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स्व. बिनोद बिहारी महतो की वीर भूमि उत्तरी छोटानागपुर की लाखों बहनों को खुशियों का उपहार

झारखण्ड मुख्यमंत्री मंडियां सम्मान योजना के तहत

श्री हेमन्त सोरेन

माननीय मुख्यमंत्री, झारखण्ड



हर बहना को हर साल

₹ 12 हजार



सम्मान राशि का करेंगे हस्तांतरण



24 अगस्त, 2024 | अपराह्न 12:30 बजे से
सिंदूर मैदान, हजारीबाग

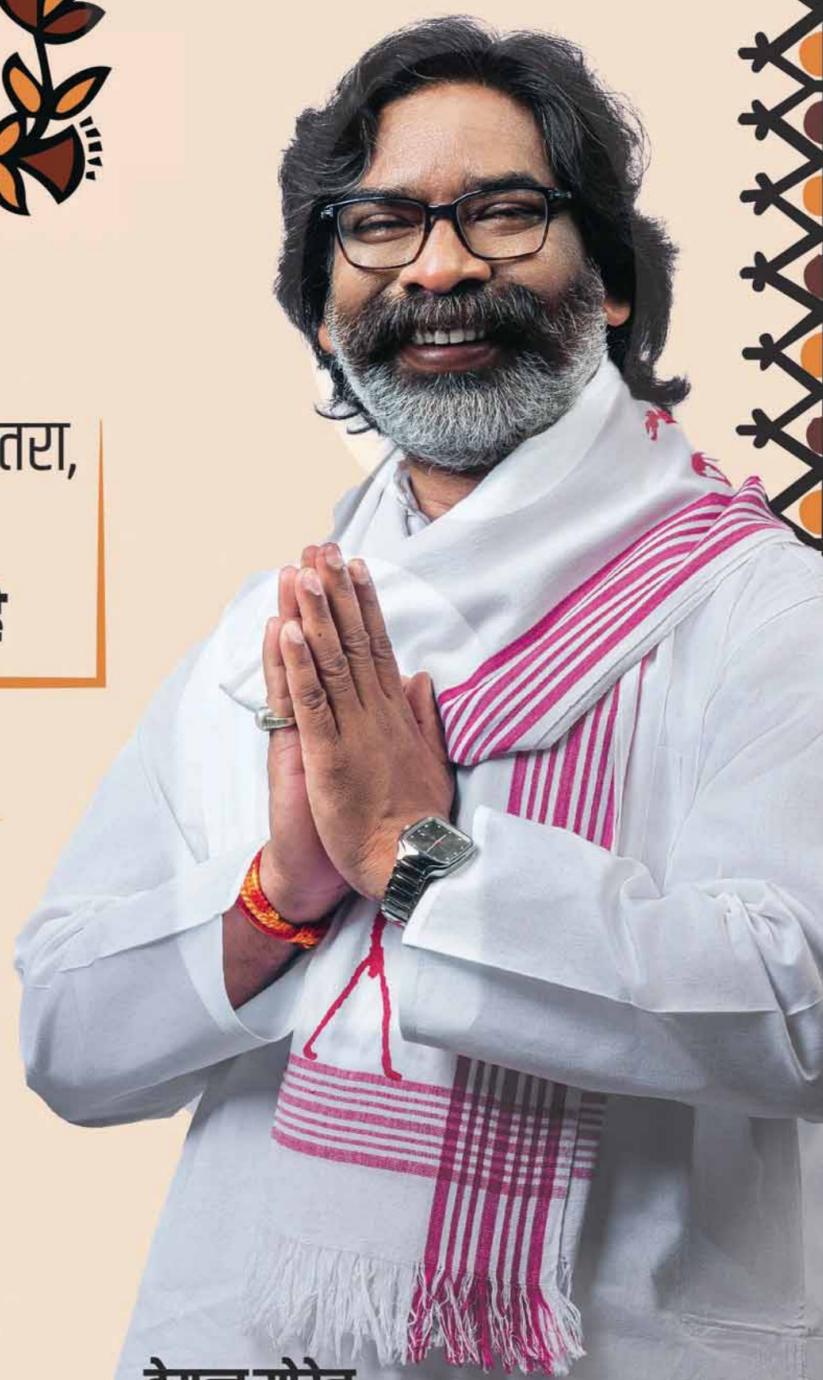
उत्तरी छोटानागपुर (रामगढ़, हजारीबाग, चतरा,
कोडरमा, गिरिडीह, धनबाद और बोकारो)
की सभी बहनों का समारोह में स्वागत है

46 लाख से अधिक निबंधन

अब तक 43 लाख बहनों का आवेदन स्वीकृत

31 अगस्त से पहले सभी बहनों के खातों में होगी
एक हजार रुपये की सम्मान राशि (पहली किस्त)

सितंबर से हर महीने की 15 तारीख को हर बहन
के खाते में पहुँचेंगी सम्मान राशि



हेमन्त सोरेन
मुख्यमंत्री, झारखण्ड

CM pays emotional tribute to late Ankita Mahato in Jamshedpur

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

In a poignant display of empathy and solidarity, Chief Minister Hemant Soren, accompanied by his wife MLA Kalpana Soren, visited the residence of former MP late Sunil Mahato and former MP Suman Mahato in Sonari, Jamshedpur, to pay his respects to their late daughter, Ankita Mahato.

The Chief Minister, deeply moved by the tragic loss, paid a floral tribute to a photograph of Ankita Mahato, expressing his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family. With folded hands and a bowed head, Hemant

Soren offered prayers for the peace of Ankita's departed soul and for strength to be granted to her grieving family to endure this immense loss.

Upon arriving at the Mahato residence, Chief Minister Soren and his wife, MLA Kalpana Soren, met with Suman Mahato and other family members. During their visit, they extended their deep condolences and spent time consoling the family, emphasizing the government's support and their personal commitment to standing by them during this difficult time.

In a brief interaction with the media, Chief Minister



Soren expressed his sorrow and extended his sympathies, saying, "Ankita Mahato's untimely passing is a profound loss not only to her family but to all of us. I stand with the Mahato family in their grief and pray for the strength they need to cope with this tragedy."

Several prominent figures from the state's political arena also joined the Chief Minister in paying their respects. Minister Deepak Birua, Minister Baby Devi, Minister Deepika Pandey Singh, MP Joba Manjhi, MLA Ramdas Soren, MLA Sukhran Oraon, MLA Savita Mahato, MLA Sanjeev Sardar, MLA Sameer

Mohanty, MLA Mangal Kalindi, and others were present to offer their condolences and participate in the tribute ceremony.

Each of them offered flowers at Ankita Mahato's photograph, symbolizing their shared grief and solidarity with the Mahato family. The atmosphere was heavy with emotion as leaders from various political parties set aside their differences to mourn the loss of a young life taken too soon.

Ankita Mahato, the daughter of Suman Mahato and late Sunil Mahato, was remembered by all as a bright and promising young woman whose life was tragi-

cally cut short. Her passing has left a deep void in the hearts of those who knew her, and her memory continues to inspire her family and friends to carry forward her legacy with love and determination.

The Mahato family, visibly touched by the overwhelming support, thanked the Chief Minister and other leaders for their visit and their heartfelt words of comfort. "This is a very difficult time for our family, and we are grateful for the support and prayers from everyone," said Suman Mahato. "Ankita was a beloved daughter, and her memory will always remain in our hearts."

Director Sajid Ali celebrates Loyola's lasting impact on his career

PARVINDER BHATIA : JAMSHEDPUR

Renowned Bollywood director Sajid Ali, known for his work on films like "Laila Majnu" and "Wo Bhi Din The," visited his alma mater Loyola School on Friday morning to address the inter-school event, Azionare. Ali, who has carved a niche for himself in the film industry, credited the values and ethics instilled in him during his time at Loyola as the foundation of his success.

Recalling his early days, Ali shared a memorable experience from 2003 when he performed his very first skit at Loyola School. "The skit was organized in honor



of the then Principal, Father Pius Fernandes, and it was based on the Domicile issue," Ali reminisced. "That performance made me realize my talent and passion for storytelling."

Speaking to this correspondent, Ali reflected on his journey from a schoolboy in Loyola to a filmmaker in Mumbai. "When I moved to Mumbai, I truly understood the importance

of the extracurricular activities that Loyola organized. Those activities played a crucial role in shaping my personality and helped me discover my talent," he said. "Father Pius has always been a guiding force in my life." Sajid Ali, the younger brother of the well-known Bollywood writer-director Intiaz Ali, began his career in the film industry by co-writing the romantic comedy-drama "Cocktail" alongside his brother. The film, starring Saif Ali Khan, marked his entry into Bollywood. In 2018, Ali made his directorial debut with the romantic drama "Laila Majnu," which he also co-wrote. His latest release, "Wo Bhi Din The,"

premiered on an OTT platform and received widespread acclaim for its fresh take on the coming-of-age genre.

During his visit, Ali also shared that Loyola School holds a special place in his heart. In fact, the school was the backdrop for his latest film, "Wo Bhi Din The." The 2024 Hindi-language coming-of-age romantic comedy, co-written with Saurabh Swamy and directed by Ali himself, reflects his deep connection with the school and its values. Father Vinod Fernandes, Principal, Loyola School and Vice Principal Jayanti Sheshadri played a key role in the success of the event.

Top performing PAS Students enjoy educational tour to Malaysia

PNS : BOKARO

Ten top-performing students from The Pentecostal Assembly School returned on August 23rd from a memorable five-day, four-night educational tour to Malaysia. These students, who scored 95% and above in their 10th and 12th CBSE Board exams, were selected for this exclusive trip, a visionary initiative by Founder Director Dr. D. N. Prasad. The tour was organized and led by Administrator Daniel Michael Prasad.

During the trip, the students visited Malaysia's iconic landmarks, including the Petronas Towers and Genting Highlands, and



enjoyed an exciting day at Sunway Lagoon. They also had the opportunity to explore Singapore's Changi Airport attractions during a layover. Principal Dr. Karuna Prasad emphasized the value of the experience, stating that travel offers educational insights beyond the class-

room. School topper Arpan Kumar expressed his gratitude, calling the trip both educational and exhilarating. This initiative has set a new standard in rewarding academic excellence by combining academic achievements with international exposure.

BSL hosts meeting with Bokaro SC/ST vendors

PNS : BOKARO

Bokaro Steel Plant (BSL) organized a meeting with SC/ST vendors under the chairmanship of C. R. Mahapatra, Executive Director (Projects & Additional Charge of Materials Management). The meeting was attended by senior BSL officials, including Anil Kumar, Chief General Manager (Services), P. K. Baisakhia, Chief General Manager (Maintenance), J. V. Shekhar, Chief General Manager (Shops), A. Bankira, Chief General Manager (Information Technology), Harsh Nigam, Chief General Manager (Materials Management), C. R. Mishra, Chief General Manager (Materials Management), Prakash Kumar, Chief General Manager (Mechanical), Dhananjay Kumar, General Manager (Materials Management), and I. H. Ansari, Deputy General Manager (Materials Management).

Representatives from the Government of Jharkhand,

including Rajendra Prasad, General Manager of District Industries Center Dhanbad, and Kiran Tiru, Senior Manager of the SC/ST section, also participated along with over 20 SC/ST vendors.

The meeting began with a welcome address by Dhananjay Kumar, General Manager (Materials Management), and was moderated by I. H. Ansari, Deputy General Manager (Materials Management). C. R. Mahapatra emphasized BSL's commitment to the holistic development of SC/ST vendors. A detailed presentation on ISO-8000 was given by Devyani Chakraborty, Senior Manager of the Business Excellence Department.

During the meeting, SC/ST vendors raised various issues, which were discussed by BSL officials. Both sides expressed their commitment to resolving these issues through mutual cooperation and to enhancing the quality of materials and services supplied by the SC/ST vendors.



Mesmerizing Janmashtami program presented by young students

PNS : BOKARO

A captivating Janmashtami program was organized at Mithila Academy Public School, Sector 4/E. The event featured performances by students from Nursery to Grade 2, who beautifully depicted the divine story of Radha and Krishna through various tableaux. The program commenced with an Aarti, setting a spiritual tone for the day.

The young performers left the audience spellbound with their charming presentations, transforming the entire school environment into a Krishna-inspired haven. In his message, the school president, Hari Mohan Jha, emphasized that Janmashtami is a festival of spiritual purity and that everyone should draw inspiration from Lord Krishna's life.

Secretary Pramod Kumar Jha Chandan highlighted the importance of cultural values, stating that understanding one's culture and values is crucial for children's continuous growth in life. Principal Ashok Pathak praised the children's performance, noting that such programs instill both devotion and values in the students.



Fitness and Nutrition Tips for Aspiring Models: An Insider's Guide



BY RACHNA TIWARI

As an ex-fashion model, I've seen firsthand the physical and mental demands of the industry. Achieving and maintaining the ideal body requires more than just good genes—it takes discipline, strategy, and a deep understanding of your body's needs. For aspiring models in India, where the industry's expectations are high, here are some essential fitness and nutrition tips to keep you in peak condition.

Fitness: Consistency Over Intensity

- Strength Training is Key:** Contrary to popular belief, lifting weights won't make you bulky. It's essential for toning muscles and building the lean, sculpted physique that's in demand. Focus on compound movements like squats, lunges, and push-ups. Aim for three to four strength training sessions a week.
- Cardio for Endurance:** Not Excess: Cardio is important, but don't overdo it. Excessive cardio can lead to muscle loss, which is counterproductive. Opt for moderate-intensity activities like brisk walking, cycling, or swimming for 30 minutes, three times a week.
- Yoga and Pilates for Flexibility:** Incorporate yoga or Pilates into your routine to improve flexibility and posture. These practices not only elongate your muscles but also help with stress management—a crucial aspect of the modeling world.
- Consistency is King:** It's

better to exercise consistently for 30 minutes every day than to do intense workouts sporadically. Your body responds better to regular activity, and it's easier to maintain progress over the long term.

Nutrition: Fuel Your Body Right

- Balanced Diet, Not Fad Diets:** Avoid falling into the trap of fad diets. They might offer quick results, but they're unsustainable and often unhealthy. Instead, focus on a balanced diet rich in whole foods—plenty of fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and healthy fats.
 - Portion Control:** In India, portion sizes can be deceptive. Even healthy foods can lead to weight gain if consumed in excess. Pay attention to portion sizes, especially with calorie-dense foods like nuts, oils, and grains.
 - Hydration is Non-Negotiable:** Drink at least 2-3 liters of water daily. Proper hydration aids in digestion, keeps your skin glowing, and helps control hunger pangs. Start your day with a glass of warm water with lemon—it's a great way to kickstart your metabolism.
 - Smart Snacking:** Opt for nutritious snacks like fruits, nuts, yogurt, or makhana (fox nuts) instead of processed foods. These provide energy without the empty calories and sugar spikes.
 - Watch Your Sugar and Salt Intake:** Indian diets can be high in sugar and salt, which can lead to bloating and other health issues. Cut back on sweets, sugary drinks, and processed snacks. Instead, satisfy your sweet cravings with fresh fruits or a piece of dark chocolate.
- Lifestyle: The Unsung Hero**
- Sleep is Sacred:** Your body repairs and regenerates during sleep, making it crucial for maintaining your physique. Aim for 7-8 hours of quality sleep every night.

Lack of sleep can lead to weight gain, skin issues, and reduced mental focus—none of which are conducive to a successful modeling career.

2. Stress Management: The fashion industry can be incredibly stressful, but managing stress is vital for your overall well-being. Incorporate practices like meditation, deep breathing, or even a simple hobby into your daily routine to keep stress levels in check.

3. Mindful Eating: In a fast-paced industry, it's easy to eat on the go. However, taking the time to eat mindfully—chewing slowly, savoring each bite—can improve digestion and help you better recognize when you're full, preventing overeating.

4. Avoid Crash Diets and Extreme Measures: The pressure to look a certain way can be immense, but remember that extreme diets and unhealthy weight loss methods can have long-term consequences on your health. Always prioritize your well-being over temporary results.

Conclusion: The Long Game

Success in modeling isn't just about looking good for a season; it's about maintaining your health and physique for the long run. By adopting a consistent fitness routine, eating a balanced diet, and taking care of your mental health, you'll not only look great but feel great too. And in this industry, confidence and well-being are just as important as your appearance. Stay disciplined, stay focused, and remember—your body is your greatest asset. Treat it with respect.

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

Dhanbad based AHD awarded Youth Icon, two other awards

PANKAJ : DHANBAD

Dr. Amla, Dhanbad based Veterinary Officer has been awarded Vetiko Queen of India in a pageant organised under the aegis of Indian Veterinary Association (IVA) that was held at Lucknow recently.

Talking to the media over her achievement Dr Amla said it was the first season of the pageant along with Vet Icon Awards. And youth icon award by the IVA.

This program was organized by Dr. Nidhi Rawat, president chairperson of the ladies wing of Indian Veterinary Association. Celebrity Jury, Pradeep Pali, Producer of Crime Patrol TV Series crowned her as Vetiko queen during the pageant.

It's worth mentioning that Dr. Amla is Touring Veterinary Officer, Topchanchi cum Incharge Junior Veterinary Officer, Dhanbad.

Dr. Amla graduated from Ranchi Veterinary College in 2017 and joined as a



Dr Amla with Celebrity Jury, Pradeep Pali, Producer of Crime patrol after being crowned. PNS

Touring Veterinary Officer in Dhanbad in November 2023.

CMPDI provides 6 food distribution vehicles for MDM



PNS : RANCHI

CMD, CMPDI, Manoj Kumar flagged off six fully insulated food distribution vehicles which were provided to Akshaya Patra Foundation, Ranchi by CMPDI under CSR project "Improving nutritional level of children by providing six number of food distribution vehicles to provide mid-day meal to Govt. school students of Hazaribagh, Jharkhand".

Shankar Nagachari, Director (Tech/CRD); Ajay Kumar, Director (Tech/P&D); Satish Jha, Director (Tech/ES); Achyut Ghatak, Director

(Tech/RD&T); Sumeet Kumar Sinha, C.V.O, CMPDI; GM/HoDs, CSR team of CMPDI (HQ) and representatives from Akshaya Patra were also present.

The major objective is to ensure transportation of mid-day meals to Govt schools of Hazaribagh district, Jharkhand. Approximately one lakh school going children from Hazaribagh and adjoining areas would be benefited from this project. These vehicles will help in transportation for on time delivery and increase the reach of the Akshaya Patra Foundation to deliver the mid-day meals thereby, helping in enhancing the nutritional status and attendance of the children in Govt schools.

CMPDI has signed a MoA with Akshaya Patra Foundation, Ranchi on 04.03.2024 at CMPDI (HQ), Ranchi for the project. The MoA was exchanged between R.K. Mahapatra, GM(HRD/CSR), CMPDI and Vyompada Das, Regional Director, Akshaya Patra Foundation.

CCL honoured with CSR Times Award 2024

PNS : RANCHI

Central Coalfields Limited (CCL) has been honoured with the CSR Times Award 2024 (Gold Award) in the PSU category for its ambitious project "Jharkhand State Sports Promotion Society" "Better Operation of Sports Academy in Ranchi".

The award was presented by Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha Sadanand Shet Tanavade during a ceremony held in Goa on August 23. The award was received by the CCL team associated with the JSSPS project.

