



मुख्य आकर्षण

- रीझ रंग शोभा यात्रा
- सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रम
- झारखण्ड की चित्रकला शैलियां
- आदिवासी पुस्तक मेला
- आदिवासी कवि सम्मेलन
- वृत्तचित्र स्क्रीनिंग
- कला-शिल्प प्रदर्शनी
- परिधान फैशन शो
- खान-पान
- लेजर शो



उद्घाटन समारोह



झारखण्ड आदिवासी महोत्सव 2024

❖ मुख्य अतिथि ❖

श्री संतोष कुमार गंगवार

माननीय राज्यपाल, झारखण्ड

❖ विशिष्ट अतिथि ❖

श्री शिबू सोरेन

माननीय अध्यक्ष, राज्य समन्वय समिति
सह सांसद, राज्यसभा

❖ अध्यक्षता ❖

श्री हेमन्त सोरेन

माननीय मुख्यमंत्री, झारखण्ड

तथा

माननीय मंत्रीगण, माननीय सांसदगण,
माननीय विधायकगण एवं अन्य गणमान्य अतिथियों
की गरिमामयी उपस्थिति में

शुक्रवार 9 अगस्त, 2024 | अपराह्न 12:00 बजे से

बिरसा मुण्डा स्मृति उद्यान, जेल चौक,
रांची में आयोजित है

**समारोह में आपकी
उपस्थिति सादर प्रार्थित है**

श्री संतोष कुमार गंगवार
माननीय राज्यपाल, झारखण्ड

सूचना एवं जनसंपर्क विभाग, झारखण्ड सरकार

श्री हेमन्त सोरेन
माननीय मुख्यमंत्री, झारखण्ड

CM pays tribute to Nirmal Mahato on his 37th Martyrdom Day

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

Chief Minister Hemant Soren paid tribute to Amar Shaheed Nirmal Mahato on his 37th martyrdom day by offering flowers at his samadhi sthal in Uliyan, Kadma. The Chief Minister, along with several dignitaries and members of the public, gathered to honour the legacy of the revered leader.

Nirmal Mahato, a prominent leader and a martyr in the struggle for Jharkhand's statehood, remains a symbol of courage and sacrifice for the people of the state. His unwavering commitment to the cause of Jharkhand and his leadership in the movement for a separate state have left an indelible mark on the region's history.

Soren, in his tribute, spoke passionately about Nirmal Mahato's contributions and the enduring impact of his work. "Amar



Chief Minister Hemant Soren pays tribute to martyr Nirmal Mahato on his 37th martyrdom day by offering flowers at his samadhi sthal in Uliyan, Kadma in Jamshedpur on Thursday. PNS

Shaheed Nirmal Mahato ji's life was a testament to the power of dedication and the pursuit of justice. His sacrifices have laid the founda-

tion for the Jharkhand we see today. As we honor his memory, we must continue to work towards the ideals he stood for," said the Chief

Minister. Soren, who was greeted by local leaders, members of Nirmal Mahato's family, and a large gathering of support-

ers and admirers. The Chief Minister, accompanied by other officials, walked to the samadhi sthal and offered floral tributes. The atmosphere was charged with emotion as the attendees observed a moment of silence in honor of the martyr.

Following the tribute, several leaders and dignitaries spoke about Nirmal Mahato's life and legacy. They recalled his role in mobilizing the people of Jharkhand and his efforts to unite various communities under a common cause. The speakers emphasized the importance of continuing his mission of social justice and development for the state.

Nirmal Mahato's martyrdom in 1987 was a pivotal moment in the history of Jharkhand's struggle for statehood. His vision and leadership inspired countless individuals to join the movement, ultimately lead-

ing to the formation of Jharkhand as a separate state in 2000. His legacy is celebrated not just as a leader of the statehood movement, but as a champion of the rights and aspirations of the people.

Hemant Soren's tribute was not just a recognition of Nirmal Mahato's historical significance but also a reaffirmation of the state government's commitment to upholding the principles for which he fought. "We must carry forward the mission that Nirmal Mahato ji began. It is our responsibility to ensure that Jharkhand continues to progress, with justice and equality as our guiding principles," Soren added in his address.

Floral tribute was paid to the statue of the departed leader, who was gunned down on this day in 1987 in front of the Chamaria guest house at Bistupur area.

DIC, BSL conducts surprise inspection of TA department

R SHARMA : BOKARO

B.K. Tiwari, the Director-in-Charge of BSL, conducted a surprise inspection of the Town Administration Department. He was accompanied by Rajan Prasad, Executive Director (HR and additional charge of Works).

During his visit, DIC Tiwari inspected various sections of the Town Administration Department and interacted with the concerned officers and employees to gather information about their departmental work. Notably he also spoke with visitors to the department to collect feedback. DIC Tiwari provided necessary instructions to Kundan Kumar, Chief General Manager (Town Administration), and other present officers.

B.K. Tiwari demonstrated a commitment to transparency and accountability. His directives to the officials highlight the need for continuous improvement and responsiveness to the needs of the community. This proactive approach is expected to foster a more efficient and user-friendly administration, ultimately contributing to better service delivery and enhanced public satisfaction.



TSF organises 'Assistive Devices Distribution' Camp

PANKAJ : DHANBAD

A two-day camp on 'Assistive Device Distribution' was organised by the Tata Steel Foundation on Thursday in collaborative effort with Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti, New Delhi under the SABAL Project of Tata Steel Foundation at programme was held at the Malkera Community Center.

Vikash Kumar, Chief, Sijua Group, Jharia Division, Tata Steel, inaugurated the event and praised Tata Steel Foundation for highlighting projects like SABAL, which reach all sections of society, even in remote locations.

A total of 40 Assistive Devices, including artificial limbs (hands and feet), pairs of crutches, and wheelchairs for both adults and children, were distributed to all the identified persons with disabilities.

The Tata Steel Foundation (TSF) operates across 33 panchayats in the Baghmara block, under its flagship project SABAL. From identifying Persons with Disabilities (PwD), helping them access disability certificates, to providing them with needs-based training in various fields, TSF aims to transform and empower persons with disabilities.

Congress leader calls for accountability and better support for athletes

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

Former MP and senior Congress leader Dr. Ajoy Kumar has criticized the central government following the disqualification of Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat from the women's 50 kg wrestling event at the Paris Olympics. Phogat was disqualified for being just 100 grams over the weight limit.

Dr. Kumar expressed outrage over the government's spending priorities, highlighting that while 738 crores are allocated for promoting Prime Minister Narendra Modi, only 70.45 lakhs were provided to support Vinesh Phogat, who has brought



Dr. Kumar expressed outrage over the government's spending priorities, highlighting that while 738 crores are allocated for promoting Prime Minister Narendra Modi, only 70.45 lakhs were provided to support Vinesh Phogat, who has brought

honor to the nation on the global stage. Dr. Kumar described the situation as both "shameful and unfortunate," particularly condemning Sports

Minister Mansukh Mandaviya's response in Parliament. He criticized Mandaviya for boasting about the financial assistance given to Phogat, which he deemed insufficient and reflective of the government's poor priorities.

"The entire nation is in mourning and deeply saddened by Vinesh Phogat's disqualification at the Paris Olympics," Dr. Kumar stated. He argued that instead of boasting about the minimal financial support, the Sports Minister should have advocated for Phogat's case more vigorously before the Paris Olympic Council, especially since her weight was within limits until the semi-finals.

Dr. Kumar suggested that Phogat should have been awarded the silver medal, given that her disqualification occurred due to a minor weight discrepancy in the final.

Dr. Kumar also called for an investigation into the circumstances surrounding Phogat's disqualification, questioning how such a significant mistake could occur so close to a potential gold medal victory. He demanded accountability, emphasizing the need to prevent similar incidents in the future. Notably, the Indian Olympic team included five wrestlers, with a support team of 17 people, including eight coaches and four assistants.

CRPF SI injured in IED blast in West Singhbhum

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

In a significant incident highlighting the ongoing threat of Naxal violence, a CRPF sub-inspector was severely injured in an IED blast under the Naxal-infested Chotanagra thana area in West Singhbhum on Thursday morning.

The injured officer, Sub-Inspector Jitendra Dani, is a member of the elite 209 battalion of the CoBRA (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action) wing of the CRPF. He was immediately airlifted to Ranchi for advanced medical treatment after receiving initial first aid at a local health center. His condition is currently stable but critical.

The IED blast occurred in the notorious Baliba village, situated on the border of the Jeraikela thana area. This area has long been a hotspot for Naxal activities. The incident took place during an extensive anti-insurgency operation carried out by the CoBRA troopers. The police had received credible intelligence reports indicating that CPI-Maoist rebels were hiding in the dense forests of Chotanagra and Jeraikela since Wednesday.

As the CoBRA jawans were meticulously scanning the forest area, an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated, resulting in severe injuries to Sub-Inspector Dani. His fellow troopers acted swiftly, rescuing him from the blast site and rushing him to a nearby govern-



ment-run health facility. Following first aid, Dani was airlifted to Ranchi for further medical attention. His swift evacuation underscores the preparedness and coordination among the security forces in dealing with such emergencies.

