



OPINION 6
FINDING FAULT WITH THE
US FOR INTERNAL FAILURES

WORLD 8
FBI PROBING TRUMP CAMPAIGN
CHARGE OF HACKING BY IRAN

MONEY 10
SENSEX TUMBLES
NEARLY 700 POINTS

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12 SPORTS

CBI TO PROBE KOLKATA'S BESTIAL RAPE AND MURDER CASE

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In a verdict welcomed by the medical fraternity which was fearing destruction of evidence by the State police in the brutal rape and murder of a resident doctor of RG Kar Medical College Hospital, Kolkata, in the medical college's seminar hall, the Calcutta High Court on Tuesday ordered a court-monitored probe by the CBI into the crime.

Ironically, R G Kar Medical College Hospital was considered till a few years ago the best medical college in eastern India.

The Bench of Chief Justice TS Sivagnanam and Justice Hiranmay Bhattacharya, hearing five public interest litigations (PIL) and a private plea, in its order directed the Kolkata Police to immediately hand over the case diary to the CBI official present in the court.

Other related documents are to be handed over to the Central agency by 10 am on Wednesday. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had on Monday set the State police a deadline till Sunday to crack the case failing which, she warned, she would consider transferring the case to the Central agency. The agitators demanding justice for the 31-year-old victim, however, took the Chief Minister's decision with a pinch of salt wondering whether she was giving the



police some extra bit of time to tamper with or destroy evidence. They also questioned her move to transfer Sandip Ghosh the principal of the RG Kar Medical College to the NRS Medical College. "While passing the order, the court was particularly perturbed at the facts that the college authorities did not lodge any FIR and tried to let the crime pass as a suicide case whereas the police registered an unnatural death (UD) case, ..." there was clearly something in it and some people (the authorities) were trying to protect which could not escape the High Court justices' notice," Kaustav Bagchi, a BJP leader and a lawyer who is also one of the petitioners said.



The post-graduate student who was sleeping inside the seminar hall at the medical college after completing 36-hours of work was on Friday morning found dead with her body in a semi-nude condition setting off massive protests by doctors across the State. Later,

resident doctors in several cities in other States, too, joined the agitation for bringing the culprit/culprits to justice. Apparently, in a damage control exercise, the Kolkata Police immediately set up a special investigation team, and arrested one Sanjay Roy, a civic volunteer. However, the resident doctors said there were other insiders with high connections involved in the crime. They also attacked the principal for calling him the fountainhead of "everything that is bad and deplorable in the college". The court on its part wondered why the Health Department transferred Ghosh to the NRS Medical

College within hours of his resigning from his post following intense public outcry. The judges directed the Health Department to force the principal to go on long leave which he did by the end of the day.

The medical students across the State, including those of the RGKMCH, however, said they were not immediately calling off the 'cease work' stir and would take a decision only after a general body meeting. Welcoming the court order, Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari said his "next step would be to demand the resignation of the Health Minister Mamata who is also the Chief Minister."

He said, "The BJP MLAs will start a dharna at the State Assembly from tomorrow seeking her resignation... because she had gone to the victim's house not to express her sympathy but to 'manage' her family... this Ghosh who is a real racketeer and is close to Dr SP Das, the family physician of the Chief Minister, and so he does whatever he wants... the principal and the TMC students union have held the college to ransom... the situation is almost the same in other medical colleges of the State... these are a den of corruption and everyone knows where the money goes... so Mamata gave the principal a reward posting him elsewhere after he resigned."



Junior doctors take part in protest at the Rani Chennamma Circle against the rape and murder of a trainee doctor in Kolkata, in Hubballi, on Tuesday



Doctors and medical students protest against the sexual assault and killing of a Kolkata based post-graduate trainee doctor, at Nair Hospital in Mumbai, on Tuesday

National Fury: How we treat our women, our saviours, a Doctor!

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Medical services such as working of Outpatient Departments (OPDs) and non-emergency surgeries at various Government hospitals across the country, including the national Capital, continued to remain paralysed on Tuesday as the resident doctors' agitation against the rape-murder of a trainee doctor in Kolkata.

On Tuesday, more resident doctors joined the strike led by the Federation of Resident Doctors' Association (FORDA). The incident has sparked widespread protests, with over three lakh junior doctors and healthcare

workers expressing deep concern over their safety. Amid the strike led by the FORDA, which said "the strike will not be lifted until justice is done and our demands are met", the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued notices to the West Bengal Government and the State's police chief in the matter.

The commission on Tuesday said it has sought the reports from these authorities in two weeks. However, acting tough, as the Delhi AIIMS' Resident Doctors' Association (RDA) continued their indefinite strike on Tuesday too, the hospital administration warned them against holding any

demonstration on or around the hospital campus stating it was in violation of High Court directions and amounts to contempt of court.

The administration issued an office memorandum drawing the attention of all resident doctors to the "Code of Conduct" as laid down by the High Court. It further stated that the violation of the High Court orders by the individual/students/employees/Resident Doctors/Associations/Unions etc will be in contravention of the directions of High Court and make them liable for disciplinary actions and also for contempt of court.



Union Health Minister JP Nadda speaks on the RG Medical College rape and murder incident, in New Delhi, on Tuesday

Union Health Minister JP Nadda in damage control mode

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Days after the tragic sexual assault and murder of a post-graduate student at a medical college in West Bengal triggering nationwide agitation, Union Health Minister and BJP national president JP Nadda on Tuesday condemned the incident and hoped that the CBI probe will bring out the truth in the case.

However, Nadda did not commit to implementing new laws related to the safety of doctors, a key demand of the medical community which under the banner of the Federation of Resident Doctors' Association (FORDA) has been on strike, disrupting medical services in the hospitals. He, however, assured that the Central Government would take necessary actions against those involved in the incident and promised to address the broader concerns raised by doctors.

Nadda said the incident that took place with the young woman, a PG student in West Bengal, is really heart-wrenching and has shaken the world and the country. "I condemn it and feel sorry that such an inhumane incident has happened. The way the incident took place and the way the Government has tried to hush it up, no amount of condemnation will be enough. Bengal has become a State where there is no such thing as law and

order. Lawlessness is at its peak and the sad thing is that atrocities on women are increasing day by day and all this happening despite the State having a woman Chief Minister. This is even more worrying. "I would also like to say the way the West Bengal Government has tried to hush up and suppress this case, is condemnable in the strongest terms. I welcome the decision of the High Court for the CBI enquiry. The CBI enquiry will bring out the truth."

Regarding his meeting with the delegations of Doctors' Association in the last two days, he said he has assured them that the Central Government will take action against anyone connected with this incident. "I will definitely find a remedy for this and I am sure that whatever steps are necessary for this, the Government and the Ministry will take them."

Meanwhile, the National Medical Commission (NMC), as directed by the Health Minister, issued advisory to all the medical colleges to ensure a safe working environment for doctors across the country. The advisory said, "Incidents of violence against doctors in medical colleges have been reported in recent past. All medical colleges are requested to develop a policy for creation of a safe work environment within the college and hospital campus for doctors.

New Bangladesh regime reaches out to Hindus

PTI ■ DHAKA

Reaching out to the distressed Hindu community members at the famous Dhakeshwari Temple here, Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus on Tuesday urged the people to "exercise patience" before judging his Government's role.

Yunus, who took charge as the Chief Advisor of the interim Government on August 8 amid ongoing violence and vandalism, including against the minorities, also said each one's rights should be ensured and blamed "institutional decay" for the predicament that his country



Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus with Hindu community members at the famous Dhakeshwari Temple in Dhaka, on Tuesday

has fallen into. The meeting comes close on the heels of attacks on the minority Hindu population, vandalism of their

business and properties and devastation of Hindu temples hours in the violence that ensued for days following the ouster of Prime

Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 5. Dhakeshwari temple is one of the prominent shakti peethas.

Meanwhile, the apex body of Hindus in Bangladesh on Tuesday said the minority Hindu community faced attacks and threats in 278 locations across 48 districts since the fall of the Hasina-led Government on August 5 and termed it as an "assault on the Hindu religion."

The Bangladesh National Hindu Grand Alliance members also pointed to the increase in attacks in recent times and asserted, "We too have rights in this country, we were born here."

Sheikh Hasina booked for murder

PTI ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh's deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and six others, including two senior Ministers of her Cabinet and the sacked police chief, would face trial on murder charges, court officials said on Tuesday.

The murder case filed against 76-year-old Hasina is the first so far against her since she resigned and fled to India on August 5. She and six



others over the death of a grocery shop owner during last month's violent clashes that led to the fall of her Government.

Delhi LG nominates minister Kailash Gahlot to hoist national flag on I Day

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Uncertainty over who will hoist the national flag in the absence of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, ended on Tuesday after Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena nominated Delhi Home Minister Kailash Gahlot to hoist the national flag at State Government function on Independence Day at Chhatrasaal Stadium.

A controversy erupted with the jailed Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal directing Cabinet member Atishi to do the same. "Lieutenant Governor is pleased to nominate Minister (Home), GNCTD,



Delhi LG VK Saxena with Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot during foundation stone laying of multi-level electric bus depot, in New Delhi, on Tuesday

Kailash Gahlot to unfurl the National Flag at the State level Independence Day celebrations at

Chhatrasaal Stadium. Necessary arrangements may be made accordingly," Lieutenant Governor's

principal secretary Ashish Kundra said in a written communication to Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar.

Contrary to Kejriwal's wish, Atishi won't be able to hoist Tricolour during the State Government function on the occasion of Independence Day. This year, because Kejriwal has been in custody since March in connection with the excise policy case, the AAP convener, nominated Atishi to replace him in a letter to the Lieutenant Governor on August 6. This is the first time both AAP and Delhi BJP are on the same page and welcomed the LG's decision.

Supreme Court closes contempt case on Baba Ramdev

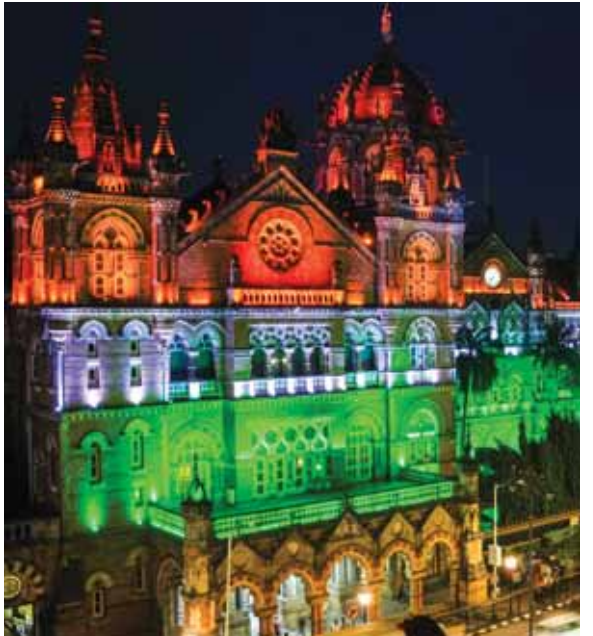
PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a relief to yoga guru Ramdev, his aide Balkrishna and Patanjali Ayurved Limited, the Supreme Court on Tuesday closed the contempt proceedings initiated against them for "violation" of the undertakings given before the court in the misleading advertisements case. While the apex court accepted their apology and closed the matter, it cautioned them to strictly abide by the terms of

their undertakings. "Any future transgression on their part, whether by act, deed or speech that could tantamount to violating the orders of the court or dishonouring the terms of the undertakings, shall be viewed strictly and the ensuing consequences could indeed be grave," a bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Ahsanuddin Amanullah said. "In that eventuality, the sword of contempt that has now been returned to rest in its sheath,



Illuminated ahead of I-Day



Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus illuminated ahead of the Independence Day, in Mumbai, on Tuesday

shall be flourished as swiftly as these proceedings were originally initiated," the bench said in its 41-page verdict. The contempt proceedings was initiated by the top court which is hearing a plea filed by the Indian Medical Association alleging a smear campaign against the Covid vaccination drive and modern systems of medicine. In its November 21, 2023 order passed in the matter, the top court had noted that the counsel representing

Patanjali Ayurved had assured it that "henceforth there shall not be any violation of any law(s), especially relating to advertising or branding of products manufactured and marketed by it and, further, that no casual statements claiming medicinal efficacy or against any system of medicine will be released to the media in any form". The top court had said Patanjali Ayurved Ltd is "bound down to such assurance".

Final ID parade held, Health Minister to hoist flag

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

The final parade rehearsal for the district-level Independence Day celebrations was successfully completed today at Gopal Maidan, Jamshedpur. The main function is set to take place on 15 August 2024, with the flag hoisting ceremony scheduled for 9:05 am. Banna Gupta, Minister of Health, Medical Education, Family Welfare, and Food Supply, Public Distribution, and Consumer Affairs, will be the chief guest and will hoist the national flag during the ceremony.



ADM (SOR) Kumar also hoisted the flag and, along with the Rural SP, saluted the national flag. Both officials provided various guidelines to ensure the grandeur of the main event and the smooth conduct of the parade. The parade contingent included JAP 6, the District Police

Force (Men and Women), Home Guard, NCC (Boys and Girls), Scouts and Guides (Boys and Girls), and the St Mary's Band Team.

District Magistrate cum Deputy Commissioner Ananya Mittal has instructed all Block Development Officers to ensure that flag

hoisting ceremonies are conducted at all block offices and Panchayat Secretariat levels on Independence Day, with active participation from local Panchayat representatives. Additionally, a cultural program featuring patriotic songs and dances has been organized on the evening of

14 August at the Town Hall in Sidgora. Students from various government and private schools will participate, performing group dances, songs, and poetry recitations. On 15 August, a friendly football match between the district administration and the media is scheduled to take place at the Tinplate Ground at 3:00 pm. Flag hoisting ceremonies will also be conducted at various locations throughout the district on Independence Day. The schedule includes an 8:00 am ceremony at the residential office of the District Magistrate cum Deputy Commissioner, followed by the main event at Gopal Maidan at 9:05 am. Additional ceremonies will be held at the Collectorate, the Senior Superintendent of Police office, the subdivision office in Dhalbhum, the

Bokaro DC, SP inspect rehearsal parade for Independence Day

R SHARMA : BOKARO

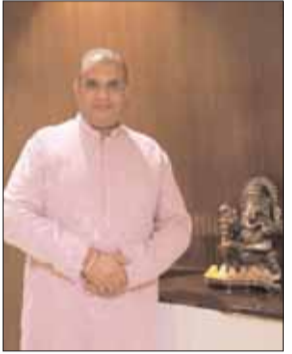


Deputy Commissioner Vijaya Jadhav and Superintendent of Police Pujya Prakash inspected the final rehearsal for the 78th Independence Day parade at the Police Line Grounds in Sector 12. DC Jadhav saluted the national flag following the inspection.

The parade included various platoons from the District Armed Forces, CRPF, CISF, Home Guard, NCC, and local schools. The grounds have been freshly decorated for the event. All arrangements have been finalized, with additional precautions in place due to potential rain. Security measures have been strengthened with officials stationed at entry points.

Several dignitaries, including Deputy Development Commissioner Girija Shankar Prasad, Additional Collector M. Mumtaz Ansari, Sub-Divisional Officer of Chas Om Prakash Gupta, Headquarters DSP Animesh Gupta, DTO Vandana Shejwalkar, District Public Relations Officer Saket Kumar Pandey, and Assistant Public Relations Officer Avinash Kumar Singh, were also present at the event.

SriGuru Rajnn Ji on Astrological Remedies and Karmic Cycle



BY GAURA GUPTA

It was Ram Navmi (the birthday of Lord Sri Ram as per Hindu calendar) and 11 year old Rajnn's mother returned home from the temple only to find him reciting the verses of Ramayan from the Baal Kaand.

At 12, he was consecrating the idols. At 18, horoscopes (kundlis) got him handy.

SriGuru Rajnn Ji is a commerce graduate from Delhi University who discovered his forte early on. Is there a word in the ambit of thesaurus that could encompass the horizon of 'astrology'?! ... since it is this world and beyond.

An innate power that perpetuated SriGuru Rajnn Ji to pursue astrology, led him to his Guru, under whose grace and guidance, he attained the wisdom about the celestial effect upon the mortals.

Fifty two years and he enjoys analysing horoscope charts every day and letting people doable remedies.

Co-inventor of SriSukt Foundation - a podium for Vedic studies, SriGuru Rajnn Ji envisions the confluence of Indian occult faculties under one roof for the purpose of research and mass

benefit. In my first meeting with him, I gathered oodles of heart-warming and hopeful energies about success - in all walks of life, but with a transparent disclaimer that some areas might demand more effort.

Living the courage to call a spade, a spade SriGuru Rajnn Ji veraciously reads your birth journal to you and explains in a manner that you'd understand the gist on point.

But when I met him, my question to him was whether it is correct to exercise remedies while our birth chart has celestial bodies aligned in a manner that aim to have us go through certain circumstances? Now, if we don't do good our karmic debts by facing the situations posed by the heavenly bodies, would it find us in a fix as we anyhow need to complete the cycle?

He satiated my quench with explaining me that certain actions are believed to result in reincarnations. Deliberately or unintentionally, we continue to create new karma, so by the time you exhaust the karma of one lifetime, you will have already created much more karma.

A soul re incarnates when the planets, stars and the moon are at exactly the correct position over a particular point on the earth, to match the karma that must be experienced in this life, in order to give it the chance to learn and grow.

Once reborn with a certain celestial placement, one requires to face it and accept it so that the old karmic baggage is released.

He further told that in this process of continuous

incarnations, each birth aims at the gain of knowledge as a part of evolution. The duration of life is a series of experiences wherein we imbibe wisdom and when you haven't learned enough, you come back. This process continues until one is best wise and all lessons are learnt.

So, during a lifetime while we experience certain situations and look for solutions to overcome the challenges and resorting to astrological remedies is a tool that very much is a part of fixing the problem and in doing so, we request the astrological entities to soothe us and help us push through the difficult situation. By practicing a ritual suggested by an astrologer, we do not have the circumstances perish, we only get the strength to navigate smoothly. And moreover, remedies are more based on our intention so practising mindlessly, you anyhow wouldn't harvest any result.

"This is like an exam," SriGuru Rajnn Ji says. "You have to clear it to switch on to the next class.

Astrological remedies are just certain elements that amplify your performance in the exam, like being well prepared and reaching the examination hall in time, being in good health that day and the best, having a linient examiner mark your answer sheets".

And here, astrologer is the teacher who will accurately read your horoscope and guide you the efficient remedies.

TO BOOK AN APPOINTMENT WITH SRIGURU RAJNN JI, CONTACT HIM AT : 9266514545, 9266524545.

Bokaro Foundation trust celebrates Sawan Festival at MLA Residence

PNS : BOKARO

The Bokaro Foundation Trust held a vibrant Sawan Festival celebration at the residence of Bokaro MLA Biranchi Narayan in Sector 1. MLA Narayan highlighted the cultural significance of Sawan, a month linked to nature, love, and faith in Indian tradition, and stressed the importance of such events in reviving the festive spirit.

Organized by Neena Narayan, wife of MLA Narayan and president of the Bokaro Foundation Trust, the event brought women together for a day of joy and camaraderie. Attendees enjoyed activities like Mehendi application and musical chairs, dressed in green sarees and adorned with bangles, adding to the festive spirit of Sawan.

Several women, including Aarti Rana, Girija Devi, Shyamalika Dubey, Rimpa Chakraborty, Leela Devi, Rakhi Jha, Sunita Devi, Banita Devi, Sudha Gupta, Preeti Gupta, Poonam Devi among others participated in the festivities.



'WHISPERS OF EPIPHANY', A HAPPY READ FOR ALL AGE GROUPS

BY IPSITA SHARAN

'Whispers of Epiphany' by Anshika Singh is a pretty locket, to be kept close to the heart. The honest revelations, the simple language, the smooth flow of events, make the book a happy read for all age groups.

An epiphany is an intuitive grasp of reality through some simple and striking event. The choice of words for the title is very apt as it presents the unfolding of a young girl into a promising writer, opening up her sweet nature, her skill of understanding the people around her and accepting the situations confronting



her. 'Whispers of epiphany' with charming softness introduces the

readers to the modification of a young girl into a teenager who

learns not only to take a grip over her emotions but recognises the feelings of others with reverence.

All the sub- titles are meaningful. It takes courage to call oneself 'The Black Sheep' or to take up the serious issue, the vagaries of 'War'. The charming young women in her make sure that she gives proper respect to each and every member of her family. This balance makes the narrator in the book absolutely relatable.

'Whispers of Epiphany' sweetly coos to the readers, 'I am real, I am one of you.'

THE WRITER IS HOD ENGLISH, LITERA VALLEY SCHOOL, PATNA.

Rotaract Club organises Rotaract Pathshala



PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

Rotaract Club of Steel City, in collaboration with the Rotary Club of Jamshedpur Steel City and the Rotary Club of Jamshedpur Dalma, successfully organized "Rotaract Pathshala" at Kerala Samajam Model School. The event aimed to shape future leaders by enhancing leadership skills and fostering community spirit.

A total of 85 Rotaractors from various

clubs participated, including DBMS College of Education, Karim City College, Arka Jain University, Social Crew (NSU), Mrs KMPM Vocational College, Co-operative B.Ed College, MGM Medical College, Steel City, and Kalimati Jamshedpur.

The program featured an impressive lineup of speakers, including PDG Pratim Banerjee, Anjani Nidhi, Maneesh Jain, Amitava Bakshi, Simran Saggi, Murali, DRR Rtr Rinku, and Shekhar. Each speaker shared valuable insights on leadership, personal development, and the importance of community service, inspiring the young Rotaractors to continue their journey of service above self.

The event served as an excellent platform for networking, collaboration, and the exchange of ideas among the youth leaders. The event was made possible with the help of Kerala Samajam Model School. This initiative demonstrates the dedication of young leaders in Jamshedpur, committed to making a positive impact in their communities.

BJP women's cell stages protest in Lohardaga

VINOD PRASAD : LOHARDAGA

Bharatiya Janata Party Mahila Morcha organized a DC office gherao and angry demonstration program on Tuesday. The program started by gathering near the block office turn and reaching the Collectorate grounds while marching on foot. After that, the workers of Mahila Morcha demonstrated their anger against the Hemant government of Jharkhand by gheraoing the Collectorate.

