

OPINION 6

THE UNYIELDING SPIRIT  
OF MILITARY FAMILIES

WORLD 8

STRIKES ON GAZA KILL 18;  
TWO DEAD IN TEL AVIV

MONEY 10

RBI LIKELY TO KEEP INTEREST RATE  
UNCHANGED AT 6.5%: EXPERTS

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SEN FALLS  
TO AXELSEN  
IN SEMIS  
12 SPORTS

## Fresh violence rocks Bangladesh



People participate in a rally against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Government demanding justice for the victims killed in the recent countrywide deadly clashes, in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on Sunday AP/PTI

PTI ■ DHAKA

At least 91 people, including 14 policemen, were killed and hundreds injured on Sunday in fierce clashes between protesters demanding Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's resignation and the ruling party supporters in different parts of Bangladesh on the first day of the non-cooperation movement over a Government jobs quota system.

The clashes broke out this morning when protesters attending the non-

cooperation programme under the banner of the Students Against Discrimination with the one-point demand of the Government's resignation faced opposition from the supporters of the Awami League, Chhatra League, and Jubo League activists. So far, 91 people have been killed in day-long clashes across the country, the leading Bengali-language daily Prothom Alo reported. According to the police headquarters, 14 policemen have been killed across the country. Of them, 13 were

killed in Sirajganj's Enayetpur police station. One person was killed in Comilla's Elliotganj, the paper said. As violence escalated, the Home Ministry imposed an indefinite countrywide curfew from 6 pm on Sunday. A Government agency has ordered the shutdown of Meta platforms Facebook, Messenger, WhatsApp and Instagram. The mobile operators were ordered to shut down 4G mobile internet, the paper added. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Hasina said those engaging in "sabotage" across the country

in the name of protest are not students but terrorists and asked people to suppress them with a firm hand.

"I appeal to the countrymen to suppress these terrorists with a firm hand," she said. Hasina called a meeting of the National Committee on Security Affairs at Ganabhaban, the paper reported citing sources from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). The meeting was attended by the chiefs of the Army, Navy, Air Force, police, RAB, BGB, and other top security officers. The meeting came as renewed violence spread to several parts of the country.

The Government has announced a three-day general holiday on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday to ensure public safety amid the ongoing violent protests across the country. Giving details, the paper said at least five people were killed in Feni, 22 including 13 policemen in Sirajganj, four in Kishoreganj, four in Dhaka, four in Bogura, three in Munshiganj, four in Magura, three in Bhola, four in Rangpur, three in Pabna, four in Sylhet, three in Cumilla, one in Joypurhat, one in Habiganj and one in Barisal.

Six Awami League leaders and activists were beaten to death and several others injured in a clash between the ruling party supporters and protesters in Narsingdi, the paper reported.

## Team Hockey keeps India's Olympics Gold dream alive

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

If Tokyo 2020 was resurrection, Paris 2024 is turning out to be reaffirmation that the Indian hockey team is well and truly on its way to becoming a global giant again.

Down to 10 men for close to 40 minutes in a 60-minute game, Harmanpreet Singh's men didn't just hold off Britain 1-1 in regulation time, they outplayed the old foes 4-2 in the ensuing shootout to enter the Olympic semifinals for a second successive edition. The win was special in more ways than one because an average hockey fan in India is not used to seeing the team show such tenacity in a high-pressure situation. The bronze that these men pulled off in Tokyo was a first in 41 years. It was an emotional revival for a sport, whose glorious past of eight Olympic gold medals, the last of which came in 1980, had become a source of nostalgia and grief in equal measure.

The win in Paris is a reassurance that the side is on the right track. Little wonder then that the hockey fraternity as well as the average man on the street was left in awe of mental toughness and unity that India showed on Sunday.

"Words cannot express the sort of tenacity, fighting spirit and unity these players have displayed today. Every



India's captain Harmanpreet Singh (C) celebrates a goal with others during the Hockey Men's Quarterfinal match between India and Great Britain at the 2024 Summer Olympics, at Yves-du-Manoir Stadium, in Colombes, France, on Sunday PTI

player was backing each other after they were one player down," Ajit Pal Singh, captain of the 1975 World Cup-winning team told PTI. "The way they defended was world-class and Sreejesh was simply at different level. In all the matches from pool stages they only got better and the nation is expecting another medal from the team.

"The performance so far in

pitch, India could not play scoop balls, a strategy that worked for the side in previous matches, but it managed to escape without getting hurt.

It all boiled down to how Sreejesh would perform and the veteran goalkeeper did not disappoint, blocking the third and fourth attempts by Connor Williamson and Phillip Ropper after the score was tied 2-2 in the shootout.

James Albrey and Zach Wallace had scored earlier for Great Britain while skipper Harmanpreet Singh, Sukhjeet Singh, Lalit Upadhyay and Rajkumar Pal sounded the board for India. "We had no option but to keep the score tied till the end. We focussed on defence, we played to a structure and today communication between the players was pretty good. It was a team effort," Harmanpreet said.

The skipper said they had to forget the red card and move forward.

"We could not change what had happened. It was a team effort, it was our best defence, playing with 10 men, that was a hard part." "At this stage, we can't afford to be nervous, no matter who we play or we play extra man or not. That mind-set will remain in the next match."

Harmanpreet acknowledged Sreejesh's role in the win but insisted that it was not a one-man show.



Officials and others during a search and rescue operation following a recent cloudburst, in Shimla, on Sunday PTI

## Death toll rises to 11 in Himachal cloudbursts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ SHIMLA

With the recovery of two more bodies from Mandi district, the death toll due to flash floods triggered by cloudbursts in three districts of Himachal Pradesh has increased to 11.

Over 40 people are still missing after a series of cloudbursts occurred in Kullu's Nirmand, Sainj and Malana, Mandi's Padhar and Shimla's Rampur subdivision on the night of July 31 and wreaked havoc. The bodies of Sonam (23) and three-month-old Manvi were recovered from Rajbhan village in Padhar area of Mandi district, officials said.

The rescue operations are still underway and sniffer dogs, drones and other equipment are also being used to locate the missing people.

According to officials, 410 rescuers from teams of the Army, NDRF, SDRF, ITBP, CISF, Himachal Pradesh Police and home guards are involved in the hunt.

Over 30 people are missing in Samej village in Gram panchayat Sarpara in Rampur subdivision. More machines have been deployed and the rescue operations are going in full swing. As the flow of water has reduced, now machines have reached the spot where the missing persons could be possibly found, Up-pradhan Sarpara C L Negi said.

The State Government on Friday announced an immediate relief of ₹50,000 for the victims and said they would be given ₹5,000 monthly for rent for the next three months along with gas, food and other essential items.

The State has suffered a loss of ₹662 crore since the onset of monsoon on June 27 till August 3.

## Assam to bring law soon for life term in 'love jihad' cases

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ GUWAHATI/NEW DELHI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Sunday that his Government will bring a new law that would criminalise "love jihad". The proposed law will have provision for life imprisonment if found guilty. Sarma's statement comes days after the Uttar Pradesh Assembly passed the UP Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion (Amendment) Bill, 2024, providing for a maximum punishment of life imprisonment to the offenders convicted under certain circumstances. Speaking at the State BJP executive meet held at the Assam's capital, Sarma said, "We spoke about 'love jihad' during the elections. Soon, we will bring a law, which will award life imprisonment in such cases." However, he did not talk about any deadline regarding the proposed law. Sarma also said the Government will also bring in new domicile policy, allowing only those born in the State to be entitled for Government



jobs, he said. The Assam Chief Minister maintained that indigenous people have received priority in the "one lakh Government jobs" provided as per a pre-poll promise, which will be evident when the complete list is published.

The Chief Minister said the Assam Government has also taken a decision regarding the sale of land between Hindus and Muslims.

Earlier this week, Sarma had said the Government will end the VIP culture, and from now on, only vegetarian and satvik food will be served in every Government programme. Sarma also said the State Government will launch a pilot project to simultaneously issue Aadhaar cards and birth certificates to newborns in 13 medical colleges.

## Wall collapse kills 9 kids making Shivlings in MP

PTI ■ SAGAR

Some 15 children happily engrossed in making 'parthiv shivling' (creating shivlings out of clay) in Shahpur in Madhya Pradesh's Sagar district on a wet Sunday had no inkling that a cruel twist of fate would snatch nine of their friends forever. Nine children in the 10-15 age group were killed and two injured after a wall of a dilapidated house near a temple collapsed between 8:30am and 9am, wiping out the happiness residents of Shahpur town were deriving from the three-day 'parthiv shivling nirmaan' programme, a staple of the month of 'Saavan', underway at Hardoi Temple.

"I was returning after offering



Rescue work underway after a wall collapsed at Shahpur village, in Sagar district, on Sunday PTI

water to the shivling when a wall collapsed, trapping several children who were making clay shivlings under a tent. I was stunned and could not fathom

what was happening. The urn in which I had taken water for the offering fell from my hand. I shouted and people for all around rushed to help," said an

eyewitness, who was one of the organisers of the religious event.

A video of his narration of the incident to local police at the site, in which he can be heard saying the programme was on for the past three days, went viral on social media soon after.

"The wall collapse took place in a dilapidated house belonging to one Patel. We did not know how precarious its condition was or else we would never have erected a tent using it as support. Constant rains further weakened the structure," he said.

At the local primary health centre, a tearful parent said there was no one to bandage the wound on her niece's hand, adding that the facility was a neglected one.

## IMD issues red alert for Rajasthan, MP, Gujarat, Goa, Maharashtra

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

After Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Kerala where rains have caused havoc in the past few days, now it's the turn of the western Madhya Pradesh, eastern Rajasthan, Gujarat, the Konkan region, Goa, and central Maharashtra to brace for heavy rainfall. The

Meteorological Department on Sunday issued a red alert for these States.

The most severe category, a red alert, indicates extremely heavy rainfall exceeding 204.5 mm within 24 hours. This poses a significant threat to life and property. Widespread flooding, disruption of essential services, and evacuation orders become

likely. In the coming days, heavy rainfall is also expected in Kerala, Coastal Karnataka and Tamil Nadu while in Maharashtra, a red alert has been issued in Palghar, Pune, and Satara, while an orange alert for very heavy rains has been issued in Mumbai, Thane, Raigad, Ratnagiri, Nasik.



## Bulldozers erase Khyber Pass residents' homes, memories

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

A demolition drive in Khyber Pass, located in the Civil Lines area, carried out by the Land and Development Office on Sunday, left a trail of devastation that extended far beyond the physical destruction of houses and shops. It obliterated the cherished memories of residents who had called this place home for generations. The morning calm was shattered as locals woke to the alarming sight of bulldozers lined up in their neighbourhood, poised to demolish their homes. These structures held not just their belongings but the essence of their lives, their memories intricately woven into the very walls that now lay in ruins. Among the many hit was Bhupinder Singh Bhatia, a small shop owner whose livelihood and legacy were

reduced to rubble. He stood amid the debris, gazing at the remnants of his life with despair. His small shop, a cornerstone of his existence, was now nothing more than a pile of broken bricks and shattered dreams.

"I have been living here for 70 years. I built this house and shop with my hard-earned money and today, it is gut-wrenching to see the house being demolished," Bhatia said. A large-scale demolition drive at Khyber Pass was also carried out last month which led to over 250 houses being razed and hundreds of residents being displaced. Shahana Begum, 55, said she has been living in the area for decades but a demolition drive last month razed all her memories.

"Last month, they demolished my house in the Civil Lines area and today, they demolished my daughter's house," she said,



A police personnel during a demolition drive at Khyber Pass area, in New Delhi, on Sunday Ranjan Dimiri/Pioneer

expressing her grief over the drive that has left her with nothing.

While some of the houses and shops were demolished on Sunday, the residents of the area said many of them have

received notices about demolition to be carried out in the coming days. A father of two children, Mohit Gupta is worried about his children's future. They are studying in a nearby school in the area.

He said, "This is my only shop, Gupta Store, which will be demolished on August 13. I am very worried as to how I will earn and support my family." The demolition scare has made Gupta move to Burari area for the time being.

"The rent there is so high that all my savings are spent paying it. For how long can I sustain? I have to pay the fees for children's studies too," he rued. At the site, the air was dense with dust as machinery demolished buildings. Several residents were seen sitting among the rubble that was once their home.

Many of the children who have moved from the area are now returning worried for their parent's security.

Nisha, who returned from Dubai on Saturday night after learning about the demolition of her parents' house, was worried about her elderly parents. "Where will I take my

family now? My father is not keeping well. They razed my house in no time and many useful things have been destroyed," she said.

Nishant, 40, was in despair seeing his house being razed. He said while he had built a proper house with all the papers, no one came to their rescue. "We had all the papers for the house but now all my belongings have gone. No one came to help us. What do I do now? This was my home for all my life and now I am left with nothing," he said.

A petition in this regard was filed in the High Court in 2010 and the court had directed that "no coercive steps be taken" against the petitioners. However, the petitioners filed an application in the matter for clarification, after authorities passed an order earlier this year threatening removal of alleged unauthorised occupation and construction from the area.

# Rise in water levels of Kharkai and Swarnarekha Rivers in Jamshedpur

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

Amidst heavy rainfall in the region, the water levels of the Kharkai and Swarnarekha rivers in Jamshedpur have been rising steadily, nearing their respective danger marks. Authorities have issued a public appeal urging residents to stay away from the coastal and submerged areas of both rivers to ensure safety.

The Swarnarekha River, which courses through Jamshedpur, has shown a significant rise in its water level. As of the latest measurement at the Mango Bridge site, the river stands at 116.58 meters, which is just 4.92 meters below the designated danger level of 121.50 meters. The rapid rise is a cause for concern, especially for the communities living in the low-lying areas along the riverbanks.



Similarly, the Kharkai River is witnessing an alarming increase in its water level. Recorded at 126.830 meters at the Adityapur Bridge site, the river is now only 2.17 meters short of the danger level of 129.00 meters. This situation poses a significant threat to the areas surrounding the river, particularly those situated at lower elevations.

Given the precarious rise in water levels, local authorities have intensified their efforts to monitor the situa-



tion closely. The district administration, in collaboration with disaster management teams, is on high alert, preparing for any potential emergencies that may arise due to further rainfall or unexpected surges in river levels. Residents are strongly advised to avoid venturing into coastal or submerged areas near both rivers. People living in vulnerable areas should remain alert and be prepared to evacuate if necessary. The administration has set up emergency helplines and

temporary shelters for those who may need to relocate," said an official.

The Kharkai and Swarnarekha rivers have a history of swelling during the monsoon season, leading to flooding that disrupts lives and livelihoods in Jamshedpur. Previous incidents have caused significant damage to property, infrastructure, and agricultural lands, highlighting the critical need for vigilance during this period. The rising water levels of the Kharkai and Swarnarekha rivers demand immediate attention and action from both the authorities and the general public. By adhering to safety advisories and remaining vigilant, the community can mitigate the risks posed by the swelling rivers. Continuous monitoring and proactive measures are essential to ensure the safety and well-being of Jamshedpur's residents as the monsoon season progresses.

# Rural women become 'Market Leaders; through brand Palash

**Total gross sales of Rs 3982 lakh in less than 3 years**

PNS : RANCHI

Chief Minister Hemant Soren launched the Palash branding and marketing strategy on September 29, 2020 with the aim of ensuring year-round market and respectable profits for the products of rural women entrepreneurs of the State and also for establishing rural women as "market leaders" of the rural economy. In less than three years, a total gross sale of Rs. 3982.00 lakh has been made under this initiative.

Through this innovative effort and as per the instructions of the Chief Minister, as many as 29 different types of products have been made available for sale in the open market so far. More than one lakh rural women of the State's self-help groups are associated with the brand Palash either by supplying their agricultural products or are involved in other packaging and sales work. These women are not increasing their income but have also given an impetus to the rural economy and connected it to the mainstream.

As per the instructions of the CM, 'Palash Enterprise Company' is being formed for purely commercial operations of the brand which has now become the identity of the products of rural women.

In order to bring the poor families out of the vicious circle of poverty, the Chief Minister has set a target to ensure rapid development and growth of the rural economy of the State. For this change in the rural economy, work has been done to provide a proper place and to ensure maximum profit in the market to the products manufactured by lakhs of rural women entrepreneurs of the State who are associated with Sakhi Mandal.

To achieve this objective new technology, training, capital, entrepreneurship skills, collection, storage, processing, production and branding process is being rapidly set up for women farmers and entrepreneurs in their rural environment. With the resolve to ensure access to essential technology skills, structure, trained human resources and financial resource ecosystem to every rural and tribal women entrepreneur, the State government is continuously working on Palash branding and marketing strategy.

In view of the credibility of the brand, the products of "Palash Brand" were awarded the first prize by the Government of India at the National Livelihood Saras Mela recently held in Noida Haat, Uttar Pradesh. Palash Mart has also been the center of attraction as a brand of rural women in the World Food India International Conference organised by the Government of India at Bharat Mandapam, Pragati Maidan. Palash brand is also proving to be a great milestone in getting the rural women of Jharkhand a respectable place as a market force.

The Jharkhand government is making continuous

efforts to connect the rural women entrepreneurs of the State with the Palash brand. Under the strategy being adopted for the products so far 23 Palash collection centers, 45 processing centers, 155 production centers, 19 Palash packaging and branding centers and 46 'Palash Marts' have been started. Approval has been given for the construction of Palash Mall in the main business area of Ranchi. Along with this, approval has also been given for the construction work by acquiring land of Palash Mall in other tribal dominated districts of the State such as Dumka, West Singhbhum, Pakur, Lohardaga and Khunti.

Two National Saras Melas are being organised every year in the State with the objective of promoting the sale of Palash brand products along with the products of lakhs of rural women entrepreneurs associated with Sakhi Mandal. Special measures were also taken to prominently display and sell Palash products in the International Tribal Festival organised by the State Government.

Deputy Commissioners of all the districts have been directed to provide free stalls for exhibition and sale of Palash products in the Government and non-government State Festivals, fairs, expos, trade fairs organised in the district. Participation of enterprising rural women of the State associated with Palash products is being ensured in Saras Mela, trade fairs and international fairs organised in other states. Last year, the women entrepreneurs of Sakhi Mandal participated in Saras and other national and international level fairs organized in 19 states and also at the country's capital Delhi and commercial capital Mumbai and did a business of more than 1100 lakh rupees.

From this year, the State government is organising special local fairs and entrepreneurship fortnight in all the districts to promote the products of rural and tribal women entrepreneurs. A scheme has been formulated to broaden the participation of women in the rural economy. Palash branding and marketing strategy is proving to be the main link in livelihood promotion of rural women.

Through branding and marketing, rural women entrepreneurs are now showing a tendency of giving priority to the quality of their products, modernisation of the production unit, cleanliness of the production process and importance of safe environment as well as to compete in the main market for their products. Creating a space together is becoming the goal of rural women entrepreneurs. A self-reliant rural woman entrepreneur is determined to create her own place in the open market on the basis of her skills and ability and is blowing the trumpet of a comprehensive change in the rural economy of Jharkhand.

# Polycystic Ovary Syndrome: Understanding and Managing with Homeopathy



DR. RAJEEV KUMAR

DR RAJEEV KUMAR

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOD) is a common hormonal disorder that affects many women of reproductive age. Characterized by the presence of multiple cysts on the ovaries, PCOD can lead to various health challenges. This article delves into the causes, symptoms, and holistic management of PCOD, including yoga, health and hygiene, precautions, homeopathic remedies, and more.

**WHAT IS PCOD?**  
PCOD, or Polycystic Ovary Disease, is a condition where the ovaries produce an abnormal amount of androgens, which are male sex hormones usually present in women in small amounts. This imbalance can lead to the development of cysts in the ovaries, irregular menstrual cycles, and other health issues.

**CAUSES OF PCOD**  
The exact cause of PCOD is unknown, but several factors may contribute to its development:

1. Genetics: A family history of PCOD increases the risk.
2. Insulin Resistance: High insulin levels can increase androgen production, leading to PCOD.
3. Inflammation: Chronic inflammation is linked to higher androgen levels.

**HORMONAL IMBALANCE AND CHANGES**  
Hormonal imbalance is a core issue in PCOD, leading to several changes:

- Increased Androgens: Results in hirsutism and acne.
- Insulin Resistance: Can cause weight gain and difficulty in losing weight.
- Estrogen and Progesterone Imbalance: Leads to irregular menstrual cycles.

**AGE-RELATED ISSUES**  
PCOD can present different challenges at various stages of life:

- Teenagers: May struggle with acne, weight issues, and menstrual irregularities.
- Women of Reproductive Age: May face fertility challenges and hormonal imbalances.
- Older Women: Risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and metabolic syndrome increases.

**YOGA FOR PCOD**  
Yoga can be a beneficial

practice for managing PCOD. Some recommended poses include:

1. Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutation): Helps in weight management and hormonal balance.
2. Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose): Stimulates ovarian function.
3. Dhanurasana (Bow Pose): Enhances reproductive health.

