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## झारखण्ड आदिवासी महोत्सव 2024

उद्घाटन सत्र के  
कार्यक्रम की झलकियां

### मुख्य आकर्षण

सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रम, पूर्वाह्न 11 बजे से

- नगाड़ा समूह का वादन
- आसाम बैंड की प्रस्तुति
- "फ्लेम ऑफ दी फारेस्ट"  
वादन कार्यक्रम
- आदिवासी परिधान  
प्रदर्शन प्रस्तुति
- लेजर एवं फायर शो  
(VFX)

### समापन समारोह

❖ मुख्य अतिथि ❖

**श्री हेमन्त सोरेन**

माननीय मुख्यमंत्री, झारखण्ड

❖ विशिष्ट अतिथि ❖

**समस्त माननीय मंत्री, झारखण्ड सरकार**

तथा

माननीय सांसदगण, माननीय विधायकगण  
एवं अन्य गणमान्य अतिथियों  
की गरिमामय उपस्थिति में

**शनिवार 10 अगस्त, अपराह्न 05:00 बजे से**

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

समारोह में आपकी  
उपस्थिति सादर प्रार्थित है

सूचना एवं जनसंपर्क विभाग, झारखण्ड सरकार

हेमन्त सोरेन  
मुख्यमंत्री, झारखण्ड



World Tribal Day- 30 beneficiaries benefit from government schemes

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR The Town Hall in Sidgora was abuzz with energy and enthusiasm as the district level program celebrating World Tribal Day unfolded on Friday.



community spirit, and their enduring traditions. In addition to the cultural performances, the program also recognized and rewarded the talents of young students.

under schemes like the Mukhyamantri Rojgar Srijan Yojana, Van Patta, Sarvajan Pension, Mukhyamantri Pashudhan Vikas Yojana, and Credit Linkage to Self Help Groups.

community to work together to protect their heritage, natural resources, and self-respect. He paid tribute to tribal freedom fighters like Bhagwan Birsa Munda, Sidhu-Kanhu, and Chand Bhairav, whose contributions to the nation's independence and tribal culture remain a source of inspiration.

to the last person in society. He reiterated the government's dedication to connecting tribal youth, particularly girls from remote areas, to education through initiatives like scholarship programs and bicycle distribution.

Garware Hi-Tech Films Launches its Paint Protection Film Application Studio in Faridabad



PNS : RANCHI The opening of the Garware Application Studio in Faridabad marks a significant milestone towards customer centricity. During the inaugural session, Deepak Joshi, Director - Sales & Marketing at GHFL, said "AtGarware Hi-Tech Films, our 90-year legacy is a testament to our unwavering commitment to innovation and excellence."

Over 60 students present research at finance and marketing seminar

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR The Postgraduate Department of Commerce at Karim City College, Jamshedpur, organized a one-day departmental seminar focused on finance and marketing for M.Com Semester-4 students on Thursday.



Reyaz, the esteemed Principal of Karim City College. Dr. Reyaz delivered an inspiring address, emphasizing the importance of hard work and dedication in achieving success. He urged the students to devote 6 to 8 hours daily to their studies and encouraged them to pursue JRF and NET qualifications, which are essential for securing Assistant Professor positions.

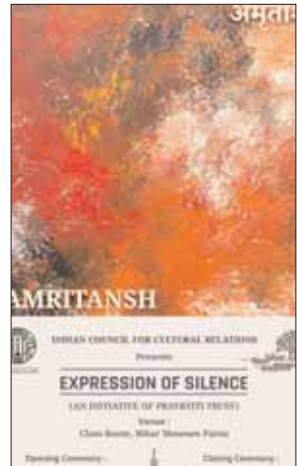
nar, noting their importance in the current economic landscape. Dr. Md. Moazzam Nazri, Head of the PG Department of Commerce, also addressed the students, elaborating on the seminar's objectives and highlighting the crucial role of NABARD in promoting sustainable agricultural and rural development in India.

ensured by the efforts of key faculty members, including Dr. G. Vijayalakshmi, Dr. Syed Zahid Perwaiz, Dr. Rashmi Akhtar, Dr. Aftab Alam, Dr. Fouzia Tabassum, and Prof. Rashid Iqbal Ansari. Their guidance played a pivotal role in facilitating the event. Dr. Rashmi Akhtar conducted the seminar proceedings, ensuring a smooth flow of presentations and discussions, while Dr. Syed Zahid Perwaiz delivered the vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to all participants and organizers.

'Expression Of Silence': Neurodiverse Talent at Bihar Museum

BY HUMAIRA HASAN

BENGALURU : The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), in collaboration with Pravriti Trust, is set to present an art exhibition titled "Expression of Silence," featuring the works of Amritansh, a remarkable non-verbal, outsider neurodiverse artist. The exhibition will be held at the Bihar Museum in Patna, opening on August 10, 2024, at 12:30 PM, and concluding on August 11, 2024, at 4:00 PM.



'Views from Planet Autism'. This was soon followed by a stream of events starting with his debut solo show, "Awesomism Autism," held in Patna on World Autism Awareness Day in 2022 organized by Action For Autism (ASA) and later followed by another exhibition of the same name in Gurugram. This multifaceted virtuoso has been lauded by several distinguished figures, including Han Jun Ho, a Member of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea.

THE WRITER IS A STUDENT OF BA JOURNALISM AND PSYCHOLOGY AT ST. JOSEPH'S UNIVERSITY.

Jharkhand Jal Sahiya workers present key demands to Shweta Singh

PNS : BOKARO



On August 8, 2024, the Jal Sahiya workers of Jharkhand submitted a ten-point demand list to Jharkhand Pradesh Congress General Secretary, Shweta Singh. This comes shortly after Mrs. Singh's successful intervention led to the release of their long-pending honorarium. The demands include a respectable monthly honorarium of ₹20,000, comprehensive health insurance and benefits, and the allocation of all water and sanitation responsibilities to Jal Sahiya workers.

mobile phones, and the immediate disbursement of pending payments related to toilet surveys and ODF incentives. Mrs. Singh assured the workers that she would advocate for these demands at the government level, pledging to make every effort to have their concerns addressed and fulfilled.

In response, Shweta Singh emphasized the critical role that Jal Sahiya workers play in maintaining the health and hygiene of communities, particularly in rural areas. The seminar's success was

Young talent secures admission to Rashtriya Indian Military College

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

Vedanta Sharma, son of Snigdha Kumar and Praveen Kumar, a resident of Kadma, Jamshedpur, has achieved a remarkable milestone by securing admission to the Rashtriya Indian Military College (RIMC), Dehradun. Vedanta, a dedicated student of Kavyapta Global School (formerly known as Mount Litera Zee School, Jamshedpur), has earned his place in one of India's most esteemed military schools.