On the occasion, Mahila Morcha District President Kalavati Devi said that there is no law and order in the

Hemant government of Jharkhand. Despite being a tribal Chief Minister, tribal sisters and daughters are unsafe. Conversion and brutal murder are being done by Jihadis through love jihad. He said that if the dumb government does not reform in time, it will be taught a lesson in the upcoming assembly elections.

State General Secretary Renu Tirkey said that Chief Minister Hemant Soren has cheated the youth. As promised, he neither provided employment nor allowance to the youth. BJP District President Manir Oraon said that when he was the Chief

Minister, Hemant Soren had illegally acquired the land of the tribals. Lakhs of Rohingya Muslims have infiltrated into Jharkhand, but instead of taking action for the vote bank, the Jharkhand government is supporting them. Budhan Devi, Sarita Devi, Sarita Devi, Samela Bhagat, Laxmi Narayan Bhagat etc. also addressed the protest. Before this, a large number of women reached the Deputy Commissioner's office in the form of a rally from Block Mod. During this, slogans were raised against Hemant government.



BY PRANJAL PANDEY

It would be extremely difficult to locate a species of animal, in the Indian Subcontinent, that holds equal degrees of ecological and cultural importance, as the elephant. Their intelligence and high capacity to follow instruction have made them especially useful since ancient times. Elephants have been shown to exhibit traits that are similar to more advanced species of mammals such as apes, humans and dolphins. The animal is extremely sociable from a very young age while also showcasing complex social relationships amongst members of their own species. It is widely accepted that they share knowledge inter and intra generationally and additionally they have even been observed to participate in ritual worship.

Their utility has surpassed categorisation as they have found place

as beasts of burden, in religious ceremonies, as a mode of transport and even as siege engines against fortified structures, in pre modern era warfare. However, their role as a keystone species in any ecosystem they inhabit is arguably the most important. Elephants are hailed as ecosystem engineers as they markedly transform the terrain due to their size and power, which works to make conditions more favourable for other species. Furthermore they are integral for propagation of flora as they are reliable vehicles for seed dispersion. Unfortunately, the African as well as the Asian elephant species have been facing threats from man-made factors that have caused a significant reduction in numbers. While the African bush and forest elephants are largely plagued by the scourge of poaching and wildlife trade; the Indian elephant has suffered primarily due to habitat loss. Human encroachment of the natural habitat of these animals has led to shrinkage as well as fragmentation. The encroachment is mostly a product of development policies of the administration as well as ignorant and careless expansion on the individual and societal front. Numerous highways and railway routes that pass through forests and elephant corridors worsen the problem by causing increased fragmentation as well as being responsible directly for deaths due to collision and human-wildlife conflict.

While fragmentation is a collective threat to the ecosystem it is especially detrimental to elephants

as they tend to migrate long distances in search of food, water and mates. Elephant corridors are natural routes that the elephants have routinely and historically used to travel. Interference with the corridors exposes the animals to avoidable and unnecessary risks since it leads to loss of crucial areas where the elephants rest and feed. Consequently, if the corridors are compromised the elephants need to search for alternate routes and this deviation increases risk of human-wildlife conflict, which imposes danger upon all parties involved. Habitat loss and fragmentation of the habitat are not as apparent as poaching or wanton killing as the consequences are not as immediate or as visceral. Although this makes it difficult to quantify the chaos fragmentation brings, the threat is very real and should be appreciated as such. Moreover the loss of habitat has complex implications in the case of elephants as their psychological and emotional breadth is not entirely understood. The negative impacts of habitat encroachment are not just restricted to the animals, as the resultant human-wildlife conflict culminates in deaths of people, damage to property and crops, which makes the locals even more recalcitrant when it comes to conservation.

A few years ago, in 2020, a train struck and killed an elephant in Assam, which led to the Assam forest department seizing the engine of the train. More recently this year another elephant was killed by a train collision but the incident was not

deemed serious as the incident did not take place on an elephant corridors. However, such an outlook creates an illusory and forced distinction when it should emphasised that caution must be exercised regardless of whether the area is a protected area or not. In Madhya Pradesh a speeding train plying through the Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary, caused the death of three tiger cubs much to the ire of the forest department. The forest officials of the state have rightfully demanded that the onus lies with the railway authorities to act reasonably and carefully. We would be remiss in failing to appreciate the role of the judiciary and the forest authorities in trying to secure safe passage of elephants through the corridors. The Madras High Court ordered the suspension and demolition of all commercial construction in the elephant corridors and earlier it had held that the animals held the right of passage, which was upheld by the Supreme Court as well in 2020. Such decisions are important in crystallising the rights of the animals as well as in declaring the intent of the judiciary to safeguard the interests of the ecosystem.

Although the path is not straightforward or easy, conscious effort must be made to move away from development projects and policies that interfere with fragile areas and risk not just the wildlife but also the local population.

THE WRITER IS A LAWYER BY PROFESSION. VIEWS EXPRESSED ARE PERSONAL.

Jharkhand girls become Subroto Cup U-17 Football Champions

Defeat Bangladesh by 4-1 in 63rd International Subroto Cup

PNS : RANCHI

Jharkhand's girls team has performed brilliantly in the final match of the 63rd International Subroto Cup Under 17 Girls Football Competition held at Dr. Ambedkar Stadium in Delhi and has won the title of champion. Jharkhand team has become champion by defeating Bangladesh by a margin of 4-1 in the final match of the 63rd National Subroto Cup Under 17 Girls Football Competition.

Sanjana Oraon scored 2 goals, Urvashi Kumari and Babita Kumari scored one goal each for Jharkhand in the final match, while Bangladesh scored only one goal in this match. The Best Player of the tournament award was given to Lalita Bonpai of Jharkhand. The Best Goalkeeper Award was given to Jharkhand's Anisha Oraon. Chief Minister



Jharkhand under 17 girls football team pose for a picture showing their medals after winning the 63rd International Subroto Cup Under 17 Girls Football Competition in Delhi on Tuesday. PNS

Hemant Soren has congratulated the entire team on the excellent performance of the daughters of Jharkhand and the victory of the team. The strong performance of the daughters of Jharkhand was seen from the beginning in the Subroto Cup 2024 Under 17 Girls Competition. The

team had left a strong mark by defeating Delhi 7-0, Gujarat 3-0, Arunachal Pradesh 13-0, Tripura 2-0 and Haryana 4-2 in the previous matches.

The champion team of the 63rd International Subroto Cup Under 17 Girls Football Competition will come to

Ranchi by flight tomorrow, 13 August 2024. After registering victory, the Under 17 girls team will reach Ranchi tomorrow at 1 pm. An award ceremony for the champion girls will be organized at the Jharkhand Education Project Council. In the award ceremony, the champions will be

jointly honored by Umashankar Singh, Secretary, School Education and Literacy Department of the State Government, and Aditya Ranjan, Director, Jharkhand Education Project. On the excellent performance of Jharkhand team in the final, Minister of State School Education and Literacy Department Baidyanath Ram, Secretary of School Education and Literacy Department Umashankar Singh, State Education Project Director Aditya Ranjan, State Program Officer Dhirasen Soreng, International Football Coach and former Director of Sports Authority of India (SAI) Sushil Kumar Verma, LMC member Mukul Toppo, JSSPS Coach Somnath Singh, Team Manager Bindu Kujur and all the officials of Sports Cell wished the team best of luck for the final match and congratulated them for the victory.

KOLKATA RAPE-MURDER CASE Docs at Govt hospitals stage protests, OPD services hit

Doctors demands CBI probe and arrest of culprit

PNS : RANCHI

In response to nation-wide strike call by the Federation of Resident Doctors Association (FORDA) to protest the rape and murder of a trainee doctor in Kolkata, resident doctors of various government hospitals in Jharkhand went on strike (except for emergency duty) on Tuesday. Senior medical teachers, lecturers and bonded candidates in these medical colleges are managing the hospitals. The medics have gone on strike in order to express solidarity with the residents of RG Kar Medical College, Kolkata.

Junior doctors of Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), Ranchi went on indefinite strike on Monday. The demands of agitating doctors include CBI probe into the case and safety of doctors at workplace. The decision to call for strike was taken in the morning after an emergency meeting.

Dr Bharti Kashyap, Chairperson of Women Doctors Wing IMA, demanded immediate investigation of this case by CBI. She said that National Medical Commission has not made any guideline for safety of doctors. There are strong safety guidelines at airports. Such guidelines should be made for big hospitals where many resident doctors work even at night. There should be proper arrangement of CCTV cameras, guards and street lights.

Apart from junior doctors at RIMS, senior residents and junior residents of the other five medical colleges, including MGMCH Jamshepur, SNMCH Dhanbad, SBMCH



Jharkhand IMA officials along with RIMS Junior doctors protest against the rape and murder of a young medic from Kolkata at Rajendra Institute of Medical science in Ranchi on Tuesday. PNS

Hazaribagh, MMCH Palamu and PJMCH Dumka took out candle march in the evening today and after that they decided to join an indefinite boycott from tomorrow. As pre-announced programme, senior residents, junior residents and PG students reached the hospital under banner of the IMA Junior Doctors Network (JDN) and Junior Doctors Association (JDA) and began an indefinite boycott of their duty from 8.45 am.

JDN president Dr Vikash Kumar, vice-presidents Dr Jaideep Kumar and Dr Ranvijay, JDN president Dr Ankit Kumar, vice-president Dr Abhishek Hansda who were leading the agitation at RIMS said emergency services have been exempted from indefinite boycott and only OPDs and routine OT have been boycotted.

The indefinite boycott will continue till all demands of the Kolkata Junior Doctors

Association are accepted", said JDN and JDA leaders. The main demands of Kolkata doctors are a CBI probe into murder, speedy trial, security arrangement and compensation to the victim's family. In the meantime, having seen the massive impact of the boycott on health services, RIMS authorities called both the associations' leaders to talk to solve the issues.

A meeting of senior residents and junior doctors was also held at Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Medical College Hospital (MGMCH) Jamshepur today over joining the indefinite boycott. JDN state secretary Dr Raghendra Kumar said that as per the decision senior residents and junior doctors of all five medical colleges will take out a candle march at 6.30 pm.

"After that, we will take a decision of indefinite boycott", said Dr Raghendra.

2 criminals arrested for looting Rs 2.40 lakh

Ranchi Police arrested two criminals involved in snatching Rs 2.40 lakh from a vegetable trader Sanjay Kumar Chaurasia in Mount Motor Lane of Sukhdev Nagar police station area of the State Capital on Tuesday morning. Chaurasia came to Ratu Road after getting off the train. After that he was going to his house on foot through Mount Motor Lane. During this time, two criminals riding a scooter robbed the businessman of money at knife point and fled. After the incident businessman informed the police about it. The police took action and arrested both the criminals. Seeing the seriousness of the case, the police team under the leadership of Kotwali Dy SP Prakash Soye took immediate action and arrested both the criminals within six hours of the incident. The police has also recovered the scooter used in the incident.

I-Day special program at Aqua World

Aqua World will organize a special program on the occasion of Independence Day on 15th August from 5:00 pm. The main attraction of this program will be the dance performance on the theme of independence by Vipul Nayak's Deepanjali Dance Group and a fashion show on the theme of independence by Wasim Alam's Vams Modeling Group. Apart from this, many programs and bumper housie will also be organized for children. This information was given by Aqua World directors Satya Prakash Chandel and Ahsan Ali.

IIM-R climbs to 17th Rank in NIRF 2024

IIM Ranchi secured the 17th rank in the Management category in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2024. This accomplishment represents a significant 7-rank improvement from last year, placing IIM Ranchi among the top 10 IIMs in the country. Prof. Deepak Kumar Srivastava, Director IIM Ranchi, stated, "We are incredibly proud of this achievement, which is a testament to the exceptional efforts and dedication of our entire IIM Ranchi family. Our improved ranking reflects the positive impact of our strategic initiatives and the collective efforts of the entire IIM Ranchi community. Our improved ranking in the NIRF rankings not only highlights our commitment to delivering high-quality education and impactful research but also reinforces our strategic plan of the IIMRanchi@2030.



Scientific management of human-elephant conflict is necessary: Ram

International workshop on human-elephant conflict held in Bengaluru

PNS : RANCHI

School Education and Literacy Department Minister Baidyanath Ram said that elephant is not only a major species in the wildlife kingdom, but is also considered a revered creature in Indian culture. Humans and wildlife have been living peacefully in our country for centuries. However, for some time now, the expectation of human advancement has created a situation of conflict between the two species, resulting in unpleasant situations and loss of life and property on both sides. He was speaking at the International Workshop on Human-Elephant Conflict organized by the Government of Karnataka in Bengaluru on the occasion of World Elephant Day on August 12.

He praised the wildlife management system of Karnataka and said that Karnataka has a long and glorious tradition of scientific forest and wildlife management. The initiative taken by the Government of Karnataka to bring together leading experts of the world to discuss the increasing incidents of human-elephant conflict is commendable.

The Education Minister said that Jharkhand is a land of forests. More than 29 per cent of the land is covered by forests. Jharkhand is a landlocked state with a healthy elephant population roaming around. The state is also surrounded by elephant migration friendly states on all sides and is marked as the East-Central Elephant Landscape. This scenario, while on the one hand, makes it difficult for proper scientific wildlife management, on the other hand, it points out the importance and need for mutual coordination among the concerned states. The latest census shows that Jharkhand is home to about 600 to 700 elephants. The lives of the people of



Jharkhand Education Minister Baidyanath Ram during the inaugural programme of the International Workshop on Human-Elephant Conflict organized by the Government of Karnataka in Bengaluru on the occasion of World Elephant Day on August 12. PNS

Jharkhand are inextricably linked with nature and its conservation, but Jharkhand is also not untouched by the global trend of human-wildlife conflict and we are dealing with it in our own way. Both humans and elephants have lost their lives in the past years. The average annual loss of property and agriculture due to human-elephant conflict is about Rs 60 to 70 crore per year, which is compensated by the Jharkhand government in the form of compensation. Incidents of poaching are less, but the main reasons for the death of elephants in Jharkhand are train accidents and electric current. On the other hand, the people of Jharkhand see their crops produced by their hard work throughout the year and their homes getting destroyed before their eyes.

Now the time has come for us to think about those practical options and strategies that can solve these complex problems facing all of us today. We are trying to solve this situation in our own way. These solutions are of two types. First, there should be no incidents of conflict

between humans and elephants and second, immediate measures should be taken in case of an incident. Some of the measures taken by the Jharkhand government include. Formation of Rapid Response Teams at the regional level, which we intend to extend to the divisional level. Establishment of Elephant Tracking System, which is a web based application and informs people and forest department officials about elephant movements, so that timely safety measures can be taken. Identification and scientific management of elephant corridors.

Spreading latest information and awareness about elephant movements through FM radio. Mobile application (Hamar Hathi) which is publicly available to the public for latest information and assistance. 24x7 helpline number. Establishment of a wildlife rescue centre in Ranchi. Financial incentives to local Gram Vikas Samitis for assisting in case of human-elephant conflict and in driving elephants away from

human settlements. Coordination with all departments, especially railways and electricity department. Joint survey of loose electric wires, bent and damaged poles and incidents of power theft. WhatsApp groups of regional officers of railways and forest department and coordination committees at regional level. Regulation of train speed at sensitive elephant crossing points.

Habitat improvement through development of bamboo and other types of fodder for elephants, construction of check dams and watch towers and elephant-proof structures. In the last five years, we have built a total of 1400 check dams and planted bamboo in 2629 hectares of area to improve elephant migration. Today, on the occasion of World Elephant Day, one lakh saplings of bamboo, banyan, peepal, pakkad etc. are being planted in Jamshepur district of the state.

Distribution of free kerosene, crackers, dragon torches etc. in elephant-affected villages. Also, patrolling of the affected area with torches by special anti-elephant teams to prevent elephant herds from entering the villages.

Payment of prompt and full compensation. Our government is aware of the need to increase the compensation amount to the national level and we are also working in this direction. Measures for conflict management through mutual cooperation by holding periodic coordination meetings of forest officials of neighboring states Chhattisgarh, Odisha and West Bengal. Training and capacity building of field staff. Singbhum Gaj Reserve, established in 1992, is the first and largest Gaj Reserve in the country, under which 17 out of 19 corridors of the state are marked.

Ranchi police arrest PLFI extremist

PNS : RANCHI

Ranchi Police on Tuesday arrested PLFI extremist Arjun Singh alias Nepali. On the instructions of SSP Chandan Sinha, the police team took action and arrested absconding extremist Arjun from Nagdi police station area. He is originally a resident of Sogada village under Sisai in Gumla.

Ranchi Police is on alert in view of Independence Day. Under this, the police is continuously conducting raids in search of criminals.

Nine cases are registered against Arjun in Gumla district, in which he was absconding. Since no case is registered in Ranchi district, further action is being taken by informing Gumla Police. The extrem-

ist was living in Nagdi area of Ranchi by hiding his identity. But Ranchi Police came to know about the case and arrested him by conducting raids. Investigation also revealed that Gumla Police has taken action to attach Nepal Singh's house.

Ranchi Police team arrested Nepal Singh and also searched the entire house. But, no weapon has been recovered from Nepal's house. Ranchi police is busy investigating Nepal Singh's entire criminal history. According to information received from the police, 9 cases are registered against Nepal Singh in Gumla district. Nepal was absconding in all these cases. It has also been revealed that Gumla police had taken action to confiscate Nepal Singh's house.

DESKS MADE AVAILABLE IN 24 HRS IN SOE AFTER CM'S ORDER

PNS : RANCHI

After the prompt cognizance of the Chief Minister Hemant Soren on the news published in a leading daily titled "No bench, no desk, children of CM School of Excellence studying sitting on the ground", desks has been made available to Sakshi Balika Mukhyamantri Utkrishta Vidyalaya within 24 hours.

As soon as the news came to the notice of the CM Hemant Soren, instructions were issued and the team under the leadership of the District Education Officer inspected the school and immediately completed the process of providing desks. The team has also supplied other necessary resources to



the school. The girl students of the school have expressed their gratitude to the Chief Minister. With the quality and free education being provided in the CM's Schools of Excellence being run by the State government and recognized by the CBSE

Board, now a large number of children from private schools are also getting enrolled in these schools. Keeping in mind the increasing number of students, resources are being supplied to each CM School of Excellence and Block level

This year 51,500 students have applied for enrollment in Chief Minister's Schools of Excellence. The process of enrollment in class 9th and 11th is still going on. In view of the increasing trend of children in enrollment, the number of seats has also been increased by the department this year. In the last session, enrollment was taken in 63,554 seats, while this year the number of seats has been increased to 73,554. With the increasing number of children, the sections have also been increased.

Adarsh Vidyalayas. To overcome the shortage of teachers in these schools, the School Education and Literacy Department of the State Government has also deputed and posted qualified and experienced teachers of CBSE in all 80 CM's Schools of Excellence. In the first week of August, 2024, all the deputed and posted teachers were also given special training at

Jharkhand Academic Council. In order to develop discipline and leadership skills among the teachers, they have been given special training at IIM Ranchi and IIM Ahmedabad. Students are also showing enthusiasm for enrollment in CM's Schools of Excellence. More applications have been received in proportion to the seats set for enrollment for the session 2024-25.

BJP office-bearers meet to launch membership drive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The BJP's national office-bearers are expected to meet on August 17 to finalise the launch of the party's membership drive, which will culminate with the election of a new party president.

Besides those holding an office in the BJP's organisational team at the national level, the meeting will also be attended by state party presidents and general secretaries in charge of the party's organisation in different states.

There has long been a buzz that the ruling party may appoint a 'working president' before a president is formally elected as the membership drive required to be completed for the election to take place may stretch over six months.

With incumbent president J P Nadda joining the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government as a Cabinet minister, he is expected to be replaced as per the party's convention of 'one person one post'. However, unlike 2019, when Nadda had emerged as the obvious successor to Home Minister Amit Shah at the helm of the party after he did not join the Modi 2.0 Government, there is no



automatic alternative visible this time.

Nadda was first appointed as working president in June 2019 before he was formally elected as president in January 2020. BJP's presidents have traditionally been elected with consensus.

As the BJP prepares for organisational polls, which cover the formation of new committees at booths, mandals, districts and states before the chosen delegates meet to elect its national president, the party has engaged in wide consultation with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.

Senior BJP leaders, including Shah and Nadda, besides Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, had met RSS functionaries, including its second-in-command and

general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale, on Sunday.

Sources said the meeting at Singh's residence discussed the plight of Hindus in Bangladesh and the measures which can be taken to help them but added that the issues like the upcoming coordination meet of the Hindutva organisation in Kerala and political issues also figured.

BJP and RSS functionaries have engaged in talks in several states following the party's underwhelming performance in the Lok Sabha polls as it lost majority and indications emerged of the Hindutva organisation's reservations with the party's poll tactics.

The RSS, considered the ideological progenitor of the BJP, has generally had an important role in the choice for the party's president.

EAM for strong India-US ties to tide over global tension

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday here warned of a "very grim forecast" for the world in the next five years given tension in West Asia, Ukraine and Russia and in Southeast Asia. He also flagged economic challenges and the spectre of climate change.

The possibility of such a future "makes the case" for a stronger relationship between India and the United States, Jaishankar said as much, if not all, of the world waits on the outcome of November's US presidential election.

"I am an optimistic person and generally tend to think of solutions to problems rather than the problems that come out of solutions. But I would say, with a great deal of sobriety, that we are going through an exceptionally difficult period," the external affairs minister said at an event.

"... (and) I have a very grim forecast for the next five years... you see happening in the Middle East, in Ukraine, in Southeast and East Asia, and the continued impact of COVID, which those of us who have come out of it take for granted... but many have



not come out of it," Jaishankar said.

Elaborating upon the threats posed by military conflict to the world, he warned this would spill over into economic challenges, such as rising fuel and fertiliser prices precipitated last year due to Ukraine-Russia conflict.

"The kind of economic challenges you see in the world... you see more and more countries struggling. Trade is getting difficult, there are forex shortages... so, you know, disruptions of various kinds," Jaishankar said, also referring to concerns over increased pirate attacks in the Red Sea by Iran-aligned Houthi militia targeting commercial ships in a 'show of solidarity' with Palestinians in

Gaza.

"What was happening in the Red Sea (and) climate events... are no longer just news... they have globally disruptive consequences and sometimes entire regions are basically made dysfunctional." "This makes the case for India-US ties... not just about treaties (but) much more..." he said.

However, Jaishankar refused to get drawn into a discussion on the US election. "We don't comment on other countries' elections. The US will give its verdict (and) we have every confidence, based on the past 20 years, we can work with the President... whoever he or she will be." The 2024 US presidential election will see Vice President Kamala Harris facing Donald Trump.