Kandima Maldives: The ultimate Solo Island Getaway for Women Travellers

As solo travel gains popularity in India, Kandima Maldives emerges as the ultimate island playground for solo female travellers. This active lifestyle destination offers a perfect blend of serene escapes and thrilling bucket-list activities. Kandima is home to tranquil beaches where you can unwind with a good book or simply soak up the sun. With smart and stylish accommodations that provide the perfect retreat after a day of exploration and a range of activities that cater to both relaxation and adventure, Kandima has it all. From holistic spa treatments and yoga sessions to water sports like snorkelling, diving, parasailing, and other unique experiences such as adopting coral and sunset cruises, Kandima offers a complete experience. To make the vacation easier, Manta Air now flies direct to the Maldives three times a week from Bengaluru to Dhaalu Atoll, ensuring a seamless and enjoyable travel experience!

ESG Global Conference and Prithvi Awards 2024 on September 14 in Delhi

Prithvi Awards 2024 and ESG Global Conference is a groundbreaking initiative by ESG Research Foundation, (Section 8 Not for Profit organisation registered with Govt. of India) to recognise sustainability icons and leaders in ESG and bring together ESG experts to have evocative discussions related to Environmental Social and Governance (ESG). The ESG Research Foundation confers Prithvi Awards every year recognising Sustainability Icons in the field of ESG and Sustainability under various categories - Corporates, PSUs, Startups, NGOs, Self Help Groups (SHGs), Environmentalists Individuals, etc. This year, the highly anticipated event- Prithvi Awards 2024 and Global ESG Conference is Scheduled to be held on 14th September, 2024 at The Ashok Hotel, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi. The last date for filing Nominations is 23rd August, 2024. There is No Nomination Fee.

DPS Bokaro Principal meets Governor Santosh Gangwar

PNS : BOKARO

In a significant milestone for DPS Bokaro, Principal Dr. A. S. Gangwar, accompanied by Senior Teacher Dr. Sarita Gangwar, had the privilege of meeting the Governor of Jharkhand, Santosh Kumar Gangwar, at Raj Bhavan in Ranchi. The discussion focused on the current progress and future blueprint for education in Jharkhand, with an emphasis on enhancing the quality of education to global standards.

During the meeting, the Governor shared his vision for empowering educational prospects in both the state and the nation. He also offered valuable insights on various aspects of education, including skill-based learning, vocational training, green initiatives, and innovative empirical studies.

Expressing his joy, Principal Dr. Gangwar remarked on the simplicity and humility of His Excellency, stating, "It was a proud moment for the entire DPS Bokaro fraternity and a source of



inspiration for us to excel in all our endeavors."



OPINION 6
VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN: UNHEEDED CRIES

WORLD 8
NORWAY PROPOSES
EASING ABORTION LAW

MONEY 10
GOLD PRICES DECLINE BY ` 350,
SILVER DROPS ` 200

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NEERAJ FINISHES
2ND IN LAUSANNE
DIAMOND LEAGUE
12 SPORTS

PM Modi gives Zelenskyy a comforting hug



PTI n KYIV

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday told Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy that both Ukraine and Russia should sit together without wasting time to find ways to end the ongoing war and that India was on the side of peace since the beginning of the conflict. In his talks with Zelenskyy in Kyiv that took place under the shadow of the raging war, Modi said India is ever ready to play an "active role" in every effort to restore peace in Ukraine and he would even like to contribute personally in ending the conflict. The Prime Minister's wide-ranging talks with Zelenskyy primarily focused on ways to end the war and boost bilateral cooperation in areas of trade, defence, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, agriculture and education. "We (India) are not neutral. From the very beginning, we have taken sides. And we have chosen the side of peace. We have come from the land of Buddha where there is no place for war," Modi said in his opening remarks during the talks. "We have come from the land of Mahatma Gandhi who had given a message of peace to the entire world," he said. The Prime Minister also asserted India's strong commitment towards respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. "I want to assure you and the entire global community that India is committed to respecting sovereignty and territorial



Prime Minister Narendra Modi receives warm welcome by Indian community during his arrival at Kyiv, in Ukraine, on Friday

PIB

integrity (of states) and it is of utmost importance to us," he said. Modi also apprised Zelenskyy of his conversations with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Samarkand in September 2022 as well as in Moscow last month. "Some time back, when I met President Putin in Samarkand, I had told him that this was not the era of war. Last month when I went to Russia, I said in clear words that a solution to any problem is never found on the battlefield," Modi said. "The solution comes through talks, dialogue and diplomacy and we should move ahead in that

direction without wasting time. Both sides should sit together and find ways to come out of this crisis," Modi said. The Prime Minister conveyed to Zelenskyy that he had come to Kyiv with a message of peace, including from the Global South. Modi arrived in Kyiv this morning on a special train on the first-ever visit to Ukraine by an Indian Prime Minister after it became independent in 1991. The Prime Minister's visit to Kyiv is seen in many quarters as a diplomatic balancing act as his trip to Russia triggered anguish among the Western countries.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said Modi reiterated the need for "practical engagement" between all stakeholders to develop an innovative solution that will help build broad acceptability and contribute towards peace and stability. The Prime Minister conveyed to Zelenskyy India's willingness to contribute in "all possible ways" to facilitate an early return of peace to Ukraine, he said. It was a "very detailed, open and in many ways constructive discussion", Jaishankar said at a media briefing.

SEBI bans Anil Ambani from securities market for five years

PTI n NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi has barred industrialist Anil Ambani and 24 others from the securities market for five years on charges of diversion of funds from Reliance Home Finance Ltd. Additionally, Sebi has imposed a penalty of ` 25 crore on Ambani and restrained him from serving as a director or Key Managerial Personnel (KMP) in any listed company or Sebi-registered entity for five years. Besides, a fine ranging ` 21 crore to ` 25 crore have been levied on 24 entities. Also, the regulator barred Reliance Home Finance from the securities market for six months and slapped a fine of ` 6 lakh on it. An email sent to Anil Ambani-led Reliance Group company remained unanswered. After receiving multiple complaints alleging diversion/siphoning of funds of Reliance Home Finance Ltd, Sebi conducted an investigation for the period of FY 2018-19 to ascertain any regulatory violations. In its probe, Sebi found that Anil Ambani, with the help of RHFL's KMPs — Amit Bapna, Ravindra Sudhakar and Pinkesh R Shah — have orchestrated a



fraudulent scheme to "siphon off" funds from RHFL by disguising them as loans to entities linked to him. Although the board of directors of RHFL had issued strong directives to stop such lending practices and review corporate loans regularly, the company's management ignored these orders. This suggests a significant failure of governance, driven by certain KMPs under the influence of Ambani. Given these circumstances, the company RHFL itself should not be held equally responsible as the individuals involved in the fraud. Further, the remaining entities have played the role of being either recipients of illegally obtained loans or conduits to enable illegal diversion of money from RHFL, the regulator noted.

UP bus in Nepal veers off into a river, killing 18 Indians



Rescue work underway after an Indian number plate bus with 40 passengers coming from Pokhara to Kathmandu fell into the Marsyangdi river at Tanahun, Nepal, on Friday

PTI

At least 18 Indian pilgrims who arrived in Nepal from Maharashtra for a 10-day tour were killed after a tourist bus veered off the highway and fell 150 metres into the fast-flowing Marsyangdi River in Central Nepal approximately 120 kilometres from the capital on Friday, according to media reports. The bus from Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh was heading towards Nepal's Capital Kathmandu from the resort town of Pokhara when it drove off the highway in Aaina Pahara in the Tanahun district. There were 43 people, including the driver and the co-driver, on the bus with an Indian registration number. The passengers onboard the bus were part of a group of 104 Indian pilgrims who arrived in Nepal from Maharashtra in three buses two days ago for a 10-day tour of the Himalayan nation, MyRepublica news portal reported. They came from Bhusal village in Jalgaon district. After visiting Pokhara for two days, all three buses left for the capital Kathmandu on Friday morning. Madhav Prasad Paudel, chief of the Armed Police Force (APF), Kurintar, said most of the passengers travelling in the three buses were families and relatives. A list of names of the 43 passengers who were in the ill-fated bus has been released. "An Indian tourist bus travelling from Pokhara to

Kathmandu with around 43 Indians fell 150 metres into Marshyangdi River today," the Embassy of India said in a post on X. The mission is coordinating with local authorities undertaking relief and rescue. According to Deputy Superintendent of Police of the APF Shailendra Thapa, 14 bodies were retrieved from the crash site and 16 injured were rushed to a local hospital. The bus that fell on the river bank has been badly damaged. An MI 17 helicopter of the Nepal Army has left for the accident site at Anbu Khaireni in Tanahun district with a medical team for the rescue operation, MyRepublica reported. The Gandaki Province Police Office, Pokhara, said 15 of those rescued can speak. Meanwhile, the Uttar Pradesh Government has sent a Sub Divisional Magistrate to the incident site. An ADM has also been appointed to coordinate the relief work. Uttar Pradesh Relief Commissioner GS Naveen Kumar in a press statement said, "As per media reports and further confirmed from the MEA Nepal Division, today at about 11:30 am, a bus with registration number — UP 53 FD 7623 carrying approx 43 passengers from Maharashtra, including the driver and one assistant, fell around 150 metres into river Marshyangdi in Ambukhereni region in the Tanahu District of Nepal."

DGCA imposes ` 98 lakh penalty on Tata-owned Air India

RAJESH KUMAR n NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Friday imposed a penalty of ` 98 lakh on Tata-owned Air India Limited for operating flights with non-qualified crew members from Mumbai to Riyadh. Additionally, the aviation watchdog also penalised the Director Operations and Director Training of Air India, slapping fines of ` six lakh and ` three lakh respectively. This incident was highlighted after the airline submitted a voluntary report on July 10.

DGCA said as per regulations, a trainee co-pilot is supposed to fly with a trainer captain. However in this case, trainee co-pilot was found flying with a non trainer captain. DGCA has called it a serious scheduling mistake having serious safety ramifications. According to sources, on landing in Riyadh, the young trainee would have asked the training pilot to sign his SLF (supervised line flying) form. However, the training captain fell ill and rostering replaced him with a normal line (not training) captain. Enroute, the two pilots realised this mix-up (which wasn't their fault) by the scheduling department. The other pilot could not have sign that form as he was not a training

captain. The trainee could not have known this. And the other pilot could not have known the trainee was to do supervised flying under a training captain.



In a statement, DGCA said the concerned pilot has been warned and asked to exercise caution to prevent such occurrences in future. "M/s Air India Limited operated a flight commanded by a non-trainer line captain paired with a non-line-released first officer which has been viewed by the regulator as a serious scheduling mistake having significant safety ramifications," it said. After the incident came to its notice through a voluntary report submitted by the airline on July 10, the regulator investigated the operations of the carrier, including examination of documentations and spot check of the scheduling facility.

Routine Indian Army drone crosses into Pakistan territory

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE n JAMMU

A tactical drone belonging to the Indian Army accidentally crossed the Line of Control (LoC) from the Rajouri sector into Pakistan on Friday morning. The Pakistan Army has reportedly recovered the drone following its unintended landing. The incident occurred at approximately 9:30 am while the drone was engaged in a routine surveillance mission. In response to the situation, the Indian Army is expected to initiate discussions with the Pakistan Army at the Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) level. According to reports, the drone was on a routine surveillance



mission when it crossed the line of control and it landed in Pakistan due to some technical snag.

A teenager drowns in Delhi's waterlogged Chanakyapuri

SAUMYA SHUKLA n NEW DELHI

As heavy rain lashed several parts of the national Capital on Friday morning, the city was left inundated, causing significant traffic disruptions. Tragically, a teenager drowned on a waterlogged road near The British School in the upscale Chanakyapuri area of Central Delhi. In addition, two people have died due to electrocution in the city in the past two days. A 40-year-old woman died after being electrocuted on a waterlogged street, and a 40-year-old man lost his life when rainwater entered his house and he got electrocuted after the water came into contact with the electrical circuit.



In the past one and a half months of the monsoon season, Delhi has witnessed nearly 30 rain-related deaths. According to the police, the 15-year-old deceased Sourabh lived with his family at the Vivekanand Camp in the same area.

Amit Shah launches counter offensive on Congress in Jammu and Kashmir

MOHIT KANDHARI n JAMMU

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday launched a scathing attack on the Congress over its decision to ally with the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference in the upcoming Assembly polls beginning September 18. Accusing the Congress of repeatedly putting at risk the country's unity and security in its greed for power, the Union Home Minister also sought clarification while he posted 10 straight questions for the Congress party and Rahul Gandhi on the microblogging

site X. Before launching the party's election campaign on ground zero, the top brass of the BJP is also in the process of finalising the names of the party candidates for the 90 Assembly seats in Jammu Kashmir. As per the reports, the NC-Congress alliance has almost finalised its seat-sharing formula. Inside reports suggested the National Conference is laying its claim on at least 60 Assembly seats (41 from Kashmir and 19 from Jammu province) and offering 30 seats to the



meeting of the core group to review the report cards of the party aspirants ahead of the final meeting of the Central Election Committee on August 25. The meeting was also attended by Shah and all the core group members, including Union Minister and Election in charge G Kishan Reddy and Ram Madhav, along with other leaders National General Secretary and BJP J&K in charge Tarun Chugh, co-incharge Ashish Sood, MP Jammu Jugal Kishore, State General Secretary (org)

Ashok Kaul, State President Ravinder Raina, Union Minister and MP from Jammu, Dr Jitendra Singh. Meanwhile, referring to the manifesto of the National Conference the Union Home Minister asked, "Does the Congress support the National Conference's promise of a separate flag for Jammu and Kashmir? Do Rahul Gandhi and the Congress party support the JKNC's decision to restore Article 370 and 35A, thereby pushing Jammu and Kashmir back into an era of unrest and terrorism?"

'Govt committed to solve problems of women police officers and personnel'

Chief Secretary L Kھیangte inaugurates first state level women police conference 2024

PNS : RANCHI

Chief Secretary L. Kھیangte said that the State government is determined to solve the problems of women police officers and personnel. This two-day state level women police conference 2024 is being organized for the first time due to the efforts of Chief Minister Hemant Soren. In this conference, various points related to service, respect and security of women police personnel were discussed. After the inaugural session, a technical session was also organized in the conference.

The Chief Secretary said that whatever conclusions will come out of this conference, the government will be helped to work on all those aspects. He was addressing by inaugurating the first state level women police conference 2024 organized at Shaurya Auditorium, JAP-1 today.

Kھیangte said that the entire society is worried about the increasing crime against women. In this environment, the responsibility of the police personnel,

especially women police personnel, becomes important. There is a need to consider the role of women police to prevent crime against women. There is a need to act promptly on information about crime. Women police officers and personnel can play an important role in investigation and gathering evidence.

The Chief Secretary said that the discussions of the speakers in the technical session organized in this two-day conference will help the government in achieving the conclusions that will emerge in resolving the problems of women police officers and personnel.

The Chief Secretary said that it is being considered to increase the number of women police personnel in the state. He said that at present only 5 percent of the total police force in the state is women police. Efforts are being made to increase it through recruitment.

The Chief Secretary said that such programs help in the training of police. He said that such training should not be only for women police but should



DGP Anurag Gupta being welcomed by senior police officials during inaugural ceremony of Two Days State Level Women Police Conference at JAP-1, Doranda in Ranchi on Friday. Pix by Ratan Lal

also be done with male police colleagues.

Principal Secretary, Home, Jail and Disaster Management Department, Vandana Dadel said that this two-day state level women police conference will pave the way for their service, respect and role. In this conference, further strategy will be discussed. She said that the Naxal problem in the state is on its end except for one or two areas. Apart from

this, other problems are also being looked at, which includes prevention of drug abuse, for which a comprehensive campaign was recently launched by the state government. Along with this, women trafficking is also an issue in the state on which the state government is focusing. With the help of women police, this problem can be resolved.

DGP Anurag Gupta said that soon there will be a



Chief Secretary L Kھیangte, Principal Secretary Vandana Dadel, and DGP Anurag Gupta lighting the lamp during inaugural ceremony of Two Days State Level Women Police Conference at JAP-1, Doranda in Ranchi on Friday. Pix by Ratan Lal

woman police officer in every police station. Also, there will be women police station in-charges in city police stations. The police department is preparing for this. Soon a decision will be taken on this at the government level. A memorandum will be prepared and placed before the chief guest Chief Minister Hemant Soren at the end of this conference. He said that with the presence of a female police officer in the police station, any woman will not hesitate in telling her problems and she

will be able to speak openly. This step will promote women empowerment.

During the sessions Ranjana Asthana, Member Secretary, Jhalsa said that for the safety of women, there is Shakti App, toll free number 15100 which provides legal advice for any problem occurring at the workplace 24 hours a day.

Speaking on the topic "Safety of women police officers at the workplace and crimes against women", Asthana said that the role of women police is very impor-

tant. Many laws and policies have been made for the safety of women at the workplace, such as the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. This Act has been made to protect women from sexual harassment at the workplace and it also includes the process of filing complaints and redressal. A woman or any person authorized by her can file a written complaint of sexual harassment. If the organization has more than ten

employees, the complaint should be filed before the Internal Committee (IC). If the organization has less than ten employees, the complaint can be filed before the Local Committee (LC) constituted by the District Officer.

Speaking on the topic "Emphasizing the relationship between gender diversity and inclusive workplace", Dr. Anuradha Vats, NGO Deepshikha, Ranchi, who participated in the program, said that first we have to understand what is the relationship between diversity and inclusion. Diversity and inclusion are two interrelated concepts - "Diversity focuses on the representation or composition of an entity." "Inclusion is about how well the contributions, presence and perspectives of different groups of people are valued and integrated into an environment."

Many dignitaries including senior police officers, women police officers from various districts of Jharkhand, women police personnel and participants were present in the conference.

'Govt sensitive towards housing and employment for the poor' UD & HD Secy asks urban bodies to accelerate PMAY (Urban) work

PNS : RANCHI

Principal Secretary, Urban Development and Housing Department Sunil Kumar has said that the state government is very sensitive about every urban poor family having their own house and getting employment in their own city. Speaking at the review meeting of the urban bodies of the state on Friday, he said that the urban bodies should work sensitively on providing housing to the poor, providing employment, providing pure drinking water to all the citizens, cleanliness of the city as well as how to improve the standard of living of the people.

He reviewed the progress of many schemes implemented by JUSCO including Affordable Housing Scheme and Beneficiary Based Individual Housing Construction Scheme under



Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Deendayal Antyodaya Urban Livelihood Mission, PM Swanidhi Yojana, Chief Minister Shramik Yojana, Swachh Bharat Mission and Amrit Yojana and gave necessary instructions.

Kumar conducted an in-depth review of this scheme and said that under this, he will request the Electricity Department to provide electricity to the buildings under construction. The electricity department will prepare the structure till there and the concerned municipal body will do the further work in collaboration with that society. The municipal body should arrange for drinking

water in such new societies with the help of drinking water. Ensure that the beneficiaries who are not able to shift to their homes due to lack of money get a loan from the bank. Organize loan fairs several times within a week. DMA was instructed to hold state level bankers meet soon. The Principal Secretary directed to take the current status of the job card holders registered under the Chief Minister Shramik Yojana and also to make a list of those who are getting employment on the basis of this card and who is not seeking employment.

Along with this, instructions have been given to expedite the formation of Self

Help Group and Area Level Federation under Deendayal Antyodaya Urban Livelihood Mission, and to review how much improvement has come in the lives of those who joined it and started employment by getting a loan.