**HEALTH AND HYGIENE**  
Maintaining good health and hygiene is crucial for managing PCOD:

- Balanced Diet: Focus on whole foods, fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and healthy fats.
- Regular Exercise: Helps in weight management and reducing insulin resistance.
- Hydration: Drink plenty of water to flush out toxins.

**Precautions**  
Women with PCOD should take certain precautions to manage their condition effectively:

- Avoid Processed Foods: Limit intake of refined sugars and carbohydrates.
- Regular Check-ups: Monitor your health with regular medical check-ups.
- Stress Management: Practice relaxation techniques like meditation and deep breathing.

**HOMEOPATHIC MEDICINE FOR PCOD**  
Homeopathy offers several remedies that may help manage PCOD symptoms:

- Sepia: Useful for irregular periods and hormonal imbalances.
- Pulsatilla: Helps in regulating menstrual cycles.
- Lachesis: Effective for ovarian cysts and related symptoms.

**Ovary Drop Diagnostic Tests**  
Two primary diagnostic tests are used to confirm PCOD:

1. Ultrasound (USG): Detects the presence of cysts on the ovaries.
2. Blood Tests: Measures hormone levels, including androgens and insulin.

**CONCLUSION**  
PCOD is a multifaceted condition that requires a comprehensive approach to management. By understanding the causes, recognizing the symptoms, and adopting a healthy lifestyle, women with PCOD can lead fulfilling lives. Holistic treatments, including yoga and homeopathic remedies, along with regular medical check-ups, can significantly improve quality of life.

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# Celebrating Friendship Day: SAIL's heartwarming tribute

R SHARMA : BOKARO

In a heartfelt gesture, the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) commemorated Friendship Day on August 4th with a touching message that highlights the importance of strong, unbreakable bonds. The company shared a vibrant illustration of three joyful children, symbolizing the essence of friendship and unity.

With the tagline, "Celebrating unbreakable bonds and steel-strong friendships," SAIL emphasized the strength and durability of friendships, akin to the qualities of steel. This thoughtful message resonates with the company's core values, underscoring the role of mutual support and solidarity in both personal and professional spheres. It is noteworthy that SAIL, a certified Great Place to Work, continues to



foster a community-oriented culture, ensuring that every individual feels a part of the larger family. The initiative not only celebrates the spirit of Friendship Day but also reinforces SAIL's commitment to nurturing positive relationships within the community.

# Rotary Club of Bokaro Steel City Hosts "Barkha Bahar" Event



PNS : BOKARO

Bokaro Steel City - The Rotary Club of Bokaro Steel City celebrated the monsoon season with the vibrant "Barkha Bahar" event on August 3, 2024, at the Paul Harris Auditorium. The event featured enchanting cultural performances by

club members themed around Sawan (monsoon).

The event began with a ceremonial lamp lighting by the Ladies' Committee, followed by captivating Kajari performances led by President Rotarian Alka Gupta and her team. Highlights included a dance by Rotarian Alka Gupta and Club President Rotarian Mahesh Kumar Gupta, an Odissi dance by former president Rotarian Chandrima Ray, and enthusiastic couple dances by senior Rotarians.

The younger generation of Rotarians impressed with energetic performances, and Rotarian Hardeep's family delighted with a Bhangra dance. Rotarian Mannu Srivastava's skit added humor, making the hall echo with laughter.

Chief guests ONGC's CGM Balbir Singh and his wife Bindu Singh, along with ONGC's GM Dilip Kumar, praised the event and expressed gratitude. Members from Rotary Club Chas and Rotary Club of Midtown Couples also participated and enjoyed the event.

The event, expertly coordinated by former presidents Rotarian Sandhya and Sunita Jain, was a resounding success.

# Group of 65 Muslim Pilgrims Leaves for Ajmer Sharif-Fatehpur Sikri-Agra

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

Under the Chief Minister's Tirtha Darshan Yojana of the Jharkhand government, a group of 65 Muslim devotees (including attendants) from the East Singhbhum district was sent off from the Collectorate premises at 8:30 am for the Ajmer Sharif-Fatehpur Sikri-Agra pilgrimage. District Sports Officer-cum-Tourism Nodal Officer Mr. Avinash Tripathi and Priyanka Tiru, Manager, Tourism Information Center, Jamshedpur, flagged off the bus to Hatia Railway Station in Ranchi, wishing the pilgrims a pleasant and auspicious journey.

From Ranchi, the group of pilgrims will depart by rail to Ajmer Sharif-Fatehpur Sikri-Agra. The seven-day pilgrimage, commencing on August 4 and concluding on August 10, 2024, includes residents of



Jharkhand who are over 60 years old, fall under the BPL category, and are physically healthy. The Jharkhand Tourism Department Corporation and District Administration East Singhbhum have made

robust arrangements for the pilgrims. Mr. Anil Kumar Pradhan, Technician JREDA, DRDA, will serve as the Nodal Officer for proper care of the pilgrims during the Yatra, assisted by Vinita Biruwa, Technical Assistant.

# Dorabjee Rose Garden to come up in Jamshedpur

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

The Horticultural Society of Jamshedpur (HSJ) has announced the establishment of the Dorabjee Rose Garden near Mody Park. This exciting development was revealed during the 8th Annual General Meeting of HSJ, held at the SNTI Auditorium.

The new garden is made possible through the generous provision of land by Tata Steel Limited (TSL) and Tata Steel USIL (TSLUSIL). This collaboration underscores the ongoing support and commitment of Tata Steel towards enhancing the green spaces in Jamshedpur and fostering a deeper connection between the community and nature.

During the meeting, Baren Maity and Aswani Srivastava presented a detailed progress report and layout overview of the Dorabjee Rose Garden. They highlighted the garden's planned features, which aim to showcase a diverse collection of rose species and provide a tranquil environment for visitors to enjoy. The garden is expected to become a significant attraction for both residents and tourists, contributing to the city's reputation as a hub of horticultural excellence.

The Dorabjee Rose Garden is part of HSJ's broader initiative to promote a Green Revolution in Jamshedpur. This initiative includes organizing major events such as the 41st All India Rose Convention cum Rose Show and the 34th Annual Flower Show, as well as various other competitions, workshops, and celebrations aimed at encouraging community participation in environmental conservation.

The HSJ extends its heartfelt thanks to Tata



Steel and TSLUSIL for their invaluable support in this endeavor. This new garden will not only enhance the beauty of Mody Park but also serve as a living testament to the power of community collaboration in achieving sustainable development goals.

"HSJ looks forward to welcoming the community to the Dorabjee Rose Garden upon its completion and invites everyone to join in celebrating this significant addition to Jamshedpur's green landscape," said an official.

# Dhullu dharna against private hospitals

PNS : DHANBAD

Dhanbad Lok Sabha MP Dhullu Mahto on Sunday said that he would hold dharna against private hospitals of Dhanbad who are looting poor by misuse of Ayushman health card and giving inflated bills to patients.

Talking to media here at Dhanbad, Mahto said soon after current session of parliament ends he would hold dharna and would ask

deputy commissioner to fix rate of ICU, CCU and other facilities of private hospital and nursing homes so that poor may be saved from cheating attitude of such hospitals. In same way he would also see that BCCL hospitals treat patients inhouse hospitals rather than referring each and every case to private hospitals.

The MP praised the union budget and gave details of what the infrastructure facili-

ties Jharkhand would be getting in current financial year. He termed the budget as budget aimed at upliftment of poor of country.

Replying to a query Mahto said, "the union civil aviation minister has assured him that as soon as state government sends proposal for aerodrome in Dhanbad and identifies needed land for it, his ministry would give a nod for construction of aerodrome in Dhanbad."

# Police crack advocate Gopal Krishna murder case

PNS : RANCHI

Ranchi police has got a big success in the Advocate Gopal Krishna murder case. Police has arrested the main accused of the murder. Roshan Munda has been arrested from Angada. However, his associate Sandeep Kalindi managed to escape while firing.

When the police team led by Kotwali Dy SP Prakash Soy reached Angada to catch the criminals, the criminals started firing at the police. After this, the police took action and opened fire. It is being told that Roshan Munda has been shot in the leg. He has been admitted to RIMS for treatment. It is not clear yet whether Roshan Munda was shot in the firing by his partner or in retaliation by the



police. The role of Kotwali Dy SP was very important in the arrest of the criminals.

Roshan has told the police that the advocate had beaten him on the day of the inci-

dent. He said that the Advocate was going to the temple to worship, during which he collided with the Advocate and his worship material fell down, after this,

the Advocate beat him brutally. In this anger, he stabbed the Advocate to death in front of his house a little while later, he added. However, the police is

continuously interrogating him. Some more facts may come to light in this case. At the same time, the police is continuously raiding possible hideouts in search of the other criminal.

Civil Court Lawyer Gopal Krishna alias Gopi Babu was murdered on Friday in Mahua Toli, Madhukam, Sukhdevnagar police station area. On Saturday, the second day of this incident, DGP Anurag Gupta reached the Advocate's house to meet his family. The DGP talked to the mother and wife of the deceased Gopal for a long time. He assured them of the early arrest of the criminals. During this, the DGP also tried to know the reason from the family, but the family could not tell anything as they did not have any information related to this.

# BJP leader Sunny Toppo joins Kavariya Yatra

PNS : RANCHI

A 12-day Kanwar Yatra was taken out on Sunday by Bindas Kavariya Singh, Bijupada under Chanho block. The Kanwar Yatra was flagged off by youth leader Sunny Toppo.

Addressing the gathering on the occasion Toppo said that the tradition of offering water to Lord Shiva's temple in the month of Shrawan with faith and belief has been going on for centuries. "It has a different significance and it provide a lot of peace to the worshippers. The Month of Sawan has important for people so that they pour water to Lord Shiva to get his blessing," he added.

The Youth Leader also said that he has also immense faith in Lord Shiva so that he came to launch the pious Yatra. It provide me immense peace and blessing of lord Shiva, he added.

The entire atmosphere was resonating with the chants of Har Har Mahadev and Bol Bam. After worshipping and offering water in Shiva temples, the group of Kanwariyas left for Ayodhya Dham. During this Kavar Yatra, the Kanwariyas will visit Deoghar, Rajgir, Triveni, Ayodhya, Vindhyaachal and other places.



# CAR T- cell therapy - A new ray of hope for cancer patients



DIVYA MODI : RANCHI

For Jharkhand based journalist Ravi Prakash, who has been battling fourth stage lung cancer for over three and a half years now, there is a glimmer of hope for a new life. After fighting the disease with intensive sessions of chemotherapy, the journalist is now undergoing a treatment called CAR T-cell therapy in Mumbai.

Prakash is the sixth patient in the country to receive this treatment and is being treated by Dr Vijay Patil at Sunact Cancer Institute, Thane.

In a tête-à-tête with The Pioneer, Dr Vijay Patil sheds

lights on what is CAR T Cell therapy, its side effects, precautions and the cost.

Q: What is CAR T-cell therapy? Is it only effective for lung cancer or other types of cancer as well?

A: CAR T-cell stands for Chimeric antigen receptor therapy. Our bodies have 2-3 types of cancer and our WBC fights these cancer cells. If our WBC is active no one will have cancer. In this therapy we activate WBC to fight cancer in the body. The patient's blood is taken and a special type of WBC called Lymphocyte is extracted by the machine while the remaining blood is given back to the patient. This is then genetically modified in the lab to firstly identify cancer cells and secondly kill the infected cells. Millions of the CAR T-cells are grown in the laboratory and then given to the patient by infusion. The CAR T-cells are able to bind to an antigen on the cancer cells and kill them.

It is basically a way to get immune cells called T cells (a

type of white blood cell) to fight cancer by changing them in the lab so they can find and destroy cancer cells.

This treatment can be effective for all types of cancer if the patient's cancer cells have a unique mutation. The therapy has shown best results in types of blood cancer including leukemia, lymphoma and multiple myeloma with a success of 80-90%. For lung cancer, breast cancer or ovarian cancer, the development has been done in the last one and a half to two years and it also depends on the stage and mutation of the disease.

Q: After this therapy what precautions does the patient need to follow?

A: Precautions depend on whether the treatment is Autologous or Allogeneic. In Autologous the patient's blood is being used while in Allogeneic blood is taken from a person other than the patient. For a cancer patient, after undergoing CAR T cell therapy one needs to take precautions against infec-

tions. These include consuming hygienic or boiled water. The doctor's advice also needs to be closely followed about the way of cooking food for the patient. Consumption of uncooked food or un-hygienically cooked food is also strictly prohibited.

To further reduce the risk of infection, the patient is asked to stay away from crowded places and is also asked to wear masks.

Q: When was this therapy started in India and what is the success rate?

A: In India this treatment for blood cancer was started about 6 months back. The success rate varies from doctor to doctor. For us, the success rate has been about 95%.

I was the one to have started this treatment for solid tumors- like the one Ravi Prakash is undergoing and this was first done in the last week of May 2024. It is a little too early to give a definite success rate for this and at least five to six months need to be given to give a sustained success rate.

Q: How is Ravi Prakash responding to the treatment?

A: He is doing very well till now. He has developed a slight cough and there is no major side effect as well.

In CAR T-cell therapy, the side effects are also related to the efficacy effects. When the tumor cells start dying, the patient can develop fever, breathing issues or a drop in the blood pressure. Similarly, if the tumor is in the lungs, when CAR T-cell therapy starts working the patient tends to develop a cough which is more an efficacy related side-effect. There are side effects and all are manageable by the experts.

Ravi Prakash is an example for other patients. When the patient is mentally strong, it also boosts the doctor's confidence.

Q: What would be the cost of this treatment?

A: The cost varies according to the patient's age, the type of cancer and also the stage of the disease. In India the cost is between Rs 40 lakhs to Rs 1 crore.

# Heavy rain fills Kanke dam to its full capacity

PNS : RANCHI

Due to continuous heavy rain in the State Capital, the water level in Kanke dam has increased beyond its capacity. All three gates of the dam have been opened for this.

It is worth noting that at present, water has started flowing above the capacity of 28 feet in Kanke dam. All three gates of the dam have been opened. Due to the opening of all three gates, a flood-like situation has arisen in the lower area. People living nearby are facing many difficulties.

Due to continuous rain for three days, many places in the entire district including the State Capital Ranchi have been flooded. In some areas, houses have been submerged, while water has entered the houses of some. The



Meteorological Department had already issued a red alert regarding this. Houses were flooded in Deepatoli area of Ranchi. NDRF team had to be called to evacuate people from their homes. However, people have heaved a sigh of relief as the rain has stopped on Sunday.

At the same time, there is news of damage due to heavy rain from Garhwa, Giridih,

Chatra and Chandil. Meanwhile, the Meteorological Department has said that there may be relief from rain till August 5, that is tomorrow. After this, there may be heavy rain in 11 districts on August 7. At the same time, a bridge has broken and washed away in Gomia, Bokaro. There is news of a man missing after being washed away in it.

# MAMATA BLAMES J'KHAND FOR FLOODS IN BENGAL, HIMANTA DISAGREES

PNS : RANCHI

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has blamed Jharkhand for the floods in her State. She termed the floods as man-made. Though the State Government is silent but the Jharkhand BJP's election co-in-charge and Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma has reacted. Himanta has called Mamata Banerjee's claim wrong and without facts. In fact, Mamata Banerjee has told through a post on the social media platform X that she has spoken to Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren.

The Bengal CM has said, "I have discussed the emerging flood situation with him. Mamata has further written that I discussed with him the matter of sudden and heavy release of water from Tenughat, due to which floods have already started in Bengal. I told him that the water of Jharkhand is flooding Bengal and it is man-made. I requested him to please take care of this."

Responding to Mamata Banerjee, Himanta Biswa



Sarma has written that I respect Didi, but I cannot accept her belief that the Jharkhand government is responsible for the floods in West Bengal. Both the governments should work together to reduce the difficulties of the people. Every year, the water coming from Arunachal and Bhutan hills causes floods in Assam. However, we do not blame the Arunachal govern-

ment or the Royal Bhutan government because we understand that water has no boundaries. It naturally flows downwards.

On the other hand, on Himanta's tweet, JMM MLA Sudivya Kumar Sonu said that Bengal and Jharkhand have not only been sharing borders for centuries but we also share culture along with festivals, happiness and sorrow.



No outsider has the right to speak on the problem of Jharkhand and Bengal. That too those people who are being nurtured in the lap of feudalism. This is a matter

between Bengal and Jharkhand, both of us states will find a solution to it. The JMM leader said Himanta should worry about his state Assam.

# Bauri visit Mandar to support Mukhiya Sangh's agitation

PNS : RANCHI



PNS : RANCHI

Leader of Opposition Amar Kumar Bauri on Sunday visited Mandar to support the indefinite dharna organized by the Mukhiya Sangh, Mandar, demanding the withdrawal of the suspension of Sarwa Panchayat Mukhiya Prabha Kispotta.

Mandar Block Mukhiya Sangh President Laxman Bhagat gave detail information about the reason of suspension of Prabha Kispotta to Bauri.

On the occasion Bauri said that the Mukhiya cannot be removed under pressure in an unfair manner and all the offi-

cers involved in the wrongful suspension of the Mukhiya will definitely be punished. Targeting the State Government, he said that the Government invokes the Constitution but does not respect the Constitution made by Baba Saheb. The Government is only for two months.

Speaking about Bangladeshi infiltration, the Leader of Opposition said that the infiltrators are forcibly grabbing land in the Santhal Pargana region still the Government is silent, because they are more concerned about their vote bank than their sovereignty. He said that

the suspension will be withdrawn by meeting the departmental secretary and the guilty officer will be dismissed.

During this, Youth BJP Leader Sunny Toppo said that by wrongly suspending Prabha Kispotta, an attempt has been made to strangle the democratic system.

Finally, Mandal Block Mukhiya Sangh President Laxman Bhagat ended the protest after Amar Kumar Bauri assured him of withdrawal of suspension. He further said that if the suspension of the suspended Mukhiya is not withdrawn, a strong agitation will be organized at the State level.

BJP leader Neetu Kujur, Ramnarayan Bhagat, District Mukhiya Sangh Treasurer Prakash Khalkho, Shankar Oraon, Prabha Kispotta, BJP leader Kailash Prasad Gupta, Vijay Mahato, Arvind Singh, Satish Shah, Vijay Soni, Bablu Gop, Bhogen Soren, Bishnath Bhagat, Mohan Oraon, Shibra Oraon, Chamra Oraon, Sukra Oraon, Bigi Uraoin, Mukesh Oraon, Shanti Oraon and various Mukhiyas were also present on the occasion.

# Plantation conducted by NTPC Swayamsiddha Ladies Club members

PNS : RANCHI

Plantation or the act of planting trees is a crucial aspect of caring for the environment as it helps in various ways towards environment conservation such as maintaining Biodiversity, Soil Conservation.

Water Conservation and Climate as it is said he or she who plants a tree, plants a hope". Keeping in view of the benefits of plantation of trees and ongoing monsoon, NTPC Swayamsiddha Ladies Club, Coal Mining Headquarters, Ranchi planted trees like Neem, Peepal and Banyan, which are popularly known as Triveni trees, the plantation drive was done under the guidance of President, Swayamsiddha Ladies Club Rekha Jain in the august presence of committee members of the club. Plantation of Triveni trees was conducted at Dungi village, Ranchi. This noble work was possible with the help of village panchayat

head and Asha Home, Ranchi members. On this occasion, the village head thanked all the ladies club Members for the tree plantation which is a small step initiative towards to protecting the environment. In another initiative, the second batch of sewing & stitching classes, completion certificate was provided to trainees after undergoing successful skill development training under NTPC CSR in association with Swayamsiddha Ladies club and Asha Home On the occasion Jain took the initiative for distribution of the certificates and encouraged the trainees to become self-reliant which was followed by Vice Presidents, Shika Rastogi and Purnima Shrikhande, Deepa, General Secretary, Joint Secretary, Parmeshwari, Cultural Secretary, Anita Prasad, Mansa Verma, Welfare Secretary, Snigdha Majhi, Treasurer and other members were present on the occasion.

# Seth plans to set up wool bank for poor people

PNS : RANCHI

Minister of State for Defence and MP from Ranchi, Sanjay Seth today announced to open a wool bank for the needy people in winter. Union Minister said that there is a large population in the winter, which does not get warm clothes. The shivering of cold sometimes takes their lives. Such children, women, elderly, people of all classes face this problem. Certainly, it is also the responsibility of the society to protect those people from the cold. With this objective, a wool bank has been started in Ranchi. This bank has been started so early so that warm clothes can reach the needy as soon as winter starts.

Addressing the journalists Seth said that the people of Ranchi supported me a lot in the book bank and toy bank. This is the reason that we



could distribute more than 3 lakh books through the book bank. More than 70 thousand toys were distributed among the needy children through Toy Bank. Now I once again urge the society to fulfill its responsibility for those who do not have warm clothes to protect themselves from the cold. The Union Minister has appealed to the citizens of

Ranchi that whatever old but good condition warm clothes are lying in your house, which you do not use for yourself. Clean those clothes and deposit them in my central office. These clothes will reach the needy in both urban and rural areas.