Some unable to digest India's development, says VP Dhankhar



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

In an apparent swipe at the Opposition over its demand for a JPC probe into Hindenburg Research's allegations, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Tuesday said India is developing at a "nuclear speed" but some people want to "bring instability", and are taking randomly surfaced issues as authentic. The remarks came as the Opposition stepped up its attack on the Government over Hindenburg's allegations against SEBI chairperson Madhabi Buch, with the Congress warning of a nationwide stir if a JPC probe is not initiated. The BJP has dismissed the demand as a "sham" aimed at undermining the Indian economy.

Dhankhar, who flagged off a 'Tiranga Bike Rally' from Bharat Mandapam, as part of 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign, said in his address that "Fellow citizens, our pace of development is such that we are moving ahead at a nuclear speed. Some people are unable to digest it, they want to bring obstruction and instability".

"They think that if India keeps moving at this pace then it will definitely become a 'Vishwa Guru'. Those who bring obstruction, such people take randomly surfaced issues as authentic," he said. "I caution the nation, I urge the citizens to be extremely alert at such forces, sinister forces, with pernicious designs. Their only motive being to destabilise Bharat, so that our progress is impeded," the vice president said.

Dhankhar asserted that the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign shows the country's commitment towards 'Viksit Bharat' and indicates that this century is "India's century". The vice president said he had no doubt in his mind that today every Indian shall resolve to subdue forces inimical to the country. The 'Har Ghar Tiranga'

campaign inspires Indians to unite to render ineffective the inimical forces, he said. "I appeal to all fellow citizens that in all conditions and circumstances, country's interest should be above the interests of an individual, politics and society.

Be united to defeat enemies of our nation who cannot stomach our unprecedented rise and development," Dhankhar said, adding, one should guide and handhold such people and their knowledge be augmented and they be introduced to the Indian culture.

The bike rally, which started from the Bharat Mandapam, Pragati Maidan, ended at the Major Dhyan Chand Stadium, passing through India Gate.

The third edition of the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign is being celebrated from August 9 to 15 to mark the 78th Independence Day. "We are no longer a nation with potential or a promise. We are a nation today on the rise as never before. Our rise is unstoppable. Our rise will make us a developed nation by 2047 when we celebrate the centenary of our Independence," the vice president said.

"I appeal to every 'Bharatiya', you are an important stakeholder in this marathon march and this bike rally which I am privileged to flag is one of its parts. It will happen all over the country and this will gain momentum year by year," he added. Dhankhar ended his speech by exhorting people to take part in this campaign, and said unfurl this flag with pride and resolve that its pride, prestige and glory shall keep increasing, and that the tricolour shall fly high in all situations. Union ministers Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Kiren Rijju and Mansukh Mandaviya were also present on the dais.

The campaign was started under the banner of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav in 2022 and it has grown into a people's movement. Shekhawat said.

BJP's Jagdambika to head JPC on Waqf Bill

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Senior BJP Lok Sabha member Jagdambika Pal was on Tuesday named chairperson of the joint committee of Parliament, which will examine the contentious Waqf (Amendment) Bill.

A Lok Sabha notification said Speaker Om Birla appointed Pal as the head of the 31-member committee. Amid protests by the opposition in the Lok Sabha on its provisions, the government had decided to refer the bill to a joint committee of the two Houses.

The joint panel has 31 members -- 21 from the Lok Sabha and 10 from the Rajya Sabha -- and will submit its report by the next session. The 73-year-old Pal is a fourth-term MP from Uttar Pradesh and is seen as a lawmaker who enjoys warm cross-party relations.

The Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha on Friday last adopted a motion moved by Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju, who also holds the parliamentary affairs portfolio, naming the members to be part of the committee. A formal notification naming Pal as the chairperson of the joint committee is set to be issued



shortly, the officials said.

In the Lower House, 12 members of the panel are from the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA), including eight from the BJP, and nine from the opposition. In the Upper House, four are from the BJP, four from the opposition, one from the YSRCP, which has opposed the Bill, and one is a nominated member.

The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Thursday last and referred to a joint committee of Parliament after a heated debate, with the government asserting the proposed law did not intend to interfere with the functioning of mosques and the opposition calling it targeting of Muslims and an attack on the Constitution.

The committee has been asked to submit its report to Lok Sabha by the last day of the first week of the next session, Rijju said.

Ensure level playing field during Assembly elections, EC tells Haryana officials

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI/CHANDIGARH

The Election Commission has directed district election officers and superintendents of police in Haryana to act with complete impartiality and ensure a level playing field for free and fair assembly elections. According to the draft electoral roll published on August 2, there were 2.01 crore electors -- 1.06 crore male and 0.95 crore female -- registered in the state. More than 4.52 lakh first-time voters, 2.55 lakh voters above the age of 85 and 1.5 lakh persons with disabilities are registered to vote in the elections. More than 10,000 voters are older than 100.

Underscoring its focus on an inducement-free poll process, the commission directed the enforcement agencies to work in a coordinated manner to curb the inflow of illicit liquor, cash and drugs. The directions were issued by an Election Commission (EC) team led by Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar.

The team is on a two-day visit of Haryana to review poll preparedness for assembly elections, likely to be held later this year. The term of the 90-member Haryana Assembly is due to expire on November 3.



The EC team, also comprising election commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu, arrived in Chandigarh on Monday. During the visit, the team met representatives of national and state parties such as AAP, BJP, CPI (M), Congress, Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) and the Jannayak Janta Party (JJP). The political parties raised several issues, including the conduct of free and fair elections with strict action against the misuse of government machinery, deployment of adequate forces in sensitive polling stations, and requests to reduce the distance between polling stations and improve facilities for the elderly and women voters.

Concerns were also raised about the inaccessibility of election observers for timely grievance redressal, a release said. The EC assured the

parties' representatives that it had taken cognisance of their suggestions and concerns and said it was committed to conducting free, fair, participative, inclusive, peaceful and inducement-free elections.

Regarding the parties' concerns over the misuse of government machinery when the Model Code of Conduct is in place, the EC directed the district election officers, superintendents of police and the state administration to act with complete impartiality. The district election officers were specifically told to be equally accessible to all political parties and ensure prompt resolution of their complaints and grievances, apart from meeting them regularly through periodic meetings, the release said. They were also asked to ensure assured minimum facilities, including ramps, wheelchairs and volunteers, for the elderly and persons with disabilities at all polling stations.

"All polling stations will be on the ground floor and within two kilometres of the residences of voters," the statement said. Observers will be accessible to all parties and voters during the election period and their contact information made

public by the district election officers. Directions were also issued to monitor social media for fake news.

On Tuesday, the team held a review meeting with nearly 20 central and state enforcement agencies, including the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Reserve Bank of India, Haryana Police, Income Tax and the Enforcement Directorate.

The EC conveyed its zero-tolerance policy towards the use of money power in the elections, it said. Cohort-wise route maps were identified to keep a strict vigil on movement, stockpiling and distribution of any kind of inducements, it added. The EC also ordered that strict action be taken against liquor and drug kingpins in the state.

The agencies were asked to share intelligence, work in a coordinated manner and introduce round-the-clock CCTV monitoring at critical check posts along interstate borders. The agencies concerned were also asked to monitor for unscheduled chartered flights and helipads for any movement of goods.

According to an official, 20,629 polling stations would be set up for the elections, an increase of 817 from the 2019 elections.

India, Australia discuss counter-terrorism challenges

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

India and Australia here exchanged views on the domestic, regional and global terrorism threat assessment and discussed counter-terrorism challenges related to the use of new and emerging technologies by terrorists. The two sides also discussed misuse of internet for terrorist purposes, radicalisation and terror financing, and the nexus between organised crime and terrorism, among other issues.

Giving details, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the 14th meeting of the India-Australia Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism was held on Monday. K D Dewal, Joint Secretary for Counter-Terrorism at the Ministry of External Affairs of India, and Richard Feakes, Ambassador for Counter-Terrorism, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, led the respective delegations of experts to discuss the global counter-terrorism challenges and the ongoing counter-terrorism



cooperation between the two countries.

India and Australia strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and emphasised the need for strengthening international cooperation to combat terrorism in a comprehensive and sustained manner. They also condemned both sides also discussed cooperation in regional, global and multilateral fora such as UN, GCTE, FATE, ARE, IORA and with QUAD partners to combat global terrorism.

The ongoing co-operation in counter terrorism is an important element of the India - Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

Meanwhile, the 6th India-Australia Maritime Security Dialogue was held on Tuesday in Canberra, MEA informed. The Indian delegation was led by Muanpui Saiawi, Joint Secretary, Disarmament and International Security Affairs, Ministry of External Affairs and the Australian delegation was led by Sarah Storey, First Assistant Secretary, South Asia and Central Asia Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Bernard Philip, First Assistant Secretary, International Policy, Department of Defence.

The two sides conferred on ways to sustain a safe and secure maritime environment conducive for inclusive growth and global well being. They exchanged views on various topics of mutual interest, including the maritime security environment in the Indo-Pacific region, maritime domain awareness, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) coordination, regional and multilateral engagements and sustainable use of marine resources.

Akhilesh, Rahul's rise emboldens criminals in UP, claims BJP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Tuesday alleged that the recent rise in the political strength of 'do ladke', a reference to Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav, has resulted in criminals getting emboldened in Uttar Pradesh.

BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi accused the Samajwadi Party of sheltering criminals, and targeted the party over the arrest of two persons allegedly associated with it on the charges of rape and attempt to rape.

Not only the SP has been giving "cover fire" to criminals but the members of the Opposition INDIA Bloc are helping each other defend criminal elements of their alliance partners as well, he told reporters. "Those associated with two boys have been committing crimes.

The audacity of criminals has been rising since the increase in the strength of

these two boys," he said in an apparent reference to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav. It is in the DNA of the Samajwadi Party to stand with criminals, he said, in a swipe at the regional party's demand for the DNA testing to prove the guilt of the accused in one of the cases. The BJP leader also targeted West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for her stand that she will transfer the case of rape and murder of a doctor in a government-run hospital in Kolkata to the CBI if the local police did not solve the case till Sunday.

Is so much time being given so that the case can be manipulated, he asked, demanding an immediate transfer of the investigation to the CBI. Questioning the "silence" of Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi and his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra over these crimes, he said INDIA bloc parties are covering up for "mutual criminal elements" in their alliance.

Hindenburg: Cong to hold nationwide protest, demand SEBI chief's resignation, JPC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday said the party's focus is on the pressing issues of "unbridled unemployment" and "uncontrolled inflation", and it would design a national campaign around these problems and go to people.

Amid the row over the Hindenburg allegations, the Congress also announced that it will hold a nationwide agitation on August 22 demanding SEBI Chief Madhabi Puri Buch's resignation and a Joint Parliamentary Committee probe into the Adani issue. Kharge's remarks on his party's focus came as he chaired a meeting of the party's general secretaries, state unit chiefs and AICC state in-charges to discuss organisational matters and various issues of national importance for election preparedness.

Kharge also said the "shocking revelations of a nexus" between the SEBI and Adani needs a thorough investigation. "The money of



small investors in the stock market can't be jeopardised. The Modi government must immediately seek the resignation of the SEBI chairperson and constitute a JPC in this regard," the Congress chief said. He claimed attack on the Constitution continues unabated under the Modi-led NDA government. He also said caste census is a demand of people.

The Congress president said the party will continue its fight for demanding legal guarantee for Minimum Support Price of crop. The Agnipath scheme must be scrapped, he said. "The pressing issues of unbridled unemployment and uncontrolled inflation and depletion of household savings are our focus. The

poor and middle class have been betrayed," he said. He also attacked the government over the issue of railway safety saying "train derailments have become a norm".

Climate-related disasters and collapsing infrastructure are also a cause of concern, the senior leader said. "We would design a national campaign around these issues and go to the people." As regards nationwide agitation on the Hindenburg report, Congress made the announcement after Kharge held a meeting with all general secretaries, state unit chiefs and AICC state in-charges here as the party gets battle-ready for the upcoming round of assembly polls to discuss organisational matters and various issues of national importance for election preparedness.

Briefing reporters on the meeting, Venugopal said it was unanimously decided at the meeting that the party will hold a nationwide agitation on August 22, demanding the SEBI chief's resignation and a JPC probe into Adani issue.

Landslides in Kerala indicate climate change cannot be ignored, says UDF

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Congress-led UDF Opposition on Tuesday said the recent landslides in Wayanad and Kozhikode districts of Kerala indicate that climate change can no longer be ignored, and suggested the implementation of an early warning system to mitigate the impact of natural disasters in the future. The recommendations were made along with the suggestions given to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan for the rehabilitation of victims of the landslides-hit areas in Wayanad and Vilangad village in Kozhikode, Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the State Assembly V D Satheesan said. The LoP said the opposition has been saying since 2021 that climate change cannot be ignored and that it has to be addressed. "The opposition has now suggested carrying out scientific testing, mapping of disaster prone areas and setting up early warning systems. "For that, scientific institutions and meteorological departments of central and state governments and institutions of international standard like



Cochin University should work in concert," he said while speaking to reporters here after submitting the proposals to the CM. Satheesan said that when claims of Kerala being a "knowledge society" are made periodically, then all the scientific knowledge available in the world should be used to mitigate the impact of natural disasters. He said that Kerala has faced several natural disasters in the past and, therefore, going forward, any developmental work should take climate change also into account. The opposition leader further said that the UDF also suggested that the government consider framing a law for the rehabilitation of

victims of natural disasters. Satheesan, who submitted the proposals in person to the CM, said that he received a positive response from Vijayan. Regarding the rehabilitation of the victims, he said that Congress MP Rahul Gandhi has already promised to build 100 houses and the state government has assured that it would hold talks with the opposition as soon as land for the project is found. Satheesan said the opposition suggested that while building the houses, a township model, facilitating community living, should be adopted, instead of simply building homes, so that all the affected persons can live together. He said that the

opposition has also recommended making micro-level rehabilitation packages tailored to the needs of each affected family as they were all affected in different ways. "In some cases, children were orphaned, in others only elderly members of the family survived and in some, the earning members died. So, the packages have to be different in each case. We hope the state government will consider the suggestion seriously," he said. He said that the opposition also sought a separate rehabilitation package for Vilangad as officially there were 24 landslides in the village that caused widespread damage to property, which included homes, farmland, roads and even bridges. Satheesan said that the other suggestions given by the opposition include a complete waiver of loans taken by those who lost everything in the landslides in Wayanad and Vilangad as the people no longer have the means to repay their debts. He said that CM Vijayan agreed to look into the matter and take a decision accordingly.

Schools shut as rain wreaks havoc in Rajasthan, CM conducts aerial survey

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Schools were shut in several Rajasthan districts on Tuesday as heavy rainfall continued to batter parts of the state where 22 people died in rain-related incidents in two days. Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma conducted an aerial survey of rain-hit areas in Dausa, Karauli and Bharatpur districts while BJP leader Kirodi Lal Meena took part in a field survey and met officials in Dausa. Meena recently resigned from the Cabinet and is not taking part in official meetings. A warning for heavy to very heavy rainfall is in place for Tuesday and Wednesday in the Bharatpur, Ajmer, Jaipur and Kota divisions. In some areas of eastern Rajasthan, moderate to heavy rain may occur on Thursday and Friday. For Tuesday, a 'red' warning is in place for Baran, Bundi, Kota and Tonk districts and an 'orange' alert for Bharatpur, Dausa, Dholpur, Jaipur and Karauli. The administration has declared holidays in schools in these districts. In the 24 hours ended at 8:30 am on Tuesday, Mahua in Dausa recorded the highest



rainfall at 163 mm, the Met centre in Jaipur said. Nainwa in Bundi recorded 161 mm rainfall, Jaipur 152 mm and Madhorajpura in Jaipur 136 mm -- all in the category of very heavy rain. Torrential rain during the past couple of days has caused waterlogging in several districts, with National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) teams rescuing more than 100 people from affected areas. The continuous heavy rain has led to flood-like conditions in Karauli district and nearby areas where overflowing dams and rivers have disrupted daily life. At least 22 people have died in rain-related incidents in Rajasthan since August 11. Sharma conducted a field

inspection in Jaipur on Monday and issued necessary directions to officials. On Tuesday, he conducted an aerial survey in rain-hit Dausa, Karauli and Bharatpur districts, an official said. BJP MLA Meena conducted a field visit in Dausa amid the flood-like situation in some areas of eastern Rajasthan and shared photos on social media. "Held a review meeting to deal with the current situation after heavy rainfall and discussions were held with all the subdivision-level officers in the Mahwa Panchayat Samiti auditorium and directions were given to take necessary steps to help the affected people. All possible help will be provided to the affected people," he said in a post on X.

Five killed as car falls into canal in Bihar

PTI ■ AURANGABAD



Five persons, all of them residents of Patna, were on Tuesday killed in Aurangabad district of Bihar where their car fell into a canal, a police officer said. According to Kumar Rishiraj, Sub Divisional Police Officer, Daudnagar, the accident took place in the morning close to Chaman Bigha village falling in Aurangabad district. "Bodies of all five occupants have been exhumed. The owner of the vehicle has been traced with the help of the number plate. We have learnt that all the deceased were residents of Rajiv Nagar locality in the state capital," said Rishiraj. "The deceased had gone to offer prayers at a shrine in the adjoining Rohtas district. While returning, the driver lost control of the car which crashed into the canal," added the SDPO.

BJP's TN ally Devanathan held on fraud charges

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Devanathan Yadav, who unsuccessfully contested on a BJP ticket from Sivaganga Lok Sabha constituency, was arrested on a charge of cheating depositors of a non-banking financial institution here, police said on Tuesday. He was arrested by a team of officials from the Economic Offences wing in Tiruchirappalli and later brought to Chennai for questioning. The arrest followed protests and also complaints from several aggrieved investors who claimed that a financial institution that Yadav headed -- Mylapore Hindu Saswat Nidhi Limited -- cheated them with the promise of an attractive higher rate of interest on their deposits. Devanathan Yadav, who runs a political outfit Indhiya Makkal Kalvi Munnetra Kazhagam, allied with the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha poll and was fielded from Sivaganga constituency. Reacting to the arrest, Tamil Nadu BJP chief K Annamalai said his party was committed to ensuring justice for the investors of the Mylapore Hindu Saswat Nidhi Limited. "The Tamil Nadu government should conduct a thorough investigation and confirm this to all investors," he said in a post on social media platform X. "At the same time, if this is one of the attempts to threaten the NDA parties for pointing out the law and order and administrative failure of the DMK government, then I strongly condemn it," Annamalai added.

CM directs to restore damaged crest gate of Tungabhadra reservoir in 3-4 days

PTI ■ KOPPALL (KARNATAKA)

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday said he has asked officials and experts to fix within three to four days the damaged crest gate of Tungabhadra reservoir so that water from expected rains can be stored. After inspecting the dam, he also assured that there is no need for farmers to worry. "I'm confident that Tungabhadra dam will be filled once again and I will come to offer 'Bagina' (traditional thanksgiving to the river). No politics on this issue." One of the crest gates (19th gate) of the Tungabhadra reservoir in Koppal district was washed away after its chain link snapped on Friday midnight, following which the downstream areas were put on alert, as a huge quantity of water was being released. "We were releasing water through ten gates, which included the 19th gate. The



19th gate got washed away after its chain link snapped...We have consulted dam safety experts and the repair works are on. Based on the advice of experts, the Tungabhadra Board will take appropriate decisions," Siddaramaiah told reporters. He assured that there won't be any problem for farmers in the three states -- Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, who have sown

crops, as water is flowing through all the canals and there will be any damage to crops. "There is no need for farmers to worry." "...From August 17-18 there are expectations of above normal rains. I have asked experts to complete the work in three to four days, so that we can store the water from the expected rains, as we need 90 tmcft of water for standing crops. The government is at it, we want to complete the work

at the earliest and want to ensure that farmers don't face any trouble. It is our responsibility," he added. The dam is managed by the Tungabhadra Board with representatives from Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana government representatives being its members; the Central Water Commission (CWC) appointee is the Chairman. Andhra Pradesh Minister of Finance Payyavula Keshav, Minister for Water Resources Development Nimmala Ramanaidu, also MPs and legislators from that state were present during the Chief Minister's visit and his interaction with media. Noting that the dam construction work began in 1948 and got completed in 1953, and from 1954 water is being released to canals, the Chief Minister said, "the dam is aged about 70 years. So far there was no chain link snap in this dam's 33 gates, now it has happened for the first time in the 19th gate."

Adivasi-Dalit groups call for hartal in Kerala over SC quota verdict

PTI ■ KOTTAYAM (KERALA)

Various Adivasi-Dalit organisations on Tuesday called for a state-wide hartal in Kerala on August 21, to protest the recent Supreme Court verdict on the sub-categorisation of reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as granted under the Constitution. In a joint statement signed by leaders of various Adivasi-Dalit organisations, it was alleged that the verdict aimed to divide the SC/ST list on a caste basis and introduce a 'creamy layer' within SC/ST categories. They said the hartal will exempt Wayanad district due to the recent natural disasters. The outfits announced that the state-wide hartal is part of the Bharat Bandh called by Bhim Army and various Dalit-Bahujan movements. The primary demand is for Parliament to pass legislation overturning the Supreme Court verdict, according to the statement.



Despite the BJP government's assurance that it will not implement the creamy layer, the central government has yet to acknowledge that the creamy layer division is the basis for categorising the list, they alleged. Earlier this month, a seven-judge Bench of the Supreme Court led by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud ruled in a 6:1 majority judgment that state governments were permitted to sub-classify communities within the SC list based on empirical data. Supreme Court judge Justice B R Gavai had said that States must evolve a policy for identifying the creamy layer even among the Scheduled

Castes (SC) and Schedule Tribes (ST) and deny them the benefit of reservation. Justice Gavai penned a separate but concurring judgment in which the top court by a majority verdict said the states are empowered to make sub-classifications of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for granting quotas within the reserved category to uplift those who belong to the more underprivileged castes. The Union Cabinet has asserted that there was no provision for a creamy layer in the reservation for SCs and STs in the Constitution given by B R Ambedkar.