West Singhbhum SP, Ashutosh Sekhar, confirmed the occurrence of the IED blast and the injury to the CoBRA sub-inspector. SP Sekhar emphasized the ongoing efforts to combat Naxal insurgency in the region and reassured that security operations would continue with increased vigilance.

Baliba village, where the recent blast occurred, holds a grim history of Naxal violence. On April 7, 2004, the village witnessed a brutal ambush by Naxals on a CRPF convoy, resulting in the deaths of 29 CRPF jawans. In the fierce encounter that followed, 12 Naxals were also killed. This historical context adds a layer of poignancy to

the current incident, underlining the persistent danger and the high stakes involved in anti-Naxal operations.

The recent intelligence inputs about the presence of CPI-Maoist rebels in the Chotanagra and Jeraikela thana areas prompted the anti-insurgency operation. These operations are critical in disrupting Naxal activities and ensuring the safety of civilians in these regions. The CoBRA battalion, known for its specialized training and effectiveness in jungle warfare, plays a crucial role in these missions.

"Despite the setback of the IED blast, security forces remain undeterred. The focus is now on neutralizing the remaining Naxal elements and preventing further attacks. The operations are being conducted with heightened caution, employing advanced surveillance and ground intelligence to avert any more casualties," said an official.

Sale of Rice from various Depots of FCI through e-auction

PNS : RANCHI

Food Corporation of India releases wheat and rice from stocks available in excess of the buffer stocking norms through Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS(D)) at predetermined prices from time to time to enhance the supply of wheat and rice especially during the lean season to moderate the open market prices. Accordingly, the Government of India through FCI has decided to offer Rice from Central Pool

Stock to private traders/bulk buyers/manufacturers of Rice products through e-auction to bring down the increasing prices of wheat.

Rice buyers such as manufacturers of Rice products/Rice processors may bid for minimum quantity of 01 MT and maximum quantity of 2000 MT. FCI, Jharkhand Region has begun the Sale of Rice under OMSS(D) to its empanelled (registered) buyers with effect from 02.08.2024 through e-auction. E-Auction will be conducted on every Wednesday.

FCI, Jharkhand Region would be inviting bids from empaneled buyers for Sale of Rice under OMSS(D) lying at various Depots of FCI, Jharkhand Region on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS". In the next e-auction (14.08.2024) tenders have been invited for sale of 5300 MT Rice (FRK Rice - 5000 MT & Non FRK Rice - 300 MT) from 07 depots across the Jharkhand Region. The empaneled buyers may participate in the tender through e-auction by using login ID and Password pro-

vided to them by M/s Mjunction Services Ltd. The base price for rice is Rs. 2800/- per quintal and fortification cost (Rs. 73/- per quintal), rail freight and road transportation will also be applied above base price.

Empanelment of bulk consumers and traders is a continuous process. Interested Bidders may contact help desk at 1800 102 7136 provided by M/s Mjunction Services Ltd. on <http://www.valuejunction.in/fcifer/empanelment> and bidding through e-auction.

Indian Bank organised road show for deposit collection



On the occasion of 118th Foundation Day of Indian Bank, Zonal Office, Ranchi organised a road show on Thursday. The objective of this programme is to make everyone aware of various products of Indian Bank. For this, various loan, deposit and digital products of Indian Bank - Ind Smart, Internet Banking, QR Code etc. were promoted through banners, posters and leaflets. Chief Managers and staff members of Ranchi Zone and Ranchi branches participated in this road show in the presence of Zonal Manager, Ram Swaroop Sarkar; Deputy Zonal Manager Vijendra Singh Malik; Assistant General Manager Prabhakar Kumar and Assistant General Manager Dilip Kumar Sarkar.

Celebrate Teej with Senco Gold and Diamond Sutra Collection

Senco Gold & Diamonds presents their most awaited annual Teej collection Sutra, embracing the season with sparkle and elegance. From classic, aesthetically designed Mangal Sutras to red and green floral bangles, these stunning assortments of handcrafted gold jewelry are perfect for Teej. Inspired by Teej's vibrant colors, each piece is meticulously crafted in between 18k to 22k gold to embody the elegance and timeless charm that Senco Gold & Diamonds is renowned for. Joita Sen, Director of Senco Gold & Diamonds, shares that the joy of discovering exquisite gold jewelry and securing the best deals is set to elevate as we introduce our Teej festive offers, helping consumers make the most of their purchases. Designed by a team of skilled artisans, the Sutra collection of Senco Gold & Diamonds showcases an array of intricately crafted pieces that highlight the beauty of geometric design, contemporary style, and the tradition of the festival.

TRIBAL FASHION



BY RACHNA TIWARI

In a refreshing departure from the conventional norms of the fashion industry, India is witnessing a burgeoning trend of tribal models gracing the ramp and adorning magazine covers. This unprecedented rise of indigenous beauty is not just a cosmetic change but a powerful statement of cultural inclusivity and economic empowerment. Factors such as the growing awareness of diversity, the allure of exotic features, and the quest for authentic representation have propelled tribal models into the limelight. The fashion industry, long criticized for its homogeneity, is now recognizing the potential of untapped beauty and the growing demand for inclusive aesthetics.

Several young women from tribal communities have made significant strides in the modeling world. Names like Andrea Kevichusa from the Angami Naga community, and Renee Kujur, a Kurukh Adivasi from Chhattisgarh, have captured the attention of both national and international audiences. Their unique features, often characterized

by high cheekbones, almond-shaped eyes, and lustrous hair, have redefined beauty standards and inspired a new generation of models.

The northeastern states of India, with their rich tribal diversity, have emerged as a hotbed for discovering new faces. Tribes like the Apatani, Naga, and Mishmi have given rise to models who are not only stunning but also carry the essence of their culture with pride. Additionally, tribal communities in states like Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh are also contributing to this growing trend. There is greater acceptance of, and even a desire for, models with the dark, lustrous skin exhibited by tribals from central Indian tribal communities.

However, the journey of tribal models is not without its challenges. Many face systemic barriers including socio-economic disadvantages, limited access to professional training, and often, cultural resistance from within their communities. Discrimination and stereotypes persist in the broader fashion industry, where tribal models may struggle to find equal opportunities and recognition compared to their counterparts from more mainstream backgrounds.

Despite these hurdles, the role of social media has been instrumental in promoting tribal models. Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok have provided these models with a direct line to global audiences, bypassing traditional gatekeepers of the fashion industry. Social media

has allowed tribal models to showcase their talents and cultural heritage on their terms, garnering support from a diverse and appreciative audience. Viral campaigns and hashtags celebrating diversity and inclusivity have further amplified their visibility, creating opportunities for collaborations with prominent designers and brands.

This newfound prominence of tribal models is not merely about fashion; it's a socio-economic transformation. Many of these models come from marginalized communities, and their success is providing a pathway to financial independence and a platform to represent their culture. It's a testament to the power of representation and the potential of the fashion industry to be a force for positive change.

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the demand for authentic and diverse beauty is only set to grow. The rise of tribal models in India is a significant step towards a more inclusive and equitable fashion industry. It's a celebration of India's rich cultural tapestry and a recognition of the beauty that has long been overlooked.

WITH A CAREER SPANNING 10 YEARS, THE WRITER HAS SOLIDIFIED HER EXPERTISE IN HR, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM DEVELOPMENT. SHE IS A PRINT AND RAMP MODEL, WHO WAS ALSO FEATURED IN VOGUE AND GLADRAGS MAGAZINES.

BSL's Meghahatuburu Iron Ore Mines awarded 5 Star Rating



PNS : BOKARO

SAIL-BSL's Meghahatuburu Iron Ore Mines (MIOM) has been awarded a 5 Star Rating for its commitment to sustainable mining, community welfare, and environmental protection for the year 2022-23

by the Indian Bureau of Mines, Ministry of Mines, Government of India.

The award ceremony took place in New Delhi, where the Hon'ble Minister of Coal & Mines, G. Kishan Reddy, and MoS for Coal & Mines, Satish Chandra Dubey, presented

BSL Introduces Eco-Friendly electric vehicles for senior officials

PNS : BOKARO

In a significant move towards promoting environmental sustainability, Bokaro Steel Limited (BSL) has started providing eco-friendly electric vehicles (EVs) to its senior officials for daily use. On August 8, in a ceremony held at the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) building premises, Director-in-Charge Birendra Kumar Tiwari handed over the keys to the electric cars to seven senior Chief General Managers. The event

was attended by Executive Directors, Chief General Managers, and other senior officers of BSL.

Alongside providing the electric vehicles, BSL is also establishing electric charging stations both inside and outside the plant premises. These electric vehicles are not only environmentally friendly but also silent, convenient to use, and equipped with the latest technology. BSL has ordered a total of 65 Tata Nexon (EV) vehicles, which will be delivered in phases.