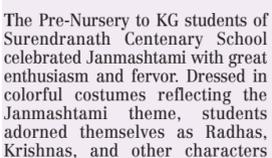
Kumar said that cleanliness is necessary in cities, so ensure availability of land where solid waste management plants are not installed. Wherever the construction work of the plant is going on, complete the construction work as soon as possible and make the plant functional. He also said that wherever there is a problem in land transfer, environmental clearance etc. for the scheme related to drinking water and sanitation, a letter will be written from the Secretary level and if necessary, an attempt will be made to organize a meeting at the Chief Secretary level.

SBPS students shine in 15th edition of Confluence



The students of Sarala Birla Public School, Ranchi won accolades for their stupendous performance in the 15th edition of Confluence: SIS Literary Convergence held in Mumbai. It was a National level event in which 18 schools from all over the country participated. Kritika Sarkar of Std. IX won the Best Speaker award in the Turncoat segment of Multi-format English debates. Nabhya Lal of Std. XI and Kritika Sarkar of Std. IX were awarded with the Overall Best Delegation in Creative Writing. Principal, Paramjit Kaur, congratulated the students on their momentous success and encouraged others to participate in such competitions which give them global exposure.

Janmashtami Celebration at SCS



The Pre-Nursery to KG students of Surendranath Centenary School celebrated Janmashtami with great enthusiasm and fervor. Dressed in colorful costumes reflecting the Janmashtami theme, students adorned themselves as Radhas, Krishnas, and other characters from Krishna's life. They decorated a Jhula with flowers and peacock feathers. The celebration included soulful bhajans, aarti, and recitation of shlokas by students and teachers. Storytelling sessions by teachers highlighted incidents from Krishna's life. Principal Samita Sinha stated that the aim was to inculcate values of love, compassion, and devotion in the young students, while keeping alive the traditions and spirit of Janmashtami.

BoM inaugurated Chas branch

BOKARO: Bank of Maharashtra (BoM), Ranchi Zone has inaugurated the Chas Branch at Chas, Bokaro which is our 2nd Branch in Bokaro District and 34th Branch in Jharkhand. Our Zonal Manager Mrs. Shikha Kumari Choudhary has inaugurated Chas Branch along with CPC Head Hemant Kumar Mishra, Branch Manager Sandip Kumar and our esteemed customers.

Tech Mahindra held placement Drive VBU

HAZARIBAGH : Tech Mahindra's one day placement drive was organized at Vinoba Bhave University's U Set. The event was inaugurated by lighting a lamp in Vivekananda Auditorium. Barka village MLA Amba Prasad, Dr KK Gupta, Dr PK Manjhi, Dr Budhdev Mahato, Khemlal Mahato, Dr Mita Rani Singh, Dr Archana Dhan and other dignitaries were present at the inaugural ceremony. The stage was managed by Dr Archana Dhan, welcome address was given by Dr Kamal Mahato, and vote of thanks was given by Dr Mita Rani Singh. Pratyush Rahul, Kartikeya Rai and Aman Verma were present on behalf of Tech Mahindra. HR Head Pratyush Rahul gave the presentation on behalf of Tech Mahindra. The auditorium was packed to the brim.

Ranchi based Dr Ishtiaq alleged to be running AQIS module in State

PNS : RANCHI

Jharkhand ATS and Delhi Police have taken major action against Al Qaeda Indian Subcontinent module in Jharkhand with the arrest of eight persons linked with the organisation. Out of eight arrested persons the key person includes Dr Ishtiaq Ahmed a medical practitioner who was running the module in Jharkhand, said sources.

According to sources Dr Ishtiaq, who lives in Al Hasan Apartment in Bariatu, was recruiting terrorists for the Jharkhand module of Al Qaeda in Indian Subcontinent (AQIS). Young terrorists sent by Dr Ishtiaq from Delhi and Rajasthan have been caught training.

Dr. Ishtiaq is originally from Jamshepur, Jharkhand. He used to work in the radiology department at Medica Hospital in Ranchi. Apart from this, he also has his own clinic in Hazaribagh. It is being told that during his visits to Hazaribagh, he had linked Faizan Ahmed to the organization. The doctor lives in Al Hasan Residency located at Joda Talab in Ranchi. Ishtiaq has done

MBBS from RIMS, Ranchi. When asked about the arrest of the doctor of Medica, the Medical Director of the hospital, Dr. Vijay Mishra said that the hospital management has no information about it.

On Thursday, in a major operation, Jharkhand's Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) has arrested eight persons in a series of coordinated raids across the state. The raids took place at 14 different locations, including Lohardaga's Kairo and Hazaribagh's Pelawal, as well as several other districts. The operation marks a significant success in the state's ongoing efforts to curb terrorism.

The ATS also recovered a cache of weapons from one of the terrorists apprehended in Lohardaga. Sources said that the eight arrested persons have allegedly been linked to Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS).

The joint raids were carried out by Jharkhand ATS, Special Task Force (STF), Ranchi Police and Delhi Police across 16 locations in Ranchi, Hazaribagh and Lohardaga, following a tip-off from central agencies, he said.

Saffron-clad people are frightened by Hemant's popularity: Pandey



PNS : RANCHI

JMM General Secretary Vinod Pandey has targeted the BJP. He issued a press statement on Friday saying that BJP leaders had come with the intention of clashing with the police and saffron-

clad people are scared of Chief Minister Hemant Soren's popularity.

Pandey said that but the BJP's nefarious designs will never succeed on the soil of Jharkhand. "The discriminatory attitude of the BJP Government at the Center towards Jharkhand has become apparent. The BJP, which is in power at the Center, came by promising to provide two crore jobs every year, but for the last ten years the youth of the Country have only been cheated. This is the

Police, BJP workers clash in BJYM rally against Govt policies

Police use tear gas, water cannons to disperse protesting cadres



BJP leaders Babul Marandi, Arjun Munda, Deepak Prakash along with others meet injured party workers at RIMS Ranchi on Friday. Pics by Vinay Mumru

PNS : RANCHI

Mid heavy security arrangements and prohibitory orders imposed outside the Morabadi Ground in Jharkhand's capital Ranchi, the BJYM protest rally against alleged injustice by the JMM-led government in

and water cannon are also being used on the road leading to Babul's residence.

BJP workers broke the barricades on the road coming from Shibu Soren's residence. Along with tear gas, lathicharge was also being done on BJP workers. BJP workers were also pelting stones at the police. Five BJP

opened for the public. The police is firing firecrackers towards the CM residence.

Addressing the rally, BJP SC Morcha National President and Rajya Sabha MP Sameer Oraon said that the Hemant government has only cheated the youth in the last five years. The ministers and MLAs of the government are busy filling their coffers. The government is being run by deceiving the tribals, Dalits

but the paper is getting leaked.

Sanjay Seth said that Hemant Soren's government is scared of the roar of the youth. He said that I have never seen such a scared government in my life. The state government had promised to give jobs to 5 lakh youth. The government had said that it would leave the throne if jobs were not given. The public has gathered



Police use water cannons to disperse BJP workers during a protest against State government over alleged corruption during 'Yuva Akrosh Rally' at Morhabadi ground in Ranchi on Friday. Pix by Ratan Lal

and minorities. Hemant Soren will have to give an account to the youth of the state. Deepak Prakash said that the youth of the state have gathered here today to overthrow the government. The Hemant government is scared.

Arjun Munda said that this government is so immersed in familyism that it removed a tribal Chief

here to demand this answer. Amar Bauri targeted Hemant Soren and said that this government has set a record of atrocities on the youth. They have sold all the examinations. This government is completely anti-youth. They love Bangladeshi infiltrators. The people of Al Qaeda do not see this government. They do not see the atrocities



Police use water cannons to disperse BJP workers during a protest against State government over alleged corruption during 'Yuva Akrosh Rally' at Morhabadi ground in Ranchi on Friday. Pix by Ratan Lal

Minister. Outsiders have no say in this family party. They have no concern for the tribals. People are not getting the benefit of the Nal Ja Yojana. This government is only doing fraud in the name of the scheme. JPSC-JSSC is conducting the examination,

being committed on the tribals. When the youth take to the streets for their rights, Hemant Soren's government works to barricade them with barbed wires. The barbed wires of the Hemant government will not be able to stop the youth.

Secretary said that every citizen of the state has seen and understood how the BJP has been conspiring at such low levels to destabilize the democratically elected popular Hemant Government. "The Center and the BJP Government constantly conspired against Hemant behind the ED, important bills of the Government were stopped from becoming law from the Raj Bhavan. When all this did not work, Hemant Soren was put in jail for five months. But after this mali-

understood the discrimination and communal game of the BJP," he added.

Pandey said that the BJP's trick, character and face have been exposed. "The youth of the State have unwavering faith in the Hemant Government, proof of which was found by seeing the flood of youth in the Jharkhand Adhikar March. He said that the BJP has lost its mass base in Jharkhand, this is the reason why it has become nervous.

reason why the youth were absent from the BJP rally," he added.

The party General Secretary also said that the BJP leaders did not come to hold a rally to shine their politics, their purpose was to provoke the police, so that forceful action could be taken. "The State Government is concerned about the safety of every citizen. No one can be allowed to take the law into their own hands. The youth of the Country is intelligent and has

The party General

Karnataka Govt mulls safety steps for doctors, hospital staff post-Kolkata incident

PTI n BENGALURU

The Karnataka government on Friday suggested a slew of measures to be adopted to ensure the safety and security of doctors working in hospitals across the state. A meeting chaired by Minister for Medical Education Sharanprakash Patil discussed safety measures for doctors, nurses and hospital staff. Members of the doctors' association were asked to draft a document so that the Department of Medical Education can prepare a standard advisory. After the recent rape and murder of a woman doctor in Kolkata, which has shocked the entire nation, the safety profile for the working doctors has once again been reviewed, the Director of Medical Education Dr Shobha Rathod said. "On the instructions of our minister, we have held a meeting with all the directors of the government institutes and the super speciality hospitals to identify the



gaps in the safety profile for our working doctors," she told PTI. According to DME, there are 71 medical colleges including 22 government medical colleges under the Department of Medical Education. Apart from them, there are nursing and paramedical institutes in the state. During the meet, the department also reviewed the safety lapses. Following the Nirbhaya advisory, the department has been insisting that there are no dark corridors anywhere and

all the places should be well lit, Rathod said adding that CCTV cameras should be installed in most of the areas. "The security personnel are the ones who can walk anywhere with the consent in all the areas of the institute, so whether we have a good background check of all these people whom we take under security and house-keeping, that was one issue." All the institutes have the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) committees, which can also suggest a

precautionary measure so that if there is any such incident then an alert can be sounded. Rathod said the POSH committees have been regularly conducting meeting to make sure that there are no incidents of harassment of women. The department is also using Artificial Intelligence for the safety of each doctor. Self-defence training of the doctors and counseling of medical professionals regarding their stress levels were also discussed, she explained. "We are also encouraging pink boxes so that in case of unbiased complaints, the administration can look into it," Dr Rathod said. "Introducing of 'code white' system. - If there is something called a code white, which we have already seen, it being worked out in our Indian Institute of nephro-urology, that will make all of them alert, how quickly we can be alerted if there is an untoward incident which is happening," she added.

Withdraw cases against Badlapur protesters, or we will hit the streets: Uddhav

PTI n MUMBAI

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Friday demanded the withdrawal of cases against those who had protested in Badlapur against the alleged sexual abuse of two kindergarten girls, warning that the opposition would have to hit the streets if it is not done. Addressing a news conference, Thackeray said the August 24 'Maharashtra Bandh' called by the opposition bloc Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) is not political but against "perversion" and urged people cutting across caste and religion to participate in it. He claimed the bandh would be observed on behalf of the people of the state. Slamming the Eknath Shinde government's action over the Badlapur protest, Thackeray said, "Arrests are still taking place in Badlapur. The cases against the protesters must be withdrawn or else we have to hit the streets." A massive protest rocked Badlapur town in Thane dis-



tract on Tuesday after thousands of people hit the streets and spilled onto railway tracks to protest the alleged sexual assault of two four-year-old girls by a male attendant at a local school. At least 25 police personnel were injured in the incidents of stone-pelting at the railway station and other parts of Badlapur during the protest. Police have arrested 72 persons in connection with the violence during the stir. The accused was arrested on August 17. He has been sent to police custody till August 26. Thackeray said the bandh should be "strictly" followed till 2 pm, ensuring that emergency services remain operational.

Himachal Govt signs pact with MSTC for e-auction of mines

PTI n SHIMLA

The Himachal Pradesh government has signed a pact with MSTC Ltd to facilitate e-auction services for mining leases and composite licenses in the state, Industries Minister Harshwardhan Chauhan said on Friday. Chauhan said the state government will auction two big blocks of limestone in Arki tehsil of Solan district and Sunni tehsil of Shimla district. The limestone from these blocks is of fine quality, making it highly valuable for use in cement, steel, glass and fertilizer industries, the minister said. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed by Director of Industries Rakesh Kumar Prajapati on behalf of the state government and Regional Manager Nitin Anand representing Metal Scrap Trade Corporation (MSTC) Ltd, a Government of India enterprise under the Ministry of Steel, according to a statement issued here.



Further, Chauhan highlighted that the auction of these mineral mines would not only boost the state's revenue but also create employment opportunities for the local population. On Friday, the minister also presided over the 231st meeting of the Board of Directors of HP General Industries Corporation Ltd here. During the meeting, the board approved a 7 per cent dividend payment to the Himachal Pradesh government for FY23, amounting to Rs 50.06 lakh. This dividend represents a 2 per cent increase over the state government's standard directive of 5 per cent, the statement said.

Shivraj lauds Modi Govt's efforts to uplift backward classes, mocks Cong for 'lip service'

PTI n PATNA

Senior BJP leader and Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Friday praised the Narendra Modi government for its efforts to uplift backward classes and accused the Congress-led opposition of merely offering "lip service" to the cause. The Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development was addressing a party function in memory of Ramphal Mandal, a freedom fighter who went to the gallows

at the age of 19 for killing three British officials who were blamed for a police firing during the 1942 Quit India movement. Chouhan, a former chief minister of Madhya Pradesh, noted that Mandal was a "dhanuk", a backward class "known for its contribution in nation building, in my home state as well as Bihar". "Our opponents only pay lip service to backward classes who have got their due only under the current BJP regime, with an 'ati pichhda' (extremely backward class)

Narendra Modi at the helm", said Chouhan. He added, "It is Modi who gave 27 per cent reservation to the OBCs in entrance tests like NEET. It is this government which granted constitutional status to the National OBC Commission. Compare this with the Congress which slept over recommendations of the Kalelkar Commission". Chouhan's aversion comes in the backdrop of the opposition, led by Rahul Gandhi, making a strong pitch for "caste census", which implies enumeration of



social groups other than SCs, STs and religious minorities, which was last undertaken about a century ago. The BJP leader said, "Mere talks will not do. We need to make a difference to the lives of the common people. The Modi government is committed to build 13 lakh houses in the next four years for the benefit of the homeless. Entrepreneurship is being encouraged among women through schemes like Lakhpati Didi". "We are also trying to ensure an increase in agricultural output,

alongside a reduction in cost of farming, so that agriculture is not seen as an economically unviable activity. Activities like horticulture and floriculture are also being encouraged and farmers are being provided support when they face losses because natural calamities", the agriculture minister said. Earlier, Chouhan held a discussion with farmers and said he was "amazed" to see stalls of local items like makhana, rice, honey and maize put up at the state-of-the-art 'Krishi Bhavan'. "In Bihar, we do not have large

tracts of land. More than 90 per cent of cultivators are marginal farmers. But they are working wonders", remarked Chouhan. The Minister also said that "makhana" (fox nuts), which is cultivated mostly in Bihar, is in huge demand abroad and its export would bring immense benefits to farmers. "Diversification of agriculture is on the government's roadmap... Along with traditional crops, we will encourage cultivation of items which could bring in more money", the minister added.

Himachal to launch new flight routes to connect Chandigarh, Kullu, Dharamshala

PTI n SHIMLA

In a bid to further boost tourism in the state, the Himachal Pradesh government is set to introduce new flight routes connecting Chandigarh, Kullu and Dharamshala, officials said on Friday. According to the officials, the government is already in discussions with airlines and other stakeholders to launch flights in these routes. The direct flight between Kullu and Dharamshala is expected to significantly benefit the tourism sector, addressing a long-standing demand from visitors, a statement issued here said. Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu emphasised the government's commitment to attracting high-end tourists to the state. "Strengthening air connectivity was crucial to achieving our tourism goals and reducing travel time and costs for tourists is essential," he



said. "Himachal Pradesh is blessed with breathtaking landscapes and has immense potential for tourism. Systematic development of tourism infrastructure would not only increase tourist footfalls but also bolster the local economy," CM Sukhu said. Four flight routes, linking a few popular tourist destinations in the state with other parts of the country, are currently operational. Flights on the Delhi-

Shimla-Delhi and Shimla-Dharamshala-Shimla routes operate daily, while the Amritsar-Shimla-Amritsar and Amritsar-Kullu-Amritsar routes are operational thrice a week. In addition to expanding flight routes, the Himachal Pradesh government is also developing new heliports to further improve air connectivity for tourists, the statement said. "Rs 13 crore has been allocated for the construction of heli-

ports in Rakkar and Palampur in Kangra district, Reckong Peo in Kinnaur district and another in Chamba district," it said. "The hilly terrain of Himachal Pradesh makes the construction of heliports beneficial," the chief minister. "These heliports would attract more tourists by saving travel time and they would also provide assistance to local residents in emergencies, if any," he added. The more tourists we attract, the more benefits would accrue to the people of the state, Sukhu said, adding that the state government was adopting a focused approach to establish these heliports, ensuring that each district headquarters was connected to this facility. Furthermore, the state government has declared Kangra district as the tourism capital of Himachal Pradesh and is upgrading the necessary tourism infrastructure in the district, the statement said.

Prime suspect in schoolgirl's sexual assault at fake NCC camp case commits suicide

PTI n KRISHNAGIRI (TAMIL NADU)

The prime suspect in the sexual assault of a school girl at a fake NCC camp at Bargur in the district died allegedly by suicide on Friday, said police. Sivaraman reportedly consumed rat control paste ahead of his arrest on August 19, they said. He was admitted to the Government Medical College Hospital in Krishnagiri, where he was undergoing treatment for fracturing his leg when he attempted to escape from being caught by the police. Later, he was referred to the Government Medical College Hospital, Salem as his condition worsened, and he died today. Incidentally, Sivaraman's father Ashok Kumar died in a road accident when he was riding a two-wheeler in an inebriated



condition on Thursday, a senior police official said. Sivaraman was among 11 people, including the school authorities, who were arrested by the Bargur All-Woman police. He had organised the fake NCC camp where the girl student studying in class 8 and several other girls were sexually assaulted. About 41 students, including 17 girls, participated in the fake NCC camp recently and the incident of sexual assault came to light after the girl narrated her trauma to her par-

ents, who then lodged a complaint with the police. Opposition parties AIADMK and BJP have raised suspicion over the death of Sivaraman by suicide following his father's demise allegedly due to a road accident and wondered if any attempt was being made to shield the real culprit involved in the sexual assault and abuse of the girls at the fake NCC camp. Citing media reports, AIADMK General Secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami said the timing of Sivaraman's death before the Special Investigation Team (SIT) commenced the probe into the case, and also that of Ashok Kumar on Thursday night raises doubts. "The public wonders whether Sivaraman has been killed fearing he might reveal the names of real culprits involved in the criminal activity and

that the police are trying to shield the real culprits," Palaniswami said in a statement here. He demanded that a SIT undertake a thorough probe and expose those involved in the sexual assault and abuse at the fake NCC camps. Also, he sought to know how many such camps were organised so far and if any action has been taken on the schools that allowed their children to participate in such fake camps. Expressing similar doubts, BJP state chief K Annamalai said, "both the deaths are suspicious... A strong doubt arises whether those involved in the case have actually been arrested or whether the two deaths took place to save someone," he said in a post on social media platform X. He urged the SIT to conduct a detailed enquiry and bring out the truth.