Janmashtami to be celebrated in Mathura-Vrindavan amid high security

PTI ■ MATHURA (UP)

The Hindu holy cities of Mathura and Vrindavan in Uttar Pradesh are set to celebrate the birth anniversary of Lord Krishna over two days, with extensive security arrangements being put in place, officials, saints and temple authorities said on Tuesday. According to officials, preparation are underway to celebrate the 5251st birth anniversary of Lord Krishna on a grand scale across Braj. The festival will be celebrated at the Shri Krishna Janmasthan in Mathura and other prominent temples on

the midnight of August 26, while the Banke Bihari Temple in Vrindavan will observe Janmashtami on the night of August 27. Thus allowing devotees to enjoy the festivities on both days. Every year, the birth anniversary of Lord Krishna is celebrated on the midnight of Ashtami, the eighth day of the dark fortnight of Bhadrapada month. The following day, Nandotsav, a celebration marking the joy on Lord Krishna's birth, is observed in temples, where sweets are distributed, and traditional songs are sung. Saints indicated that this year, the celebration of Lord



Krishna's birth will take place in all temples and households across Braj on the midnight of August 26. Devotees will observe a fast during the day, and at midnight, they will celebrate

the appearance of Lord Krishna, symbolised by breaking a cucumber, and offer 'panjiri' made of coriander as an offering to conclude the fast. Meanwhile, in the Banke

Bihari Temple in Vrindavan, Janmashtami will be celebrated on August 27 instead of August 26, as per the temple's tradition, which follows the lunar calendar based on the sunrise on a particular date. Munish Sharma, the manager of the Banke Bihari Temple, said that all festivals and rituals in the temple are carried out according to the 'panchang' (Hindu calendar) prepared by the temple's priests at the beginning of the year. This year, as the sunrise of Ashtami falls on August 27, the temple will celebrate Janmashtami on that day. The special 'Mangala Aarti' (a

unique prayer once a year) will be conducted at 2 am, Sharma said. Prahlad Ballabh Goswami, an expert on the history of the Banke Bihari Temple, stated that the usual prayers and rituals will be conducted at the scheduled time on August 27. This will be followed by the 'mahabhishek' (grand bathing ceremony) of the deity at midnight, which will not be open to the general public. The 'Mangala Aarti' will be held at around 2 am and the temple will remain open until 5 am for devotees, he said. Kapil Sharma, the secretary of Shri Krishna Janmasthan Nyas, said the Janmashtami

festival will be celebrated on August 26 in the sanctum sanctorum, Thakur Keshav Dev, and Bhagwat Bhavan at the Shri Krishna Janmasthan. Similarly, Rakesh Tiwari, the Public Relations Officer of Thakur Dwarkadhish Temple, confirmed that Janmashtami will also be celebrated on August 26, following the temple's tradition and calendar. In other temples of Vrindavan, including Thakur Radharaman Lal, ISKCON's Shri Krishna Balram Temple and the Prem Mandir, the Janmashtami festival will also be celebrated on August 26.

Rajasthan man held for tying wife to motorcycle, dragging her around village

PTI ■ JAIPUR

A woman in Rajasthan's Nagaur district was allegedly thrashed by her alcoholic husband, tied to a motorcycle and dragged around their village, police said on Tuesday. A video purporting to show the woman tied to the motorcycle and being dragged behind it was circulated on social media, following which her husband was arrested. Panchaudi police station assistant sub-inspector Surendra Kumar said the alleged incident occurred nearly a month ago in the Naharsinghpura village. Premaram Meghwal (32)

allegedly thrashed his wife before tying her to his motorcycle and dragging her behind it, he said. A video of the incident surfaced online on Monday, following which the police probed into the matter and arrested the accused. The woman is currently living with her relatives. She did not report the matter to the police. The accused was arrested on Monday for disturbing the peace, the police said. His neighbours said Meghwal was an alcoholic and regularly thrashed his wife. He did not let her talk to anyone in the village either, the police added.

Kerala HC rejects plea against release of Justice Hema committee report

PTI ■ KOCHI

The Kerala High Court on Tuesday dismissed a plea challenging a State Information Commission's order directing the release of the Justice K Hema Committee report which studied the issues faced by women in the Malayalam film industry. Justice V G Arun directed that the report be published within one week. The court dismissed the order saying that the petitioner -- Sajimon Parayil -- was not an aggrieved party, his lawyer Saiby Jose Kidangoor said. The detailed order is not yet available. The court had on July 24 stayed release of the report for a week and the interim order was extended from time to time. The interim order was last extended on

August 6. Parayil, a film producer, had challenged the information commission's July 5 order directing the State Public Information Officer (SPIO) to reasonably disseminate the information in the report while ensuring that it does not compromise the privacy of individuals. "While providing attested copies of the Justice K Hema Committee report, the SPIO should ensure that the materials do not lead to the identification of individuals referenced in the said report or compromise their privacy," it had said. The Information Commissioner, in his order, however, had asked the SPIO not to disclose the details of paragraph 96 contained on page 49 and paragraphs 165 to 196 from pages 81 to 100. The

committee was formed after the 2017 actress assault case involving actor Dileep to study issues of sexual harassment and gender inequality in Malayalam cinema. Even though the report was filed in 2019, the government is yet to release the details as it was suspected to contain sensitive information. The actress-victim who has worked in Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam films was allegedly abducted and molested in her car for two hours by some of the accused, who had forced their way into the vehicle on the night of February 17, 2017 and later escaped in a busy area. The entire act was filmed by some of the accused to blackmail the actress. There are 10 accused in the case.

Bihar stampede: Police arrest flower vendor

PTI ■ JEHANABAD (BIHAR)

The police on Tuesday arrested a flower vendor in connection with a stampede that left seven people dead and 16 others injured at Baba Siddheshwar Nath Temple in Bihar's Jehanabad district, an officer said. Preliminary investigation revealed that the stampede happened following a clash between flower vendors and a few Kanwaris near the temple on Baravar hills in Makhdumpur block, District Magistrate Alankrita Pandey said. This is the first arrest in connection with the incident and the police are searching for two or three other flower vendors who are absconding, she said.



"The entire area of the temple premises has now been made a vendor-free zone," the DM said. The arrest was made after analysing CCTV footage and recording the statement of those present there at the time of the incident, Pandey said. Seven people, including six women, were killed and 16 others injured in a stampede at the temple in the

intervening night of Sunday and Monday. A large number of devotees had assembled at the temple to offer water to the deity on Monday in Shraavan, a holy month for Hindus. The police also decided to deploy 100 more security personnel along the route the Kanwaris take and near the temple premises. "Besides, a temporary medical facility is also being opened near Makhdumpur in case of any untoward incident. It will start functioning from today," said the DM. Meanwhile, a video clip of the incident surfaced on social media on Tuesday showing how the stampede took place. It is seen in the video clip that devotees were struggling to come out of a narrow lane packed with devotees.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Sunshine after the storm

Indian agriculture set to benefit from good monsoon and PM Modi's release of climate-resistant seeds

India's agricultural sector, the cornerstone of its economy, is set to benefit from a double dose of positive news this monsoon season. With forecasts predicting a normal to above-normal monsoon and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent announcement of 109 climate-resistant seed varieties, the outlook for the country's farmers is brighter than ever. These developments not only promise a significant boost for agriculture but also hold the potential to ease inflationary pressures—a key concern for both policymakers and the general public. A favorable monsoon is expected to drive agricultural growth in India, with a report from India Ratings predicting a 4.3% increase in FY25, up from 1.4% in FY24. The monsoon plays a critical role in sustaining food supply, which in turn satisfies consumer demand and helps stabilise food prices. Additionally, a good monsoon increases rural incomes, which can stimulate demand for fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG). Monsoon rains are vital for Indian agriculture, particularly for the kharif crop season, which includes staples like rice, maize, and pulses. With nearly 60 per cent of India's farmland being rain-fed, a good monsoon often translates to a successful harvest. This year's normal to above-average rainfall has raised hopes for a bumper crop season. A successful monsoon reduces the need for costly irrigation solutions, helping farmers save on input costs. As a result, rural incomes are expected to rise, driving consumer demand in villages and small towns, which are vital engines of the country's economic growth.



Against this promising backdrop, Prime Minister Modi's release of 109 climate-resistant seed varieties marks

a significant step towards securing India's agricultural future. These seeds have been specially developed to withstand the growing challenges posed by climate change, including erratic rainfall, prolonged droughts, and rising temperatures. By enhancing crop resilience, these seeds aim to ensure stable yields even in adverse weather conditions. The introduction of these seeds is a forward-looking initiative that aligns with the government's broader agricultural strategy, which emphasises sustainability and self-reliance. These seeds are expected to reduce crop losses due to unpredictable weather, providing farmers with a safety net and helping to stabilise food production. This could lead to a more consistent food supply. In recent years, inflation, particularly driven by volatile food prices, has been a persistent concern for the Indian economy. A good monsoon and the adoption of climate-resistant seeds could bring much-needed relief to consumers, especially those in lower-income brackets who are most affected by rising food costs. During his second term, Prime Minister Modi had promised to double farmers' incomes—a goal that was challenging to achieve at the time. However, that target now seems within reach. The combination of good rainfall and resilient seed varieties could be the key to realising that vision and securing a prosperous future for Indian agriculture.

PICTALK



NCC cadets during full dress rehearsal for the 78th Independence Day celebrations at Red Fort, in New Delhi

Finding fault with the US for internal failures



BHOPIINDER SINGH

The narrative of an 'American hand' in political unrest in South Asia sells, even as the root cause of instability often lie with its own politicians

The United States of America did not have a significant role in the run-up to the independence of the Indian subcontinent from the British Raj. Indeed, the Gadar Party started as a San Francisco-based anti-colonial organization, as did the New York-based India Home Rule League founded by Lala Lajpat Rai, but the Government of the USA had remained largely oblivious of the subcontinental developments. It was only in the post-World War 2 tensions between the competing 'blobs', when the Cold War started in earnest, that the USA went into overdrive to control the subcontinental narrative. To further its interest, the USA had backed military dictators in Pakistan, and undemocratic monarchies in Afghanistan and Nepal, while remaining decidedly hostile towards India.

Washington DC tellingly overlooked the genocidal conduct of the Pakistani Generals in what later became, Bangladesh. Americans were instrumental in harnessing toxic religiosity by creating the Afghan mujahedeen, the cause of which continues to this date. Pakistan was a 'Major Non-NATO Ally' and did most of its bidding in the region. The end of the Cold War with the implosion of the Soviet Union in the early 90s coincided with the rise of China as the new principal enemy. This led to a recalibration of allies and enemies, which eventually warranted a more pro-India outlook from Washington DC, even though an unnatural alliance with Pakistan persisted owing to the necessities of Afghanistan and tackling religio-terror.

For a variety of reasons, including the continuing 'War on Terror' in Afghanistan, the Middle East, and Iran, to now the latest Israel-Palestine War, perceptions of America within the Ummah (Islamic World), made it naturally unsavoury. This often makes the USA the prime suspect for anything that went wrong in Tehran, Kabul, Damascus, Islamabad to even Dhaka. Invariably the Americans are seen to be partaking in Samuel P



Huntington's 'Clash of the Civilisations', which seemingly pits the Americans as a force against the Ummah. America-bashing is a latent and potent undercurrent that is tapped by various political parties in the Islamic countries of the region like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Maldives or Bangladesh, even if the same is genuinely warranted or not. There is no denying that America has had an amoral past with many missteps and convenient overlooking of events, but it is equally true that many political parties have twisted and even extrapolated the same to suggest outsize agendas for Washington DC because they know that such a spiel feeds into the popular and basic instincts of their citizenry.

In Pakistan, amidst the turf wars between the Military 'establishment' and Imran Khan's Tehreek-e-Insaaf government, the wily Imran Khan dialled up a phoney 'cypher' controversy entailing a foreign power i.e., the USA. This move sought to conflate two enemies (one already imagined i.e., USA, and the other requiring some context i.e. Pakistani Military) to apportion a disproportionate role for the Americans, as it was safe and popular to do so. The Americans have historically had a say in Pakistani affairs, but the ouster of Imran Khan had more to do with the Pakistani 'establishment' tak-



WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT DHAKA UNDER HASINA HAD ADOPTED A BELLIGERENT STANCE AND EVEN COSIED UP TO ITS NEMESIS THAT IS, CHINA, BY ACCEPTING BEIJING'S OVERTURES – BANGLADESH WAS NOT CHINA'S BUNNY IN THE SAME WAY AS PAKISTAN IS, NOR WAS IT POISED TO GO THAT WAY

ing the initiative with Americans agreeing to the same, as opposed to the other way round.

Today, realising his folly of having overplayed the America-hand storyline, Imran Khan has deftly redirected the attack onto his local political rivals as opposed to the Americans or even the Pakistani 'establishment', as done earlier. Now, after the self-created tinder-box-like situation and the subsequent implosion, Bangladesh's former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is believed to have drummed up the US hand in the recent coup. While it is true that Dhaka under Hasina had adopted a belligerent stance and even cosied up to its nemesis i.e., China, by accepting Beijing's overtures – Bangladesh was not China's bunny in the same way as Pakistan is, nor was it poised to go that way, either. It is true Hasina had declined the American request for a Military base in its Saint Martin Islands, but that was more out of good sense given the societal sentiments that prevailed and good local politics.

The only thing that riled up Hasina was the routine concerns expressed by the USA that Hasina was increasingly undemocratic, intolerant and authoritarian (which she was) – but other than these concerns, both Hasina and the

Americans had a common enemy in religious-extremist forces that threatened the interests of both sides. Hasina also amplified her American rhetoric as it was without any accompanying risks and could endear her to Bangladeshi society, as the Ummah has been wounded by emotions of the Palestine war, and the tacit role of the USA. Hasina's purported accusation of the USA plotting regime change in Bangladesh (in her undelivered speech) needs to be read contextually. His supposed stance that she'd be in power if she had given away, "Saint Martin and Bay of Bengal", is more theatrical than factual as Bangladeshi (especially youth) had genuinely tired of her rule.

If anything, the forces that have come to power reflect the sort of spirit and religious tenor that militates against American preferences. Hasina's exit has more to do with her hubris and excesses than with America working overtime to dislodge her. America is just a convenient (though often justified) enemy in Islamic countries and those who are inelegantly bumped out resort to blaming the USA hand on the rebound e.g., Pakistan earlier, Bangladesh now.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MOTHERS HAVE BIG HEART

Madam — In the world of sports, where records are measured in meters and seconds, Nadeem's Olympic gold throw of 92.97 meters and Neeraj's silver throw of 89.45 meters are remarkable feats. Yet, they pale in comparison to the "universal affection javelin throw" of infinite meters launched by their mothers. The media captured a heartwarming moment as both mothers wished their sons not just victory and medals, but everlasting friendship and affection.

Indeed, the true champions here are the mothers of Nadeem and Neeraj, whose boundless care and love transcending international borders, setting a new record for the longest "affectionate and harmonious javelin throw" of infinite meters. Kudos to these incredible women for their unparalleled contribution to the spirit of sportsmanship and humanity.

PV Madhu Nivriti | Secunrabad

ADDRESS ATTACK ON MINORITIES

Madam — The ongoing attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh are deeply concerning. Despite Hindu support for the movement against the Sheikh Hasina government, the new regime has failed to protect them. Alarming, Indian opposition parties, vocal about minority rights in India, have remained silent on this issue.

Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus, leading the interim government, has appealed for calm but to little effect. The anti-quota protests in Bangladesh, which led to the fall of the Hasina government, have now targeted Hindus, even though their involvement was primarily against the previous government. The situation worsened with the forced resignation of Bangladesh's Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan. Bangladesh remains an Islamic country, and protection for minorities is limited compared to India. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's offer to shelter "anyone" in distress is problematic, as it could enable more Bangladeshi infiltration into India, exacerbating the

Medics need support



The removal of the City Police Commissioner and the Medical Superintendent cum VP of RG Kar Medical College Hospital in Calcutta, following the horrific rape

demographic challenges in states like Assam and West Bengal. Mamata Banerjee's silence on the attacks against Hindus in Bangladesh is troubling, especially as her actions seem to prioritise vote-bank politics over national security and humanitarian concerns. The government must act fast as things are very fluid in Bangladesh.

K V Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

LESSONS FROM WAYANAD

Madam — The recent landslides and floods in Wayanad, Kerala, have drawn global attention, reminding us of the ongoing vulnerability of our planet to natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods. Our Earth has always been a haven of beauty and abundance, providing a diverse range of species and natural resources like majestic mountains and expansive oceans. For millennia, Mother Nature has been humanity's nurturing cradle. I recall the massive floods of the early 1990s, which devastated regions in Tamil Nadu, including Korkai, Tiruchendur, Tuticorin, and

and murder of a 31-year-old medical professional on the hospital grounds, will not alone bring justice to this case. The Federation of Resident Doctors' Association (FORDA) has demanded a CBI inquiry and calls for decisive action.

The frequency of such atrocities against doctors across the country, compounded by inadequate protection from many state authorities, is undeniable. The reluctance of junior doctors to speak out due to fear has led to even greater tragedies over the years. If this situation persists, it will severely impact medical care for millions of impoverished patients and place the medical profession in a critical condition.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

Tirunelveli. It is crucial for all Asian countries, especially those in the Himalayan region, to implement proactive measures such as adopting advanced technologies and large-scale afforestation to mitigate the effects of natural disasters.

These events underscore the urgent need to harmonise human activities with the Earth's natural systems. Overexploitation of resources has pushed our planet to its limits, disrupting its balance. To address this, it is essential to regulate high-rise construction in earthquake-prone areas and shift focus from building concrete jungles to fostering green, sustainable landscapes. Regions like Korkai, Tiruchendur, Tuticorin, Tirunelveli, Marthandam, Nagercoil, and Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu serve as examples of how humans and nature can coexist harmoniously. By prioritising reforestation and sustainable land use, we can build a resilient future.

P Senthil Saravana Durai | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

The quest for real freedom in a divided society

Real liberation comes from transcending divisions and recognising our spiritual identity, a path that leads to peace, harmony, and tranquility

More than seven decades after we attained independence from the British, we are still enslaved—trapped in the bondage of caste, creed, religion, regionalism et al. This has created deep fissures in society, destroying the democratic fabric of amity, harmony and peaceful co-existence. All this is there because as individuals, society and a nation, we have not attained real or to say ultimate freedom that promotes peace, harmony and happiness.

What is real or ultimate freedom? It is a state of not being enslaved to physical senses, to mind and its desires. It means breaking free from toxic thoughts and the vices associated with it. We need freedom from prejudices of caste, creed and religion, greed and selfishness, anger and animosity, hate and hostility.

But then why are we failing to achieve real freedom and how can we attain it? Real freedom is eluding us because we are facing an identity crisis. We don't know our real identity.



In reality, we are spiritual beings (having soul-based identity) in body form. But we make a fallacy of treating ourselves as a body and this unreal world as the real world.

The basic nature of our material existence is bondage and when we act upon the material desires of the mind and senses, we often take to unwise and unholy acts which lead to our sorrows and sufferings. Because of duality, we tend to discriminate against fellow beings and this dis-

crimination takes the form of hatred, animosity and hostility, even leading to violence and bloodshed. Liberation of the soul or spiritual freedom is the ultimate freedom.

The devotees belonging to the Nirankari Mission observe the 15th of August as 'Mukti Parv Diwas' to signify the liberation of the soul. To attain this ultimate liberation, we have to come out of the contaminated state of our consciousness and position ourselves in a pure state of

our consciousness. Even Bhagavad Gita says that being situated in such a position, one is never shaken even amid the greatest difficulty and it is actual freedom from all miseries arising from material contact.

We can certainly attain ultimate liberation through self-liberation by way of self-realization that we are a pure and noble soul—a constituent of God. We can lead such an aware life constantly by strengthening our spiritual dimension through God's remembrance and the company of saintly persons. Lord Jesus set people free from bondage to live in the freedom that only comes from God.

We shall be able to attain real freedom by living an enlightened life in the spirit of oneness (Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam) with the Creator and His creation, in turn turning this world into a happy, harmonious and peaceful place to live.

(The writer is a senior journalist; views expressed are personal)



VINOD BEHAL



FIRST COLUMN

FROM RIFTS TO RESOLUTION

It is very important to recognise that the world shall change when I change



BY RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

We all know that conflicts are a part of our everyday life and they form in our close relations, at a societal level & on an international level. Very often we see conflicts leading to aggression, hostility and war. However, conflicts can also be a stepping stone leading to change and wisdom; if we learn to handle them constructively. Since relationship conflicts are inevitable, learning to deal with them healthily is extremely crucial because when a conflict is mismanaged, it can harm the relationship. But when handled respectfully and positively, it provides an opportunity for growth, ultimately strengthening the bond between two people.

Any kind of conflict has two dimensions, internal and external. Internal conflicts arise when the mind and intellect are moving in opposite directions and external conflicts are caused when people or situations confront us and we are not sure how to cope with them. Some people view conflicts as an opportunity for a change and some see it as a natural global phenomenon. But others feel that conflicts are avoidable through better communication but they are frightened of the process. Due to this fear, they hold themselves back and content themselves by making a peace contract or a deal. However, such solutions are very temporary and can be seen as a band-aid solution, which might be effective for the short term only. We all know that conflicts ought to be resolved by use of intellect or reasoning because when conflicts are allowed to develop unhindered without intervention or when the parties involved fuel the



conflict, it often happens that the conflict evolves negatively. And that is why people seek guru's or senior's advice when they are faced with conflicting decisions. But the irony is that with all the information and advice that is available to us, we are unable to resolve matters because there is an acute implementation paralysis. We must not forget about the fact that the best source of judgement is a person's intellect because nobody can understand his feelings, situations and capabilities to deal better than his self.

We may seek advice from an experienced person, however, the sense of joy or security that we feel on hearing good advice is only temporary because it is not real. Just like the feeling of joy derived from thinking of eating something delicious is unreal, real joy comes only after eating the thing. We too have to undergo an experience to make it real. Remember! conflict triggers strong emotions and can lead to hurt feelings, disappointment, and discomfort. When handled in an unhealthy manner, it can cause irreparable rifts, resentments, and break-ups. But when it is resolved healthily, it increases our understanding of one another, builds trust, and strengthens our relationship bonds. A growing body of research has shown spirituality as a great antidote for all kinds of conflicts. Spirituality is like the medicine that heals the root of the disease and not just the symptoms. It is the only means that gives us complete solutions to conflicts. From a spiritual perspective, the most powerful value needed for conflict resolution is 'respect'. This is because most of the people don't wish to negotiate when they have material power. Therefore, there's an urgent need for those to realize and respect their inner powers. Similarly, faith is also a very important element in conflict resolution, it is the key to mutual understanding. For global conflicts, the solution lies with the leadership. The leaders can bring about the much-needed change and make it trickle down the societies. Leaders of today must remember that any kind of change can be termed 'real' only when it affects the grassroots. It is thus very important to recognize that the world shall change when I change. Hence, people should not wait to be told that they need to change, instead, they should realise it themselves.