In the press conference, the Union Minister also criticized the state government.

On the issue of law and order, the Union Minister said that what kind of a city is this, where journalists are also being attacked. Lawyers are being murdered. Even the inspector who has the responsibility of giving security to the society is not safe. This clearly shows that the criminals have open protection of the state government. The government, which is running with the alliance of JMM, Congress and RJD with the leftists, has given a free hand to the criminals.

Therefore, the graph of crime is constantly increasing. It is an unfortunate situation that in the capital where the Chief Minister lives, where all the ministers of the government live, crimes are taking place in broad daylight. When the sub-inspector and the lawyer are not safe, then we can easily imagine who is safe in

this state? The Union Minister said that I repeatedly warn the government to rein in those who sell drugs and intoxicants. It also has a connection with the criminal world, but the government has only put up hoardings and banners on this issue. No work has been seen on the ground. Now it seems as if the people of Ranchi accept this jungle raj and crime-ridden rule as their destiny. Certainly, this system is reminding us of the jungle raj of Bihar.

The Union Minister took the Chief Minister to task on the severe waterlogging in Ranchi. He said that this government is only deceiving the people. Last year also such a problem of water logging had occurred in the capital. Even then I had warned the government. It is unfortunate that when plans for the rainy season had to be prepared in

the summer days. When I was working on all these issues, the people of JMM-Congress were playing with the government. They have made the capital their toy. They have no concern for the people of the capital.

Yesterday when the entire capital was flooded, not a single representative of the government was ready to take care of the people. Neither the ministers of the government, nor the officers of the government. No one took care of the people of the capital. People kept crying for help everywhere but they remained immersed in their power. The Union Minister warned the state government that if the functioning of the government does not improve, then the people of the state will destroy them. Ranchi MLA Shri CP Singh was also present on this occasion.

# Goa Assembly ST quota Bill likely in LS this week

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A Bill to provide reservation to Scheduled Tribes in the Goa Legislative Assembly is likely to be introduced in the Lok Sabha this week. As of now, the ST community has no seats reserved in the Goa assembly. Amid demands from the community, the Readjustment of Scheduled Tribes Bill, 2024 has been listed in the Government business for the remaining part of the Parliament session. The session is scheduled to conclude on August 12. The law Ministry Bill will empower the census commissioner to notify the population of STs in Goa. Based on it, the Election Commission will amend the Delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies Order, 2008, to make way for ST reservation in the 40-member Goa Assembly.



The Election Commission will take into consideration the revised population figures of the Scheduled Tribes and readjust the Legislative Assembly constituency once the Bill becomes a law. The proposal to bring the Bill was cleared by the Union Cabinet in March this year days before the schedule for the Lok Sabha elections was announced on March 16. As

of now, no seat in the 40-member Goa assembly is reserved for the ST community while one seat is reserved for the Scheduled Castes. The ST community has been demanding that four out of the 40 seats in the Goa assembly be reserved for them. It is estimated that Goa has an ST population of 1.5 lakh.

# Main reservoirs' level less than 2023, but above decade's average: CWC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Despite significant rainfall across India, the average water level in the country's 150 main reservoirs is currently lower than last year's levels but remains above the average for the past decade, according to the Central Water Commission (CWC). The total live storage across the 150 monitored reservoirs is at 91,496 billion cubic meters (BCM), which represents 51 per cent of their total capacity. This is 94 per cent of the storage recorded during the same period last year and 107% of the average storage for the last decade. According to a CWC report, the live storage available in these reservoirs stands at 91,496 BCM, or 51 per cent of their total capacity. This is 94 per cent of the storage levels recorded during the same period last year and 107 per cent of the normal storage based on the last decade's average. Last year, the live storage during the same period was 83,987 BCM, and the normal



storage was 72,411 BCM. Thus, the storage levels this week represent an increase from the previous week but remain lower than both the corresponding period last year and the normal storage. In the northern region, which includes Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, and Rajasthan, there are 10 reservoirs with a total capacity of 19,663 BCM. Currently, they hold 6,532 BCM, which is 33 per cent of their capacity, significantly lower than last year's 76 per cent and the normal storage of 53 per cent for this period. The eastern region, comprising Assam, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Tripura, Nagaland, and Bihar, has 23 reservoirs

with a combined capacity of 20,430 BCM. The western region's Gujarat and Maharashtra -- 49 reservoirs have a total capacity of 37,130 BCM. They are at 19,863 BCM, or 53 per cent of capacity, down from last year's 63 per cent but better than the normal storage of 48 per cent. This week's storage shows an increase from the previous week's 15,274 BCM (41 per cent of capacity). The central region, which comprises Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh, has 26 reservoirs totalling a capacity of 48,227 BCM. They are currently storing 23,102 BCM, or 48 per cent of capacity, less than last year's

55 per cent and the normal storage of 50 per cent. This week's storage marks an increase from the previous week's 16,042 BCM (33 per cent of capacity). The southern region, covering Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu, has 42 reservoirs with a total capacity of 53,334 BCM. They currently hold 35,010 BCM, or 66 per cent of capacity, which is better than last year's 50 per cent and the normal storage of 47 per cent. This week's storage shows an increase from the previous week's 26,538 BCM (50 per cent of capacity). Some States like Assam, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Tripura, Nagaland, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu showed improved storage levels compared to last year. Conversely, States like Rajasthan, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh have reported lower storage levels.



# CDS to chair tri-service finance conference

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan will chair an apex level tri-service financial conference on Monday here. The meet is aimed to enhance cohesion and synergy in financial issues of the Armed Forces, Defence Ministry said here on Sunday. Giving details, officials said the conference will see the participation of senior officials from MoD, MoD (Fin), Controller General Defence Accounts, Integrated Financial Advisers of Services, Government e-Marketplace, Service Headquarters, and Indian Coast Guard Headquarters. The CDS will also deliver the keynote address. The conference, aligned with the objectives set for the ongoing drive on integration and jointness in the Armed Forces, is being coordinated by HQ IDS to enhance cooperation and have greater synergy on financial issues. Discussions are scheduled on aspects of Understanding the Perspectives of various stakeholders in Defence Finance and Finding Solutions to challenges faced in defence procurements. The Financial Advisor (Defence Services) and Director General (Acquisitions) will also give specific talks on the roles and actions undertaken by their organisations in expeditious procurement.

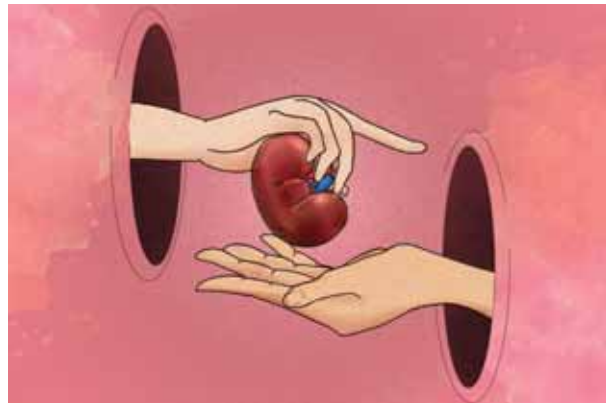
# India ranks third globally in organ transplants

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India's organ transplants have more than tripled over the past decade, reaching 18,378 in 2023, up from 4,990 in 2013. The country now ranks third globally in overall transplants and second in corneal transplants. Key figures include 13,426 kidney transplants and 4,491 liver transplants. Among the States, Telangana accounted for the highest number of deceased donors in the year at 252, followed by both Tamil Nadu and Karnataka at 178, Maharashtra at 148, Gujarat at 146 and Delhi at 66. The num-

ber of transplants to foreigners was recorded at 1,851 with most of them being in Delhi at 1,445. Despite these advances, the organ donation rate remains under 1 per million. Highlighting the need for increased awareness and improved donation rates, according to a report by the National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO). It calls for stepping up efforts to promote organ donation from deceased persons to take care of the huge organ requirement due to the increasing burden of non-

communicable and lifestyle diseases. Such conditions are leading to a high number of patients suffering from end-stage organ failure disease, the report stated. On the positive side, the number of deceased-donor transplants has increased from 837 in 2013 to 2,935 in 2023. According to data, the number of kidney transplants in 2023 stood at 13,426 while liver transplants were at 4,491, heart transplants at 221, lung transplants at 197 and pancreas transplants at 27. Among living donors, the number of females (9,784)



was almost double the number of males (5,651) in 2023. However, among

deceased donors, males outnumbered females at 844 compared to 255.

The total number of living donors in 2023 was 15,436 while deceased donors stood at 1,099. The number of heart transplants increased from 30 in 2013 to 221 in 2023. Heart transplants were higher in 2018 at 241. Tamil Nadu topped the deceased donor transplants at 595 followed by Telangana (546), Karnataka (471), Maharashtra (426) and Gujarat (421) in 2023. Delhi-NCR has the most number of living-donor transplants at 4,275, followed by Tamil Nadu (1,833), Maharashtra (1,493), Kerala (1,376) and West Bengal (1,021).

Organs are best donated from brain stem dead persons before the heart stops beating and there are many myths and misconceptions regarding organ donation which need to be taken care of, it said. Standard Operative Procedures have been drafted, which prescribe that every concerned Ministry will have a nodal officer and State Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (SOTTO) will coordinate with a nodal officer to facilitate organ transport, it said. No screening of organs will be done at the airport, the report added.



# Experts raise alarm on vapes, e-cigarettes' promotion

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With traditional tobacco products under scrutiny for their severe health impacts, the tobacco industry is now promoting e-cigarettes and vapes as healthier alternatives, health and child rights experts have raised alarms, urging the Government to address this growing threat on an urgent basis. They warned that despite being banned these products are being strategically marketed to attract and entrap the young population, especially those aged 10 to 19 years. "E-cigarettes and vapes are as dangerous as tobacco and drugs for our country. Once a child is addicted to these products, they can easily be drawn to other forms of tobacco," said Priyank Kanoongo, Chairperson of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), at a webinar organised by Tobacco Free India, a citizens' initiative, recently. Kanoongo highlighted the urgent need for vigilance while Dr Naveen Thacker, President of the International Pediatric Association (IPA), voiced serious concerns about the tobacco industry's tactics. "The industry is falsely promoting e-cigarettes and vapes as 'healthy' and harmless alternatives to traditional tobacco, with a relentless focus on targeting the youth. This is a blatant lie. These products are just as harmful, and their deliberate targeting of children is unmistakable," he stated.

# WII launches first-ever Master's course in freshwater ecology, conservation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Aiming to bridge gaps in scientific understanding and conservation planning for freshwater ecosystems—an area that has been relatively overlooked despite the increasing pressures from energy projects, agricultural demands, and domestic use, the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) has launched the first-ever much-needed two-year Master's Degree Course in Freshwater Ecology and Conservation in the country, starting this academic year. Dr Ruchi Badola, Dean of WII, emphasised the course's role in developing a new generation of professionals capable of understanding and managing freshwater ecosystems effectively. With several water resource project coming up to address the energy security, water demand for agriculture and domestic use in the country and with 82 wetlands of International importance



(Ramsar wetland) in the country the need for trained human resources for conservation of freshwater ecosystem in India was felt, she said talking about the need to launch such a course. A batch of 14 students has already been enrolled with the course. Director Virendra R Tiwari highlighted the course as a significant step in line with the Institute's new vision plan, marking a milestone in the development of human resources for managing the country's freshwater biodiversity.

# Good diet with yoga boosts physical, mental health, say AYUSH experts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Integrating a well-considered diet with yoga practice not only supports physical health but also enhances mental clarity and spiritual progress, ayurveda and yoga experts said here at a recent event organised by the Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga (MDNIY), an autonomous body under the Union Ayush Ministry. Vaidya Kamlesh Kumar Sharma from Jaipur's National Institute of Ayurveda emphasised that diet is integral to balancing the body's five elements ('pancha bhutas') and affecting both the conscious and unconscious mind. He stressed that proper dietary habits are crucial for achieving harmony in yoga practice, as they align with the principles of 'yama' and 'niyama' (ethical and personal conduct). Sharma noted that adhering to a diet that suits one's 'dosha' (body constitution), weather, and geographical conditions can help prevent many disorders and enhance yoga's effectiveness in alleviating



sorrow and fostering happiness. Dr Kashinath Samagandi, MDNIY Director, highlighted that according to the Bhagavad Gita, focusing on proper diet and conduct (Achaar-Vichaar, Ahaar-Vihar) is essential for successful yoga practice. He recommended consuming two meals a day to align with the digestive cycle. He elaborated that the morning meal should be substantial and nutritious, eaten approximately 1.25 hours after sunrise while the evening meal should be lighter and half the size of the morning meal, ideally between 7:30 and 8:15 p.m.,

or before sunset. At the same time, Dr Arpit Kumar Dubey of MDNIY discussed the concept of 'Yuktahara' from the Bhagavad Gita, which emphasises a balanced diet as key to achieving yoga goals. "If we pay attention to the food habits in terms of what to take, when to take, how much to take and how to take, then the Yoga Sadhana becomes the Samadhi (the ultimate goal). As has been said in Changogyia Upanishad - whatever we consume through our five Gyanendriyas, the same helps us in the growth of our personality," he added.

# SC verdict today on AAP plea against LG's order on MCD alderman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to pronounce its verdict on August 5 on a plea of the Aam Aadmi Party-led Delhi Government challenging the Lieutenant Governor's decision to nominate aldermen in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi without the aid and advice of the council of Ministers. A bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices PS Narasimha, JB Pardiwala had reserved its verdict in the matter on May 17, last year. As per the apex Court's website, a bench headed by Justice PS Narasimha will be pronouncing the verdict. On May 17, last year the top Court said giving the Lieutenant Governor the power to nominate aldermen to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) will mean he can destabilise an elected civic body. The MCD has 250 elected and 10 nominated members. In December, 2022, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) defeated the BJP in the civic elections, winning 134 wards and ending the saffron party's 15-year run at the helm of the MCD. The BJP won 104 seats and the Congress finished a distant third with nine. "Is the nomination of specialised people in MCD of that much concern to the Centre? Actually, giving this power to the LG would effectively mean that he can destabilise the democratically elected Municipal Committees because they (aldermen) will have voting powers also," the top Court had said. Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for the Delhi Government, had contended that no separate powers have been accorded to the State Government to nominate people to the MCD, and for the past 30 years, the practice of the LG nominating aldermen on the aid and advice of the city Government has been followed. Then Additional Solicitor General Sanjay Jain, appearing for the LG's office had submitted that just because a practice has been followed for 30 years



does not mean it is correct. The bench had observed that giving the LG the power to nominate aldermen will effectively mean that he can destabilise a democratically-elected MCD because these aldermen get appointed to the standing committees and have voting power. Earlier, the top Court had asked about the "source of power" of the LG under the Constitution and the law to nominate aldermen to the MCD without the aid and advice of the elected Government. The ASG had referred to the reply filed by the office of the LG and the constitutional scheme to assert the concept of 'aid and advice', in the context of the administrator's power to nominate members to the MCD, is different from the one which has been projected by the Delhi Government here. He had argued that the file pertaining to nominations to the MCD come directly to the office of LG as he is the administrator, and the concept of aid and advice is not applicable in this case. Singhvi had referred to the 2018 constitution bench judgement of the apex Court and its recent verdict on control over services to claim the LG has to act as per the aid and advice of the Government. The senior lawyer contended the LG should have taken back the nominations by now. "There are 12 zones, 12 ward committees and aldermen can be appointed to any committee... For the first time in the last 30 years, the LG has directly appointed members in the MCD and earlier it was always based on aid and advice (of the Government)," Singhvi had said in this arguments.

# Govt to revoke Nicholson statue's national monument status

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a dramatic twist, the Government has launched the process to strip the Nicholson Statue of its status as a Monument of National Importance, revealing a striking lapse in historical oversight. The statue, once proudly standing at Kashmiri Gate in the national capital to honor John Nicholson—a British officer notorious for his role in the 1857 Mutiny—was clandestinely shipped to Northern Ireland in 1958. Despite its absence for so many years, it remained on India's list of significant monuments until now. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has however moved to issue a draft notification proposing the removal of the statue from its prestigious list. Nicholson, who led the British forces in recapturing

Delhi during the mutiny, had been celebrated for his controversial role. However, the official stance now acknowledges the statue's non-existence at its original location. "The statue's removal and its absence from Kashmiri Gate necessitate its declassification as a monument of national importance," admitted an official from the ASI. The draft notification issued on July 25 and signed by Yadubir Singh Rawat, Director General says, "whereas, the Central Government is of the opinion that monument namely Nicholson Statue and its



platform, and the surrounding gardens, paths and enclosure wall, outside the Kashmiri gate, Delhi, declared protected vide notification..... in 1913, in

the Gazette of India, Calcutta... have ceased to be of national importance." "Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by section 35 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 (24 of 1958), the Central Government hereby gives notice of its intention to declare that the said monument has ceased to be of national importance for the purposes of said Act." The draft notification opens a 60-day window for public objections, inviting feedback to the Director General of ASI. What is more intriguing

is that the ASI's move to delist the statue from the list of monuments of national importance follows a scathing report from the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), which exposed the ASI's shocking oversight. The CAG highlighted that several monuments, including Nicholson's, were listed as important despite being missing. The report disclosed that, out of 1,655 protected sites, 92 were unaccounted for, underscoring a severe lapse in the ASI's records. The CAG report also said that on more than one occasion the culture Minister has told Parliament that 35 of its monuments have gone missing. When the CAG checked about 1,655 protected monuments and sites—comprising 45 per cent of the total—they found 92 monuments missing.

# Wayanad death toll crosses 370

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Sunday, the sixth day of the landslide and deluge in Wayanad district, turned out to be a heart-rending day as the district administration performed mass burial of eight unidentified bodies out of the 40 retrieved by the rescue team National Disaster Response Team. Unconfirmed reports said that the death toll in Tuesday's landslide and deluge crossed 370 by Sunday though the district administration remained tight-lipped about the number of lives lost in the disaster.

It is believed that the bodies belonged to the residents of Mundakkai and Chooralmala villages that perished in the landslide. There were parts of human bodies like hands, legs etc which were accorded the status of a human body for last rites. Nearly 60 cents of the Harrison Plantation was earmarked for the burial, since 35 bodies are yet to be identified, the district administration has held back the burial for collecting the DNA samples for future needs. The last rites of the eight unidentified bodies



were performed with all-religion prayers. The function was attended by hundreds of people from the other parts of the district and those who had lost their near and dear ones in the mishap. The State Government announced that a new and secured township would be developed at a safe location for those who lost their houses. V Sivankutty, the education minister, declared that he would undertake the reconstruction of a higher secondary school in Mundakkai which was washed away in the deluge. Arif Mohammed Khan, the

governor of the State, who had been to the national capital to attend the Governors' Conference convened by the President, told reporters that the Centre would do everything that is needed for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the disaster stricken Wayanad district. Governor is closely monitoring the situation in Wayanad district on an hourly basis. Governor Arif Mohammed Khan was the first authority to reach the disaster site on Tuesday and spent a whole day supervising the rescue operations. It was taking a cue

from him the State cabinet and other political leaders reached the inaccessible terrain.

Officers and engineers of the Indian Army continue scanning the region with thermal imaging radar and scanners to find out whether any more persons remain trapped in the flood affected regions.

Two more dead bodies and remains of some persons were retrieved from the Chaliyar Puzha (River).

According to unconfirmed reports, 2250 persons have been accommodated in relief camps in Wayanad and Malappuram district. Kerala Finance Minister K N Balagopalan said on Sunday that funds would not be an issue for rebuilding a new Wayanad.

P A Mohammed Riyaz, minister for public works, who is the second-in-command of the Kerala Government, issued a stern warning to the people asking them not to visit the mishap site till further orders. "I will not allow the promotion of disaster tourism in Wayanad," said Riyaz, who is also the son-in-law of chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

# BJP, JD(S) continue protest march against Mysuru site allotment scam

PTI ■ RAMANAGARA (KARNATAKA)

The opposition BJP and JD(S), on Sunday continued their week-long protest march from Bengaluru to Mysuru for the second day, against alleged Mysuru Urban Development Authority site allotment scam, seeking to corner the Congress government and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. The 'Mysuru Chalo padayatre' against the alleged fraudulent allotment of sites to land losers by MUDA, including to Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi and demanding his resignation -- on the second day, began at Bidadi here and is scheduled to cover a distance of 22 km to reach Kengal.

BJP State President and MLA B Y Vijayendra, JD(S) State President and Union Minister H D Kumaraswamy, Opposition Leader in Legislative Council Chalavadi Narayanswamy, JD(S) leader Nikhil Kumaraswamy, several legislators, leaders and workers from both parties



took part. A large number of workers and leaders from both parties were seen marching, shouting slogans against Siddaramaiah and the Congress government led by him, holding BJP and JD(S) flags and placards, amidst drum beats. The stretch through which the march passed was decked up with flags of both parties, bunting and portraits of prominent leaders at several places. Kick-started on Saturday at Kengeri near Bengaluru, the march on its first day covered a distance of 16 km to reach Bidadi.