The Rashtriya Indian Military College, often referred to as the cradle of military leadership in India, is a prestigious institution that has shaped the careers of many high-ranking officers in the Indian Armed Forces. Located in the serene Doon Valley, RIMC serves as a feeder institution for the National Defence Academy, Indian Naval Academy, and the Indian Armed Forces. Established in 1922, the institution has a storied history of producing leaders of distinction not just in India, but also in Pakistan and Bangladesh. With an expansive campus spread over 140 acres, RIMC is administered by the Union Ministry of Defence, under the Army Training Command, Shimla. The school maintains a commendable teacher-student ratio of 1:14, ensuring personalized attention and a rigorous academic environment for all its cadets. Admission to RIMC is highly competitive, with only 25 cadets selected every six months from across India. Vedanta's selection is particularly significant as he has secured the sole seat allocated to the state of Jharkhand for this term. This achievement highlights his exceptional dedication, hard work, and potential as a future leader.



THE WRITER IS A NOTED ACADEMICIAN AND POLITICAL COMMENTATOR. VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THE ARTICLE ARE PERSONAL.

One day Hindi workshop organized by UBI

PNS : RANCHI

A one day Hindi workshop was organized by Union Bank of India (UBI), Regional Office Dhanbad. The program was presided over by Area Head Deepmala Lakra. Also, Deputy Area Head Umesh Chandra, Chief Manager Umesh Kumar, Chief Manager PN Rai and other executive members addressed all the participants.

Official Language In-Charge cum Narakas Dhanbad Secretary Dilip Kumar Singh from Bharat Coking Coal Limited was present as the Chief Guest. He made the participants aware of the constitutional provisions of the official language and praised the one day Hindi workshops organized by UBI at regular intervals. Other sessions of the workshop were conducted by Manager Mahadev Das and Official Language Officer Sharda Sao and Simple Kumari as faculty. Rajbhasha Shabd Gyan competition was organized among 23 participants from all the branches of Deoghar, Dhanbad, Dumka and Pakur districts and the winning participants were awarded by the hands of Area Head Deepmala Lakra. The main objective of the workshop was "Implementation of Rajbhasha in branches". The President of the program Lakra said that Hindi is the language of communication. "We should use Hindi spontaneously in our daily tasks. Hindi is the most capable language for communication and providing customer service."

A Burning Backyard



BY BANSHIDHAR RUKHAIYAR

Bangladesh is burning. The democratically elected Awami League and its leader Sheikh Hasina have been ousted from power because of a students movement that sprang from nowhere and which was taken over by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and the army in its arms. The stated cause of the student unrest was reservation for the freedom fighters of Bangladesh. But the movement had ulterior motives from the very beginning and it came out in the open when the movement continued even after the disputed reservation was struck down by the apex court of Bangladesh.

Sheikh Hasina is a victim of geopolitical factors and the western hegemony led by the US. The entire Indian sub-continent now dubbed as South Asia is the hotbed of American and Chinese politics. The bone of contention is a rising and assertive India. Both America and China are hellbent upon checking the rise of India as a regional political power because it doesn't suit their

interests. If India stands for justice, stability and democratic values; America and China stand for their vested political, economic and geostrategic interests. It is an irony that the oldest and most powerful democracy of the world, America, has butchered democracy in different parts of the world as and when it suits its interests. It has a shady and bloody past. Bangladesh is a victim of the latest nefarious design of America in the region. China, on the other hand, wants a monopolistic hegemony in the region and India puts up a serious challenge. It makes America and China fellow travellers of the same boat.

The present development in Bangladesh has put India in a very difficult situation. We have a more than four thousand kilometres boundary line with Bangladesh which is not an easy task to manage, given hundreds of rivulets and many big rivers and dense forest. We have constantly faced the intrusion of Bangladeshi nationals into our border states which has been aided and abetted by the vote bank politics of the country and the lack of political will and decisiveness of our political masters in Delhi. The influx of Bangladeshi nationals coming to India will increase manifold in the coming days as the goons of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party has started looting and vandalising the property of the Hindus and supporters of the BNP. The Hindu temples have been vandalised. The modesty of the Hindu women is being outraged in the most cruel manner and the Hindus are threatened with slogans like "Go to India". This is nothing but a well planned

ethnic cleansing of Hindus and other minorities living in Bangladesh. The police and army are mute spectators to all these developments. The champions of democracy and human rights the world over are silent and tight lipped over these heinous crimes in Bangladesh. The only country which has stood against such crimes is Israel. But it is a lonely voice.

India can not remain a silent spectator to all these developments as it has a huge Hindu population. It is a highly emotive issue having larger electoral ramifications. Strategically also, a burning backyard is very dangerous and India will have to interfere in Bangladesh, whether it likes it or not. This interference might be direct or covert. A hostile government in our neighborhood is the last thing the county can afford. Either control the present regime there or change it. We are capable of doing it and we have shown in the past as to what we can do. The cost of doing so is less than the cost of taking crores of refugees and having a volatile condition in our backyard. This is not a choice but a bitter medicine that has to be administered to the seriously ailing patient. We have no option but to counter balance the machinations of America and China in the region. We are on the cusp of becoming a regional power having the capacity to act as a bulwark against China and we will have to pay the price for our safety as well as ambition.

10 lakh reward carrying Moist caught in Palamu

PNS : DALTONGANJ

Palamu police have caught and jailed a 65 year old zonal commander of Maoist Sitaram Rajwar alias Raman who has 51 cases against him spanning over two states Jharkhand and Bihar comprising 3 districts Palamu in Jharkhand and Aurangabad and Gaya districts in Bihar said the SP Reeshma Ramesan at the press briefing today.

Sitaram Rajwar alias Raman carried a reward for 10L in Jharkhand while Bihar government had declared a reward for 3L on him.

Reeshma Ramesan said the most wanted Maoist sought by Jharkhand and Bihar police had all the luck of him before his arrest here at Jhapiya hillock near Jhargana village under the Hussainabad police station on Thursday as in his 30 plus year of his extremism he went to the jail in Bihar and too only for once.

DGP Anurag Gupta has directed the SPs to contain and curb extremism by all means. There was a bunker discovered in Bokaro. Here in Palamu Maoists lost. their trusted face Sitaram Rajwar.

Sitaram Rajwar was a handler to Ak 56. But when caught by the Palamu police, he was unarmed.



SP Reeshma Ramesan and SDPO Hussainabad Mukesh Kumar Mahto at the press briefing today in Daltonganj. PNS

**OPINION 6**  
GENDER RIGHTS AND  
REALITY: BRIDGING THE GAP

**WORLD 8**  
BRITISH AUTHORITIES STILL ON  
ALERT FOR FURTHER UNREST

**MONEY 10**  
SENSEX  
BOUNCES BACK

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## SISODIA WALKS TO FREEDOM

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Holding aloft flags and cheering loudly, crowds of AAP supporters waited to welcome Sisodia as he stepped out of jail. Senior AAP leaders Sanjay Singh, Atishi, and Saurabh Bharadwaj were present outside Tihar to receive Sisodia. Sisodia is a founding member of the AAP and a close confidant of party chief Kejriwal. The bail to Sisodia is a shot in the arm for the beleaguered party, which is gearing up to contest the Haryana Assembly polls and the Delhi elections in the next few months. His release comes as a big win for the AAP. This is because of the three big AAP leaders who were arrested in the liquor policy case, just Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal remains behind bars. Sisodia's release also comes as the AAP struggles to govern Delhi and counter Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena. According to experts, Sisodia will have to wait to join the Delhi Cabinet as there are several issues that need to be dealt with since the Chief Minister himself is in jail. "For Sisodia to be inducted in his Council of Ministers, Kejriwal needs to send his recommendation to the Lieutenant Governor from Tihar Jail, which seems difficult currently," experts said.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

"In the wake of the ongoing situation in Bangladesh, the Modi Government has constituted a committee to monitor the current situation on the Indo-Bangladesh Border (IBB). The committee will maintain communication channels with their counterpart authorities in Bangladesh to ensure the safety and security of Indian nationals, Hindus, and other minority communities living there. The committee will be headed by the ADG (Additional Director General), Border Security Force, Eastern Command," Shah said in a social media post.