(The writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist, views are personal)

Rupee's fall against dollar is a wake-up call for India



BRAJESH KUMAR TIWARI

As the rupee weakens and inflation rises, strategic economic reforms to boost domestic manufacturing and reduce import dependency are urgently needed

The rupee hit a record low against the US dollar on August 5th and was trading at 84.09 per dollar. This is the biggest fall ever seen in the rupee and the rupee has reached its all-time low. If the currency of any country is stronger than other currencies, then the country is considered strong. In this globalized world, the value of every country's currency against the US dollar not only impacts the economy of that country but also affects the prices of many things in the market.

Rupee has Fallen 20 Times since Independence: The rupee has fallen almost 20 times since independence; in 1948, 1 dollar was equal to 4 rupees. At that time there was no debt in the country, then when the first five-year plan was implemented in 1951, the government started taking loans from foreign countries and then the value of the rupee also started decreasing continuously. The continuous outflow of foreign funds from financial markets and crude oil has increased pressure on the rupee. The economy around the world has seen two major shocks – the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine, Israel conflict. India is also not untouched by this. Today, the condition of currencies in major markets around the world is weak.

Dollar as King: According to the International Standard Organization list, there are a total of 180 currencies around the world, but among them, the American currency 'Dollar' has become a global currency. The price of most of the things exported is paid in dollars. Today the dollar is involved in 80 percent of the world's trade. The US dollar has the status of a global currency, which is why the value of the rupee against the dollar shows whether the Indian currency is strong or weak.

The falling value of the Rupee affects Common People: When the rupee becomes cheaper against the dollar, it has a direct impact on the economy. The falling value of the rupee brings inflation. Rising prices could accelerate inflation, which is already high. In such a situation, everything from the life of the common man to businessmen and government will be affected by the value of the rupee. The decline in global activity, investors' decision to invest money in safe global markets and increasing tension in global politics are among the main reasons behind the fall of the rupee. Even if we do not take seriously the fall and rise of a few paise in the rupee, they have a big impact on our lives.

The fall in the rupee has a direct impact on the country's economy, due to which import of petroleum products will become expensive and freight transportation will become expensive. This will have a direct impact on the inflation of every essential item. There is a sudden increase in all loans taken in foreign currency and the interest paid on them. Studying abroad will also be expensive.

Why the Rupee is falling: The value of the rupee completely depends on its demand and supply and import and export also have a direct impact. A country that imports more than it exports has a higher demand for dollars. Like India imports more than it exports. India is one of the major importers of crude oil and imports about 80 per cent of the oil, undoubtedly the rising prices of crude oil



IF WE START USING INDIGENOUS GOODS THEN THE COST OF IMPORTING FOREIGN GOODS WILL BE SAVED. FOR INDIA TO BECOME A \$5 TRILLION ECONOMY BY 2025, WE NEED TO EXPORT AT LEAST \$2.5 TRILLION WORTH OF GOODS AND SERVICES, AS EXPORTS CURRENTLY CONTRIBUTE ABOUT 25% TO THE TOTAL GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT

in the international market are the main reason for the fall in the value of the rupee. Things to do for the value of the Rupee: Although the Central Government has assured to make every possible effort to stop the fall of the Rupee, now the Government will have to take concrete and tough steps. If the government tries to change its economy dependent on oil, then we can save a huge part of the foreign reserves and for this, we all should consider alternatives to oil. There is a need to pay attention to electric vehicles. Effective steps will have to be taken to stop the fall in the value of the rupee and keep the foreign exchange reserves rich.

Government Steps: The government is indeed striving to create a competitive, dynamic environment to provide sustained economic growth and enhance its relevance in international trade, PM Gati Shakti, National Single Window Clearance, GIS-mapped Land Bank, Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) etc. The manufacturing sector is expected to benefit from the implementation of recent policies like the PLI scheme. Its results are also visible in some areas, the development of coronavirus vaccines by Indian companies is a vivid example of indigenous talent. India has rapidly made its place in the Ease of Doing Business index released by the World Bank. India's EDB rank was 134th in the year 2014, whereas in the year 2023, it has become 63rd. India is ranked 40th in the Global Competitiveness Report Index published by the Geneva-based World Economic Forum, where it was ranked 60th in 2014. But all these reforms in the ranks have also failed to revive the manufacturing sector and provide the desired support to the Make in India campaign.

Big Time for Make in India: The government will have to move strategically towards controlling imports and increasing exports. This is the time to effectively

implement the 'Make in India' program which even after nine years is far behind in its effective contribution. Despite being the fifth largest economy, India contributes barely 1.6% to world exports. A primary objective of the campaign was to increase the share of the manufacturing sector in the Indian GDP to 25 per cent by 2022 although it has remained between 14 to 16 per cent in the last 9 years.

During the coronavirus pandemic, there was publicity that the companies leaving China were going to come to India, however, most of these companies have shifted their base to Vietnam, Taiwan, Thailand etc. and only a few have come to India. Every year crores of laptops, desktops and servers are sold in India, in which motherboards memory models and chips are being imported. We are dependent on other countries for these components.

Even today, most of the items are not being produced but are being assembled. There is no justification for the import of Harmonized System products (HS-84, nuclear reactors, boilers, mechanical equipment and their parts), and HS-85 (electrical machinery) as most of these items can be produced locally. PLI schemes should be extended to MSMEs and emerging industries to increase exports.

The 15 per cent corporate tax rate for new investment in manufacturing should be extended to all industries including the service sector. The expansion and use of new-age technology applications such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT) and Machine Learning (ML) require tax incentives on capital or operational expenditure. The government should reduce the logistics cost to 6-8% of the GDP which is currently 14%, the good thing is that recently at the G-20 summit, there has been talk of setting up an economic corridor at the international level. The manufacturing industry in

India remains flawed due to the poor infrastructure of the country. Compared to China, which spends 20% of its GDP on infrastructure development, our country spends only 3%. Way Forward: At a time when the value of the rupee has crossed Rs 84 per US dollar, the role of 'Make in India' becomes very important. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), India may face a shortage of about 29 million skilled workers by 2030. The economy needs more than policy window dressing to increase manufacturing activity. We need to understand that just passing bills and organizing investor conferences will not be enough to promote industrialization.

The manufacturing sector is constrained by large amounts of paperwork, be it labour, land or environmental clearances, stringent regulations and policy. Taxation and customs policies are complex to such an extent that it is cheaper to import things like medical equipment rather than manufacture the equipment domestically. India can make itself the next 'global factory' in the future, which is already fed up with China and is looking for alternative manufacturing hubs. There is a need to free the manufacturing sector from cumbersome rules.

Certainly, the fall of the rupee against the dollar can be controlled through such effective steps. Also, if we start using indigenous goods then the cost of importing foreign goods will be saved. For India to become a \$5 trillion economy by 2025, we need to export at least \$2.5 trillion worth of goods and services, as exports currently contribute about 25% to the total gross domestic product (GDP). India has no time to rest. We have come a long way, but the journey is not over yet.

(The writer is an associate professor at JNU, New Delhi; views are personal)

The strength of sisterhood: How women's circles empower and change lives

Women groups foster empowerment, drive economic progress, and challenge societal stereotypes, proving that together, women can achieve anything

Humans are inherently social beings, and women, in particular, thrive on social connections. This insight struck me during a recent celebration of Hariyali Teej, a Hindu festival dedicated to women. On this day, women don traditional attire, enjoy special foods, and revel in music, reflecting the profound significance of women's gatherings not only provide joy but also reinforce the unique strength women possess. This power is deeply rooted in their ability to manage and share energy, which flourishes through communal interactions. Women need to connect with their feminine essence and the best way to nurture this strength is by bonding with other women. Such connections are crucial for self-discovery and empowerment. The concept of Shine Theory, coined by journalist Ann Friedman and businesswoman Aminatou Sow, encapsulates this idea: exceptional women support each other to shine even brighter.



SUGANDHA NAGAR

Historically, women have passed wisdom and experience through communal practices, whether through household chores or cultural rituals. For example, traditional activities like grinding spices together in Indian families or crafting quilts in Alice Walker's 'The Color Purple' symbolize unity and shared strength.

Everyday interactions among women not only ease the burden of tasks but also preserve cultural traditions and create a space for emotional exchange. These interactions form a vessel of healing and transformation, extending beyond personal growth to effecting positive change in their communities. In modern settings, such as neighborhood gatherings or

workplace environments, the same principles apply. Despite the often harsh competitive dynamics driven by stereotypes, supportive women's circles offer a vital source of relief and rejuvenation. Unfortunately, societal narratives and media perpetuate the myth that women are inherently competitive and unhelpful to one another. This stereotype undermines the historical practices of women uplifting each other and fosters unhealthy rivalry. Recent initiatives aim to counteract these negative dynamics by promoting women's economic empowerment. The Union Budget for 2024-25 proposes establishing working women hostels and supporting women-led self-help groups (SHGs). These



measures are designed to enhance financial stability and provide economic opportunities for women, particularly in rural areas. The goal is to transform women into 'Lakshmi Didi's' or those with an annual income exceeding INR 1,00,000, while also encouraging sustainable livelihoods and

improved living standards. The emphasis on SHGs highlights the importance of collective unity and mutual support among women. These groups not only provide economic benefits but also foster a strong network of women who support each other's growth and success. By encouraging more women to

engage in such supportive environments, we can pave the way for greater economic prosperity and gender equality. Sheryl Sandberg, former COO of Meta Platforms, emphasizes the power of women supporting women in her book, 'Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead'. She dispels the myth that women don't support each other, arguing that collaboration among women is key to achieving remarkable success. Successful women often have the backing of other women who help them reach their goals.

To overcome systemic discrimination and internalized biases, women must challenge the societal pressures that pit them against each

other. By rejecting stereotypes and fostering genuine support, women can create spaces where they feel safe to express themselves, show vulnerability, and receive the support they need.

Ultimately, female friendships and communal support not only inspire personal and spiritual growth but also enhance collective strength and performance. Women's circles provide a crucial platform for sharing energy, ideas, and support, enabling women to achieve their full potential and contribute positively to their communities.

(The author is a writer, social worker, culture enthusiast, and former UN employee; views are personal)

Iran rejects European leaders' call to refrain from retaliation

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Iran rejected a call Tuesday by three European countries urging it to refrain from any retaliatory attacks that would further escalate regional tensions. Iran calls it an "excessive request." The leaders of Britain, France and Germany in a joint statement Monday asked Iran and its allies to refrain from retaliation for the killing of Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran last month. Iran has blamed Israel.

The European leaders also endorsed the latest push by mediators Qatar, Egypt and the United States to broker an agreement to end the Israel-Hamas war. Talks are expected to resume Thursday. And they called for the return of scores of hostages held by Hamas and the "unfettered" delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza.

Mediators have spent months trying to get the sides to agree to a three-phase plan in which Hamas would release the remaining hostages captured in its October 7 attack in exchange for Palestinians imprisoned by Israel, and Israel would withdraw from Gaza.

After more than 10 months of fighting, the Palestinian death toll is nearing 40,000 in Gaza, according to the Health Ministry there.

Meanwhile, Israel's far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir visited Jerusalem's most sensitive holy site Tuesday, in a pilgrimage seen by Muslims as provocative as regional tensions soar.

Tensions over the compound have fueled rounds of violence before. Ben-Gvir, an ultranationalist settler leader, last visited the compound in July, which the Palestinian Foreign Ministry condemned as a "provocative intrusion" that endangered the fragile status quo regarding the Jerusalem compound.

Ben-Gvir visited the flashpoint



site Tuesday morning as Jews marked Tisha B'Av, a day of mourning commemorating the destruction of the biblical Temples. Jews revere the site as the Temple Mount, believed to be the location of the First and Second Temples, and it is a holy site for Muslims as Haram al-Sharif or the Noble Sanctuary.

The visit elicited a rebuke from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who said prayers there were a "deviation" from decades-old understandings at the site that prohibit Jewish worship there.

In video released by his office, Ben-Gvir was seen strolling through the compound singing, "The people of Israel live!" while accompanied by dozens of supporters. One supporter yelled a Jewish prayer, which is not permitted under the longstanding arrangement in place at the site meant to ease regional tensions. Ben-Gvir has said he is changing the policy and, despite previous assurances to the contrary by Netanyahu, he repeated the stance Tuesday, adding that "very large progress" had been made to allow Jewish prayer at the site. Netanyahu said there was no change to the policy.

Israeli strikes kill at least 16

AP ■ DEIR AL-BALAH

Israeli strikes in Gaza killed at least 16 Palestinians, including four women and seven children, and orphaned another four children, Palestinian medical officials said Tuesday.

Ten people were killed in a strike late Monday on a house near the southern city of Khan Younis, where Israel ordered mass evacuations in recent days, saying it must act against Palestinian militants.

Nasser Hospital, where the bodies were brought, said another four children, including a 3-month-old infant, were wounded. The infant's parents and their other five children were among those killed.

The parents of the other three wounded children were also killed, according to the hospital's list of casualties.

An Associated Press journalist counted the bodies.

A separate strike near Deir al-Balah in central Gaza killed a woman and her twin babies, who were four days old, and their grandmother. Another strike in central Gaza killed a man and his nephew.

An Associated Press reporter counted the bodies at the nearby Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital and spoke to the father of the twins, who had planned to register their birth on Tuesday.

Israel says it tries to avoid harming civilians and blames their deaths on Hamas because its fighters operate in residential areas. The military rarely comments on individual strikes, which often kill women and children.



Hindus in Bangladesh hold a rally condemning violence against them and other religious groups in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on Monday.

'Resignations of B'desh officials are legal'

AP ■ DHAKA

The head of Bangladesh's interim government, Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, says the high-profile resignations of authorities close to ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina are legal after student leaders who organised protests against Hasina's government issued ultimatums for them to quit.

"Legally ... all the steps were taken," Yunus, 83, told a group of journalists Sunday night.

The country's chief justice, five justices and central bank governor have all resigned in the past few days, part of a dramatic transformation after weeks of protests against a quota system for government jobs turned into a mass uprising.

Hasina resigned and fled to India last week.

Yunus said a key priority of the interim government is to restore the independence of

the judiciary. He called former chief justice Obaidul Hassan "just a hangman."

Syed Rezaat Ahmed was appointed the new chief justice on Sunday after his name was proposed by student leaders of the protests.

Students vow to cleanse the political system of Hasina's rule, which they have denounced as autocratic. More than 300 people, including students and police officers, were killed in the weeks of violence.

Yunus took over on Thursday after student leaders reached out. He said the students told him he was the only one they could trust.

He said he accepted "because these are the guys who broke the local government," describing it as a "student-led revolution."

"It's not my dream, it's their dream. So I'm kind of helping them to make it come true," Yunus said.

The interim government is expected to announce a new election, but it is not clear when it will be held.

Yunus had been a longtime critic of Hasina and her government.

An economist and banker by profession and known as the "banker to the poorest of the poor," he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 for pioneering the use of micro-credit to help impoverished people, particularly women.

Yunus ran into trouble with Hasina in 2008, when her administration launched a series of investigations into him and his Grameen Bank. He was put on trial in 2013 on charges of receiving money without government permission, including his Nobel Prize and royalties from a book.

Yunus has denied the allegations, and his supporters say he was targeted because of his frosty relations with Hasina.

Khaleda Zia's BNP to hold sit-in across Bangladesh

PTI ■ DHAKA

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party of former prime minister Khaleda Zia will hold sit-in programmes in front of its party offices across the country on Wednesday and Thursday, demanding a trial be conducted against ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina for "genocide."

Bangladesh Nationalist Party's (BNP) joint secretary general Ruhul Kabir Rizvi announced the programme on Tuesday and said that a prayer session will be held to commemorate Khaleda Zia's 79th birthday on Friday and to pray for those killed in the protest, The Dhaka Tribune reported.

Special prayers have been arranged in Hindu temples and other places of worship, the report said.

Rizvi urged all leaders and activists of the BNP and its affiliated organisations to participate in these programmes.

Over 230 people were killed in Bangladesh in the incidents of violence that erupted across the country following the fall of the Hasina government on August 5, taking the death toll to 560 since the anti-quota protests first started in mid-July.

An interim government was formed after the fall of the Hasina-led government, and its Chief Adviser, 84-year-old Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, announced the portfolios of his 16-member council of advisors last week.

On Monday, seven political parties, including the Awami League's arch-rival BNP, met Yunus separately and said the interim government could take the time necessary to create a conducive environment for holding free and fair elections, The Daily Star newspaper reported.

Family calls for transparency after heatstroke death of Baltimore trash collector

PTI ■ BALTIMORE

The family of a Baltimore man who died of heatstroke while collecting trash for the city's public works agency is demanding increased transparency from local officials following his death.

The relatives held a news conference Monday and called on the Baltimore City Council to conduct a series of investigative hearings and shed light on how the otherwise healthy Ronald Silver II succumbed to heat-related illness at work.

"Ronnie Silver's death is an absolutely preventable tragedy. It should never have happened," said Thiru Vignarajah, an attorney representing the family. "And it was only because of a failure to respect the basic dignity and humanity of a trashman that this family had to hold funeral services for Ronnie Silver II on Friday."

A copy of Silver's offer letter from the Baltimore Department of Public Works shows he started the job last fall and was making about \$18 an hour. Vignarajah said the letter

was a source of pride for Silver, who was working to help support his five children and fiancée.

Silver, 36, died Aug. 2 as temperatures in the Baltimore area climbed to about 100 degrees (38 Celsius) and city officials issued a Code Red heat advisory. Local media outlets reported that Silver rang the doorbell of a northeast Baltimore resident that afternoon asking for help. The person who answered the door called 911 on his behalf.

Department of Public Works officials have declined to answer questions about the events leading up to Silver's death, including whether supervisors were notified about his condition earlier in the shift.

Critics say it was a tragic result of longstanding problems within the agency, including an abusive culture perpetuated by supervisors and a lack of concern for basic health and safety measures. Earlier this summer, the city's inspector general released a report saying that some agency employees —



including at the solid waste yard where Silver reported to work — didn't have adequate access to water, ice, air conditioning and fans to help them complete their trash cleanup routes in intense summer heat.

In response to those findings, agency leaders promised to address the issue by properly maintaining ice machines, repairing broken air conditioners in their trash trucks, handing out Gatorade and giving employees an alternative to their traditional uniforms on hot days, among other changes.

The agency also announced last week that it would provide employees with mandatory heat safety training, including "recognizing the signs and symptoms of heat stroke and related illnesses."

Vignarajah called those efforts "a day late and a dollar short." He said the Silver family hopes their loss will be a catalyst for change and "the reason that this never happens again," especially as record-shattering heat waves are becoming increasingly common worldwide.

"We will not let the world forget Ronald Silver II," his aunt Renee Meredith said during the news conference. "Ronnie, we miss you and love you. And by the time we're done, every worker will be safer because of the mark you have left."

Greece on high alert as wildfire rages on

AP ■ ATHENS

A major wildfire has raged out of control in the northern suburbs of Athens, triggering evacuations of several areas as swirling winds hampered the efforts of hundreds of firefighters and dozens of water-dropping planes.

The massive, fast-moving blaze on Monday sent flames to heights of over 25 metres (80 feet) as Greece sought assistance from other countries, activating Europe's mutual civil protection mechanism.

The fire began Sunday afternoon about 35 kilometres (22 miles) northeast of Athens, burning several homes and businesses and sending a blanket of smoke and ash over the city centre. Power cuts hit parts of the Greek capital and affected traffic lights at major central junctions. Authorities said 15 people were injured, mostly due to smoke inhalation, as the blaze reached outlying sections of a suburb about 15 kilometres (9 miles) from the city centre.

Greece's National Observatory said late Monday that satellite images show the blaze has affected about 10,000 hectares (25,000 acres). France would provide a heli-



copter, Italy two water-dropping planes and the Czech Republic 75 firefighters and 25 vehicles, officials said, while Serbia and Romania were also readying aid. Neighbouring Turkey's Foreign Ministry said the country would dispatch two firefighting planes and a helicopter, while Spain was also finalising reinforcements to send to Greece.

The wildfire raced through pine forests left tinder-dry by repeated heat waves this summer. June and July were the hottest months ever recorded

in Greece, which also recorded its warmest winter ever. An early start of the fire season this year has strained Greece's firefighting force.

"Firefighters have been working at full tilt for months," said Nikos Lavranos, head of Greece's main firefighters' union. "They are exhausted."

Climate Crisis and Civil Protection Minister Vassilis Kikilias said Monday it was "an exceptionally dangerous fire, which we have been fighting for more than 20 hours under dramatic circumstances." Some

areas that were burning on a mountain northeast of Athens were particularly hard to reach, he added.

Three hospitals, including a children's hospital, two monasteries and a children's home were evacuated on Monday afternoon. Cellphones in the area got at least 30 push alerts warning people to flee.

"The wind would go in one direction and then in the other," said Spyros Gorilas, a resident of the area of Dionisi who hosed down his house with water to save it from the flames.

Harris more incompetent than Biden, Trump tells Musk

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris is a "third-rate phoney candidate" and "more incompetent" than her boss President Joe Biden, her Republican rival in the November election, Donald Trump, has said.

In a much-anticipated audio-only interview with billionaire tech magnate Elon Musk on Monday on his social media platform X which was delayed by more than 40 minutes due to technical difficulties, the 78-year-old former president said, "She is a radical left lunatic," as he alleged that "she wants to be more Trump than Trump."

Launching a scathing attack on the 59-year-old US Vice President, Trump described Harris as a "third-rate phoney candidate." He reiterated his allegation that Biden being replaced by Harris as a presidential candidate of the Democratic party was a coup. Musk agreed with the former president and said, "Her

behaviour is far left." "She (Harris) had three and a half years, and by the way, they have another five months that they can do something. But they won't do anything. It's all talk," Trump said.

"She's incompetent, and he (Biden) is incompetent. And frankly, I think that she's more incompetent than he is, and that's saying something because he's not too good," he said. Trump would face Harris in the general elections on November 5.

He accused Harris of having failed miserably on border security as hundreds and thousands of people entered the country illegally.

Asserting that he is in favour of legal immigration, Trump said it is illegal immigration that he is against.