Siddaramaiah, Shivakumar in Delhi to discuss MUDA 'scam' with Congress high command



Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar arrived in the national capital on Friday for crucial meetings with top Congress leaders. Sources indicate that the primary focus of these discussions will be to formulate a strategy ahead of next week's high court hearing on the controversial Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) 'scam' case. The MUDA 'scam' has been a thorn in Siddaramaiah's side, with allegations of illegal land dealings involving the chief minister and his wife Parvathi flying thick and fast. At the heart of the controversy are claims that Parvathi received 14 plots in exchange for 3.16 acres of land, which was allegedly

acquired illegally by MUDA. Adding to political pressure, Karnataka Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot has recently sanctioned investigations under the Prevention of Corruption Act, intensifying scrutiny of the chief minister. Sources refer to the matter suggest that the Delhi meetings will also address pending corruption cases against the state BJP leaders. The Congress leadership is expected to devise a counter strategy to exert pressure on the governor. Accompanying Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar are several key state ministers, including Home Minister G Pameshwar, Social Welfare Minister H C Mahadevappa and Minority and Housing Minister B Z Zameer Ahmed Khan, MLC K Govindaraju and Power Minister K J George.

Teen gangraped in Assam, massive protests erupt

PTI n GUWAHATI

A 14-year-old girl was allegedly gang-raped by three persons in Assam's Nagaon district, triggering massive protests by people on the streets. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma promised that stern action would be taken against the perpetrators. The girl was allegedly assaulted and raped by three persons while she was returning home from her tuition on her bicycle in Dhing area around 8 pm on Thursday, police said. Three persons came in a motorcycle and surrounded the girl, who was then allegedly raped by them and left in an injured and unconscious state on the roadside near a pond. The class 10 student was later rescued by locals, who informed the police. She was initially taken to a health centre in Dhing and later shifted to a hospital in Nagaon for treatment and medical examination. "The criminals who dared to commit such a heinous crime against a minor Hindu girl of Dhing will not be spared by the law. I have directed the DGP and



Water Resources Minister Pijush Hazarika to rush to Dhing and take the toughest action," Sarma told reporters in Hailakandi. Sarma alleged that after Lok Sabha elections, "a section of members of a particular community have become very active and have been encouraged to commit such crimes. We will, however, come down heavily on the perpetrators and nobody will be spared." In the last two months, 22 such crimes against women have taken place and this is

the 23rd such incident in the state, he added. "In Lower and central Assam and Barak Valley districts, where indigenous people have become a numeric minority, they are living in constant fear. People outside these regions cannot gauge this harsh reality," he said. The chief minister urged all to be sensitive about these issues of the indigenous people. "We should identify the real perpetrators behind these heinous crimes and not be

stuck in blaming communities within the Hindu society," Sarma said. The police said that one person had been already arrested and another detained while a search was on to nab the others. DGP G P Singh reached Dhing and visited the crime scene along with district police officials. Meanwhile, people from all sections of the society hit the streets on Friday morning demanding the arrest of the culprits. Shopkeepers downed the shutters of their business establishments and social and political organisations demanded stringent action against the culprits and security for women and girls. Tension prevailed in the area and police patrolling and vigil have been intensified. Earlier, Sarma had said that "the horrific incident at Dhing, involving a minor, is a crime against humanity and has struck our collective conscience". "We will NOT SPARE anyone & BRING the perpetrators to JUSTICE. I've directed @DGPAssamPolice to visit the site and ensure swift action against such monsters," Sarma posted on X.

Four labourers among 5 killed as under-construction cottage's roof caves in at MP resort

PTI n MHOW (MP)

Five persons -- four labourers and their contractor -- were killed after the roof of an under-construction cottage at a resort collapsed in Indore district amid heavy rains, a police official said on Friday. The incident occurred at Choral village in Mhow tehsil, about 40km from the district headquarters, on Thursday night when four labourers and their contractor were sleeping under the freshly laid concrete slab, which suddenly came crashing down, trapping them, he said. Two of the deceased were brothers. Police were informed about the roof collapse at around 6.30 am and they immediately rushed to the spot and started a rescue operation, Indore (Rural) Superintendent of Police Hitika Wasal told PTI over the phone from the construction site which is surrounded by forests and hillocks. The operation ended with the recovery of five bodies, which were sent to a hospital, she said, adding "We have launched an investigation

into the incident." The accident came to light in the morning when other labourers turned up for work at the site, said inspector Amit Kumar of the Simrol police station. The deceased were identified as labourers Hariom Malviya (22), Ajay Malviya (20), Gopal Prajapati (45), Raja (22) and their contractor Pawan Panchal (35), Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Umakant Chaudhary said. Hariom and Ajay Malviya were brothers, he added. "The roof slab which collapsed was constructed just one or two days ago," Chaudhary added. The police officer said six cottages were being readied at the resort and their structures appeared weak at the first glance. The department concerned will check the quality of construction work, Chaudhary added. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav expressed grief over the tragedy and announced financial assistance of Rs 2 lakh each to the family of the deceased. Indore District Magistrate Ashish Singh said.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Surging ahead

Kamala's socialism resonates with people while personal attacks by Trump diminish his chances in the US elections

As the United States gears up for another contentious election, the spotlight is once again on Vice President Kamala Harris. Her steadfast commitment to secularism has struck a chord with a diverse electorate that values the separation of church and state. In contrast, former President Donald Trump's attacks on Harris, aimed at undermining her credibility, may be backfiring, potentially diminishing his chances in the upcoming elections. As the political climate in the United States continues to evolve, Vice President Kamala Harris has emerged as a prominent advocate for policies rooted in democratic socialism. Her focus on social justice, economic equality, and government intervention to address systemic issues resonates with a growing segment of the American electorate. Meanwhile, former President Donald Trump's attacks on Harris appear to be weakening his appeal, potentially diminishing his chances in the upcoming elections. Kamala Harris's brand of socialism centres on creating a fairer society through progressive taxation expanded healthcare access, and stronger social safety nets. Her policies aim to address the widening wealth gap, ensure affordable education, and promote racial and gender equality. These ideas have gained traction, particularly among younger voters, minorities, and working-class Americans who feel left behind by the current economic system. Harris's commitment to these principles is seen as a response to the pressing needs of a diverse and economically stratified nation. By advocating for policies that prioritize the needs of the many over the interests of the few, Harris is tapping into a widespread desire for systemic change. In contrast, Donald Trump's strategy has often relied on personal attacks, attempting to discredit Harris by questioning her policies and character. However, these comments have not only failed to undermine Harris's growing support but may also be backfiring on Trump himself. Many voters perceive Trump's rhetoric as divisive and out of touch with the issues that matter most to them, such as healthcare, education, and economic justice. Moreover, Trump's focus on personal attacks rather than substantive policy debates could be alienating voters who are looking for solutions to real problems. As the electorate becomes increasingly concerned with issues like income inequality, climate change, and access to healthcare, Trump's attacks may come across as a distraction from the pressing issues at hand. Kamala Harris's approach, rooted in democratic socialism, offers a vision of an America where everyone has a fair shot at success. This vision is resonating with a growing number of voters who are frustrated with the status quo and are seeking leaders who will champion their interests. Meanwhile, Trump's jabs may be costing him the support of those who are tired of political mudslinging and are looking for a leader who can address their needs.



These incidents happened within days when the entire nation was gripped by the horrors of the R G Kar Medical College and Hospital at Kolkata. And these are not isolated incidents – they are part of a grim reality where a rape is reported every 21 minutes. Yet, despite the horror these crimes evoke, they are quickly forgotten by all except the victims and their families, who are left to fight lonely, often futile battles for justice for years, which sometimes is only the ray of hope for them. India's response to sexual violence remains disturbingly inadequate. More than a decade has passed since the Nirbhaya case – a brutal gang rape that shocked the nation and led to the passage of new sexual assault laws. But the situation has barely improved. Nearly 50 years before Nirbhaya, the fearless, Aruna Shanbaug, a 25-year-old nurse, was viciously assaulted by a hospital cleaner in Mumbai. Sodomized, strangled with a metal chain, and left for dead, she survived – only to remain in a vegetative state for 41 years until her death. Her ordeal led to a landmark judgment on passive euthanasia in India, yet her suffering stands as a testament to the enduring failures of a society that continues to fail its women. The recent brutal rape and murder of a 31-year-old postgraduate trainee doctor in Kolkata serves as a grim reminder that little has changed. Female healthcare workers or

women workers per se, still fear for their safety even in supposed sanctuaries such as hospitals. This ongoing crisis underscores the dire need for real change – a change that goes beyond laws and addresses the deep-seated cultural and institutional failures that allow such atrocities to persist. This incident of R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital has shaken the conscience of West Bengal, and the ripple effects are being felt across the political landscape – and the entire nation. The public's reaction to this crime has been fierce and unforgiving. Protests have erupted across the state, with citizens demanding justice not only for the victim but also calling for broader reforms to ensure such incidents are not repeated. The political and social response to the incident has been equally chaotic. The decision for a swift call for a CBI investigation and capital punishment, alongside the rally for "Khela Hobe Divas," has been met with criticism for its timing and focus. Additionally, state actions, such as the transfer of doctors allegedly involved in protests and the use of social media to counter celebrity critiques (read singers), have further fueled debates about the handling of the case. The political implications of this incident could be far-reaching. Beyond politics, the safety of women and girls in India remains a critical concern, deeply rooted in societal norms, legal frameworks, and institutional practices. Despite advancements in legislation and public awareness, instances of violence and harassment against women are prevalent. High-profile cases of assault, trafficking, and domestic violence highlight the persistent vulnerabilities faced by women and girls. The legal system, while equipped with laws like the 'Protection of Human Rights Act' and the 'Criminal Law Amendment Act', or for that matter, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO of 2012), often struggles with implementation and enforcement. There are systemic delays in justice delivery and shortcomings in police response, which exacerbate the sense of insecurity. Protective measures, including the establishment of fast-track courts and specialized police units, aim to address these issues and provide some ray of light in this dark world for women. Further, societal attitudes towards women play a significant role in undermining these measures. Deep-seated patriarchal views and cultural practices continue to normalize gender-based violence, making it difficult for protective laws to translate into tangible safety for women. The lack of comprehensive sexual education and community engagement further perpetuates harmful stereotypes and behaviours. Right education for the boys at home is another crucial area for intervention by the government and NGOs. The role of NGOs and grassroots movements has been pivotal in advocating for women's rights and safety. Effective safety measures must involve not only legal reforms but also significant shifts in overall attitudes and community involvement. The challenge before the authorities is not just one of governance but of moral leadership – a test that will define their legacy to guarantee safety to women and girl children. *Aami tomari maatiro konya, janoni bosundhara /Tobe aamar manobojanmo keno bonchito kora...* (I am no other, but the daughter of yours, O' motherland/Why deprive me of the legacy of my human life...). Written in the year 1933 by Rabindranath Tagore, these lines echo far and wide and call for collective action. It is time to stand up to see where we stand and where we fail. (The writer is Program Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)

PICTALK



A mahout bathes an elephant at Elephant Orphanage in Pinnawala

PTI

Empowering Women: Mandatory self-defence training in schools

This proactive approach could provide women with the skills and confidence to fend off potential attackers, empowering them

The cauldron of public rage is boiling over in the aftermath of the rape and murder of a young resident doctor in Kolkata. It isn't the first time that the nation is witnessing such gruesomeness, and it won't be the last either unless something drastic happens at all levels – societal, legal and psychological.

It isn't that there were no horrific instances of sexual assault on women before Nirbhaya. There were, but Nirbhaya's case brought the issue of women's safety (or the lack of it) front and centre, and it resulted in instituting legislation that offered women more protection and legal support. Stringent measures have been implemented, yet incidents keep happening across the country. It nearly feels like no external force can stem this rot, and it is time for women to take their protection into their own hands, literally. In light of the above, I am wondering if it wouldn't be more prudent and practical to arm our girls with self-defence tactics right from the beginning. Crimes against women have become so reg-



ular, that attention must now turn towards finding means to empower women in a way that will give them confidence and security in different realms of their professional and private lives. The violations can probably be attributed to a deep-rooted patriarchal mindset that has been the bane of women (not just in India), but fixing the blame on society or its vagaries does not help us fight critical issues such as this. It's worse when women themselves are held responsible for the abuses they are subjected to. If society wants to pin the responsibility of safety on women, then there must be an action plan to arm women with the necessary armament. In simple words, why not

make martial arts and other self-defence lessons compulsory in the school curriculum? If there can be a sports or PT period, there can be a martial arts period too. The very idea of equipping our girls with the skills to fend off troublemakers makes me jubilant and offers hope that no legislation can offer. Widespread condemnation and demand for punitive action cannot pre-empt future instances.

What can curb it is the general knowledge among errant men that the woman they have cornered is capable of packing a punch, a chop or a kick that will neutralise them. Martial arts has been an optional activity for girls in an urban setting, but only when it is introduced as a part of the curriculum from primary grades in every school and they must be genuinely emancipated from the dangers that lurk at every corner of their daily lives. It is encouraging to learn that the government is intent on its aim to ensure the safety of women in the country and hand out the severest punishment to perpetrators,

but these are steps taken post-incident. What is suggested in this piece is a plan to provide a pre-emptive measure, a way to forestall violent attacks against women by their defences. It can deter a good majority of men on the loose with vagrant ideas. Parents who are better informed enrol their daughters in self-defence programmes, but they are few and far between. The real difference will be seen only when every school-going child is taught the techniques to ward off an offender by dint of their physical prowess. If our women can win medals in the boxing and wrestling rings, if they can build enough brawns along with brains in school, if every man who casts a salacious glance on a woman remembers that his prospective victim is not a push-over, then there will be change. Let us empower our girls with the spunk to keep the marauders at bay.

(The author is a columnist, author and writing coach based in Dubai; views are personal)



ASHA IYER KUMAR

VALID CONCERNS ON E-COMMERCE
Madam — Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, has raised valid concerns about the questionable practices of e-commerce companies, particularly regarding predatory pricing, cash burning, successive years of losses, and the use of FDI to cover these losses. His concerns emphasize the need for policymakers to ensure a level playing field for local businesses and industries. More troubling is the destination and intent behind the FDI in these companies. E-commerce companies consistently declare significant losses in their income tax returns, carrying them forward year after year to offset against future profits. This cycle continues with mergers, where the losses of merged companies are also carried forward. In contrast, local traders and entrepreneurs pay regular taxes on their incomes, while e-commerce companies avoid taxes through their accounting strategies. This tax advantage, along with the convenience and wide range of products offered by online trade, gives e-commerce companies a significant edge. Goyal suggests that cash burn by e-commerce companies should not be allowed as a deduction, and the period for carrying forward losses should be limited to a maximum of two years. The impact of e-commerce on local traders is already evident, with potential job losses on the horizon. Another concern is the shift of youth from traditional businesses and agriculture to delivery jobs, leading to their migration from rural areas to metro cities. Vinod Johri | New Delhi

MODERN SLAVERY
Madam — "I freed a thousand slaves. I could have freed more if only they knew they were slaves". One need not look beyond these thought-provoking words of American abolitionist Harriet Tubman to decipher the evils of slavery. Though Tubman spoke at the end of the 19th century, her words hold true for modern slavery as well. Human trafficking, bonded

labour and forced marriages are direct examples of today's slavery whereas domestic work, construction activities, and sexual exploitation fall into the "domain" of forced labour. Nothing can exemplify modern slavery better than the child labour. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has identified about twenty five million men and women as victims of modern slavery. Nobody can turn somebody into a slave unless the latter allows them is now something like a misnomer. ILO has specially targeted migrant workers who are easily lured because of their poor understanding of local language and tradition. To take stock of the progress done by ancillary agencies and the respective governments, "International Day for the Abolition of Slave Trade" is observed on August 23. It is hoped that the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights that states "no one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms" gains a fresh momentum. Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

ment wanted to rope in 45 lateral entries into our civil services, which was not the first time, it has been happening since Nehru's days. But such is the compulsion of coalition politics that the government had to give in to the demands of its own allies. Prime Minister Modi had also rolled back critical three farm laws which were in the larger interest of the farmers. So now after this decision, it is going to boost opposition morale to put Gol on the mat again in future, and it has given Modi's government a negative and weak government's image. Hopefully it will learn its lessons and take opposition and allies on board before rolling out any sensitive changes or policies in future. It is the most democratic thing to do anyway because what is democracy if it is not inclusive and does not reflect people's will. Bal Govind | Noida

NO LIMITS FOR PARA PLAYERS
Madam — The season of Paralympics is all set to begin with Indian athletic contingent start reaching over there in the Game village of Paris. So far, the closing of Paris Olympics done, with India taking on six medals only, however some sports spectators and aficionados are setting the medal count limit with 12 medals at the Paralympics. India has successfully lifted 19 medals in Paralympics Tokyo edition of 2021, for all those are setting the bar before the real talent actually comes up, it is crucial to appreciate the talent and zeal of our para players. Let's don't set any specific boundary of medals that they have to win for the nation. Why just 12, our players have the capability of winning much more. May their competitive spirit and sportsmanship, let them conquer the sports laurels in a celebrated manner without any pressure. Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

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Violence against women: Unheeded cries

As public outrage grows, the challenge before the authorities is to provide safety and dignity of women across the country