Speaking on the occasion, Birendra Kumar Tiwari stated that this initiative is a crucial part of Bokaro Steel Plant's decarbonization roadmap and its efforts to reduce carbon emissions, which will yield long-term positive outcomes.



OPINION 6 CULTURAL IDENTITY SHAPES BEHAVIOUR

WORLD 9 ANTI-RACISM PROTESTERS MARCH COUNTERS VIOLENCE IN UK

MONEY 10 RBI KEEPS INTEREST RATE UNCHANGED

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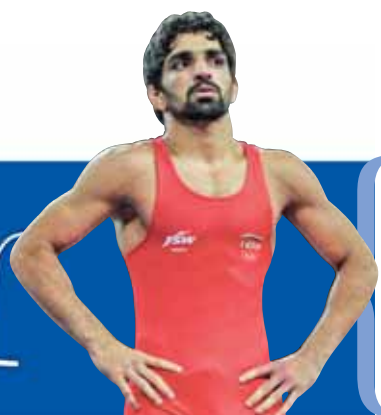
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WRESTLER AMAN ENTERS SEMIFINALS 12 SPORTS

Waqf Bill to face JPC scrutiny after Opp outcry



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

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

Indian hockey's historic moment at Paris

PTI ■ PARIS

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



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

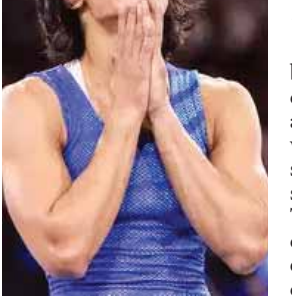
contingent in Paris, which has endured six fourth-place finishes so far, apart from the disappointing disqualification of wrestler Vinesh Phogat. Spain went ahead with

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

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

Vinesh retires after Olympics heartbreak

PTI ■ PARIS



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

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

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

Ex-West Bengal CM Buddhadeb passes away

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

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



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



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

Hasina ouster Bangladesh's second independence: Yunus

PTI ■ DHAKA

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

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

Registration of temples, mutts, trusts made mandatory in Bihar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PATNA

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



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

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

Forging signs of chief secretaries lands IAS officer in hot soup

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

After granting prosecution sanction against controversial IAS officer Udit Prakash Rai for alleged forging of the signatures of Delhi and Andaman & Nicobar Administration on his annual performance appraisal reports (APAR) during different periods of his posting, Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has referred the case to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) for further action.



Rai has also been charged with demolishing a heritage structure for construction of his official residence in Delhi's Jal Vihar while he was serving as the Chief Executive Officer of Delhi Jal Board, at a whopping cost of ₹5 crores. According to officials, Rai, a 2007 IAS officer and a blue-eyed boy of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, had forged the signatures of the reviewing authority, the Chief Secretary of A&N and Delhi between 2017 and 2021. A criminal case of forgery under sections 465/471 IPC has been registered against Rai at IP Estate Police Station on the complaint of Special Secretary (Vigilance), Delhi

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

New measures on anvil for hassle-free journey in Delhi

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

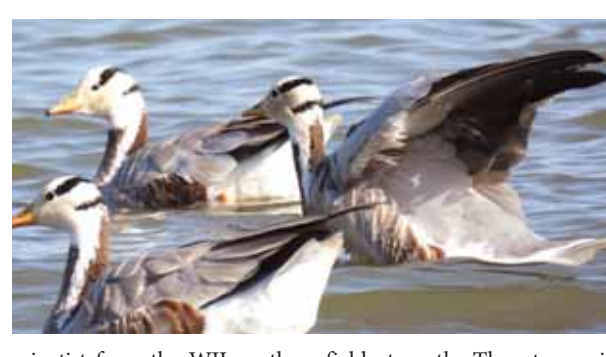
roadside, flyovers, especially by buses which cause inconvenience to commuters and compromise road safety apart from increasing pollution caused by vehicular emission. The LG has also directed for special drives to be carried out to enforce lane driving by buses especially on Ring Road, Airport Road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

India to monitor winged guests in real-time

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



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

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

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

Empowering tribals, youth, poor, women, farmers, labourers of State: CM

PNS : RANCHI

While addressing the martyrdom day program of Amar Shaheed Nirmal Mahato in Janshedpur on Thursday, Chief Minister Hemant Soren said that the State government has launched several revolutionary schemes to empower tribals, Dalits, poor, labourers, farmers, women and youth. We have been continuously working to change the picture and fate of this state through our schemes, he said.

The CM said that many schemes are being run by our government. He asked the people to join the schemes of their need and those who are not aware of these schemes, motivate them to join those schemes by giving them information. Our government is committed to give the benefits of

the state government schemes to everyone with the cooperation and participation of all.

The CM said that the government is committed to women empowerment and continuous efforts are being made to make women self-reliant. There are many schemes for women to move forward. In this series, Jharkhand Mukhyamantri Maiyaan Samman Yojana is being started. Under this scheme, women between 21 to 50 years of age will be given an honorarium of Rs 12,000 every year. The application process has been kept very simple so that maximum number of women of the state can get its benefit. Women should come forward and join this scheme and make a new path of their progress.

The CM said that the government is continuously working to provide employment to the youth



A delegation of Assistant Professors from various colleges under Ranchi University meets Chief Minister Hemant Soren at his official residence in Ranchi on Thursday. PNS

of the state in government and private sectors. He said that in the last 20 years neither the appointment rules were made here nor any concrete efforts were made regarding appointments. But, our government is making appointment rules and making appointments on a large scale on vacant posts in government departments. At the same time, employment is also being provided to thousands of youth in private organizations and institutions.

The CM said that better education can create a better future for children. When children study and move forward, the state will also move forward. This is the reason why our government is fully committed to providing quality education to children. Many education related schemes are being run so that the education of any poor child is not affected due to lack of

money. Our government has started the Guru Ji Credit Card Scheme. Under this scheme, the government is giving education loan up to Rs 15 lakh to the children on its guarantee. With the thought that our tribal-Dalit poor children should study and reach higher positions, we are implementing our schemes on the ground.

Minister Champai Soren, Minister Banna Gupta, MLA Ramdas Soren, MLA Savita Mahato, MLA Sanjeev Sardar, MLA Sameer Mohanty, MLA Mangal Kalindi, Chairman of Jharkhand State Minority Commission Hidayatullah Khan, Vice President of Gau Seva Commission Raju Giri, Vice President of District Twenty Point Program Implementation Committee Mohan Karmakar and others were present in this program.

State gears up for World's Indigenous Peoples day

Rajya Sabha MP Shibu Soren to inaugurate exhibition cum fair

PNS : RANCHI

Jharkhand is yet again gearing up to observe the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples with much pomp and show. The State government observes August 9 as a State holiday.

The official two-day function will be held at the Bhagwan Birsa Munda Memorial Park or the old Birsa Munda Central Jail, where the tribal icon died in captivity. Tribal artists from all over the country have been requested to participate. A Book Fair, Food Festival and live demonstrations of Sohara and Dokra Arts will be the main attractions. The interested ones will be getting opportunities to learn these art forms from experts.

32 tribal communities will



Welfare Minister Deepak Birua invites Chief Minister Hemant Soren for World tribal day programme at his official residence in Ranchi on Thursday. PNS

take out a Reej-Rang Shobha Yatra from Dhumkudia Bhawan Karam Toli Chowk to Birsa Munda Smriti Udyan Jail Chowk for Jharkhand Tribal Festival 2024. As the chief guest of Jharkhand Tribal Festival 2024, State

Coordination Committee cum MP Rajya Sabha Shibu Soren will inaugurate the exhibition camp, tribal painter camp and tribal cuisine at the fair. Thereafter, flowers will be offered by him at the martyr's altar. State

Chief Minister Shri Hemant Soren will preside over the program.

In the cultural program, artists from other states like Mizoram, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tripura, Chhattisgarh etc. will give their captivating performance of traditional tribal dance.

In the fair, Akhada Darshan, song dance of 8 tribes, Nagpuri song dance by Padmashri Mukund Nayak, Janani Jhumar, Varsha Lakra and her group will present a narrative musical dance drama of the historical saga of Lord Birsa Munda, presentation by Santhali Band (modern Santhali singing and playing singer Sharon Marandi), Jharkhand Jharokha folk art musical instruments and costumes. At the same time, Tribal Culture in Fragman Stylish in

Costume Darshan will be presented by the tribal disabled children of Parivartan Sanstha and a drama based on character traits will be presented by the students of Ashram School. This time, 12 books will be released in the fair and forest rights patta will also be distributed.

Chief Minister Hemant Soren, who reviewed the progress of the preparations on Tuesday, has directed officials to ensure that the event has no shortcomings right from the seating of the guests and visitors to its grandeur. He instructed the officials to ensure Jharkhand's rich cultural heritage is on full display even as he issued a specific direction that no plant or tree gets harmed at the Park during the event. He also called for giving priority to local artistes in the events lined up for the occasion.

