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MESSI JOINS GROUP TRAINING WITH INTER MIAMI 12 SPORTS

Jammu or Kashmir, India will not spare Pakistani terrorists



A security personnel keeps vigil during pre-dawn cordon and search operation after reports of suspicious movement, leading to an exchange of fire, in Rajouri district, on Thursday

military forces to be deployed on ground zero to instill confidence among the voters. During the recently held Lok Sabha polls the Union Territory witnessed over 58 per cent voter turnout across five Parliamentary constituencies. The Election Commission of India is aiming to further improve the voter percentage turnout during the Assembly polls.

In the Jammu region, security forces had also established initial contact with a group of foreign terrorists in the Kheri Mohra Lathi & Danthal areas under the jurisdiction of Budhal police station, Rajouri, past midnight. After a brief exchange of firing as the security forces rushed additional troops to cordon the area the terrorists, taking advantage of the inclement weather, may have fled the area. Residents in the area also claimed heavy firing in the Lathi area of Khwas around midnight. In Srinagar, Chinar Corps while confirming the killing of two terrorists in the Machhal sector of Kupwara posted on X, "Two terrorists have been eliminated in the ongoing anti-infiltration operation in general area Machhal, Kupwara. Two AK-47 Rifles, one Pistol, four Hand Grenades, and other war-like stores were recovered". The troops were still carrying out the searches in the area to rule out the presence of more infiltrators.

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

As electioneering gains momentum across different parts of Jammu and Kashmir in the run-up to the first round of polling on September 18, the terrorist handlers sitting across the Line of Control (LoC) in Pakistan are hell-bent on disturbing the peaceful conduct of Assembly polls, being held after a gap of 10 long years. On Thursday, the troops of the Indian army eliminated at least three terrorists while they were attempting to infiltrate inside the Indian territory along the LoC in

the frontier district of Kupwara. These terrorists were gunned down by the alert troops in two separate anti-infiltration operations along the line of control in the Machhal and Tangdhar sectors of Kupwara. This is the second major incident involving terrorists after the announcement of the Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir on August 16. On August 19, a heavily armed group of Pakistani terrorists targeted an area domination patrol party comprising jawans of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Special Operations

Group of Jammu Kashmir Police (JKP) in the remote Duddu Basantgarh area of Udhampur in which one Inspector-rank CRPF officer sacrificed his life in the line of duty. Official sources said troops deployed along the LoC in the anti-infiltration grid could pick up the movement of the terrorists and neutralised them before they could breach the Anti-Infiltration Obstacle system (AIOS). Meanwhile, efforts are being made to create a conducive atmosphere for holding of election. The Centre has already rushed additional companies of para-



Delhi drowns, yet again

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Incessant rain since Wednesday midnight in Delhi and its neighbouring areas led to a complete collapse of city's drainage infrastructure causing severe waterlogging and traffic congestions in many parts of the national Capital. There were reports of tree falling and power outages in several areas. According to reports from civic agencies, most of the low-lying areas and underpasses were inundated with rainwater. Visuals showed vehicles struggling to negotiate heavily waterlogged roads and pedestrians wading through ankle to knee-deep water on most roads, with underpasses almost completely submerged. There was also the risk of an overflow of sewers in many areas. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) received a total of 34 calls regarding waterlogging and tree falling from different parts of the city in 12 hours till 6 pm. According to the India

Meteorological Department (IMD), the Safdarjung Observatory, the city's primary weather station, recorded 77 mm of rainfall bringing the total rainfall for the monsoon season to 825.5 mm. This figure has already exceeded Delhi's annual average rainfall of 762.3 mm. According to Mahesh Palawat of Skymet Weather Services, Delhi's annual average rainfall is 762.3 mm and the city has already received 825.5 mm so far. August has seen unprecedented rainfall as the number of rainy days shot up to 25 which is the highest number of rainy days reported for the month in the last 13 years, according to IMD record from 2011 to 2024. There were 22 rainy days reported in August 2012, which is the second-highest mark in this period. Moreover, the month received 378.5 mm of rainfall, the city's highest in 12 years, according to the IMD, surpassing the previous high of 321.4 mm recorded in August 2013.

Gujarat flooded with merciless rains

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

The situation in rain-battered Gujarat improved slightly on Thursday as the rainfall activity subsided, but Vadodara and some other parts of the State are still reeling under a flood-like situation due to overflowing rivers while the authorities continue the rescue and relief operations. Rain-related incidents have claimed the lives of 26 people in three days till Wednesday, the authorities said earlier. More than 18,000 people have been relocated and around 1,200 people rescued from flood-affected areas in the state. In some cases, choppers were used by the security forces to take people to safer locations, State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC) said in its latest update. Vadodara, the worst-hit city due to recent downpour, heaved a sigh of relief as the water level of Vishwamitri river has come down from 37 feet to 32 feet in the morning. However, several low-lying areas are still inundated. The river had crossed the danger mark of 25 feet on Tuesday morning following heavy rains and the release of water from Ajwa dam. In a post on X, Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel said, "Gujarat has been receiving incessant rains for the last three days. Prime Minister Narendra Modi called me up today on the second straight day and inquired about the situation." Modi spoke to Patel for the second consecutive day and took stock of the situation. He also asked the CM to ensure that proper steps are taken to prevent the spread of diseases post floods.

Me Too travels from Kerala to Tamil Nadu

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The MeToo controversy rocking the Malayalam film industry is set to spread over to Tamil Nadu. Vishal Reddy, popularly known as Vishal to fans, said on Thursday that the disclosures would start surfacing in the coming days. "This is not a phenomenon confined to Malayalam films alone. We have many skeletons in the cupboard which will tumble out soon," said Vishal in a brief interaction with media persons at Chennai. Vishal is the president of Tamil Film Producers Council. Meanwhile, Siddique, veteran Malayalam actor who had to quit as general secretary of Association of Malayalam Movie Artists following allegations by some actresses that they were harassed by him, was in for a shock on Thursday as a young actress filed a complaint against him with Thiruvananthapuram Police for rape and physical assault. "The incident took place in 2016 after the preview show of a Malayalam film. After the show was over Siddique asked me to accompany him to Mascot Hotel owned by Kerala State Tourism Development Corporation where he sexually abused and



assaulted me," said the actress in her complaint. The police inspected the hotel and reportedly found that the actress and Siddique had stayed in the hotel on the day she mentioned in the complaint. If proved correct, Siddique would get imprisonment for seven years. Actor and the CPI(M) MLA Mukesh got a reprieve from the Ernakulam District and Sessions Judge who asked the cops not to arrest the actor till September 3. Mukesh had approached the court on Thursday morning claiming that the allegations were baseless and have been made with ulterior motives. But CPI(M)'s Kerala leadership announced that there was no need for Mukesh to resign as the MLA. "This is a mere charge and it

is for the police and court to prove the authenticity of the allegation. There were many serious allegations of rape and assault against Congress party leaders in the past and none of them had resigned. Why you are singling out Mukesh?" asked E P Jayarajan, convener, Left Democratic Front and one of the CPI(M)'s top leaders in Kerala. CPI(M) ideologue MA Baby with interests in Malayalam film industry supported Mukesh on Thursday and other artists involved in the cases. Marxist leadership pointed out that Congress MLA Eldhose Kunnapillil had raped a schoolteacher in the capital city and had gone underground for weeks to evade arrest.

Kolkata horror gets murkier

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The parents of the victim lady doctor of RG Kar Medical College Hospital rejected the claims of the Kolkata Police that the portions of the seminar hall where the body of the said doctor was allegedly found in a semi-nude condition had been cordoned off and that the outsiders were not allowed to go near the place of occurrence. The lady doctor was allegedly raped and murdered in the early hours of August 9. "First of all we deny and reject the claim made by the Kolkata

Police that the place of occurrence had been safely cordoned off because when we reached the place we found no such cordon," said parents of the doctor who was allegedly raped and murdered in the night of August 8, adding, "not only we were kept waiting for more than three hours before we could see the body of our daughter... but also when we reached there we were told by the staff at that hospital that authorities were inspecting the area before which we could not be let in." The mother of the victim said, "They kept us, the parents of



Womens participate in a rally to protest against the alleged rape and murder of a postgraduate trainee doctor, in Kolkata, on Thursday

the only child who was dead, waiting for three hours but they allowed outsiders to vitiate the area leading to

destruction of evidence... now we wonder what is left for the CBI to find on the spot that could shed light on the crime."

The parents also referred to the bed sheet that was used to cover victim's body complaining how "the sheet was changed thrice." The mother of the victim doctor said, "My daughter had a red chador with her... which was changed to blue and then green... these three kinds of sheets were on her on three occasions... is this not an example of destruction of evidence... if it is now then what is." Meanwhile the audio tape of the telephone call that went to the victim's family for the first time from the hospital on August nine went viral.

Adani outpaces Ambani in race to riches

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Billionaire Gautam Adani with a net worth of ₹11.6 lakh crore is the richest Indian. He has elbowed out Mukesh Ambani to clinch the top spot in 2024, according to the Hurun India Rich list released on Thursday. Moreover, a new billionaire is being added every five days this year as compared to last year. Interestingly, 2024 had the best for those people whose zodiac sign is cancer, followed by Gemini and Leo. The number of billionaire in India has reached 334 this



year, rising by 29 per cent as compared to 2023. Cancer witnessed an astonishing 84 per cent increase in cumulative wealth. Gemini follows closely, with a notable 77 per

cent increase in wealth. In third place is Leo, with a 68 per cent rise in cumulative wealth. Similarly, Sagittarius, with a 64 per cent wealth increase, and Libra with 61 per cent are also among the top five. Capricorn saw a 58 per cent increase in cumulative wealth followed by Pisces with a 46 per cent increase. Aquarius and Virgo share the eighth spot, each with a 39 per cent increase in wealth. Aries, Scorpio, and Taurus occupy the final spots, with wealth increases of 34 per cent, 33 per cent, and 32 per cent, respectively.

Supreme Court reprimands Telangana CM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Trked over Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's comments towards alleged deal between the BJP and the BRS for securing bail for BRS leader K Kavitha in cases linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam, the Supreme Court on Thursday reprimanded him, saying such statements might create apprehensions in minds of people. The top court asked "why should they (politicians) drag the court in political rivalry?". The reprimand came as a three-judge bench of Justices

BR Gavai, PK Mishra, and KV Viswanathan was hearing a plea seeking transfer of the 2015 cash-for-votes case against the Chief Minister to Madhya Pradesh. The petitioners argued he could influence witnesses and tamper with evidence. "Have you read in the newspaper what he said? Just read what he has stated. What sort of statement is this by a responsible chief minister. That might rightly create apprehension in the minds of people. Is this a kind of statement which should be made by a chief minister.

Nitish Kumar's dream for Jarasandh moves closer to reality

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Bihar Government's ambitious plan to construct a grand memorial for Jarasandh, a key figure from the Mahabharata and the ancient king of Magadha with his capital at Girivraja (modern-day Rajgir) at lush green Rajgir wildlife sanctuary, has taken a significant step forward. Recently, the Central Wildlife panel, headed by Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav, approved the project, bringing it closer to realisation. Situated in the protected area in Nalanda district, this project includes the installation of an 18-foot tall statue of Jarasandha, various murals depicting his life and achievements, as well as tributes to great freedom fighter and socialist Lok Nayak Jayprakash Narayan also known

as JP. Additionally, the project envisions the construction of an art gallery using prefabricated materials and the renovation of existing park facilities. The project is part of the Jay Prakash Udyan Park situated within the sanctuary and officials pin hopes that it is expected to boost tourism given that it is around 100 km from the State capital Patna, and cultural interest by highlighting Bihar's rich historical and mythological heritage. Because of the want of approval, many installed structures are in dilapidated condition. Given that the project falls within the Rajgir Wildlife Sanctuary, it required extensive consideration for wildlife clearance. The Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife, which is the highest decision-



making body of the Central Government for projects in protected sanctuaries and reserves, has now endorsed the proposal. This approval signifies that the project has met the

necessary environmental and regulatory criteria, as confirmed by an official from the Union Environment Ministry. "The State Government had requested the diversion of

approximately 1.8436 hectares of forest land within the Rajgir Wildlife Sanctuary for the installation of the statue and historic murals, alongside the construction of essential facilities such as toilets, a cafeteria, and an art gallery made of prefabricated structures," said the officials. The proposal has already received recommendations from the State Chief Wildlife Warden, the State Board for Wildlife, and the State Government. According to the minutes of the meeting of the NBWL, the Chief Wildlife Warden noted that the sanctuary was officially notified in 1978, with park development commencing prior to that and opening to the public in 1979. "The ongoing renovation and provision of basic amenities are crucial to maintaining and enhancing the park for public

use," said the minutes quoting the Bihar Government officials about the project being overseen by the Divisional Forest Officer of the Nalanda Forest Division. Following deliberations, the Standing Committee recommended the proposal with the stipulation that the region's flora and fauna remain undisturbed. The Rajgir Wildlife Sanctuary is home to various species, including wild boar, cheetal, jungle fowl, porcupine, hare, langur, monkey, and jackal. The central wildlife panel emphasised that the legal status of the land will remain as part of the sanctuary and will be dedicated solely to eco-tourism purposes. The project proponent has assured that no trees will be cut down as the area falls within an Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) for

which the final notification was issued in 2017. The park, established in 1979, has been in use since its opening. However, many of its structures are now in disrepair. The planned upgrades include the installation of essential amenities such as toilets, seating benches, platforms, drinking water facilities, landscaping, and water drainage systems. These improvements are vital to prevent further deterioration of the park. "Upgrading the park is aimed at integrating the ecological, cultural, and historical aspects of Rajgir," said officials. "This initiative will bring the glory of ancient India to the forefront, providing educational opportunities for park visitors and enhancing their understanding of the region's rich heritage," he said.