RAJDEEP PATHAK

In a flashback all the past horrendous incidents of violence against women, particularly incidents of rape cross the mind. Here in our country, newspaper pages more than often bring out horrifying accounts of sexual violence – a 65-year-old grandmother assaulted in Kharagpur or a teenage girl, native of Uttar Pradesh, was gang-raped inside a government bus at the Dehradun Inter-State Bus Terminal (ISBT) in Uttarakhand on August 12, 2024, and the latest from Maharashtra, when on August 20, 2024, two minor girls, aged 4, studying in Nursery, were sexually assaulted by a school sweeper in the washroom of a well-known Adarsh Vidya Mandir in Badlapur school near Mumbai. These incidents happened within days when the entire nation was gripped by the horrors of the R G Kar Medical College and Hospital at Kolkata. And these are not isolated incidents – they are part of a grim reality where a rape is reported every 21 minutes. Yet, despite the horror these crimes evoke, they are quickly forgotten by all except the victims and their families, who are left to fight lonely, often futile battles for justice for years, which sometimes is only the ray of hope for them. India's response to sexual violence remains disturbingly inadequate. More than a decade has passed since the Nirbhaya case – a brutal gang rape that shocked the nation and led to the passage of new sexual assault laws. But the situation has barely improved. Nearly 50 years before Nirbhaya, the fearless, Aruna Shanbaug, a 25-year-old nurse, was viciously assaulted by a hospital cleaner in Mumbai. Sodomized, strangled with a metal chain, and left for dead, she survived – only to remain in a vegetative state for 41 years until her death. Her ordeal led to a landmark judgment on passive euthanasia in India, yet her suffering stands as a testament to the enduring failures of a society that continues to fail its women. The recent brutal rape and murder of a 31-year-old postgraduate trainee doctor in Kolkata serves as a grim reminder that little has changed. Female healthcare workers or



women workers per se, still fear for their safety even in supposed sanctuaries such as hospitals. This ongoing crisis underscores the dire need for real change – a change that goes beyond laws and addresses the deep-seated cultural and institutional failures that allow such atrocities to persist. This incident of R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital has shaken the conscience of West Bengal, and the ripple effects are being felt across the political landscape – and the entire nation. The public's reaction to this crime has been fierce and unforgiving. Protests have erupted across the state, with citizens demanding justice not only for the victim but also calling for broader reforms to ensure such incidents are not repeated. The political and social response to the incident has been equally chaotic. The decision for a swift call for a CBI investigation and capital punishment, alongside the rally for "Khela Hobe Divas," has been met with criticism for its timing and focus. Additionally, state actions, such as the transfer of doctors allegedly involved in protests and the use of social media to counter celebrity critiques (read singers), have further fueled debates about the handling of the case. The political implications of this incident could be far-reaching. Beyond politics, the safety of women and girls in India remains a critical concern, deeply rooted in societal norms, legal frameworks, and institutional practices. Despite advancements in legislation and public awareness, instances of violence and harassment against women are prevalent. High-profile cases of assault, trafficking, and domestic violence highlight the persistent vulnerabilities faced by women and girls. The legal system, while equipped with laws like the 'Protection of Human Rights Act' and the 'Criminal Law Amendment Act', or for that matter, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO of 2012), often struggles with implementation and enforcement. There are systemic delays in justice delivery and shortcomings in police response, which exacerbate the sense of insecurity. Protective measures, including the establishment of fast-track courts and specialized police units, aim to address these issues and provide some ray of light in this dark world for women. Further, societal attitudes towards women play a significant role in undermining these measures. Deep-seated patriarchal views and cultural practices continue to normalize gender-based violence, making it difficult for protective laws to translate into tangible safety for women. The lack of comprehensive sexual education and community engagement further perpetuates harmful stereotypes and behaviours. Right education for the boys at home is another crucial area for intervention by the government and NGOs. The role of NGOs and grassroots movements has been pivotal in advocating for women's rights and safety. Effective safety measures must involve not only legal reforms but also significant shifts in overall attitudes and community involvement. The challenge before the authorities is not just one of governance but of moral leadership – a test that will define their legacy to guarantee safety to women and girl children. *Aami tomari maatiro konya, janoni bosundhara /Tobe aamar manobojanmo keno bonchito kora...* (I am no other, but the daughter of yours, O' motherland/Why deprive me of the legacy of my human life...). Written in the year 1933 by Rabindranath Tagore, these lines echo far and wide and call for collective action. It is time to stand up to see where we stand and where we fail. (The writer is Program Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)



HIGH-PROFILE CASES OF ASSAULT, TRAFFICKING, AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HIGHLIGHT THE PERSISTENT VULNERABILITIES FACED BY WOMEN

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Lateral entries rolled back



propos to "The Govt steps back" published on 22nd August, it is my response". Efficient bureaucracy leads to good governance and with this good intention the gov-

ernment wanted to rope in 45 lateral entries into our civil services, which was not the first time, it has been happening since Nehru's days. But such is the compulsion of coalition politics that the government had to give in to the demands of its own allies. Prime Minister Modi had also rolled back critical three farm laws which were in the larger interest of the farmers. So now after this decision, it is going to boost opposition morale to put Gol on the mat again in future, and it has given Modi's government a negative and weak government's image. Hopefully it will learn its lessons and take opposition and allies on board before rolling out any sensitive changes or policies in future. It is the most democratic thing to do anyway because what is democracy if it is not inclusive and does not reflect people's will. Bal Govind | Noida

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FIRST COLUMN

THE ESSENCE OF BEING:
BEYOND BODY AND MIND

The soul is envisioned as pure and tranquil, the mind remains latent and unmanifest.



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

It is now becoming something of a cliché in various circles of modern life—from religion to psychology to holistic medicine—to use the phrase “body-mind-soul” or “body-mind-spirit” when referring to our totality as human beings. So, what do we exactly mean when we ask, What is the body? What is the mind? What is the soul? and What is the spirit? It is often said that the real self is behind the mind or intellect. It is also said that we can experience and know the self when we go beyond the mind, which is like a sheath of the soul.

This is truly said, but it means something different than what is generally understood because to experience or perceive the soul, we do not have to cross the mind which is considered to be a subtle form of matter. No! Instead, we have to calm the ripples of the mind, stop it from being agitated by the outer world, and check its outward tendency. From a spiritual perspective, it should be understood that when the soul is in the soul-world, it is pure, calm, tranquil, and above all bondages or attributes.

There, the mind is unmanifest, and its abilities of volition, action, desire, understanding, ascertainment, etc., are not at play but at rest—not emerged but latent and merged. While in the soul-world, the soul is pinned, so to say, only on one thought, one consciousness, one feeling, one understanding, viz—‘I am a Soul, I am a Soul, I am a Soul’. That is all—nothing more. The turbulence, the vagrancy, the sportiveness of the mind is at rest, or you may say that, in a sense, it is in deep sleep. Therefore, when it is said that “If we want to experience the peace and tranquility



of the soul or have to know the self, we will have to go beyond the intellect and the mind,” it does not mean that we will penetrate, percolate through, tear away, or cross over to a material form as the mind is understood to be. No! It means that to know ourselves, we will have to concentrate our mind on the maxim: “I am a soul, a child of the Supreme Soul.”

We will have to make our intellect and mind one-pointed and disposed to understand the Self alone. We will have to lay all our memories, thoughts, feelings, etc., to rest. This is what would be ‘going beyond’ the mind. For this, there are so many methods that have been advocated, demonstrated, advised, and laid down by various spiritual and religious teachers. However, the all-knowing Almighty has offered His supreme advice that we should control the mind using the intellect. This means that we have to know the Self, the Supreme, etc., and using that, know the Self to calm ourselves. He has sermonized that it can be best done by pinning the mind on the name, form, attributes, and relation of the Supreme with the soul.

His sermon is, “Manmana Bhav,” i.e., concentrate your mind on me, your love, your faith in me. And I assure you that I will bless you with supreme sanctity, peace, and bliss, and you will attain me. I will purge you of all sins, rest assured. If we act as HE says, all our inner conflict will end, and we will work only as His divine instrument. By aligning ourselves with the Supreme, our mind will cease its endless wandering, and we will find ourselves centred and at peace. We will then be able to adjust ourselves easily and quickly in any situation. Having been freed from other psychological memories, except that of the Supreme and our duty, our energy potential will find no resistance and will be free for full performance. We will thus be able to attain excellence and experience peace and tranquillity without putting in much effort. This state of effortless being is what every soul seeks, whether knowingly or unknowingly. The Supreme guides us to this state of fulfilment, away from the darkness of ignorance. Now, it’s up to us whether to listen to the Almighty or keep wandering in the darkness of ignorance.

(The writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist; views are personal)

Reject calls for extraditing
Sheikh Hasina

India must stand firm in its refusal to hand over a leader who has been a steadfast ally, particularly when such demands come from factions with anti-India sentiment

HIARANMAY
KARLEKAR

India must not pay the slightest heed to the demand by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party’s secretary-general, Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, to extradite Sheikh Hasina to his country. From reports in Indian newspapers, he seems to have cited two grounds, both utterly laughable, for his demand. The first is that she should stand trial for the murder and other charges levelled against her. The question is: will she receive a fair trial under the conditions now prevailing in Bangladesh? The matter is important. Even if the charges levelled against her are true, and she has done terrible things, she has an inalienable right to a fair trial.

This, she will not get with large mobs literally baying for her blood, statues of her father, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the architect of the country’s emergence from East Pakistan to sovereign Bangladesh, are being pulled down, the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum of 32 Dhanmondi, Dhaka, his erstwhile residence, ransacked and burnt, and the Liberation War Museum at Suhrawardy Udyan Dhaka, razed to the ground.

Clearly, a section of people is trying to take advantage of the situation created by the Anti-Discrimination Students’ Movement (ADSM), to target the symbols of Bangladesh’s liberation struggle. Undoing the country’s independence and its re-unification with Pakistan is, of course, out of the question. But cultivating closer ties with Pakistan, pursuing a stridently hostile policy towards India, which such elements have never ceased hating for playing a decisive role in Bangladesh’s independence by routing Pakistan in the 1971 war, and replacing Bangladesh’s secular, democratic polity by one practicing fundamentalist Islam, has been a part of the agenda of the country’s fundamentalist Islamist groups.

It is no secret that the Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, recently re-incarnated as Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami (BJE), its students’ organization, Bangladesh Islami Chhatra Shibir (BICS)—which was Islami Chhatra Sangha (ICS) in 1971—and allied organisations like al-Badr, al-Shams, Razakars, and Shanti Committee, had sided with Pakistan and committed despicable war crimes during the liberation war of 1971. A number of them have been punished, including some who have been executed, by the International Crimes Tribunal set by the Bangladesh Government in 2009 by an amendment to the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973, to investigate and prosecute personnel of the Pakistan Army and BJE, Razakars, Al-Badr, Al-Shams, and Shanti Committee, accused of committing genocide during the 1971 liberation war.

The BJE and the BICS, which have close links with Islamist terrorist organisations like Ansar al-Islam, linked to Al-Qaeda in the Indian Sub-continent (AQIS) and Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), clearly joined the ADSM to further their own agenda, which is transforming a secular and democratic Bangladesh into an Islamic emirate. To do this, they must eliminate from the political scene not only the Awami League and its leaders, particularly Sheikh Hasina, but all secular, democratic and humanist civil society organisations and leaders.



GIVEN THAT THE AWAMI LEAGUE HAS BEEN REDUCED TO SUCH STRAITS THAT IT COULD NOT EVEN OBSERVE THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE GRENADE ATTACKS ON AUGUST 21, 2004, IT COULD HARDLY BE IN A POSITION TO CONSPIRE TO DEFEAT THE STUDENTS’ UPSURGE

Revealingly, circulating in Bangladesh in the wake of Sheikh Hasina’s ouster, is a list of intellectuals, scholars, lawyers, academics, human rights social activists, who its shadowy authors want to “see.”

Included in the list of 50 or more were the Professor Abul Barakat (a well-known economist who had exposed the sources of the BJE’s phenomenal wealth), Rana Dasgupta (general secretary of the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council), AAMS Arefin Siddique, (former vice-chancellor, Dhaka University), and Professor Sadeka Halim (vice-chancellor, Jagannath University) and a number of journalists and film personalities. In these circumstances, Sheikh Hasina’s life will be in danger if she is extradited to Bangladesh: nor can she be assured of a fair trial, particularly given the fact that judges will either be under tremendous pressure or will be pre-disposed to convict her as they have been appointed by the Interim Government and are hostile to her.

The second ground that, according to the reports, Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir has cited for Sheikh Hasina’s extradition, is that the Awami League and she were conspiring in New Delhi to falsify (sic) the victory that students and other citizens of Bangladesh have achieved. Nothing could be more ludicrous. Most Awami League leaders are in Bangladesh, busy defending themselves in courts

against charges brought against them, or in hiding. A number of them have been lynched. The homes and business establishments of many of them have been destroyed and set aflame.

In fact, the Awami League has been reduced to such straits that, unlike in the earlier years, it could not stage an event to observe the anniversary of the grenade attack on an Awami League rally in Dhaka on August 21, 2004, to protest against increasing terrorist attacks on its cadres and leaders. Perpetrated by the terrorist outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami Bangladesh (HUJIB), it left at least 24 persons dead and over 300 injured. Among the wounded was Sheikh Hasina, whose hearing has been permanently impaired. Ivy Rahman, secretary of the Awami League’s women’s affairs wing and wife of its general-secretary, Zillur Rahman, who subsequently became Bangladesh’s president, was also seriously hurt. She later died later in hospital.

Given that the Awami League has been reduced to such straits that it could not even observe the anniversary of the grenade attacks on August 21, 2004, it could hardly be in a position to conspire to defeat the students’ upsurge. It may well be argued that Sheikh Hasina needs to be present in courts to stand trial and face cross-examination to establish the veracity of the charges levelled against her, or examine the complicity of others involved.

For that, the interim government or its successor must establish that a prima facie case exists against her and then request India to allow an emissary to question her in any facility that New Delhi may provide. Meanwhile, there can be no question of extraditing her. The BNP-BJE coalition government, in office from 2001 to 2006 with Begum Khaleda Zia as prime minister, made no bones about its hostility to India. Indeed, except those headed by Sheikh Hasina, all governments of Bangladesh since the murder of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975, have been hostile to India and pro-Pakistan.

To cite one example, under them, Bangladesh provided sanctuary, assistance and training to north-east India’s secessionist rebel groups. On the other hand, Sheikh Hasina not only closed down their sanctuaries but handed over to India some of the leaders of these secessionist terrorist groups. In fact, India-Bangladesh relations were perhaps more cordial under her than even when Sheikh Mujibur Rahman headed the government in Dhaka. Extraditing Sheikh Hasina would send the message round that even the most loyal friends of India cannot depend on it for support in times of distress. That is not something that New Delhi should want.

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

Lateral entry in bureaucracy: A double-edged sword of reform and controversy

The implementation of lateral entry has sparked serious concerns about social justice and the representation of marginalised groups in the Indian bureaucracy

The introduction of lateral appointments in India’s bureaucracy has sparked intense debate, particularly due to the absence of reservations for Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC), and Economically Weaker Sections (EWS). The issue gained traction with a recent UPSC advertisement for 45 senior positions, which did not include the constitutionally mandated quotas, raising concerns about social justice and the representation of disadvantaged groups in high-level government roles.



K S TOMAR

trations. However, the lack of provisions for reservations in this system has led to widespread criticism. Rahul Gandhi, Leader of the Opposition, accused the NDA government of undermining the Constitution by excluding reservations from these appointments. He argued that this move was a direct attack on social justice, sidelining the underprivileged and diluting their representation in the

higher echelons of bureaucracy. In response, Arjun Meghwal pointed out the Congress’s past practices, highlighting the appointments of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh as Finance Secretary in 1971 and Montek Ahluwalia as Planning Commission Chairman without transparent procedures.

Since the inception of the lateral entry system in 2018, the government has received 6,077 applications, resulting in the appointment of 63 individuals to senior positions across various ministries, with approximately 35 from the private sector. While these appointments aim to bring in expertise and fresh perspectives, the exclusion of reservations has overshadowed the intended benefits. The backlog of vacancies

in proportion to these 63 officials can only be addressed if the government creates new posts specifically for candidates from SC, ST, OBC, and EWS categories. The delay in amending recruitment rules has already caused significant harm, as many eligible candidates may have crossed the age limit.

The introduction of lateral appointments has been met with mixed reactions within the bureaucracy. While it brings in specialized knowledge and fresh perspectives, it also poses several risks to the traditional bureaucratic structure:

Impact on Bureaucracy: A Mixed Bag; the introduction of lateral appointments has been met with mixed reactions. While it brings in specialized



knowledge and fresh perspectives, it also poses several risks to the traditional bureaucratic structure.

Demoralization of Bureaucracy: Traditional bureaucrats, who have risen through the ranks, may feel demoralized seeing lateral entrants appointed to senior positions without undergoing the rigorous training and years of service they have endured. This could lead to a perception that meritocracy is being

undermined and create uncertainty regarding career progression.

Integration Challenges: Lateral entrants may struggle to integrate into the established bureaucratic culture, leading to friction with traditional bureaucrats.

3rd. Potential Conflicts of Interest: Lateral entrants from the private sector may face conflicts of interest, where their decisions could be influenced by their previous affiliations.

This raises concerns about policy bias and the potential prioritization of private sector interests over the public good. **Accountability and Transparency Issues:** Unlike career bureaucrats, lateral entrants might not undergo the same level of public scrutiny

and evaluation, leading to concerns about transparency in decision-making. Their lack of deep institutional knowledge could also affect the quality of their decisions, especially in complex policy areas. **Impact on Administrative Cohesion:** The introduction of lateral entrants at senior levels could fragment authority within the bureaucracy, leading to inefficiencies and delays.

Positive Takeaways: Lateral entry into senior government positions offers several benefits:

Expertise Infusion: Brings specialized knowledge from various sectors, enhancing policy-making. **Diverse Perspectives:** Introduces new viewpoints, fostering innovative solutions.

Increased Efficiency: Private sector professionals bring a focus on performance and efficiency.

Skill Gap Bridging: Addresses deficiencies in areas like technology and finance. **Meritocracy Promotion:** Emphasizes skills over seniority, potentially improving leadership quality.

Governance Flexibility: Allows for quick adaptation to new challenges with experienced professionals.

Public-Private Collaboration: Strengthens ties between government and private sectors. (Writer has been ex chairperson of Standing Committee of All State Public service Commissions in India and former chairman of HP Public Service Commission; views are personal)

Kamala Harris accepts Democratic nomination

Warns of Trump's return risks



Delegates cheer during the Democratic National Convention Thursday in Chicago.

AP/PTI

PTI CHICAGO

Kamala Harris has used her presidential acceptance speech to present herself as a leader who could unite all Americans to chart a "new way forward" and warned them of "extremely serious" consequences of putting her Republican rival Donald Trump back in the White House.

Vice President Harris, who is of Indian and African heritage, on Thursday night accepted her party's nomination at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, becoming the second woman to do so for the Democratic Party after former first lady Hillary Clinton.

The 59-year-old leader walked on stage to thunderous applause and a standing ovation from the audience. Chants of "Yes You Can!" erupted before her remarks.

Taking the stage at the United Center in Chicago to accept her nomination, Harris, who was a tough prosecutor in California before becoming US Vice President, said she is no stranger to unlikely journeys. "On behalf of the people, on behalf of every American, regardless of party, race, gender or the language your grand-

mother speaks, on behalf of my mother and everyone who has ever set out on their own unlikely journey on behalf of Americans, like the people I grew up with, people who work hard, chase their dreams and look out for one another, on behalf of everyone whose story could only be written in the greatest nation on earth, I accept your nomination the United States," she said.

She fondly remembered her mother Shyamala Gopalan and said that she misses her every day, especially when she is on the verge of breaking the highest glass ceiling of the United States.

She said the November 5 election is the most important in America's history. "Our nation with this election has a precious, fleeting opportunity to move past the bitterness, cynicism, and divisive battles of the past. A chance to chart a new way forward. Not as members of any one party or faction, but as Americans," she said in her 40-minute speech.

Vice President Harris outlined her plans for a "new way forward" if she's elected to be the 47th president of the United States. "I will be a president who unites us around our highest aspirations. A president who leads — and listens. Who is

realistic, Practical and has common sense. And always fights for the American people. From the courthouse to the White House, that has been my life's work," Harris said.

She laid out the consequences of electing former president Trump, 78, to a second term. "In many ways, Donald Trump is an unserious man, but the consequences of putting Donald Trump back in the White House are extremely serious," she warned.

She spoke about the "chaos and calamity" of his years in the Oval Office and also pointed to him questioning election results in 2020 when he lost his reelection bid to Biden. "Donald Trump tried to throw away your votes. When he failed, he sent an armed mob to the United States Capitol where they assaulted law enforcement officers. When politicians in his own party begged him to call off the mob and send help, he did the opposite. He fanned the flames," she said.