Govt working for prosperity of farmers of the state: Deepika Pandey

PNS : RANCHI

The Agriculture Department is working at various levels to strengthen the farmers of Jharkhand state economically, said State Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Cooperation Minister Deepika Pandey while reacting after the passing of three proposals related to the interest of farmers of the Agriculture Department in the Cabinet Council meeting on August 7. Deepika Pandey said that to provide relief to the farmers of the state, while the amount of loan waiver scheme has been increased from Rs 50 thousand to Rs 2 lakh, a provision of Rs 30 crore has been made in the budget for Crop Protection Scheme and Rs 50 lakh for Birsa Prime Minister Crop Insurance Scheme and a proposal of Rs 750 crore has been made. Proposals passed by the Agriculture Department in the meeting of the Council of Ministers: 1. Jharkhand Agriculture Loan Waiver Scheme: Jharkhand Agriculture Loan Waiver Scheme is a very ambitious farmer welfare scheme of the state government which has been operated from the



financial year 2020-21 to the financial year 2023-24. Till now, a total of Rs. 1900.35 crore loan of a total of 4,73,567 farmers of the state has been waived. The benefit of this scheme is given to those rayat, non-rayat of the state who have taken short term crop loan from any bank located in the state. The outstanding amount up to Rs 50,000 in the standard crop loan outstanding accounts till 31-03-2020 has been waived under this scheme. There has been a constant demand from the farmers to increase this amount to Rs 2,00,000. Taking cognizance of this demand, the Agriculture Minister had placed a proposal before the Council of Ministers, making departmental consent to increase

the amount to be waived to Rs 2,00,000. The approval of the Council of Ministers was given on this proposal yesterday on 07-08-2024. Therefore, in the financial year 2024-25, the benefit of loan waiver up to Rs 2,00,000 will be given to the farmers of the state, on which an expenditure of about Rs 750 crore is likely.

2. Birsa Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana: This scheme will be implemented again in the state from the financial year 2024-25. The benefit of this scheme will be given to the farmers of the state in the form of financial assistance in case of crop loss in an emergency situation. A total budgetary provision of Rs 50 crore has been received for the implementation of this scheme, for which an additional provision of Rs 250 crore is proposed in the supplementary budget. 3. Crop Protection Program Scheme: Under the State Scheme, an amount of Rs 30 crore has been approved for the implementation of Crop Protection Program Scheme for the financial year 2024-25 to increase crop productivity and quality productivity in the agriculture sector.

'Drug smuggling from Bangladesh ruining tribal youth in Santhal'



State BJP President Babul Marandi addresses party workers during a meeting at the party office in Ranchi on Thursday. Pix by Vinay Murmu

PNS : RANCHI

A day ahead when the State has geared up for celebrating International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, BJP State President and former Chief Minister Babul Marandi targeting the JMM/Congress government said that the drug game being run by Bangladesh infiltrators in the entire Santhal under the protection of the state government is ruining the youth especially the tribal population.

He said that due to the population explosion of

Bangladeshi infiltrators, the tribal society in Santhal Pargana is struggling to save its identity.

He said that the conspiracy to wipe out the existence of tribals is not limited to land loot and love jihad, Bangladeshi infiltrators are conspiring to destroy the Santhal tribals by trapping them in the clutches of drugs.

It is very unfortunate that Chief Minister Hemant Soren has given a statement in favor of Bangladeshi infiltrators even in such a huge crisis arising on the tribal society at present. Hemant has made

his intention very clear by defending the Bangladeshi infiltrators inside the House that the priority of the JMM Congress government is to protect its Muslim vote bank, not the tribal society struggling with the crisis of existence.

This is not for the first time that BJP has targeted the JMM government over Bangladeshi infiltrators. Recently, Assam Chief Minister and Jharkhand BJP Assembly Election Co-in-charge Himanta Biswa Sarma during his visit to State last week said that the number of Bangladeshi intruders is increasing in Jharkhand. The question of demography is being raised because the land of tribals is being occupied in Santhal Pargana.

The empire of Bangladeshi intruders is being established there. If the situation is not improved, then in the coming 20 years, the Chief Minister of Jharkhand will also become an intruder. The Chief Minister of the neighboring state being prevented from going to the village of Santhal Pargana where tribals are being tortured, their land is being snatched, shows how terrible the situation is.

Despite HC order Ratan Heights residents still spending sleepless nights

PNS : RANCHI

Despite the Jharkhand High Court order in their favour and continuously seeking help from Government, Municipal Corporation and local administration the woes of residents are increasing manifolds. They are living in complete danger and the apartment can decimate any time.

The Jharkhand High Court has stayed the construction of a new apartment, which was started in November, 22 adjacent to Ratan Heights in Morhabadi under the Bariatu police station area in the heart of the State Capital.

The bench of Justice Rajesh Shanker had directed after Ratan Heights Building Society knocked on its door for justice saying after the construction work started the life of their building had come in danger. Now the pit area has increased and the construction work is going on.

Apart from staying the work the court had directed the Ranchi Deputy Commissioner and Municipal Commissioner to file an affidavit in the matter within three weeks.

The society through their petition said the court that after builder VKS Reality dug

a 35 feet pit adjacent to the land of their apartment on Morabadi-Boedya Road, the entrance wall suddenly collapsed and a car parked there fell into a 35 feet pit on January 23.

Advocate Indrajit Sinha had represented the society in the High Court.

Around 48 flat owners of Ratan Height apartment, who were having sleepless nights due to the construction of a multi-storey apartment adjacent to their apartment, heaved a sigh of relief after the direction but now they still in danger because the construction work not stopped.

The resident also organised a press conference to share their problem on January 4 with the media. During the press conference, they said that despite direction by civic authorities, construction work was going on and they were fearful.

Talking to The Pioneer on phone Ratan Heights Resident, Ajay Kumar said the owner of the land Jay Parmal is completely responsible for all this issue. "But the irony is that the Government is not taking cognizance of the issue. The court had sent notice to fill the pit but they are not filling it and the apartment may collapse any time," he added.



Special Rakhi envelopes by Postal Dept



On behalf of the Senior Postal Superintendent, Ranchi Division for the convenience of the public sale of special envelopes for Rakhi has been started. These envelopes available for Rs 10, are specially designed to send Rakhi safely and on time. Special arrangements for posting these envelopes have also been made at Ranchi GPO (Main Post Office) and various post offices of Ranchi Division and additional assistance will also be provided to the senders. Udaybhan Singh Senior Postal Superintendent, Ranchi Division Postal Department, Ranchi has urged citizens to take advantage of these facilities as the Ranchi Postal Division is committed to make this festival successful and memorable.

Goat population growth rate second highest in Jharkhand: Experts



PNS : RANCHI

BAU animal geneticist and Principal Investigator (PI) of AICRP on Goat, Dr Nandani Kumari said Jharkhand having a goat population of 9.1 million (2019 livestock census), ranks 8th amongst Indian states in goat population registering an increase of 38.59 percent in the last five years. The increase in goat population in Jharkhand is second only to West Bengal which signifies the economic dependence of the Jharkhand farmers especially tribals on goat rearing.

Birsa Agriculture University (BAU) team members of All India Coordinated Research Project (AICRP) on Goat visited its Barabanki breeding cluster located in East Singhbhum. The team conducted vaccination of altogether 471 goats against PPR which is an important viral disease caused by morbillivirus in goats causing huge morbidity and mortality. The

team also held a health camp and distributed medicines to farmers for their ailing goats along with required consultation for disease management.

Kumari apprised the farmers about the importance of goat rearing and the role of balanced diet, proper management practices like timely dipping, de-worming, vaccination and others in profitable goat rearing.

They were advised to grow moringa and feed its leaves to goat as is has immense health benefits. She also promoted the female farmers in general and those belonging to SC-ST in particular to get registered to AICRP on goat project by taking up goat rearing to avail the benefits provided for them.

ICAR supported AICRP on goat, Black Bengal (Field Unit) under operation at BAU is mandated for selection and improvement of Black Bengal Goats and socio-economic upliftment of the farmers associated with it by teaching

them about scientific and innovative methods of goat rearing in four of its breeding centres namely Barabanki (East Singhbhum), Tiko (Lohardaga), Palojori (Deoghar) and Changguru (Ranchi).

The centres are operated with the help of four enumerators who collect data from their registered farmers about the growth and reproductive traits of Black Bengal goats of the area so that appropriate strategy for improvement of Black Bengal goats by selective breeding, in consonance with the Livestock Breeding Policy of Jharkhand, could be prepared. Tribal sub plan (TSP) and schedule caste sub plan (SCSP) components are other important part of this project making it immensely beneficial for the farmers of Jharkhand relying on goat rearing for their sustenance.

The visiting team consisted animal nutritionist Dr Dinesh Kumar (Co-PI), veterinary gynaecologist Dr Dilip Kumar and project staff.