Addressing the gathering ahead of the march, Vijayendra said the ruling Congress, Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar are "trembling", following the opposition's protest march. "I have seen in the media that the CM and DCM are now questioning the opposition parties as we have begun the protest march, it is for the first time probably the ruling party is questioning the opposition. We are raising our voice against the corrupt Congress government, in favour of SC/STs, backward classes, poor and

downtrodden people," he said.

Alleging that the Congress after coming to power has indulged in loot, Vijayendra accused Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar of offering the looted money to the "Gandhi family" (Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi). "If we question them about the loot, they (govt) are running away from answering it. They are questioning us today." The Congress is holding public meetings to counter the BJP-JD(S) foot march to Mysuru, by targeting both parties and the Union government.

Kumaraswamy, in his address said, the day the Congress came to power in the state, it opened its "shop of corruption". He accused it of looting the money that was to be used for the welfare of the people of the state.

"There is competition among the Ministers, they are indulging in corruption. We have accused the government with records. But, they are making false allegations against the opposition without any document or proof," he said.

# Govt incorporated employee suggestions in revised Budget: Rajasthan CM Bhajanlal

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma on Sunday said keeping in mind the interests of the state's employees and pensioners, the government has made provisions by incorporating their suggestions in the revised state Budget 2024-25, he said. Sharma was addressing the thanksgiving meeting on budget announcements for state employees and pensioners at the chief minister's residence on Sunday. In a statement, he said the state government is committed to the interests of the employees and their families.

He said pensioners are a source of inspiration for society. The experience and knowledge of pensioners is an invaluable asset for the development of the state.

The chief minister said the state government has made many important announcements in this Budget for the welfare of employees and pensioners like salary discrepancy reform, increase in maximum gratuity amount, increase in pension, and improvement in medical facilities.

He said that in the state, there is a facility of pension at an increased rate for those above 75 years of age. Now, the state government has also announced an additional 5 per cent



allowance for pensioners between 70 and 75 years. Also, in accordance with the Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules, 2021, family pension will be available at an increased rate for 10 years in case of death of personnel while in service after April 1, 2024. The chief Minister alleged the previous government made "tempting announcements" without Budget provision keeping only the elections in mind.

# Tipra MLA urges Shah to form infiltrator identification committee

PTI ■ AGARTALA

Tipra Motha MLA Ranjit Debarma has written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah seeking his intervention to constitute a committee to identify foreigners who have entered Tripura illegally and to deport them to their respective countries.

Debarma alleged that a large number of Bangladeshi nationals from Chittagong hill tracts entered Tripura and are residing in areas like Chawmanu and Gandacherra in Dhalai district and Karbook and Silcherri in Gumati district - all under Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) area and are a threat to the country's security.

"A large number of foreigners are entering Indian territory taking advantage of the weak security system in the Indo-



Bangla border. Infiltration has increased in the last few months," he wrote in the letter to Shah on Saturday.

"There are reports that Rohingyas have entered Indian territory using Tripura and are a threat to the country's security," the Tipra Motha MLA said.

Debarma urged the Union Home Minister to constitute a high power committee

involving civil, police and judicial officers for identification and foreigners who have illegally entered Tripura and push them back to their countries.

Road crash in Rajasthan leaves four dead Jaipur, Aug 4 (PTI) Four members of a family were killed and five others injured when their car rammed into a truck on the Delhi-Mumbai

Expressway in Rajasthan's Sawai Madhopur district on Sunday, police said.

The deceased had gone to Rishikesh in Uttarakhand for a religious programme where a woman of the family died. After cremation, the family members were returning to Vikramgarh-Alot in Madhya Pradesh's Ratlam district when the accident occurred.

"Prima facie, the car driver dozed off due to which the car rammed into a truck moving ahead near Bhagwatgarh-Trilokpura Banas river falling under Surwal police station," Deputy Superintendent of Police Hemendra Kumar said. The bodies of the deceased and the injured were taken to a hospital of Sawai Madhopur by an ambulance.

The deceased were identified as Rajan (22), his sister Monica (24), Rekha (42) and her mother Dhapu Prajapat (60).



# GRP, RPF need valid tickets for train travel, rules tribunal

PTI ■ Ahmedabad

GRP and RPF personnel must obtain a travel authority or purchase a ticket for train travel and carrying only the ID card is not enough, the Railway Claims Tribunal ruled dismissing the plea for compensation filed by a constable who claimed to be on official duty when he fell off a train.

The Ahmedabad bench of the tribunal also underlined the "negligent attitude of Railway" regarding a circular on issuing duty card passes to Government Railway Police (GRP) personnel required to travel frequently. GRP constable Rajesh Bagul had moved the tribunal seeking Rs 8 lakh compensation with interest from Railway claiming he was on official duty on the day of the accident. Bagul went to Surat railway police station for official duty on November 13, 2019.

He was returning from Surat to Bharuch on the Surat-Jamnagar intercity train when he fell off at Palej station, causing serious injuries to his left leg, leading to its amputation above the knee, as per his petition.

Tribunal Member (Judicial) Vinay Goel dismissed the petition noting Bagul had failed to provide any valid travel authority to prove his official travel claims.



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# Court sentences 17 people for stripping woman in Rajasthan

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Nearly a year after a 20-year-old pregnant woman was stripped and paraded naked in Rajasthan, a district court has sentenced 14 men, including her husband, to seven-year imprisonment while noting that it was a "heinous crime" similar to the one committed in Manipur. Chief Judicial Magistrate, Pratapgarh, Ramkanya Soni on Saturday also sentenced three women involved in the case to five-year imprisonment, Special Public Prosecutor in the case, Manish Nagar said. While observing that women are revered in the country as goddesses and that the



ancient scriptures also mention honouring women, he said violence and atrocities are continuing on women in 'kalyug' (depraved and final age of Hindu world cycle). "It was a serious crime committed against the woman by the accused. Similar heinous crime was committed in Manipur. Such crimes cause emotional hurt to the women. Strict steps are necessary to curb crime

against women then only crime will reduce," the judge said in the order.

He was apparently referring to two women being paraded naked in strife-torn Manipur last year.

Besides the victim's husband Kanha Meena, the court sentenced Khetia Meena, Motiya alias Motilal Meena, Punia Meena, Kesra alias Kesrimal Meena, Suraj Meena, Pintu Meena, Nathulal Meena, Manaram alias Veniya Meena, Netia Meena, Rupa Meena, Gautam Meena, Ramlal Meena, Ramesh Meena to seven-year imprisonment.

Three women --Indra Meena, Mirki Meena and Jhumli Meena -- were sentenced to five-year imprisonment.

# Coaching centres in basements will be sealed: Patna DM

PTI ■ PATNA

The Patna district administration on Sunday said that any coaching centre found to be running from the basement of a building in the district will be sealed forthwith.

Patna District Magistrate (DM) Chandrashekhar Singh, who has launched an inspection drive ever since three civil servant aspirants died in an institute in Delhi, said that so far no coaching centre here was found to be running from the basement. "Officials of the district administration have been given clear instructions to immediately seal those coaching institutes which are running from the basement. This is simply a violation of



the existing norms of running a coaching institute. However, so far district officials, who are conducting the inspection of coaching centres, have not found even a single institute in the state capital which is running from the basement," the DM told PTI on Sunday. The Patna district administration has given a month to coaching institutes to fully comply with the rules. They must obtain mandatory

registration to run coaching centres in the district. Strict action will be taken against those centres who fail to comply with the existing provisions after a month, the DM said.

"The district administration has so far (in the last six days) received applications from around 1,100 coaching centres in Patna for registration/renewal. Their applications are under process. The district administration has also decided to launch an online system of single Window Clearance' for all mandatory clearances/permissions to coaching institutes in the district ... A portal will be launched for the purpose within a few days," said the DM.

# Assam's 30-year-old fake encounter case closed with compensation payment

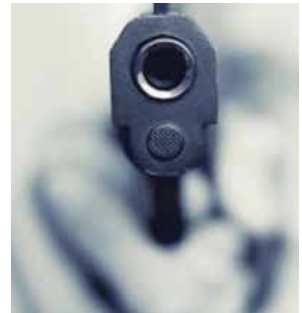
PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Thirty years after five youths were killed in an alleged fake encounter in Assam, their family members have been given a compensation of Rs 20 lakh each on court's direction, bringing to a close a long legal battle. Seven accused army personnel, including a Major General and two Colonels, escaped from any punishment even though a military court initially and a CBI inquiry found they were involved in the alleged crime.

A review of the case by Court Martial authorities later took some further evidence and announced that the army personnel were 'not guilty'.

All these army personnel are retired now. Prabin Sonowal, Akhil Sonowal, Debajit Biswas, Pradip Dutta and Bhupen Moran were picked up by a team of army personnel of the 18th Punjab Regiment on February 17 and 19, 1994 from their homes or offices in Assam's Tinsukia district following the killing of a tea garden manager by the banned insurgent group ULFA a few days earlier.

On February 23, 1994, the bodies of the five youths were handed over to the local police station where the army claimed they were killed in an "encounter". "It was not an encounter but a fake encounter as all the



youths were innocent and had no connection with ULFA. As per the post mortem report, the victims were found with their eyes gauged out, nails removed and knees broken. Such things cannot happen in an actual encounter," said the then student leader Jagadish Bhuyan, who filed a habeas

corpus in the case in 1994 in Gauhati High Court.

After an inquiry, the CBI filed a change sheet in a local court in Guwahati in 2002 saying the agency had arrived at its conclusion that it is "disbelievable that the injuries that were found on the deceased persons were caused in any encounter".

Accordingly, the CBI held that five army personnel - the then Captain R K Shivrain (later Colonel), JCOs and NCOs Dalip Singh, Palwinder Singh, Shivender Singh and Jagdev Singh - were "responsible for the killing" of the five persons as they "had actually opened fire on them" and therefore, liable to be prosecuted for murder charges.

# Task force to clear encroachments, illegal resorts in forests, western ghats

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Forest Minister Keshwar Khandre on Sunday said the state government has constituted a forests and western ghats encroachment clearance task force to clear illegal resorts, home stays and all forest encroachments in the entire ghat regions of the state, including the western ghats, which covers 10 districts. This task force has been formed under the leadership of Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Head of Forest Force, and it will carry out forest encroachment clearance operations in western ghats and other ghat areas from tomorrow itself, the Minister



said in a statement. Khandre had on Friday directed the forest department's additional chief secretary to issue orders for the removal of all forest encroachments that have sprung up after 2015 in the western ghats region, and to submit an action taken report in a month's time. Pointing to terrible tragedies caused by

landslides at Wayanad in neighbouring Kerala and Shirur in Uttara Kannada district, resulting in loss of lives, Khandre said hills that existed for thousands of years have disappeared, landslides are continuously occurring in the western ghats region of the state including Shiradi Ghat, Charmadi Ghat. He said, "if we do not wake up now, the next generation will not forgive us."

The Minister said clear instructions have been given to carry out clearance operations in all the cases where the 64A (of the Karnataka Forest Act) process has been completed with regards to the encroachment in the forests in the Ghat areas after 2015.





## FIRST COLUMN

## A HOLISTIC APPROACH FOR HEALING A TROUBLED MIND

Through spiritual practices and positive affirmations, one can find the peace



RAVI VALLURI

Recently I received a message on my cell, "I am the son of Lord Krishna, I keep visiting Tirumala, yet I take drugs. Why do I suffer? Kindly help me!" My response was, "Meet a psychiatrist, undergo counselling, and undertake a holistic programme of wellness." But the caller remained unsatisfied and kept pestering me with a flurry of such messages. This person was positively in a state of misery and fear. His crutch and lifeboat were Lord Krishna. The mind of the caller was both fragmented and deeply disturbed. He appeared to be in a state of imbalance. Patanjali Yoga Sutras have identified the following as root causes of miseries in life—Avidya, Asmita, Raga, Dwesha and Abhinivesha. 1) Avidya—This is nothing but a lack of knowledge or ignorance. Everything around us keeps changing constantly. It could be our cells, blood, stomach linings, and hair to name some. But we are oblivious to the change. 2) Asmita—This is our intellect and our self. We get stubbornly stuck to our opinions. The caller was fixated on the idea that he was the child of Lord Krishna and stayed put at Tirumala. Yet he was partaking in drugs. 3) Raga—This is nothing but craving. Normally craving arises out of certain pleasurable experiences of the past. It has a deep imprint on the mind. But such impressions only aggravate our wants and misery. 4) Dwesha—Is nothing but hatred. Hatred is antithetical to craving. Though it arises out of craving, the premise is an unpleasant experience. This could be because of certain trag-



ic moments in the past or unrealistic expectations which do not materialise. 5) Abhinivesha—This is fear of the unknown. An emotion that affects all of us. Only a clairvoyant sage through penance and austerity overcomes this barrier. The caller proclaiming to be the son of Lord Krishna was in obvious pain and agony. He could experience ecstasy only through scientific help that is, consulting a psychiatrist, taking proper medication and a wellness programme. The troubled individual's mind could have undergone say the Happiness Programme of the Art of Living or Vipassana to combat fear. But he remained an escapist by not attending either. This is how a fragmented and escapist mind reacts. The caller continued to escape and obviate the inevitable. It keeps hunting for excuses, and alternatives. Invariably the cloak of negativity and ignorance shrouds the mind from combating the problem. Exercising all love, caution, and care, I asked him to chant "Om Namah Shivay", 108 times thrice a day to purge his mind of all negative thoughts and by making positive affirmations through writing "I am happy, healthy and peaceful". This task was also to be done thrice daily 108 times, and the tapas was to be continued for 41 days. In case a day is missed for some reason, repeat the process for 41 days. Such signals to the mind are extremely useful and powerful. The mind then responds to positivity and discards negative feelings and emotions. He has not contacted me thus far. Presumably, he has embarked on the journey of tapas and hopefully has found support and a beacon of light in the dark tunnel. His Ishta Devata, Lord Krishna wielded Sudarshan Chakra wading through negativity and impurity. Sudarshan Kriya, Pranayama, Yoga and Meditation will certainly swathe through the cobwebs of his troubled mind and increase his Prana, Chi, or energy to obliterate the negativity. I am waiting for the 41 days to end so that he can be happy, healthy, and peaceful and lead a purposeful life.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

## The global crisis of over-tourism

Around the world, over-tourism is emerging as a big problem. The overwhelming influx of tourists causes significant hardships for local residents and destinations



ARCHANA DATTA



The growing problem of over-tourism across the globe! Archana Datta Recently, thousands of residents of Barcelona in Spain, protested against tourism, urging tourists to 'go home', waving placards and squirting water guns at outdoor diners, averring that tourists increased prices and put pressure on public services in Spain's most visited city. Not only Barcelona alone, Venice also introduced a five euro entrance fee to dissuade day-trippers from crowding into the city's limited space and public resources. Japan, too, has put up a giant screen to block views of Mount Fuji to discourage tourists from gatherings at the iconic spot. Closer home, in Chikmagalur, Karnataka, police resorted to a special drive at tourist destinations to curb the unruly behaviour of visiting tourists. Now, people have been travelling for centuries, and have traditionally been welcomed to visit countries. While, in India, the spirit of 'atithi devo bhava', treating guests as Gods, prevailed. Over the years, travel as tourism, has turned into one of the most important economic sectors. The ease in global air connectivity and people's increasing craze for exotic visits, adventure and leisure in the internet-connected world, created an unprecedented rise in the number of tourists, which, eventually, evoked a 'tourist phobia', an aversion and social rejection among the locals, as happened in Spain, and elsewhere. In 2019, when, 1.5 billion international tourist arrivals were recorded, a hike of 4% from the previous year, the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) called for managing 'such a growth of tourists responsibly to best seize the opportunities that tourism can generate for com-



ONE TOURIST PRODUCES FROM 1 TO 12 KG OF SOLID WASTE PER DAY WHEN VISITING A NEW PLACE, DEPENDING ON FACTORS LIKE LOCATION, THE TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION, PERSONAL PREFERENCES, AND THE CHARACTER OF THE STAY

munities around the world'. While, tourism has been described as 'the excessive growth of visitors in areas where residents suffer negative consequences such as permanent changes to their lifestyles, denial of access to civic amenities and damages in their general well-being' (Milano et al., 2019). It has a social dimension too that 'impairs the place-person interrelationships and induces changes in residents' attitudes towards tourism' (Gössling et al., 2020). Over tourism, also makes urban life 'more tense and stressful' and for women 'a concern for safety in public space'. (Maja Hristov, Nebojša Stefanovic, Nataša Danilovic Hristic, Serbia, 2021). However, the present-day discourses predominantly veer around the issue of sustainability (Gowreesunkar & Thanh, 2020), as tourist hotspots are mostly located in sensitive ecosystems. Water, a precious natural resource, gets seriously misused by the tourism sector affecting the water cycle of the area. In Zanzibar, an average household consumes a little over 93 litres of water per day, while, the average consumption per room in a guesthouse is 686 litres, 7 times more, which in a luxurious 5-star hotel room, rises to 3,000+ litres of water per day. Spain, an important producer of vegetables and fruits for Europe, struggles over water utilisation in two competing economic sectors, tourism and agriculture (Water Equity in

Tourism, 2012). While, a 2022 study said that in case of water scarcity, women are the most affected ones, as it worsens their daily life tasks. One tourist produces from 1 to 12 kg of solid waste per day when visiting a new place, depending on factors like location, the type of accommodation, personal preferences, and the character of the stay. If the present trend continues, there will be an increase of 251 per cent in solid waste production because of tourism by 2050 (UNEP). Cruise ships are among the top polluters, and their raw sewage affects the coral reefs. Sewage from Mexico's tourism industry threatens the Caribbean coast, and the Mesoamerican Reef has already lost 80 per cent of corals to pollution. In 2023, Santorini Island in Greece, which has a population of fifteen thousand, received around 800 cruise ships, which caused a layer of pollution around the caldera. Notwithstanding, tourism is an economic powerhouse. The Travel & Tourism sector (T&T) witnessed a boom in 2019, accounting for 10.5% of all jobs (334 million), and 10.4% of global GDP (US\$ 10.3 trillion). In India, in 2019, the T&T sector was worth about \$194.3 billion, added 6.8% to the GDP and employed 40 million people. By 2033, the tourism industry is slated to represent 11.6% of the global economy. While, women comprise 54% of the workforce, but, they are mostly in lower-

skilled, lower-paid and often in informal employment (UNWTO). Now, some cities have gone for new or revised taxation, fines, etc, to de-market tourism. However, tourism de-growth cannot be considered a remedy, which can push tourism-dependent local economies into crisis, as happened in Myanmar's temple city, Bagan, where people suffer to make ends meet for want of visitors, as the country is deep into civil wars. While, regenerative tourism as an antidote, was mooted in 1987 in the Brundtland Report, which set the tone for 'building back better', going beyond the concept of 'not damaging the environment'. The UN called for a holistic understanding of living systems in the entire tourism ecosystem, as everything is inter-connected, the government, private sector, voluntary sector, and the communities'. The tourism industries should also operate in a new way by discarding the 'make-use and dispose' linear extractive model and fit themselves into a circular economy model of 'reuse/no waste', the world body urged. Isn't it high time for the burgeoning tourism sector to follow the path of regeneration, and herald an era of intergenerational equity, without compromising the planet for future generations? (The author is former Director General, Doordarshan, All India Radio)

## Jammu and Kashmir post-Article 370: Tackling terrorism and ensuring integration

Recent terrorist attacks in Jammu highlight the necessity for a having deeper emotional connect with the people and addressing their concerns

This is a 'Stop Press' moment for Jammu and Kashmir after the significant and benefiting legislation of the abrogation of Article 370 - a step towards demystifying and demolishing the 'special status' of Jammu and Kashmir which was a hydra-headed invitation to the West to make a spectacle of India's extreme problems of terrorism as it was and is being transported from Pakistan and India's Foreign Minister Dr. Jai Shankar has often enlightened us on our Nation's self-interest. I say the 'Stop Press' moment because there has been a spike in terrorist attacks in Jammu and Kashmir, especially in Jammu and has brought under the lens the



PRATIBHA CHOPRA

local support for Pakistan terrorists. So what does the 'Stop Press' moment signify? In this 'stop press' moment, we need to dig deep - the abrogation of Article 370- will not integrate into the body-politic on its own - it has to be integrated as a living experience to attain validation in the Being and Soul of Jammu and Kashmir and its people. The definition of the people

of Jammu and Kashmir is 'Indians' where Indians from the rest of the country also become an active agency. This calls for a few hardcore resolute living and active steps- the foremost being understanding the minds of the people of Jammu and Kashmir - a lot has been done - but we need to engage with this relentlessly and break the ice to pierce their 'special status', 'isolation' and 'exclusivity' which has not done them any good except for dragging them into the mindless narrative of asking for 'autonomy' and realizing it the hard way that Pakistan has always worked out of bounds, and still does so, to 'keep' them in a perpetual zone of con-

flict. This brings us to a preparation for working towards democratic strengthening and consolidation of institutional structures in consonance with the reality of Jammu and Kashmir as the Government of India wants to see it after the abrogation of Article 370. Needless to say, all those developmental questions that are normally addressed in any State or Union Territory of India need to be addressed, foremost being economic egalitarianism. The Congress Party must keep its mouth shut and let the present govt. led by the Prime Minister Modi do its work in Jammu and Kashmir with the infrastructure and development, as



Union Minister Nitin Gadkari would have it. The Congress has through the years mutilated all the Federal aspects of the Constitution of India to politically force a Centralised hegemony. The present Govt. does not intend to treat Kashmir as a communal cauldron and a battleground for Hindutva

and rightly so, therefore it is building infrastructure there. The whole idea of the abrogation of Art. 370 would bear fruit if religious and ethnic exclusiveness were not exploited negatively but used towards international trade and commerce in the best cultural parlance. In the same breath I would say that the Muslim majority

could suggest itself to confine its international commitments to religious brotherhood and political proximities within the respectful questioning bounds and press freedom, this press freedom not being an absolute right but subject to the upholding of the Sovereignty and Integrity of India and its Dignity as envisaged in the Constitution of India. As far as the question of 'Kashmiriyat' is concerned, nobody is stopping or stalling this journey as long as it is within the legitimacy of the Constitutional provisions and the artistic license that it provides. And there may be questions of class and caste here that cannot be ignored if we are

to sound and purport real. We will never forget the Indian Army, the soldiers who never fail us in the treacherous terrains of Jammu Kashmir, Ladhak & Siachen in the said region. We give them the space in our hearts for they do not hide behind any 'political' discourses and tricks and are the first agency of the Social Contract that a Nation State is based on. Their relentless invincibility and risk-taking bravado have no given path to tread but every day is a new challenge. Let all our actions as envisioned in the above paras be a tribute to the soldiers of the Indian Army and it is on us to do our duty now and here. (The writer is a lawyer; views are personal)

# Strikes on Gaza kill 18; two dead in Tel Aviv

AP ■ TEL AVIV

Israeli strikes killed 18 people in Gaza early on Sunday, including four Palestinians in a tent camp inside a hospital complex, while a stabbing attack by a Palestinian killed two people in a Tel Aviv suburb. Tensions have soared following nearly 10 months of war in Gaza and the killing last week of a senior Hezbollah commander in Lebanon and Hamas' top political leader in Iran. Iran and its allies have blamed Israel and threatened retaliation, raising fears of an even more destructive regional war.