Harris also highlighted that Trump was convicted on 34 felony counts in a hush-money case and that a federal jury in his civil defamation trial found that the former president had sexually abused writer E Jean Carroll.

RFK Jr withdraws from Arizona ballot amid Trump alliance speculation

Phoenix (AP): Robert F. Kennedy Jr. withdrew from the ballot in Arizona late Thursday, a day before he and Donald Trump were set to appear miles apart in the Phoenix area as speculation grows that Kennedy could drop his independent presidential bid and endorse the Republican nominee. Kennedy is scheduled to speak at 2 p.m. Eastern time in Phoenix "about the present historical moment and his path forward," according to his campaign. Hours later, Trump will hold a rally in neighbouring Glendale. Trump, campaigning Thursday in southern Arizona at the US-Mexico border, said that "no plans have been made" for Kennedy to appear with him on Friday. But he noted they would be in the same city at the same time.



On Thursday evening, Trump's campaign made an unusual announcement, teasing that he would be joined by "a special guest" at his Glendale event.

Hours later when he called into Fox News Channel after the Democratic National Convention wrapped, Trump said of Kennedy, "I have no idea if he's going to endorse me." But he noted that they were going to be in the same state and said, "It's possible we will be meeting tomorrow and we'll be discussing it." Representatives for Trump's campaign did not respond to messages about whether Kennedy would be the guest and the Kennedy campaign did not immediately return a message seeking comment if he would be joining Trump. Kennedy's Arizona withdrawal, confirmed by a spokesperson for the secretary of state, came less than a week after Kennedy submitted well more than the required number of signatures to appear on the ballot. His critics raised questions about the validity of some of the signatures after a pro-Kennedy super PAC was heavily involved in his effort to collect them, potentially running afoul of rules against coordination between candidates and independent political groups. But on Thursday, Kennedy, his running mate, Nicole Shanahan and all of their electors submitted notarized letters dated that day, withdrawing from the race in the state.

A year ago, some would have thought it inconceivable that Kennedy — a member of the most storied family in Democratic politics — would work with Trump to keep a Democrat out of the White House. Even in recent months, Kennedy has accused Trump of betraying his followers, while Trump has criticised Kennedy as "the most radical left candidate in the race". But the two campaigns have ramped up their compliments to each other and engaged in behind-the-scenes discussions in recent weeks, according to those familiar with the efforts. Both campaigns have spent months accusing Democrats of weaponising the legal system for their own benefit. And both have hinted publicly that they could be open to joining forces, with the shared goal of limiting the election

chances of Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris. Last month, during the Republican National Convention, Kennedy's son posted and then quickly deleted a video showing a phone call between Kennedy and Trump, in which the former president appeared to try to talk Kennedy into siding with him.

Talks between the two camps have continued, with close Trump allies quietly lobbying Kennedy to drop out of the race and support the Republican nominee, according to a person familiar with the efforts who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations. Trump told CNN on Tuesday that he would "love" an endorsement from Kennedy, whom he called a "brilliant guy." He also said he would "certainly" be open to Kennedy playing a role in his administration if Kennedy drops out and endorses him.

Shanahan, also openly suggested on a podcast this week that his campaign might "walk away right now and join forces with Donald Trump." While she clarified that she is not personally in talks with Trump, she entertained the idea that Kennedy could join Trump's administration as secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

"I think that Bobby in a role like that would be excellent," Shanahan said. "I fully support it. I have high hopes." Kennedy, a son of former Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy and a nephew of former President John F. Kennedy, hasn't disclosed the reason for his Friday remarks, but they come as his campaign's momentum has slipped.

Kennedy Jr. first entered the 2024 presidential race as a Democrat but left the party last fall to run as an independent. He built an unusually strong base for a third-party bid, fueled in part by anti-establishment voters and vaccine sceptics who have followed his anti-vaccine work since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Macron talks with key players to form new French govt

AP PARIS

After the excitement of the Paris Olympics and a Mediterranean vacation, now French President Emmanuel Macron has to figure out how to make his country governable again. Faced with a hung parliament, social tensions and ballooning debt, Macron kicked off talks Friday with key political players in a bid to choose a new prime minister who would form a government and end the deadlock created by snap legislative elections last month.

Members of the left-wing New Popular Front coalition that won the most seats pressured Macron for a quick decision. Their nominee for prime minister, little-known civil servant Lucie Castets, said after Friday's meetings in the Elysee Palace that she was ready to govern, and ready for compromise to get things done.

But the party only has about a third of the seats in the National Assembly, France's powerful lower house of parliament, and no party has a majority. Macron's centrist alliance came in second and the far-right National Rally came in third.

There's no rulebook that requires Macron to name a candidate from the party that won the most seats, or lays out a timeline for a decision. The absence of any dominant political bloc is unprecedented in France's modern Republic.

Centrists and conservatives are also meeting with Macron on Friday, while National Rally leaders Marine Le Pen and Jordan Bardella are expected at the Elysee on Monday. Macron's office said he will name a prime minister based on these consultations, which are aimed at "moving towards the broadest and most stable majority possible."

Castets said that in her meeting with Macron, he "recognised that a message was sent by the French during the elections" but seemed reluctant to allow an opposition party to form a government. Left-wing leaders have decried

Macron's decision to delay the prime minister nomination while he spent time at the Olympics and at the presidential holiday retreat in Bregancon on the French Riviera.

"We need a response Tuesday," said the national secretary of the Greens party, Marine Tondelier. "There are urgent issues, and leaving weeks roll by without facing them is grave, and even irresponsible."

The New Popular Front, which includes the hard-left France Unbowed, the Socialists and the Greens, has insisted that the prime minister should come out of their ranks as the largest group.

Macron last month appeared to dismiss Castets, saying in a televised interview "the issue is not a name provided by a political group" and stressing instead the need for a parliamentary majority behind the candidate. Politicians from the centre, the right and the far right have suggested they would try to bring down any government that includes members from France Unbowed.

Macron appears more keen to seek a coalition that could include politicians from the centre-left to the traditional right.

Other names that have emerged in French media as potential prime minister candidates include centre-left politician Bernard Cazeneuve, who served as France's top cop during a series of bloody terror attacks in 2015, and Xavier Bertrand, a former minister considered relatively moderate within the French right. Conservative politician Michel Barnier, EU's chief negotiator for post-Brexit talks, is also considered a potential candidate.

As president, Macron has sole power to name the prime minister according to the French Constitution.

The French president said last month he would keep the outgoing centrist government on a purely caretaker role to "handle current affairs," notably during the Olympics that ended on August 11.

Last body from sunken superyacht recovered

Rome (AP): Italian rescuers brought ashore the body of the final missing person who was on a superyacht that sunk off the coast of Sicily. The woman's body was detected on Friday, the Coast Guard said. She has not been officially identified, but Hannah Lynch, the 18-year-old daughter of British tech magnate Mike Lynch, is reportedly unaccounted for. The Lynch family was aboard The Bayesian, a 56-metre (184-foot) British-flagged yacht, when went down in a storm early Monday. Civil protection officials said they believe the ship was struck by a tornado over the water, known as a waterspout, and sank quickly. Mike Lynch's body was recovered Thursday. He had been celebrating his recent acquittal on fraud charges with his family and the people who had defended him at trial in the United States.

Norway proposes easing abortion law

Copenhagen (AP): Norway's government said Friday it wants to relax restrictions on abortion for the first time in nearly half a century to make it legal for women to terminate pregnancies up to the 18th week of gestation. Norway's laws currently allow legal abortions up to 12 weeks, but many pregnant women ask for an abortion after the 12th week and are granted it in hospitals and clinics.

The proposed changes are "in line with practice today. Almost no one is refused applications for abortion after the 12th week," Norwegian Health Minister Jan Christian Vestre said. He said that "women's right to self-determined abortion is a fundamental value in Norway." The Norwegian Institute of Public Health said abortion rate has remained "historically low for several years" at about 12,000 each year, but began to rise in 2022. Last year some 12,814 pregnancy terminations were performed in Norway, a 6.7% increase from 2022, figures show.

The government agency said that eight out of 10 abortions are performed before the 9th week, and that nine out of 10 abortions are performed with medication. Free abortion was introduced in Norway in 1978 and women can opt for a surgical or medical abortion. "Society has changed significantly since the 1970s," Vestre told a press conference. The law proposal needs a majority — 85 votes — in the 169-member Stortinget, or parliament. So far some 80 lawmakers have said they will vote in favour of the new law. It was not yet clear when a vote would be held in parliament. The Centre Party, which holds 28 seats in Stortinget and is one of the parties in the governing coalition, wants to keep the current abortion limit of 12 weeks. Family Minister Kjersti Toppe said she hopes that "as many people as possible vote in line with the party line," but added that the issue was "a matter of conscience" and allowed party members to vote against the party's stance.

House fire in Serbia kills six people

Belgrade (AP) A house fire in a northern Serbian city early Friday killed six people, including four children, police said. The fire erupted around 3 am in Novi Sad, some 90 kilometres (54 miles) north of Belgrade, the capital, said the Interior Minister Ivica Dacic. An emergency doctor told state television channel RTS that all the victims were already dead when the medical team reached the scene. Dacic said in a statement that initial findings suggest the cause could have been a charging electric scooter. The children were between 2 and 7 years old, said Dacic. Police are working to establish the victims' identity but they assume they are all members of a family registered at the address, he added. Serbian media published photos from the scene showing charred items in a small brick house, including a baby stroller and a washing machine.

S'pore starts screening incoming passengers for mpox symptoms

PTI SINGAPORE

Temperature and visual screening will be carried out at Changi and Seletar airports for inbound travellers and crew arriving on flights from places that may be exposed to outbreak of the viral disease. Health advisories have also been put in place at air checkpoints, so that travellers will take the necessary personal precautions to avoid being infected. Travellers are strongly advised to follow the advisory, especially if they are travelling to and from affected countries. Those found to have fever, rash and/or symptoms compatible with mpox will be referred for medical assessment. The MOH said there are no mpox clade I cases detected in Singapore to date. But it is monitoring the global situation very closely and the outbreak remains generally confined to Africa, with two cases of the more severe mpox clade I reported in Sweden and Thailand. There are currently no

reports of local spread in these two countries. The World Health Organisation (WHO) on August 14 declared mpox a global public health emergency for the second time in two years. As there were no reported cases of the more severe clade I exported out of the African continent, MOH said then that the immediate public health risk to Singapore was low. Infectious disease experts also said then that there was no need for visitors from countries where mpox is circulating, or Singaporeans who are returning home, to quarantine themselves if they do not have any symptoms. According to the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, there have been more than 27,000 cases and more than 1,300 deaths since January 2023 in the current outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Security stepped up at Germany NATO air base

Berlin (AP): Security at a NATO air base in western Germany has been raised because of intelligence information pointing to a "potential threat," and all staff not essential to missions have been sent home as a precaution, NATO said. The Geilenkirchen air base, near the border with the Netherlands, is where the alliance's Airborne Warning and Control System, or AWACS, aircraft are based. A post on the NATO AWACS fleet's account on social media network X late Thursday night announcing that "we raised the security level" did not elaborate on the nature of the potential threat. It said that "operations continue as planned." The Geilenkirchen base said Friday that it had nothing to add to the statement and "the situation at the moment is unchanged." German news agency dpa said a reporter saw police cars on the grounds of the air base. Police confirmed a deployment Thursday night but gave no details, and offered no information on Friday morning. Last week, a major German air force based near Cologne was locked down for several hours amid fears that its water supply might have been tampered with. An investigation found no evidence of such sabotage. There were also reports of suspicious observations at Geilenkirchen and a person was briefly detained for questioning near the base, dpa reported at the time, but there turned out to be nothing untoward. The incidents come at a time of jitters about the possible vulnerability of infrastructure to attempted Russian sabotage. On Thursday, prosecutors in Flensburg, in Germany's far north, said they were investigating suspicions of espionage for the purpose of sabotage, without elaborating on who might be behind it. German media reported that drones had been spotted over a chemical park in Brunsbüttel, on the North Sea coast.

Kolkata rape-murder: British Indians hold justice march

London (PTI): Indian students, charities and diaspora organisations in Britain have organised a series of events to continue to highlight their demand for justice following the rape-murder of an on-duty female doctor at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata. While women's organisations came together to organise peace vigils at the Mahatma Gandhi statue in Parliament Square in London and across several other UK cities on Thursday, the Students' Federation of India - United Kingdom (SFI-UK) organised a march in the city of Liverpool on Wednesday. The hundreds who gathered at London's Parliament Square lit candles to spell out "justice" and held placards with messages calling for respect and empowerment of women. "We have received overwhelming support from the entire



world, proving that the time has come to wake up, take notice, rise up above our individual interests and join hands in our endeavour of showing support and solidarity to the cause," said Dr Dipti Jain of the Medicos Women Charity. "These peace protests are being held by units we set up in several cities in England, Scotland and Wales at the same time with Belfast and Dublin arrang-

ing theirs over the weekend. We have involved global units in the US, Canada and Australia, who are also holding peace vigils with us," said the UK-based National Health Service (NHS) doctor, who trained as a medic in Kolkata. Earlier, SFI-UK continued its series of student-led peaceful protests and demonstrations with a march from London Road to the city centre of Liverpool.

US expands Mexico asylum appointment area

PTI CIUDAD HALDIGO

As soon as she stepped onto Mexican soil this week, Venezuelan migrant Yuri Carolina Meléndez downloaded the US government's app to apply for asylum appointments. The CBP One app has been around, but as of Friday migrants in Mexico's southernmost states bordering Guatemala will be able to apply for appointments. Previously, they had to be in central or northern Mexico. "I have to wait to see if it really works," the woman said while resting under a tree with her 16- and 18-year-old daughters along a border highway leading to the city of Tapachula this week. Mexico has been asking the US to expand the app's access to the south in an attempt to relieve the pressure migrants feel to continue north to at least Mexico City. In recent years, the Mexican government has tried to contain migrants in the south farther

from the US border, but the lack of work opportunities and housing in southern cities like Tapachula have pushed migrants north. Mexico hopes that if migrants can wait for their appointments in the south they might not risk getting snagged by authorities without papers or by organised crime groups that prey on migrants travelling north. With an appointment, they could, in theory, move without interference. Germin Alemán, a 31-year-old from Honduras travelling with his wife and three children, planned to register as soon as they reached Tapachula. "We're going to apply here, we're going to wait for the appointment," he said as they walked from the border toward Tapachula. Others, however, still felt the pressure to get farther north. Many migrants often carry big debts and need to start paying them off as soon as possible. Meléndez, for instance, said she planned to keep mov-

ing to improve her chances of finding work. CBP One has been one of the measures of greatest impact in US efforts to bring order to the growing demand for US asylum along its southwestern border. In the 2023 fiscal year, US Customs and Border Protection reported more than 2.4 million encounters with migrants along the US Southwest border. Since the app was launched in January 2023, more than 765,000 people have scheduled appointments to request asylum. Immigration has become a central issue in the US presidential election. When the Biden administration temporarily suspended the asylum process for those who crossed illegally in June, the app became one of the only ways to request asylum. The US handles 1,500 appointments daily. The number of migrants crossing the US border illegally has fallen significantly since peak-

ing in December 2023. Washington attributes much of that decline to Mexico's enforcement efforts, which include nabbing migrants in the north and sending them south again. Still, Mexico welcomes CBP One's expansion. "That is going to help us a lot," Foreign Affairs Secretary Alicia Bárcena said earlier this month when she announced the expansion was coming. Immigration is a key issue in the two countries' relationship. But for dozens of non-governmental groups that advocate for migrants and human rights, there is little to celebrate. In an open letter to the Mexican government Thursday, they called CBP One "a violation of international law" because it allows the US to limit access to its territory for people in need of protection. The groups argued that many migrants wind up stuck in Mexico for months waiting in full shelters or camping in unsanitary conditions.

Sensex, Nifty edge up in volatile trade ahead of US Fed chief speech

PTI | MUMBAI

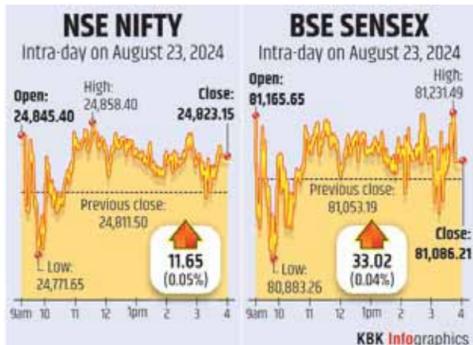
Benchmark Sensex and Nifty edged up in volatile trade on Friday following buying in blue-chip stocks such as ICICI Bank and Bharti Airtel amid mixed global trends ahead of the US Fed chair Jerome Powell's speech at Jackson Hole Symposium.

Rising for the fourth straight session, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 33.02 points or 0.04 per cent higher at 81,086.21.

In early trade, the benchmark declined 169.93 points or 0.20 per cent to a low of 80,883.26. Later, it bounced back 178.3 points or 0.21 per cent to hit a high of 81,231.49 but gave up gains towards the end.

The NSE Nifty edged up 11.65 points or 0.05 per cent to close at 24,823.15 registering gains for the seventh session in a row.

From the Sensex pack, Tata Motors, Sun Pharmaceutical, Bharti Airtel, Bajaj Finserv,



ICICI Bank, Mahindra & Mahindra and JSW Steel were the gainers. Tech Mahindra, HCL Technologies, Asian Paints, Titan, Infosys, State Bank of India, Tata Consultancy Services and HDFC Bank were the laggards.

"Ahead of the Fed chair Powell's speech, the Indian indices oscillated around the flat trajectory and mixed

global market sentiments further catalysed this scenario," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said. Investors are exercising caution and awaiting Powell's signals for more insights on the interest rate path, Nair added. In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge jumped 0.15 per cent, however the midcap index fell 0.66 per cent. Among the indices, Services

surged by 1.07 per cent, Auto by 0.93 per cent, Industrials by 0.26 per cent, capital goods by 0.23 per cent and Consumer Discretionary by 0.13 per cent. Realty, IT, Oil & Gas and Teck were among the laggards.

"Indian market struggled for direction in early trade on Friday as investors awaited cues from US Federal Reserve Jerome Powell's speech at the ongoing Jackson Hole Economic Symposium.

"Markets are looking for new clues on the timing and pace of possible interest rate cuts by the Fed this year," Avdhut Bagkar Technical and Derivatives Analyst at StoxBox.

Bajaj Auto stock jumped 5 per cent after the company became the first automotive original equipment manufacturer (OEM) to receive a domestic value addition certificate for all 15 electric models it submitted for clearance from the Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI).

Rupee rises 4 paise to close at 83.89 against US dollar

PTI | MUMBAI

The rupee traded in a narrow range and settled higher by 4 paise at 83.89 (provisional) against the American currency on Friday, as traders remained cautious ahead of Fed Chair Jerome Powell's speech at the Jackson Hole Symposium.

Forex traders said weak US Dollar, foreign fund inflows and a positive tone in the domestic markets supported the rupee. However, overnight gains in crude oil prices capped sharp gains.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened weak at 83.93 and touched an intraday high of 83.85 against the US dollar.

The domestic currency finally settled at 83.89 (provisional), 4 paise higher from its previous close. On Thursday, the rupee traded in a narrow range and settled lower by 3 paise at 83.93 against the American currency.

"We expect the rupee to trade with a slight negative bias as traders remain cautious ahead



of Fed Chair Jerome Powell's speech at the Jackson Hole Symposium which could provide some cues on Fed's path to cut interest rates.