Vehicles stuck in traffic jam after rain in New Delhi on Thursday



Waterlogged road in New Delhi on Thursday



Traffic jam in New Delhi on Thursday

PTI

Record 100 mm rainfall sinks Gurugram

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

With the Gurugram recording 100 mm of rainfall on Thursday morning, the residents were seen helpless and multiple stretches across city turned into a river. However, officials claimed that efforts are on to clear waterlogging. Power outages were also reported from different areas of the city. A few hours of rain caused heavy water logging on multiple stretches across the district. Both vehicular traffic and pedestrian movement have been disrupted due to waterlogging on several roads. Commuters faced huge prob-

lems due to rainwater. Morning rush hour traffic was affected and the police struggled to keep the vehicles moving. Also, 3-4 feet of water accumulated on several city roads while the rainwater was also seen in the city's industrial area in Sector-37, Sector-34, Khandsa and Wazirabad. The rain started at around 4 am on Thursday and it turned into a heavy downpour till 9.30 am. Traffic movement on the Delhi-Jaipur-Mumbai highway was severely hit due to waterlogging. Nearly 70 percent of the city was submerged in an average of 3 feet of water with the worst-hit areas being Signature Tower Chowk, Hanuman Chowk



(Udyog Vihar), Narsinghpur (NH-48), Haldiram towards Manesar, Basai Road, Nathupur, Z Chowk near Huda City Centre Metro Station, Bilaspur Chowk, Dronacharya Metro Station, Iffco Metro Station, Galleria Market Road, Mayfield Garden Chowk, Sector-12 Chowk, Mini Secretariat, Sector-21/22 T-point, Medicity T-point, Bus Stand Road, Sanjay Gram Road, Basai Road and Sheela Mata Road. With heavy rain lashing the city since the early hours on Thursday, several parts of the district were inundated, and water also entered several houses in Sector 7, Sector 4, Malibu Town, Anjana Colony, Saraswati Enclave,

Sheetla Colony, Rajiv Colony, Ashok Vihar, Palam Vihar and Sushant Lok. The Gurugram resident took to social media to describe their anguish and held responsible the local authority due for this huge mess. People were seen taking selfies in the water logging area. Several residents took to Twitter to share their experiences and posted photos of waterlogging and traffic jams. Office-goers in the city, too, faced a lot of inconvenience due to traffic disruptions. "We have improved upon our city infrastructure in last three years, which kept the city running even during the heavy downpour. We will learn from

our experiences and ensure that areas and junctions which experienced waterlogging, can be improved upon for the future," a civic body official added. "I would like to say the district administration, Gurugram, stop fooling the residents of Gurugram and must start work on the ground. A few kilometres of travelling turned into hours which is ridiculous," Ajay Chauhan, a resident of Sector-31, said. "1,000 plus traffic personnel have been deployed at major junctions for traffic operations. We also coordinated with the civic authorities to drain out the water for smooth traffic movement," said Virender Vij, DCP (traffic).

Traffic cops to re-launch upgraded version of Traffic Sentinel app

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor (LG) Vinai Kumar Saxena has directed Delhi Traffic Police to re-launch the modified and upgraded version of the Traffic Sentinel Mobile App "as Traffic Prahari" starting September 1, which serves as a platform for the common citizens to report traffic/parking violations and thus helps in regulating city traffic. It aims at enhancing people's participation in the management of traffic as direct stakeholders. Citizens will now be able to complain of traffic violations, help the police track them and contribute to managing traffic in the city, Raj Niwas officials said. Traffic Sentinel scheme (TSS) is a unique scheme where common citizens act as the eyes and ears of Delhi Traffic Police and help reduce the number of traffic violations on roads by reporting the same to the police. To further encourage citizens' participation, the LG asked the Delhi Traffic Police to introduce monthly rewards



system for the "Traffic Prahari". As part of this, a first reward of Rs 50,000, 2nd reward of Rs 25,000, 3rd reward of Rs 15,000 and 4th reward of Rs 10,000 will be given every month to the top 04 performers, based on the points earned through their activities and reporting of traffic violations. The first monthly rewards would be distributed in the first week of October, after analyzing the activities of the "Traffic Praharis" through the month of September. The LG said Traffic Praharis Scheme would provide the aware citizens with an opportunity to participate with Delhi Traffic Police in maintaining the city traffic and preventing

traffic violations. He said this would additionally provide avenues of income to the people as well as contribute constructively and significantly in governance and earn. He said the effectiveness of the scheme would be reviewed after six months and based on the results, the monthly rewards would also be accordingly enhanced so as to encourage more participation of the people. Saxena exuded confidence that this model of citizens' participation would prove effective in creating awareness about citizen's rights and responsibilities while being the partners of the government

Shahbad Dairy BJP Councillor joins AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Days after five AAP councillors switched their loyalties and joined BJP on Sunday, Shahbad Dairy Councillor Ramchandra on Thursday re-joined the AAP and said that it was his biggest mistake to join the BJP. This comes a day after the Municipal Secretary announced that elections for the MCD's 12 ward committees will be held on September 4. AAP in a statement said, "The BJP, which tricked an AAP councillor into joining its party, got a big blow on Thursday as Councillor Ramchandra from Ward No. 28, who left the AAP after being misled by the BJP, returned to his party." On his rejoining, Ramchandra said that he realized his wrong decision and met senior leaders of the AAP including former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, Rajya Sabha MPs Sanjay Singh and Dr. Sandeep Pathak and expressed his desire to return to his family. "Joining the BJP was my big mistake, but now I want to return to my family and correct this mistake," he said. Welcoming the Councillor



back into the party fold, Manish Sisodia tweeted, "I met old AAP colleague and former Bawana Vidhan Sabha MLA Ramchandra. Today he has returned to his Aam Aadmi family." The AAP councillor said that he has returned after getting a dream of AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal. "I am Ramchandra, a small soldier of the AAP. I made the wrong decision, but I have returned to my family again. Last night, our Chief Minister came in my dream and reprimanded me saying that Ramchandra get up and go and meet Manish (Sisodia), Gopal Rai, Sandeep (Pathak) and all the leaders; go and meet your workers in the area and work." He added that he will never

leave AAP and said that he has taken an oath to never be misled by anyone in the future. Chander's return could have implications in the upcoming ward committee elections, particularly in the Narela Zone. Chander was one of two AAP councillors from the Narela Zone who had defected to the BJP, giving the BJP a majority in the ward. With Chander back in AAP, the Narela ward is likely to see a tie in the upcoming ward committee elections, as both parties may now have an equal number of votes. The ward committee elections are important because 12 of the 18 members of the Standing Committee, which serves as the MCD's financial backbone, are elected during these elections.

Lawyer files complaint with Delhi Police against Mamata for inciting remarks

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A lawyer has filed a complaint with the Delhi Police on Thursday against West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for her remarks at a Trinamool Chhatra Parishad event, alleging they were provocative and inciting statements. The complaint, filed by Vineet Jindal, a practising lawyer at the Supreme Court, to the Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora is against Banerjee's statement on Wednesday where she reportedly said, "Remember, if Bengal burns, then Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Delhi will also burn." It is clear that this statement is instigating, provocative, and antinational in nature. Her words are intended to create hatred and enmity between different groups on the basis of region, which is prejudicial to the maintenance of harmony. As the Chief Minister of a state in the Union of India, she holds significant influence over the public," he said.



He added that the seriousness of her statement is amplified by her position as Chief Minister, where she controls the administrative and law enforcement authorities in West Bengal. "Her words clearly indicate a willingness to misuse her power to create unstoppable unrest in the state and other parts of the country," Jindal alleged. "Given the instigating and provocative nature of her statement, which intends to create disharmony and foster hatred and enmity among the masses of India, as she mentioned the name of Delhi in her statement as one of the states, I being a resident of Delhi respectfully request that an FIR be lodged under Sections 152, 192, 196, and 353 of the BNS against Mamata Banerjee.

Innovative ideas shared at workshop on pre-incubation entrepreneurship

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amity Foundation for Science Technology & Innovation Alliances (AFSTIA), Amity University Noida organised a Workshop on "Pre-Incubation Entrepreneurship (PIE) Development Programme" in collaboration with Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre, Department of Space (IN-SPACe). The IN-SPACe PIE programme is designed for aspiring space entrepreneurs and individuals with innovative ideas in the space sector who are seeking early-stage support and mentorship to develop their concepts into viable businesses. More than 1000 participants from Delhi/NCR Universities and institutions joined the workshop, including IIT Delhi, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi Technological University and National Institute of Technology, to name a few. Delivering the Keynote Address, Dr Vinod Kumar, Director, Promotion Directorate, IN-SPACe, averred "On November 20, 1967, India's first Indigenous Sounding Rocket, Rohini-75 was launched which marked a new beginning for the Indian



Space Industry. Under the visionary leadership of our Prime Minister, the Government initiated Space Sector reforms and formed and autonomous body, Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre, IN-SPACe on June 24, 2020, which enables private entities to carry out end-to-end space activities. Welcoming the guests, Prof (Dr) Balvinder Shukla, Vice Chancellor, Amity University, Uttar Pradesh, said, "The workshop serves as a one-stop solution for participants to explore the entire journey from ideation to commercialization in starting a start-up or pursuing entrepreneurship. Space Technology is an important sector for Viksit Bharat@2047 and Chandrayaan's landing on the South Pole of the moon has proved India's potential in the Space Sector."

Cluster bus with 50 passengers catches fire, no casualties reported

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

A low-floor cluster blue bus with around 50 passengers onboard was completely gutted after it caught fire in east Delhi's Jagatpuri area near A block bus stand on Thursday. According to the police, no passengers were injured. DCP Shahdara Surendra Choudhary said, "On Thursday at 9.48 am, we received a PCR call at Jagatpuri police station about a cluster bus burning at A block bus stand in Jagatpuri. After reaching the spot, it is found that fire broke out in a blue colour cluster bus." He added that as the vehicle is a CNG air-conditioned bus, there was a danger of fire spreading. "So the area was cordoned off and about 40 passengers were rescued. Three fire tenders reached at the spot immediately and extinguished the fire," DCP stated, adding that no one was injured and no causality was reported. The bus was plying on route 340, from Central Secretariat to Seemapuri. The probable cause of the fire was short-circuit in the AC system, he added. The Delhi Integrated Multi-Modal Transit System Limited (DIMTS) monitors and manages cluster buses. An inquiry has been ordered, transport



department officials said and added that the bus will be examined by the manufacturer to determine what caused the fire. Reacting to the news, Delhi Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot said, "This bus was not very old and only four years old. We will conduct an investigation to know the reason for the fire. We will hundred percent get to the root cause of the incident. We stand committed to the safety of passengers. We will surely come down very heavily on those responsible at any level." Another officer added, "It is a matter of concern that a relatively new bus caught fire. The fire started from the back portion and despite efforts by the driver and the conductor to extinguish it, it spread." Station officer of Delhi Fire

Services (DFS) Anoop Singh said a call was received around 9.40 am about the incident and three fire tenders were sent to the spot. It is suspected that an electrical short-circuit in the vehicle's air conditioning system may have caused the fire, Singh said. Eyewitness Surender Bhola said a biker noticed smoke coming out of the bus engine and alerted the driver, who immediately stopped the vehicle and instructed the passengers to get off. The incident caused a massive traffic jam at the Jagatpuri crossing, affecting other commuters. "Traffic is affected on New Rohtak Road in the carriageway from Kamal T-Point towards Punjabi Bagh due to a fire in a Cluster Bus on Zakhira Flyover. Commuters are advised to avoid the stretch," it said in a post on X.