Relished for its meat trait and known for prolificacy etc. across the country, Black Bengal goat is an asset not only for Jharkhand but for India. Jharkhand being richly inhabited mostly by the only recognized breed Black Bengal goat, the potential of its genetic improvement with other indigenous as well as exotic breed is immense paving the way for development of new crossbreed or varieties with black Bengal goat under the AICRP, benefiting the farmers.

Multilingual teaching program expands to 1041 schools in State

PNS : RANCHI

The School Education and Literacy Department of Jharkhand has been taking continuous initiatives to provide education in mother tongue and tribal languages to the school children of the State.

Mother tongue is the first language learned by children, which connects them to family, community and cultural traditions. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has also highlighted the influence of multilingualism, local and regional language. Keeping this in mind, the State Council of Ministers has identified 15 tribal and regional languages such as Santhali, Ho, Mundari, Kurukh, Kharia, Malto, Bhumij, Birhor, Asur and regional languages such as Odia, Bengali, Panchpargana, Kudmali, Khortha and Nagpuri for teaching programs.

Currently, under the multilingual education program, mother tongue and tribal language based education is being given in six districts of the State. With the support of UNICEF, the multilingual education program MTB-MLE was started in 259 schools of the State. Under this, children were being educated in five tribal languages such as Mundari, Kurukh, Ho, Kharia and Santali. This year it has been expanded to 1041 schools. The six districts in which this program has been started include 24 blocks of Gumla, Lohardaga, Simdega, Khunti, West Singhbhum and Sahibganj and

this program is being run in schools from class three to five in these blocks.

Bilingual textbooks of Mathematics and Environmental Studies for class three to five have been developed in five tribal languages. Under the MTB-MLE program difficult words of Hindi and tribal languages have been included in 30,000 English textbooks for class three to five for selected schools. Along with this, tribal language based activities have also been included in these textbooks. All five tribal languages have been included in the storybooks of four levels of the Barkha series. Apart from these, flash cards and teacher's guides have also been translated into these five tribal languages.

There is a plan to expand the multilingual education program in 15 languages identified by the State Council of Ministers, such as Santhali, Ho, Mundari, Kurukh, Kharia, Malto, Bhumij, Birhor, Asur and regional languages such as Oriya, Bangla, Panchpargana, Kudmali, Khortha and Nagpuri. Under this, this year the target has been set to develop teaching and learning materials in these 15 languages, create training models, create resources for linguistic skill development, and create evaluation technology.

For the successful operation of a multilingual education program in the State and training of teachers, a state-level tribal language lab has been formed in the Jharkhand Educational Research and Training Council.

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

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN
KOCHI

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



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

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

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

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

PTI ■ IMPHAL

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



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

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

Rain claims 100 lives in Himachal since start of monsoon

PTI ■ SHIMLA

Rain has taken 100 lives since the onset of monsoon on June 27 and continues to thwart the traffic in the state with 97 roads closed at the moment, officials said on Thursday. The Met office on Thursday issued an 'orange' warning, foreboding heavy to very rainfall, marked by thunderstorm and lightning, at places in Kangra, Mandi, Shimla, and Sirmour districts for Saturday. 'According to the state emergency operation centre, 30 people died after falling from a height, 23 in accidental drowning, 14 of snake bite, 13 due to electrocution, 11 in cloudburst, three in flash floods and one in landslide and five due to other reasons. 'The maximum deaths, 21, were reported from Mandi, followed by 18 in Kangra while Shimla and Sirmour districts for nine deaths each. 'The Met also warned of a low to moderate flash flood in parts of Sirmour, Chamba, Shimla, and Mandi districts in the next 24 hours. 'By Thursday evening, 40 roads were closed in Mandi, 26 in Kullu, 15 in Shimla, six in Kangra, four each in Sirmour and Lahaul and Spiti, and one each in Hamirpur and Kinnaur districts. 'The traffic was restricted to one side of the road on the Shimla-Kalka National Highway 5 due to debris on the road near Kangdhat in Solan district. Long queues of vehicles were seen on both sides of the road. 'Forty-five transformers and 25 water supply schemes are affected in the state, the state emergency centre said. 'Shillaroo recorded the highest rainfall at 86.4 mm since Wednesday evening, followed by Kufri (78 mm), Baggi (76.6 mm), Sundernagar (64.2 mm), Mandi (60.2 mm), Gohar (57.4 mm), Jogindernagar (57.3 mm), Pandoh (50 mm), Palampur (48.8 mm), Dharamshala (38.6 mm), Shimla (34 mm) Narkanda (28.5 mm), Bilaspur Jubbarhatti (25 mm each), Kangra (22.6 mm), Dhaulakuan (22 mm), and Manali (16 mm). 'The water supply to Shimla city can be disturbed for the next 2-3 days due to turbidity in the water sources, the Shimla Jal Prabandhak Nigam said. 'The state received 29 per cent deficit rainfall till August 8, beginning from Jun1, the date monsoon hits the country. 'The state received 307.9 mm rainfall against an average of 435.5 mm during this period. 'In August so far, Himachal Pradesh has recorded 80.8 mm rainfall against a normal of 78.5 mm.

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

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

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



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

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

Education best tool for social transformation: Arunachal Governor

PTI ■ ITANAGAR

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

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

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

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

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



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

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

PTI ■ KOLKATA

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



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

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

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

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

PTI ■ JODHPUR

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



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

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

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



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Daunting task ahead

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

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



The political upheaval has triggered a wave of fear among the populace especially the minorities. Reports indicate that hundreds of Bangladeshis are attempting to cross the border into India, driven by concerns for their safety. The future course of Bangladesh's political landscape under Yunus' leadership is fraught with uncertainty. Yunus has been an advocate for political reform and transparency. His leadership could usher in a new era of governance, focusing on anti-corruption measures and democratic practices. However, implementing these changes in a deeply entrenched political system will be a formidable challenge. Besides,

Bangladesh's economy has been under strain due to mismanagement and corruption. Yunus' expertise in economic development and microfinance could play a pivotal role in revitalising the economy, promoting entrepreneurship, and creating jobs. While some may view him as a saviour, others may see him as an outsider with no political experience. Building trust and garnering widespread support will be essential for his administration's success. However, the biggest challenge would be restoring peace and maintaining the law and order. Ensuring law and order during this transition period is paramount. Yunus will need the cooperation of the military and law enforcement agencies to maintain stability and prevent further violence. As Bangladesh stands on the brink of a new political era with Muhammad Yunus at the helm, the road ahead is uncertain. The immediate priority will be to address the fears of the populace and restore a sense of security, especially amongst minorities. All said and done, right now the army will call the shots and till elections are announced nothing can be said about the future of interim government itself. The coming days will be crucial in determining whether Yunus' leadership can guide the country towards stability and prosperity or if Bangladesh will descend into further chaotic unrest.

PICTALK



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

PTI

Rediscovering the true value of life

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

The best things in life, they say, come free. It is a dubious statement that we may not readily agree to in a world where anything material has a price tag attached to it. The problem is not in the maxim that I opened this piece with; the problem is with our definition of "the best things". We have devised a curious way to assess our lives by putting a numerical value on everything we can possess and call our own. Even as we scamper all over the place trying to fetch luxuries and comfort items, we tend to forget several things which we do not personally possess but are indispensable to our existence.



They are more valuable to us than all the material assets of the world put together. Air, sunlight, water, and soil for instance. Many things are too obvious for us to appreciate as I discovered recently when astronauts Sunita Williams and Barry Wilmore got stranded in space. Reports say that her extended stay would affect her body adversely and as per NASA,

it could alter the structure of the eyes and brain, and their function "because low-gravity conditions shift the body's fluids toward the head". Gravity: The natural phenomenon that Newton discovered by chance in late 1666 when he saw an apple fall to the ground isn't something that we pay attention to in our daily lives. We take universal gravitation for granted, just as we take many other conventional things and natural forces as part of our privilege on this planet. The heat wave sweeping across the globe, the unprecedented floods and unseasonal snow are all testimonies of this casual attitude we have adopted towards the most valuable things in life that the universe has granted us. Climate change has been converted to a mere topic of discussion and not as a veritable threat for all species. Who will tell us that we have been presently allowed to live the best versions of ourselves aided by natural resources and no matter how hard we try, we cannot replicate these conditions in another part of the universe anytime soon? We may be vain to declare that space travel will soon become a regular thing thanks to man's daring explorations. We can claim that we are

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

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



ASHA IYER KUMAR

India, planet worship is considered particularly venerable by many components of the population, and the steps in sun worship are a widely shared phenomenon. This practice is often accompanied by pouring water facing the sun. Celebrating obeisance to the sun is popular and has many stories spun around it. It may be useful to remind oneself that, in the belief of many, worship of even other planets is a virtuous thing to do. The point, however, is to recognise that behaviour is determined by one's belief, and this belief may not always be an act of choice but an act of an inherited value system and cognitive association with values that are considered virtuous. This component of tradition, which is common in many parts of the world, is now often referred to, not so complimentarily, as the Third World Phenomena. The older the community, the greater their belief and the more grounded their behaviour. In such communities' gender relationships have a strong overlay of traditional beliefs.