"The state of Israel is in a multi-front war," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told a Cabinet meeting, and said the country was ready for any scenario in defence or attack. Jordan's foreign minister was making a rare trip to Iran as the United States and its Arab allies try to prevent a wider conflict. Already, Hamas says it has begun discussions on choosing a new leader. The stabbing attack in Tel Aviv



Palestinians react to fire from an Israeli strike that hit a tent area in the courtyard of Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital in Deir al-Balah, Gaza Strip, on Sunday. AP/PTI

killed a woman in her 70s and an 80-year-old man, according to Israel's Magen David Adom rescue service and a nearby hospital, and two other men were wounded. The police said the attack was carried out by a

Palestinian militant, who was "neutralised."

In Gaza, an Israeli strike hit a tent camp for thousands of displaced Palestinians in the courtyard of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, killing four people,

including one woman, and injuring others, Gaza's Health Ministry said. An Associated Press journalist filmed men rushing to the scene to retrieve bodies while trying to extinguish the fire.

The Israeli military said it targeted a Palestinian militant in the strike, which it said caused secondary explosions, "indicating the presence of weaponry in the area."

The hospital in Deir al-Balah is the main medical facility operating in central Gaza as many others in the territory no longer function. A separate strike on a home near Deir al-Balah killed a girl and her parents, according to the hospital.

Another strike flattened a house in northern Gaza, killing at least eight people, including three children, their parents and their grandmother, according to the Health Ministry. A further three people were killed in a strike on a vehicle in Gaza City, according to the Civil Defense first responders who operate under the Hamas-run government.

Palestinian militants in Gaza fired at least five projectiles at Israeli communities near the border without causing casualties or damage, the military said. An Israeli strike on Saturday at a school-turned-shelter in Gaza City killed at

least 16 people and wounded another 21, according to the Health Ministry, which announced the toll on Sunday. Israel's military, which regularly accuses Palestinian militants of sheltering in civilian areas, said it struck a Hamas command center. The war in Gaza was triggered by Hamas' October 7 attack into Israel that killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took around 250 people hostage.

Israel's massive offensive in response has killed at least 39,580 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants. Heavy airstrikes and ground operations have caused widespread destruction and displaced the vast majority of Gaza's 2.3 million people, often multiple times.

Hezbollah and Israel have continued to trade fire along the Lebanon border since the war began, with the severity growing in recent months. The militant group says it's aimed at relieving pressure on fellow Iran-backed ally Hamas.

# 100 arrested as anti-immigrant clashes spread across UK

PTI ■ LONDON

Police forces across the UK have made at least 100 arrests as violent clashes and unrest involving anti-immigration far-right groups continued to spread over the weekend, with Prime Minister Keir Starmer offering his full support to officers to take firm action against the "extremists".

Bricks being hurled, fireworks thrown, windows of a hotel housing asylum seekers smashed, shops attacked and set on fire and several scuffles breaking out between mobs and the police were among the scenes of confrontation that played out in Liverpool, Hull, Bristol, Leeds, Blackpool, Stoke-on-Trent, Belfast, Nottingham and Manchester on Saturday.

UK Home Secretary Yvette Cooper warned the mobs they will "pay the price" for such "criminal disorder and violent thuggery".

"Addressing the scenes of disorder we have seen, the Prime Minister set out that the police have our full support to take action against extremists on our streets who are attacking police officers, disrupting local businesses and attempting to sow hate by intimidating communities," Downing Street said after a high-level meeting of ministers convened by Starmer on Saturday.

"The Prime Minister ended by saying the right to freedom of expression and the violent disorder we have seen are two very different things. He said there is no excuse for violence of any kind and reiterated that the government backs the police to take all necessary action to keep our streets safe," the statement added.

Groups that monitor anti-Muslim incidents across the UK have said there has been an increase in reports from British Muslims expressing concerns for their safety, with many scared to visit their local mosques. "People particularly are frightened because of the

colour of their skin, and that cannot be right and that is something this government will take every action to deal with," UK Policing Minister Diana Johnson told the BBC.

"When I saw people looting some of the shops in the city centre, that's nothing to do with genuine protest or people having different opinions about immigration. That's about criminal behaviour that needs to be dealt with," she said, warning the culprits there are "sufficient prison places" for such "criminal behaviour".

Officials at the UK Ministry of Justice are said to be in discussions with the judiciary, as well as police chiefs and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) for magistrates' courts to open longer hours to speedily process the expected surge in the number of people in custody for riot-related offences.

Wales-born Axel Muganwa Rudakubana, 17, from Lancashire, has been charged with the stabbing attack on the Taylor Swift theme children's dance workshop in Southport, north-west England, which was the first site of the unrest earlier in the week.

It was triggered after false claims spread online that the suspect, who is of Rwandan heritage, was an asylum seeker who had arrived in the UK on a small boat. Since then, misinformation has continued to spread across social media and resulted in violent demonstrations involving anti-immigrant chants by protesters in different parts of the country.

Merseby Police in Southport publicly identified the English Defence League (EDL) as a key factor — a group that does not exist in a formal sense but its founder, Tommy Robinson, is associated with using the social media space to whip up far-right sentiments. Stand Up to Racism, among the groups organising some of the counter-protests, has warned that the activities of the extremist mobs must not be "unopposed".

# Jordan's top envoy to make rare Iran visit

Tehran (AP): Jordan's foreign minister is expected in Iran on Sunday, as the United States and its Arab allies try to prevent a wider war after the back-to-back killings of top Iran-allied militants sparked vows of revenge against Israel.

Ayman Safadi would be the first senior Jordanian official to pay an official visit to Iran in over 20 years. Jordan is a close Western ally and helped intercept scores of missiles and drones fired by Iran toward Israel in April. Iran said it was retaliating for the killing of its generals in an Israeli strike in Syria.

Many fear Iran and its regional allies could launch a similar attack following the killing of a senior Hezbollah commander in an Israeli strike on Beirut last week and of Hamas' top political leader in an explosion in Tehran a day later.

Both attacks were widely blamed on Israel, which has acknowledged killing the

Hezbollah commander. Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas have vowed to avenge the killings.

Safadi "will deliver a message from His Majesty King Abdullah II to Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on the situation in the region and bilateral relations," Jordan's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Safadi is expected to meet with his counterpart, Ali Bagheri Khan, and other senior officials in Tehran later on Sunday, Iran's state-run IRNA news agency reported. The last time a senior Jordanian official traveled to Iran on an official visit was in 2004 when then-Prime Minister Faisal al-Fayez went to Tehran. Last week, Jordan sent a lower-ranking official to the inauguration of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian. Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, who was also in Tehran to attend the ceremony, died in an explosion that Iranian authorities have said was caused by a short-range projectile.

# Suspected missile attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels hits container ship

AP ■ DUBAI

A suspected missile attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels struck a container ship traveling through the Gulf of Aden, authorities said on Sunday, likely the first assault by the group since Israeli airstrikes targeted them.

The Houthis have offered no explanation for the two-week pause in their attacks on shipping through the Red Sea corridor, which have seen similar slowdowns since the assaults began in November over Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip. But the resumption comes after the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran, the Houthis' main benefactor, amid renewed concerns over the war breaking out into a regional conflict.

The attack on Saturday happened some 225 kilometers (140 miles) southeast of Aden in a stretch of the Gulf of Aden that has seen numerous Houthi



Smoke rises after a strike in an area in Lebanon next to the Israeli-Lebanese border at the Galilee region on Sunday. AP/PTI

attacks previously. A security official on the vessel said a missile struck the vessel, but "no fires, water ingress or oil leaks have been observed", according to a statement from the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations centre, a clearinghouse for information on attacks in the Mideast. The UKMTO did not

immediately identify the vessel hit. The private security firm Ambrey also reported the attack. Details reported by the two organisations suggested the vessel targeted was the Liberian-flagged container ship Groton, which had left Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates bound for Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The Groton's Greek

managers did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The Houthis did not immediately claim the attack Saturday. However, it can take the rebels hours or even days before they acknowledge an assault.

The rebels have targeted more than 70 vessels by firing missiles and drones in their campaign that have killed four sailors. They have seized one vessel and sunk two in the time since. Other missiles and drones have been either intercepted by a US-led coalition in the Red Sea or splashed down before reaching their targets.

The Houthis maintain that their attacks target ships linked to Israel, the United States or Britain as part of the rebels' campaign they say seeks to force an end to the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip. However, many of the ships attacked have little or no connection to the war — including some bound for Iran.

# Harris rejects Trump's offer to shift presidential debate

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris has rejected her Republican rival Donald Trump's offer to shift the presidential debate to the Fox News channel, media reports said on Sunday.

Trump, 78, and President Joe Biden — who was then in the race to the White House — agreed in May to participate in two presidential debates. The first was in June, hosted by CNN, and the second — to be hosted by ABC News — was scheduled for September 10.

Biden withdrew from the race last month, following which Vice-President Harris, who is of Indian and African heritage, was declared the 2024 presidential nominee of the ruling Democratic Party after she won enough votes from Democratic delegates in a virtual roll call. On Saturday, Trump said that he has agreed to an offer from

Fox News to hold a debate with Vice President Harris on September 4, shifting from the original plan, CBS News reported.

"I have agreed with FoxNews to debate Kamala Harris on Wednesday, September 4th. The debate was previously scheduled against Sleepy Joe Biden on ABC, but has been terminated in that Biden will no longer be a participant, and I am in litigation against ABC Network and George Sorosopodoulos, thereby creating a conflict of interest," he said.

Meanwhile, Harris took to X to turn down Trump's debate offer on Fox News.

"It's interesting how "any time, any place" becomes "one specific time, one specific safe space." I'll be there on September 10th, like he agreed to. I hope to see him there," Harris said.

The Harris campaign also said it will stick to the original plan for an ABC News debate.

It said that "Donald Trump is running scared" hoping that Fox News will "bail him out" of the debate he had already agreed to with ABC News, according to the report.

"He needs to stop playing games and show up to the debate he already committed to on Sept. 10," the report quoted Michael Tyler, the Harris campaign communication director, as saying.

"The Vice President will be there one way or the other to take the opportunity to speak to a prime-time national audience," Tyler said, adding that the campaign is open to discussing further debates but only after the one both campaigns have already agreed to takes place. Last month, Harris challenged Trump to a debate, provoking him to say whatever he had "to say to her face".

Harris would face Trump in the general elections on November 5.

# Trump tears into Georgia's Republican governor

AP ■ ATLANTA

Former President Donald Trump picked a new fight with Georgia's Republican governor as he campaigned in the key swing state where he's looking to avenge his narrow 2020 loss — a defeat he continues to blame on Republican officials based on his false theories of election fraud.

Governor Brian Kemp, Trump wrote on his social media site, "should focus his efforts on fighting Crime, not fighting Unity and the Republican Party!" He also criticised Kemp's wife, Marty, and alleged that both Kems were once grateful for his endorsement when Brian Kemp won the 2018 governor's race.

In a subsequent post, Trump railed on Kemp for defying his demands to help overturn Trump's narrow 2020 loss in the state. And at his rally, he went on about Kemp for several minutes and blamed him for his loss to Democratic President Joe Biden and for

not stopping a local district attorney from prosecuting him and several associates for his efforts to overturn the results.

On X, Kemp told Trump to "leave my family out of it" and urged him to stop "engaging in petty personal insults, attacking fellow Republicans, or dwelling on the past".

The back and forth came just ahead of an afternoon rally, when thousands of supporters packed the same Atlanta arena as Vice President Kamala Harris' backers did four days earlier. Georgia is likely to see another closely contested election as both campaigns push hard in the state, with Democrats riding a new wave of enthusiasm after Biden dropped his reelection bid and endorsed Harris.

Trump's Republican allies have urged him to focus on issues where they see an advantage over Harris, notably the economy and immigration. While Trump attacked the likely Democratic nominee on both

issues, he also again brought up his debunked claims about fraud in 2020 and suggested he regretted endorsing Kemp two years earlier.

And he tied crime in Georgia's capital city to Kemp's inability to turn around what Trump portrayed as lax crime reduction efforts supported by Harris.

"Your governor ought to get off his ass and do something about it," he said.

Biden beat Trump in the state by 11,779 votes in 2020. Trump pressured Georgia's Republican Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger to "find" enough votes to change the outcome. Trump was later indicted in Georgia for his efforts to overturn the election, but the case remains on hold while courts decide whether the Fulton County district attorney can continue to prosecute it.

Meanwhile, Kemp has proven to be the rare Republican nationally who could hold his ground against Trump



without sacrificing his power or popularity — and ultimately, he has expanded it. Kemp won the governor's office narrowly in 2018, after garnering Trump's endorsement. But Trump blasted him after the 2020 election when Kemp certified Biden's slate of electors, defying the then-president's demands to help overturn Trump's narrow loss in his state.

Trump backed a primary rival

against Kemp in 2022 — former Sen. David Perdue, who spoke at Saturday's rally — but the governor trounced him on his way to defeating Democrat Stacey Abrams, a national star in her party, by 7.5 percentage points, a veritable blowout in a battleground state.

Kemp will chair the Republican Governor's Association for the 2026 election cycle, when he is leaving office. And he's widely known to be national Republicans' top choice to take on Democratic US Sen. Jon Ossoff in that midterm cycle.

Erick Erickson, a prominent conservative host in Georgia, said of Trump, "He can't help himself."

"Donald Trump is really trying to build unity in Georgia by attacking the sitting Republican Governor whose ground game he will need to win and also that Governor's wife," Erickson wrote on X. "And if he loses, it'll be because of this stuff, not a stolen election."

# Mystery around Pablo González: Spanish journalist or Russian spy?

AP ■ WARSAW

When Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, reporters from around the world rushed to the Polish-Ukrainian border to cover an exodus of refugees fleeing Russian bombs.

Among them was Pablo González, a freelance journalist from Spain who had been based in Poland since 2019, working for Spanish news agency EFE, Voice of America and other outlets. Warsaw-based reporters knew him as an outgoing colleague who liked to drink beer and sing karaoke into the wee hours of the morning.

Two and a half years later, he was sent to Moscow as part of a prisoner swap, leaving behind both mysteries about who he really was and concerns about how Poland handled a case in which he was accused of being a Russian agent.

In the first days of the war,

González provided stand-up reports to TV viewers in Spain against a backdrop of refugees arriving at the train station in the Polish border town of Przemysl.

But less than week into the war, Polish security agents entered the room he was staying in and arrested him. They accused him of "participating in foreign intelligence activities against Poland" and said he was an agent of the GRU, Russian military intelligence.

Friends were astonished — and, as Poland held González without trial for months that turned into years, some grew sceptical and organised protests in Spain demanding his release. Authorities have never detailed the accusations.

But on Thursday evening, the burly 42-year-old with a shaved head and beard was welcomed home by President Vladimir Putin after being freed in the largest prisoner swap since the Soviet era.

His inclusion in the deal appears to confirm suspicions that González was a Russian operative using his cover as a journalist.

Born Pavel Rubtsov in 1982 in then-Soviet Moscow, González went to Spain with his Spanish mother at age 9, where he became a citizen and received the Spanish name of Pablo González Yagüe. He went into journalism, working for outlets Público, La Sexta and Gara, a Basque nationalist newspaper. It's not clear what led Poland to arrest him. The investigation remains classified and the spokesman for the secret services told The Associated Press that he could not say anything beyond what was in a brief statement. Poland is on high alert after a string of arrests of espionage suspects and sabotage, part of what the authorities view as hybrid warfare by Russia and Belarus against the West.

Polish security ser-

vices said Poland included him in the deal due to the close Polish-American alliance and "common security interests". In their statement, they said that "Pavel Rubtsov, a GRU officer arrested in Poland in 2022, (had been) carrying out intelligence tasks in Europe".

The head of Britain's MI6 agency, Sir Richard Moore, said at the Aspen Security Forum in 2022 that González was an "illegal" who was arrested in Poland after "masquerading as a Spanish journalist".

"He was trying to go into Ukraine to be part of their destabilizing efforts there," Moore said.

Another hint at his activities came from independent Russian outlet Agentstvo, which reported that in 2016 Rubtsov befriended and spied on Zhanna Nemtsova, the daughter of Russian opposition leader Boris Nemtsov, who was murdered in Moscow in 2015.

Poland-based journalists who knew González said he used his base in Poland to travel to former Soviet countries including Ukraine and Georgia. He had a license to operate a drone and used it to film Auschwitz-Birkenau from the air for coverage on the 75th anniversary of the death camp's liberation in 2020.

Voice of America, a US-government funded organisation, confirmed that he worked briefly for them, but they have since removed any of his work from their website.

"Pablo González contributed to a few VOA stories as a freelancer over a relatively short period of time starting in late 2020," spokesperson Emily Webb said in reply to an emailed query. "As a freelancer who provided content to a number of media outlets, his services were arranged through a third-party company used by news organisations around the world."

"At no time did he have any access to any VOA systems or VOA credentials," Webb said. "As soon as VOA learned of the allegations, we removed his material."

Because Poland's justice system was politicized under a populist government that ruled in 2015-23, some activists worried about whether his rights were respected. Reporters Without Borders was among the groups that called for him to be put on trial or released.

The group stands by its position that he should not have been held that long without trial. "You are innocent until a trial proves you guilty," Alfonso Bauluz, the head of the group's office in Spain told AP on Friday. He expressed frustration at the silence around the case, and the fact that there will apparently not be a trial at all, saying Poland has not presented the evidence it has against him.

But the group also says it

expects González to provide an explanation now that he is free. Jaap Arriens, a Dutch video journalist based in Warsaw, hung out with the man he knew as Pablo in Warsaw and Kyiv, as well as in Przemysl shortly before his arrest.

Arriens described him as a friendly, funny man with a macho demeanour and a chest covered in tattoos that he once showed off in a bar.

González mostly fit in, but seemed better-off than the average freelance journalist. He always seemed to have the newest and most expensive phones and computers, working at the Poland-Ukraine border with the latest 14-inch MacBook Pro. He had plenty of money to spend. In bars, he recalled González once saying: "Life is good, life is almost too good."

"And I thought: Man, freelance life is never too good. What are you talking about? I don't know any free-

lancer who talks like this." González, whose grandfather emigrated from Spain to the Soviet Union as a child during the Spanish Civil War, was known as a Basque nationalist with ties to the region's independence movement.

Russia is suspected of supporting separatist movements in Spain and elsewhere in an effort to destabilise Europe.