Apartment from the BSF ADG, the four other members of the



FILE PHOTO

## Hundreds clamour to cross the border

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ GEDE/NADIA

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

Jalpaiguri district, Hili in Dinajpur and Gede in Nadia district.

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

committee are the BSF's Inspector General of Police (IGP) for the South Bengal frontier, the IGP for the Tripura frontier, member (planning and development) of the Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI), and secretary of the LPAI. The BSF has increased vigil along the borders adjoining Bangladesh.

## Monsoon chokes and inundates Delhi

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

## Centre expands CAA for more inclusivity



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



## ISIS terrorist caught by Delhi Police

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police Special Cell has averted a possible terrorist attack in the national Capital ahead of the Independence Day on August 15 by arresting a most wanted terrorist — a member of the Pune module of the ISIS, carrying a reward of ₹3 lakh.

The accused has been identified as Rizwan Abdul Haji Ali who was on the National Investigation Agency's (NIA) most wanted list and the probe agency had announced a reward for information leading to his arrest following his escape from the custody of the Pune Police since July 2023.

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

## A TALE OF TWO FAMILIES

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



## A mother beats all Olympic records

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

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

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

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

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# All round efforts needed for development of Tribal Society: CM

## World Tribal Day ceremony inaugurated with grandeur in city

### Governor Santosh Gangwar, SCC Chief Shibu Soren attend ceremony

PNS : RANCHI

On the occasion of World Tribal Day, the two-day Jharkhand Tribal Festival-2024 was inaugurated today in a grand manner at Birsa Munda Smriti Udyan, Ranchi. Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar, Chief Guest and Chairman of State Coordination Committee - cum- Rajya Sabha MP Shibu Soren, were present as special guests at the inaugural ceremony. Chief Minister Hemant Soren, who was presiding over the program, congratulated and wished the people of the state on World Tribal Day.

In his address, he said that on the occasion of World Tribal Day, a grand Jharkhand Tribal Festival is being organized in the state for the third time. This is not just a festival, but it is an effort to preserve, beautify and get recognition in the country and the world for its ancient and rich tribal civilization-culture and heritage. The CM said that today Tribal Day is being celebrated with joy, gaiety and enthusiasm across the state. Through various programs being organized on this occasion, the tribals are spreading the shine of their civilization and culture. He said that the Tribal Festival is becoming a big medium to give a distinct identity to the tribal philosophy of life and art-culture. In the tribal festival being organized here, we are getting a chance to come face to face with the art-culture, tradition, songs-dance and costumes of the tribals.

The CM said that tribal civilization is the oldest civilization in the world. The civilization-culture and tradition of the tribals have been very rich since ancient times. Tribal communities live in different parts of the world, but uniformity is seen somewhere in their civilization-culture. There is a need to protect and enrich the tribal art-culture and tradition, so that it always remains a source of inspiration for the coming generation.



State Coordination Committee Chairman-cum-Rajya Sabha MP Shibu Soren along with Chief Minister Hemant Soren during inaugural ceremony of the two-day Jharkhand Tribal Festival-2024 on the occasion of World Tribal Day at Birsa Munda Smriti Udyan in Ranchi on Friday. Pix by Ratan Lal

Bhikhari, Budhu Bhagat, Tana Bhagat, Nirmal Mahato and Vinod Bihari Mahato, who sacrificed their lives to protect the rights of tribals and natives against injustice and exploitation, and for the protection of water, forest and land. We salute these brave martyrs.

The CM said that tribals achieve their position after a lot of struggle. For this, they have to fight a long battle. In such a situation, the government is making efforts for the progress of tribal society. You also have to play your role. You move forward, the government is with you.

The CM said that the public has a lot of expectations from our government. We are trying to fulfill the aspirations of the people with full force. In this regard, many welfare



Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar, State Coordination Committee Chairman-cum- Rajya Sabha MP Shibu Soren Chief Minister Hemant Soren MLA Kalpana Soren along with others releases various books during inaugural ceremony of the two-day Jharkhand Tribal Festival-2024 on the occasion of World Tribal Day at Birsa Munda Smriti Udyan in Ranchi on Friday. Pix by Ratan Lal

schemes are being run by the government. Through these schemes, the people of the state are being empowered and made self-reliant. The Chief Minister said that even amidst adverse challenges, we are working to give a new dimension to development in the state, so that we can give a better future to the coming generation.

In this festival, Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar, Chairman State Coordination Committee-cum- Rajya Sabha MP Shibu Soren and CM Hemant Soren and other dignitaries present on the stage released 12 books published by Dr. Ram Dayal Munda Tribal Welfare Research Institute. At the same time, 73 thousand 5 hundred 83 acres of community forest lease was distributed among 257 people. At the beginning of the festival, the dignitaries paid tribute to the martyrs by laying flowers on the Shaheed Bedi. At the same time, the Governor and the Chief Minister inaugurated and observed the Tribal Exhibition Camp and Tribal Painter Camp.

In this festival, Minister of Scheduled Tribe, Scheduled Caste and Backward Class Welfare Department Deepak Biruwa, Rajya Sabha MP Mahua Maji, MLA Kalpana Soren, MLA Rajesh Kachhap, Chief Secretary L. Khyangte, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Avinash Kumar, Director General of Police Anurag Gupta, Principal Secretary to the Governor Nitin Madan Kulkarni, Secretary of Scheduled Caste and Backward Class Welfare Department Kripananda Jha and Tribal Welfare Commissioner Ajay Nath Jha along with many senior officers and dignitaries were present.

ity is seen somewhere in their civilization-culture. There is a need to protect and enrich the tribal art-culture and tradition, so that it always remains a source of inspiration for the coming generation.

Soren said that the tribals of Jharkhand have inherited struggle. The tribals here never compromised with their civilization-culture and honour. They fought a long struggle for the protection of water-forest-land. We are proud of our heroes who sacrificed everything for justice, exploitation and the country-state.

The CM said that Jharkhand has been the land of heroes and martyrs for centuries. Whether it is before independence or after independence, there was a long fight for a separate state of Jharkhand. There have been many heroes like Bhagwan Birsa Munda, Sido Kanhu, Bhairav- Chand, Phoolo Jhano, Nilambar Pitambar, Tilka Manjhi, Sheikh



Chief Minister Hemant Soren addresses a gathering during the inaugural ceremony of the two-day Jharkhand Tribal Festival-2024 on the occasion of World Tribal Day at Birsa Munda Smriti Udyan in Ranchi on Friday. Pix by Ratan Lal



Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar welcomed by State Chief Minister Hemant Soren and MLA Kalpana Soren during inaugural ceremony of the two-day Jharkhand Tribal Festival-2024 on the occasion of World Tribal Day at Birsa Munda Smriti Udyan in Ranchi on Friday. Pix by Ratan Lal

## Governor calls for PESA law enactment in State

### 'This will strengthen local self-governance of tribal communities'

PNS : RANCHI

Governor Santosh Gangwar, who attended the World Tribal Day inaugural ceremony in Ranchi on Friday, urged Chief Minister Hemant Soren to implement the PESA law in the state as soon as possible. The Governor said in his speech that it is necessary to implement PESA law in the state to strengthen the traditional governance system of the tribal community. At present, Jharkhand is the only state in the country where PESA law is not implemented.