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

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

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

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

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There are other rituals associated with the sun in many parts of the world as well. In



ASHA IYER KUMAR

India, planet worship is considered particularly venerable by many components of the population, and the steps in sun worship are a widely shared phenomenon. This practice is often accompanied by pouring water facing the sun. Celebrating obeisance to the sun is popular and has many stories spun around it. It may be useful to remind oneself that, in the belief of many, worship of even other planets is a virtuous thing to do. The point, however, is to recognise that behaviour is determined by one's belief, and this belief may not always be an act of choice but an act of an inherited value system and cognitive association with values that are considered virtuous. This component of tradition, which is common in many parts of the world, is now often referred to, not so complimentarily, as the Third World Phenomena. The older the community, the greater their belief and the more grounded their behaviour. In such communities' gender relationships have a strong overlay of traditional beliefs.

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ASHA IYER KUMAR



FIRST COLUMN

HASINA'S OUSTER:
A BLOW TO INDIA

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



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

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

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



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

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

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

Bangladesh at
political crossroads

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



K S TOMAR

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Challenges for India: The ouster of Sheikh Hasina presents several

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



PRIYADARSHI DUTTA

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AP ■ VIENNA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

confirmation of a planned attack at the stadium.

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

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

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

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

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

Barracuda Music said that "all tickets will be automatically refunded

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

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

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

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

Anti-racism protesters march counters violence in UK

PTI ■ LONDON

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Trump allies amplify a false claim about Harris' racial identity

AP ■ WASHINGTON

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Policemen in Bangladesh slowly returning to work

PTI ■ DHAKA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"It is because of them [unprofessional officers] that this ongoing violence and casualties have occurred," he was quoted as saying by The Daily Star newspaper. Many police officials have been injured, killed, and tortured because of some unprofessional and overly ambitious officials, he said.

Islam assured that every murder would be properly investigated.

Israeli strike on Gaza home kills 7

AP ■ JERUSALEM

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ukrainian forces make significant incursion in Kursk region

AP ■ KYIV

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

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

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

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

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

wounded, Russian news agencies reported.

The Ukrainian shelling, meanwhile, killed at least two people — a paramedic and an ambulance driver — and wounded 24 others, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said in a statement Wednesday. It wasn't possible to independently verify the Russian claims. Disinformation and propaganda have played a central role in the war, now in its third year.

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

Resolve Kashmir issue by peaceful means: UN

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sd/- Executive Engineer
Roads & Building Division
Paradip Port Authority
PPA/PR/27/2024-2025 dttd.07.08.2024

UPSIDA
उपग्रह राज्य औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण
ए-114, लखनपुर, कानपुर

एतद् द्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि प्राधिकरण के विभिन्न जमरदों में स्थित औद्योगिक क्षेत्रों में विद्युत विकास, अनुसंधान एवं रख-रखाव कार्यों हेतु सरकारी भित्तियों/सार्वजनिक उपकरणों/निर्माण/प्राधिकरणों/परिषदों/नगर निकायों में पंजीकृत एवं अनुवीची फर्मों /उकेदारों से अत्यन्तकालीन ई-निविदाये आमंत्रित की जाती है जो दिनांक 09.08.2024 को अपरान्ह 04.00 बजे से दिनांक 20.08.2024 को अपरान्ह 5.00 बजे तक अपरान्ह की जा सकती है। निविदाओं को दिनांक 21.08.2024 को अपरान्ह 04.00 बजे खोला जाएगा। निविदादाताओं द्वारा शब्द पत्रों की मूल प्रतियां दिनांक 23.08.2024 को सयं 5.00 बजे तक कार्यालय में जमा की जा सकती है। ई-निविदा के माध्यम से आमंत्रित की जाने वाली निविदा सम्बन्धी विवरण निम्नवत् है:-

क्रमांक	कार्य का नाम	कार्य की लागत (लाख में)
1	Supply and Installation of CCTV & Annual service charge with 05 years AMC at IA, Mathura site A & B, Kosi Kotwan I & II Kosi Kalan (Mathura), Firozabad, Bhogaoan (Mainpuri), Foundary Nagar Agra, Sikandra Site A, B, C & EPIIP Agra.	98.66

नोट- 1. निविदादाता अपनी निविदाओं में समस्त कर सहित दरे अंकित करें। जीएसटीडी अलग से देना होता है। निविदा सम्बन्धी विस्तृत जानकारी के लिए www.onlineupsida.com पर दिखत ई-निविदा एवं सूचीपत्रों की <http://etender.up.nic.in> पर देखी जा सकती है।
जय महाराजक (पि) नु. उद्योगाधिकारिका, कानपुर

Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot (Admission Branch)

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

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

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

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

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

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

JASCH GAUGING TECHNOLOGIES LIMITED
CIN: L33111DL2021PLC381513
Regd. Office: 502, Block-C, NDM-2, N.S.P., Pitampura, New DELHI 110034
Website: www.jasch.net.in, Phone: 0130-2216666

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

for Jasch Gauging Technologies Ltd
Sd/- Neeraj Kumar
Company Secretary

Sonipat,
07-08-2024

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

For ninth time in a row

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

Four out of the six members of MPC voted in favour of the rate decision. The panel, whose four-year term ends in October, also decided to retain a policy stance at "withdrawal of accommodation" to aid MPC's focus on bringing inflation towards its 4 per cent target. Inflation climbed to 5.08 per cent in June, primarily driven by the food component.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said food inflation



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

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

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

RBI retained India's GDP growth forecast at 7.2 per cent and headline CPI inflation at 4.5 per cent for the current fiscal 2024-25.

Upasna Bhardwaj, Chief Economist, Kotak Mahindra Bank said, with growth remaining robust, the MPC still has room to hold on to policy stance to get

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

Radhika Rao, Executive Director and Senior Economist, DBS Bank said, policy guidance reinforced that domestic considerations will be prioritised, despite a sharp buildup in rate cut pricing for the US Fed.

"The RBI MPC retained its cautious tone on inflation, in the face of an anticipated pass-through from perishables price pressures and tariff adjustments. With domestic demand conditions calling for a focus on inflation, we expect the policy rate to stay on hold for the rest of the year," Rao added.

The Governor flagged alternative investment avenues becoming more attractive to retail customers leading to bank deposits trailing loan growth.

Though he did not specify the alternate avenues, he may have been referring to investors flocking to the stock markets.

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

Retaining its unambiguous focus on inflation, the Monetary



Policy Committee (MPC), which consists of three RBI and three external members, kept the benchmark repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent.

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

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

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said food inflation remains "stubbornly" high.

"RBI MPC is in wait and watch mode and has kept the interest rates unchanged, waiting for clues from the largest Central Bank of the world, the US Federal Reserve, before acting. Stock markets will continue to consolidate in the meanwhile," said Umeshkumar Mehta, CIO, SAMCO Mutual Fund.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, Asian Paints, Infosys, JSW Steel,

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

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

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

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

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.66 per cent to USD 77.83 a barrel. On Wednesday, the BSE benchmark rallied 874.94 points or 1.11 per cent to settle at 79,468.01. During the day, it jumped 1,046.13 points or 1.33 per cent to 79,639.20.

The NSE Nifty jumped 304.95 points or 1.27 per cent to 24,297.50. Intraday, it surged 345.15 points or 1.43 per cent to 24,337.70.

Sebi amends alternative investment funds norms

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



(other than the manager, sponsor, employees or directors of the AIF or employees or directors of the manager) is an accredited investor and invests at least Rs 70 crore.

Additionally, the regulator has allowed Category I and II AIFs to borrow for a period of up to 30 days for the purpose of meeting temporary shortfall in drawdown from investors while making investments in a bid to facilitate ease of doing business and provide operational flexibility.

Category I and II AIFs shall "not borrow funds directly or indirectly or engage in

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

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

Rupee falls 1 paisa to close at 83.96 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

It finally settled at 83.96 (provisional) against the American currency, down 1 paisa from its previous close. On Wednesday, the rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled for the day lower by 3 paise at 83.95 against US dollar.

The local unit had slumped 37 paise to settle at an all-time low of 84.09 against the



US dollar on Monday.

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

However, weak US dollar may support the rupee at lower levels. Any intervention by RBI may also support the rupee.

"Traders may take cues from weekly unemployment claims data from the US. USDINR spot price is expected to trade in a range

of Rs 83.75 to Rs 84.20," Choudhary said. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.12 per cent to 103.07 points.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading 0.78 per cent lower at USD 77.72 per barrel in futures trade. On the macroeconomic front, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank kept the benchmark repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent.

Announcing the bi-monthly monetary policy review RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das

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

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

In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 581.79 points, or 0.73 per cent, to close at 78,886.22 points, while the Nifty declined 180.50 points, or 0.74 per cent, to 24,117.00 points.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Wednesday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 3,314.76 crore, according to exchange data.