González' wife in Spain had been advocating on his behalf during his detention in Poland, even though they were not living together at the time of his arrest. Over the past years, the suspect's supporters ran an account on Twitter, now X, to advocate for his release.

When he was sent to Moscow on Thursday, the @FreePabloGonzález account tweeted: "This is our last tweet: Pablo is finally free. Endless thanks to all." Those who have followed the case are now awaiting González's next moves.



# Children at risk of dying in famine-hit Darfur

AP ■ CAIRO

Malnourished children in a famine-hit camp for war-displaced people in Sudan's western region of Darfur are at risk of dying, an aid group said Sunday, because it was forced to ration malnutrition treatment due to a blockade imposed by a notorious paramilitary group. Doctors Without Borders said the Rapid Support Forces, which have besieged al-Fasher city as part of its war against the Sudanese military, have blocked three trucks carrying lifesaving medical supplies, including therapeutic food, for the city and the nearby Zamzam camp where famine was confirmed last week. Sudan plunged into chaos in April last year when simmering tensions between the military and the RSF developed into open fighting in the capital, Khartoum, before spreading across the northeastern African country. Darfur saw some of the worst and most devastating bouts of fighting in



the war. The conflict has killed thousands of people and pushed many into starvation. It created the world's largest displacement crisis with more than 10 million people forced to flee their homes since April 2023, according to the U.N. Migration agency. Over 2 mil-

lion of those fled to neighboring countries. International experts in the Famine Review Committee confirmed Thursday that starvation at Zamzam camp, where up to 600,000 people shelter, has grown into full famine. International experts use set criteria to confirm the exist-

ence of famines. A famine is declared in an area when one in five people or households severely lack food and face starvation and destitution that would ultimately lead to critical levels of acute malnutrition and death. In Zamzam camp, which has swelled with the arrival of new displaced people, many children are in critical condition, Doctors Without Borders said, adding that the malnutrition ward at its field hospital in the camp is overcrowded with a 126% bed occupancy rate. The group said RSF fighters have blocked the trucks in the town of Kabkabiya for over a month, adding that it was forced to limit the number of children receiving therapeutic food in the overcrowded camp as its stock of medicine covers only two weeks. "Deliberately obstructing or delaying humanitarian cargo is putting the lives of thousands of children at-risk as they are cut-off from receiving lifesaving treatment," it said on social media platform X. There was no immediate comment from the RSF. The RSF has imposed a siege on el-Fasher in its monthslong attempt to take it from the military and its allied rebel groups. The city, the provincial capital of North Darfur, is the last stronghold for the military in the war-torn Darfur region.

# Indian student charged for falsifying records

PTI ■ NEW YORK

A 19-year-old Indian student, who was arrested and charged with falsifying records to gain admission in a US university, will have to return to India under a plea deal entered into with American authorities. Aryan Anand had submitted fake and falsified documents to secure admission into Lehigh University, a private research university in Pennsylvania for the 2023-2024 academic year. A report in the Lehigh University's student newspaper "The Brown and White", said last month that a police investigation had found that Anand had falsified admission and financial aid documents. He had even "faked his father's death" as part of the conspiracy to obtain admission and scholarship, it said. Anand was arraigned by Magisterial District Judge Jordan Knisley on June 12, with a bail of USD 25,000. He pleaded guilty to one count of forgery. As part of the plea deal, he was sentenced to one to three months in Northampton County Prison, "which amounted to a time-served sentence", lehighvalleylive.com quoted defence attorney Molly Heidorn as saying.

Further investigation by the Lehigh police identified Anand as the author of the post, which has since been deleted but in which he had outlined his scheme. Anand had indicated that he "created a fake email address in the format of principal@schoolname.com for his application, submitted a death certificate for his father to acquire additional hardship financial aid, falsified tax documentation, altered his secondary school year 1-3 transcripts and created a false "Senior School Certificate Examination" to show success in his final year of secondary school", the report said. Anand said it was "all for the purpose of securing admission and financial aid to attend a university in the United States." The criminal complaint filed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on April 30 accused Anand of violating the statutes of forgery, tampering with records or identification, theft by deception and theft of services. "Metadata revealed the death certificate and tax documents were altered using the "iLovePDF" website, and the academic documents were modified using Adobe Photoshop," according to the criminal complaint.

As part of the deal, Anand is required to return to India and Lehigh chose not to seek restitution of about USD 85,000. He was released to the custody of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement. According to a release issued by the office of Northampton County's district attorney Stephen Baratta, Anand had created a fake email address impersonating a school principal, the report in lehighvalleylive.com said. The release had said that Anand's father is alive and in India. Anand's forgery came to light after a post he shared on the social media site Reddit titled 'I have built my life and career on lies' prompted the investigation into his case. In that anonymous post, he had laid out the details of his fraudulent scheme. The Brown and White report said that the investigation began when a Reddit monitor notified Lehigh's Admissions Department of the post on April 26. "The criminal complaint revealed the thread was authored by someone with the username 'u/transportationOK4728', and 'the creator was following only one University group of Reddit and that University was Lehigh University', the report said.

# 11 killed due to torrential rains in northwest Pakistan



PTI ■ PESHAWAR

At least 11 people died in the last 24 hours due to torrential monsoon rains that caused flash floods and roof collapses in northwest Pakistan on Sunday, authorities said. At least seven deaths were reported from Tank and Karak districts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, bordering Afghanistan. Three people died when the roof of their house collapsed due to heavy rains in Tank dis-

trict, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority said. It added that four people died after they were swept away in Karak district. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur expressed grief and sorrow over the deaths and announced compensation for the families hit by the rains. Gandapur also directed the respective district administrations to provide the best possible assistance and relief to the people affected by the rains.

# Four years after the Beirut port blast, many decry stalled justice as regional tensions spike

AP ■ BEIRUT

Four years ago, Helen Ata got a call from someone she didn't know telling her that a massive explosion at the Beirut port had caused her building to collapse. Her brothers were trapped under the rubble. One of them, Issam, survived, with a permanent disability in his right leg. Her twin brother Abdo, whom she calls her "other half," died. "We will never feel safe again," she told The Associated Press, sitting next to a portrait of Abdo. The port blast anniversary Sunday comes as the region braces for retaliation after an Israeli strike killed a senior Hezbollah commander in Beirut and an explosion in Tehran, widely blamed on Israel, killed top Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh. For many, the fears of a new escalation come as wounds of the port explosion four years ago remain raw. On August 4, 2020, hundreds of tons of ammonium nitrate



detonated in a Beirut Port warehouse. The gigantic blast tore through the Lebanese capital, killing at least 218 people, according to an AP count, wounded more than 6,000 others, and devastated large swaths of Beirut, causing billions of dollars in damages. The blast stunned the nation and a probe by a maverick investigative judge into the explosion shook the country's ruling elite, rife with corruption and mismanagement. However, years of obstructions by top officials to dodge accountability and stall the probe have hampered hopes for justice. "Four years later, there is not a

single detainee," Ata said. "There is a crime, and there are accused, but there are no criminals." Judge Tarek Bitar is the second investigator to lead the probe into the port blast. He has charged over a dozen senior political, security, port and security officials. Most of the families of the victims rallying for justice have backed him, but senior officials have repeatedly refused to show up for questioning since the start of the investigation. Karim Nammour, a lawyer with the Lebanese watchdog group Legal Agenda, said the case has rattled officials because it exposed the dangers of the "criminal incompetence" of how they have run the country for decades. Lebanon's political leadership has accused Bitar, without providing evidence, of being biased in his investigation, and some even demanded his removal while filing legal complaints against him that have stalled the investigation for years.

# Imran says 'army should apologise'

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan has refused to apologise for the May 9 riots that erupted after his arrest last year and claimed that it was the Army that owed him an apology since he was "abducted" by the paramilitary rangers on the day of the violence. Khan, 71, was on May 9, 2023, arrested by the Pakistan Rangers from the Islamabad High Court premises during his appearance in a corruption case. His arrest sparked countrywide protests and riots by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf supporters who damaged civilian as well as military installations across the country. Army spokesman Maj Gen Ahmed Sharif on May 7 this year said any dialogue with the PTI could happen if the party apologised for its "politics of anarchy". The statement was followed by calls from different quarters that Khan founded PTI to apologise for the "Black Day" violence. Khan during a media talk on Saturday at the Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi when asked whether he would tender an apology for the May 9 violence, said he had no reason to apologise, further adding that he was arrested by the rangers headed by a serving major general from the premises of the Islamabad High Court, the Dawn newspaper reported. The former premier, who over the past few weeks has repeatedly expressed his willingness to talk to the army and not with the government, reiterating his position, said he would only hold talks with the "real authority" as negotiations with the government were "a futile exercise". He alleged that talks with the government would be counterproductive as there is an unannounced martial law in the field. The cricketer-turned-politician also added that talks with "people in the power corridors"

would be within the ambit of the Constitution. Dawn further reported that responding to a question that senior politician and his ally Mahmood Khan Achakzai has declined to become the focal point for proposed talks with the establishment, Khan said the senior leader had been nominated to negotiate with political parties. Earlier this week, the former premier said his party was ready for talks with the military establishment but laid down preconditions: the return of his party's "stolen mandate", the release of all detained party workers, and the holding of transparent elections. Khan also urged the military to nominate their representatives for talks. Talking about his prison woes, the former prime minister said he twice suffered from food poisoning as he had no refrigerator in his cell to preserve the food properly. Referring to the new Toshakhana reference in which he and his wife Bushra Bibi are the accused, Khan said the case was a "clear violation of the National Accountability Ordinance". He claimed still having in his possession the Graff watch, which he is accused of selling in the NAB reference. Khan said he had moved his valuable possessions to a safer location following a raid at his Banigala residence in March last year. He warned of legal proceedings against the NAB chairman, interior minister and those officers who implicated him in "false cases". Earlier, the accountability court adjourned till August 7 the proceedings in the 190 million pounds Al-Qadir Trust corruption case. Since Khan's counsel was unavailable, the cross-examination of investigation officer Mian Umar could not be completed. The PTI leader's legal team in an application before Judge Nasir Javed Rana requested that Khan be allowed to call his children.

# Flood damage: Putin offers disaster aid to N Korea

AP ■ SEOUL

Russian President Vladimir Putin offered humanitarian assistance to help North Korea cope with damages from recent floods, both countries said, in another sign of expanding relations between the two nations. In a message to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Saturday, Putin "extended deep sympathy and support" and conveyed his willingness to provide immediate disaster aid to help North Korea recover from the floods, the North's official Korean Central News Agency reported Sunday. Russia's state news agency Tass carried a similar report, saying that Putin told Kim in the message: "You can always count on our assistance and support." Ties between North Korea and Russia have been improving significantly amid widespread

outside beliefs that North Korea has supplied conventional weapons to Russia for its war in Ukraine in return for military and economic assistance. During a meeting in Pyongyang in June, Kim and Putin signed a pact stipulating mutual military assistance if either country is attacked, in what was considered the two countries' biggest defence deal since the end of the Cold War. Kim expressed his gratitude to Putin over the offer for aid, saying he "could deeply feel the special emotion towards a genuine friend in the most difficult period." But Kim said North Korea has established its own rehabilitation plans and will ask for Russian assistance later if it is needed, according to KCNA. Heavy rains in North Korea's northwestern region on July 27 flooded 4,100 houses, 7,410 acres of agricultural fields and numerous other public build-

ings, roads and railways, according to KCNA. The scale of casualties isn't known. KCNA recently quoted Kim as saying the flood caused a "casualty that cannot be allowed" but didn't elaborate. On Thursday, rival South Korea also offered humanitarian support to North Korea. Observers say North Korea will likely ignore or turn down the South Korean proposal, as animosities between the two countries are at one of their highest points in years. During a Friday visit to a military unit involved in operations to evacuate residents stranded by the floods, Kim called South Korea "scum" as he lambasted what he called "rubbish" South Korean media for allegedly tarnishing the North's image by exaggerating the death tolls from the floods. Kim didn't mention South Korea's offer to provide aid.

# Albanians vote for new mayor of Greek town

Qeparo (AP)

Albanians in the southwestern town of Himara are to vote Sunday for a new mayor after their previous choice, a member of the country's ethnic Greek minority, was stripped of his title, convicted and imprisoned on vote-buying charges in what he and neighboring Greece have claimed was a politically motivated case. Voting started on Sunday with less than 7% of about 23,000 voters casting their ballots in the first two hours, according to the Central Election Commission, the country's governing election body. The process is normal and without any problems so far, it said. Some minor technical issues in some polling stations, with the election documentation, management or voters' identity cards have been reported by local media. Media also has reported that at least four buses have come from neighboring Greece with locally registered voters. Both rival

candidates have invested in bringing Albanian immigrants back to cast their ballots, a normal move in every election in the tiny Balkan country. The case against Fredis Belderis, a dual Albanian-Greek national who was elected to the European Parliament with Greece's governing conservative party in June, has strained relations between Tirana and Athens, with Greece threatening to hold up Albania's bid to join the European Union. Belderis, 51, was arrested two days before the May 14, 2023, municipal elections in Himara, a town populated by ethnic Greeks on what has been dubbed the Albanian Riviera, a coastal region with burgeoning tourist development that has been rife with property disputes. He was charged and ultimately convicted of offering about 40,000 Albanian leks (360 euros, \$390) to buy eight votes, and is serving a two-year prison sentence.

Intelligence and the Defence Ministry, the statement said. Meanwhile, Belgorod Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov said that a woman was killed in a Ukrainian drone strike on an apartment building in the town of Shebekino early Sunday. Ukrainian drones also damaged several other buildings in the town, he said. Gladkov said eight civilians have been wounded in the region by Ukrainian shelling and dozens of drone strikes since the previous day. In the span of a month, Russia has experienced a surge in the tempo of Ukrainian drone barages and long-range attacks, targeting Russian military infrastructure, including airfields and oil depots. Analysts say such an intensification is needed if Ukraine is to degrade Russian capabilities.

# Debby moving towards Florida with hurricane warnings

AP ■ MIAMI

A tropical depression strengthened into Tropical Storm Debby north of Cuba on Saturday and was predicted to become a hurricane as it moves through the Gulf of Mexico on a collision course with the Florida coast. The National Hurricane Centre said in an update posted at 5 am Sunday that Debby was located about 195 miles (315 kilometers) south-southwest of Tampa, Florida, and about 255 miles (410 kilometers) south-southwest of Cedar Key, Florida. The storm was moving north-northwest at 13 mph (20 kph) with maximum sustained winds of 50 mph (85 kph). The storm was strengthening over the southeastern Gulf and expected to be a hurricane before making landfall in the Big Bend region of Florida, the hurricane centre said. Wind and thunderstorms have spread over a broad area includ-

ing southern Florida, the Florida Keys and the Bahamas. A hurricane warning and tropical storm warnings were in effect for sections of Florida's coast and a tropical storm watch was added for coastal Georgia in the latest advisory. Debby is likely to bring drenching rain and coastal flooding to much of Florida's Gulf Coast by Sunday night and predictions show the system could come ashore as a hurricane Monday and cross over northern Florida into the Atlantic Ocean. Forecasters warn it also could drop heavy rains over north Florida and the Atlantic coasts of Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina early next week. Debby is the fourth named storm of the 2024 Atlantic hurricane season after Tropical Storm Alberto, Hurricane Beryl and Tropical Storm Chris, all of which formed in June. The National Hurricane Center in Miami predicted the system

will strengthen as it curves off the southwest Florida coast, where the water has been extremely warm. Intensification was expected to proceed more quickly later on Sunday. A hurricane warning was issued for parts of the Big Bend and the Florida Panhandle, while tropical storm warnings were posted for Florida's West Coast, the southern Florida Keys and Dry Tortugas. A tropical storm watch extended farther west into the Panhandle. A warning means storm conditions are expected within 36 hours, while a watch means they are possible within 48 hours. Tropical storms and hurricanes can trigger river flooding and overwhelm drainage systems and canals. Forecasters warned of 6 to 12 inches (150mm to 300 mm) of rain and up to 18 inches (450 mm) in isolated areas, which could create "locally considerable"

flash and urban flooding. Forecasters also warned of moderate flooding for some rivers along Florida's West Coast. Some of the heaviest rains could actually come next week along the Atlantic Coast from Jacksonville, Florida, through coastal regions of Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina. The storm is expected to slow down after making landfall. "We could see a stall or a meandering motion around coastal portions of the southeastern United States," National Hurricane Center Director Michael Brennan said in a Saturday briefing. "So that's going to exacerbate not just the rainfall risk, but also the potential for storm surge and some strong winds." Flat Florida is prone to flooding even on sunny days, and the storm was predicted to bring a surge of 2 to 4 feet (0.6 to 1.2 metres) along most of the

Gulf Coast, including Tampa Bay, with a storm tide of up to 7 feet (2.1 metres) north of there in the sparsely populated Big Bend region. Forecasters warned of "a danger of life-threatening storm surge inundation" in a region that includes Hernando Beach, Crystal River, Steinhatchee and Cedar Key. Officials in Citrus and Levy counties ordered a mandatory evacuation of coastal areas, while those in Hernando, Manatee, Pasco and Taylor counties called for voluntary evacuations. Shelters opened in those and some other counties. Citrus County Sheriff Mike Prendergast estimated 21,000 people live in his county's evacuation zone. Officials rescued 73 people from storm surge flooding during last year's Hurricane Idalia. Prendergast said by phone that he hopes not to have a repeat with Debbie. "After the storm surge does come in, we simply don't have

enough first responders in our agency and among the other first responders in the county to go in and rescue everybody that might need to be rescued," he said. Governor Ron DeSantis declared a state of emergency for 61 of Florida's 67 counties, with the National Guard activating 3,000 guard members. Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp made his own emergency proclamation on Saturday. The White House said federal and Florida officials were in touch and FEMA "pre-positioned" resources including water and food. In Tampa alone, officials gave out more than 30,000 sandbags to barricade against flooding. "We've got our stormwater drains cleared out. We've got our generators all checked and full. We're doing everything that we need to be prepared to face a tropical storm," Tampa Mayor Jane Castor said.

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# RBI likely to keep interest rate unchanged at 6.5%, say experts

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is likely to keep the key interest rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent on Thursday, and wait for more macroeconomic data before taking a call on rate cut in line with expectations, experts said.

The US Federal Reserve has decided to maintain a status quo on its interest rate for now and indicated there could be monetary policy easing in the coming months. Amid persisting inflationary pressures, RBI will be closely tracking the US monetary policy trajectory before changing its stance on interest rate, which has remained unchanged since February 2023, experts opined.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) may also refrain from rate cut as economic growth is picking up, notwithstanding the elevated interest rate of 6.5 per cent (repo rate).

The meeting of the Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das headed MPC is



scheduled for August 6 to 8. Das will announce the decision of the rate-setting panel on August 8 (Thursday). The central bank last hiked the repo rate to 6.5 per cent in February 2023 and since then it has held the rate at same level in its last seven bi-monthly monetary policy reviews.

"We do expect a status-quo position to be adopted by RBI in the forthcoming credit policy. Inflation remains high even today at 5.1 per cent and

while this will come down numerically in the coming months, it will be more due to the stable path which means the base effect," said Madan Sabnavis, Chief Economist, Bank of Baroda. He further said growth is on the stable path which means that the present interest rate situation does not militate against business.

"The RBI would rather wait and be sure that inflation is on the downward path on a durable basis before taking any action. While we do not expect any change in GDP

forecast, there is a possibility of new guidance on inflation numbers," Sabnavis said.

Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, ICRA, said that high growth in FY2024, combined with the inflation of 4.9 per cent in first quarter of the current fiscal are unlikely to shift the voting pattern of the four members who voted for a status quo in the June 2024 meeting towards a change in stance or rate cut in the August 2024 meeting itself.

"If the food inflation outlook turns favourable on the back of a normal distribution of rains in the second half of the monsoon season, and in the absence of global or domestic shocks, a stance change is possible in October 2024. This could be followed by a 25 bps rate cut each in December 2024 and February 2025, with an extended pause thereafter," she said.

Last month, Governor Das had said the question of change of stance on interest rate is quite premature given the gap between current inflation and 4 per cent target.

# India seeks duty concession on cars, machinery, commercial vehicles in FTA with Sri Lanka

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India is seeking customs duty concession on a number of goods including cars, commercial vehicles and machinery from Sri Lanka under a comprehensive free trade agreement (FTA), talks for which are underway, an official said.

India has also sought easier visa norms to further facilitate entry of professionals from here, the official said. The 14th round of talks between senior officials of India and Sri Lanka was concluded recently in Colombo.

Issues which came up for the talks included rules of origin, goods, services, and technical barriers for trade. On the other hand, Sri Lanka has sought removal of a quota on apparel exports to India. The island nation is also asking for duty concessions on tea and certain agricultural commodities.

The official said that as elections are announced in Sri Lanka, the next round of negotiations between the two countries will be held after that.