"She is such a liar," Trump alleged on X, previously known as Twitter, on the day when he returned to the social media platform.

Over a million people listened to the much-awaited

audio-only conversation, which started more than 40 minutes late because of technical issues.

"There appears to be a massive DDOS (distributed denial-of-service) attack on X. Working on shutting it down. Worst case, we will proceed with a smaller number of live listeners and post the conversation later," Musk said in a post on X.

During the interview, both Musk and Trump agreed that the crime rate has increased in the US because of the open border policy of the Biden-Harris Administration.

"We're gonna have the largest deportation in the history of this country. And we have no choice," said the former president. Responding to a question from Musk, Trump also slammed Biden's foreign policy and applauded Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

"I got along well with them," he said, claiming there would

have been no war if he was the president of the United States.

Meanwhile, Musk stressed that people respond to strength and not weakness and said, "We have some really bad people... we have some really bad people, and I say they are more dangerous than Russia and China."

The biggest threat, he said, is not climate change but nuclear warming.

The conversation between Trump and Musk started with the failed assassination attempt on the former president in Butler, Pennsylvania, on July 13.

"It's very much, I say, an act of God. It's a miracle that it happened," Trump said.

Commenting on the country's economy, he said the US is having the worst inflation in 100 years. Trump accused the Biden-Harris administration of the worsening of the US economy.

"We need to reduce our government spending. ... We need, like a government effi-

ciency commission," Musk said.

Trump also told Musk, the 53-year-old CEO of Tesla, that he was an "interesting character."

During the conversation, Trump described China as a primary competitor in Artificial Intelligence and announced that he would close down the Department of Education and move them to the states. In this, he said he would need Musk's help.

Trump, who has 88.8 million followers on X, had 10 posts on the social media platform, each of which has been viewed millions of times.

Some of his posts had 34 million impressions.

His first post, "Are you better off now than you were when I was president? Our economy is shattered. Our border has been erased. We're a nation in decline. Make the American Dream AFFORDABLE again. Make America SAFE again. Make America GREAT Again!" had 25 million impressions.

FBI probing Trump campaign charge of hacking by Iran

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The FBI is investigating allegations that sensitive documents from Donald Trump's presidential campaign were stolen in a cyber intrusion, as well as attempts to gain access to Vice President Kamala Harris' campaign, days after the Trump campaign declared it had been hacked by Iran.

The FBI released a brief statement on the Trump matter reading, "We can confirm the FBI is investigating this matter."

The Trump campaign provided no specific evidence of Iran's involvement, but the claim came shortly after Microsoft issued a report detailing foreign agents' attempts to interfere in the US election in 2024. The report cited an instance of an Iranian military intelligence unit in June sending "a spear-phishing email to a high-ranking official of a presidential campaign from a compromised email account of a

former senior advisor." Two people familiar with the matter said the Biden-Harris campaign was also targeted in the suspected Iranian cyber intrusion that is under FBI investigation.

The people spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to discuss the details of the investigation.

Politico reported Saturday that it began receiving emails on July 22 from an anonymous account.

The source — an AOL email account identified only as "Robert" — passed along what appeared to be a research dossier the campaign had apparently done on the Republican vice presidential nominee, Ohio Sen. JD Vance. The document was dated February 23, almost five months before Trump selected Vance as his running mate.

"These documents were obtained illegally" and "intended to interfere with the 2024 election and sow chaos throughout our Democratic process," Trump

campaign spokesperson Steven Cheung said. At least three staffers in the Biden-Harris campaign were targeted with phishing emails, but investigators have uncovered no evidence the attempt was successful, one of the people said. The attempts came before President Joe Biden dropped out of the race. The FBI began investigating that cyber incident in June and intelligence officials believe Iran was behind the attempts, that person said.

Officials have also been in touch with tech companies in recent months about the possibility that people linked to the Trump and Biden-Harris campaigns were being targeted through email. Harris' campaign said in a statement, "Our campaign vigilantly monitors and protects against cyber threats, and we are not aware of any security breaches of our systems." It declined to address whether it had identified any state-based intrusion attempts.

Pak ruling coalition hails ex-ISI chief's impending court-martial

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD
Pakistan's ruling coalition has hailed the arrest of former ISI chief Lt Gen (retd.) Faiz Hameed in connection with a housing scheme scandal but jailed former premier Imran Khan's party decided to stay neutral and termed it the army's "internal matter". Hameed served as the director general of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) from 2019 to 2021, when Khan was prime minister and was accused of meddling in political affairs at his behest. According to the army, he was arrested on Monday by military authorities and court martial proceedings were initiated against him under provisions of the Pakistan Army Act for alleged misuse of authority. His arrest followed a probe into complaints against him by the owner of Top City Housing Society over an alleged raid at his house. Asserting that the military's

actions were "internal", former premier Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party chairman, Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, said the army is a disciplined and organised institution with its own procedures for dealing with both serving and retired officers, the Dawn newspaper reported. However, members of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), including Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, Senator Irfan Siddiqui, Senator Afnan, Rana Sanaullah as well as Pakistan People Party (PPP) leader Qamar Zaman Kaira, were more open in their views on the move, with Tarar calling it a "right decision". "Action against Faiz Hameed would have been taken on the basis of investigation," the minister said. Pointing out that only a brief announcement had been made by the military spokesman about the ex-ISI DG, Senator Siddiqui said, "When investigation will go forward, his



(Hameed's) political meddling will also be proved." Siddique quoted PTI founder Khan as saying that Hameed had supported his party inside Parliament by getting legislation passed and meeting the required number of members in the National Assembly. He said Hameed also remained involved in the general elections by backing the PTI. The senator said the former ISI chief had controlled the media and politicians and tried to control the judiciary as well.

Senior PML-N leader Sanaullah alleged that Hameed was involved in "political meddling" and on his instruction, the Faizabad sit-in was staged by a religious group, choking the main arteries of the federal capital for weeks. Sanaullah said action against him was taken in the light of the Supreme Court's order in the private housing scheme, Top City, whose owner filed a petition in the apex court last year, accusing Hameed of misusing his authority. The owner stated in the petition that on May 12, 2017, at the behest of Gen Hameed, ISI officials raided the top city office and his house and seized valuables, including gold, diamonds and money. Hailing the military's internal accountability system, PPP leader Qamar Zaman Kaira said an inquiry had confirmed multiple violations by Hameed that prompted the initiation of disciplinary proceedings under the Pakistan Army Act.

Without reforms, UNSC 'ill-equipped' to address global challenges: G4 nations

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

A reform of the UN Security Council that does not address the lack of representation, particularly in the permanent category, would only "exacerbate" the current imbalances in its composition and render it "ill-equipped" to address current global challenges, India has said on behalf of the G4 countries. "Recent global geopolitical events have clearly shown that the UN Security Council is unable to deliver on its primary responsibilities to safeguard international peace and security when the world needs it the most," Chargé d'Affaires and Deputy Permanent Representative of India to the UN Ambassador R Ravindra said on Monday. He was delivering a statement on behalf of the G4 countries — Brazil, Germany, Japan and India — at the UNSC High-Level Debate on 'Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Addressing the Historical

Injustice and enhancing Africa's effective representation in the UNSC. The realities of 1945, when the Council was established, have long been superseded by current geopolitical realities, with the need for change being felt across the board, Ravindra said ahead of next month's annual high-level UN General Assembly session which world leaders will attend. He noted that for the G4, the primary reason for the underperformance of the critical UN Security Council remains the non-representation of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the under-representation of Asia Pacific in the permanent category. "It is the G4's firm belief, shared we believe by Africa and other groups, that any reform of the Council that does not address the lack of representation, particularly in the permanent category, would only exacerbate the current imbalances in the Council's composition and render it ill-

equipped to address today's international challenges," he said. The 15-nation UNSC comprises five permanent, veto-wielding members — China, France, Russia, the UK and the US — and 10 non-permanent members, without veto powers, who are elected for two-year terms. Underlining that the G4 has "walked the talk" when it comes to correcting historical injustices done to Africa, Ravindra said the group's model of UNSC reforms has clearly proposed that the Security Council membership increase from the current 15 to 25-26 by adding six permanent and four or five non-permanent members. Among the six new permanent members, two each are proposed to be from African States and Asia Pacific states, one from Latin American and Caribbean states, and one from West European and Other States. "On rights and privileges associated with permanent memberships, such as the veto, we also

support the Common African Position that as long as it exists, it should be available to all permanent members, both new and old alike," Ravindra said. Ravindra said that the G4 is convinced that African representation in permanent and non-permanent categories will be an indispensable part of UNSC reform for a more representative and effective Council. The group believes it is "inconceivable" that Africa, which constitutes over 70 per cent of the UNSC's agenda items under discussion, does not get a permanent voice at the horse-shoe table. "We as G4 continue to support fully these legitimate demands and aspirations from the people of Africa," he said, adding that the group's relationship with Africa is anchored in trust and mutual respect, and is focused on ensuring that Africa finds its "rightful" place in a new age of reformed multilateralism.

Pak's anti-terrorism court rejects bail plea of Bushra Bibi in 12 cases

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

An anti-terrorism court in Pakistan has rejected the bail application of Bushra Bibi, the wife of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan, in 12 cases related to the May 9 violence of last year which erupted when the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder was arrested in an alleged corruption case. Anti-terrorism court (ATC) Rawalpindi Judge Malik Ejaz Asif on Monday after hearing the plea of Bushra Bibi, 49, said that a thorough investigation was required in her case and subsequently dismissed the bail application. The judge also ordered that the investigation in her case should be completed in seven days. Bibi was seeking bail in FIRs registered in various police stations in Rawalpindi. Khan and Bushra were present in the court along with dozens of other accused who have been named as suspects in the May 9 violence that left more than 100 people dead. The violence started after the Pakistan Rangers arrested Khan inside the premises of the Islamabad High Court in a corruption case. The PTI supporters allegedly targeted civil and military instal-



lations, including the residence of the Pakistan Army's IV Corps Commander in Lahore and the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi, across the country following Khan's arrest. The court later adjourned the hearing of the May 9 cases until August 22. Meanwhile, Islamabad High Court (IHC) Justice Minagul Hassan Aurangzeb referred to the IHC Chief Justice a petition seeking details of the cases against the wife of the former prime minister. The court also asked the superintendent of Adiala Jail to decide on the complaints of Bibi against the administration strictly following the jail manual. Khan, 71, has been imprisoned at Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail for more than a year now upon his conviction in multiple cases. Bushra is also jailed along with

him. Khan faces several cases and has been convicted in a few. Though the former-cricketer-turned-politician had secured bail or his conviction was set aside, he has not been released. Talking to journalists in Adiala jail while appearing for a hearing in a case of alleged corruption last week, Khan warned that the incumbent government led by Shehbaz Sharif would not last for more than two months. During his conversation with the media, he also referred to the comments he made earlier regarding the May 9 riots. He said that a wrong perception was created and that he had sought an unconditional apology. He also clarified that he would apologise if the PTI activists were found involved in the violent protests. He said that his party wanted justice in the May 9 events, elaborating on his offer to initiate dialogue, and adding that he made the offer to hold talks only for the sake of the country. "I will not strike any deal no matter how many cases they register against us," he said, adding that a deal is sought by those who had committed any wrongdoing. He also clarified that he has not received any offer for negotiations so far.

Teenager stabs 5 in Turkiye, held by cops

AP ■ ANKARA

A teenager wearing a helmet and bulletproof vest randomly stabbed five people at an open-air cafe in northwest Turkiye before being detained by police, officials and media reports said Tuesday. The 18-year-old, identified as Arda K., broadcast Monday's knife attack on social media through a camera attached to his vest, HaberTurk television reported. The victims were people relaxing after prayers at a mosque in Eskisehir, some 230 kilometres west of the capital, Ankara. The teenager was detained following a police chase, according to the Eskisehir governor's office. The five wounded individuals were hospitalised and two of them were in serious condition, according to the state-run Anadolu Agency. The assailant was also carrying an ax but did not appear to have used it. Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said an investigation had begun, while HaberTurk and other media reported the assailant is believed to have been influenced by a video game.

Philippines protests Chinese flares in path of patrol plane

AP ■ MANILA

The Philippine government said Tuesday it has filed a diplomatic protest against Beijing after Chinese jets flew dangerously close and fired a volley of flares in the path of a Philippine air force patrol plane over a disputed shoal in the South China Sea. The Chinese air force jets' hostile actions against the Philippine military's NC-212i light transport plane Thursday over the Scarborough Shoal was the first such aerial encounter since high-seas hostilities between Beijing and Manila in the busy seaway started to flare last year. Philippine military chief Gen. Romeo Brawner Jr. did not report any injuries or damage but condemned the Chinese actions, which he said could have had tragic consequences.

"If the flares came into contact with our aircraft, these could have been blown into the propeller or the intake or burned our plane," Brawner told reporters. "It was very dangerous." Department of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Teresita Daza said without elaborating that a diplomatic protest has been

transmitted to China. Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said over the weekend that the actions by the Chinese air force jets were "unjustified, illegal and reckless." "We call on the government of the People's Republic of China to cease all forms of provocative and hazardous

acts that could undermine the safety of Filipino military and civilian personnel in the waters or in the skies, destabilise regional peace, and erode the trust and confidence of the international community in the PRC," a Philippine government task force overseeing the South China Sea said Monday.

PARADIPPORT AUTHORITY
e-Tender Call Notice No. EM/PED-21/2024
Date: 09/08/2024
No. EM/PED/TECH-30/2023/269
Name of the work: Supply, Installation and Commissioning of 23 Nos. High Mast Lighting Tower inside the Port prohibited area. Estimated cost: Rs.2,91,96,112/- . Last date & time of submission of bid: dt.30/08/2024 up to 18:00 Hrs. Refer our website for details <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>. Sd/- Executive Engineer (E), PED-1 PPA/PR/28/2024-2025 dtd.12.08.2024

Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar
Tender Notice Reference No.GNDU/Gen/56-68/2024
The Department of G.N.D.U. Amritsar invites online bids for the following:

Sr. No.	Item	Quantity
1	Allotment of Canteens	5
2	Allotment of Shops	8

Closing Date & Time: 23-08-2024 at 5:00 P.M.
For details log onto www.eproc.punjab.gov.in
Note: Any corrigendum(s) to the tender notice shall be published on the above website only.
Assistant Registrar (General)
Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar
NA/12/24732/2023/36618 Dated CHD - 8/13/2024

Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot
Faridkot Ph. 01639-256232, 256236
Corrigendum
Dated: 13-08-2024
In continuation to advertisement no. BFU-24/17 published in leading newspaper on 20/07/2024 to the recruitment of Joint Director (UCER)-01, Security Officer-01, Librarian Gr-I-01, Assistant Controller (F&A)-01, In-charge Central Registration Department-01, Medical Record Officer-02, Technical Supervisor (Blood Bank)-01, Radiology Supervisor-01 and Biochemist-03 under Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot. The portal was not started due to administrative reason. Now, the revised date of online application form is w.e.f 14/08/2024 to 03/09/2024.
Terms and conditions will remain same as per advertisement No. BFU-24/17.
Sd/ Registrar
nil/12/21/2023/36625 Dated CHD :- 8/13/2024

Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot
Faridkot Ph. 01639-256232, 256236
Advt. No. BFU-24/18
Vacancies
Online applications are invited w.e.f. 14-08-2024 to 03-09-2024 from eligible candidates through University website i.e. www.bfuhhs.ac.in to the recruitment of Casualty Medical Officer (EMO)-05 & Lady Medical Officer-01 at constituent colleges/institutes of Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot (Guru Gobind Singh Medical College & Hospital, Faridkot).
For Application form, fee, detail of posts/updates/ other terms & conditions, visit university website: www.bfuhhs.ac.in.
Sd/- Registrar
nil/12/21/2023/36627 Dated CHD :- 8/13/2024

Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot
ADMISSION NOTICE -M.Sc. (Anatomy), M.Sc. (Physiology), M.Sc. (Biochemistry), Session 2024
Online Applications are invited available on University website for admission to M.Sc. in Anatomy, Physiology and Biochemistry Courses from 16.08.2024 to 31.08.2024 alongwith requisite fee through University Payment Gateway. Counseling will be held on 04.09.2023 (11:00P M) in Senate Hall, BFUHS, Faridkot. The selected candidates shall pay the tuition fee on the spot at the counseling venue in the shape of Bank Demand Draft in favor of Registrar, BFUHS, payable in Faridkot.
ADMISSION NOTICE for Post Basic Diploma in Oncology Nursing, and Neonatal Nursing-2024
Online applications are invited w.e.f 14.08.2024 to 24.08.2024 for admission to Post Basic Diploma in Oncology Nursing and Neonatal Nursing courses at Homi Bhabha Cancer Hospital, Sangrur and University College of Nursing, Faridkot alongwith requisite fee through University Payment Gateway. Physical Counseling will be held on 02.09.2024 (12:00 noon) at University of College of Nursing, Faridkot. The selected candidates shall pay the tuition fee on the spot at the counseling venue in the shape of Bank Demand Draft in favor of Registrar, BFUHS, payable in Faridkot.

Admission Notice for PMNET (M.Sc.Nursing) Courses, session 2023
Online applications are invited for admission in all the Govt./ University/ Private colleges of Punjab through website w.e.f 14.08.2024 to 20.08.2024. The PMNET-2024 Computer Based Entrance Test for admission to M.Sc. Nursing course will be conducted on 02-09-2024. The date of counseling shall be notified on University website.
Note:- Any Notification/Corrigendum/Amendment by Govt. of Punjab will be followed. For all schedule/online counseling/details & updates visit us at www.bfuhhs.ac.in regularly.
Registrar
nil/12/12/2023/36628 Dated CHD :- 8/13/2024

Yemen's Houthis seize UNHR office in Sanaa

AP ■ CAIRO

Yemen's Houthi rebels stormed the headquarters of the United Nations Human Rights Office in the capital, Sanaa, seizing documents, furniture and vehicles, a senior UN official said Tuesday. The seizure was the latest move in a crackdown by the Houthis on people working with the UN, aid agencies and foreign embassies. The crackdown comes as the Iranian-backed rebels have been targeting shipping through-out the Red Sea corridor over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip. The rebels took over the UN Human Rights Office's premises in Sanaa on August 3, after forcing UN Yemeni workers to hand over belongings, including documents, furniture and vehicles, UN Human Rights Chief Volker Turk said in a statement. "Ansar Allah forces must leave the premises and return all assets and belongings immediately," Turk said, using the official name of the Houthis. A spokesman for the Houthis didn't return phone calls and messages requesting comment.

The UN's Human Rights Office said it had suspended the office's operations in Sanaa and other Yemeni areas controlled by the Houthis following the June crackdown campaign. But it still operates in the parts of Yemen controlled by the internationally recognized government. In June, the Houthis detained more than 60 people working with the UN and other NGOs, according to the UN Human Rights Office. Among the detainees were six workers with the Human Rights Office, who joined two of their colleagues detained by the Houthis in November 2021 and August 2023, it said. Days after the arrest campaign, the rebels said they had arrested members of what they called an "American-Israeli spy network." The Houthis issued what they purported to be videotaped confessions by 10 Yemenis, several of whom said they were recruited by the US Embassy in Yemen. The UN Human Rights Office said one of its staffers who was detained earlier appeared in a video in which he was forced to confess to allegations, including of espionage, the office said. The Houthis' claims could not be independently verified.

Houthi rebels target ship in Red Sea again

AP ■ DUBAI

A ship in the Red Sea was targeted in a third by Yemen's Houthi rebels Tuesday in their campaign of assaults over the Israel-Hamas war, officials said. The attacks come as the rebels' main sponsor, Iran, weighs possible retaliation against Israel over the assassination of Hamas official Ismail Haniyeh in July, which has renewed fears of a wider regional war in the Middle East. Already, the Houthi assaults have disrupted the USD 1 trillion annual flow of goods through the maritime route crucial to trade among Asia, Europe and the Middle East, while also sparking the most intense combat for the US Navy since World War II. The ship was first attacked around 115 kilometers (70 miles) south of the Houthi-held port city of Hodeida, the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center said. An explosive was detonated near the ship, then a small vessel "acting suspiciously" flashed a light near the ship and came close, actions that were followed by a second blast, the UKMTO said.