DU welcomes new batch of UG students for academic session 2024-25

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Vibrant posters, anti-ragging campaigns and signature drives welcomed the new batch of undergraduate students as classes for the 2024-25 academic session commenced at Delhi University on Thursday. The roads around the North Campus were bustling with heavy traffic as excited students, along with their parents, flocked to the colleges. Outside the colleges, several police personnel were deployed to prevent any untoward incident, while, inside, volunteers and senior students warmly greeted the freshers with chocolates and flowers. I am very happy to have finally made it to the college of my choice, Anjali, a student who has secured admission in the BA (Hons) English programme at Hansraj College, said. "I was quite tense when the CUET results were delayed. I was eager to start college life. My first impression of the college is good and I hope it continues to be so," she added. Radha Saini, mother of another student Udhai Saini who will be pursuing BA (Hons) Economics at Hansraj College, said, "We are happy that our



child has been admitted here. It's a nice college and I hope he studies well". Over 65,000 students have secured admissions in various undergraduate programmes across Delhi University's 69 colleges this year. More than 1,500 undergraduate programmes, with a total of 71,600 sanctioned seats, are available at the university. Admissions are still ongoing, with a third round scheduled to admit students through performance-based programmes and supernumerary quotas, including those for children and widows of armed-forces personnel (CW), extra-curricular activities (ECA) and sports. Students have time until August 30 to accept their allocated college and course combination by paying the required fees on the Delhi University's CSAS portal for admissions.

NDMC to provide free tea and snacks to its field staff

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a first, the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has decided to provide free tea and snacks to its field staff across various departments. This initiative is aimed at supporting over 5,000 employees, including sweepers, gardeners, 'beldars' (groundsmen) and linemen from the electricity department among others, according to an official. The official added the decision is on the same lines as practiced in the police and paramilitary forces where the personnel working during the odd hours receive free refreshments. "Our field workers, like sweepers, start their duties as early as 4 am to ensure that streets are clean before the traffic begins. At that time, finding food or tea is challenging, so this is a commendable step," the official said. According to the official, this initiative makes the NDMC the first municipal body in India to implement such a program and the provision of free tea and snacks is a gesture of appreciation and support for the dedication of these workers, who often work in difficult conditions. Asked about the implementation details, the official did not divulge details.

Olympic gold medalists from C'garh to get Rs 3 crore reward

STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Thursday said that gold medal winners in the Olympics games from Chhattisgarh will be awarded Rs 3 crores.

The silver and bronze medalists would get Rs 2 crores and 1 crore respectively, he said.

Sai said this at the State Sports Excellence Award Ceremony on National Sports Day.

The programme was presided over by Speaker Dr. Raman Singh. The special guests were Union Minister of State for Housing and Urban Development Tokhan Sahu, Deputy Chief Ministers Arun Sao and Vijay Sharma and Sports and Youth Welfare Minister Tankram Verma.



The Chief Minister said the government was committed to augmenting the sports facility in the state in order to promote sports. The government honored six

players with Shaheed Rajiv Pandey Award for 2021-22, six players with Shaheed Kaushal Yadav Award, two players with Veer Hanuman Singh Award, 11 players with Shaheed Pankaj

Vikram Samman, five players with Shaheed Vinod Choubey Samman and 11 players were awarded the Chief Minister Trophy for 2021-22.

Similarly, for 2022-23, four players were honored with trophies of Shaheed Rajiv Pandey Award, seven players were awarded the Shaheed Kaushal Yadav Award, one player got the Veer Hanuman Singh Award.

Fifteen players were awarded the Shaheed Pankaj Vikram Samman, five got the Shaheed Vinod Choubey Samman and 24 selected players got the Chief Minister Trophy for 2022-23.

For 2021-22 and 2022-23, prize money of Rs 76 lakh was given to 97 awardees players and Rs 60.33 lakh was transferred to the bank accounts of 502 medal winning players, totalling around Rs 1.33 crore.

Hardcore Maoist with Rs 24L bounty held

STAFF REPORTER ■
BIJAPUR

A hardcore Maoist leader, carrying a cumulative bounty of Rs 24 lakh in two states, was arrested on Thursday in Bijapur of Chhattisgarh.

Sainu Munshi Jeti alias Vikash (35) was apprehended by security forces from a forest near Bhatpalli village, Bijapur Superintendent of Police Jitendra Kumar Yadav said.

The Chhattisgarh Armed Force's 13/E battalion and local police nabbed him when he was being shifted to hospital for treatment.

The security personnel seized Rs 80,000 in cash, Maoist uniform, Maoist literature, pamphlets and



medicines from Vikash. Vikash was the Aheri Dalam Divisional Committee Member of the outlawed Maoists outfit. He carried a reward Rs 8 lakh in

Chhattisgarh and Rs 16 lakh in Maharashtra. He was involved in more than 35 instances of Maoist violence in Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Telangana.

Three women Maoists killed in gunfight in C'garh



STAFF REPORTER ■
NARAYANPUR

Three women Maoists were killed on Thursday in a gun battle with security forces in Narayanpur district in Chhattisgarh.

The gunfight ensued at around 8 am in the forest of Abhujmad located on the border of Narayanpur and

Kanker districts, Narayanpur Superintendent of Police Prabhat Kumar said.

The Special Task Force (STF), the District Reserve Guard (DRG) and the Border Security Force (BSF) were involved in the operation.

The bodies of the three women clad in 'uniform' along with a huge cache of weapons were recovered from the spot.

The Special Task Force (STF), the District Reserve Guard (DRG) and the Border Security Force (BSF) were involved in the operation.

So far, 145 Maoists have been gunned down by security forces in Chhattisgarh this year.

Man held for bank fraud of Rs 39 lakhs

STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Police on Thursday arrested a 44-year-old man after a relative for whom he stood as a guarantor failed to pay back a loan of Rs 39.90 lakh taken from a bank in 2019.

Deepak Tiwari of Raipur has been taken into custody, Raipur Additional Superintendent of Police Lakhan Pawar Patle said. Efforts are on to nab his relative Rishi Tiwari.

Rishi Tiwari had taken a loan from a nationalized bank to buy a concrete power machine trailer and he failed to pay back the loan. Deepak Tiwari was the guarantor.

'Only healthy children can contribute to nation building'

STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Thursday said that only healthy children can contribute to nation building.

He said this at a function at the JR Dani Girls School in Raipur where he launched the administration of deworming pills on the National Deworming Day.

Officials from the Health Department and other departments were urged to attain 100 percent target in the initiative.

On August 29, as part of National Deworming Day, children and teenagers aged one to 19 years in the state were administered the deworming medication. Those who missed the



medication on August 29 will have another opportunity on September 4.

Deworming medicine was administered at various locations including Anganwadis, government

schools, healthcare centres, aided private schools, and technical education institutions.

Children aged one to two years will be given half a tablet of Albendazole, while

those above two years should receive a combination of D.E.C. and Albendazole.

The initiative aims to combat a variety of parasitic worm infections among the young population.

How catching up on sleep may help reduce heart disease

AGENCIES ■

Unable to sleep better on weekdays due to busy schedules? Sleeping in on weekends may not only compensate for lost sleep but may reduce your heart disease risk by one-fifth too, according to a study.

"Sufficient compensatory sleep is linked to a lower risk of heart disease. The association becomes even more pronounced among individuals who regularly experience inadequate sleep on weekdays," said study author Yanjun Song of the State Key Laboratory of Infectious Disease, Fuwai Hospital, Beijing, which is also the National Centre for Cardiovascular Disease. It is generally known that those who experience sleep deprivation, "sleep in" on their days off, just to compensate for that one day they missed.

Accelerometers, a device used to measure sleep patterns, were employed by the authors to collect sleep data from 90,903

participants in the UK Biobank project in order to assess the association between compensated weekend sleep and heart disease.

The participants were divided into 4 quarters, with quarter 1 being the least compensated with sleep, and quarter 4 being the most compensated one. Individuals who self-reported getting less than 7 hours of sleep per night were considered to be suffering from sleep deprivation. 19,816 (21.8 per cent) of the individuals in total were classified as sleep-deprived. The remaining members of the cohort might have occasionally had insufficient sleep, but overall, their daily sleep hours did not satisfy the standards for sleep deprivation; the authors acknowledge this as a limitation to their findings.

It was possible to diagnose a number of cardiac conditions, such as ischemic heart disease (IHD), heart failure (HF), atrial fibrillation (AF), and stroke, using hospitalisation records and information from the cause of death registry.



Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Thursday inspected the under-construction tribal museum at Nava Raipur. The museum, named after freedom fighter Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh, will showcase tribal culture and civilization in the state.

New Mpox strain poses a notable risk to children: Experts

AGENCIES ■

The new and deadlier Mpox strain -- Clade 1b -- poses a notable risk to children, said experts on Thursday, amid an outbreak of the infectious disease in Africa.

The ongoing outbreak of Mpox which has been declared as a global health emergency by the World Health Organization (WHO) on August 15, is different from what the world experienced earlier in the 2022 outbreak.

The 2022 outbreak was driven by Clade II, which is less virulent, and the infections were primarily seen in men who had sex with other men.

Since then, the WHO has reported 99,176 cases and 208 deaths due to Mpox from 116 countries. India detected a total of 30 cases, with the last case in March 2024.

The number of cases and deaths has increased significantly this year, with over 15,600 cases and 537 deaths reported so far in 2024.

The latest outbreak is majorly



caused by Clade 1b which jumped to humans from animals in September 2023. Dr Rajeev Jayadevan, co-

chairman of the Indian Medical Association's National Covid-19 Task Force, told IANS that the pattern of spread and mortality are markedly different from what we experienced in 2022.

This time "greater numbers of people are being infected, including women and children," he said.

Traditionally, Mpox was transmitted through close physical contact or sexual contact -- as was observed in the 2022 outbreak -- and the infection was largely confined to the MSM (men having sex with men) community.

Historical data shows that while paediatric cases were rare in past outbreaks, the current resurgence has highlighted a growing vulnerability in this age group.

"Mpox is posing a notable risk to children, though they represent a smaller proportion of cases compared to adults," Dr Rohit Garg, Consultant, Infectious Disease, Amrita Hospital, Faridabad, told IANS.

"Recent data indicates an increase in paediatric cases during the current resurgence, with children showing symptoms similar to those in adults but potentially facing more severe outcomes," he added.

As per WHO data (2022-2024), as of July 2024, there were 1,156 (1.3 per cent) cases reported aged 0-17, out of which 333 (0.4 per cent) were aged 0-4.

"Observed changes include higher transmission rates in households and schools, emphasising the need for vigilant monitoring and preventive measures," Garg said.

This suggests that we need to keep an open mind about the possible modes of transmission, Jayadevan said, amid debate on whether transmission can occur through the air.

"The fact that children are readily getting infected suggests that either close contact or respiratory or both modes of transmission could potentially be involved. This requires validation, however," he said.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, E/M CIRCLE, RAIPUR (C.G.)

e-Procurement Tender Notice

Online tenders are invited on behalf of Governor of Chhattisgarh from contractors, C.G. P.W.D in new Registration system (unified Registration system) for the following work :-

NIT No.	Name of work	Probable amount of contract
23/SE E/M/2024-2025 (1Call) System Tender No158024 Registered contractor class in "D" & above For Form "A" (Percentage Rate Tender)	IT SCHEDULE OF OPERATION & PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE CONTRACT (AMC) OF ANNUAL OPERATING AND MONITORING OF (AMC) AHU, FCU, AIR WASH-ER PUMPS AND VENTILATION FAN SYSTEM AT B.R.L.S.A.B.B. MEMORIAL HOSPITAL RAJ-NANDGAON (C.G.)	Rs 41.05 Lacs.
24/SE. F/M/2024-2025 (1Call) System Tender No158026 Registered contractor class in "C" & above For Form "A" (Percentage Rate Tender)	OPERATION & PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE CONTRACT (AMC) OF INTERNAL & EXTERNAL ELECTRIFICATION, WATER SUPPLY PUMP AND FIRE FIGHTING PUMP SUB STATION AND TRANSFORMER, L.T. PANNEL, 750 KLD STP AND 100 KLD ETP AT B.R.L.S.A.B.B. MEMORIAL HOSPITAL RAJNANDGAON (C.G.)	Rs 158.94 Lacs

Note: last date of bid submission of NIT 10-09-2024
The tender documents can be downloaded from the web-portal <http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>. Only those contractors/bidders, interested in bidding shall pay the tender document cost online.