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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

PTI ■ KOLKATA

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

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

17 new printers launched

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

They are hopeful for a rate cut in the next monetary policy committee meeting. Commenting on the RBI policy, realtors body CREDAI President Boman Irani said, "RBI's decision to keep the repo rates unchanged at 6.5 per cent would maintain the borrowing costs for homebuyers and their ongoing home loan EMIs. However, we do expect and hope for a rate cut in the upcoming MPC meets, given the relatively favourable macro-economic dynamics."

"Coupled with the festive season in the coming months, we expect the housing sales momentum to continue going into the final quarters of the 2024 calendar year," he added.

NAREDCO President G Hari Babu the central bank's decision creates a stable environment for the real estate sector. "With steady borrowing costs, home loans become more affordable, which is likely to boost demand in the housing market, especially during the upcoming festive season. This stability allows developers to plan projects confidently, knowing that

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

Leading housing brokerage firm Anarock Chairman Anuj Puri said this sets a positive tone for the housing industry. "Maintaining interest rates offers consistency in borrowing costs, which will prompt more aspiring homebuyers to consider taking the plunge — and thus drive demand in the housing market. With interest rates staying steady, EMIs will remain manageable for current and potential homeowners, potentially leading to increased home sales — particularly in the price-sensitive affordable segment," he added.

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

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

Among developers, Gurugram-based Krisumi Corporation Managing Director Mohit Jain said, "While a rate cut would have been an ideal scenario to propel economic growth across industries, including real estate, maintaining the status quo will help prevent borrowing cost from rising, enable affordability, propel the residential demand and boost the overall economy."

Bengaluru-based Sterling Developers CMD Ramani Sastri said the decision fosters consumer confidence and offers a sense of continuity and predictability to the real estate sector, which is already witnessing a strong demand from end-users. "The decision will keep the ongoing sales momentum on track and boost the optimistic attitude currently prevailing in the market," he added.

Nayan Raheja of Delhi-NCR-based Raheja Developers said, "As luxury housing gains momentum, maintaining the status quo will further boost the demand for more properties and strengthen market confidence."

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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

significant role, as new ventures prioritise hiring developers to build and scale their products, it said.

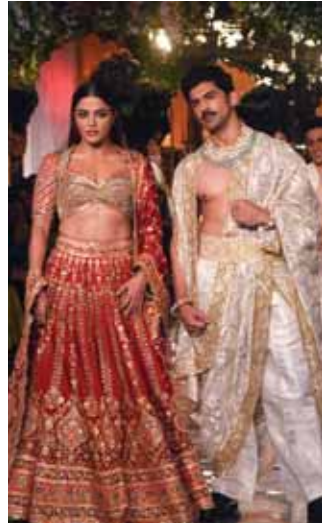
According to Indeed data, companies are actively hiring for roles such as Application Developer, Software Engineer, Full-Stack Developer, Senior Software Engineer, and PHP Developer. There's also a growing demand for NET Developers, Software Architects, DevOps Engineers, Data Engineers, and Front-End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

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



GLITTER AND GRACE INDIA COUTURE WEEK 2024

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



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



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



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



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



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



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

A New Chapter in Indian Luxury Fashion

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

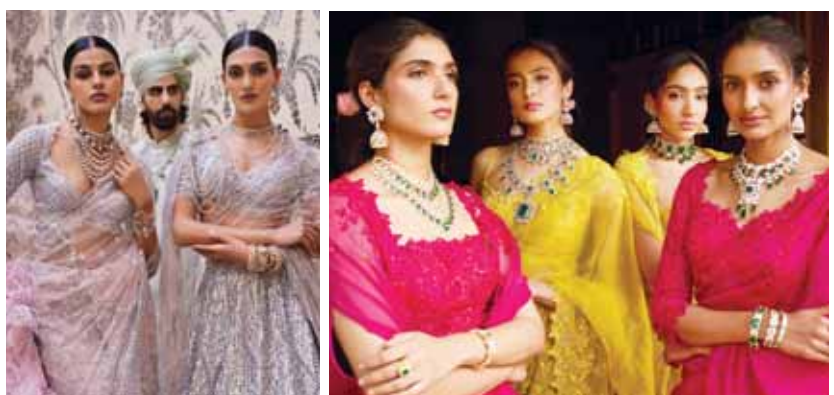


TEAM VIVA

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

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

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



A FUSION OF STYLE, WELLNESS AND TIMELESS ELEGANCE

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



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



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

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

WRESTLER AMAN ENTERS SEMIFINALS

PTI ■ PARIS

Young Indian grappler Aman Sehrawat rekindled India's hopes of a medal in wrestling, demolishing former world champion Zelimkhan Abakarov of Albania by technical superiority to seal a place in the 57kg free-style semifinal at the Paris Olympics here on Thursday.

Aman was in imperious form as he toyed with Abakarov in the second round. The 21-year-old Indian locked his legs at the start of the second round and turned him over multiple times to earn eight straight points to secure a 12-0 victory.

The bout started with Aman earning a passivity point after his Russian-turned-Albanian opponent did not initiate any attacking move.

Moments later, the Indian effected a left-leg hold to earn two more points to showcase his dominance by going 3-0 up at the end of round 1.

Aman was on song in round 2 and Abakarov, world champion in 2022, bore the brunt. The Indian's superb agility against the 31-year-old Albanian was on display as he attacked the left leg to bring him down.

He then effected a 'fitley' (leg lace), turning the Albanian around several times to end the contest with more than two minutes to go. Abakarov contested the last two points awarded to Aman but the referee ruled in favour of the Indian and awarded him a point.

Aman will meet Japanese top seed Rei Higuchi in the last-four round later in the day.

Earlier, Aman ensured himself an easy passage into the quarterfinal with a dominating performance against North Macedonian rival Vladimir Egorov.

The 21-year-old Indian, an Asian Championship gold medallist and the only male wrestler from the country to qualify for the Olympics, was amazingly agile as he kept his defence intact while regularly overpowering his 29-year-old former European champion with leg holds to win the bout on technical superiority (10-0).

Egorov seemed to be in a bit of bother after the first round, requiring medical attention on his knee following Aman's all-out attack.

But the Macedonian could not stage a comeback with Aman effecting a takedown to earn two



more points and go 10-0 up with more than two minutes remaining on the clock.

ANSHU MALIK LOSES: Woman grappler Anshu Malik displayed great determination but could not breach the defence of USA's vastly experienced Helen Louise Maroulis, losing 2-7 in the 57kg pre-quarterfinals.

It was a rematch of the 2021 World Championship final in Oslo where Anshu had to settle for silver against the American.

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

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

The Indian then held Helen, a three-time world champion, at bay in the first round before the American came back to showcase her pedigree in the second and win despite getting a warning.



AP ■ LE BOURGET (FRANCE)

For many athletes at the Paris Olympics, the fun was just beginning after they were done competing.

During the second full week of the 2024 Olympics, going home wasn't an option. Now that the pressure of having to compete is gone, it was time to become a fan: Enjoy Paris and watch other sports.

"I'm a huge track fan," said triathlete Morgan Pearson, who won the silver medal with the U.S. Team in the mixed relay on Monday. "I hope to go to some of those races. I'm a huge Olympic fan in general."

American sport climber Zach Hammer, who was finished competing on Tuesday, also was headed to the track. "I would definitely be excited to watch the men's 200-(meter) with (Noah) Lyles. He's one of my favorite athletes," he said. "I'm definitely excited to get the full Olympic experience, and I'll go watch whatever there is to watch. It will definitely be cool to see Americans competing on the

Athletes stick around Paris Games to watch other sports, get full experience

biggest stage." U.S. Rower Jacob Plihal was among those who stayed in town after competing during the first week.

"Hopefully I can watch a little handball if that's still going, maybe 3x3 basketball," he said. "I don't know what the schedules are. I've been focused on the racing but I'm excited to stick around and watch other sports, cheer Team USA on and get to know some athletes at the (Olympic) Village."

Another American sport climber, Sam Watson, who broke the speed world record in an elimination heat on Tuesday, was making the most out of his stay at the village. He was challenging fellow athletes to chess games and trying to get selfies with a member of



every delegation at the Games. Some of the American women rowers who competed last week were at the women's basketball game between the U.S. and Nigeria on Wednesday.

Molly Thompson-Smith, a British sport climber, was interested in watching some of the other smaller sports that don't often get much attention. She said "it's been really cool to kind of learn how they work and all the weird things about them."

Thompson-Smith added that she "did see a bit of beach volleyball" but "I think everyone wants to see the athletics, just to see something like that and feel the atmosphere of the crowd would be incredible. But I'm open to seeing anything now ... I'm here to make as many memories and see as much as I possibly can."

Rower Viktorija Senkute, who won Lithuania's first medal at the Games last week, was sticking around to watch her boyfriend, Simonas Maldonis, compete in canoe sprint. Athletes can watch their own discipline with their accreditation, but need tickets for other sports. Some said they can get them through their national Olympic committees, or with the

International Olympic Committee, which gives each athlete one free ticket per day.