"It is necessary to implement the traditional governance system of the tribal community in the state. At present, Jharkhand is the only state in the country where PESA law is not implemented. I request the Chief Minister to implement this law soon," he said. The Governor said that he was proud to say that there are no things like dowry system in the tribal community. But the irony is that evils like witch practice still exist in the tribal society. There is a need to remove it by bringing public awareness. On this occasion, I urge everyone to become more aware of education. Education plays an important role in the social and economic progress of any society.

He said that the land of Jharkhand has been the land



Chief Minister Hemant Soren hands over a memento to Governor Santosh Gangwar during the inaugural function of World Tribal Day in Ranchi on Friday. PNS

of heroes. Great sons like Veer Budhu Bhagat, Sidhu-Kanhu, Chand-Bhairav, Phoolo-Jhanho, and Jatra Oraon, born in this soil, sacrificed their lives to protect their motherland. Remembering the sacrifices of all of them, I pay my tribute to them. The art, culture, folk literature and customs preserved by the tribes are renowned not only in our country but all over the world. Their environmental knowledge and approach to co-existence with nature is inspiring for all of us, he said. The tribal community accounts for about 27 per cent of the population of more than 3.28 crore in the state of Jharkhand. 32 types of scheduled tribes live here, including 8 PVTGs (Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups). This society is an integral part of our society,

who have further enriched the diversity of our country through their unique identity and culture. However, even today our tribal community is facing many challenges. We need to work more on basic issues like education, health, and employment. We have to ensure that our tribal brothers and sisters get full benefit of the welfare schemes run by the government, and they are aware of their rights.

We all should be proud of the culture of the tribal community and take a pledge to preserve it. I am proud to say that there are no evils like dowry-pratha in the tribal society, which is an exemplary example but the irony is that social evils like witch-practice still exist in the tribal society, which we all have to remove by becoming aware. On this occasion, I urge

everyone to be more aware of education. Education plays an important role in the social and economic progress of any society. The government runs many scholarship schemes in this direction and it should be ensured that our students get the benefits of scholarship on time.

History is a witness to the fact that many people from our tribal community have received education even in difficult circumstances. Our country's President and former Governor of Jharkhand State, Draupadi Murmu also received higher education in difficult circumstances and she became the first woman from her village to take admission in college. She is an inspiration for all. Today, we have a better education environment than before. Therefore, more and more people should get higher education and emerge as a source of inspiration in society through their work.

The Governor has been entrusted with special responsibilities by the Constitution in the administration of scheduled areas. I am committed to discharge these responsibilities.

Finally, I would like to say that we all have a lot to learn from the tribal society. Their love for nature, their simple and balanced approach towards life can lead us to a better future.



Secretary, Vikas Bharti Bishunpur Padma Shri recipient Ashok Bhagat, greets Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar at Raj Bhavan and apprises the Governor about the activities of the organization on Friday. PNS

## State Level Rural and Indigenous Tribal Sports Competition inaugurated



PNS : RANCHI

Under the aegis of Tourism, Art-Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs Department, Government of Jharkhand, the two-day Jharkhand State Level Rural and Indigenous Tribal Sports Competition 2024 was inaugurated today at Birsa Munda Football Stadium, Morhabadi.

Chief Guest of the inaugural ceremony, Sports Director, Sandeep Kumar, Special Guest, Tribal Welfare Commissioner of Jharkhand, Ajay Nath Jha, Joint Director, Raj Kishore Khakha of SAJHA, Departmental Sports Deputy Director Manish Kumar jointly lit the lamp.

On this occasion, Sandeep Kumar, District Sports Officer, West Singhbhum, Rupa Rani Tirkey, District Sports Officer, Lohardaga Upvan Bada,

District Sports Officer, Ramgarh Marcus Hemrom, District Sports Officer Dhanbad Umesh Lohara and District Sports Officer, Ranchi's Shivendra Kumar were honored with symbols and robes.

In this two-day state level competition, competitions of slingshot, traditional archery, Sikhaur, Gidi race, football, hockey have been organized.

Departmental trainers Bharat Kumar Shah, Gopal Tirkey, Sunil Mahli, Annol Toppo, Kali Charan Mahato, Angad Hansraj, Raju Sahu, Harish Kumar, Prem Puri, Akhtar Hussain, Balram, Mohan Kumar, Jolene Kerketta, Sandeep Oraon, Raymond Minj, Sudeep Kujur and many eminent trainers played an important role in the successful conduct of this competition.

## Management Conclave 2024 at IIM-R



IIM Ranchi hosted the inaugural ceremony of the Management Conclave 2024. Pramod Agrawal, chairman of the Bombay Stock Exchange, was the event's chief guest. Joining him were Prof. Deepak Kumar Srivastava, Director of Corporate Relations Committee, Prof. Deepak Kumar Srivastava then highlighted the importance of the conclave from a business perspective and emphasized the relevance of multidisciplinary courses offered in the 6th term, particularly in law, ethics, and sustainability. Pramod Agrawal, in his address, shared his extensive experience and insights with the audience and discussed the pressing issues of ecological imbalance and the impact of artificial intelligence, emphasizing the need for solutions from both the supply and demand sides. He highlighted the critical role of ethics in balancing sustainability and profitability, urging that a portion of our income should be invested in sustainable development to secure the future.

## Bol to organize Samjhauta Day on August 16 to 17

On the occasion of Independence Day, Bank of India (BoI) is organizing 'Samjhauta Day- Azadi Rin Se' on August 16th to August 17th to settle the NPA loan accounts of borrowers under One Time Settlement (OTS) at all its branches, zones and FGMOs across the Country. The Day is specially designed for the NPA Borrowers who could not repay their loan in time due to distress in business, medical condition of the borrower or any other genuine reason. Our Bank is having special OTS schemes to settle small value accounts and mid-size accounts through which special and good discounts are offered to the borrowers whose accounts are NPA. We appeal to all the borrowers whose accounts are NPA to come forward to avail this Golden opportunity by settling NPA loan accounts on the Day.

## KISS celebrates World Tribal Day

Xavier Institute of Social Service (XISS), Ranchi, celebrated the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples in its campus, bringing together faculty, staff, and students to honour and celebrate the rich cultural heritage and peaceful life of Indigenous communities. This global event, dedicated to promoting and protecting Indigenous rights, was marked by a series of cultural activities. Dr Joseph Marianus Kujur, Director, XISS, delivered the welcome address, focusing on this year's theme, "Protecting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact." The event concluded with Dr Amar E Tigga, Dean Academics, XISS delivering the concluding remarks where he highlighted indigenous struggles for resources and uplift.