Superintending Engineer P.W.D., E/M Circle Raipur (C.G.)
G- 242502074/8

GOVERNMENT OF CHHATTISGARH, WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER HASDEO CANAL W/M DIVISION, JANJIR DISTT. JANJIR-CHAMPA (C.G.)

e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

eProcurement Portal: <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>

Online Tenders are invited for the following works up to 19-09-2024 at 17:30 Hour

System Tender No.	NIT No. & Date	Name of Work	Probable Amount of Contract (In Lakhs)	Tender Call
158011	05/SAC/2024-25 Dated. 29-08-2024	CONSTRUCTION OF TOE WALL AT RD 800 M. TO 1300 ? OF BAN-JARI MINOR AND AT RD 1000 ? ? 1450 M. OF GITARI MINOR. REPAIR OF LINING & STRUCTURES OF JAMANIPALI MINOR & DEWALAPAT MINOR UNDER HASDEO BANGO PROJECT.	287.70	First Call
158012	06/SAC/2024-25 Dated. 29-08-2024	REPAIR OF C.C. LINING & STRUCTURES OF LIMGAON MR. TONDA MINOR. DEWARMAL MINOR. REPAIR OF C.C. LINING, STRUCTURES & CONSTRUCTION OF PROTECTION WALL RD 0 TO 500 M OF BHAINSAMUDA MINOR UNDER HASDEO BANGO PROJECT IN KORBA DISTRICT.	275.87	First Call

The details can be viewed and downloaded online directly from the Government of Chhattisgarh Integrated e- Procurement Portal (<https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>) from Date 05-09-2024 at 17:31 Hours. (IST) onwards.

NOTE:- All eligible/intrested contractors/bidders are mandated to get enrolled on the Integrated e-procurement portal (<https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>) and get approval on specific vendor class from PWD under Centralized Contractor/Supplier Registration in order to download the tender documents and participate in the subsequent bidding process. Other terms and condition of this tender visit WRD website <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> under Live Tender available.

Executive Engineer Hasdeo Canal W/M Division Janjir (Chhattisgarh)
G-242502086/6

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PAPER WITH PASSION

A close contest!

The rural-urban divide and the Jat-non-Jat paradigm could be crucial in deciding the Haryana assembly elections

As Haryana gears up for its upcoming elections, the state's political landscape is rife with complexities that reflect broader societal divides. Central to this is the rural-urban divide and the Jat-non-Jat paradigm, both of which are poised to play a crucial role in determining the electoral outcome. The recent request by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to the Election Commission of India (ECI) to change the polling date has added another layer of intrigue to an already charged atmosphere. Haryana's political fabric is deeply influenced by the rural-urban divide, a reflection of the state's socio-economic disparities. The urban areas, particularly key centres like Gurugram, Faridabad, and Rohtak, have traditionally been BJP strongholds. These cities, with their high migrant populations, represent a significant voter base for the BJP. However, the upcoming election is complicated by the timing of the polling date. Scheduled for October 1, the date falls within a period that could easily be extended into a six-day holiday, thanks to overlapping weekends and public holidays. The BJP fears that urban voters, particularly those in the NCR, may choose to use this extended break to travel, thereby potentially lowering voter turnout in areas where the party has a stronghold. Historically, rural turnout in Haryana has been higher than urban turnout, which could tilt the scales against the BJP if urban voters are absent.



Another crucial factor in the upcoming elections is the Jat-non-Jat divide. Jats, who form a dominant social group in Haryana, have traditionally been aligned with the Congress, especially in rural areas. The BJP, on the other hand, has found support among the non-

Jat communities, particularly in urban regions. This division was evident in the 2024 general elections, where the BJP won all five Lok Sabha seats in non-Jat dominated areas. The BJP's support base in rural areas has been eroded, particularly among Jats, who have been disillusioned by the central government's response to their protests. The Congress is working to capitalise on this discontent by consolidating a Jat-Dalit-Muslim alliance in rural areas, which could pose a significant challenge to the BJP. In light of these challenges, the BJP's request to change the polling date has sparked controversy. The party argues that the potential for a long weekend could lead to lower voter turnout, particularly in urban areas where it has a strong base. The Congress has dismissed the BJP's request for date change as a sign of nervousness. The Election Commission's decision on the date change will be crucial, as it could influence the electoral outcome in a state where every vote counts. With ten years of incumbency and a narrowing margin of victory, the BJP is leaving no stone unturned to secure a favourable result. Whether the ECI will accommodate the BJP's request remains to be seen, but the upcoming elections in Haryana are shaping up to be a closely contested battle.

PICTALK



Visitors at India Gate enjoy the rains in New Delhi

RANJAN DIMRI

Emotional intelligence: The secret of outstanding leadership

As the next era of leadership unfolds, the demand for emotionally intelligent leaders has never been clearer—are you ready to rise to the challenge?

Today's corporate climate is fast-paced and continually evolving. Emotional intelligence (EI) is the secret weapon that distinguishes great pioneers from average ones; it is accompanied by a long list of excellent technical qualifications. But what precisely is this elusive talent, and why is it becoming a defining characteristic of outstanding leaders? It is the ability to control our emotions and understand and empathise with others. It forms a link between self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. To speak more specifically to leaders, emotional intelligence is not only desirable but even more crucial for leaders than the desire to influence others and inspire their teams to greatness. This is where EI comes into play, somewhat like the oil that keeps the motor of leadership running. Emotionally intelligent leaders express ideas with clarity and empathy, make judgements based on both logic and emotion and maintain strong team morale and productivity. They prefer to ride out the



storm rather than be tossed by it, and instead look to harness it for growth and innovation. But how do aspiring leaders cultivate this crucial ability? It begins with reflection. Frequent self-analytical practices, such as journaling or meditation, may promote insight. Encouraging feedback—even the difficult kind—and viewing failures as opportunities for improvement are also important components. The most critical aspect is empathy and listening to others rather than simply hearing them. This final trait will propel a good leader to new heights. Take, for example, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella. Since the beginning of his term in 2014, he has been considered as the driving

force behind the company's cultural shift from fierce competitiveness to collaborative innovation. So, what's the magic? A leadership style relies mostly on emotional intelligence. Empathy-driven continuous learning and development mindset not only rebuilt Microsoft's reputation but also its financial performance to unprecedented heights. Another excellent example is Jacinda Ardern, the former Prime Minister of New Zealand. Ardern's leadership style, which includes speaking with compassion, making clear tough decisions, and uniting the country in the face of tragedy, highlights the importance of emotional intelligence in political leadership. Looking ahead, it is clear that one aspect of good lead-



RACHNA LAKHPATRI

ership will remain central: emotional intelligence. While the next wave of technology will undoubtedly replace occupations in the future, leaders in any area will need to possess increasingly humane qualities such as empathy, self-awareness, and emotional regulation. The message is clear: to be an effective leader in the twenty-first century, we must continue to improve our emotional intelligence alongside our technical proficiency. Whether you aspire to be an established CEO or a team leader, investing in your emotional intelligence can pay you in terms of career success and personal fulfilment. Remember that developing emotional intelligence is a lifetime journey that promises to improve not only your leadership style but also your overall approach to life and relationships. As leaders, we commit to leaving a legacy based on how we make others feel and the relationships we build. The future of leadership is in emotional intelligence: isn't it time you took the initiative? (The author is a freelance writer, views are personal)

How media shapes public perception

In a world where sensationalism often trumps substance, it's time to rethink how we engage with the news and what it says about the society we've built.



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

The last few weeks have seen some major convulsions at the basic level of the Indian society. The listing can be long, depending upon the predisposition and values of the person making a list, or indeed brief if this person wants to strike a judgmental posture on what he considers important. This debate can merit its own resolution but the common-sense approach would make it obvious that the NEET examination and the Kolkata rape and murder episode have touched a very large number of minds and people who are in touch with the media.

This itself raises another basic question. That has to do with the role of the media in attributing to an episode both circulation and importance. The reach and mode of the media become critical in identifying an issue and formulating it. One of the farthest reach of a media is through the radio. By and large, the radio is controlled by governmental agencies. This is followed by television, which is controlled both by the government and by some powerful private media houses. Both clusters claim a popular following, and both are accused of biases. Hence, to a fairly complicated question on what constitutes much of the news, there is a plausible answer: that which the media of the day decides to project and sustain as news. Thus it is that the role of governance/ownership of the mode of the media, in the identification of news, and sustaining it becomes critical. This brings us to a basic question: what constitutes news and how is it maintained at the frontlines? What is projected in so-called news is impossible for a private citizen to verify. That raises the question of the credibility of a channel. The credibility of the channel is itself a matter of popular perception, and it is also nurtured by reputation and conviction. To understand the gravity and implications of the statements and exposures above, one has to realize that news is both essential and dependent



upon the larger intellectual culture of the community where the news circulates. If the community is mature, it has developed safe parameters of credibility and conviction, and therefore one can be reasonably sure that what is being circulated is true. By and large, globally, the media, also, has its methods of checks and balances, standards and credibility, of reach and sustenance. Hence, whereas it may be a worthwhile debate to consider what constitutes news: origin, sustenance, and dissemination of news has certain standards across the globe. These, are like many things in life, having largely acknowledged standards without much vagueness. These are considered givens of a civil society. Hence the conclusion that if the general media projects something, it must be the truth, or at least the truth in good faith. Reference has been made above to the NEET episode and the Kolkata murder and rape case. The jury is out on both cases, and a conclusions are awaited. The civil society is maintained on such pillars. However, two questions emerge: given the attention which both of these cases have received, is this the only news which affected



THE BASIC TRUTH IS ALSO THAT IT IS NOT SOME INTRANSIENT STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS OF THE MEDIA THAT SUSTAINS ITS LIFE BUT THE ECONOMIC FORCES WHICH NURTURE ITS EXISTENCE

the wellbeing of the people, and is there a question of the proportion and inter-se importance of news? To debate the importance of both of the two episodes mentioned above would be a pointless exercise. However, by the same token, it is true that there are other activities effecting every-day living and have been, in a manner of speaking, overlooked. Hence, after resolving the concerns related to credibility arises an issue of the relative importance of the items being reported. It would be a common place to say that sensational news spreads faster and catches more attention than routine news, no matter how important it may be. Good news travels slower and catches less attention. The healthiness of a society needs to be assessed against objective indicators of health, and clearly one of them would be how much mileage does a positive news get as compared to the mileage a negative news gets. The strength of a society comes not only from handling the unhappy episodes which lead to news but also from giving positive news the importance that it deserves. It is here again that the media need continuous help in introspection. The basic truth

is also that it is not some intransient strength and weakness of the media that sustains its life but the economic forces which nurture its existence. As indicated above, if the media disseminates sensational information, it is because that kind of information is read more widely and followed more avidly. The problem therefore originates not just with the media but with the people who use the media. Further, it becomes a question of mass contact and mobilization of mass opinion. The time has come when one needs to revisit what constitutes a civil society and how a civil society exercises its choices and preferences. The economic and financial flows merely run in the channels which have been created with such efforts. Essentially, therefore, a question is: what is the kind of society which one has given to oneself and how do its norms get modified and operated, also, through the media? As indicated above, this is merely the sub-structure to a much larger edifice that the society has built for itself. (The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A STATUE OF POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY

Madam — The recently collapsed statue of Shivaji in Maharashtra, is a grim reflection of political expediency. That a statue of one of the most revered and respected figures of Maharashtra has collapsed barely nine months after its inauguration, speaks volumes about the malpractices that must have gone into the installation of a statue that was expected to last a good part of a century. Instead of expressing remorse and regret, the political class is doing what it knows best — ducking responsibility and pointing fingers. The pedestal and all that remains of the statue ought to be cordoned off, and preserved as a reminder of the gross failure of the present day dispensation. Near it, a stone plaque should read — This site is an admission of the government's failure to do justice to the memory of Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, whose statue collapsed just nine months after it was dedicated to the people of Maharashtra. We promise that this will never happen again. We hope to be forgiven by the people of the state with whose money the statue project was commissioned. To atone for our grave mistake, another statue is being constructed nearby. We assure you that it will last many many years and be a fitting tribute to a historical figure who is so dear to our hearts. I know too well that the shameful episode will soon be forgotten by our netas as well as the public.

Avinash Godbole | Dewas

IMPLEMENT MISSION SHAKTI

Madam — Many people are prone to depression due to the harsh realities of life like low income, pollution, bad relationships, lack of education, etc. During this post-depression, if a person does not hope to become well, then it is a sign of mental illness. The consequences of inaction are dire. Without effective support systems, women in the country are left vulnerable to violence, harass-

The logic of Changing election date



Haryana BJP's State Election Management Committee has logically put forward the view that there is a weekend holiday before the assembly election date on October

1 and there are some holidays after that. INLD has also agreed to postpone the assembly elections. Opposition parties are hell-bent on condemning every aspect of the ruling party. Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar has expressed concern over low voting percentage where people use long weekend holidays on the day of polling. Shifting the election dates will definitely help in increasing the voting percentage. Earlier also, the dates of elections were changed in Rajasthan, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh. Therefore, the change of date is not important but the change of mind of voters will be more meaningful. The election Commission is a statutory independent body and should remain firm on its stand rather than bowing to the political pressure which often times is self-serving than for the public good.

Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad

ment and exploitation. Every day, stories emerge of women who have been failed by the very systems that were supposed to protect them. These are not just isolated incidents; they are symptoms of a much larger problem — a systemic failure to prioritise women's safety. It's time that the country wakes up to the harsh realities and takes a hard look at where we stand and acknowledge that we are failing our women. The outrage over the incident in Kolkata should serve as a wake-up call for the nation. We cannot afford to delay any longer. We need immediate action to fully implement Mission Shakti in a broader sense and the narrow minded approach of neglecting women must be a priority. In conclusion, addressing the root causes of depression and systemic failures is crucial to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of women in our country. The recent incident in Kolkata is a stark reminder that we cannot continue to ignore the harsh realities faced by women daily. It's time for collective action to fully implement initiatives like

Mission Shakti and move beyond narrow-minded neglect. Only by prioritizing women's safety and mental health can we hope to create a society where every woman is protected, respected, and empowered. The time for change is now.

K Subramaniam | Mumbai

REVIVAL OF VIVACITY

Madam — As an avid reader of The Pioneer, I am delighted to see that Vivacity is being published regularly for the past few months. I always enjoy reading Vivacity and Agenda, the reviews about art exhibitions, culture and movies being my personal favourites. Your past few features have been great, especially the Rakshbandhan one. Today, I read about the Heritage Walk and I will definitely visit Purana Qila now. The food review section is and has always been great!!!

Atharv Singh | Delhi

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

UKRAINE: INDIA'S DIPLOMATIC TIGHTROPE

PM Modi's historic Ukraine visit signals new foreign policy approach



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Ukraine, last week, comes at an interesting churn of events on the geopolitical landscape. The visit, a first, by any Indian PM since Ukraine was first carved out as an independent sovereign nation, had many layers of interpretations regarding India's new foreign policy approach. The timing was significant as this trip came barely six weeks after PM Modi's state visit to Moscow. The Russia trip was widely criticised by India's strategic ally US, primarily due to the timing. Even as PM Modi was in Moscow, the NATO leaders were huddled together in Washington, discussing military aid for Ukraine. Meanwhile, Russia bombed a children's hospital in Ukraine leading to the loss of lives for civilians and children. President Zelenskyy had condemned India's PM's first visit to Russia during his third term and the US State Department had also issued stern statements regarding the trip. Indian PM had also avoided participating in the Peace Summit organised in June, to find a political solution to the Russia-Ukraine crisis. The recent visit by PM Modi to Ukraine, even as Defence Minister Rajnath Singh was in Washington DC was a statement regarding India's fine balance diplomacy in times of war. President Biden, called up the Indian PM soon after his visit to Ukraine to apprise him of the prevailing situation. The readout released from the White House read "President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. spoke today with Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India to discuss the Prime Minister's recent trip to Poland and Ukraine, as well as the United Nations General Assembly meetings in September. The



President commended the Prime Minister for his historic visits to Poland and Ukraine, the first by an Indian Prime Minister in decades, and for his message of peace and ongoing humanitarian support for Ukraine, including its energy sector. The Leaders affirmed their continued support for a peaceful resolution of the conflict by international law, on the basis of the UN Charter." Interestingly, the Indian PM also spoke to President Biden regarding the ongoing crisis in Bangladesh and expressed concern regarding the safety of minorities, especially Hindus, which was highlighted in the Indian statement after the telephone conversation. The Bangladesh situation omission from the White House readout did create some murmurs across Delhi corridors. India is now making efforts to have its own Europe policy, which is not curated with a Russia factor in mind. For several decades post-independence, the Cold War era, the block approach mostly guided India's foreign policy, especially where Russia was involved. Russia has been a long-standing ally of India and is also one of the biggest exporters of defence equipment. While maintaining silence on sensitive Russia-related topics has been India's long-standing approach, things began to change in the past few years. There is a growing sense of having an independent need-based foreign policy, amongst the top policymakers. PM Modi initiated the concept of "not a time for war" at multilateral platforms such as G20, which started finding global resonance when vocalising concerns regarding Ukraine and Russia. He upped the narrative with his clear message to Russia during his Moscow visit that permanent solutions could not be found on the battlefield. The joint statement issued post PM Modi's meeting with President Zelenskyy read "The Indian side reiterated its principled position and focus on peaceful resolution through dialogue and diplomacy. Prime Minister Modi reiterated the need for sincere and practical engagement between all stakeholders to develop innovative solutions that will have broad acceptability and contribute towards early restoration of peace." The message to global leaders, particularly the US and Russia that the recent PM Modi visit highlighted was that India is willing to engage with any nation, even if they may be in opposite camps, to find the best possible outcomes for itself.

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

Prospects of privatisation of PSUs are bleak

As the Modi government shifts its strategy towards 'prudent public wealth management' the prospect of privatising PSBs are increasingly unlikely.



UTTAM GUPTA



Announcing Modi - government's policy on disinvestment of central public sector undertakings (CPSUs) in her Budget speech for FY 2021-22 the Union Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman had talked of privatizing two public sector banks (PSBs) and one insurance company. A CPSU is an undertaking in which the Central government has majority share holding of more than 50 percent. Disinvestment refers to sale of its shares to private investors. When, such sale results in reduction of the government's shareholding in the CPSU to below 50 percent and concomitant transfer of ownership and management control to private entity, this is termed as privatization. The disinvestment plans have met with disappointing results so far. During 2021-22, against a target of Rs 175,000 crore, the actual proceeds from share sale of CPSUs were a meager Rs 15,440 crore. During 2022-23, against a target of Rs 65,000 crore, the actual was Rs 31,059 crore. For 2023-24, the actual was Rs 14,564 crore against a target of Rs 30,000 crore which itself was watered down from the budget estimate (BE) of Rs 51,000 crore. As for privatization, except for the sale of Air India to the Tata Group during 2021-22, the government has little to show. Apart from offloading 3.5 percent of its shareholding in the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), it is selling its stake in the IDBI Bank. The process of selling the latter that started in May 2021 is likely to get consummated during the current FY. However, it can't be termed as privatization as already the bank was operating as a private lender even as the Centre became its passive shareholder consequent to capital infusions to manage former's bad debt losses. Currently, the government and the LIC collectively own 94.72 per cent of IDBI Bank with shareholding of 45.48 percent and 49.24 percent respectively (the remaining 5.28 percent is with Public shareholders). Of this, the Centre plans to sell a 60.7 percent stake, comprising 30.5 per cent of its own and 30.2 percent of LIC's. Will the Centre take up selling of PSBs and an insurance company - as promised in the 2021-22 budget? It seems unlikely. If, that were to be the case,



AS FOR PRIVATISATION, EXCEPT FOR THE SALE OF AIR INDIA TO THE TATA GROUP DURING 2021-22, THE GOVERNMENT HAS LITTLE TO SHOW. APART FROM OFFLOADING 3.5 PERCENT OF ITS SHAREHOLDING IN THE LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION (LIC), IT IS SELLING ITS STAKE IN THE IDBI BANK.

the government ought to have set a target for 'receipts from disinvestment' in its budget for 2024-25. But, it hasn't even as the FM has made a provision for Rs 50,000 crore under the head "miscellaneous capital receipts". This has happened for the first time in a decade. Second, Team Modi is reviewing its strategy to shift its focus from selling CPSUs to what it euphemistically describes as 'prudent public wealth management (PWM)', supporting not-for-profit enterprises, and ensuring strong presence of state-run firms in strategic sectors'. Banking, insurance and financial services (BIFS) were one of the four strategic sectors mentioned by Nirmala Sitharaman in her budget speech for 2021-22. BIFS also qualifies for not-for-profit enterprises categorization especially when it comes to PSBs which are expected to contribute to realizing social objectives such as reaching out banking services to remote and inaccessible areas; making concessional credit available to small and marginal farmers and other vulnerable/deprived sections of the society; funding infrastructure development particularly in areas (for instance, rural roads, housing for the poor etc) where private banks may not be so keen to come. Modi - government's commitment to a strong presence of state-run firms in strategic sectors juxtaposed with support for not-for-profit enterprises clearly signals that it has lost interest in privatizing PSBs and insurance companies. Third, unlike the previous two terms when BJP had an absolute majority in the Lok Sabha on its own, in the third term, it depends on the support from its major allies namely TDP and JD (U) for implementing far reaching decisions such as privatization. Moreover, in the current political environment wherein even a small move such as 'lateral entry' of specialists from the private sector (the sole intent

behind this step was to deliver more effective governance in sync with contemporary challenges) is opposed by the opposition parties forcing the government to retreat, it wouldn't be inclined to make a big move such as privatization of PSBs. About a decade back, many of PSBs were on the brink. The present dispensation has made a lot of efforts to them pull back. These included amongst others capital infusion, enactment of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) for expeditious resolution of non-performing assets (NPAs), banks consolidation into fewer entities for achieving scale and greater efficiencies, computerization of bank branches and so on. Today, they are robust and healthy even as the performance of some of them is even better than private banks. But, we shouldn't miss the big picture. Fundamentally, most of the ills associated with the functioning of CPSUs including PSBs have a lot to do with their continued majority ownership (share holding of more than 50 percent) and control by the government. This brings them under a plethora of controls and monitoring/surveillance/vigilance and has the effect of shackling its management. Armed with it, the political establishment makes all board level appointments viz. CMD/MD etc and deposes bureaucrats on a bank's board to represent its overwhelming ownership. In other words, the entire board is geared to listen to his master's voice (read the political bosses) when it comes to taking policy decisions or even in its day-to-day running. In the past, meddling in the affairs of PSBs took the form of what came to be known as the cult of 'crony capitalism'. The businessmen patronized by the ruling class managed loans on considerations other than merit and got them ever-greened (taking

a new loan to payback the earlier one). Neither, the banks insisted on repayment, nor the defaulters had any sense of fear as those who were expected to take action, chose not to. In the past, the political brass also rode piggy back on PSBs for absorbing losses/liabilities created by populist policies such as supplying power to farmers and households at subsidized rates, (or even free in some states). Be it a spate of bail-outs given to power distribution companies (discoms) or loan waivers given to farmers etc, these inflicted heavy loss on PSBs. The idea of disinvesting PSBs should be seen as a befitting response to the dire need for reducing bureaucratic interference and granting autonomy to their management for speedy decisions and improved functioning. It was first mooted by the NDA - dispensation under the then, prime minister Vajpayee (1999-2004). It had proposed reduction in government's shareholding in PSBs to less than 50 percent initially and eventually to 33 percent. In 2015, a RBI committee headed by P Nayak recommended setting up of a bank investment company (BIC) where all government shares in PSBs will be vested and divestment of its shareholding in all PSBs to below 50 percent. It also proposed setting up of an autonomous Bank Boards Bureau (BBB) to select their top management. In 2020, the RBI recommended reduction in the shareholding of the government in six top PSBs to 51 percent. In a follow up meeting, it went a step further to recommend reduction in government's stake to 26 percent. The 2021-22 budget announcement to privatize two PSBs was a good step forward, though belated. To put it on the backburner now doesn't bode well for banks' health in the long-term. (The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

Global interference and India's economic sovereignty

As India rises to become a global superpower, it faces challenges not only from within but also from international entities that aim to disrupt its economic and political stability

The prosperity and progress of a nation hinge on the efficiency of its governance, particularly in upholding the rule of law by those in top constitutional, administrative, and judicial positions. This also involves the transparency and accountability of regulatory regimes across various sectors of law and economy. In our modern era, characterized by freedom, equality, and democracy, many developing countries have emerged from the shadows of colonialism. Despite independence, the remnants of colonialism persist in governance and social structures, and former colonial powers often carry a lingering sense of superiority. This is evident in their interventions in other countries, where they create



V K BAHUGUNA

political and economic crises under the guise of promoting cosmopolitan values. These interventions are particularly harmful to independent and dynamic leaders in Third World countries. A recent example is the destabilization of the Hasina Wazed government in Bangladesh, fueled by agitation with foreign backing. In recent years, such external forces have formed an international cartel, often

referred to as the "deep state." This group, supported by a segment of religious extremists and a political elite, acts against their own country's interests for selfish reasons. This insidious influence is spreading to stable democracies like India. Direct military intervention is difficult in modern times, so these forces resort to destabilizing social, political, and economic fabrics with the help of internal collaborators. They present themselves as the arbiters of morality, creating narratives to discredit certain groups, undermine social harmony, and ultimately destabilize economies. Their goal is to generate public unrest and overthrow democratically elected governments by eroding the state's capacity to man-

age public welfare. This is a fallout of globalization and an attempt to reassert hegemonic control. One prominent example is the Hindenburg Research firm, which targeted Adani Enterprises last year, leading to a severe crash in the Indian stock market and a major political storm just before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The Congress party seized the opportunity, and the Supreme Court ordered an inquiry, which eventually discredited Hindenburg's report. However, this month, Hindenburg targeted the SEBI Chairperson, accusing her of investing in Adani companies abroad. Both SEBI and Adani Group denied any wrongdoing, explaining that the investments were made before she took on her



role at SEBI. Similar uproar was seen when the Rafale aircraft deal was signed in 2015. When Hindenburg first targeted Adani, it made a profit of \$4 million, while Adani lost \$153 million in market value. However, this time, the public saw through the ruse, dismissing it as the tantrum of a disgruntled entity. It is common for companies to

establish subsidiaries abroad, and such activities are always under regulatory surveillance, operating within the law. Historically, India lacked a robust private sector, with Tata being the only notable corporate entity during the era of the "license raj." However, thanks to economic liberalization under the Narsimha Rao government, the private sector has grown significantly and now contributes around 27% of the country's GDP. The Indian private sector is now a crucial engine for employment, service delivery, capital flow, and industrial growth. The public sector, on the other hand, focuses on activities serving the general public, funded by tax revenues. Gautam Adani's conglomerate plays a central role in India's ambition to

become the third-largest economy, with its involvement in key sectors like electricity, port management, mining, natural gas, and infrastructure. Among the top taxpayers in 2022-2023, only the State Bank of India (SBI) was a public sector entity, with Reliance Industries leading the list, followed by SBI and HDFC. The GDP at constant prices in May 2024 was tentatively estimated by the Indian Statistical Office at Rs173.82 lakh crore, with real Gross Value Added at Rs158.74 lakh crore for 2023-24, marking an 8% increase over the previous year. Various private sector industries played a pivotal role in this growth. Adani Group dominated the list of top value gainers in 2022, adding Rs 8.42 lakh crore to investor wealth.