US-backed Syrian fighters kill 18 pro-govt gunmen in rare attack

AP ■ QAMISHLI

US-backed Syrian fighters carried out a rare attack in eastern Syria, striking at three posts manned by pro-government gunmen and claiming that they killed 18 of them in a major escalation near the border with Iraq. The renewed clashes in Syria's eastern oil-rich province of Deir el-Zour on Monday came amid high tensions in the region following last month's killings of a top commander of

Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group in Beirut and the political leader of the Palestinian Hamas group in Iran. Israel was blamed for both attacks, and Iran and Hezbollah have vowed to retaliate. The Syrian government, which is backed by Russia and Iran, has vowed for years to liberate eastern Syria from US forces who have been deployed in the area since 2015 to help fight the Islamic State group. Monday's attack by members of the Arab-led Deir el-Zour

Military Council — part of the US-backed and Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces — came days after clashes and shelling between the SDF and pro-government gunmen left more than a dozen people dead. The Deir el-Zour Military Council said the new attack was in retaliation for government forces' shelling the villages of Dahla and Jdaidet Bakkrara last week that left at least 11 civilians dead. The group said it attacked the area where the

Tapir Constructions Limited
(CIN: U70200DL2014PLC267441)
Extract of Unaudited Financial Results for the quarter ended 30 June 2024
(₹ in Millions)

Particulars	Quarter ended 30 June 2024 (Unaudited)	Corresponding Quarter ended 30 June 2023 (Unaudited)	Previous year ended 31 March 2024 (Audited)
Total Income from Operations	1.7	6.1	24.8
Net (Loss) / Profit for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	(22.8)	(7.3)	(71.5)
Net (Loss) / Profit for the period before Tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	(22.8)	(7.3)	(71.5)
Net (Loss) / Profit for the period after Tax, (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	(22.8)	(7.3)	(71.5)
Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising (Loss) / Profit for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax))	(22.8)	(7.3)	(72.0)
Paid up Equity Share Capital	0.5	0.5	0.5
Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve)	(2,140.3)	(2,052.7)	(2,117.5)
Securities Premium Account	-	-	-
Net Worth	(2,139.8)	(2,052.2)	(2,117.0)
Paid up Debt Capital / Outstanding Debt	3,569.2	3,349.3	3,540.5
Outstanding redemption preference share	-	-	-
Debt Equity Ratio	(1.70)	(1.63)	(1.70)
Earnings per Share (EPS) (Face value Per Share ₹ 10 each)	-	-	-
- Basic (Amount in ₹)	(456.68)	(145.46)	(1,430.52)
- Diluted (Amount in ₹)	(456.68)	(145.46)	(1,430.52)
Capital Redemption Reserve	-	-	-
Debt Service Coverage Ratio	(0.35)	(0.05)	(0.06)
Interest Service Coverage Ratio	(0.35)	(0.19)	(0.35)
Current ratio (In times)	0.91	0.72	0.92
Total debts to total assets	0.71	0.73	0.71
Long term debt to working capital (In times)	(3.66)	(0.71)	(3.79)
Bad debt to account receivable ratio (In %)	-	-	-
Current liability ratio (In times)	0.77	0.95	0.76
Debtor turnover ratio (In times)	-	-	-
Inventory turnover ratio (In times)	-	-	-
Operating margin (In %)	-	-	31.91
Net profit margin (In %)	(1,310.62)	(118.67)	(288.53)

1. The above results have been reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors ("the Board") at its meeting held on 13 August 2024.
2. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly / Annual Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 52(B), read with 52(4) of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly/ Annual Financial Results are available on the Company's website (<https://equinoxindia.com/tol/>) and on the website of BSE (<https://www.bseindia.com>) and NSE (<https://www.nseindia.com>).
Registered Office: Office No 202, 2nd Floor, A-18 Rama House, Middle Circle, Connaught Place, New Delhi- 110 001.
Place : Mumbai
Date : 13 August, 2024
For and on behalf of the Board of Directors
Abhishek Rajnithar Surve
Executive director

Sitharaman: Govt needs money to meet challenges, fund R&D

PTI ■ BHOPAL

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday justified the present taxation regime, saying that the country needs resources to meet the challenges facing the nation and also to fund research and development activities. Sitharaman was addressing the 11th convocation of Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (ISER) in Bhopal. While appealing to the scientist community to do more research on the storage of renewable energy, Sitharaman said the world has promised a lot of money towards transitioning from fossil fuel to renewable energy but that money is yet to come. "But India didn't wait. The promises given in Paris (Paris Agreement) were fulfilled with our own money. There



are times when being the finance minister, it doesn't give me motivation when I have to answer people about why our taxes are like this? Why can't we even be lower than this? I wish I can bring it down to almost nil. But India's challenges are severe and challenges will have to be overcome," the finance minister said. She said the government has heavily invested in scientific research.

"I seek a very learned crowd before me graduates, PhD holders, to understand India's challenges. I have taken the example of renewable energy, global energy as one of those sustainable sources of energy for a growing country like India," she said. While urging scientists to come up with innovations, she said that India is moving from fossil fuel to renewable energy at its own strength as the country cannot afford to

wait for money from somewhere else. Sitharaman also urged scientists to develop batteries for the storage of the renewable energy as transition from fossil fuel to renewable energy has to be sustainable. "The government is just not talking. It is putting money in R&D (research and development). Money that is earned out of taxation. That's my job so I will tell you that. My job is to generate revenue but not troubling people, I will assure that. But, even with that money comes because we also need to fund research," Sitharaman said while seeking a reply from the gathering that should there be more money for research? Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, Bhopal's Lok Sabha MP Alok Sharma and other dignitaries were present during the convocation.

Sensex tumbles nearly 700 points amid broad-based selloff

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark BSE Sensex tumbled nearly 700 points to sink below the 79,000 level on Tuesday, extending its losses for the second straight day due to selling pressure in HDFC Bank, SBI and ITC amid fresh foreign capital outflows. Besides, deep losses in commodity, banking and financial stocks and concerns over stretched valuation contributed to the steep market decline, analysts said. The 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 692.89 points or 0.87 per cent to settle at 78,956.03. During the day, it tanked 759.54 points or 0.95 per cent to 78,889.38. The NSE Nifty slumped 208 points or 0.85 per cent to 24,139. A total of 2,676 stocks declined while 1,266 advanced and 84 remained unchanged on the BSE. "The domestic market plunged into red terrain in the latter half, amidst mixed global sentiments. Recent IIP data indicates a lacklustre growth in the major manufacturing sector. Persistent selling by FII and elevated valuations are



further contributing to the decline. "All sectors, especially banking, metal were in red, while HDFC Bank declined due to lower-than-expected passive fund inflows in the recent MSCI index rejig," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services. From the 30 Sensex firms, HDFC Bank declined over 3 per cent. Tata Steel, Bajaj Finance, State Bank of India, Tata Motors, Power Grid and JSW Steel were the other laggards. In contrast, Titan, HCL Tech, Nestle, Sun Pharma, Reliance

and Mahindra & Mahindra were the gainers. Seven firms, including Vodafone Idea and Oil India, would be included in the MSCI India Index effective August 30, 2024, as per the latest index review by MSCI. Dixon Technologies (India), Oil India, Oracle Financial Services Software, Prestige Estates Projects, Rail Vikas Nigam, Vodafone Idea and Zydus Lifesciences are the additions to the MSCI India Index, according to an announcement by index compiler MSCI.

EEPC, ISSDA join hands to boost MSME exports

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The Engineering Export Promotion Council of India (EEPC India) and the Indian Stainless Steel Development Association (ISSDA) on Tuesday signed an MoU to promote exports by MSME members. The two organisations will collaborate to identify potential export products and organise trade exhibitions, buyer-seller meets, and economic summits, an EEPC statement said. The agreement also aims to facilitate the exchange of trade information and encourage international investment through joint ventures and technical collaborations. The MoU was signed by EEPC India's Executive Director Adhip Mitra and ISSDA's Executive Director Rohit Kumar. ISSDA President Rajamani Krishnamurti and other EEPC India's senior officials were also present.

Rupee settles flat at 83.97 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee witnessed range-bound trading and settled for the day on a flat note at 83.97 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, as weak domestic markets and a surge in crude oil prices weighed on investor sentiments. Forex traders said risk aversion in the global markets amid heightened geopolitical tension in the Middle East between Israel and Iran also dented sentiments. The interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit traded in a tight range as it opened at 83.95 and finally settled at 83.97 (provisional) against the American currency, unchanged from its previous close. On Monday, the rupee settled for the day lower by 2 paise at 83.97 against the American currency. The local unit had slumped 37 paise to settle at an all-time low of 84.09 against the US dollar on August 5. "We expect the rupee to trade with a slight negative bias on risk aversion in the global markets amid heightened



geopolitical tension in the Middle East between Israel and Iran. Rising crude oil prices and weak domestic markets may also weigh on the domestic currency," said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas. However, mixed-to-weak US dollar amid dovish comments from Fed speakers may support the rupee at lower levels. Investors may remain cautious ahead of the US CPI, retail sales and consumer confidence data from the US this week, said Choudhary, adding that USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 83.75 to 84.25. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.06 per cent higher at 103.19. Brent crude, the global oil

benchmark, declined 0.27 per cent to USD 82.08 per barrel. On the domestic macroeconomic front, the net direct tax collection in the country grew 22.48 per cent to about Rs 6.93 lakh crore as of August 11 of this fiscal. The retail inflation eased to 3.54 per cent with food prices falling after a good monsoon. It was the lowest in last 5 years and has dipped below RBIs targeted rate of 4 per cent. However, India's industrial production slowed to a five-month low of 4.2 per cent in June 2024, mainly due to poor performance of the manufacturing sector, though power and mining sectors continue to perform well, as per official data released on Monday. On the domestic equity market front, Sensex declined 692.89 points, or 0.87 per cent, to 78,956.03 points. The Nifty fell 208.00 points, or 0.85 per cent, to 24,139.00 points. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Monday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 4,680.51 crore, according to exchange data.

Vodafone Idea, Oil India, five others to be included in MSCI India Index

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Seven firms, including Vodafone Idea and Oil India, would be included in the MSCI India Index effective August 30, 2024, as per the latest index review by MSCI. Dixon Technologies (India), Oil India, Oracle Financial Services Software, Prestige Estates Projects, Rail Vikas Nigam, Vodafone Idea and Zydus Lifesciences are the additions to the MSCI India Index, according to an announcement by index compiler MSCI. The changes in constituents for the MSCI Global Standard Indices will take place as of the close of August 30, 2024, as per the announcement. Bandhan Bank would move out from the MSCI India Index, it announced. Shares of Rail Vikas Nigam jumped 4.61 per cent, Dixon Technologies climbed 3.29 per cent, Oil India went up by 3.21 per cent, Oracle Financial Services Software (1.95 per cent) and Prestige Estates (1.46 per cent) on the



BSE. However, Vodafone Idea and Zydus Lifesciences were trading lower. MSCI is a leading provider of critical decision support tools and services for the global investment community. In the MSCI Global Smallcap Indices list, 27 firms will be included in the MSCI India Index. The additions include Bajaj Hindusthan Sugar, Bandhan Bank, Gulf Oil Lubricants India, Inox Wind Energy and TVS Supply Chain Solutions. Cochin Shipyard, Dixon Technologies, Jaiprakash Associates, Network18 Media and two others would move out from the MSCI India Index from the Smallcap Indices list.

India's smartphone market grows 3.2% with 39 million units shipment in Q2

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian smartphone market grew 3.2 per cent with 39 million units shipment in the second quarter of 2024, market research firm International Data Corporation said on Tuesday. The market was led by Chinese smartphone maker Vivo with a 16.5 per cent share in volume terms with its shipment growing by 6.7 per cent on a year-over-year (YoY) basis, it said. Apple led the super-premium segment, which are smartphones priced above Rs 67,000 apiece with an 83 per cent share followed by Samsung with a 16 per cent share. "Overall, Vivo continued to lead for the second consecutive quarter, with multiple launches across price segments through the Y series, mid-premium V series and flagship X Fold 3 Pro. Motorola registered the highest growth backed by product portfolio across price segments," the report said. Xiaomi followed Vivo with 13.5 per cent market. Samsung slipped to the third sport with a 12.9 per cent share as its shipment



declined 15.4 per cent on a YoY basis, according to the report. Apple stood at the sixth spot with a 6.7 per cent market share and a 24.2 per cent increase in shipment on a YoY basis. According to IDC Worldwide Quarterly Mobile Phone Tracker, the Indian smartphone market shipped 69 million smartphones in the first half of 2024. In the premium segment, the price range above Rs 50,000 to Rs 67,000, Apple's share increased YoY to 61 per cent, while Samsung's share increased to 24 per cent, from 21 per cent a year ago, the report said. "The entry-premium segment (USD200 or about Rs 16,700 to USD 400 or Rs 33,500) is expected to see healthy growth, while the

entry-level (sub-USD100) will remain challenged at least this year despite efforts around launching affordable 5G smartphones. Also, the marketing around GenAI smartphones will be more pronounced, amid heavy promotional activities around it," IDC, Associate Vice President, Devices Research, Navkendar Singh said. The biggest growth segment in the overall smartphone market was the entry-premium segment which counts devices priced in the range of Rs 16,000 to Rs 33,500. The segment's share increased to 30 per cent from 22 per cent and registered the highest growth of 42 per cent on a YoY basis. According to the report, 27 million 5G smartphones were shipped in the quarter, and the share of 5G smartphone shipments increased to 77 per cent, up from 49 per cent in the year-ago period, while 5G smartphone ASPs declined by 22 per cent YoY to USD 293 or about Rs 24,600. Within 5G, shipments of the mass budget segment priced in the range of Rs 8,000-Rs 16,700, grew by 2.5 times to reach a 45 per cent share.

TRAI directs telcos to disconnect unregistered telemarketers' lines over spam calls

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sector regulator TRAI on Tuesday directed telcos to disconnect all telecom resources of unregistered telemarketers found making spam calls, and to blacklist them for up to two years. Further, TRAI has asked telcos to comply immediately with its latest directive and submit regular updates on action taken in this regard on a fortnightly basis. Issuing its directive to telcos, TRAI said this "decisive action" is expected to significantly reduce spam calls and provide relief to

consumers. TRAI in a release said it has issued "directives to access providers to disconnect all telecom resources of unregistered senders for making spam calls and to blacklist such senders under the Telecom Commercial Communication Customer Preference Regulations, 2018" regulations. Towards this, TRAI has mandated all access service providers to stop voice promotional calls whether pre-recorded or computer generated or otherwise from all unregistered senders or telemarketers (UTMs) using

bulk connections or other telecom resources. "... All promotional voice calls from the unregistered Senders/ Unregistered Telemarketer (UTMs) using Telecom Resources (SIP/ PRI/ other telecom resources) shall be stopped immediately," TRAI said. If any unregistered telemarketer or sender is found to be misusing telecom resources for making commercial voice calls in violation of the regulations resulting in consumer complaints, all its telecom resources will be disconnected by the primary



telcom service provider for a period up to two years. Further, such unregistered

entities will be blacklisted for a period up to two years. "...Information regarding

blacklisting of the sender shall be shared by the OAP (Originating Access Provider) with all other access providers on DLT platform, within 24 hours, who will, in turn, disconnect all the telecom resources given by them to that sender within the next 24 hours," TRAI said. New telecom resources would not be allocated to them by any access provider during the period of blacklisting. "All the unregistered Senders/ Unregistered Telemarketers (UTMs) using SIP/PRI/ other telecom resources to make commercial voice calls to the

citizen shall be migrated to the DLT platform within one month of the issue of this direction and submit compliance report within seven days thereafter," TRAI said. Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has directed all telcos to comply with its latest directive and submit regular updates on the actions taken on the first and sixteenth of every month. The regulator has declared an all-out war against the rising menace of spam calls - last week TRAI had had warned that telcos will disconnect the

telecom resources of entities that are found misusing bulk connections for making spam calls, and such entities would face blacklisting by all operators for up to two years. TRAI held a meeting with regulatory heads of all the Telecom Service Providers last Thursday. The meeting, Chaired by TRAI Chief, was attended by the Chief Regulatory Officers of Airtel, BSNL, Quadrant Televentures Limited (QTL), Reliance Jio, Tata Teleservices Limited, Vodafone Idea Limited and V-CON Mobile & Infra Private Limited.

Wipro top-level exits continue as CTO Subha Tatavarti steps down

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In another high-level exit at IT major Wipro, its Chief Technology Officer Subha Tatavarti has resigned to pursue opportunities outside the company. Tatavarti joined Wipro in April 2021 as the technology head under the then-CEO and MD Thierry Delaporte. During her three-year stint, she led Wipro's GenAI initiatives and introduced Wipro ai360. "Subha Tatavarti, Chief Technology Officer, resigned from the services of the Company to pursue opportunities outside Wipro," a regulatory filing said on Monday. Before joining Wipro, she led different roles at Walmart and



PayPal, among others. She was recognised in "Top 100 Executive Women in Tech to Watch" earlier this year by the WomenTech Network. "I am resigning from the post of CTO, Wipro, effective August 16th. Good luck with your journey," Tatavarti wrote in her resignation letter to Wipro CEO Srinji Pallia. This is the fourth top-level exit in the last 4 months after Pallia joined the Bengaluru-based

firm in April, following Delaporte's resignation. The IT company saw Chief Delivery Officer Ajit Mahale, Chief Operating Officer Amit Choudhary, and CEO of APMEA (Asia Pacific, India, Middle East & Africa) Anis Chenchah exiting in May 2024 again "to pursue opportunities outside Wipro". Most of these key departures include executives, who joined Wipro when it was led by Delaporte. Wipro posted a 3.8 per cent fall to Rs 21,963.8 crore in its consolidated revenue from operations for the June-ended quarter. A 4.6 per cent year-on-year rise was seen in its consolidated net profit for the June quarter at Rs 3,003.2 crore.

Gold jumps ₹500 to ₹72,850 per 10 g; silver remains flat

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices jumped Rs 500 to Rs 72,850 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday amid strong cues from the global market and a rise in domestic demand. In the previous session, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had settled at Rs 72,350 per 10 grams on Monday. However, silver prices remained flat at Rs 83,500 per kilogram on Tuesday, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also rallied by Rs 500 to Rs 72,500 per 10 grams against the previous close. Traders attributed the rise in gold prices to the rising demand from retail buyers as well as jewellers. In the overseas market, gold is trading at USD 2,502.70 per ounce, up by USD 1.30 per ounce.



"Gold's gains on Tuesday as demand for safe-haven assets continued to support the precious metal's rise. "Further, there were concerns that Iran could strike Israel as early as this week have raised the gold-safe haven premium," Saamil Gandhi, Senior Analyst, Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

According to Kaynat Chainwala, AVP-Commodity Research, Kotak Securities, Comex gold surged by 1.2 per cent to an all-time closing high of USD 2,504 per ounce on Monday, driven by escalating tensions in the Middle East, a decline in US Treasury yields, and expectations of the US Federal Reserve interest rate

cuts at its September 18 meeting. However, silver was quoting lower at USD 27.81 per ounce in the international markets. "Gold prices are seen consolidating previous session gains amid caution ahead of the important US inflation data that could set the tone for the Fed's policy meeting early next month," Pranav Mer, Vice President, EBG - Commodity & Currency Research at JM Financial Services, said. Also, the bullion remains supported by higher safe-haven bids amid signs of escalation in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Mer added. As per Prathamesh Mallya, DVP-Research, Non-Agri Commodities and Currencies at Angel One, traders are closely watching upcoming US producer and consumer price index data, which could provide further insights into the Fed's interest rate trajectory.

HARMANPREET & CO HAVE STRONG FOUNDATION FOR LA GOLD: MIKE

PTI ■ KOLKATA

After winning successive bronze medals at the Tokyo and Paris Olympics, the Indian men's hockey team has shown their strong foundation and they have it in them to go for a gold in four years' time in Los Angeles, feels the world renowned explorer Mike Horn.

The Swiss motivational coach's intense three-day mental toughness boot camp in the Alps pushed Harmanpreet and Co to their limits, in adventure tasks that also helps in coming out of their comfort zones and also form strong bond.

"The bronze they won is a reflection of their dedication, and I believe they have set a strong foundation for future success, including the possibility of going for gold in the next Olympics," Horn told PTI in an interview.

"The team's performance was exceptional, and they indeed came very close to clinching a gold medal. They showed remarkable skill, strategy, and mental toughness throughout the tournament. While they didn't secure the gold, the fact that they were so close is a testament to their hard work and determination.

"It's important to recognise that winning a medal, especially at the Olympics, is an immense achievement," added Horn, known for his work with MS Dhoni's 2011 World Cup-winning team, Kolkata Knight Riders in their 2014 IPL victory, and Germany's 2014

football champions. India started their campaign with a rusty win over New Zealand before they gradually started to find rhythm.

Their biggest win in the group stage came when they defeated Australia for the first time in 52 years. Their true mental fortitude and team bonding came to fore when they defeated Great Britain in a shootout, despite being reduced to 10 players early in the second quarter.

"I followed their journey at Paris 2024 very closely, and I was genuinely impressed by their resilience and how they handled the pressure. They have so much to be proud of, and it was an honour to be a small part of their journey," said the 58-year-old said.

The bootcamp was packed with extreme adventures, from walking on Glacier 3000, the highest peak of the Alps, to sleeping on grass — an experience that India defender Amit Rohidas had described as extremely back-breaking.

"They came into the camp with an incredible mindset, ready to push themselves and grow as a team," recalled the 58-year-old.

"I would like to think that the bootcamp contributed in some way to the team's success, but the real credit goes to the players and their relentless hard work and dedication. The bootcamp was designed to challenge them, and they responded brilliantly, but ultimately, it was their commitment and teamwork that shone through during the



Olympics." Horn also had special words of praise for skipper Harmanpreet whom he described as "all time greats". Harmanpreet was the top-scorer of the Olympics with 10 goals.

"What impresses me most about Harmanpreet is his ability to lead by

example. He's not just a great player but also someone who inspires his teammates to elevate their game. "His leadership was crucial to the team's success, and he has undoubtedly cemented his place as one of the all-time greats in Indian hockey," Horn said. He also said it's "hard" to see that PR Sreejesh won't

be there at the goalpost. "Even though this was his last appearance for Team India, he played with the passion and intensity that have defined his entire career. "During the bootcamp, Sreejesh was a pillar of strength for the team — his experience and leadership

were invaluable, and he set the tone for the younger players. "Considering his contributions to Indian hockey, it's hard not to wish he would continue. However, if this is indeed his final chapter, he leaves behind a tremendous legacy that will inspire future generations of players," he said.

Horn also spoke about newly-appointed India cricket team head coach Gautam Gambhir and recalled how he made the difference at KKR with his strategic acumen and game-reading skills. Gambhir began his stint with a 3-0 thrashing of Sri Lanka in the T20Is, but suffered a 0-2 defeat in the ODIs.

"Gambhir's transformation from a successful India cricket team head coach to a title-winning mentor has been remarkable. As a captain, Gambhir was known for his strategic acumen and ability to inspire his team. He led by example, showing immense dedication and resilience, which were key to KKR's successes. "Transitioning to a mentor role, Gambhir continued to be a significant influence. His deep understanding of the game and experience in handling high-pressure situations provided invaluable guidance to the team. "He was able to connect with the players on a personal level, offering insights and support that went beyond just technical advice. Working with Gautam was a special experience. His passion for the game and commitment to excellence were truly inspiring. "He has a unique ability to read the game and anticipate challenges, which made him an exceptional mentor. His presence and leadership helped foster a winning mentality within the team, proving that his contributions are vital whether on the field or off it," he signed off.



Para shuttler Bhagat suspended for 18 months, to miss Paris Paralympics

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Tokyo gold medallist para shuttler Pramod Bhagat will not be able to defend his title at the Paris Paralympics after he was handed a 18-month suspension for breaching BWF's anti-doping whereabouts clause, leaving the Indian heartbroken.

"The Badminton World Federation can confirm India's Tokyo 2020 Paralympic champion Pramod Bhagat has been suspended for a period of 18 months and will miss the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games," the governing body said in a statement on Tuesday.

"In 1 March 2024, the Court of Arbitration of Sport (CAS) Anti-Doping Division found Bhagat in breach of the BWF anti-doping regulations for committing three whereabouts failures within 12 months."

The 36-year-old, an SL3 athlete, said he is saddened by the decision and it was a result of a technical glitch.

"It is an extremely hard decision for me. I respect WADA, I understand they are drawing a line for all players,

but to ban someone for technical reasons is not right," Bhagat told PTI.