## HC seeks fresh affidavit on Bangladeshi infiltrators, asks State to remain alert

PNS : RANCHI

The Jharkhand High Court has again questioned on steps being taken to prevent influx of immigrants from Bangladesh in view of the unrest in the neighbouring country and at the same time directed the state government to remain alert. A bench headed by acting Chief Justice Sujit Narayan Prasad was hearing a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) related to alleged infiltration of Bangladeshi nationals into Santhal area of Jharkhand. It pointed out that there is an atmosphere of political instability in Bangladesh and it will

act before it is too late. Disappointed over the Centre's failure in filing an affidavit in this regard, the court wondered whether the government would act only after the infiltrators enter the country.

A bench headed by acting Chief Justice Sujit Narayan Prasad was hearing a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) related to alleged infiltration of Bangladeshi nationals into Santhal area of Jharkhand. It pointed out that there is an atmosphere of political instability in Bangladesh and it will

be too late if the government does not wake up now.

Asking as to what efforts the Central government has taken to prevent infiltration into Jharkhand, the court also inquired about the steps taken to identify the alleged infiltrators and to deport them. Also, he has sought a fresh affidavit in this connection.

During the previous hearing, the high court had directed the Deputy Commissioners of the respective districts to file an affidavit to identify the alleged infiltrators and to

deport them. However, when the affidavit was filed by junior officials instead of Deputy Commissioners, the court expressed strong displeasure and issued instructions to file the affidavit again. The court had also directed the SPs of the respective districts to help them in preparing the data.

Earlier, on July 3, the court had directed the state government to identify the infiltrators and prepare an action plan to send them back. The PIL has been filed by a Janshedpur-based social activist, Daniel Danish.

# Vinesh's Olympics exit echoes of Shiny 1986 heartbreak

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

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

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



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

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

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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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



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

# Andhra CM promises to uplift tribals through all-round development

PTI ■ VIJAYAWADA

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



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

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

PTI ■ INDORE

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

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



PTI ■ MORBI (GUJARAT)

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

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

# Mizoram, Assam hold border talks after 20 months

PTI ■ AIZAWL

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

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



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

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

# Assam ex-BJP MLA Sarma joins Congress

PTI ■ NALBARI

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



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

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

PTI ■ PALANPUR

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

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

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

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

# Centre withdraws ₹66 cr sanctioned for Mizoram border road project

PTI ■ AIZAWL

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

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

# Post-Wayanad, Goa reactivates disaster management committee

PTI ■ PANAJI

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



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

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

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

PTI ■ AGARTALA

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



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

# Goods train derailed in mountainous South Goa

PTI ■ PANAJI

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



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Reaching out

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

## Gender rights and reality: Bridging the gap



GURDEEP KAUR

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

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

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



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



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

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

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



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

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

## PICTALK



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

PTI

## The role of technology in driving financial literacy



YUVRAJ A THAKKAR

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

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



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

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

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

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## A COURT IS A COURT

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

Ganpathi Bhat | Akola

## VINESH PHOGAT HAS BEEN WRONGED

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

## Economics should not be politicised



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

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

Dr O Prasad Rao | Hyderabad

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

Yash Pal Ralhan | Jalandhar

## BANGLADESH: A WARNING FOR INDIA

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

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

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN

## DO NOT LET SKY BE YOUR LIMIT

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



RACHNA LAKHPATRI

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

## Bangladesh: Uncertainty and chaos grip the nation



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Given all this, Hasina should have

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

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

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

lence and terror.

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

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

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

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

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

## Integrative health approaches for mental wellbeing

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

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

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



ISHAN SHIVANAND

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

## The Drawbacks of Traditional Approaches

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

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

## Embracing Integrative Health Approaches

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

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

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

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

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



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

## The Science Behind the Practice:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ DEIR-AL-BALAH

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

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

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



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

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

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

# Bangladeshis welcome interim govt with hope for normalcy

PTI ■ DHAKA

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

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

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

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

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

# UN concern over racially-based attacks in B'desh

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

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

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

# Police stations reopen with military support in Dhaka

PTI ■ DHAKA

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

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

zens to come to the police station. We are ready to serve you." He added that out of six police stations in Tejaoga division, three police stations have been fully operational. "Work is underway on a small scale at the affected police station. In the meantime, many policemen have joined work in the police stations. The others are starting to arrive. We hope that all our policemen will join the workplace by afternoon," Haque said. On Wednesday, the newly-appointed Inspector General of Police, Md Mainul Islam, ordered officers to join their respective units within the next 24 hours. People from all walks of life, including different political parties leaders and students, are extending all-out necessary support to the returnee police personnel so they can come to their workplaces safely, according to a press release issued by police headquarters on Thursday.

# British authorities still on alert for further unrest

AP ■ KONDON

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

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

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

# 3rd person in custody over foiled plot targeting Swift show

AP ■ VIENNA

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

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

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

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

violence. In Austria, the main suspect confessed that he had started planning the attack in July, authorities said. The 19-year-old just a few weeks ago uploaded to the internet an oath of allegiance to the current leader of the Islamic State group. He was "clearly radicalised in the direction of the Islamic State and thinks it is right to kill infidels," said Omar Hajjawi-Pirchner, head of the Directorate of State Security and Intelligence. Hajjawi-Pirchner added that the suspect "wanted to carry out an attack in the area outside the stadium, killing as many people as possible using the knives or even using the explosive devices he had made." During a raid of the suspect's home in Ternitz, south of Vienna, investigators found chemical substances and technical devices that indicated "concrete preparatory acts," said Franz Ruf, director general for public security at the Ministry of the Interior.

# Iran accelerating cyber activity to influence US poll: Microsoft

AP ■ NEW YORK

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# Russia declares emergency in region under attack from Ukraine

AP ■ KYIV

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Upset over curbs, Paraguay orders US ambassador to leave

AP ■ ASUNCION (PARAGUAY)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

AP/PTI

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

AP ■ NEW YORK

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

A federal jury in New York delivered the verdict.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

prosecutors said.

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

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

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

# Maduro suspends X network in Venezuela for 10 days

AP ■ CARACAS

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

# Houthi rebels attacks ship off Yemen

AP ■ DUBAI

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW YORK

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ments on behalf of applicants. It has also publicised the fees and charges for all the services provided to ensure applicants don't end up paying higher amounts.

The New York Consulate serves the northeastern states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont. Pradhan noted that of the 5.4 million strong Indian diaspora in the US, about 2.5 million or 40-45 per cent of the total, live in these 10 states. Over 113,000 Indian students out of the 354,000 in the whole country study in universities in these 10 northeastern states.

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

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

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

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

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

AP ■ MINNEAPOLIS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Dy.Chief Engineer/ Headquarter (Procurement Cell-3) GGSSTP, Roopnagar invites Press Tender for Erection of MS pipes used for supply of water to fire hydrant system at GGSSTP, Roopnagar. For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to PSPCL website [www.pspcl.in](http://www.pspcl.in) from 08.08.24 from 05:00 P.M. onwards.