When any country challenges the supremacy of these foreign powers, they attempt to destroy it by spending vast sums of money. The 'Make in India' initiative is gradually positioning Adani as a global industrial leader, alongside other Indian giants like Ambani, Tata, and Mahindra. India's technological advancements and the societal contributions of companies like Tata are gaining recognition. This is precisely why foreign forces forge alliances with frustrated leaders and international elements, funding them to gain control over governance. The current government must take stronger actions rather than merely offering rhetoric. (The writer is a former civil servant; views are personal)

Israel kills prominent militant

AP ■ TULKAREM

The Israeli military said it killed five more militants, including a local commander, early Thursday in the West Bank as it pressed ahead with what appeared to be the deadliest military operation in the occupied territory since the start of the war in Gaza.

four other militants in a shootout with Israeli forces after the five had hidden inside a mosque. It said Abu Shuja was linked to numerous attacks on Israelis, including a deadly shooting in June, and was planning more. The military said another militant was arrested in the operation in Tulkarem, and that a member of Israel's paramilitary Border Police was lightly wounded.

killed, and the territory saw a surge of settler violence. Israel says the operations are required to prevent attacks on its citizens, which have also risen since the start of the war. Israel captured the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem in the 1967 Mideast war, and the Palestinians want all three territories for their future state.

the Western-backed Palestinian Authority, which cooperate with Israel, to "join the sacred battle of our people". Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has also condemned the Israeli raids, but his forces were not expected to get involved.

EU urged to rethink ties with Israel over Gaza

AP ■ BRUSSELS

The European Union must rethink its relations with Israel as the death toll mounts in Gaza and the West Bank and impose sanctions on some Israeli government ministers accused of fomenting racial hatred, Ireland and the bloc's top diplomat said on Thursday.

West Bank since Hamas' October 7 attack inside southern Israel ignited the war there. Israel launched a large-scale operation in the West Bank this week, in which Hamas said 10 of its fighters were killed in different locations.

Austria, Germany and Hungary are staunch backers of Israel, while Ireland and Spain are more vocal in their support for the Palestinians. Nonetheless, the bloc does have credibility as a European project founded on peace.

HK court convicts two journalists in landmark sedition case

Hong Kong (AP): A Hong Kong court convicted two former editors of a shuttered news outlet on Thursday, in a sedition case widely seen as a barometer for the future of media freedoms in the city once hailed as a bastion of free press in Asia.

Iran gas leak kills 2, hurts 10

AP ■ DUBAI

A gas leak caused the death of two people and injured 10 others at an Iranian Revolutionary Guard centre, Iranian state television reported Thursday. The leak occurred on Wednesday night at a workshop belonging to the Guard in Isfahan province, and the injured people were transferred to a hospital for treatment, it said.

the paramilitary force's missile programme. Initially, authorities described the blast as an accident, though a former prisoner later said the Guard interrogated him on suspicion that Israel caused the explosion.

and-missile assault on Israel. In January 2023, bomb-carrying drones struck a defense factory in the central city of Isfahan, while in April 2023, the country's air defence systems shot down a drone strike on an Isfahan defence factory.

Top Chinese general tells US to stop colluding with Taiwan in meeting with security adviser

AP ■ BEIJING

A top Chinese military officer, in a rare meeting with a visiting American official, demanded Thursday that the United States stop "collusion" with Taiwan, the self-governing island that China says must come under its rule.

spiralling into conflict. Both governments are eager to keep relations on an even keel ahead of a change in the US presidency in January. "Your request to meet with me shows the value you attach to military security and the relationship between our militaries," Zhang said in brief opening remarks.

trip, a day and a half of meetings with Wang Yi, the foreign minister and the ruling Communist Party's top foreign policy official. The US doesn't recognise Taiwan as an independent country but it is its main supplier of arms for its defence. China and Taiwan split in 1949 at the end of a civil war that brought the communists to power in China.

communications over the past ten months" and noted an agreement announced the previous day to hold a telephone call between commanders at the theatre-level in the near future. On Taiwan, the US statement said only that Sullivan had raised the importance of cross-strait peace and stability.

Harris, Walz will sit down for first major TV interview

AP ■ SAVANNA

Vice President Kamala Harris and her running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, will sit down Thursday for their first major television interview of their presidential campaign as the duo travels in southeast Georgia on a bus tour.



Harris, Trump and Mike Pence, Barack Obama and Biden — all did them at a similar point in the race. The difference is those other candidates had all done solo interviews, too.

Trump and Biden of whom voters had near-universal awareness and opinion. The CNN interview, airing at 9 pm EDT Thursday, takes place during her two-day bus tour through southeast Georgia.

make inroads in GOP strongholds across the state. Harris, during her time as vice president, has done on-camera and print interviews with The Associated Press and many other outlets, a much more frequent pace than the president

become the leader of the free world and ask people to make her president of the United States when she can't even sit down (for) an interview," she said on "Fox & Friends."

UK's Starmer confirms that his govt mulling crackdown on smoking

AP ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer confirmed on Thursday that his government is looking at introducing tougher anti-smoking measures, which could potentially see a ban on smoking in outdoor spaces, including at pubs and restaurants.

from the NHS. My starting point on this is to remind everybody that over 80,000 people lose their lives every year because of smoking," Starmer said in Paris while visiting French President Emmanuel Macron.

will be raised by one year, every year until it is eventually illegal for the whole population. The number of people who smoke in the UK has declined by two-thirds since the 1970s, but some 6.4 million people in the country — or about 13 per cent of the population — still smoke, according to official figures.

Suspects in foiled plot to attack Taylor Swift shows aimed to kill 'thousands'

AP ■ BERLIN

The suspects in the foiled plot to attack Taylor Swift concerts in Vienna earlier this month sought to kill "tens of thousands" of fans before the CIA discovered intelligence that disrupted the planning and led to arrests, the agency's deputy director said.



week in Maryland. "They were plotting to kill a huge number — tens of thousands of people at this concert, including I am sure many Americans — and were quite advanced in this," Cohen said on Wednesday.

community provided them information about what this ISIS-connected group was planning to do." Austrian officials said the main suspect, a 19-year-old Austrian man, was inspired by the Islamic State group. He allegedly planned to attack outside the stadium, where upwards of 30,000 fans were expected to gather, with knives or homemade explosives.

her silence about the cancellations last week after her London shows had concluded. "Having our Vienna shows cancelled was devastating," she wrote in a statement posted to Instagram. "The reason for the cancellations filled me with a new sense of fear, and a tremendous amount of guilt because so many people had planned on coming to those shows."

Denmark has record 25 govt mins after major reshuffle

AP ■ COPENHAGEN

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen on Thursday appointed six new ministers in a major reshuffle of her three-party centrist government, bringing the number of ministers to 25 — the largest ever in 30 years.

now has two other new ministries, bringing the total to 25, the largest since the 1993-1994 Cabinet of Social Democratic Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen who had 24 ministers.

job was given to Caroline Stage Olsen, who became the digitalisation minister. The gender equality portfolio was handed over to Environment Minister Magnus Heunicke.

Brazil's top court threatens to suspend X operations

Rio de Janeiro (AP): A Brazilian Supreme Court justice has threatened to shut down the local operations of X, formerly Twitter, unless its billionaire owner Elon Musk names an in-country legal representative within 24 hours.

Sensex, Nifty scale all-time high levels

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty hit their all-time high levels on Thursday, driven by a rally in index majors Reliance Industries and Tata Motors. The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 349.05 points or 0.43 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 82,134.61, extending its winning momentum to the eighth day in a row. During the day, it soared 500.27 points or 0.61 per cent to hit a lifetime intra-day peak of 82,285.83.

Rallying for the 11th straight session, the NSE Nifty surged 99.60 points or 0.40 per cent to settle at a new closing high of 25,151.95. During the trade, the benchmark climbed 140.55 points or 0.56 per cent to hit a fresh record intra-day peak of 25,192.90. Among the 30 Sensex firms, Tata Motors jumped over 4 per cent, followed by Bajaj



Finserv, Bajaj Finance, HCL Technologies, ITC, Reliance Industries, Tech Mahindra, Maruti and State Bank of India. Reliance Industries climbed nearly 2 per cent after Mukesh Ambani, chairman and managing director of the firm, said the board of the company will meet on September 5 to consider

issuing bonus shares in the ratio of 1:1. "When Reliance grows, we reward our shareholders handsomely," Ambani said. Mahindra & Mahindra, Sun Pharma, JSW Steel, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Infosys and Tata Steel were among the biggest laggards. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Shanghai settled

in the negative territory, while Hong Kong ended higher. European markets were trading in the positive zone. The US markets ended lower on Wednesday. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,347.53 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data. Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.60 per cent to USD 78.27 a barrel. Rising for the tenth straight session on Wednesday, the NSE Nifty went up by 34.60 points or 0.14 per cent to settle at a new closing high of 25,052.35. The benchmark surged 111.85 points or 0.44 per cent to hit a fresh intra-day all-time peak of 25,129.60. Extending its winning run to the seventh day in a row, the BSE benchmark climbed 73.80 points or 0.09 per cent to settle at 81,785.56.

SEBI proposes mandatory UPI block mechanism facility for secondary marketing trading

Capital markets regulator Sebi has proposed mandating Qualified Stock Brokers (QSBs) to offer the facility of trading in the secondary market using the UPI-based block mechanism to their clients, similar to the ASBA facility. In the UPI block mechanism, clients can trade in the secondary market based on blocked funds in their bank accounts, instead of transferring the funds upfront to the trading member. The facility is currently optional for investors, and not mandatory for Trading Members (TMs). Application Supported by Blocked Amount (ASBA)-like facility already available for the primary market which ensures that money from an investor gets moved only when an allotment happens. In its consultation paper on Wednesday, Sebi has suggested that QSBs must provide the facility of trading using the UPI block mechanism in the cash



segment for their clients — individuals and HUFs — with an appropriate glide path for implementation. Also, it has been suggested that QSBs can offer a "3-in-1 trading account facility" as an alternative to making the ASBA-like facility mandatory. In the case of 3-in-1 trading accounts, the clients would have their funds in their bank account, earning interest on the cash balances. In addition, the 3-in-1 facility would be available for cash as well as derivatives segment, without any amount restrictions, while

proposals. Trading Members are classified as Qualified Stock Brokers (QSBs) based on factors such as the size and scale of their operations, including the number of active clients, the total assets held by clients with the TM, the end-of-day margin of all clients, and the trading volume of the TM. Being designated as a QSB, brings with it enhanced responsibilities and obligations. Further, QSBs are also subjected to enhanced monitoring by Market Infrastructure Institutions. The regulator had introduced the use of RBI-approved Unified Payments Interface (UPI) with the facility of blocking of funds, as a payment mechanism for retail investor applications submitted through intermediaries for public issues such as IPO from January 2019. The Beta version of trading through block mechanism for secondary markets was launched on January 1, 2024, for individuals and HUFs, and was made applicable only to the cash segment.