"Weak US and Asian markets and a recovery in crude oil prices may pressure the rupee while positive domestic markets may support the rupee at lower levels," said Anuj Choudhary -- Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas. Meanwhile, the dollar index,

which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.10 per cent lower at 101.40.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, advanced 1.05 per cent to USD 78.03 per barrel. On the domestic equity market front, Sensex advanced 33.02 points, or 0.04 per cent, to close at 81,086.21 points. The Nifty rose 11.65 points, or 0.05 per cent, to 24,823.15 points.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets on Thursday as they purchased shares worth Rs 1,371.79 crore, according to exchange data.

On the domestic macroeconomic front, the minutes of the last Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday

noted that the calibrated increase in policy repo rate by 250 basis points since May 2022 and subsequent change of stance to the withdrawal of accommodation have facilitated gradual disinflation over 2022-23.

India's forex reserves jump by USD 4.546 bn to USD 674.664 bn

PTI | MUMBAI

India's forex reserves jumped by USD 4.546 billion to USD 674.664 billion during the week ended August 16, the RBI said on Friday.

In the previous week, the forex kitty had dropped by USD 4.8 billion to USD 670.119 billion. On August 2, the overall reserves hit an all-time high of USD 674.919 billion.

In the week ended August 16, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased by USD 3.609 billion to USD 591.569 billion, the data released on Friday showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves increased by USD 865 million to USD 60,104 billion during the week, the RBI said.

Sebi asks CAs to be 'extra careful' while auditing listed SMEs

PTI | MUMBAI

Sebi's whole-time member Ashwani Bhatia on Friday asked chartered accountants to be more diligent while auditing companies listed on the SME exchange platforms.

Addressing an industry event of CAs, Bhatia said it is important to look at the listed SMEs (Small and medium-sized enterprises) in a more careful way because the same companies will grow to be a part of the main board in the future.

"We have seen some challenges there (SME platform). We request you to be extra careful as far as SME IPOs and fundraising are concerned because these small companies will become much, much bigger going forward," the banker-turned-capital markets regulator said.

Bhatia expressed satisfaction with the progress of the SME platform, stating that Rs 14,000 crore has been raised by such entities, with Rs 6,000 crore being raised in FY24



alone. He compared the CAs to "doctors", and added that they act as first-level regulators by ensuring orderly conduct of companies.

Bhatia said many Sebi investigations and orders, which take over a year to complete, may not be necessary at all if the CAs had done their work more diligently.

It can be noted that in March this year, Sebi chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch had flagged concerns around "price manipulation" in the SME platform listings and investors

to be cautious. Meanwhile, addressing CAs on Friday, Bhatia recalled the conduct of SBI's past chairman R K Talwar and said that the strength of character of the leader helps create "great institutions". He also said that despite the regulator coming out with regulations to enable delisting, the experience has been the "reverse" with little interest on that front.

The whole-time member hinted that the low interest in delisting is due to high valuations, and added that even foreign companies are looking at listing in India.

Registration of housing properties in Noida, Gr Noida up 29 per cent in Apr-Jun at 8,212 units: Report

PTI | NEW DELHI

Registration of residential properties in Noida and Greater Noida rose 29 per cent annually in the June quarter to 8,212 units, according to housing brokerage firm Square Yards. As many as 6,354 units were registered in the year-ago period.

Residential real estate activity in Noida and Greater Noida saw a marked uptick in the June quarter of 2024, with 8,212 residential transactions registered with the Inspector General of Registration (IGR).

"The combined sales value of these transactions reached Rs 6,013 crore, representing a 59 per cent year-on-year surge, outpacing the growth in transaction volume," the consultant said in a statement. In Noida, Square Yards said that 3,200 units were registered during the April-June period against 2,408



units a year ago. Greater Noida saw a 27 per cent increase in registration of residential properties at 5,012 units compared to 3,946 units in the corresponding period of the previous year.

Among developers, realty firm Nirala World topped both the number of transactions and sales value in April-June 2024. Its project, Nirala Estate in Tech Zone-4 (Greater Noida), led the pack with 620 units registered, amounting to Rs 565 crore in sales value, the consultant said.

Gold prices decline by ` 350, silver drops ` 200

PTI | NEW DELHI

Gold prices declined by Rs 350 to Rs 73,800 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

In the previous session, gold of 99.9 per cent purity traded at Rs 74,150 per 10 grams. Silver declined by Rs 200 to Rs 87,000 per kg from Rs 87,200 per kg in the previous day.

Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also dropped by Rs 350 to Rs 73,450 per 10 grams against Rs 73,800 per 10 grams on Thursday.

The yellow metal extended losses on Friday, weighed down by rising US Treasury yields and a recovery in the dollar index, market experts said.

Prices of precious metal were also influenced by the minutes of the last Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) released by RBI on Thursday. Reserve Bank Governor



Shaktikanta Das said that the current policy rate of 6.5 per cent is broadly balanced, and any justification for policy easing at this juncture can be misleading, according to the MPC minutes.

Governor Das and three other members voted for the status quo on the repo rate in the MPC, while two members advocated a rate cut.

Globally, gold at Comex gained USD 18.20 to trade at USD 2,534.90 per ounce. Silver was trading 1.24 per cent higher at USD 29.84 per ounce in the international markets.

Minutes from the US Federal Reserve's July meeting

revealed a strong inclination toward a rate cut next month, a move supported by at least two Fed officials, Prathamesh Mallya, DVP- Research, Non-Agri Commodities and Currencies, Angel One Ltd, said.

"Speculators overstated the likelihood of an aggressive rate cut before the end of the year; now they trimmed their bets and are pricing three 25-basis-point cuts across the remaining three Fed policy meetings this year, down from around four cuts priced two days ago," said Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities.

US top trading partner, highest trade deficit with China in January-June 2024: GTRI

PTI | NEW DELHI

The US has emerged as India's top trading partner during January-June this year, while the country has recorded its highest trade deficit of USD 41.6 billion with China during the period, according to think tank GTRI.

It also said the country's merchandise exports rose 5.41 per cent to USD 230.51 billion during the first of 2024.

"China topped the list with a substantial trade deficit of USD 41.6 billion, as exports to China were USD 8.5 billion, while imports reached USD 50.1 billion during January-June 2024," it added. The data analysis for the first half of this calendar year by the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) showed



India exports goods to 239 countries and out of these, 126 countries showed positive growth in exports. These nations account for 75.3 per cent of India's total exports.

Major countries with increased exports include the USA, UAE, Netherlands, Singapore, and China. However, exports declined in

98 countries, which account for 24.6 per cent of India's exports, with notable declines in Italy, Belgium, Nepal, and Hong Kong.

"The US is India's top export partner. Exports to the US increased from USD 37.7 billion in January-June 2023 to USD 41.6 billion in January-June 2024, reflecting

a growth of 10.5 per cent. The UAE saw a significant rise in exports, increasing from USD 15.8 billion to USD 19.7 billion, marking a 24.9 per cent growth," it said.

In the first half of 2024, China remained the largest import supplier, with imports increasing from USD 46.2 billion to USD 50.1 billion.

"In FY2024, China was India's top trading partner, just ahead of the US. However, from January to June 2024, the US became India's largest trading partner, with total trade growing from USD 59.4 billion to USD 62.5 billion, a 5.3 per cent increase," GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said. China followed as the second-largest trading partner, with total trade rising from USD 54.4 billion to USD 58.6 billion, marking a 7.7 per cent increase.

India steel market hit by unfair imports, dumping amid slump in China: Former Steel Secretary

PTI | NEW DELHI

Indian steel market is hit by "unfair imports and dumping" amid a demand slump in China and the government needs to take action in a time-bound manner, former steel secretary Nagendra Nath Sinha has said.

"If you take flat steel products, imports are certainly an issue. The slump in the Chinese market has really shaken the (domestic) market," Sinha, who superannuated on July 31, said at the 7th edition of BigMint's Indian Iron Ore and Pellet Summit on Friday. He also warned of the price realisations getting affected due to surging imports impacting the profitability of steel makers.

"To the extent the imports currently happening are



unfair and there is dumping going on and the Indian government should certainly respond to them in a timeframe," Sinha said.

His statement assumes significance as local steel players have been raising the issue of imports for months from select countries

including China. Steelmakers have raised concern that India is becoming a net importer of steel against the aim to become a global supplier of the commodity.

Sinha said "...Duty prayers for imposition of the duty are being considered at a longer

timeframe for about a year and a half that is not going help industry at least give them a fair hearing."

On August 16, the government initiated an anti-dumping probe into the import of hot-rolled steel products from Vietnam following a complaint by a domestic industry.

The commerce ministry's investigation arm Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) is probing the alleged dumping of 'hot rolled flat products of alloy or non-alloy steel'. According to the DGTR notification, Indian Steel Association has filed an application on behalf of domestic producers - JSW Steel Ltd and ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India Ltd - seeking initiation of an anti-dumping investigation on imports from Vietnam.

Peak power demand to grow by 15GW/year for next 6 years: Govt Official

PTI | NEW DELHI

Power demand in the country will grow at a higher rate of 15GW per annum for next six years compared to 11GW per annum in last one decade, a senior government official said on Friday.

By 2030, about 85 GW of additional demand will be added during the solar hours and during the non solar hours more than 90 GW will be added to the peak demand, said Additional Secretary Power Srikant Nagulapalli at an Industry Conclave organised by IEEMA.

"... The CAGR may not reflect these numbers truly, but if you see the absolute numbers it's a big jump and to meet

this growth, substantial expansion of our coal capacity and along with solar, wind, storage and also transmission capacity is being undertaken," Nagulapalli added. Nagulapalli noted that "India's peak demand grew at an average of 11GW for the last 10 years and going forward for the next 6 years, we expect that the demand is going to grow at an average of 15 GW per year."

He further stated that approx 40 GW will be through storage. "By 2030, we intend to rely on storage capacity, be it long storage batteries to supply our non solar hour peak," he said.

The Ministry of Power has set a target of 500 GW capacity from non-fossil fuel-based



sources by 2030.

"... We have already crossed 200 GW (RE capacity addition) and additional 300 GW has to be realised in the next 6 years, of this (300GW) almost 225 GW will be from solar and wind," he said.

On capacity addition, he said this plan prioritises the RE zones of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh etc. As there are large chunks of solar potential lands available.

He also talked about plan to

install offshore wind farms near Gujarat and Tamil Nadu coast and added that the country is also gearing up to add green hydrogen capacity in a big way especially coastal areas of Odisha, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and so on.

"We have large demand that is going to come from EVs and also data centres," he pointed out.

Together with the electrification of the economy all these will drive the demand that is going to come up in the near future, he stated.

The whole country, if you see, is connected into a single grid running on single frequency and it is capable of transferring 170 GW power from one end to another even

remote regions in Arunachal and Ladakh are connected.

He noted that the government is promoting the storage through PSPs (pumped hydro storage projects) and batteries. "We aim for 40 GW of BESS (battery energy storage system) and 19 GW PSP capacity in next 6 years and in the budget also an announcement made that a new PSP Policy would come to push PSP projects," he stated.

The government has also improved about 4GW of BESS through VGF (viability gap funding). Beyond this we are creating a policy framework for bringing battery energy storage systems in a short-term in a big way, he added.

Foxconn infuses ` 1,200 crore in Karnataka unit

PTI | NEW DELHI

Electronics manufacturing giant Foxconn has infused about Rs 1,200 crore -- approximately USD 144 million -- into its Karnataka-based Foxconn Hon Hai Technology India Mega Development Pvt Ltd, the company said in a recent regulatory filing.

The iPhone contract manufacturer's Singapore-based arm Foxconn Singapore Pte has bought over 120.35 crore stocks of Foxconn Hon Hai Technology India Mega Development Pvt Ltd at Rs 10 per share on August 21. The Karnataka government

in a statement last week said Foxconn is planning to invest Rs 25,000 crore to establish a massive manufacturing plant near Doodda Ballapur that will create 40,000 jobs.

"The unit in Karnataka will soon become the second-largest Foxconn plant after China's unit. It will create 40,000 direct jobs, especially for middle-level educated individuals, and our investment will not stop here; in the future, we plan to explore other sectors also," Foxconn Chairman Young Liu was quoted as saying in the statement. With the fresh infusion, Foxconn Singapore has invested over Rs 13,800 crore in the Karnataka unit.



UNCOVERING THE PAST THE LAHORE CONSPIRACY CASE

Aparna Vaidik's *Revolutionaries on Trial* offers a fresh perspective on the Lahore Conspiracy Case of 1929, highlighting the trial's intricate political and legal dimensions. By examining the roles of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru, Vaidik reveals the trial's broader significance beyond martyrdom, providing a deeper understanding of its impact on India's independence struggle, writes **SAKSHI PRIYA**

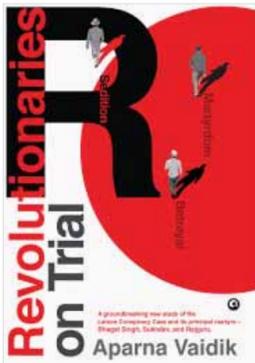
Aparna Vaidik's *Revolutionaries on Trial* is a riveting examination of one of the most significant and controversial events in India's struggle for independence - The Lahore Conspiracy Case of 1929. This book distinguishes itself with its insightful portrayal of the trial, not merely as a moment of colonial injustice but as a complex interplay of legal, political and cultural forces that shaped the course of Indian nationalism.

One of the most striking aspects of Vaidik's work is her ability to reframe the Lahore Conspiracy Case from a simplistic tale of martyrdom into a multifaceted historical event with far-reaching implications. While Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru have been venerated as heroes of the Indian independence movement, Vaidik challenges the reader to look beyond this familiar narrative. She delves into the intricacies of the trial, revealing the colonial state's calculated efforts to use the legal system as a tool for suppressing



revolutionary activities while simultaneously attempting to undermine the moral authority of the independence movement. The book challenges the conventional focus on Bhagat Singh as the central figure, providing a more holistic view of the revolutionary movement. By highlighting the contributions and experiences of Sukhdev and Rajguru, Vaidik corrects the often narrow historical lens that tends to elevate Singh's martyrdom while marginalising his comrade's significant roles. This nuanced

portrayal helps to appreciate the collective nature of the HSRAs struggle and the ideological and personal dynamics within the revolutionary group. Vaidik's approach is particularly compelling because she does not merely focus on the courtroom drama. Instead, she broadens the scope to include the roles played by the colonial government, the revolutionaries, the Indian press and the public. This holistic view allows readers to appreciate the trial's significance as a cultural and political spectacle that extended



far beyond the legal proceedings. Vaidik's detailed examination of the motivations and strategies of all the actors involved provides a richer understanding of the dynamics at play during this critical period in India's history. The book's exploration of the colonial state's decision to prosecute the revolutionaries is particularly eye-opening. The author argues that the trial was not just about dispensing justice, it was a deliberate move by the British to assert their authority and counter the growing influence of

revolutionary ideologies. This perspective adds a new layer of complexity to the story, highlighting the colonial government's strategic use of public trials to shape public opinion and maintain control. Moreover, Vaidik's analysis of the revolutionaries' actions during the trial challenges the conventional view that their courtroom tactics were purely propagandistic. She presents a nuanced argument that these actions were part of a broader political strategy designed to galvanise public support and expose the hypocrisies of the colonial regime. This interpretation enriches our understanding of revolutionary politics and underscores the significance of the trial in the broader context of India's nationalist movement. Vaidik's scholarly rigor is matched by her engaging writing style, making *Revolutionaries on Trial* both accessible and informative. The book is meticulously researched, drawing on a wide range of sources, including

archival documents, personal letters and contemporary press reports. This thoroughness not only enhances the credibility of Vaidik's arguments but also brings the historical events to life, making the book a compelling read. *Revolutionaries on Trial* is a significant contribution to the study of Indian history. It offers fresh insights into a well-known event, challenging readers to reconsider their understanding of the Lahore Conspiracy Case and the broader struggle for independence. Vaidik's work is essential reading for anyone interested in the complexities of colonial justice, revolutionary movements and the enduring legacy of India's fight for freedom. Whether you are a historian, a student of political science or simply someone interested in the depth of India's past, this book is sure to leave a lasting impression.

Book Name — Revolutionaries on Trial
Author — Aparna Vaidik
Publisher — Aleph book company
Price — Rs. 999

Through the Eyes of a Top Indian Cop

Jayaram Padikkal (1937-1997) was an IPS officer who served as the chief of Kerala Police during 1993 to 1994. He was the youngest DIG in the country as he excelled in investigation and intelligence gathering. Had it not been for a controversy associated with the custodial death of a young Maoist leader by name P Rajan of the Regional Engineering College (now NIT) at Kozhikode during the black days of the internal emergency, Padikkal would have retired as the top echelon of the Home Ministry either as the chief of IB or CBI.

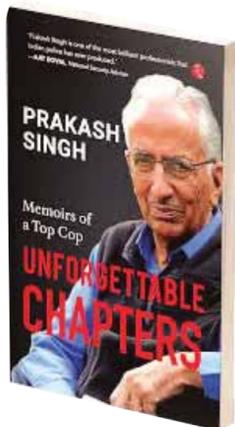
It is strange that the entire media in Kerala went gaga when Padikkal was suspended from service following the Rajan case. Though he was reinstated in service following the Court acquitted him of all charges, the Kerala media never left him alone and went after his blood with their own findings which were far from reality. All columns, books and even films of those days portrayed him as a villain. Even today, young journalists who do not have any idea about the Rajan case, lambast Padikkal. The truth is that there was a period in the history of Kerala Police when people, cutting across political lines, demanded that cases of murder, corruption and misuse of power should be investigated by Jayaram Padikkal! Newspapers and periodicals in the State stand proof of this demand.

What happened to Padikkal was his success in exposing the hypocrisy and double standard of the Communists. Interestingly it was during the tenure of EMS Namboodiripad as chief minister that a separate unit was set up in the State for tackling the Maoist menace. Padikkal was appointed as head of the special unit and he did not let his bosses down. The Maoists, they were known as Naxalites those days, ran for their lives and within a couple of years, Padikkal and his "boys" finished them off. But they struck back during the emergency days and

A revealing account of the challenges, controversies and victories faced by one of India's top police officers, as detailed in Prakash Singh's *Unforgettable Chapters: Memoirs of a Top Cop*, shedding light on the complex world of law enforcement in the country, says **KUMAR CHELLAPPAN**

murdered three cops including a deputy superintendent of police. Rajan was taken into custody for facilitating the escape of the Maoists who were the perpetrators of the heinous crime. While a lot of tears were shed for Rajan, the Kerala society ignored the sacrifice made by the cops and that was how Padikkal became the "evil character". Padikkal, the super cop of Kerala, breathed his last in 1997 and had a peaceful death. Despite the persecution and attack by the media and intellectuals, Padikkal kept his cool. "I was not a public relations officer of the Kerala Police and my mission was to safeguard the Constitution of India," he reportedly told a close associate when he was asked why he was indifferent to criticism by the media.