**Note:-** Corrigendum & addendum, if any will be published online at PSPCL website [www.pspcl.in](http://www.pspcl.in)

**RTP-84/24**

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कार्यालय बरिस प्रबन्धक, विद्युत उपाय-विहीन  
**UPSIDA**  
उपग्रह राज्य औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण  
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ई-निविदा सूचना

एतद् द्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि प्राधिकरण के विभिन्न जनपदों में विद्युत औद्योगिक क्षेत्रों में विद्युत विकास/अनुसंधान कार्य हेतु सरकारी भिगमों/सर्वजनिक उपकरणों/निगमों/प्राधिकरणों/बसिदों/नगर निकायों में पंजीकृत फर्मों/केन्द्रीय से अल्पकालीन/पूर्णकालीन ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है।

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

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

# Sensex bounces back

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

Kotak Mahindra Bank and



Maruti were the laggards.

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

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

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

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

significantly higher on Thursday.

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

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

# Rupee rises two paise to close at 83.95 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

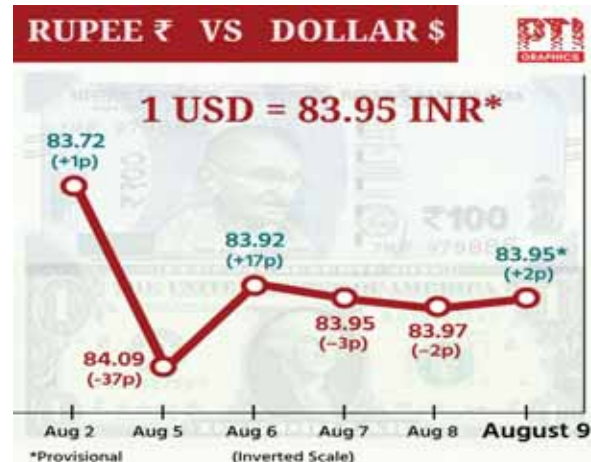
Forex traders said the rupee edged up slightly on gains in the domestic markets. However, a surge in crude oil prices capped sharp gains for the local unit.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

expected weekly unemployment claims data.

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

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

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

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

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

Meanwhile, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank kept the benchmark repurchase or repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent.

Announcing the bi-monthly monetary policy review RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said Indian rupee remained largely range-bound so far this financial year. Das further noted that the country's forex reserves touched a record high of USD 675 billion as on August 2.

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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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



and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

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

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

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

# Sebi asks mutual fund industry to proactively conduct stress test

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

investment schemes.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Moreover, the number of mutual fund investors has

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

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

## LIC shares climb 3% after earnings announcement

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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



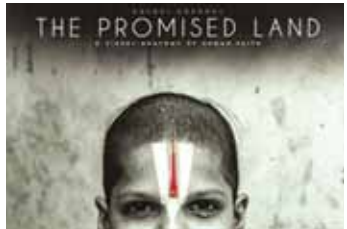
purchases for the third consecutive month," Kaynat Chainwala, AVP-Commodity Research, Kotak Securities, said.

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

"Gold traders are advised to



# A POWERFUL PORTRAIT OF FAITH THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY



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

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

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

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

# A POIGNANT PORTRAIT OF SRINAGAR'S BEAUTY AND STRUGGLE

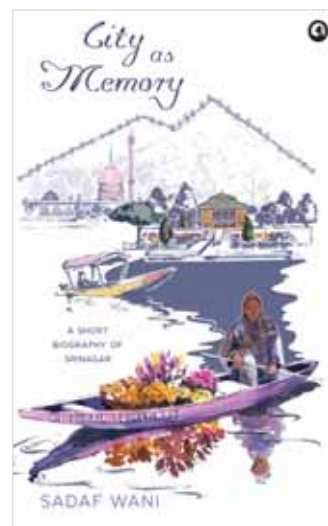
Sadaf Wani's *City as Memory* is a heartfelt exploration of Srinagar, where breathtaking beauty and deep-rooted pain exist side by side. Wani shares her personal experiences, creating a vivid picture of a city that is both fascinating and deeply scarred

## TEAM VIVA

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



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



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

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

commentary on how political strife shapes a city's character. The contrast between Srinagar's scenic beauty and its troubled reality underscores the city's profound contradictions. Through vivid descriptions and reflective insights, Wani captures a place that is both enchanting and beleaguered. The cover of the book, illustrated by Zainab Tambawalla, truly brings Srinagar to life. It features a charming cityscape with a mosque, majestic mountains and a serene lake dotted with traditional boats. A delightful "Flower Man" in a shikara adds a touch of local character. The illustration's gentle, watercolor-like style creates a warm, nostalgic feeling, while the subtle barbed wire design hints at the region's complicated past. This artwork beautifully complements Wani's story, offering a vivid, heartfelt glimpse into Srinagar's captivating blend of beauty and struggle. *City as Memory* is more than a recounting of events; it's a profound exploration of Srinagar's complex character. Sadaf Wani's portrayal offers readers a deeper understanding of how beauty and conflict coexist, shaping the lives of its inhabitants. This book is a significant addition to the literature on Kashmir, providing both personal and political perspectives on a city at the crossroads of history and identity. Adding this book to your bookshelf is not just a literary choice but a way to appreciate the intricate relationship between place and memory. Wani's work is a must-read for anyone interested in the interplay between historical and valuable perspectives that will resonate long after the last page is turned. **Publisher - Aleph Book Company (Rs 399)**

# LEGENDARY ATHLETE ON FIELD, A SUPERSTAR SANS PRETENSIONS

PTI ■ PARIS

Neeraj Chopra is all about greatness without pretensions. A fierce competitor, a superstar of Indian sports, a humble human being who would make no bones about his limitations or desires, the double Olympic medallist from India, is all rolled into one. He may want the top prize for himself but would not be envious if the rival pips him. He would tell himself to accept what he got, and work harder to achieve what he desires. He would not pretend that he does not care for brand endorsement. He certainly wants it, money matters, but would not compromise on his training for that. The 17-minute interaction with the Indian media after winning a silver medal in the Paris Olympics was more than just a routine question-answer session. "Your first throw was foul then in the second..." the scribe had not even completed his question before Chopra quipped, "Saari throw fouls hi thi sir sirf doosri hi theek thi (All throws were foul, except the second one)," he said, chuckling, and the 50-strong group joined him in laughter.

It was not a great deal for him to say he fouled five of his six attempts. The long Q and A session was largely in Hindi with Indian and Pakistani journalists asking questions, but when the volunteer requested an answer in English for the benefit of few foreign scribes, Chopra laid bare his simplicity. "Now I need to motivate myself to speak in English, the way I motivate myself for competition," he said with a smile, as the gathered group burst out in laughter. "Can you describe the competition between you and Nadeem, India and Pakistan," the foreign scribe asked again, requesting the answer in English. Well, he explained pretty well, effortlessly. "It was a really great competition. Maybe one of the greatest competitions in history. Arshad threw really well. I was also in good shape. But I don't know. My runway was not that good today," he responded quickly, without having to think much. It was inevitable that he would be asked about the missed competitions in the 2024 season, leading up to the Paris Games. It led to speculations whether he was carrying injury into the Paris Games.