India plans reparability index for mobile, electronics to tackle e-waste

India is planning a reparability index for mobile phones and electronic products to address the growing e-waste problem and encourage manufacturers to produce more easily repairable items, officials said on Thursday. The Consumer Affairs Ministry is spearheading the initiative, which will provide a score on key parameters to inform consumers about the ease with which a product can be repaired, the officials said at a national workshop on the issue. Addressing the workshop, Consumer Affairs Secretary Nidhi Khare said: "As India emerges as the third largest economy in the world, we should have a vibrant and tech-savvy repair system." She also added, "India can become a repair hub for the world." The proposed index will be



similar to initiatives in other countries, such as France's reparability index. It will rate products on criteria including availability of technical documents, ease of disassembly, spare parts availability and pricing. The workshop was aimed at establishing a consensus among industry stakeholders on "key parameters for accessing and evaluating reparability index" besides promoting longevity in product design, and democratizing repair information to enhance consumer experiences in reusing the mobile and

electronics products they own. Additional Secretary Bharat Khara emphasized the need for transparent and affordable repair solutions, increased consumer awareness, and support for local repairs. Joint Secretary Anupam Mishra highlighted concerns about the lack of genuine spare parts in local markets, compatibility issues with product components, and the absence of information for consumers to repair their own devices. He also mentioned that the Reparability Index of France rates products on five criteria, while the EU has additional parameters. HCL Technologies Founder Ajai Chowdhry called for legislation to drive change. "Today, most products are not repairable. We need to design products which can be repaired... Unless we create a law, things will not change," he said.

Infosys, NVIDIA expand partnership to develop GenAI-powered solutions

Infosys on Thursday said it has expanded its partnership with American chipmaker NVIDIA to develop GenAI-powered solutions for telecom operators. The IT major has developed three generative AI solutions powered by its AI-offering Topaz, which make use of NVIDIA NIM inference microservices, NVIDIA NeMo Retriever embedding models, and NeMo Guardrails to customise and deploy generative AI telco domain-specific large-language models. It has also used NVIDIA Riva to allow real-time transcription and translations for call centre agents, according to a regulatory filing.

"Telcos are increasingly adopting generative AI solutions to improve the productivity of their businesses with smarter networks, more efficient operations, and enhanced customer service. Leveraging NVIDIA's full-stack accelerated computing and AI platform, Infosys Topaz is delivering a suite of domain-specific solutions that will help telcos accelerate and streamline their adoption of generative AI," Ronnie Vasishtha, Senior Vice President of Telecom at NVIDIA, said. These generative-AI solutions have resulted in up to 61 per cent lower latency and 22 per cent absolute improvement in accuracy, the filing said. Shares of Infosys settled 0.35 per cent lower at Rs 1,932.40 apiece on the BSE.

Rupee rises 10 paise to close at 83.87 against US dollar

The rupee appreciated 10 paise to close at 83.87 (provisional) against the American currency on Thursday, supported by easing crude oil prices and a firm trend in domestic equities. Forex traders said the market is awaiting cues from the US GDP and the US Personal Consumption Expenditure (PCE) inflation data, as this data point is crucial since it could sway the Federal Reserve's decision on whether to implement a 25 or 50 basis point rate cut at its September meeting. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.92 and touched an intra-day high of 83.84 against the US dollar. The domestic currency finally settled at 83.87 (provisional), 10 paise higher from its previous close. On Wednesday, the rupee



depreciated 4 paise to close at 83.97 against the American currency. According to Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst, Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, the rupee gained 10 paise, as expectations of interest rate cuts continue to provide support, preventing the rupee from falling below 84.00. "The strong demand around 84.00 keeps the rupee buoyant, with resistance seen at 83.75. The rupee is expected to trade in a positive

range between 84.00 - 83.70," Trivedi said. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.11 per cent higher at 101.20. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, declined 0.34 per cent to USD 78.38 per barrel. On the domestic equity market front, Sensex rose 349.05 points, or 0.43 per cent, to close at 82,134.61 points. The Nifty closed 99.60 points, or 0.4 per cent, up at 25,151.95 points. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Wednesday, as they offloaded shares worth Rs 1,347.53 crore, according to exchange data.

Final guidelines on project loans likely in 2-3 months: RBI official

The final project loan guidelines are likely to be announced in the next two to three months, a senior RBI official said on Thursday. The norms regarding the Expected Credit Loss (ECL)-based provisioning are in an advanced stage of discussion, the official told reporters here. The Reserve Bank of India has proposed to set aside 5 per cent of the total exposure to a project till the construction of the project is on. Fearing a hit to profits, banks have been asking for a relook into it, as per reports. The RBI official said up to 60 responses have been received on the project loans draft, and the central bank is going



through all the suggestions. When asked about the timelines by when the final guidelines will come in, the official said it will take "at least 2-3 months", but did not give a specific answer on whether the guidelines will be implemented from April 1 next year onwards. To a question on the ECL framework, the official said the norms are in the "advance stages" of discussion. The official admitted that there is an "overlap" on both the ECL and project finance norms, but seemed non-

committal on whether both the guidelines will come in together. These are two concurrent streams running together, the official said, assuring that the intent of the RBI is to be non-disruptive and take into account all the impact of the guidelines before finalising. Meanwhile, on reports of higher delinquencies in microloans, the official said there is no systemic risk and entry-specific concerns are discussed bilaterally as part of the supervisory framework. If some regulatory interventions are required, they are also initiated, the official said, citing the November 2023 regulations on hiking risk weights on unsecured lending. There is "nothing on the table" right now on the MFI

sector, the official added. If any action is taken, it will be for the entire sector and not entity-specific, the official clarified. Speaking at the annual GFF here, RBI's chief general manager Vaibhav Chaturvedi asked financiers to be more "responsible" while engaging in their core lending activities and the industry to take steps towards this aim. The offerings need to be transparent and the regulated entities' dealings need to be fair, he underlined. At the same conference, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research professor Ashima Goyal said the credit deposit ratios in India are much lower than in other countries and the government borrows a lot of resources.

Green hydrogen firm Ohmium bags financial aid for 137-MW capacity under SIGHT scheme

Green hydrogen firm Ohmium on Thursday said it has secured financial assistance for setting up a 137-MW electrolyzer manufacturing capacity under the SIGHT scheme. Electrolyzer is a device that uses electricity to split water into hydrogen and oxygen through a chemical process called electrolysis. Ohmium International (Ohmium) has been selected for the second time as a SIGHT Incentive Program award winner by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), a company statement said. "Our selection for this award demonstrates both Ohmium team's commitment to excellence as well as to decarbonization in India and across the globe," said Arne



Ballantine, Ohmium CEO in the statement. This award is a continuation of Ohmium's success in Tranche I of the SIGHT program. The tenders, implemented by the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) are intended to incentivize 1.5 GW of domestic electrolyzer manufacturing capacity in support of India's sustainability goals. "India has ambitious green hydrogen goals, and this program supports India's

evolution as a global Energy hub. These funds will accelerate the expansion of Ohmium's Gigafactory in Bangalore as well as support future local manufacturing facilities", noted Ballantine. Ohmium is the PEM electrolyzer leader in India, with partnerships with industry leaders such as NTPC and Tata Projects. The company has an active green hydrogen project pipeline of over 2 GW across four continents, serving a diverse range of customers across energy, transportation, steel production, and heavy industry. Headquartered in the United States with manufacturing facilities in India and operations worldwide, Ohmium has a global green hydrogen project pipeline exceeding 2 GW across three continents.

Fitch retains India rating at BBB with stable outlook

Global rating agency Fitch on Thursday affirmed India's sovereign rating at 'BBB-' with a stable outlook. India's rating has remained unchanged at 'BBB-', the lowest investment grade, since August 2006. "Fitch Ratings has affirmed India's Long-Term Foreign-Currency Issuer Default Rating (IDR) at 'BBB-' with a Stable Outlook," the global rating agency said in a statement. India's ratings are underpinned by its strong medium-term growth outlook, which will continue to drive improvement in structural aspects of its credit profile, including India's share of GDP in the global economy, as well as its solid external finance position, it said in a statement. Strengthening fiscal credibility from recent achievement of deficit targets, enhanced transparency and buoyant revenues, have increased the likelihood that government debt can follow a modest downward trend in the medium term, it said. Nevertheless, it said, fiscal metrics remain a credit weakness, with deficits, debt and debt service burden all high compared to 'BBB' range peers. Lagging structural metrics, including governance indicators and GDP per capita, also weigh on the rating, it added. Observing that India is set to remain among the fastest-growing sovereigns globally, it said, "we forecast GDP growth of 7.2 per cent in the fiscal year ending March 2025 (FY25) and 6.5 per cent in FY26, down slightly from 8.2 per cent in FY24."

Gold slips ₹100; silver plunges ₹600

Gold prices slipped Rs 100 to Rs 74,250 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal had ended at Rs 74,350 per 10 grams in the previous trade. Silver prices also plunged by Rs 600 to Rs 87,200 per kilogram, extending the losses in the second straight session on Thursday from the previous close of Rs 87,800 per kg. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also declined Rs 100 to Rs 73,900 per 10 grams



on Thursday. It had settled at Rs 74,000 per 10 grams in the previous trade. Traders attributed fall in the gold prices due to reduced demand by jewellers in the local markets. On the global front, comex gold is trading at USD 2,555.10 per ounce, higher by USD 17.30 per ounce or 0.68 per cent.

Tyre exports from India rise 17 per cent in Q1: ATMA

Tyre exports from India grew 17 per cent year-on-year to reach Rs 6,219 crore in the first quarter of the current fiscal with the US emerging as the biggest market, industry body Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association (ATMA) said on Thursday. Tyre exports from India recouped in the first quarter of FY25, increasing by 17 per cent YoY. Tyre exports had declined by 14 per cent in the corresponding quarter in the previous year, ATMA said citing data just released by the Ministry of Commerce. Sustained focus on R&D and



development of advanced technology products aided by competitive pricing and branding efforts helped Indian tyre manufacturers drive growth in exports despite a challenging environment, ATMA Chairman Arnab Banerjee said in a statement. "Improving demand prospects in key export destinations and expected monetary easing also helped growth," Banerjee

added. The rise in exports is a testament to the Indian tyre industry's enhanced integration with global supply chains, he added. "The globally aligned regulatory environment in the country for manufacturing of tyres also augurs well for increasing the addressable market for Indian manufactured tyres," Banerjee said. During Q1FY25, the US was the largest export destination for Indian manufactured tyres accounting for 17 per cent share. Other large export destinations included Brazil, Germany, France and Italy, the statement said.

LIC hands over ₹3,662 cr dividend cheque to Govt

State-owned Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) on Thursday handed over a dividend cheque of Rs 3,662.17 crore to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The cheque was presented by Siddhartha Mohanty, Chief Executive Officer & Managing Director of LIC to the finance minister in the presence of M P Tangirala, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Finance. LIC also paid an interim dividend of Rs 2,441.45 crore on March 1, 2024, thus



totaling Rs 6,103.62 crore dividend paid to the Centre for the year 2023-24. LIC, which completed 68 years since its incorporation, has an asset base of over Rs 52.85 lakh crore.

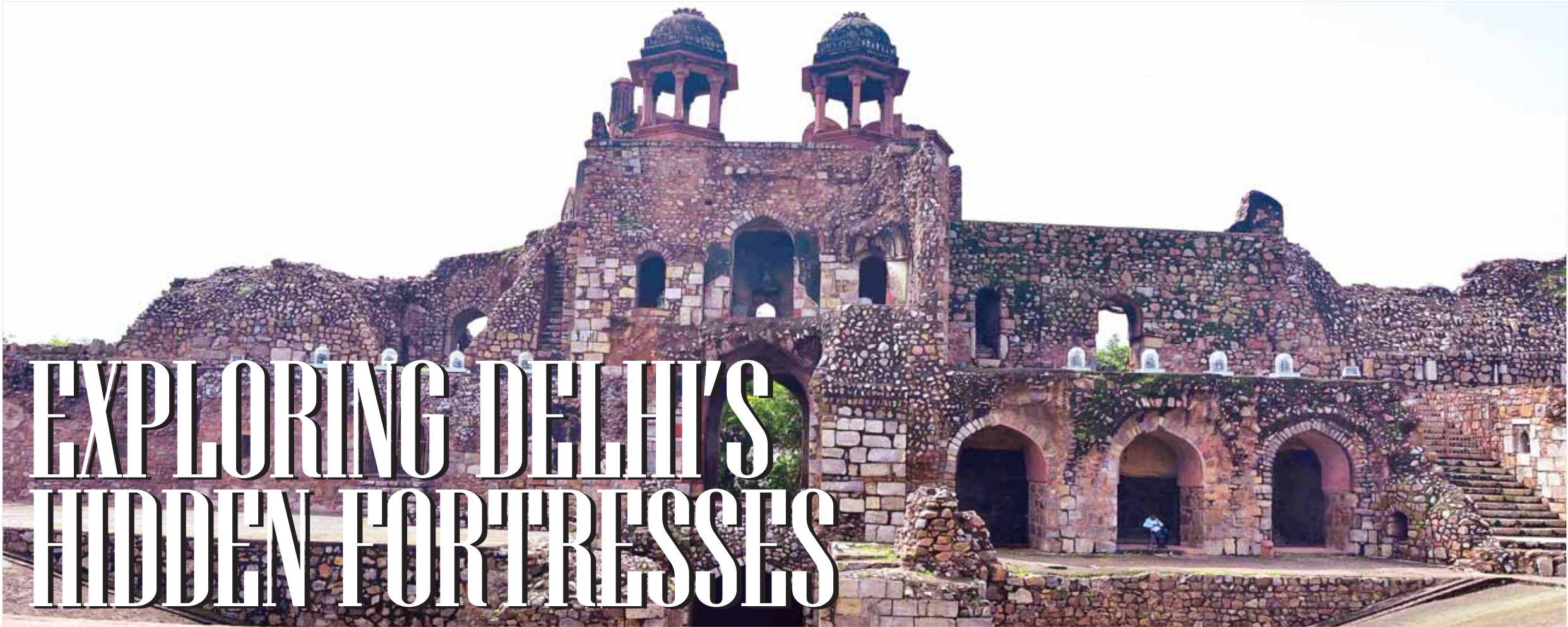


Photo: Pankaj Kumar

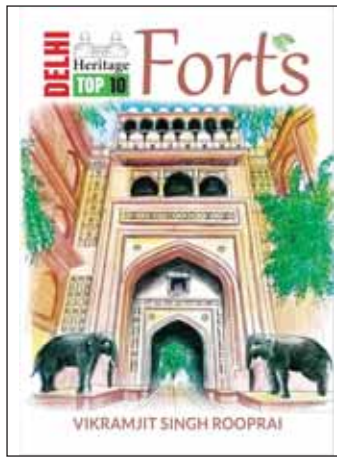
EXPLORING DELHI'S HIDDEN FORTRESSES

Discover the rich history and architecture of Delhi's forts in *Delhi Heritage: Top 10 Forts* by Vikramjit Singh Rooprai, offering an engaging and insightful exploration of the city's past, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