The two nations have already implemented a free trade agreement in goods and now



they are negotiating to expand the pact by including more goods and services. The India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement (ISFTA) came into force in March 2000. It enhanced economic relations between the two countries by reducing tariffs on a wide range of goods.

Since the original ISFTA focused solely on goods, both countries have been negotiating for several years to expand it into a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which would include services, investment, and other areas of economic cooperation. Under the current FTA, India allowed limited imports of garments from Sri Lanka at a 50 per cent tariff (or customs

duty) concession for up to 8 million pieces annually, with a requirement that 6 million of these pieces use Indian fabric. Additionally, India offered a 50 per cent tariff concession on up to 15 million kg of tea from Sri Lanka each year. Think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said that Sri Lanka may be seeking removal of the quota on garments, especially considering that India has allowed duty-free imports of garments from Bangladesh under the South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) for Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

"However agreeing to this request may not be easy for India as allowing duty free imports has led to a significant increase in

garment imports from Bangladesh, growing from USD 144.25 million in FY2014 to USD 739.06 million in FY2024, a cumulative growth of 412.34 per cent," GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said.

Sri Lanka has placed items like automobiles and electrical goods on its negative list, restricting their import. Since the implementation of the ISFTA, trade between the two countries has experienced fair growth. India's exports to Sri Lanka increased from USD 499.3 million in FY2000 to USD 4.17 billion in 2023-24, a cumulative growth of 735.2 per cent. Meanwhile, imports grew from USD 44.3 million to USD 1.4 billion over the same period.

In the last fiscal, India's key exports to Sri Lanka included petroleum products (USD 704 million), cotton (USD 260 million), pharmaceuticals (USD 255 million), refined sugar (USD 206 million), fabric (USD 223 million), machinery (USD 171 million), pepper (USD 90.9 million), car and motorcycle parts (USD 79.3 million), onions (USD 63.4 million), and pulses (USD 32 million).

# FPIs invest ₹32,365 cr in equities in July on continued policy reforms

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign investors infused Rs 32,365 crore into Indian equities in July on the back of expectation of continued policy reforms and sustained economic growth and better-than-expected earnings season.

However, they pulled Rs 1,027 crore from equities in the first two trading sessions of this month (August 1-2), data with the depositories showed. There has been a mixed trend with respect to FPI flows following the budget announcement on increase in capital gains tax on equity investments.

Going forward, developments in the US economy and markets will set the trend for FPI in August, V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said.

"Weaker-than-expected employment data along with slowing economy has made it certain that the US Fed is expected to cut rates in September. The more important question here is the extent of cut. Currently, there is strong commentary getting built for maybe a 50 basis points rate cut in interest



rates," Vaibhav Porwal, Co-founder of Dezerv, said. According to the data with the depositories, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) have made a net inflow of Rs 32,365 crore in equities in July. This came following an inflow Rs 26,565 crore in June driven by political stability and the sharp rebound in markets.

Before that, FPIs withdrew Rs 25,586 crore in May on poll jitters and over Rs 8,700 crore in April on concerns over a tweak in India's tax treaty with Mauritius and a sustained rise in US bond yields. The resurgence in FPI investment can be attributed to sustained economic

growth, government's focus on infrastructure development, better-than-expected earnings season that has improved corporate India's balance sheet, Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research at Morningstar Investment Research India, said. Additionally, upward revisions in India's GDP forecast by IMF and ADB, and a slowdown in China, also works in India's favour, he added.

Apart from equities, FPIs invested Rs 22,363 crore in the debt market in July. This has pushed the debt tally to Rs 94,628 crore this year so far.

# Mcap of eight of top-10 most valued firms slump ₹1.28 lakh cr; TCS, Infosys biggest laggards

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Eight of the top-10 most valued firms together lost Rs 1,28,913.5 crore in market valuation last week, with IT majors Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Infosys emerging as the biggest laggards, amid weak trend in equities.

The valuation of TCS tumbled Rs 37,971.83 crore to Rs 15,49,626.88 crore, the most among the top-10 firms. The market capitalisation (mcap) of Infosys tanked Rs 23,811.88 crore to Rs 7,56,250.47 crore.

ITC's mcap dropped by Rs 16,619.51 crore to Rs 6,11,423.11 crore and that of State Bank of India slumped by Rs 13,431.54 crore to Rs 7,56,177.85 crore. The valuation of Reliance Industries Limited declined by Rs 13,125.49 crore to Rs 20,28,695.57 crore. Bharti Airtel's market valuation went lower by Rs 11,821.5 crore to Rs 8,50,389.88 crore and that of ICICI Bank diminished by Rs 7,843.75 crore to Rs 8,42,176.78 crore. The valuation of Hindustan Unilever dipped by Rs 4,288



crore to Rs 6,32,862.41 crore. However, the mcap of HDFC Bank jumped Rs 32,759.37 crore to Rs 12,63,601.40 crore.

The valuation of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) soared Rs 1,075.25 crore to Rs 7,47,677.98 crore. Last week, the BSE benchmark declined by 350.77 points or 0.43 per cent. In the ranking of the most valued firms, Reliance Industries retained the number one rank followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Infosys, LIC, Hindustan Unilever and ITC.

# Spending on outbound tourism to rise 11% annually to reach USD 55 bn in 2034: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Spending on outbound tourism is expected to grow from USD 18.82 billion in 2024 to USD 55.39 billion in 2034, a report said.

The 'Navigating Horizons' report jointly prepared by Nangia NXT and Ficci said packaged tours still dominate the outbound market in India, with a share of 39.20 per cent in 2024, as there is a preference for choosing pre-planned tour packages from travel service providers due to greater convenience and customisation.

The report said that availability of Indian or vegetarian food options as well as awareness about niche tourism will help increase the number and frequency of Indians engaging in foreign travel in the coming years. The market has already seen robust growth with rising disposable incomes, an expanding middle class, systemic ease and flexibility in obtaining visas, and a desire for international experiences.

"Countries like Egypt, Azerbaijan and Georgia, among others, known for their rich history, cultural



heritage, natural beauty and unique topographies, are attracting more and more Indians to venture abroad. Such destinations are often more affordable as well," the report said.

With a rising urban and young population, the inclination towards exploring international destinations is expected to continue to grow. Demographic trends thus are likely to support growth in outbound tourism in the near future, it added.

"India's outbound tourism market is showing stellar growth and is projected to reach USD 18.82 billion in 2024. There have also been

measurable benefits to allied industries such as aviation and hospitality. The growth in the industry is bolstered by increased consumer spending, visa reforms, social media visibility and commercial marketing efforts," said Suraj Nangia, Head (Government and Public Sector Advisory), Nangia NXT. With the Indian outbound market expected to grow at a CAGR of 11.4 per cent and reach USD 55.39 billion by 2034, the outlook is positive with coordinated efforts by all stakeholders propelling the industry forward, Nangia added.

# After record profits, State-owned fuel retailers see profit slump in Q1

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

After reporting record profits, state-owned fuel retailers Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), BPCL and HPCL posted up to 90 per cent slump in their June quarter earnings as margins fell and they booked under-recovery on the sale of domestic cooking gas LPG at government-controlled rates.

IOC, the nation's largest oil firm, reported 81 per cent drop in standalone net profit in April-June - the first quarter of current 2024-25 fiscal year - to Rs 2,643.18 crore as opposed to a profit of Rs 13,750.44 crore a year back, according to a company filing. Net profit also declined sequentially, when compared to an earning of Rs 11,570.82 crore in March quarter.

Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) posted 90 per cent drop in profit to Rs 633.94 crore as compared to an earning of Rs 6,765.50 crore in April-June 2023 and Rs 2,709.31 crore in the preceding March quarter.

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) net profit dropped to Rs 2,841.55 crore in April-June from Rs 10,644.30 crore a year back and Rs 4,789.57 crore in January-March, its filing showed. The three fuel retailers made extraordinary gains from



holding petrol and diesel prices despite a drop in cost. The price freeze was justified in the name of recovering losses they had suffered in the previous year when they did not raise retail prices despite a surge in cost. The gains arising from the price freeze were eroded with petrol and diesel prices being cut by Rs 2 per litre each just before general elections and a fall in refining margins.

Also, the three had uncompensated LPG subsidy - IOC booking under-recovery of Rs 5,156.23 crore in April-June, BPCL Rs 2,015.10 crore and HPCL Rs 2,443.71 crore, according to the filings. As per an order of the oil ministry, when market determined price (MDP) of LPG cylinders is less than its effective cost to customer (ECC), oil marketing companies (OMCs) have to

retain the difference in a separate buffer account for future adjustment. However, as on June 30, 2024, the three firms had a net negative buffer as the retail selling price was less than MDP.

The three retailers IOC, BPCL and HPCL had reported record profits totalling about Rs 81,000 crore in FY24 (2023-24), which was far more than their annual earnings of Rs 39,356 crore in pre-oil crisis years. This is because they resisted calls to revert to daily price revision and pass on softening in rates to consumers on grounds that prices continue to be extremely volatile - rising on one day and falling on the other - and that they needed to recoup losses incurred in the year, when they kept rates lower than cost.

IOC in 2023-24 posted a standalone net profit of Rs

39,618.84 crore compared to Rs 8,241.82 crore in 2022-23. While the company could argue that FY23 was impacted by the oil crisis, the FY24 earnings are higher than even the pre-crisis years - Rs 24,184 crore net profit in 2021-22 and Rs 21,836 crore in 2020-21.

BPCL posted a net profit of Rs 26,673.50 crore in FY24, higher than Rs 1,870.10 crore earnings in 2022-23 and Rs 8,788.73 crore in FY22.

HPCL's 2023-24 profit of Rs 14,693.83 crore is compared with a Rs 8,974.03 crore loss in FY23 and a profit of Rs 6,382.63 crore in 2021-22, according to the filings. The losses in FY23 had led to the finance minister announcing Rs 30,000 crore equity infusion in the three firms. Mid-way through the year, that support was halved to Rs 15,000 crore. The support was to happen by way of equity infusion via a rights issue.

But after the record profits of 2023-24, the equity infusion plan has now been scrapped. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had on February 1 last year, while presenting the annual Budget for the 2023-24 fiscal (April 2023 to March 2024), announced an equity infusion of Rs 30,000 crore in IOC, BPCL and HPCL to support the three state-owned firm's energy transition plans.

# Rise in construction activities to propel India's cement demand by 7-8% in FY25: UltraTech

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Demand for cement is projected to grow 7-8 per cent in the current financial year, helped by an increase in construction activities throughout the country, UltraTech Cement said in its latest annual report.

To meet this increased demand, the cement industry is expected to add 35 - 40 million tonne capacity in the next fiscal, with 60-65 per cent concentrated in the eastern and southern regions, said the Aditya Birla group flagship firm.

Besides, this demand surge will translate into an increase in capacity utilisation of the industry to 72 per cent in FY25, which was around 68 per cent in FY23.

"In FY 2024-25, cement demand is projected to grow 7-8 per cent driven by an increase in construction activities throughout the country, spread across the infrastructure and housing sector," said UltraTech.

There has been a "concerted focus" on the integrated and coordinated planning and implementation of infrastructure projects, adhering to the principles of PM Gati Shakti. Priority has been given to allocating expenditure towards vital sectors and additionally, the effectiveness of cash management has been enhanced through the timely release of resources



using the Single Nodal Agency/Treasury Single Account system, it added. "Responding to the increasing demand from the infrastructure and housing sectors, the Indian cement industry is poised to add new production capacities. As much as 35-40 million tonne capacity is expected to be commissioned in the next fiscal, with 60-65 per cent concentrated in the eastern and southern regions," it said.

Addressing the company's shareholders, Chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla said India's infrastructure sector is poised for "remarkable growth", with an estimated 15.3 per cent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) in investments, projected over the next five years. Citing a Morgan Stanley report, Birla said, "This growth is expected to result in a cumulative expenditure of USD 1.45 trillion." "The rapid expansion of production capacity, coupled

with the significant strengthening of brand equity in the marketplace, positions your company to harness these long-term growth opportunities effectively," he said adding UltraTech's growth trajectory mirrors India's growth story.

UltraTech is aggressively expanding its capacity and Birla said "our growth momentum has accelerated, enabling us to be at the forefront of India's infrastructure development." While mentioning the capacity of UltraTech, Birla said its "scale and capacity footprint is unparalleled" which will further enable it to service India's growing demand for cement across the country. Last month, UltraTech announced acquiring a majority stake in South-based India Cements Ltd (ICL) and also over Rs 3,000 crore open offer to acquire 26 per cent shares of the company.

In FY24, UltraTech recorded net sales of Rs 69,810 crore and crossed the historic milestone of 150 MTPA (million tonne per annum) capacity. "From the first cement unit that we commissioned in the early 1980s with one MTPA capacity to now the world's third largest cement company, outside of China, UltraTech's journey has been marked by scorching growth, ambitious bets and flawless execution," said Birla.

# Zomato collected ₹ 83 cr in platform fee from customers till March

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Food delivery aggregator Zomato, which began charging platform fee on orders from last August, collected Rs 83 crore through the new levy till March, the company's annual report has revealed.

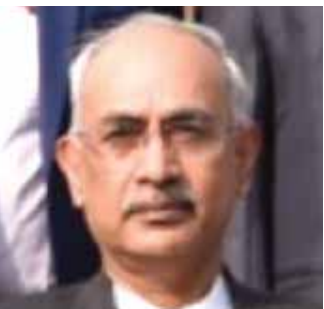
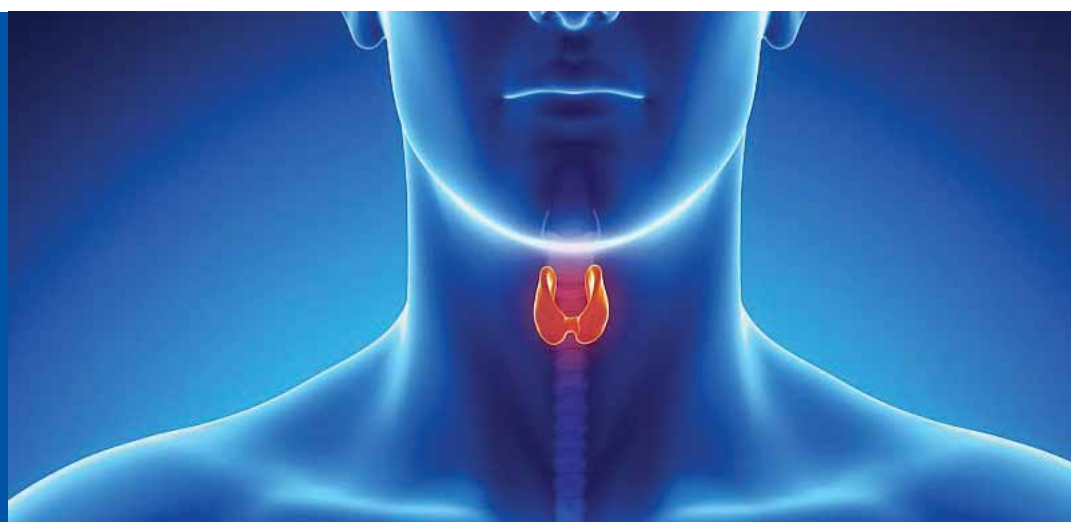
Platform fee has been cited as one of the three key factors driving Zomato's Adjusted Revenue, which grew 27 per cent year-on-year to Rs 7,792 crore in FY24.

"Adjusted Revenue as a percentage of GOV (gross order value), continued to increase primarily due to increase in restaurant commission take-rates, improvement in ad monetization and introduction of platform fee from Q2FY24 onwards," the report stated.

All of these factors more than compensated for the reduction in customer delivery charge per order due to the free delivery benefit available on Gold orders, it added. Interestingly, most late night orders in the last fiscal year came from Delhi NCR, while most breakfast orders came from Bengaluru, Zomato shared in the report. The food delivery aggregator began levying platform fee at Rs 2 per order last August, which has gradually been increased to Rs 6 now in key markets.

# GOITRE

## BENIGN GROWTH WITH POTENTIAL RISKS



**DR SUNIL CHUMBER**  
 Professor and Head

Characterised by multiple growths in the thyroid gland, multinodular Goitre (MNG) is typically benign but carries a small cancer risk. Factors like family history and nodule features influence cancer risk, necessitating timely imaging and, blood investigations among others. In this second part of the series, **ARCHANA JYOTI** speaks with the team of AIIMS Delhi's Surgical Disciplines Department headed by **DR SUNIL CHUMBER** to get more insight into this

### UNDERSTANDING THE RISKS AND COMPLICATIONS OF CANCER IN MNG

#### Are All Nodules Dangerous?

Not all thyroid nodules are harmful. In fact, most nodules in a multinodular goitre are benign, meaning they are not cancerous. However, there is a small chance that some nodules can be malignant (cancerous). Understanding this risk is crucial for proper monitoring and treatment.

**Potential Complications of MNG:** While MNG itself is usually not life-threatening, it can cause several complications, including:

- **Compression Symptoms:** As the goitre grows, it can press against the windpipe (trachea) and esophagus (food pipe), leading to difficulty breathing and swallowing. This pressure can also cause a noticeable swelling in the neck.

- **Thyroid Dysfunction:** MNG can sometimes lead to hyperthyroidism (overactive thyroid), where the gland produces too much thyroid hormone, causing symptoms like weight loss, rapid heartbeat, and nervousness. Less commonly, it can cause hypothyroidism (underactive thyroid), resulting in fatigue, weight gain, and depression.
- **Cancer Risk:** Although rare, some nodules in a multinodular goitre can become cancerous. Detecting these malignant nodules early is vital for effective treatment.



**DR ANKITA SINGH**  
 Assistant Professor

**RECOGNISING RISK IN MNG**  
 Several factors can increase the risk of thyroid cancer in



**DR AJAY MOHAN**  
 Senior Resident

**individuals with MNG:**  
**Family History:** A family history of thyroid cancer or genetic conditions that predispose to cancer increases the risk.

**Radiation Exposure:** Previous exposure to radiation, particularly in childhood, can raise the likelihood of developing thyroid cancer.

**Nodule Characteristics:** Nodules that are large, rapidly growing, or have certain features seen on ultrasound (such as irregular edges or microcalcifications) may be more suspicious for cancer.

**PREVENTIVE MEASURES AND FOLLOW-UP**  
**Regular check-ups and appropriate diagnostic tests are crucial for managing the risk of cancer in MNG. If you have a MNG, your doctor may recommend:**

- **Periodic Ultrasound Exams:** To monitor nodule size and characteristics.
  - **Thyroid Function Tests:** To ensure your thyroid is working properly.
  - **Prompt Biopsy of Suspicious Nodules:** Early detection is key to successful treatment.
- While the majority of MNG are benign, it is important to be aware of the potential risks and complications, including the small chance of cancer. Regular check-ups, appropriate diagnostic tests, and timely treatment are key to managing this condition effectively. If you have a multinodular goitre or notice any unusual symptoms, consult your doctor for personalised advice and care. Staying informed and vigilant can help ensure the best possible outcomes.



### BLOOD INVESTIGATIONS

Blood investigations in multinodular goitre form an important part of evaluation. It helps understand the cause of the goitre and the status of thyroid hormone production - increased, normal or decreased. It includes the following:



**DR CATHERINE HALAM**  
 Senior Resident

- **TSH (Thyroid Stimulating Hormone)** - usually remains normal but can be reduced in toxic MNG (increased secretion of thyroxine by thyroid gland) and increased in hypothyroidism (decreased thyroxine secretion)
- **Free T4**
- **Free T3**

Both usually remain normal, increased in toxic goitre, can be decreased in goitres with hypothyroidism.



**DR KAMAL KATARIA**  
 Additional professor

investigate the functional status of a patient with a simple diffuse goitre or multinodular goitre may differ depending on the geographic areas of the world. Although serum thyroglobulin correlates with the iodine status and the size of the enlarged thyroid gland, it has little or no value in diagnosis of goitre.

**In treating a condition like MNG, doctors often rely on different imaging methods to get a clear picture of what's happening in the thyroid gland. Here's a breakdown of the main ones used:**

- **Ultrasound (US):** This is the first imaging investigation to be done in anyone with MNG. It gives a black and white picture of the thyroid gland and allows your doctor to see the size and number of nodules, and even their makeup - whether they're solid, fluid-filled, or a mix of both. Ultrasound images also help identify suspicious features in the nodules that might indicate cancer risk.
- **Computed Tomography (CT):** CT scans provide more detailed images than ultrasound, but is not required for all cases of MNG. Your doctor will ask for this only if required like if the goiter is large, or pressing on other organs, and if cancer is suspected. In these situations, CT scans provide a closer look at the thyroid and nearby

### IMAGING MODALITIES



**DR. DEVENDER**  
 Assistant Professor

structures to help plan treatment.