NEERAJ CHOPRA

He had skipped the Paris Diamond League in July, just before the Games, though he later clarified that the event was not part of his competition calendar. He revealed how difficult it becomes for him to say no to the organisers despite fitness concerns. With a wide grin, he said, "Of course I need to play more but then I send those carefully drafted messages that I have suffered a strain and I won't compete. "In few competitions I have played just for the sake of organisers so that they don't feel bad. I keep thinking that I have entered the competition and if I don't go, they will say I am making excuses. Personally I love to compete as much as possible. "I make plans but then you tell your team, 'let's draft a good message, saying sorry for pulling out,'" he said, laughing, but the pain of missing the event was writ large. "No happiness is greater than playing. You work hard to compete only. Whatever strength God has given me I do." Then came a tricky one. He was asked about the pressure of sponsors in the Olympic cycle. How he finds that balance

between brand endorsements, obligations and training? Again, he came up with an honest answer. "I put my game on top priority after Tokyo and after Tokyo Games only I got the opportunity to get associated with brands. It is difficult for us that brands come after you, and if you get it, why will you leave that opportunity. Just do it," he said, with all honesty. "It also opens the way for kids (next generation), 'nahi to shreer hi tootega khel khel key, last mein kuch nahi rahega.'" How many athletes say that so openly? "So I balance it. Priority is sport. This was an Olympic year, so whatever commitments I had, I fulfilled in the first half. "You have seen I have been training outside since Tokyo." He could be upset inside for not being able to defend his title but accepted that Thursday was Nadeem's day. Lastly, volunteers did their best to push him out of the mixed zone but he would keep coming back either to sign autographs or honour the request for selfies. After all, he knows how to find a balance between different things and saying no is the most difficult thing for him.

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

PTI ■ PARIS

Celebrated hockey goalkeeper PR Sreejesh will join star shooter Manu Bhaker as the flag-bearer of the Indian contingent in the closing ceremony of the Olympic Games here on Sunday, a fitting honour and recognition for his contributions to the team. Before homing in on Sreejesh, Indian Olympic Association (IOA) chief PT Usha spoke with Neeraj Chopra, and she said even the superstar javelin thrower wanted to see the retiring legend as flag-bearer. Chopra claimed a silver here to become the first Indian track and field athlete to win two Olympic medals. He won a historic gold in the Tokyo edition three years ago.



"I spoke with Neeraj Chopra and appreciate the spontaneity and grace with which he agreed that Sreejesh should be the flag-bearer at the Closing Ceremony," Usha said in a statement. "He told me 'Ma'am, even if you had not asked me, I would have suggested

Sree bhai's name'. It is reflective of the immense respect Neeraj has for Sreejesh and his contribution to Indian sport," she revealed. Usha said Sreejesh was "both an emotional and popular choice" within the IOA leadership, including Chief-Mission Gagan Narang, and the entire Indian contingent. The legendary Sreejesh retired from the game after India's bronze medal-winning feat at the ongoing Games, bringing to an end a glorious career spanning 18 years. "The Indian Olympic Association is delighted to announce the nomination of hockey goalkeeper PR Sreejesh as the joint flag-bearer with pistol shooter Manu Bhaker at the Closing Ceremony of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games," the IOA said in a

statement. The 2-1 triumph over Spain, in the bronze medal playoff match here on Thursday, was a fitting farewell for the 36-year-old custodian who has served the team with distinction for so long. "Sreejesh has served Indian hockey in particular and Indian sport in general admirably through more than two decades," Usha said. Sreejesh was also the flag-bearer in the closing ceremony of the Hangzhou Asian Games last year. The IOA had earlier named Bhaker as the female flag-bearer after she became the first Indian athlete post Independence to win multiple medals in a single Olympic Games. She won bronze medals in the women's 10m air pistol and the 10m air pistol mixed team (with Sarabjot Singh).

## COVID-hit Lyles misses out on a double

AP ■ PARIS

Sprinter Noah Lyles revealed he had COVID-19 after missing out on another gold medal for the United States at the Paris Olympics. Elsewhere, French basketball star Victor Wembanyama moved closer to his dream of a first gold after helping Les Bleus beat Germany to set up a dream final against the U.S. Team after the Americans edged Serbia 95-91. On the same Stade de France track where he won the historically close 100 meters by five thousandths of a second, Lyles was third behind gold medalist Letsile Tebogo of Botswana and U.S. Teammate Kenneth Bednarek. Medics tended to a tired-looking Lyles and took him off in a wheelchair. Wearing a mask as he spoke with reporters, Lyles later said he had COVID. "It definitely affected my performance," said Lyles, adding that he tested positive early Tuesday morning but was cleared to compete. The U.S. Track federation said it and the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee adhered to all Olympic and Centers for Disease Control guidelines.



Over at Bercy Arena, with former NBA stars Dirk Nowitzki and Tony Parker watching their respective countrymen, France held on to win 73-69. Wembanyama, the NBA rookie of the year, clenched his fists at the buzzer and teammate Evan Fournier jubilantly threw the ball into the crowd. The 20-year-old star didn't play three years ago in Tokyo, when the French lost the final to the U.S. They meet again Saturday, when Wembanyama hopes to give France its first Olympic gold in men's or women's basketball.

AP ■ PARIS

Algerian boxer Imane Khelif is one victory away from wrapping up her tumultuous Paris Olympics with a gold medal around her neck - a potential prize that she has called the best response to a cascade of online abuse she has endured over misconceptions about her sex. Khelif fights Yang Liu of China on Friday night in the final of the women's welterweight division at Roland Garros. Khelif has yet to lose one round on a judge's scorecard in her first three fights in Paris, going on the most dominant run of her boxing career while facing an extraordinary amount of scrutiny. It stems from Khelif and fellow two-time Olympian Li Yu-ting of Taiwan getting disqualified from last year's world championships by the Russian-dominated International Boxing Association, which claims both fighters failed a murky eligibility test for women's competition. The International Olympic Committee took the unprecedented step last year of permanently banning the IBA from the Olympics following

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

years of concerns about its governance, competitive fairness and financial transparency. The IOC has called the arbitrary sex tests that the sport's governing body imposed on the two boxers irretrievably flawed. The IBA did nothing to help its argument this week at a shambolic news conference in which its leadership contradicted itself about the tests and declined to answer basic questions about them, citing privacy concerns from the Olympic committees of Algeria and Taiwan. The IOC repeatedly reaffirmed the two boxers' right to compete in Paris, with President Thomas Bach personally defending Khelif and Lin while calling the criticism "hate speech." "We have two boxers who are born as women, who have been raised as women, who have a passport as a woman and have competed for many



years as women," Bach said. That hasn't stopped the international outcry tied to misconceptions around the fighters that have been amplified by Russian disinformation networks, but neither has it slowed the two. Khelif has dominated all three bouts. But, she faces her most significant test in Yang, the 2023 world champion and the No. 2 seed in their weight class. Khelif told SNTV, a sports video partner of The Associated Press, that the wave of hateful scrutiny she has received "harms human dignity," and she called for an end to bullying athletes. She also said a gold medal would be "the best response" to the backlash against her. The crowds in Paris, however, have embraced both Khelif and Lin, who have heard nothing