Delhi Heritage: Top 10 Forts by Vikramjit Singh Rooprai is an engaging journey of ten prominent forts in Delhi. As part of the Delhi Heritage series, this book dives deep into the architectural and historical significance of these forts, offering readers a comprehensive view of Delhi's rich past. Rooprai, a dedicated heritage activist and educator has put together a guide that blends historical facts with intriguing stories, making it accessible to both history enthusiasts and casual readers. One of the highlights of the book is how it sheds light on not just the famous forts like the Red Fort and Purana Qila, but also on the lesser-known ones, such as Qila-i-Rai Pithora and Nai ka Kot. Rooprai takes readers on a journey through

the history of these forts, detailing their construction, purpose and the events they have witnessed over centuries. The book stands out because it goes beyond the typical tourist information, offering a more detailed look at how these forts fit into the broader historical and cultural context of Delhi. The book opens with a vivid portrayal of the Red Fort, a symbol of Mughal grandeur. Rooprai captures the momentous day of 18 May 1648, when Emperor Shahjahan inaugurated this architectural marvel. The description of Shahjahan's grand entry, with Prince Dara Shikoh showering him with coins, sets the tone for the book's rich narrative style. The Red Fort's formidable outer walls, crowned with ornate chhatris and punctuated by five

principal gates, are brought to life through Rooprai's evocative prose. Following the Red Fort, Rooprai delves into the history of Purana Qila, a site steeped in both myth and historical significance. The fort is traditionally believed to be built on the grounds of Indraprastha, the legendary capital of the Pandavas. Rooprai skillfully interweaves folklore with historical facts, recounting legends such as Lord Krishna's demand for Khandavprastha. The Bada Darwaza (large gate) of Purana Qila stands as an attestation to its historical importance and Rooprai's detailed descriptions make it clear why it has been a must-visit site since the British era. Tughlaqabad Fort, the largest surviving fort in Delhi, takes centre stage next. Commissioned by Sultan



Ghiasuddin Tughlaq between 1321-1323 CE, the fort's imposing ruins and its strategic significance during the Tughlaq dynasty are examined. Rooprai brings to light the fort's intriguing lore, including the

reputed curse by Sufi mystic Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya that condemned it to remain abandoned. The fort's role in defending Delhi from Mongol invasions underscores its military importance, a facet Rooprai explores with both depth and clarity. The book also highlights the contributions of Feroz Shah Tughlaq, whose focus on public works and irrigation earned him the title 'Father of the Indian Irrigation System'. Rooprai describes Feroz Shah's efforts to improve the lives of his subjects and his legacy of equality and prosperity. This section provides insight into the ruler's priorities and the architectural innovations that characterised his reign. Salimgarh, another significant fort, is

introduced as a strategic outpost built by Islam Shah Suri, son of Sher Shah Suri. Rooprai's account of Salimgarh's strategic location on a riverine island near the Yamuna and its role in defending Delhi adds a layer of understanding to the city's fortification network. Rooprai's narrative is enriched by his ability to convey the fort's historical and cultural significance. His engaging writing style and meticulous research offer readers a window into the past, highlighting how these structures reflect the evolving history of Delhi. The book is peppered with narrative and detailed descriptions that humanise the history of these fortresses, making their stories accessible and compelling. *Delhi Heritage: Top 10 Forts* by Vikramjit Singh Rooprai is more

than just a guide, it's a celebration of Delhi's rich historical and architectural heritage. Rooprai's engaging narrative brings these majestic structures to life, making it an invaluable resource for both history enthusiasts and those curious about Delhi's cultural legacy. Through its insightful and meticulously researched content, the book highlights the importance of preserving our historical landmarks and provides a compelling journey into the depths of Delhi's heritage.

BOOK DETAILS:
Book Name & Author: Delhi Heritage: Top 10 Forts by Vikramjit Singh Rooprai
Price: INR 499
Pages: 214
Publisher: Niyogi Books

NEW ARRIVAL
The Battle of Haji Pir: The Indian Army's Cross-Border Surgical Strike

The Battle of Haji Pir by Kulpreet Yadav offers a profound exploration of the 1965 Indo-Pak war, focusing on the pivotal yet often overlooked Haji Pir battle, which was surrendered under the Tashkent Agreement. Yadav's book brings to life the valor and sacrifices of Indian soldiers, making the complexities of military history accessible to all readers. Yadav's detailed account highlights the strategic maneuvers of the Indian Army during Operation Gibraltar and their critical role in defending Kashmir. The book also delves into the behind-the-scenes diplomacy and concessions made for peace, providing an insider's perspective on the conflict. With over 15 books to his name, Kulpreet Yadav combines thorough research with engaging storytelling, making 'The Battle of Haji Pir' a compelling read for military enthusiasts and history buffs. Available this September in major bookstores and online platforms.

Human at Work by Richard Lobo

In 'Human at Work,' Richard Lobo, Chief People Officer at Tech Mahindra, delves into the evolving workplace, emphasising the importance of keeping humans at the center of technological shifts. The book explores themes like agile leadership, ethical decision-making, and human-centric technology, offering practical insights and real-world examples. Lobo underscores that every company today, regardless of industry, is fundamentally a tech company, driven by human expertise and strategy. 'Human at Work' highlights the power of micro-transformations to spark significant change, making it a valuable read for HR professionals, managers and anyone navigating today's complex work landscape. Lobo's approach is particularly relevant to the Indian market, with timely discussions on hybrid work models and managing technological disruptions. Available this September in major bookstores and online, this book serves as a roadmap for leading with a human-first mindset in an increasingly digital world.

Genetic Study Refutes Eelam Tamil Origins

A new genetic study reveals that Sri Lanka's Tamil and Sinhala populations are genetically similar, challenging claims of distinct Eelam Tamil origins and questioning the basis for separatist movements

BY KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

An international team of scientists, drawn mainly from Sri Lanka and India, have demolished the concept of Eelam Tamils in the island nation through a comprehensive genetic study. A three-year long molecular biology research spanning across Sri Lanka and India have established that the population in the island nation is homogeneous in nature and there is no scientific basis for the claims by the Tamils that they had their origin in that country. The findings prove that the demand for a separate Eelam (country) for Tamils is bunkum and thousands of Tamils and Sinhalese massacred in the war for Eelam died for a non-existent cause. "The Sri Lankan population, mainly the Sinhala and Tamils, have massive genetic mixing. If the Tamils had their origin in Sri Lanka, their DNA should be visible and discernible. But it is missing," said Prof Gyaneshwer Chaubey, Department of Zoology, Banaras Hindu University who led the team of scientists in this path breaking research.

The peer-reviewed research paper "Reconstructing the Population History of the Sinhalese, the major ethnic group of Sri Lanka," has been published in iScience, a widely respected scientific portal. While Dr Chaubey led the team of Indian scientists, R Ranasinghe (Institute of Biochemistry, Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, University of Colombo) led the researchers from the island nation. It may be remembered that Dr Chaubey and a team of researchers from Estonia, Harvard and Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (Hyderabad) had demolished the Aryan and Dravidian linguistic theory and proved that both of these groups share the same forefathers. "The analysis based on



Dr Gyaneshwar Chaubey in discussion with a Sri Lankan student of his research team

the frequency of various genetic mutations showed a tight cluster of Sinhalese and Tamil populations, suggesting strong gene flow beyond the boundary of ethnicity and language. A further connection of Sinhalese with the West of India has been established based on the traces of DNA segments. Overall in the South Asian context, Sri Lankan ethnic groups are genetically more homogenous than others", said the team leaders.

The study also found that the Sinhala language spoken in the country is a combination of Konkani, Marathi, Sanskrit and Gujarati and reached the island nation through Arabian Sea. According to K M Raghavan, a Sri Lankan historian, the Tamils could have reached Sri Lanka as part of the Kaurava army units hired by the princes of the island nation to fight for them as private army warriors. The Kauravas, who were defeated by the Pandavas in the Mahabharata War took refuge in the East Coast of India and reached Sri Lanka at the invitation of various Kings in the island nation. Following the Portuguese occupation of Sri Lanka, the Kauravas converted to Christianity and their name was

changed to Karavas, writes Raghavan in his book. Ramaswami Wijayabalan, a plantation owner and Tamil scholar based in Colombo, told The Pioneer that the Tamils in north and north east of Sri Lanka are descendants of migrant workers from Malabar province in present day Kerala. "The Tamil they speak, their food habits and social life have their origin in Malabar. The priests in their origin in North and East are addressed as Gurukkal as they had come here for teaching martial arts and offering poojas," said Wijayabalan. He asked how puttu, appam etc became the staple food of the Jaffna and Batticaloa Tamils. Interestingly, Ceylon and Colombo find mention in novels and short stories in Malayalam whereas the same is not that common in yesteryear literary works in Tamil, said Josephine Jayashanthi, leading novelist in Tamil Nadu. Dr S Kalyanaraman, Indologist of repute, concurred with the findings of Dr Chaubey and his team. "You may be able to distort history but you cannot distort science. The study by Dr Chaubey is based on pure science and no force can repudiate the same," said Dr Kalyanaraman who has deciphered the Indus script.

Revolutionising India's Dairy Industry: The Inspiring Legacy of Verghese Kurien

MS Meenakshi's "Verghese Kurien: The Man Who Brought Milk to a Million Homes" chronicles the transformative journey of the 'Milkman of India,' whose visionary leadership and innovative approach revolutionised India's dairy industry and empowered rural communities, writes **TEAM VIVA**

Verghese Kurien: The Man Who Brought Milk to a Million Homes by MS Meenakshi is a compelling tribute to the 'Milkman of India,' whose visionary leadership and relentless dedication transformed India's dairy industry and rural economy. This book, part of the Pioneers of India series, meticulously chronicles Kurien's journey from a young, unconventional engineer in Anand, Gujarat to becoming the architect of the White Revolution and a pivotal figure in post-Independence India.

MS Meenakshi vividly captures the essence of Kurien's pragmatic leadership and his many accomplishments in the development of cooperative societies, which became a bedrock of India's dairy sector. The book emphasises Kurien's commitment to sustainable development and social entrepreneurship, highlighting how he championed the interests of rural stakeholders. Through initiatives like the creation of AMUL and the Institute of Rural Management in Anand, Kurien not only revolutionised dairy management but also spurred significant changes in rural socio-economic structures, industries, and developmental policies. One of the book's strengths lies in its detailed portrayal of Kurien's partnerships with



entrepreneur whose initiatives under Operation Flood linked the entire country through milk, a staple necessity. Meenakshi's portrayal of Kurien's character is both respectful and intimate, offering a balanced view of a leader who was as astute as he was compassionate. MS Meenakshi's writing is both informative and engaging. Her expertise is evident in the way she presents complex economic and social concepts in a manner that is accessible to readers, making Kurien's achievements all the more inspiring. *Verghese Kurien: The Man Who Brought Milk to a Million Homes* is more than just a biography, it's an inspiring roadmap for future thinkers and leaders in sustainable development. It reminds us of the power of visionary leadership and the impact that one dedicated individual can have on a nation. For anyone interested in the history of India's economic development, social entrepreneurship or the story of a man whose legacy continues to feed millions, this book is a must-read.

BOOK DETAILS:
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