There was an additional Olympic experience for athletes this time in Paris, as for the first time in the Summer Games organizers gave them a place to be closer to fans and celebrate their medals. In the new Champions Park, athletes got a chance to parade with their medals and interact with fans.

"I feel as if this year they've done a really good job of treating after winning athletes with memories that we're going to cherish forever," French rugby player Aaron Grandier Nkanang said after going to the Champions Park. "We're just in front of the Eiffel Tower, and there's thousands of people out to come and cheer us on."

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

PTI ■ PARIS

Wrestler Antim Panghal, who caused embarrassment to the Indian Olympic contingent by trying to facilitate her sister's entry into the athletes village through her accreditation card, is likely to be banned for three years by the IOA, a source told PTI on Thursday.

Panghal had crashed out of the Olympics after losing her opening bout in the women's 53kg category on Wednesday. "IOA (Indian Olympic Association) officials discussed the issue that caused embarrassment to all. It is considering a three-year ban on everyone involved, including the coaches," a source in the Indian contingent told PTI.

"First, we need to ensure that she reaches home. The decision will be announced only after she reaches India," the source added. Panghal is set to take a flight to Delhi this evening. The IOA decided to send her and her support staff back after the disciplinary breach was brought to its notice by the French authorities. The body, however, asserted that the ban has not yet been imposed.

"A ban has not been imposed as yet," said an IOA official. Speaking with PTI before her flight back to India, the 19-

year-old said, "I did not intend to do anything wrong. I was not well and there was confusion. All of this happened due to confusion."

Later, in a video, she admitted that she had to go to the police station but only for the verification of her accreditation card.

"It was not a good day for me. I lost. A lot is being spread about me, that's not true. I had high fever, and had taken permission from my coach to go to the hotel with my sister."

"I needed some some of my belongings which were in the Games Village. My sister took my card and asked the officials there if she could take my belongings. They took her to the Police Station for accreditation verification."

She also denied that her coaches were drunk and got into an altercation with a taxi driver over fare.

"My coaches had stayed back at the venue and when they wanted to come back, we booked a cab for them. My coaches did not have enough cash and due to the language issues, led to an argument with the taxi driver."

"Since they came to collect some Euros from the hotel room, it took some time and led to the situation. I already have had a bad time, please don't spread rumours. Please support me," she said.

Weinberg helps US beat Australia 11-10 in men's water polo quarters

AP ■ NANTERRE

Adrian Weinberg made two blocks in a penalty shootout to help the United States beat Australia 11-10 in the quarterfinals of the men's water polo tournament at the Paris Olympics.

Hannes Daube and Alex Bowen each scored two goals in regulation as the U.S. Reached the semifinals at the Olympics for the first time since 2008. Daube and Bowen also converted their penalty shots in the tiebreaker. "It was exhausting," U.S. Attacker Marko Vavic said. "Both of us fighting for our country, each trying to get to the semifinal. It's what we've been dreaming about since we were kids. Everyone put it down on the line."

It was the third straight win for the U.S., which will play Serbia on Friday at Paris La Defense Arena. Serbia is trying to become the third men's team to win three consecutive Olympic gold medals.

Croatia will face Hungary in the other semifinal. Croatia beat Spain 10-8 in the first quarterfinal of the day, and Hungary edged Italy 12-10 in another game that went to a penalty shootout. Serbia advanced when captain Nikola Jaksic skipped home a perfect shot from deep with 3 seconds left, lifting his country to a 12-11 victory over Greece.

"We finally looked like the team that came here to win it," Jaksic said. "We didn't give up from the first to the last moment."

Angelos Vlachopoulos had just tied the game for Greece with 6 seconds remaining.

"In this moment, I really hope this is a dream right now, just a nightmare and I will wake up and play again," Greece's Dimitrios Skoumpakis said. "Every guy on this team really tried a lot. We worked very hard, but this is the sport."

The U.S. Rallied after a tough sequence in the first quarter. Max



Irving had a goal waved off when the game was stopped for a video review and U.S. Attacker Johnny Hooper received a brutality foul, taking him out for the rest of the contest.

Australia also got a 4-minute power play that it turned into two more goals and a 5-2 advantage.

But the U.S. Went ahead 6-5 when Daube scored with 6:03 left in regulation. After Pavillard scored two straight for Australia, Bowen's man-

up goal with 32 seconds remaining tied it at 7.

Irving also connected for the U.S. In the tiebreaker before Vavic closed it out for the U.S., beating Australia goaltender Nic Porter after they played together in college at Southern California.

"I didn't even look at him until I went up to shoot," Vavic said. "He was trying to eye me down and talk to me about the pressure before I got there. "He was chirping me, but I just tried to keep my composure and luckily I stuck it."

Pavillard scored four times for Australia in regulation on four shots. He also converted his penalty shot in the tiebreaker.

"Full credit to the U.S.," Porter said. "They really pulled it out of the fire there. It was our game to win, and they snatched it from us for sure."

Kristian Manhercz scored five times for Hungary in its quarterfinal win, and Gergo Zalanki had three goals. Manhercz and Zalanki also made their penalty shots in the tiebreaker.

Francesco di Fulvio and Gonzalo Echenique each scored three goals in the loss. When it was over, Italy's Nicholas Presciutti directed a middle finger toward Hungary's players.

AP ■ PARIS

Oleksandr punches his way to Paris Gold

Oleksandr Khyzhniak was one minute away from winning an Olympic gold medal three years ago when he was rocked by one miraculous punch. Khyzhniak went down, the fight was stopped and the most fearsome boxer in Tokyo had to settle for silver.

The middleweight from Ukraine decided he would wait three years to make it right. Khyzhniak got his epic redemption Wednesday night at the Paris Games with a gold medal finally around his neck - but only after he paid for it in time, sweat and pain.

Khyzhniak beat Nurbek Oralbay of Kazakhstan 3:2 in a thrilling final at Roland Garros, securing the championship that evaded him in heartbreaking fashion in Tokyo. The fighters unloaded on each other for three action-packed rounds, but Khyzhniak

clinched the win by dominating a final three minutes filled with a jaw-dropping number of uppercuts, combinations and power punches for an Olympic fight.

When Khyzhniak's hand was raised, the 29-year-old dropped to his knees in cathartic relief. Even though he is an obvious blue-chip professional prospect, Khyzhniak put any other chapters of his life on hold because he was determined to do what he couldn't in Tokyo.

Khyzhniak spent the last three years thinking about his loss to Hebert Sousa of Brazil, a game competitor who clearly wasn't the best middleweight in a stacked division in Tokyo. Khyzhniak was up 20-18 on all

five cards after two rounds in their gold medal bout, meaning he only had to avoid a stoppage or a point deduction to win.

But Khyzhniak simply couldn't stop himself from coming forward relentlessly. He knows no way to fight other than to throw as many punches as his arms can muster for nine minutes of bruising, bleeding pressure.

So Khyzhniak kept coming forward, and the artful Sousa floored him with what might have been just a flash knockdown in the pros but was enough to persuade the Olympic referee to stop the bout.

After the loss, Khyzhniak devoted himself to an Olympic comeback, winning every



amateur bout he took since Tokyo. When the Olympics eliminated the 75-kilogram division in which Khyzhniak fought in Tokyo, he even moved up to 80 kilograms - now called middleweight.

Now he has been probably the most exciting fighter in his second Olympics, Khyzhniak didn't steamroll through his four bouts in Paris. He was tested in his early fights before he reached the semifinals against Arlen Lopez, the two-time Olympic gold medalist from Cuba.

The veteran amateurs put on a memorable show worthy of their combined star power, but Khyzhniak won with another phenomenal third round. He simply wouldn't stop pressuring Lopez, who finally

ran out of stratagems to keep the Ukrainian star off him.

In the final, Khyzhniak faced a dynamic prospect in the 24-year-old Oralbay, whose twin brother also fought at Paris. Oralbay had ample skill and punching power to challenge Khyzhniak, and the fighters were essentially even on the scorecards heading to the third round.

And what a round it turned out to be.

Oralbay bled from a cut near his right eye early in the third, but the fighters unloaded on each other for three minutes. All five judges favored Khyzhniak, who snapped Oralbay's head back on his neck multiple times with pinpoint-perfect uppercuts. Khyzhniak was the second

gold medal winner at Roland Garros on Wednesday, joining Erislandy Alvarez of Cuba. Alvarez edged Sofiane Oumih of France 3:2 in an exciting lightweight bout - but it couldn't match the emotion and savagery on display between Khyzhniak and Oralbay, who fights one weight class below his twin brother.

Earlier on the card, Lin Yu-ting of Taiwan advanced to the women's featherweight gold medal bout with her third straight victory while dealing with widespread scrutiny regarding misconceptions about her gender.

Tokyo gold medalist Bakhodir Jalolov of Uzbekistan shut out Melvie Tiafack of Germany to move within one victory of becoming the first two-time super heavyweight gold medalist in Olympic history. The 30-year-old Jalolov, a 14-0 professional, will fight Ayoub Ghadfa of Spain for gold.