- **Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI):** This is another way to get detailed images of the thyroid and surrounding areas. Again, it is not performed for all patients and has similar indications as for CT scan and is especially useful when doctors suspect the goiter is growing into other tissues, or if a patient is allergic to dye used in CT scans.
- **Thyroid Scintigraphy:** This is a different type of scan in which a special kind of dye ("radioactive tracer") is



**DR AAYUSH NAGPAL**  
 Junior Resident

used to take images of the thyroid. It shows if nodules are "hot" or "cold", which is, whether they are actively working - to produce thyroxine (hot), or not (cold). Hot nodules usually aren't cancerous, but cold ones might need further checking.

Each imaging method has its pros and cons, but your doctor often will use a mix of them to get the full picture of what's going on with the thyroid. This helps them make the best decisions about treatment and keep an eye out for any potential problems.

*(To be concluded)*



## RML Doctors Set New Benchmark in Plastic Surgery Arena

In a departure from traditional celebrations such as routine seminars and conferences, doctors at the central government-run Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) Hospital in Delhi embarked on a marathon of surgical prowess to mark World Plastic Surgery Day on July 15. The hospital's medical team, led by The Burn and Plastic Surgery Department, set out to demonstrate their expertise in an unprecedented 24-hour surgical session.

From 9 am on July 15 to 9 am on July 16, a dedicated team of 17 surgeons tirelessly operated across 24 operating theatres, tackling a spectrum of complex cases ranging from congenital anomalies to severe trauma-induced deformities.

Among their patients were individuals as young as two years old to adults up to 47 years of age, each requiring specialised care and surgical intervention. Of the two minors (two years of age) bardach's palatal repair and contracture release with skin grafting were done. The oldest male, a 47-year-old patient underwent lymphangioma excision plastic surgery.



**DR AJAY SHUKLA**  
 Medical Superintendent of RML Hospital, Delhi

**The department's initiative was aimed to prioritise postponed surgeries and urgent cases, underscoring its commitment to timely treatment and increasing the number of procedures conducted**

crucial for facial symmetry and expression. The marathon session also catered trauma-induced deformities, burns requiring skin grafts, and congenital anomalies such as cleft lip and palate. Dr. Sharma, a seasoned Professor within the department, emphasised the transformative impact of these surgeries, not only improving physical health but also enhancing overall quality of life for their patients.

Dr. Neeraj Banerjee, head of Anesthesia, and the team headed by Dr. Rupesh conducted the OT as a mission. Dr. Banerjee said, that reconstructive surgery aims to restore the appearance and function of body parts affected by illness, injury, cancer, tumors, developmental issues, or congenital defects. Commenting on the unique approach, Dr. VK Tiwari, a renowned Plastic Surgeon and former Medical Superintendent of RML Hospital, currently serving as Dean of Hindu Rao College in Delhi, said such initiatives will give idea to more hospitals which will ultimately benefit the needy.

"These surgeries often involve more complexity and longer healing times compared to cosmetic treatments," he said.

# Plastic Surgery: Transforming Lives and Confidence

**DR SANJAY PARASHAR** and **DR KRITI LOHIA** delve into the various benefits of plastic surgery, emphasising its role in improving physical appearance, correcting congenital deformities, boosting self-esteem, and fostering mental well-being for individuals facing personal challenges

Plastic surgery is a subspecialty that focuses on the restoration, reconstruction, or enhancement of the human body and it has evolved significantly over the years. It comprises two broad specialties- Aesthetic surgery, which was once primarily associated with celebrities for beauty enhancements, and Reconstructive surgery, which encompasses a wide range of procedures that significantly impact an individual's life.

augmentation, liposuction, and hair transplantation significantly alter not only a person's looks but also help align their external appearance with their inner self-image. This alignment is like a bullet train to a substantial boost in self-esteem. When individuals feel happy about their appearance, they most definitely experience increased self-confidence, which positively influences various aspects of not only their own lives, from personal relationships to professional endeavors but also a trickle-down effect on people in their circles. For instance, a person who has spent the majority of their life feeling self-conscious about a prominent nasal hump or unbalanced breasts



**DR SANJAY PARASHAR**

may find that correcting these issues through plastic surgery eliminates a significant source of insecurity. Other skin issues like vitiligo, acne, scars, burns, moles, warts, cysts, mulberry birthmarks, dark spots, etc can be handled through minimally invasive aesthetic dermatology and improve the looks significantly. These procedures become the first step towards their newfound



**DR KRITI LOHIA**

confidence, which encourages them to engage more freely in social situations, pursue career opportunities with greater vigor, and generally approach life with a more positive outlook.

**CORRECTING CONGENITAL DEFORMITIES**  
 Plastic surgery also has a profound impact on individuals who are born

with congenital deformities such as cleft lip and palate, craniostylosis (premature fusion of skull bones), and syndactyly (webbed fingers) that are effectively treated through reconstructive surgery. These congenital issues affect not only their physical appearance but also lead to functional impairments and social stigma. Cleft lip and palate, for example, are among the most common congenital deformities, affecting approximately 1 in 700 babies worldwide. These conditions cause difficulties in feeding, speech, and hearing, and often result in social challenges due to visible facial differences. Reconstructive surgery corrects these deformities,

significantly improving an individual's quality of life or in this case, a child. When you look beyond just the physical benefits, children and adults who undergo successful corrective surgery, time and again report higher self-esteem and better social integration, as they no longer feel defined by their appearance. It is often argued that plastic surgery allowed them to redefine themselves.

**ADDRESSING TRAUMATIC INJURIES**  
 Traumatic injuries, such as those sustained in accidents or due to violence, can leave individuals with severe disfigurements that impact their physical and emotional well-being. Reconstructive

plastic surgery repairs damage caused by burns, fractures, and other traumatic injuries, restoring both function and appearance. Consider the case of a burn victim who has suffered extensive facial and body burns. These resulting scars can be physically debilitating and emotionally harrowing. Through skin grafts, tissue expansion, regenerative therapies, and other reconstructive techniques, plastic surgeons and trained dermatologists significantly reduce the appearance of these scars and improve the functionality of affected areas. The psychological impact of such transformations is both immense and priceless.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS AND IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE**  
 The psychological benefits of plastic surgery extend beyond improved self-esteem. Individuals frequently report a reduction in their anxiety and depression following these procedures. This is particularly true for those who have lived with long-term dissatisfaction or emotional distress related to their appearance. By addressing their concerns, plastic surgery helps alleviate negative emotions and promotes mental well-being. (Dr Sanjay Parashar is a well-known plastic surgeon in Dubai and Dr Kriti Lohia is an Aesthetic Dermatologist and Dermato-surgeon. They are co-founders of 'Aesthetics redefined by Cocoon', Gurgaon)

# JULIEN SHOCKS SHA'CARRI, WINS WOMEN'S 100 METRE GOLD, BRINGS 1ST OLYMPIC MEDAL TO SAINT LUCIA

AP ■ SAINT-DENIS, FRANCE

Sha'Carri Richardson's comeback story hit a brick wall when Julien Alfred romped in the rain to the 100-meter title in 10.72 seconds to bring the first-ever Olympic medal to her island country of Saint Lucia.

Racing one lane to the left of Richardson, and with water from a fast-moving storm puddling on the purple track in the Stade de France, Alfred got off to a fantastic start, then powered through the rain and beat Richardson by .15 seconds - about three body lengths on Saturday. It was the biggest margin in the women's Olympic 100 since 2008.

Richardson' training partner, American Melissa Jefferson,



finished third in 10.92 seconds. All week long, the field seemed to be clearing for Richardson, the reigning world champion who was making her Olympic debut after a positive test for marijuana cost her a chance to

race three years ago in Tokyo. When Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce abruptly withdrew from the semifinal, which went off about 90 minutes before the gold-medal race, the entire Jamaican team that had swept the podium

in Tokyo was out of the 100. One island's loss is another's gain. The strongest contender left was Alfred, who hails from the Eastern Caribbean island with a population of around

180,000. She was the only Olympic entrant besides Richardson to break 10.8 this year - and when she and Richardson lined up next to each other in the semifinals, it was a preview of things to come.

Alfred won that race by .05, then lined up next to Richardson again for the final and tripled that margin. One of the most anticipated races of the Olympic track meet was never a contest.

Alfred had two steps on the entire field at the 40-meter mark, while Richardson, whose starts have been an issue at times this summer, labored to get to full speed.

The American, her arms pumping wide in Lane 7, looked to be making up a bit of ground when Alfred leaned

into the finish line. But there was too big a gap between them and the real contest was the one between Richardson and Jefferson for second.

America's lone gold medal of the day came from Ryan Crouser, who earned a threepeat in the shot put. Another American silver went to the 4x400 mixed relay team, which got reeled in by Femke Bol of the Netherlands in the anchor lap.

Jasmine Moore won a bronze medal in the triple jump competition, won by Thea Lafond, setting herself up for a possible double when she competes in long jump later this week.

Earlier in the day, Noah Lyles finished second (10.04) in a sluggish first-round qualifying heat to make the semifinals in the men's 100.

## BADMINTON AT OLYMPICS Sen falls to Axelsen in semis, to play bronze-medal playoff

PTI ■ PARIS

India's dream of a first-ever Olympic gold in badminton will remain unfulfilled after Lakshya Sen suffered a straight-game defeat to reigning Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen in the men's singles semifinals at the Paris Games here on Sunday.

The 22-year-old from Almor, a 2021 World Championships bronze medal, squandered a three-point advantage in the first game and a 7-0 lead in the second to surrender 20-22 14-21 to the two-time world champion Axelsen in a 54-minute semifinal clash.

Sen will have another chance to become the first Indian male shuttler to win an Olympic medal when he meets Lee Zii Jia of Malaysia in the bronze medal playoff.

India have never won a Olympic gold medal in bad-



minton with PV Sindhu claiming a silver and bronze at the Rio and Tokyo Olympics and Saina Nehwal securing a bronze in London Games.



## Lovlina outwitted in QF; India's boxing campaign ends

PTI ■ PARIS

India's boxing campaign at the ongoing Olympics came to a medal-less end after Tokyo edition bronze-winner Lovlina Borgohain (75kg) bowed out following a hard-fought quarterfinal loss to China's Li Qian in the women's competition here on Sunday.

Borgohain, the reigning world champion in the category, went down 1-4 to the Tokyo Games silver-winning 34-year-old in a messy contest during which both the boxers were repeatedly cautioned for clinching and holding.

The 26-year-old's loss ended India's boxing campaign in the Olympics after Nishant Dev was ousted from the men's 71kg quarterfinals on Saturday night, also a close contest.

A six-strong boxing contingent, comprising four women and two men, was representing the country in the Games. Out of these, four had crashed out in the preliminary stage itself.

It was a pacy start to the proceedings as Borgohain and Qian quickly got into a tangle.

However, none of the boxers seemed willing to launch the first attack.

The holding and clinching started pretty early in the bout and the referee had to repeatedly step in to separate the two old foes.

Qian seemed determined while Borgohain came across the more animated of the two early on. The Chinese connected some clean combination punches and a left hook towards the end of the first round. She was particularly impressive before she took a 3-2 lead in the contest.

The second round didn't start any different but Qian was more purposeful in her approach. Her right straights were on target while Borgohain was cautioned twice for excessive holding.

It was once again 3-2 in favour of Qian but with a different set of judges scoring in her favour this time, she only had a slender one-point lead on one card, while the remaining four were tied.

The holding and clinching continued in the third round too and both the women seemed a bit drained.

However, Qian showed great presence of mind throughout to keep Borgohain at a distance. Borgohain was not up to it when it came to controlling the pace of the bout and repeatedly took hits on counter-attacks.

The Assamese had fought Qian in the Asian Games final last year and gone down 0-5. She later beat Qian in the semifinals of the world championship semifinal in 2023.

But more recently, she was bested by the veteran in a pre-Olympic tournament in Czechia in June.

## Boxer Nishant's Olympic debut ends in heartbreak with quarterfinal loss

PTI ■ PARIS

Nishant Dev's maiden Olympic campaign ended in heartbreak after a devastating split verdict defeat to Mexico's Marco Verde Alvarez in the men's 71kg quarterfinal here on Saturday.

Leading after the first round, the 23-year-old world championship bronze medallist Indian right hook on Nishant's face, that forced the referee to give the Indian a standing count, followed by a left in the dying minutes. But the Indian's dom-

inant display ensured he had the bragging rights. Nishant continued to unleash a range of punches, including a combination of hooks, while Alvarez too upped his game,



connecting some vital blows. However, Nishant looked the stronger of the two as he picked the Mexican's shots.

But the judges favoured the Mexican 3-2 as Alvarez and Nishant entered the final three minutes by the narrowest of margins, leading on one card.

Alvarez landed a combination of punches to start the final round on an aggressive note. The Mexican showed more urgency as he landed an uppercut. The Indian, on the other hand, looked completely spent and while he tried to throw

punches he was slow. Alvarez acknowledged that the bout was a tough one.

"It was a tough bout, played with heart and mind. I hit on his body to open up for upper cuts. I had lost to him in 2021 world Championships. I have a lot of respect for him," Alvarez said.

"He is very technically sound boxer. My coaches asked me to play smart after I lost the first round."

Nishant is the fifth Indian boxer to exit the Olympic Games.

## Katie Ledecky swims into history with 800 freestyle victory at Paris Olympics

AP ■ NANTERRE (FRANCE)

Katie Ledecky capped another stellar Olympics by becoming only the second swimmer to win an event at four straight Summer Games, holding off Ariarne Titmus to win the 800-meter freestyle Saturday night.

It was Ledecky's second gold medal in Paris and ninth of her remarkable career, which marked another milestone. She became only the sixth Olympian to reach that figure, joining swimmer Mark Spitz, track star Carl Lewis, Soviet gymnast Larisa Latynina and Finnish runner Paavo Nurmi in a tie for second place.

## Ukraine wins its first gold medal of Paris Olympics in women's team saber fencing

AP ■ PARIS

Ukraine has won its first gold medal of the Paris Olympics by defeating South Korea in the final of the women's team saber fencing on Saturday.

The Ukrainian team recovered from six points down to beat South Korea 45-42 on 22 points from individual bronze medalist Olga Kharlan. She came in for the final leg of the bout with her team at 40-37 down and went 8-2 to win.

Ukraine had two medals before Saturday's final; a silver in shooting from Serhiy Kulish and the bronze that Kharlan won Monday in women's saber. That was a particularly emotional moment for Kharlan, a year after she was disqualified



at the world championships for refusing to shake the hand of a Russian fencer, something which briefly put her Olympic qualification in jeopardy.

It was an incident that highlighted the tension over whether to allow Russian athletes to keep competing following Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

## Viktorija, a former UCF rower with epilepsy, wins Lithuania's first medal in Paris Olympics

AP ■ VAIRES-SUR-MARNE, FRANCE

A former University of Central Florida rower with epilepsy who won Lithuania's first medal at the Paris Olympics on Saturday hopes her achievement will help motivate others with the disorder.

Viktorija Senkute, who attended the Florida college from 2015-18, won the bronze medal in the women's singles class. It was also the first medal for any Baltic country at the 2024 Paris Games.

"This is insane, I still feel like I'm dreaming," Senkute said. "It's a very big day for Lithuania, for all Baltic countries and for UCF. Everybody from UCF was watching and cheering, everybody from Lithuania. This unites so many



countries, so many people." Senkute said she wants to use her Olympic success to help show that people with epilepsy can live their lives normally and compete at a high level.

"It means nothing to me. It's not a limitation at all," she said.

"People who have epilepsy are normal, regular people and they win Olympic medals. So I really hope that this will be a motivation for everyone who at some point people didn't believe in them. I kept doing what I want, what I love. And this being rowing. And this led to fulfilling my dreams."

The 28-year-old Senkute was diagnosed with epilepsy, which causes seizures, when she was 15 and has to take medication daily to keep it under control.

"I take medication every morning and afternoon, but it's just routine discipline," she said.

"I'm just taking it with my vitamins, so I don't even notice. It's really a part of my life, but it gives no limitations."

UCF's rowing team won four American Athletic Conference championships while Senkute was on the team.

## Won't retire until I get Olympic medal: Deepika

PTI ■ PARIS

She has flattered to deceive for four straight Olympics but multiple World Cup medal winning archer Deepika Kumari has vowed not to quit unless she ends up on podium which she feels could be Los Angeles in four years' time. For Deepika, it has always been a case of not being able to display enough temperament in pressure situation at the grandest stage.

"Obviously, I want to play more in the future and will continue my game," Deepika told PTI in an exclusive interaction at the India House here.

"I really want to win an Olympic

medal, and I won't quit until I achieve that. I'll train harder and come back strongly," added Deepika, who has won every international medal except for an Olympic yellow medal.

"Firstly, I will present myself more strongly. There are many things, like quick shooting, that I need to learn a bit more about, and it's very important to train myself accordingly. "What I learned from the Olympics is that late shooting doesn't work; you have no room to make big mistakes, so you have to control that. I will learn that from here," she said in hindsight.

Deepika, 30, appeared in her fourth consecutive Olympics in



Paris, making a remarkable comeback after becoming a mother for the first time in December 2022, when she gave birth to her daughter.

After topping the national selection trials, Deepika went on to

win an individual gold at the Shanghai World Cup in April. Back at her favorite venue, where she had won multiple World Cup medals, Olympic pressure was evident as she had her worst ranking round ever at

the Games. She qualified for the main draw as the 23rd seed, ranking lower than fellow Indian debutants Anika Bhakat and Bhajan Kaur. Her score of 658 was notably 36 points below that of Korean top seed and eventual gold medalist Lim Sihyeon.

She was the weakest link in the team event, as they succumbed to the Netherlands in their opening round match without much of a fight.

However, Deepika was not ready to give up as she made a splendid comeback in the individual category, working her way up to the quarterfinals with three tough wins.

Pitted against Korean archer Nam Suhyeon, whom she had defeated in the semifinal of the Shanghai World Cup, Deepika took a two-set lead but could not convert another, shooting into the 7-point red ring as the Korean teenager rallied to a 6-4 win.

Nam finished with a silver, losing to her more favored teammate Lim.

Looking back at the result, Deepika said: "I was not nervous. I was playing strongly, but one shot (the 7-point) really went wrong, and that was the reason I lost the match. Overall, it was a good experience."

## Salukvadze, only woman to compete at 10 Olympics, says she's retiring. For good this time

AP ■ CHATEAURoux, FRANCE

After 10 Olympics and 36 years, Nino Salukvadze says she's finally done.

The pistol shooter from Georgia has been ever-present at the Summer Olympics since Seoul in 1988, when she competed for what was still the Soviet Union. At the 2024 Paris Olympics, she became the first female athlete to compete at the Games 10 times.

In that time, the 55-year-old has seen the Games become bigger and more professionalized and says the competition is tougher than ever.

Salukvadze considered retiring after her first Olympics, after she'd won gold and silver medals as a 19-year-old. She nearly walked away in the 1990s, when she struggled to support her family financially in newly independent Georgia. She announced her retirement after the Tokyo Games in 2021.

This time, though, she says she is done "for sure."

Coming to the Paris Olympics was about honoring her father, Vakhtang, who was also her coach. After the pandemic-delayed Tokyo Olympics in 2021, he talked her out of

retirement for one last push.

"He was my mentor not only in sports, but also in life. He was a wise man," she told The Associated Press in the city of Chateauroux, near the Olympic shooting range, on Friday after her last competition.

"He never asked for anything in his life. We had the kind of relationship where we understood each other just with our eyes," Salukvadze said.

"If you quit sports, you can't come back. Just try," she recalled her father saying. "It was the only favor he asked me for his whole life. I thought he



perhaps wouldn't be able to ask again. I gathered all my strength, for his sake."

Salukvadze's father died earlier this year at the age of 93, but

he lived to see his daughter qualify for a spot for Georgia. From her 10 Olympics, Salukvadze has three medals: one gold, one silver and one

bronze. In Paris, she placed 38th in the 10-meter air pistol event and 40th in the 25-meter pistol, meaning she didn't reach a televised final.

Salukvadze's last Olympic medal - and her first for an independent Georgia - was in Beijing in 2008. At the time, Georgia was at war with neighboring Russia. Salukvadze won bronze and embraced Russian silver medalist Natalia Paderina on the podium in what was widely seen as a gesture for peace.

Salukvadze may not be totally done with the Olympics yet. She's a coach at her own

shooting club back home in Georgia and is a vice president of the national Olympic committee.

Salukvadze's record 10th Olympic appearance was recognized by the International Olympic Committee.

"IOC President Thomas Bach has sent his congratulations to Nino Salukvadze in a letter and we understand that the International Shooting Sport Federation is holding an event to honor this achievement," the IOC told the AP in an emailed statement.

Even after 36 years, nothing quite matches the feeling of

winning an Olympic gold medal as a teenager back in 1988.

**AFFIDAVIT**

I, ALBELA JYOTI KHALKO, daughter of William Khalkho, Residing at St. Joseph's Convent, Hurhuru Road, Hazaribag (Jharkhand), My name Mary Albela has been mentioned in my AADHAR card which is wrong. Vide Affidavit No.2499, Dated 29.07.2024. My correct name is Albela Jyoti Khalkho which is mentioned in my educational certificates.