"It is not like there is any substance issue, it is a issue of whereabouts failure, which I missed the test twice as I was in a different place but I have all the proof of filing the third time. But they didn't accept my appeal.

"It is a big loss for me. I was preparing for Paris, it is such a big thing for every athlete. I would have been a medallist. It is heartbreaking," Bhagat added.

Bhagat had appealed this decision to the CAS Appeals Division but it was rejected last month.

"On 29 July 2024, the CAS Appeals Division dismissed the Bhagat's appeal and confirmed the CAS Anti-Doping Division decision of 1 March 2024. His period of ineligibility is now in effect," the statement added.

His suspension is effective till September 1, 2025.

"My team and I have been proactive in appealing this decision, citing the technical issues that led to these failures. Unfortunately, despite our

efforts, we have not been able to resolve this matter before the upcoming games. "We respect the decision of the authorities and will abide by it, but this has been a challenging and emotional time for me as an athlete who has always competed with integrity." Bhagat had won a gold medal at the Tokyo Paralympics in men's singles SL3 category, beating Daniel Bethell of Great Britain in the final.

The 36-year-old Bihar-born shuttler had equalled the legendary Lin Dan of China by winning a fifth World Championships title in February last year at Pattaya, Thailand.

"It is extremely sad and unfortunate. He was a sure shot medal for India at the Paralympics but he is a fighter and I am sure he will come back stronger," Indian para-badminton head coach Gaurav Khanna told PTI.

Bhagat, who had contracted polio, resulting in a disability affecting his left leg at the age of five, is also a two-time Asian Games gold-medallist and is the current world No 3 in his category.

Manu aims for multiple Olympic medals

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ace Indian pistol shooter Manu Bhaker has set her sights on winning multiple medals at the Olympics in the future following her historic feat at the Paris Games.

The 22-year-old scripted history to become the first Indian athlete in post-independence era to win two Olympic medals in a single edition of the Games. Bhaker won a bronze each in the women's 10m air pistol and 10m air pistol mixed team event — where she had paired with Sarabjot Singh. She also came close to winning a third bronze in 25m pistol before finishing a creditable fourth in Paris. No Indian athlete has won more than two individual medals at the Olympics.

"I think we all work hard to win medals. But if that happens (winning more than 2 individual medals at Olympics) then that would be great. The aim is to work hard and better this performance in the



future," Bhaker told PTI Videos. "I am aiming to win many more Olympic medals for India," added Bhaker, who returned to the country after participating in the closing

ceremony. Bhaker had the honour of being India's flagbearer alongside veteran hockey goalkeeper PR Sreejesh at the closing ceremony on Sunday.

"Being the flag bearer was the opportunity of a lifetime, I am grateful that I got this opportunity and will cherish this for a lifetime," she said. "I have a very friendly bond with Sreejesh bhaiya. I have known him since I was a young kid. He is always very friendly, helpful and kind. He made it a lot easier for me in the closing ceremony."

Bhaker had returned to India last week but had flown back to Paris for the closing ceremony where she was the joint-flagbearer.

She was accompanied at the Indira Gandhi International Airport by her coach Jaspal Rana and mother Smedha.

"I am happy for her. I am happy for the players. When I went to Paris, I met the Hockey team, Aman Sehrawat, Neeraj Chopra. I just hope all these athletes keep winning medals and all the mothers of this nation will be happy," said Bhaker's mother.

Alexei beats Andrey in straight sets to win National Bank Open men's singles title

AP ■ MONTREAL

Australia's Alexei Popyrin, the No. 62-ranked player in the world, defeated fifth-seeded Andrey Rublev of Russia 6-2, 6-4 at the National Bank Open to win the biggest singles title of his career.

Popyrin had two lower-level ATP Tour titles on his resume coming into a week in which he faced five top-20 players in a row — and defeated all of them.

First came No. 11 seed Ben Shelton in the second round, then No. 7 seed Grigor Dimitrov, a contest in which he saved three match points. In the quarterfinals came No. 4 seed Hubert Hurkacz, who was up a set and a break in the second before Popyrin came back to win 7-5 in the third set.

Then American Sebastian Korda, who won the tournament in Washington, D.C., last week and was on a

nine-match winning streak, in the semifinals late Sunday night. And finally Rublev, who was looking for his third career ATP Masters 1000 title, his first on hard courts. But he had no answers against a player with whom he often trains at their mutual home base in Monte Carlo.

"I played a really, really high level of tennis, which I believed that I could play my whole life. But to put it into five matches in a row against I mean, six matches in a row against really high quality opponents is something else," Popyrin said.

Once it was over, Popyrin put his hands to his face and let the tears flow.

Popyrin won the first seven points of the match and from there, the hill was just too steep to climb for Rublev, who moves from No. 8 to No. 6 in the rankings with a week that included a win over world No.



1 Jannik Sinner. Popyrin will rise in the rankings from No. 62 to No. 23.

"I wanted to put a statement

in the first game, and I think I did that, which I think rattled him a little bit, which was part of the game plan. I just continued from there."

Popyrin said. As with Rublev, whose on-court emotions have often held back his career progress, Popyrin had been known more for his temper on the court than his game.

On Monday night, he was cool, calm and collected. Rublev wasn't as serene. But he's happy with his progress on that front.

"Even today, because if we go back even one month ago — or even compare my match against (Popyrin) at Monte Carlo (in April) when I was losing, I was behaving 10 times (worse) — and it was the first round," he said.

"Here, it was a final. Much more pressure. Yes, I still showed a bit emotions today, but compared to the matches when I was losing the same way, I think I did much better job. That's why I had a little chance in the second set, but it was just not my time, I guess.

USA gymnastics says arbitration panel won't reconsider decision

AP ■ WASHINGTON

USA Gymnastics officials say an arbitration panel won't reconsider a decision asking gymnast Jordan Chiles to return the bronze medal she was awarded in the floor exercise at the Paris Olympics. USA Gymnastics says it will continue efforts to let Chiles keep the medal.

"USA Gymnastics was notified by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) on Monday that their rules do not allow for an arbitral award to be reconsidered even when conclusive new evidence is presented," USA Gymnastics said in a statement.

"We are deeply disappointed by the notification and will continue to pursue every possible avenue and appeal process, including to the Swiss Federal Tribunal, to ensure the just scoring, placement, and medal award for Jordan." CAS voided an on-floor appeal from Chiles' coach that vaulted her to third, saying the appeal came 4 seconds beyond the one-minute time limit for scoring inquiries.

USA Gymnastics disputed the timing, saying in a statement Sunday that the agency submitted video evidence to CAS that showed Team USA coach Cecile Landi first appealed 13 seconds before the



deadline. The dispute over such minute details sets up what could be a months- or years-long legal battle over the gymnastics scores.

The International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) said Saturday night it would respect the court's decision and elevate Ana Barbosu of Romania to

third. The International Olympic Committee confirmed the ruling Sunday, announcing that it was reallocating the medal. CAS ruled Saturday that Landi's inquiry to have 0.1 added to Chile's score came outside the one-minute window. The CAS ad hoc committee wrote that Landi's inquiry came 1 minute, 4 seconds after Chile's initial score was posted.

The IOC said in a statement it will be in touch with the USOPC regarding the return of Chile's bronze and will work with the Romanian Olympic Committee to discuss a reallocation ceremony honoring Barbosu.

The appeal could go to Switzerland's highest court, the Swiss Tribunal, or the European Court of Human Rights. Rebeca Andrade of Brazil won gold and Simone Biles of the U.

Six Americans advance with wins in Cincinnati Open qualifying

AP ■ CINCINNATI

Nuno Borges and Magdalena Frech, the top men's and women's seeds in the Cincinnati Open, advanced with wins in the qualifying round.

Borges, from Portugal, beat Aleksandar Vukic of Australia, 7-6 (4), 6-1, and Frech, from Poland, beat 14th-seeded Jessica Bouzas Maneiro of Spain, 6-1, 6-4.

Six Americans — three men and three women — advanced in the main draws. No. 5 seed Alex Michelsen of Aliso Viejo, Calif., defeated Mackenzie McDonald of Orlando, Fla., 6-3, 6-2; Brandon Holt of Rolling Hills, Calif., beat Zachary

Svajda of San Diego, 6-4, 2-6, 6-3; and Aleksandar Kovacevic of New York got past Australia's Rinky Hijikata, 6-1, 7-6 (5).

In the women's draw, 12th-seeded Taylor Townsend of Smyrna, Ga. Beat No. 4 Katie Volynets of Walnut Creek, Calif., 6-0, 6-3; Robin Montgomery of Washington defeated No. 16 Martina Trevisan of Italy, 6-4, 6-4; and Ashlyn Krueger of Springfield, Mo., edged Japan's Naomi Osaka, 6-3, 2-6, 6-3.

For the men, Italy's Flavio Cobolli beat 10th-seeded Tommy Paul of Boca Raton, Fla., 6-2, 4-6, 7-5. No. 3 Yoshihito Nishioka of Japan and No. 11 Corentin Mouet of

France also advanced. For the women, No. 15 Harriet Dart of Great Britain, defeated No. 5 Elna Avanesyan of Armenia, 6-4, 6-1. No. 3 Lulu Sun of Australia's Lulu Sun, No. 10 Varvara Gracheva, and No. 13 Y.F. Wang of China also advanced.

LOOKING AHEAD: The men's and women's main draw both resume tomorrow. Twelve Americans — 10 men and two women — will be on courts throughout the Lindner Family Tennis Center. No. 12 seed Ben Shelton of Atlanta will take on Reilly Opelka of St. Joseph, Mich., in the afternoon. No. 11 Taylor Fritz of Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif.

PONTING BACKS AUSTRALIA TO HAND INDIA 3-1 DEFEAT IN BORDER-GAVASKAR TROPHY

PTI ■ DUBAI

Ricky Ponting believes Australia will have a "point to prove" after two straight Test series defeats at home against India and backed the Pat Cummins-led side to win the five-match Border-Gavaskar Trophy 3-1 come November-December. India, who have returned victorious in both their previous Test assignments Down Under with identical margins of 2-1, will take on the world No.1 Australia in a five-Test series starting on November 22. "It's going to be a competitive series. Australia has got a bit of a point to prove against India in Australia on the back of what happened the last two series here," Ponting told 'The ICC Review'. "We are back to (having) five Tests as well, which is the other really important thing about this series. It has only been four Tests the last couple of time. (To have) five Tests, everyone is really excited by that and I don't know if there'd be too many drawn games. "I'm obviously going to tip Australia to win and I'm never going to tip against Australia. There will be a draw somewhere and there will be some bad weather somewhere, so I'm going to say 3-1 to Australia," he added. India and Australia have not played a five-Test series after their bilateral affairs came to be known as the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Before that, in 1991-92, India had toured



Australia for a five-Test series. Ponting backed India's left-arm seamer Khaleel Ahmed, whom he coached in the IPL at Delhi Capitals, to be a part of India's touring party. "Someone like Khaleel Ahmed, I think, could find himself on the Test

tour. He has just been over in Zimbabwe recently and played that (T20I) series over there, but a left-arm would be ideal for them to have in their touring squad," Ponting said. The former Australia skipper hoped both teams will be deploying full-

fledged bowling attacks. "(Mohammed) Shami will be back fit by then, (Mohammed) Siraj we know will be there-abouts somewhere and obviously (Jasprit) Bumrah is going nowhere. Both teams are going to line up really, really strongly," he said.

Ponting said the competitiveness between India and Australia is quite close to the Ashes rivalry against England. "I was a part of it when that really started to grow, when the rivalry really started to grow, was it's right at the back end of my career," Ponting said. "I've said for the last couple of years now, Australia has always had a fierce rivalry with England, obviously, and a very strong rivalry with South Africa. "But I think India is now sitting right on the back of what an Ashes clash is like and probably overtaken the rivalry with South Africa. Ponting said while Australia's squad looks more or less settled, it remains to be seen if Steve Smith would like to persist being at the opening slot. "Australia will pretty much pick itself. Probably, the only one question there might be with Australia again, is if (Steve) Smith's the right man to be opening the batting," he said. "That would be the only query that I can see there. But that was all about obviously bringing Cameron Green back into the side. "So I'll rephrase it, not whether Smith's the right man to open the batting but whether he thinks it's the right spot for him. Because if he doesn't think it's the right spot, then they'll make a change and get someone else back up there," Ponting added.



Sri Lanka Cricket ropes in Ian Bell as batting coach ahead of away Test series vs England

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka on Tuesday appointed Ian Bell as their batting coach ahead of their tour of England comprising three Tests. Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) announced on its website that Bell, who scored 7727 runs in 118 Tests, will start working with the national side later this week. "He will start working with the team from August 16 and remain until the conclusion of the three-Test match series," SLC CEO Ashley de Silva expressed. "We appointed Ian to bring in a person with local knowledge to help the players with key insights on the conditions there."

"Ian has a lot of experience playing in England, and we believe his inputs will help our team in this crucial tour. Sri Lanka's tour of England begins with the first Test at Manchester from August 21-25. The second Test will be played at Lord's from August 29-September 2 while The Oval will host the third and final Test from September 6-10. Meanwhile, England could be in a race against time with skipper Ben Stokes suffering a hamstring injury last Sunday while playing in The Hundred. Stokes sustained the injury while batting and was eventually helped off the field. He was taken for scans and was also seen walking with the help of crutches.



We didn't even get desired coach for Olympics: Ashwini

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian doubles badminton specialist Ashwini Ponnappa on Tuesday said she received little to no individual financial assistance from the sports ministry in the build up to Paris Olympics and even her request for a coach was turned down ahead of the just-concluded Games. The Sports Authority of India (SAI) had come out with a document, detailing the financial support provided to the Paris-bound Indian athletes.

It mentions that Ashwini was provided Rs 4,50,000 under TOPS and Rs 1,48,04,080 under Annual calendar for Training and Competition (ACTC), which included the procurement of Game Ready recovery equipment, international competitions and sparring partner in the Tokyo cycle. "I'm absolutely shocked.. I don't mind not getting money but telling the nation that I got money is ridiculous. I haven't received it. Like if you're talking about national

camp, then that 1.5 Crore is spent on all the campers," Ashwini told PTI. "I don't have a specific coach. As for my personalised trainer, I'm paying for him myself. I'm not taking money from anyone. I've played on my own until November (2023). I was included as part of TOPS only after we qualified..." Ashwini, 34, has been one of the top Indian doubles player, having won a gold, a silver and a bronze in the Commonwealth Games 2010, 2014 and 2018 respectively. She has also competed in the London and Rio Olympics with Jwala Gutta. Detailing the Rs 1.48 crore spending, a SAI source said: "The Rs 1.48 crore has been spent on her on travel, stay, food, competition fee, DA in all the competitions that she participated in as part of the Indian team in the Paris cycle. "This money is given to BAI as part of ACTC." Ashwini, who had paired with N Sikki Reddy till August, 2022, joined hands with Tanisha Crasto in



December that year and started playing in international tournaments from January 2023. A series of good performances helped them seal their Paris berth, after which the duo were included in the TOPS scheme in May this year. "The ministry has always supported me. I've been part of the team for years and I'm grateful for the support I've received," Ashwini said. "The last year I haven't been supported and it's ok. But you can't say I've been given Rs 1.5 crore, if it's over four years, fair enough. As I was TOPS when I was partnering Sikki." Playing her third Olympics, Ashwini was left in tears after she and her partner Tanisha couldn't win a single match to make an unceremonious exit from the group stage. "I haven't played well, irrespective of the coach not being there, I take responsibility for that. But you can't say I'm getting this amount when I haven't even got this amount," she said.

I will meet hockey team before Sept 10 to chalk out future plans: Sports Minister

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Tuesday informed that he will hold a meeting with the bronze medal winning Indian men's hockey team before September 10 to chalk out future plans in its endeavour to clinch the gold medal in 2028 Los Angeles Games. Mandaviya on Tuesday felicitated star custodian PR Sreejesh, defender Sanjay, Amit Rohidas and striker Abhishek after their return from Paris on Tuesday morning. "It's been a wonderful performance from you guys, we didn't get the gold but we came very close to it and the way you guys inspired after the semifinal loss is commendable," Mandaviya said. "But it's not the end of the road and I will sit with you by September 10 and churn out future course of action so that

we should return with nothing less than gold from Los Angeles. I will seek your opinion how to go about it and try to provide you all possible support from the government." The minister also said he was satisfied with the performance of the Indian contingent even though they couldn't match last edition's result. In Tokyo India won seven medals including a gold, but in Paris the country could manage just six medals -- five bronze medals and one silver. The Indians, however, missed out on seven medals, finishing fourth, a fact which Mandaviya rued. "In Tokyo, we won seven medals but in Paris we won six. But the fact is we missed out on seven more medals by finishing fourth, which is a worthy performance," he said. Mandaviya had earlier felicitated the others members of the hockey who returned early.

PTI ■ JAIPUR

India aiming to win more than 25 medals at Paris Paralympics: PCI chief Jhajharia

India is hoping to win more than 25 medals from its largest-ever contingent of 84 athletes at the upcoming Paris Paralympic Games beginning on August 28, the country's governing body chief Devendra Jhajharia said on Tuesday. Jhajharia, himself a double gold medalist at the Paralympics, said the Indian contingent would look the carry the momentum of record-breaking performances in the 2021 Tokyo Paralympics and 2023 Hangzhou Asian Para Games. India had won 19 medals at the Tokyo Paralympics and a historic 111 medal at the Para Asian Games. "This is the biggest para

contingent India has ever sent to the Paralympics. We are very confident about the overall performance and are sure to win more than 25 medals," Jhajharia said here at an event organised by the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI). India is set to compete in 12 sports, including archery, athletics, badminton, canoeing, cycling, blind judo, powerlifting, rowing, shooting, swimming, table tennis, and taekwondo. "Most of our athletes are in excellent shape, having



trained rigorously for this event. We expect outstanding results, particularly in athletics, badminton, archery, and shooting. They are ready to make India proud," the PCI president said. The Indian team boasts of a mix of experienced and young athletes athletes. Many of them are participating in their second or third Paralympics. Amit Kumar Saroha, a seasoned athlete competing in his fourth Paralympics, will represent India in the

F51 category discus throw. The 39-year-old Asian Para Games medalist is the oldest member of the contingent. On the other end of the spectrum, the youngest athlete is 17-year-old archer Sheetal Devi, who shoots with her legs instead of her hands due to a medical condition that has afflicted her since birth. She recently made headlines by winning gold medals in individual compound and mixed team events in archery at the 2023 Asian Para Games. Meanwhile, 100 Sports Management Private Limited has been awarded the exclusive broadcasting and digital media right for Paris Paralympics in India, according to a release.

Premier League will have different look when season starts Friday

AP ■ LONDON

The Premier League rarely stands still. For the 2024-25 season starting on Friday, there are five newly hired managers, around \$1.6 billion worth of new players (and counting), new offside technology, updated financial regulations and a tweaked match schedule. **COACHING CHANGES:** A quarter of the coaches will be taking charge of a Premier League game for the first time, with Liverpool (Arne Slot), Chelsea (Enzo Maresca) and Brighton (Fabian Hürzeler) all having new managers and both Southampton (Russell Martin) and Ipswich (Kieran McKenna) gaining promotion with managers owning no top-flight experience. Throw in Julen Lopetegui being the new guy at West Ham after 4 1/2 years of David Moyes at the helm and Steve Cooper replacing Maresca at Leicester, and the dugouts will look different this season. Most of the intrigue, however, will focus on Slot and what style he implements at Liverpool after the team's nearly nine years with the popular Jurgen Klopp. Rock 'n' roll could turn into more control, with Slot preferring more of a possession game. **SLOWER MARKET:** The Premier League's 20 clubs have spent as much on new players in this transfer window as those in Spain, Italy and Germany combined, according to transfermarkt.com. So why does it feel such a slow summer of trading? Maybe because there have been

no blockbuster deals, with the most expensive being striker Dominic Solanke moving to Tottenham from Bournemouth for 65 million pounds (\$83 million). However, lots of deals for between \$30-70 million quickly add up - and there are still three weeks left in the window, during which Manchester City, Manchester United, Liverpool, Arsenal and Chelsea are expected to weigh in. City (Savinho) and Arsenal (Riccardo Calafiori) have only made one new signing so far and Liverpool hasn't made any. Come the end of transfer deadline day on Aug. 30, don't be surprised if Premier League clubs have spent way more than \$2 billion - even if most are balancing the books with sales because of the league's sterner financial rules.

player movements and record data points on parts of the body that are relevant for an offside decision. Data is processed with artificial intelligence to create a 3D offside line that is alerted to the team of VAR officials. It is expected to take an average of around 30 seconds off the length of time it currently takes VAR



SEMI-AUTOMATED OFFSIDES: Expect offside decisions to be reached much quicker in the Premier League this season. The competition is introducing semi-automated offside technology for the first time, with the new system set to be launched during the first half of the season. Multiple cameras will track

officials to come to a decision manually. Semi-automated offside were used at the 2022 World Cup and at the recent European Championship. **SPENDING RULES:** Last season in the Premier League was notable for some clubs, like Everton and Nottingham Forest, receiving points deductions for breaking the competition's profitability and sustainability regulations, which are now being more strictly applied. This coming season is the final year of those regulations, with two new forms of spending caps being trialed ahead of their introduction from the 2025-26 season. Teams in England's top division will trial a "Squad Cost Rules" system, which will limit spending on players to 85% of a club's soccer revenue and net profit or loss

held each weekend over a two-week period, giving teams at least one weekend off over January.

on player sales. A second system called "Top to Bottom Anchoring" limits - or anchors - spending to a multiple of the lowest combined prize money and cash from TV rights forecast to be earned by a team. The league said the systems aimed to "improve and preserve clubs' financial sustainability and the competitive balance of the Premier League" as well as "promote aspiration of clubs. **NO WINTER BREAK:** The Premier League is renowned for being a relentless slog - even more so this season. There's no winter break for clubs this time, with the season starting later, to give players more time to recover from international tournaments this summer, and therefore being squeezed. Last year, for example, five games were

AFFIDAVIT
I, Abhas Kumar Ojha, Father- Shri Tirtnath Ojha, Address-Village-Dihari, Panchayat-Hajipur West, Post-Mirzachowki, Thana-Sahibganj (Mu.), District-Sahibganj, (Jharkhand). Ayush Kashyap is my son. By affidavit number 742, dated-13.08.2024, the correct and actual date of birth of my son is 03.11.2020 which is also recorded in the Aadhar card (9141 5571 6834) and birth certificate.