Memories about Jayaram Padikkal crept into the mind while going through "UNFORGETTABLE CHAPTERS", *Memoirs of a Top Cop* by Prakash Singh, a former IPS officer who had served as police chief of Uttar Pradesh, assam, Punjab, Nagaland and as the director general of Border Security Force. Prakash Singh also fought for reforms in police, which if implemented would have elevated our cops to the best force in the world. But politicians do not want to liberate police from their shackles. The importance of our political leaders is known by the number of armed cops guarding them. A chief minister like Pinarayi Vijayan, whom the



CPI(M) in Kerala portrays as the most popular politician in India, does not move out of his palatial house without a heavy posse of commandoes and a cavalcade of fifty SUVs and siren-wielding ambulances. Singh's memoirs take the readers through a period in India filled with terrorism, political turmoil and insurgency. He has hands-on experience in tackling terrorism in States like Jammu & Kashmir, Assam, Nagaland and the mafia raj of Uttar Pradesh. Singh has diagnosed the root cause of insurgency in North East India in an exemplary manner. No other political historians, security experts or observers have gone into the basics of these issues like Prakash Singh. While serving as DGP in Uttar Pradesh, Singh had alerted his colleagues and subordinates about the danger posed by the Mukhtar Ansari, the dreaded don of Uttar Pradesh. Ansari,

nephew of a former vice-president of the country, was an accused in cases of murders, dacoity and rape. He was described as a shaheed by Asaduddin Owaisi much to the anguish of the law-abiding citizens in India. Though Prakash Singh did not approve the Sangh Parivar demolishing the disputed structure at Ayodhya in 1992, this police officer makes it unambiguously clear that the Babri Mosque was nothing other than the temple where Lord Rama was born.

What makes this book a must read for all who are interested in knowing the political and social chaos is the kind of information provided by the author. He has shared with the readers the reasons for the fall in standards of policing in the country. Post-retirement, Singh drew the attention of the Supreme Court to factors like the executive misuse and abuse of the police in frequent postings and transfers, recruitment procedures vitiated by political recommendations, tampering of investigations, and unlawful directions to the police as matters of concern.

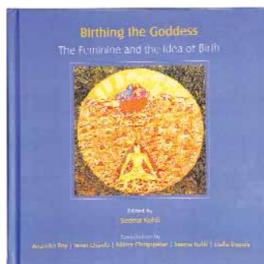
Singh is no ordinary police officer and is proved by his admission that he regrets his failure in mastering Sanskrit and not learning martial arts. His third regret that he could not divide his life in the four ashrams prescribed by our ancestors is uncalculated. We need officers like Prakash Singh to share their experiences with the new generation cops. It will make major changes in the spirit and soul of young officers. Prakash Singh had won a historical case against the Union of India when the Supreme Court ordered that IPS officers selected to head the police force should get a minimum two-year tenure as chief. Super cops like Padikkal and Prakash Singh belong to a different genre and they are the ones described by Chanakya as the real policemen.

Rediscovering the Sacred Female Principle

Birthing the Goddess: The Feminine and the Idea of Birth is a profound anthology exploring the intersection of femininity and creation through diverse cultural and spiritual lenses. With essays that challenge conventional narratives and illuminate the sacred dimensions of birth, this collection offers a fresh and insightful perspective on the divine feminine, writes **SAKSHI PRIYA**

Birthing the Goddess: The Feminine and the Idea of Birth is a captivating anthology that navigates the rich ground where birth, creation and the feminine divine intersect. Compiled by a diverse group of contributors, including Seema Kohli, Anamika Roy, Janet Chawla, Nilima Chitgopekar and Stella Dupuis. This volume extends the inquiry begun in *Experiencing the Goddess*, offering an even deeper exploration of the spiritual and cultural significance of the feminine principle. The book opens by reframing birth as not just a biological event but as a transformative process imbued with profound spiritual and cultural meaning. Anamika Roy's essay, "Radha Was Created Not Born," sets the tone by exploring the origins of Radha, a central figure in Hinduism whose existence stems from artistic and poetic creation rather than traditional birth. This interpretation of Radha's origin as a divine construct rather than a born deity is both refreshing and thought-provoking, challenging readers to reconsider the boundaries of creation.

Janet Chawla's "Birth as Magic and Dai as the Shaman" is another standout, delving into traditional Indian birthing practices. Chawla's exploration of the sacred roles of traditional midwives (dais) offers a poignant contrast to the sterile, clinical approaches of modern medicine. Her essay is a compelling reminder of the deep spiritual connections that can exist in the birthing process, connections that modern practices often overlook or undervalue. Nilima Chitgopekar "Not from the Womb - Birthing in the Devi Mahatmya" examines the divine birth of Durga, highlighting her emergence not as a typical birth but as a product of divine assembly. This essay powerfully underscores the symbolic and theological weight of Durga's creation, positioning her as a pivotal figure in maintaining cosmic



balance. Seema Kohli's essay, "Journey of Surya, from Martanda to Hiranyagarbha - Immortal Cycle of Creation and Recreation," adds a fascinating dimension to the anthology. By weaving Vedic concepts of creation with personal reflections, Kohli brings ancient symbols like the Golden Womb (Hiranyagarbha) and the Sun (Martanda) into contemporary relevance, offering readers a unique blend of mythology and modern interpretation. In "Birth of a Hero - The Pursuit of Immortality," Stella Dupuis explores the universal motif of heroism and immortality. She connects Amazonian women warriors, India's Sati memorial stones and Ladakh's Matsyendranth sculpture. Her analysis of the birth and quests of mythical heroes across different cultures enriches the anthology by showing the diverse ways divine favor and heroic journeys are

conceptualised. *Birthing the Goddess* is a deeply engaging and intellectually stimulating collection that offers new perspectives on the feminine divine through the themes of birth and creation. Each essay challenges conventional narratives and invites readers to go through into the sacred dimensions of the feminine, making the book a valuable addition to studies in mythology, spirituality and cultural traditions. What stands out most about this anthology is its ability to work together diverse perspectives into a coherent and profound meditation on the feminine principle. The author's willingness to challenge traditional narratives and explore lesser-known stories is both brave and necessary in today's cultural landscape. This book is not just an academic exercise; it's a spiritual journey that prompts readers to reflect on their own understanding of birth, creation and the divine feminine. For anyone interested in mythology, spirituality or cultural studies, *Birthing the Goddess* is a must-read. Its rich content and thought-provoking essays will leave a lasting impression, inspiring deeper contemplation and appreciation of the sacred feminine.

Book Name — Birthing the Goddess: The Feminine and the Idea of Birth
Publisher — Aryan Books International
Price — Rs. 1950

GUKESH, PRAGGNANANDHAA DRAW AGAIN IN SINQUEFIELD CUP



PTI n SAINT LOUIS (USA)

World Championship challenger D Gukesh enjoyed an advantageous position against tournament co-leader Alireza Firouzja of France but eventually settled for a draw in the fourth round of the Sinquefield Cup, here. Gukesh, who is set to play the World championship match against Ding Liren of China next November, proved that he is made of sterner mettle as he made Firouzja's life tough.

Praggnanandhaa also drew his game against Anish Giri of Holland and almost at the half way stage in this 10-player round-robin tournament, the Indians stand at a level fifty percent score. The day when Wesley So of United States won the lone decisive game, the news doing the round through unconfirmed sources was that Firouzja has been offered to play for United States. For Prag things were not difficult as he meticulously handled Anish Giri with black

pieces and even though the Dutchman believed he had some chances, they were thwarted in no time. After three decisive games in round three the fourth round yet again produced just a lone decisive game with Wesley So overcoming Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia. With Wesley winning and Nepomniachtchi on the losing side, the former joined Firouzja in lead on 2.5 points after four rounds and they are now followed by Fabiano Caruana of United States,

Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France, Nepomniachtchi, Praggnanandhaa and Gukesh. Abdusattorov and Giri share the ninth spot with 1.5 points each. **Results round 4:** Anish Giri (Ned, 1.5) drew with R Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 2); D Gukesh (Ind, 2) drew with Alireza Firouzja (Fra, 2.5); Wesley So (Usa, 2.5) beat Ian Nepomniachtchi (Fide, 2); Ding Liren (Chn, 2) drew with Fabiano Caruana (Usa, 2); Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra, 2) drew with Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb, 1.5).

Sri Lanka-New Zealand opening Test at Galle to have a rest day

PTI n DUBAI

Sri Lanka's opening Test against New Zealand at Galle next month will be a six-day affair with the provision of a rest day owing to the presidential election in the island nation. The Test, scheduled to commence on September 18, will have a rest day on September 21, "owing to the Presidential Election of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka", said an ICC release on Friday. It will be the first time in more than two decades that Sri Lanka have been scheduled to



host a Test across six days, with their match against Zimbabwe in Colombo in 2001 also including a rest day due to Poya Day (full moon), said the

ICC. The two-match series is part of the ongoing ICC World Test Championship cycle with the second Test scheduled at the

same venue from September 26-30. Rest days were a common feature in Test cricket in the last century, with several matches in the cricketing world being played across six days with Sunday usually being an off day. More recently, Bangladesh played a Test-series opener against Sri Lanka in December 2008, which was a six-day affair because of a parliamentary election. New Zealand and Sri Lanka are currently placed third and fourth respectively in the World Test Championship standings.

India A bowlers fight back but Australia A's lead surges to 192 on Day 2 of unofficial Test

PTI n GOLD COAST (AUSTRALIA)

India A bowlers led a spirited fightback but Australia A tightened grip on the unofficial one-off women's Test, with the hosts' overall lead surging to 192 runs here on the second day on Friday. India A skipper Minnu Mani completed her match haul of 10 wickets but Kate Peterson returned an impactful 12-5-16-5 to hand Australia a slender 28-run lead in the first innings, as the visitors were bowled out for 184 in reply to the host's 212. Resuming at 100/2, India A looked on course to take a substantial lead but fell short as Peterson ran through the middle order. India's set batters Tejal Hasabnis (32) and Shweta Schrawat (40) were the first to fall as the tourists lost five wickets for 27 runs before Sayali Satghare (21),



Mani (17) and Mannat Kashyap (19) put up 56 runs to deny Australia a huge lead. Mani then swung into action with the ball immediately as Australia A batters' once again struggled against Indian spinners. The off-spinner first removed opener Georgia Vull and her Australian counterpart Charli Knott for ducks in consecutive overs to reduce the hosts to 0/2 at one stage. Mani, who claimed a five-wicket haul in

the first essay, also got rid of Nicole Faltum (16) before she cleaned up Tess Fintoo with an off-break. However, opener Emma de Brouge continued to hold fort from one end as she scored 58 runs off 117 balls before falling prey to rookie leg-spinner Priya Mishra. Wicketkeeper Maddy Drake took matters into her own hands by hitting an unbeaten half century (54 not out of 100 deliveries) to lead Australia's recovery further as the hosts reached 164/7 at the end of play. Drake added 54 for the sixth wicket with Maitlan Brown (26 off 45) before the latter became Mani's tenth wicket in the game. **BRIEF SCORES:** Australia A 212 and 164 for 7 (Emma de Brouge 58, Manddy Darke 54 not out; Minnu Mani 5/47) lead India A 184 (Shweta Schrawat 40, Tejal Hasabnis 32; Kate Peterson 5/16) by 192 runs.

Ilkay returns for unlikely second spell at Man City after just a year at Barcelona



AP n MANCHESTER

Ilkay Gundogan is back at Manchester City for a sequel few could have expected. A year after leaving for Barcelona, the former Germany midfielder completed his unlikely return to City on Friday on a free transfer and a season-long deal. The 33-year-old Gundogan, who has the option of a further season at City, was the captain when Pep Guardiola's team captured the Premier League-FA Cup -Champions League treble in the 2022-23 campaign. That confirmed his place in the growing pantheon of City greats, having already been in the conversation most notably after scoring two late goals

against Aston Villa on the final day of the 2021-22 Premier League season to seal a 3-2 win that clinched the title. He was at City for seven years after joining in 2016 as Guardiola's first signing, and was often his manager's go-to player with big performances and significant goals. Bringing in Gundogan is a late call by City in this transfer window. He was one of Xavi Hernandez's favorite players during the coach's sole season with the Catalan club but Barcelona's delicate economic situation appears to have forced the new coach, Hansi Flick of Germany, to part ways with Gundogan. Typically an attacking central midfielder, Gundogan also will be used as a replacement for holding midfielder Rodri

should the Spain star need a break. He is well-versed in Guardiola's style of play so has the benefit of not needing a transitional period, and will compete for a place in the midfield alongside the irreplaceable Rodri with Kevin De Bruyne, Bernardo Silva, Mateo Kovacic and Phil Foden. Gundogan's exit should help Barcelona register new midfielder Dani Olmo, which the team has so far been unable to do because of the Spanish league's financial rules that make clubs balance expenditures on wages and transfers with available assets. In addition to Olmo, Barcelona also has depth in the creative midfield positions with Pedri Gonzalez, Frankie de Jong, Fermin Lopez and, once he recovers from his serious leg injury, Gavi Páez. Gundogan was Germany's captain at the recent European Championship but he retired from international duty this week. Gundogan's last game for City saw him lift the Champions League trophy after the win over Inter Milan in Istanbul in June last year. His next could be against Ipswich at Etihad Stadium in the Premier League on Saturday.

Aditi and Diksha fight hard on tough opening day at AIG Women's Open



PTI n ST. ANDREWS (SCOTLAND)

Indian golfers Diksha Dagar and Aditi Ashok made crucial birdies on their final holes to keep alive their chances of making the cut after the first round of the AIG Women's Open. Aditi carded a 4-over 76 to be T-79 while Diksha was 5-over 77, sitting at T-100 as play ended late on the opening day which was marred by strong winds. The cut looked likely at 3-over or 4-over after the second round.

For a long time, Diksha's score on the board showed a birdie on Par-5 14th, which was later corrected and it was shown as 5-over. Aditi opened with two pars and then had a bogey on 12th and a double on 13th for 3-over first nine. She dropped further shots on first and second to go 5-over before the birdie on ninth made it 4-over for the day. Diksha, T-21 last year at Walton Heath, was 5-over for her first nine holes, the back nine of the Old Course with bogeys on 10, 11, 13, 16 and 17.

On the second nine, she dropped a shot on third and picked a birdie on the ninth, her final hole. Charley Hull fired a round of 5-under 67 to sit in the outright lead after the first round. The English star went out to tackle the Old Course in the afternoon wave alongside world number one Nelly Korda and defending champion Lilia Vu. Hull rolled in her first birdie of the day on the fifth but made a bogey on the par-3 eighth, however, she was soon under par again with a birdie on the ninth. The three-time LET winner then had a great back nine as she made birdies on 10, 12, 15 and 18 to hold a solo lead on five-under-par in the final major of the year. China's Ruoning Yin and American Korda sit one shot behind the leader after they produced rounds of 68 (-4) on the opening day at the Old Course. Six players are in a share of fourth place with Korean duo Jenny Shin and Mi Hyang Lee, American pair Andrea Lee and Lilia Vu, Thailand's Patty Tavatanakit and Japan's Mao Saigo all on three-under.



Verstappen under pressure in front of home crowd as F1 returns at Dutch Grand Prix

AP n ZANDVOORT (NETHERLANDS)

The Dutch Grand Prix has generally been a party for Max Verstappen and his legions of orange-clad fans. This year could be very different. Verstappen has won all three races at the beach-side Zandvoort track since the Dutch Grand Prix returned to the Formula 1 schedule in 2021. For once though, home star Verstappen is under pressure in the standings. He enters the first race after the summer break without a win from any of the previous four - his longest winless run since 2020. "Last year coming here, I was a lot more confident that we had a big chance of winning the race, but that's how the season is already," Verstappen said Thursday. "It's a lot more competitive and from our side, I think we're still trying to improve, trying to find a better car balance." It will be Verstappen's 200th race and the 26-year-old Dutch driver, who has a contract with Red Bull through 2028, said he believes he's closer to the end of his F1 career than the start. McLaren and Mercedes are both closing in on Verstappen and his Red Bull team, which started the year in such a dominant style. Beating Verstappen at his home race would be a real statement of intent. Perez under pressure Verstappen's 78-point lead over McLaren's Lando Norris in the drivers' standings gives him some room for error. But, teammate Sergio Perez's poor performances mean Red Bull's 42-point lead over McLaren in the constructors' championship could be vulnerable. In normal circumstances, a driver who signed a contract extension two months ago

wouldn't face questions about his future. Perez's prolonged slump - no podium since April, no finish higher than seventh since May - hasn't quietened the speculation. Red Bull's broader F1 operation also seems to have five drivers for four seats across its main team and its second team, RB. Red Bull adviser Helmut Marko told Austrian newspaper Kleine Zeitung that New Zealander Liam Lawson, who drove five races for RB (then called AlphaTauri) last year, would "definitely be in one of our cars next year," in comments published Thursday. Yuki Tsunoda has a contract with RB for 2025, but his teammate Daniel Ricciardo's status is less clear. Another race seat for 2025 was confirmed Friday as Alpine promoted reserve driver Jack Doohan to partner Pierre Gasly next year. **RUSSELL SEEKS TO BOUNCE BACK:** George Russell thought he'd won the last race in Belgium, only to be disqualified when his car was found to be underweight. That passed the win to his teammate Lewis Hamilton. Russell has had nearly a month to reflect on what happened and said he had "zero hard feelings" toward Mercedes and that "in my mind, that is still a win."

Neeraj finishes second in Lausanne Diamond League with season's best 89.49m

PTI n LAUSANNE

Star Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra finished second in the Diamond League here after producing a season's best effort of 89.49m from his last attempt in a gritty performance despite lingering fitness concerns. The 26-year-old was at the fourth spot till the fourth round before sending his spear to 85.58m in his fifth attempt. He saved the best for the last and his final attempt measured 89.49m on Thursday, a marginal improvement on the 89.45m achieved in the Paris Olympics a few days ago. He was in danger of missing the sixth throw but his fifth round effort of 85.58m saved him. Only the top three after five rounds get their respective final attempts. Two-time world champion and Paris Olympics bronze-medallist Anderson Peters of

Grenada won the event with a monster throw of 90.61m in the second round while Julian Weber of Germany took the third spot with 87.08m. "The feeling wasn't great at first, but I am happy with my throw, especially the second (career) best throw on my last attempt. It was a tough start, but the comeback was really nice and I enjoyed the fighting spirit I showed," Chopra said after the event. "Even though my early throws were around 80-83m, I pushed hard in the last two attempts finishing strong. Competing at this high level, it's important to stay mentally tough and fight through." Peters, who had struggled to find form last year, led the competition here from beginning to end and he stamped his class with the 90m-plus throw in the last round. He has a personal best of 93.07m achieved in 2022.



With seven points from Thursday's second-place finish, Chopra is joint third alongside Weber in Diamond League standings with 15 points. Peters jumped to top spot with 21 points. Czech Republic's Jakub Vadlejch, who finished seventh (82.03m) on Thursday, is in second spot with 16 points. Nursing a long-standing groin injury, Chopra claimed a silver in the Paris Olympics on

August 8 adding to his historic gold in the Tokyo edition of the Games three years ago. Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem had beaten Chopra for the gold in Paris with an Olympic record throw of 92.97m. Nadeem was

missing from the field here. On Saturday, Chopra had confirmed his participation here, postponing a decision on a possible surgery till the end of the season. Chopra had won the Lausanne leg in 2022 and 2023 and finished second behind Vadlejch in the winner-takes-all Diamond League final in Eugene, USA, last year. This season's DL finals will be held in Brussels on September 14. He needs to finish in the top-six of the series standings to qualify for the final. There is another DL meeting - in Zurich on September 5 - which has a men's javelin throw event on its roster. Chopra is yet to win a DL meeting this year. He finished second behind Vadlejch in Doha on May 10. The Indian has been managing his groin injury since winning the gold in the Budapest World Championships last year.