but cheers during their bouts. A huge contingent of flag-waving Algeria fans greeted and serenaded Khelif throughout her semifinal victory Tuesday night, and she's become a hometown hero in her North African country. Khelif has already secured Algeria's first Olympic medal in women's boxing. She will attempt to become only her country's second boxing gold medalist, joining Hocine Soltani (1996). The gold medal fight is the culmination of Khelif's nine-day run through an Olympic tournament that began with a bizarre event. Khelif's first opponent, Angela Carini of Italy, abandoned their bout after just 46 seconds, saying she was in too much pain from Khelif's punches. An already brewing story suddenly became major international news, with the likes of former US President Donald Trump and "Harry Potter" author JK Rowling

weighing in with criticism and false speculation about men competing with women in sports. Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni personally visited with Carini to share her condolences and to cast doubt on Khelif's eligibility. Carini later said she regretted her actions and wished to apologize to Khelif. The Italian newspaper La Stampa detailed Carini's mindset in the days leading up to the bout, describing pressure from both inside and outside her team to avoid the fight amid the growing speculation over Khelif's status. The IBA later offered to pay winner's bonuses to Carini and the Italian Boxing Federation despite Carini's abandonment of the bout. The Italian federation and Carini rejected the money from the IBA, which volunteered the payments to all Paris winners and their teams despite having nothing to do with the Olympics. Lin also fights for a gold medal on Saturday on the final card of the Olympics. She takes on Julia Szeremeta of Poland with a chance to win Taiwan's first boxing gold.

## Letsile makes a case for African sprinters with thrilling victory in 200 metres

AP ■ PARIS

Letsile Tebogo is from Botswana in southern Africa, a continent with a rich history of producing world-class runners. Just not like the kind Tebogo does for a living. He's hoping 20 seconds of greatness - check 19.46 seconds of greatness - might change that. The 21-year-old pulled off a stunner (sort of) in the men's 200 meters at the Paris Olympics on Thursday night, producing the first-ever Olympic gold by an African runner in the distance. The American Kenneth Bednarek got out to an early lead, but Tebogo said he was confident

he had more than enough to track him down. By the middle of the stretch, Tebogo was in front and waited for a challenge from American star Noah Lyles that never came - perhaps in part because Lyles is dealing with COVID-19 - to win going away. "When I saw Kenny fade I knew Noah was far, far away behind us," Tebogo said. "So, that means I'm the Olympic champion." One who is also a three-time world champion. Lost amid the chaos of Lyles collapsing briefly on the track in the aftermath and his revelation that he tested positive for COVID-19 on Tuesday was

this: Tebogo's time was the fastest by anyone in the world this year. Lyles included. Heady territory for an athlete who gets himself amped up before a race by playing traditional songs he learned growing up in Kanye, Botswana, not far from the landlocked nation's border with South Africa. The ritual allows Tebogo to relax, drawing a stark contrast between him and the relentlessly amped Lyles. While Lyles roared onto the purple track at Stade de France preening, Tebogo was one lane to Lyles' right mentally preparing for the race of his life.

**Bank of India**  
BOI  
Relationship beyond banking

**Kantatoli Branch**  
H.B.Road, Mangal Tower,  
Kantatoli, Ranchi

**POSSESSION NOTICE**  
(For Immovable property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of Bank of India, Kantatoli Branch under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated 19.01.2022 calling upon the borrower M/s Pappu Ispat, Prop. Late Dhiraj Kumar, Legal heir Mrs. Ruby Singh to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 33,83,508.52 (Rs. Thirty Three Lakh Eighty Three Thousand Five Hundred Eight and Fifty Two Paise) plus Uncharged interest thereon and incidental expenses, cost, charge incurred/ to be incurred within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrower(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower/s and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property/ies described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on this the 09th day of August 2024.

The Borrower(s) in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies and any dealings with the said property/ies will be subject to the charge of the Bank of India for an amount Rs. 33,83,508.52 (Rs. Thirty Three Lakh Eighty Three Thousand Five Hundred Eight and Fifty Two Paise) plus Uncharged interest thereon and incidental expenses, cost, charge incurred/ to be incurred. The Borrower's attention is invited to the provisions of Sub Section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

**Description of the Immovable property**

EQM of Residential Plot located at Khata No. 97, R.S. Plot No. 1131/1137, Sub Plot No.1131/1137, Part 4, Area - 5 Kathas (8.265 Decimals) at Vill - Bhitia, P.S. Bariatu, Thana No. 187, Ranchi vide Title Deed No. 473 dated 03.04.2012 in the name of Late Dhiraj Kumar. Boundary : On the North by - Hira Pd. Singh, Sub Plot No. 1131/1137, Part-2, On the South by - Plot No. 896, On the East by - Plot No. 1132, On the West by - Mala Devi

\* With further interest at applicable rate till repayment.

**Authorised Officer**  
BANK OF INDIA

Date: 09.08.2024 | Place : Ranchi

**TATA CAPITAL HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED**  
Regd. Office: 11th Floor, Tower A, Peninsula Business Park, Ganpatrao Kadam Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai-400013 CIN No. U67190MH2008PLC187552

**POSSESSION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES)**  
(As per Appendix IV read with Rule 8(1) of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the TATA Capital Housing Finance Limited, under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a demand notice as mentioned below calling upon the Borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of the said notice. The borrower, having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower, in particular and the public, in general, that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said Rules.

The borrower, in particular, and the public in general, are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the TATA Capital Housing Finance Limited, for an amount referred to below along with interest thereon and penal interest, charges, costs etc. from date mentioned below. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Loan Account No.	Name of Obligor(s) / Legal Heir(s)/ Legal Representative(s)	Amount & Date of Demand Notice	Possession Date
TCHHL05 45000100 076190	Mr. Sunil Kumar Pandey & Mrs. Juhli Rani	Rs. 20,77,398/- (Rupees Twenty Lakhs Seventy Seven Thousand Three Hundred Ninety Eight Only) as on 31-01-2024	08-08-2024
TCHHP05 77000100 216098	Mr. Ravi Ranjan Prasad & Mrs. Nilam Ranjan	Rs. 9,40,382/- (Rupees Nine Lakhs Forty Thousand Three Hundred and Eighty Two Only) as on 06-03-2024	07-08-2024

**Description of Secured Assets/Immovable Properties:** All That Piece And Parcel Of The Immovable Property Being A Residential Flat Bearing Plot No- 1661, Flat No- 2a, 2nd Floor, Sai Kripa Apppt. J C Mallick Road, Kasturba Nagar, Near Gauri Apppt, Measuring Super Built Up Area Of 1345 Sq.ft. More Or Less With A Car Parking Measuring An Area Of 100 Sq. Ft., Mouza- Hirapur, P.S- Dhanbad, Sub-division And District Sub-registry Office- Dhanbad, Mouza No- 07, Khata No- 41, Ward No- 25. Under The Dhanbad Municipal Corporation, Dhanbad, Jharkhand, Pin- 826001 Together With Undivided Proprietary Share Of Land Measuring An Area Of 0.83 Decimals. The Property Is Bound By: North- Open To Sky, South- Flat No- 2B, East- Open To Sky, West- Lift.

**DATE :- 10/08/2024, PLACE:- JHARKHAND** Sd/- Authorised Officer For TATA CAPITAL HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED