



वीर शहीद पोदो द्यो

की क्रांतिकारी भूमि कोल्हान प्रमंडल
की लाखों माता-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

28 अगस्त, 2024 | अपराह्न 12:00 बजे से
फुटबॉल मैदान, रापचा, गम्हरिया, सरायकेला-खरसावाँ

कोल्हान प्रमंडल (सरायकेला-खरसावाँ,
पूर्वी सिंहभूम और पश्चिमी सिंहभूम)
की सभी बहनों का समारोह में स्वागत है

48 लाख से अधिक निबंधन

लगभग 45 लाख बहनों के 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

Champai's move marks new chapter in Jharkhand politics

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

The speculation surrounding former Chief Minister Champai Soren's political future finally came to an end. Known as the "Kolhan Tiger," Soren, a senior leader of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), is set to formally join the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on August 30. This move follows weeks of anticipation and signals a significant shift in the political landscape of Jharkhand.

Rumours of Soren's departure from JMM began when he made an unexpected trip to Delhi on August 18, accompanied by an emotional social media post that hinted at a major change. Sources within the JMM have indicated that Soren's decision was influenced by internal party dynamics, particularly after Hemant Soren, the current Chief Minister, returned from jail. Tensions reportedly escalated when Champai Soren was asked to resign from his position, which led to a series of demands from Soren regarding the composition of a new cabinet. These demands included the



deputy chief minister post, control over key departments, and the Ghatshila assembly seat for his son, Babul Soren. Despite negotiations, JMM leaders were unwilling to meet all of Soren's conditions, particularly regarding the Ghatshila seat, which is currently held by MLA Ramdas Soren. This refusal, combined with Soren's diminishing support within the party, paved the way for his exit. Over the past few weeks, Soren has been actively engaging with JMM's Kolhan MLAs, hinting at a broader defection. However, Hemant Soren's efforts to consolidate support within the party have largely neutralized these attempts.

Sources close to the matter suggest that the BJP has been courting Champai Soren for some time, recognizing his influence in Kolhan, where many seats have slim victory margins. By bringing Soren into the fold, the BJP hopes to bolster its position in the region, capitalizing on his grassroots connections and the discontent within JMM ranks.

"The decision to leave JMM was not made lightly. Reports indicate that Champai Soren had long been dissatisfied with the party's direction and felt sidelined after being removed as Chief Minister. His growing frustration culminated in the current split, with his recent activities in Kolhan signaling a clear break from JMM. His formal induction into the BJP is expected to further alter the political dynamics of the region, with both parties strategizing their next moves," said a city-based political analyst.

Within JMM, there is recognition that Champai Soren's departure could have a dual impact. While it might weaken the party's base in some areas, it could also remove internal frictions that have been brewing for years. Party insiders believe that this realignment might be beneficial in the long term, allowing JMM to rebuild and strengthen its core without the distraction of internal dissent.

As the situation unfolds, all eyes are on the Kolhan region, where political loyalties are rapidly shifting. The BJP, known for its strategy of drawing in influential figures from other parties, seems poised to capitalize on this latest development. Meanwhile, JMM is actively exploring options to counteract any potential fallout, with plans to engage with leaders who have switched allegiances in the past.

Dhanbad based Doctor, businessman in CBI net after arrest of IT Commissioner

PANKAJ : DHANBAD

A team of CBI New Delhi after apprehending Income Tax Principal Commissioner Santosh Kumar in-charge of Dhanbad and Patna circles while taking a bribe of Rs 10 lakh from a businessman of Dhanbad conducted raids in Dhanbad and took into custody three persons.

On basis of arrest of IT official the CBI team in coordination with Dhanbad CBI officials raided the residence of noted radiologist Dr Pranay Purve located at Housing Colony, an income tax employee of its technical team, outsourcing operator and transporter Gurpal Singh from Katras Road Matkuria and one businessman Ashok Chaurasia.

On Tuesday Those taken in custody include noted radiologist Dr Pranay Purve, transporter Gurpal Singh and a businessman Ashok Chaurasia were taken to Sadar Hospital for medical checkup and later supposedly have been taken to Patna for interrogation by CBI. Meanwhile, local officials of CBI refused to divulge details officially mentioning that action taken since relates to New Delhi. The CBI team continued to raid more at different locations throughout the night and have seized a huge quantity of incriminating documents relating to the raids, have been seized from all the locations. Which are being investigated. During the raid, the CBI officers kept refusing to tell anything. Gurpal Singh is a big transporter and also operated with the outsourcing coal mining company. Dr Pranay Purve happens to be the secretary of Dhanbad Club and is claimed to have business links with Gurpal for decades. According to information, Santosh Kumar has been arrested by the CBI while taking a bribe of Rs 10 lakh from Gurpal but CBI is yet to clarify links with those arrested including the role of doctor in it.

Strategic meeting aims to boost agricultural practices and food security

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

A crucial meeting of the ATMA Government Body and District Food Security Mission Executive Committee was convened under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner and ATMA Chairman Ananya Mittal at the Collectorate Auditorium today. The session aimed to outline the agricultural activities and extension programs for the financial year 2024-25, with a strong focus on improving farming practices and food security in the district.

During the meeting, the District Agriculture Officer and Project Director of ATMA, Bibek Burua, presented the approved budget of ₹232.53 lakh for the District Extension Work Plan under the ATMA Agriculture Extension Scheme. The funding will support a variety of activities designed to bolster agricultural productivity and farmer education.

The action plan includes a comprehensive set of initiatives: Training Programs: One inter-state training session, one state-level training session, nine district-level training sessions for farmers, and 11 district-level tours for farmers. Tours and Demonstrations: One inter-state tour, two in-state tours, and 40 units of mushroom production training in the Rabi season. Farmer Schools and Capacity Building: Establishment of one farmer school in each block, capacity development programs for women groups, and 11 farmer seminars. Agricultural Fair: One district-level agricultural fair to showcase advancements and innovations in farming. Deputy Commissioner Mittal emphasized the need to promote the production of coarse grains through ATMA's training and tour programs. He directed that farmers should be sent to institutions specializing in

advanced water management techniques and pulse cultivation methods. The aim is to ensure that these subjects receive special attention in programs like Krishak Goshthi and Krishak Scientist Inter-Meetings. Mittal stressed that detailed program descriptions for all activities must be submitted through the Senior Officer and Project Director of ITDA for approval. This step is crucial to ensure the proper implementation and accountability of the planned activities. In addition to the ATMA activities, the District Food Security Mission Executive Committee approved action plans under the Food and Nutrition Security Krishi Innovation Scheme. The Deputy Commissioner highlighted the importance of targeting support to genuinely needy farmers through various demonstration programs, including those for pulses, paddy, oilseeds, coarse grains, and nutri cereals.

Rotary clubs rally against violence on women

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

Members of nine Rotary Clubs from the Kolhan region took to the streets of Sakchi today in a rally protesting the recent murder of a female doctor in Kolkata on August 9th. The demonstrators later met with the local Deputy Commissioner (DC), Ananya Mittal, to voice their demands for stronger government action against such crimes.

Representatives from Jamshepur West, Jamshepur Green, Chaibasa Rotary Club, Jamshepur Rotary Club Main, Jamshepur Dalma Rotary Club, Jamshepur Mid Town, Rotary Club Jamshepur Femina, Rotary Club Jamshepur Steel City, and Rotary Club Jamshepur East were present at the rally. They emphasized that crimes against women, particularly those targeting medical professionals, are unacceptable and must be met with the strictest legal measures.



In their meeting with DC, the Rotary members presented a collectively signed letter urging the government to implement measures to prevent such incidents in society. They also called for enhanced security arrangements and special facilities for doctors in hospitals to ensure their safety.

"This tragic incident is a stark reminder of the dangers faced by women, especially those in the medical field. We must take action to prevent such crimes and protect those who serve our society," said a representative from the Jamshepur Rotary Club Main. Mittal assured the group that he would bring their concerns to the attention of higher authorities and stressed the importance of safeguarding the safety of doctors and other vulnerable professionals.

NTPC SIC provides essential food items to needy villagers



PNS : RANCHI

NTPC Swayamsiddha Ladies Club, Coal Mining Headquarters, Ranchi as part of CSR initiative distributed food items/groceries to 40 needy families in Mahadev Toli village located in Namkum, Ranchi. The initiative was undertaken under

the guidance of Rekha Jain, President, Swayamsiddha Ladies Club in association with Robin Hood Army (Swayam Sevi Sanstha). Jain conveyed her gratitude to the Members of Swayamsiddha Ladies who have wholeheartedly contributed for the initiative of providing of the grocery

items and encouraged them to participate in various welfare activities for the upliftment of the needy particularly providing education to the children. Jain also interacted with the members of Robinhood Army & encouraged them for being part of the initiative and thanked them for providing an opportunity to serve the society. On this occasion Welfare in-charge and Vice-President Shikha Rastogi, Cultural in-charge and Vice President Purnima Shrikhande, Welfare secretary Mansa Verma, Cultural Secretary, Anitha Prasad and Treasurer, Snigdha Rani Majhi were also present. The noble initiative was appreciated by the beneficiaries.

Dr. Ajoy Kumar stakes claim from Jamshedpur East Assembly

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

As Jharkhand gears up for its upcoming Assembly elections, Dr. Ajoy Kumar, a former Member of Parliament from Jamshedpur, former Indian Police Service officer, and the outgoing All India Congress Committee (AICC) in-charge for Odisha, Tamil Nadu, and Puducherry, has officially submitted his candidature for the Jamshedpur East (48) Assembly seat. The submission was made to East Singhbhum's Executive District President (City), Dharmendra Sonkar. The Jamshedpur East Assembly constituency is known to be one of the most contested and significant among the six assembly constituencies under the East Singhbhum district.



Addressing the media, Dharmendra Sonkar expressed the sentiment of anticipation and support within the community, stating, "The Jamshedpur East Assembly was waiting for a long time for Jamshedpur's universally accepted leader, the messiah of the poor and needy, Dr. Ajoy Kumar." On the same day, two other candidature applications were also submitted to the state office in Ranchi: one by Dharmendra Sonkar for Jamshedpur West and another by Surendra Kumar Jha alias Bablu Jha for Jamshedpur East. The announcement of Dr. Ajoy Kumar's candidature has stirred enthusiasm across all sections of society in Jamshedpur East. Known for his distinct image, which sets him apart from traditional political figures, Dr. Kumar's entry is seen as a game-changer. His reputation as a dynamic former IPS officer with strong management skills is perceived to have reshaped the electoral landscape in the constituency.

DPS Ranchi organises Career Guidance Fair 2024



PNS : RANCHI

The fair featured a diverse range of universities, including prestigious institutions like the Graphic Era, Deemed to be University (Dehradun), Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, MIT World Peace University (Pune), Amity University (Jharkhand), Manav Rachna, Sikkim Manipal University, Techno India University, Chanakya University, Silver Oak University, RV University, Mody University, Kalinga University, PCET's Pimpri Chinchwad University, Mahindra University, Chitkara University, RIT (Roorkee), Alliance University, Adamas University (Kolkata) and KR Manglam University. This diversity offered a plethora of courses and career pathways for students to explore. Students had the opportunity to engage in one-on-one discussions with representatives from the universities. This personal interaction allowed students to seek answers to their specific queries regarding courses, admissions, scholarships, career options and more. Career counselors were on hand to provide guidance to students and help them make informed decisions about their future academic and career paths. Many universities presented their scholarship programs, which was a particularly valuable aspect for aspiring students seeking financial aid.

The attendees found the event highly informative and appreciated the insights gained during the one-on-one interactions. Principal Dr. R.K Jha said, "The Career Guidance Fair organized by Delhi Public School Ranchi was a resounding success, providing a significant stepping stone for students as they explore their higher education options. It played a vital role in simplifying the often complex and overwhelming process of selecting the right institution and program. The University Fair at Delhi Public School Ranchi undoubtedly served as a beacon of knowledge, opportunity, and aspiration for all those who attended."

Series of Workshops on Social Stock Exchange: Accelerating Social Impact

PNS : RANCHI

The Indian Social Responsibility Network (ISRN), in collaboration with the National Stock Exchange (NSE), organized a significant workshop as part of their ongoing series across multi cities as a knowledge partner of NSE titled "SOCIAL STOCK EXCHANGE - Accelerating Social Impact." Organized by Citizens Foundation, Ranchi, the event took place with great success and participation.



(NGOs) and Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs) to gain an in-depth understanding of the Social Stock Exchange (SSE) and its potential to revolutionize social impact investing in India. Participants received valuable insights into various aspects of SSE, including improved market access, the synergy between investors and investees with social aims, performance-based philanthropy, minimal registration costs, and additional avenues for social enterprises. Kishore Mantri, in his keynote address, commended ISRN and NSE for their initiative, emphasizing the importance of such workshops in empowering social enterprises and enhancing the collaboration between the social sector and investors. He remarked, "The Social Stock Exchange is a transformative step towards creating a more inclusive and impactful ecosystem. I am confident that with the collective efforts of stakeholders, we can drive sustainable change and bring about a significant social impact."

Santosh Gupta, CEO of ISRN, highlighted the organization's commitment to fostering knowledge and capacity-building among social sector stakeholders. He stated, "Our aim through these workshops is to create awareness and build the necessary expertise among NGOs and NPOs to effectively engage with the Social Stock Exchange. We believe that this will lead to a more structured and impactful approach to social investing in India." The workshop concluded with an engaging Q&A session, where participants had the opportunity to interact with the experts and seek clarifications on various aspects of the Social Stock Exchange. This workshop marks a significant milestone in the series, reinforcing the commitment of ISRN, NSE, and Citizens Foundation to accelerating social impact through innovative financial mechanisms and collaborative efforts.

DC BOKARO PRAISES DATU STUDENTS FOR LED BULB INITIATIVE, PLEDGES SUPPORT

Expresses happiness over the Inclusion of students' story in the UN Book

R SHARMA : BOKARO

A team of five students from Plus Two High School, Datu, in Kasmar Block—Rani Kumari, Usha Kumari, Aparna Kumari, Pooja Kumari, Dipika Kumari, and Preeti Kumari—met with Deputy Commissioner (DC) Vijaya Jadhav on Tuesday. During the meeting, the students presented her with a copy of the book "Hum," published by the UN Women & Ford Team, which features their success story. The DC expressed her delight over their achievement and extended her best wishes for their future endeavors. She also encouraged



aged the students to continue their efforts. The students shared with the DC that they had acquired skills in solar energy-based lighting systems through vocational training at their school. The inadequate electricity supply in their area inspired them to work in this direction, with the full support of their vocational teacher, Animesh. The team has successfully created solar trees and solar-powered lights and is

now manufacturing LED bulbs during their spare time. The students also presented a sample of their LED bulbs to the DC. Impressed with their work, DC Jadhav instructed District Sub-Divisional Magistrate Vandana Shejwalkar, who was also present, to ensure that the bulbs used in various district offices are procured from the students' team. The students further mentioned that they had participated in the national-level Bharat Kaushal Competition. The DC assured them that the district administration would provide any necessary support for their initiatives.

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IVA JOVIC BEATS MAGDA IN FIRST ROUND 11 SPORTS



2019 का वादा था 5 लाख झारखंडी युवाओं को सरकारी नौकरी का 2024 तक आप में से किसी को मिला क्या?

Protests singe City of Joy

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Many people, including policemen, were injured in pitched battles intermittently fought at various locations of Kolkata and Howrah between the men in uniform and students protesting against the rape and murder of the lady doctor at a medical college in Kolkata.



Tear gas shells being used by security personnel to disperse students during their protest march towards West Bengal Secretariat over the alleged sexual assault and murder of a trainee doctor, in Kolkata, on Tuesday

Chatterjee Road and elsewhere shouting the hitherto familiar slogan "we want justice." At Princep Ghat and Mahatma Gandhi Road the police chased away the agitators who were trying to break the cordons.

journalists covering the incident tried to intervene by appealing the people not to take law into their own hands. Intensity of the protest was such that the agitators who were quickly joined by swarms of political activists, moved dangerously close to the seat of State power, Nabanna with the police armed with riot gear having a trying time to push them back.

Safety of healthcare workers: Portal floated, public view sought

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court-appointed National Task Force (NTF) to formulate a protocol for the safety and security of healthcare professionals held its inaugural meeting under the chairmanship of the Cabinet Secretary on Tuesday.

healthcare field. Soon after the NTF panel also favoured setting up an online portal seeking suggestions from public, the Union Health Ministry shared a link in this regard, posting on the X social platform, "Suggestions to N T F" — http://serviceonline.gov.in/dir ectApply.do?serviceId=2987

PM Modi shares perspectives on Russia-Ukraine conflict with Putin

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday spoke to Russian President Vladimir Putin and shared "insights" from his recent visit to Ukraine. During the telephone talks, Modi reiterated India's firm commitment to supporting an early, abiding and peaceful resolution of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.



FILE PHOTO

strengthen the Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership between India and Russia. They also exchanged views on a range of regional and global issues of mutual interest. The two leaders exchanged views on the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict as Modi shared with Putin insights from his recent visit to Ukraine.



NDA touches majority mark in Rajya Sabha, 11 elected unopposed

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

In a major boost to the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA), nine candidates from the BJP and two from allies have been elected unopposed in the bypolls for the Rajya Sabha. This is the first time that the NDA has reached a majority mark in the Upper House.

BRS leader Kavitha gets bail in Liquorgate

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

In a major setback to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and a big relief to Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) leader Kalvakuntla Kavitha, the Supreme Court on Tuesday granted her bail in the now-scraped Delhi excise policy 2021-22.

had to show that Kavitha was involved in the alleged scam. The bench noted that the investigation is complete and chargesheet/prosecution complaint has been filed in both the CBI and ED cases. Hence, the custodial interrogation of the petitioner, who has been behind the bars for over five months, is no longer necessary.



Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) leader Kalvakuntla Kavitha FILE PHOTO

the Delhi High Court which had denied her bail in the two cases. "The appellant (Kavitha) shall not make any attempt to

tamper with the evidence or influence the witnesses. The appellant shall deposit her passport with the learned Trial Judge. The appellant shall regularly attend the Trial Court and cooperate with the expeditious disposal of the trial," reads the order. Later in the day, a city court issued release warrants for Kavitha, paving the way for her release from jail.

politician was granted bail earlier in the day by the SC in both the cases. The bench reiterated its observation in the Manish Sisodia judgment that the undertrial custody should not be turned into a punishment. It also set aside a July 1 order of the Delhi High Court which denied bail to the BRS leader in the two cases. The Delhi HC on July 1 had denied bail to Kavitha. Among other grounds, Justice Swarna Kanta Sharma held that Kavitha was a "well-educated" woman who could not be considered "vulnerable", so the exception would not apply to her. A trial court order by Judge Kaveri Baweja had interpreted the provision on the same lines to deny bail to Kavita.

DAHI HANDI SHOW



Devotees form a human pyramid to break the 'dahi handi', an earthen pot filled with curd, as part of Janmashtami celebrations, at Dadar, Mumbai, on Tuesday

Rise of daughters in Jammu and Kashmir

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

In the absence of any 'son'rise, it is time for the 'Laadli betis' to make their presence felt in the upcoming Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections. On Tuesday, two daughters with strong claim to political legacy from the Jammu and Kashmir divisions filed their nomination papers for the first round of polling on September 18.

terrorists along with his brother Ajeet Parihar while they were returning home on November 1, 2018. Anil Parihar had considerable influence in the area and was an active member of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. "It is the love of the people of Kishtwar that has motivated me to file my nomination. I am confident of my victory. I am also certain that the brothers, sisters, and elders of Kishtwar will support my candidature and ensure my victory by a large number of votes," the BJP nominee told reporters after filing her nomination at the office of the returning officer in Kishtwar. She emphasised that this mandate is not just



for her family, but for the families of all martyrs in the region. Shagun Parihar, pursuing a doctorate in electronics, expressed gratitude to the BJP for honouring the families of martyrs who laid down their lives for the nation and the party. She stressed that peace, security, employment, and

women's empowerment would be the core areas of her work for the uplift of the mountainous district. In the Valley, 37-year-old Iltija Mufti, daughter of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mehbooba Mufti, made her electoral debut by filing the nomination papers from the Srigufwara-

Bijbehara constituency of south Kashmir. Bijbehara is a traditional bastion of the PDP. It has been represented from 1999 to 2018 by senior party leader Abdul Rehman Veeri. "The party has reposed faith in me by fielding me from the Bijbehara Assembly constituency," Iltija told

media persons in Anantnag on Tuesday. She said that her grandfather, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, and mother Mehbooba Mufti had also started their political career from Bijbehara. "Today, it is a very emotional moment for me and I am truly honoured," she said. Mehbooba Mufti has vowed not to contest Assembly elections until Statehood is restored. In Kishtwar, BJP candidates Sunil Sharma and Tariq Keen also filed their nomination papers from Paddar Nagseni and Inderwal seats, respectively. Meanwhile, the BJP on Tuesday named 29 more candidates for the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly polls, taking to 45 the number of

seats for which it has announced its nominees. The BJP has made one change from the now-revised list, which was put out on Monday, as it has named Baldev Raj Sharma from Shri Mata Vaishno Devi seat in place of Rohit Dubey. All other names are the same for the same set of constituencies, announced on Monday before being withdrawn. In Srinagar, the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference released a list of 32 candidates which included Omar Abdullah for the Ganderbal Assembly seat, a constituency that he represented from 2009 to 2014 when he was the Chief Minister of the NC-Congress coalition Government.

No one will remain devoid of Govt scheme benefits: CM

Soren transfers JMMSY benefits to 7,32,906 women of Santhal Pargana

PNS : RANCHI

The enthusiasm and happiness seen among women across the state regarding Jharkhand Mukhyamantri Mainiya Samman Yojana is amazing. Your enthusiasm gives us the strength to fight every problem and challenge. With your hopes and trust, we are constantly moving forward, fighting every challenge boldly," said Chief Minister Hemant Soren while addressing the Santhal Pargana division level program of JMMSY at Panjanpahadi in Jama block of Dumka district on Tuesday.

The CM said that the state will progress only if it strengthens and empowers half the population. Participation of women is necessary for the development of the state in every situation. This is the reason why our government is committed to empowering half

the population. Our government is working to bring smiles on the faces of women through various schemes. The CM said that 4 years ago, there were many villages where people had never even seen the block office. They did not even have any information about the DC-SP office. Today the entire government is reaching their doorsteps. There are villages where there is no way to go. Where there is no facility of transportation, today BDO-CO, DC-SP and secretaries of departments are reaching there and not only listening to your problems but also solving them. The problems whose solution is not possible immediately, information about them is being sent to the government so that concrete steps can be taken in that direction. We are working with the thought that no one should be deprived of the government schemes.

The CM said that the state



Chief Minister Hemant Soren felicitates people under JMMSY in Dumka district on Tuesday. Cabinet colleagues Satyanand Bhokta, Baby Devi, Hafizul Hasan, Deepika Pandey, Irfan Ansari, MP Nalin Soren and MLAs Pradeep Yadav, Basant Soren, Badal, Dinesh William Marandi, Kalpana Soren were also present on the occasion. PNS

cannot become strong without strengthening the villages. This is the reason why

our government is running from villages instead of Ranchi headquarters. Under

the program "Aapki Yojana- Aapki Sarkar- Aapke Dwar" the work of connecting the

last person of the society with the government schemes was done by organizing camps in every village and hamlet. This program will continue continuously. Our effort is to solve your every problem.

The CM said that the government has come up with many schemes to make the farmers economically strong. Especially the kind of change in the weather that is being seen today, farmers need to come forward for alternative agriculture apart from traditional farming. He said that there are many schemes like Birsra Harit Gram Yojana, Didi Bari Yojana and Mukhyamantri Pashudhan Yojana, by which farmers can increase their income.

The CM said that in the last four and a half years, the work done by our government for every section of this state including tribals, natives, Dalits, backward, minorities, farmers, labour-

ers, old people, women and youth, has created a new dimension of development. Today, no old person in the state is deprived of pension. Loans up to two lakh rupees of farmers have been waived. Utkrisht Vidyalayas have been opened so that children get better education. So that the children here move forward by getting education, they are being given financial support under Guruji Credit Card Yojana.

To ensure that the education of girls is not left due to financial crisis, they have been linked with Savitribai Kishori Samridhi Yojana. There are many such schemes which are paving the way for the people of the state to move forward.

Today, in the Santhal Pargana division level program, the CM took another strong step towards women empowerment by transferring 73 crore 29 lakh 6 thousand rupees as honorarium

through DBT to the accounts of 7 lakh 32 thousand 906 beneficiaries. These include 1 lakh 58 thousand 724 sisters and daughters of Dumka, 50 thousand 152 of Deoghar district, 1 lakh 20 thousand 78 of Sahibganj district, 1 lakh 58 thousand 289 of Godda district, 1 lakh 20 thousand 110 of Pakur district and 1 lakh 25 thousand 543 sisters and daughters of Jamtara district.

In the program, Ministers Satyanand Bhokta, Baby Devi, Hafizul Hasan, Deepika Pandey, Irfan Ansari, MP Nalin Soren, MLAs Pradeep Yadav, Basant Soren, Badal, William Marandi, Kalpana Soren, District Council Chairperson Joyce Besra, Divisional Commissioner Lal Chand Dadel and Deputy Commissioners and Superintendents of Police of the districts falling under Santhal Pargana Division along with other officials were present.

Marandi meets PM Modi as Champai set to join BJP

PNS : RANCHI

BJP state president Babul Marandi on Tuesday met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi where the two leaders discussed state's political affairs. Sources said that Marandi, the party state unit's president, who has also been a chief minister of the state, is reportedly upset with former Chief Minister Champai Soren joining the BJP. He is set to meet Union Home Minister Amit Shah and other BJP leaders too.

Sources said that the induction of former chief minister and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha rebel Champai Soren into the BJP has led to disappointment of Babul Marandi, longtime BJP leader of the state, who has



State BJP President Babul Marandi meets Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Tuesday. PNS

now come to Delhi to speak to the leadership. However, before he took off for Delhi, Marandi told reporters that Soren is welcome to join the BJP. "If he is joining the party, we will welcome him. There's

no doubt about it," he told reporters. On Monday, Assam chief minister and the party's Jharkhand incharge and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma tweet-

ed that Champai is to join BJP on August 30 along with his son.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who took to social media to announce Soren's upcoming induction into the party. "Former Chief Minister of Jharkhand and a distinguished Adivasi leader of our country, Champai Soren Ji met Hon'ble Union Home Minister Amit Shah Ji a short while ago. He will officially join the BJP on 30th August in Ranchi," tweeted Sarma.

The decision by Soren to join the BJP comes at a time when the party is actively strengthening its base in Jharkhand, a state with a significant tribal population. His inclusion in the BJP is seen as a strategic move, likely to bolster the party's influence

among the tribal communities ahead of the upcoming elections.

Sources said that though Marandi is upset with Champai joining BJP, most of the leaders have welcomed the JMM senior leader joining BJP. Leader of Opposition Amar Bauri said that Champai Soren is welcome in the Bharatiya Janata Party family. Bauri said, "Johar to Jharkhand agitator, Hanuman of respected Shibu Soren ji, the most senior leader of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, former Chief Minister Champai Soren ji! Jharkhand Mukti Morcha betrayed the people of Jharkhand, did not spare even its own people. You have made a decision as per the expectations of the people."

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Former CM Champai, his son to join BJP on Friday

PNS : RANCHI

In a significant political development, Champai Soren, a prominent tribal leader and former Chief Minister of Jharkhand, is set to join the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on August 30. This news was confirmed by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who took to social media to announce Soren's upcoming induction into the party.

"Former Chief Minister of Jharkhand and a distinguished Adivasi leader of our country, Champai Soren Ji met Hon'ble Union Home Minister Amit Shah Ji a short while ago. He will officially join the BJP on 30th August in Ranchi," tweeted Sarma.

The decision by Soren to join the BJP comes at a time when the party is actively strengthening its base in Jharkhand, a state with a significant tribal population. His inclusion in the BJP is seen as a strategic move, likely to bolster the party's influence among the tribal communities ahead of the upcoming elections.

The development comes in a u-turn for Soren, who last week announced to float a new party. However, the BJP leaders and Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma were keen on inducting the tribal leader into the saffron fold. Champai Soren was upset with the JMM after Hemant Soren removed to take back the Chief Minister's chair after getting bail in the alleged land scam case. Hemant made Champai the Chief Minister of Jharkhand in January this year after getting arrested in the case. However, last month, he took the reign of the state in his hand once again after getting a bail in the case.

Champai met union home minister Amit Shah late Monday night in New Delhi along with Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who is also the saffron party's co-incharge of Jharkhand assembly elections,



Former CM Champai Soren and his son.

scheduled to be held in November-December. After meeting Home Minister Amit Shah, Champai Soren said that his son will also join BJP with him. Former Jharkhand Chief Minister Champai Soren said, "Earlier I thought that I would form a new organization but time is still short for this. After a lot of brainstorming, my faith in Prime Minister and Home Minister Amit Shah has increased and we have decided to join the BJP. My son will also join me in the BJP."

Here, after the announcement of Champai joining BJP, Leader of Opposition Amar Bauri said that Champai Soren is welcome in the Bharatiya Janata Party family. Bauri said, "Johar to Jharkhand agitator, Hanuman of respected Shibu Soren ji, the most senior leader of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, former Chief Minister Champai Soren ji! Jharkhand Mukti Morcha betrayed the people of Jharkhand, did not spare even its own people. You have made a decision as per the expectations of the people."

Orientation Program at IIT Ranchi

PNS : RANCHI

IIT Ranchi organised an orientation program for the first-year B.Tech, M.Tech, and Ph.D students on Tuesday. The program began with an introduction by the Associate Dean Academics and Faculty Affairs, Dr. Jaideep Pati, the Dean Research and Development, Dr. Santosh Kumar Mahato, and the Dean Student Affairs, Dr. Jitendra Kumar Mishra provided the new students with information about the various departments, facilities and achievements of the institute. Dr. Noopur shared information about the Training and Placements Cell, Dr. Shadab Hassan discussed Outreach Activities of the institute and Dr. Rishikesh Tiwari provided insights related to campus administration. Director Rajeev Srivastava, while addressing the students emphasised on the importance of skill-building and upgrading technical skills and also stated that students should not only excel academically but also strive to become good human beings.

2,57,78,149 voters in Jharkhand

PNS : RANCHI

Chief Electoral Officer K. Ravi Kumar held a press conference with media representatives in the Election House as per the pre-scheduled program regarding the final publication of the second special summary revision program of the voter list 2024.

He said that under the upcoming assembly elections, the draft of the second special summary revision program of the voter list going on in the state was published on July 25, which has been finally published today at all the districts, blocks and polling stations. The final publication of the voter list has been made available to all political parties in the form of soft and hard copy. He said that the voters of the state must check their names in this newly published voter list, in case of any discrepancy, get it corrected immediately.

The Chief Electoral Officer said that after the publication of the voter list, there are a total of 2,57,78,149 voters in the state, out of which 1,30,65,449 are male voters, 1,27,12,266 are female voters and 434 are third gender voters.

Veterinarians' role instrumental in animals' well-being: Expert

PNS : RANCHI

Veterinarians can play an instrumental role in the well-being of animals in farming communities by providing routine health checks, vaccinations, disease management tips to farms, dipping, deworming etc. The role becomes pivotal if the farming community involves small or marginal farmers primarily belonging to the scheduled tribes of Jharkhand.

Dr. Nandani Kumar, BAU animal geneticist and Principal Investigator of All India Coordinated Research Project on Goat Improvement expressed these views while addressing the farmers gathered at the vaccination camp and kisan goshti organized at Tiko village of Lohardaga district. Vaccination of about 454 goats were done against Enterotoxaemia which is a severe bacterial disease caused by spore forming gram positive bacteria Clostridium Perfringens type C and D causing death in peracute condition.

It is fatal before the symptoms are well evident or recognized making prevention more applicable than cure for the disease as treatment is rarely effective or available in such short interval. Symptomatic treatment and medicines were provided to the ailing goats by the doctors in the team including that for mange, diarrhoea, parasitic infestation etc. The visit was climactic in the wake of concept of inbreeding and outbreeding, balanced ration, selection and culling being delivered via kisan goshti.

To assess the exact selection and breeding method to be devised to get the desired genetic gain in the economic traits of Black Bengal goats of Jharkhand in order to make goat rearing more profitable for the farmers in the state, the visit of three out of four breeding clusters of AICRP on goat across the state has already been completed. The BAU team included project co PIs Dr.Dinesh Kumar and Dr.Shailendra Rajak.

Lohardaga has a goat population of about 30 thousand as per the latest livestock census. Good forest cover, forage and cultivable land etc. altogether make goat farming a favoured occupation for the farmers here so much so that thirty or more goats per farmer was also witnessed there in few households as per the census. Genetics and breeding as a tool is vital for permanent improvement in the production.

Governor holds dialogue with villagers in Lohardaga

PNS : RANCHI/LOHARDAGA

Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar interacts with students during a programme in Lohardaga district on Tuesday. PNS

I can know your various problems so that by making the government aware of it, its solution can be found. I want to see the development of all of you.

The Governor said that 'Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Yojana' is being run in the interest of farmers. He said that there is no such family which is deprived of the benefit of free food grains and they are eligible for this scheme. He told the villagers that he was once the Petroleum Minister in the government of former Prime Minister Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji and has been fully active for the availability of LPG gas among the people. At present, to ensure availability of LPG gas to every family, the benefit of free LPG gas connection is being provided to our mothers and sisters under the 'Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana' by the PM Narendra Modi. While interacting with the villagers, the Governor said that clean drinking water is absolutely necessary. Various scientific researches have shown that drinking

UD Secy directs RMC to repair roads in the City

PNS : RANCHI

Principal Secretary of Urban Development and Housing Department Sunil Kumar has directed the officials of Ranchi Municipal Corporation to improve the condition of the roads of the capital and also start work towards repairing them as soon as possible along with ensuring that there is no waterlogging on the roads. The Principal Secretary said this while reviewing the development schemes going on in the Ranchi Corporation area at the State Secretariat Project Bhawan on Tuesday.

they are not working to replace them immediately and install lights where they are not.

Kumar also stated that there should be a bus terminal in the City for intercity buses and if there is, then civic amenities should be improved there. This instruction is for Itki Bus Terminal in Ratu Road and Dhurwa Bus Terminal.

The UDHD official also stated that industrial areas and IT parks should be developed in the City as per the Master Plan 2015. Kumar has also directed RMC to make provision for footpaths on the sides of the roads and to get them constructed so that

pedestrians can reach their destination safely.

The Principal Secretary has stressed upon the use RFID for cleanliness so that it can be known whether garbage is being lifted from every house or every society every day or not. Kumar also asked RMC to complete the projects going on under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana in Ranchi city soon and also to identify areas in the city to encourage night markets like in big cities.

The UDHD official also instructed RMC to not cut the road here and there in the name of sewerage and drainage construction.

Recertification of iso 37001:2016 ABMS

PNS : RANCHI

CMPDI (HQ), Ranchi had been Recertified with the Licence of ISO 37001:2016 Anti-Bribery Management System (ABMS) after the audit of Anti-Bribery Management System (ABMS) measures adopted by CMPDI to eliminate the potential risks of bribery at CMPDI (HQ), Ranchi by Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS). The Licence is valid till 17th January, 2027. It is pertinent to mention here that, CMPDI was first recognized with ISO 37001:2016 certification in the year 2021. The certifications has been provided in respect of, "Prevention, detection and response to bribery for all activities of mineral exploration, mine planning and design, environment management, management systems, allied engineering, provision of human resource trainings, internal support services for employees and other business processes, including all associated laboratories of CMPDI(HQ), Ranchi".

SBPS students shine at Young Thinkers' Conclave

PNS : RANCHI

The students of Sarala Birla Public School, Ranchi left their indelible mark in the Silver Jubilee Commemorative Young Thinkers' Conclave organised by Mayo College, Ajmer. Prajnashree Hota of Std. XI was accorded with the Best speaker (prelims) award in the Multi-format English debate. Prince Vyas of Std. IX, Nishka Raj and Prajnashree Hota of Std. XI received the Best Adaptation Award in English Dramatics. Rohini Raj, Nishka Raj and Prajnashree Hota of Std. XI were awarded the 3rd Best Delegation in English Creative Writing. Principal, Paramjit Kaur, lauded the exceptional performance of the students and appreciated their dedication and consistency in keeping the school's flag fly high.



Students at Young Thinkers' Conclave.

CEO K Ravi Kumar addresses media persons at his office in Ranchi on Tuesday. PNS

PNS : RANCHI

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Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar interacts with students during a programme in Lohardaga district on Tuesday. PNS

PNS : RANCHI/LOHARDAGA

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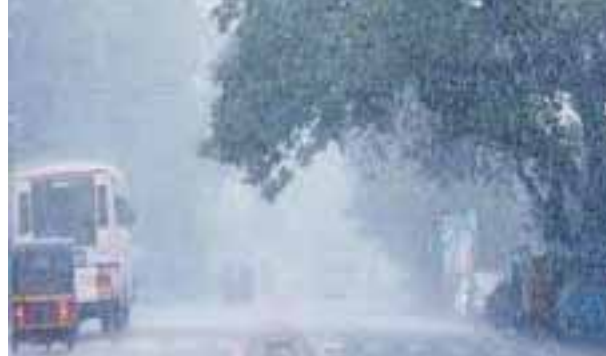
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Seven killed in rain-related incidents in Gujarat; more than 6,000 relocated

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

At least seven persons have died in rain-related incidents in different parts of Gujarat, and heavy showers continued to pound the state for the third consecutive day on Tuesday, throwing normal life out of gear and flooding low-lying areas, officials said. More than 6,000 persons have been relocated to safer places as water levels in dams and rivers rose amid incessant rainfall, they said. According to officials, seven persons lost their lives in rain-related incidents on Monday. Four persons were killed in wall collapse incidents in Gandhinagar, Kheda and Vadodra districts, while one person died after a tree fell on him and two others drowned in Anand district. The administrations of Panchmahal, Navsari, Valsad, Vadodra, Bharuch, Kheda, Gandhinagar, Botad and Aravali districts shifted hundreds of people to safer locations as a precautionary measure amid flooding in low-lying areas as water levels rose in rivers and dams. In Panchmahal, the district administration shifted around 2,000 people, while 1,000



were relocated in Vadodra, 1,200 in Navsari, and 800 in Valsad, among other areas, officials said. As per data shared by the State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC), the state has received nearly 100 per cent of its average annual rainfall so far, with Kutch, Saurashtra and south Gujarat accounting for more than 100 per cent of their average annual rainfall this season. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast isolated extremely heavy rainfall in most parts of the state on Tuesday, in the Saurashtra-Kutch region on Wednesday and Thursday, and heavy to very heavy rains across the state till Thursday. Tankara taluka in Morbi district received 347 mm of rainfall in 24 hours ending at 6 am on Tuesday, the highest in the state, followed by Morva Hadaf in Panchmahal (346 mm), Nadiad in Kheda (327 mm), Borsad in Anand (318 mm), Vadodra taluka (316 mm) and Anand taluka (314 mm). At least 24 out of 251 talukas received more than 200 mm rainfall, and 91 talukas received more than 100 mm showers in 24 hours, the SEOC said. A fresh spell of rainfall on Tuesday battered Rajkot city, inundating low-lying areas, roads and underpasses. Rajkot city alone received 142 mm of rainfall in four hours since 6 am, the SEOC data showed.

Central team to visit Tripura to assess flood damage : CM

PTI ■ AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha said the Centre will send a team to the state to assess the damage caused by the floods. At least 26 people died as the floods devastated the state. A total of 17 lakh people were estimated to have been affected, and of them, 1.37 lakh were rendered homeless, officials said. "Union Home Minister Amit Shah has assured me that he will be sending a central team shortly to assess the damage caused by the floods. The central team will physically visit the flood-hit areas," Saha told reporters on the sidelines of a Janmashtami programme on Monday. He said the state government will present a "true picture of devastation" caused by the floods when the central team arrives. Saha also expressed gratitude to Madhya Pradesh CM Mohan Yadav and UP CM Yogi Adityanath for extending financial support to the state. "Yogi Adityanath has spoken to me and donated Rs 10 crore for restoration works in flood-affected areas. The



Madhya Pradesh government also donated Rs 20 crore for restoration works. The Centre will certainly assist Tripura during these difficult times but it is praise-worthy the way other states are also lending a helping hand," he said. Speaking to the reporters, Revenue Secretary Brijesh Pandey said all district magistrates were asked to conduct an assessment of damage caused by the floods. The flood has caused extensive damage to roads, buildings, power lines, embankments and farmlands. It is estimated that the flood caused damage worth about Rs 15,000 crore, officials said. Despite waters receding in all major rivers, around 70,000 people are still in 471 relief camps, they said.

Decision on shifting Darshan to another prison likely soon: Min

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Home Minister KG Parameshwara on Tuesday said a decision is expected to be taken by authorities in a couple of days on shifting Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa, who is currently in judicial custody at Parappana Agrahara Central jail here in the Renukaswamy murder case, to another prison. A photograph of Darshan hanging out with three others, including a rowdy-sheeter, on the lawns of the jail had gone viral on Sunday, sparking a row. In the picture, the actor is seen in a relaxed mood, sitting on a chair and holding a cigarette and a coffee mug. Also, a purported video of Darshan speaking to a person over a video call from the prison too had surfaced on social media. Parameshwara said an IPS officer has been appointed to review all the systems in the state's prisons. The Minister said the government cannot take a decision on shifting Darshan to another prison. "It will be decided by the prison authorities in consultation with authorities from court and others.



Government doesn't decide it. There are certain norms as they (Darshana and co-accused) are undertrial, based on which authorities will decide," Parameshwara told reporters in response to a question. Asked as to when the authorities would decide, he said: "They will decide in a couple of days." Nine prison officials, including the Chief Superintendent of the Parappana Agrahara jail, were suspended on Monday over their "lapses" after a preliminary probe into "special treatment" to Darshan. Also, three FIRs were registered, including against Darshan, under sections of the Prisons Act and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

Noting that certain lapses were found in the prison, Parameshwara said inmates were allowed to move from one barrack to another and it is captured in the CCTVs. "So, action was taken against prison officials." "Nine officials have been suspended, they will be replaced. Even the Chief Superintendent and the Superintendent have been suspended, also others who have helped Darshan and group by supplying them with chairs, coffee, cigarettes...All these things have been captured in CCTV, based on that all of them have been suspended," he said. "The inquiry is in progress, the Minister said, adding, an IPS officer will be appointed for further probe. "Based on the findings given by the officer, we will have to find some permanent solutions. After going through the report, we will do it," he said. He added that he has come to know about a report submitted earlier for reforms in prisons. Also there is a national level report on police and prison reforms submitted during the tenure of the Manmohan Singh government

MP police arrest main accused in attack on Chhatarpur police station

PTI ■ BHOPAL

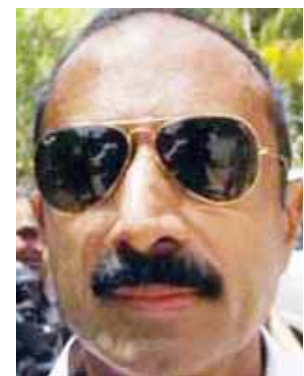
The Madhya Pradesh police on Tuesday arrested Haji Shahzad Ali, the main accused in the stone-pelting incident at a police station during a protest against a Hindu seer in Chhatarpur city, an official said. The police had issued a lookout circular for Ali to ensure he didn't flee the country. The local administration also razed his palatial house, citing that it was built without due permission. Hindu seer Ramgiri Maharaj had allegedly made objectionable remarks against Islam at Shah Panchale village in Sinnar taluka of Maharashtra's Nashik district during a religious event. Following this, around 300-400 people led by religious leaders came to Kotwali police station on August 21 to submit a memorandum demanding a case against Ramgiri Maharaj, who already faces multiple FIRs in Maharashtra over his alleged objectionable remarks against the Prophet. The crowd suddenly became aggressive and started pelting stones, it was stated. Talking to PTI, Chhatarpur's Superintendent of Police (SP) Agam Jain said Ali, the main

accused of the August 21 incident, was arrested from Chhatarpur during the day, and further legal steps will be taken after presenting him in the court. Jain said the police had formed 10 teams to apprehend the accused. Ali has a criminal record and has six cases, including murder and offences under the Arms Act to his name, since 1988, the SP said, adding that the administration is also investigating complaints of illegal encroachment lodged against Ali. The police are probing to find out where Ali stayed when he absconded after the incident and who was handling his social media account where he shared his videos during this period, Jain said. Efforts are underway to arrest other absconding accused, he said. Officials had earlier said a case was registered against 46 named and 150 unidentified persons under various provisions of law in connection with the violence. The Congress and All India Majlis-e-Itehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) chief Asaduddin Owaisi condemned the demolition of Ali's house and termed the administration as "bulldozer justice".

SC notice to Gujarat Govt on Sanjiv Bhatt's plea in custodial death case

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday sought the Gujarat government's response on former Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Sanjiv Bhatt's plea against his conviction in a 1990 custodial death case in which he was sentenced to life imprisonment. "Issue notice returnable in four weeks," a bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Prasanna B Varale said. The court also tagged the appeal with other matters related to the case. Bhatt has moved the top court challenging the Gujarat High Court's January 9, 2024 order dismissing his appeal. The court also upheld the conviction of Bhatt and co-accused Pravinshah Zala under Sections 302 (murder), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code. The high court had dismissed the state government's appeal seeking to enhance the sentences of five other accused who were acquitted of murder but convicted under Sections 323 and 506. While Bhatt and Zala are behind bars, the court cancelled the bail bonds of the five other accused who are out of jail. "We have also gone through the reasoning recorded by the



trial court while convicting the concerned accused persons for offences punishable under section 302 of the IPC," the division bench said while reading out the order. "From the evidence based on record, we are of the opinion that the trial court has rightly convicted (five) accused...For offences punishable under Sections 323," the judges had said. Bhatt and Zala, both police officers, were convicted for murder by the sessions court in Jamnagar on June 20, 2019. On October 30, 1990, then additional superintendent of police Bhatt detained around 150 people following a communal riot in Jamjodhpur town following a bandh call against the halting of BJP leader L K Advani's 'rath yatra' for the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya.

Prabhudas Vaishnani, one of the detained persons, died in hospital after his release. Vaishnani's brother accused Bhatt and six other police officials of torturing him in custody and causing his death. Bhatt was arrested on September 5, 2018, in another case where he is accused of falsely implicating a man for drug possession. The trial in the case is underway. He is also accused in a case of alleged fabrication of evidence in connection with the 2002 Gujarat riots cases along with activist Teesta Setalvad and former Gujarat director general of police R B Sreekumar. Bhatt had also hit the headlines when he filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court alleging then chief minister Narendra Modi's role in the 2002 Gujarat riots. The allegations were debunked by a special investigation team. He was suspended from service in 2011 and sacked by the Ministry of Home Affairs in August 2015 for 'unauthorised absence'. In the custodial death case, the Jamnagar court sentenced the other five policemen -- sub-inspectors Dipak Shah and Sailesh Pandya, and constables Pravinshah Jadeja, Anopsinh Jethva and Keshubha Jadeja -- to two years in prison.

Over 50 lakh vehicles used Atal Setu in seven months



PTI ■ MUMBAI

More than 50 lakh vehicles have used the Atal Setu, the country's longest sea bridge connecting Mumbai with its satellite city Navi Mumbai, since it was opened for traffic over seven months ago, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) has said. In a release issued on Monday, the MMRDA said 50,04,350 vehicles, including Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST), Navi Mumbai Municipal Transport (NMMT) and Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation's (MSRTC) Shivneri buses, have travelled between January 13 and August 26 on the sea bridge, which indicates a

daily average of 22,000 vehicles (over 227 days). "The vehicles comprise 47.40 lakh cars, 50,020 mini buses and light motor vehicles, 59,799 double-axle vehicles, 73,074 three-axle vehicles, 80,277 four-six axle vehicles and 503 oversized vehicles," a spokesperson said. The sea bridge - Mumbai Trans Harbour link (MTHL) - officially named Atal Bihari Vajpayee Sewri-Nhava Sheva Atal Setu linking Sewri in Mumbai and Nhava Sheva in Navi Mumbai, was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 12, while it was thrown open to the public the next day. "The extraordinary usage highlights the bridge's role in easing congestion and reducing travel time between south Mumbai and key destinations such as Panvel, Pune, and Navi Mumbai. Atal Setu's impact extends beyond mere traffic management. It has significantly improved connectivity between south Mumbai and other major regions, including the upcoming Navi Mumbai International Airport," the release said. "The Worli-Sewri elevated road, now 75 per cent complete, will soon provide a rapid 5-10 minute connectivity from Worli Seaface to Atal Setu. The development of an elevated road between the Chirle Interchange and the Mumbai-Pune Expressway promises even faster commutes between South Mumbai, the western suburbs, Navi Mumbai, Panvel, Pune, and the Mumbai-Goa Highway," it added.

Effective governance key to achieving our developmental goals: Siddaramaiah

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday said that effective governance is key to achieving the state's developmental goals and that the government is investing in technology and innovative solutions to enhance transparency, efficiency, and accountability in the administrative processes. Addressing a meeting with NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Suman Bery here, the chief minister said that sustainability is at the core of the state government's development strategy. "We are committed to environmental conservation and are implementing policies aimed at reducing our carbon footprint. For example, Karnataka is a leader in renewable energy; 53 per cent of our installed capacity of 32 Giga Wats comes from renewable energy sources. "Our efforts also include protecting natural resources and encouraging sustainable



agricultural practices. We recognise that environmental stewardship is essential for long-term prosperity and quality of life," he said. The chief minister said the state government is investing in technology and innovative solutions to enhance transparency, efficiency, and accountability in administrative processes. "For example we have a strong set of e-Governance solutions. Using these we were able to roll out the five guarantees in a record time of less than three months. Using our DBT module, we are transferring over Rs 54,000 crore to the beneficiaries directly into their bank accounts," he said.

Siddaramaiah further said that by adopting e-governance tools and fostering a culture of responsiveness, the government aims to improve service delivery and citizen engagement. "Our partnership with NITI Aayog has been instrumental in shaping our development strategies. We appreciate the guidance and support provided and are keen to continue collaborating on various Initiatives. We believe that through shared knowledge, resources, and expertise, we can address the challenges we face and unlock new opportunities for growth," he said. He emphasised on the state's dedication to contributing to the collective vision of a progressive and prosperous India. "We are committed to working together with all stakeholders to achieve our common goals and make a positive impact on the lives of our citizens," he added.

Goa Govt mulls hike in fine up to ₹1 crore for illegal hill-cutting: Min

PTI ■ PANAJI

The Goa government did not grant permission to anyone for hill cutting in the state in the last six months and it plans to amend regulations to raise up to Rs 1 crore the amount of fine for illegal hill cutting and other such activities, a minister has said. Town and Country Planning (TCP) Minister Vishwajit Rane issued the statement on Monday amid apprehensions that his department was allowing rampant cutting of hills in the eco-sensitive areas like slopes. "In the last six months, no permission was granted to anyone for hill cutting in the state," he said. The TCP Department is moving to amend regulations so that the minimum fine for such violations, such as hill cutting and other illegal activities, will range from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 1 crore, depending on the size of the plot, he said. As directed by Chief Minister Pramod Sawant recently in a

press conference, local officials, like deputy collector, mamlatdar and talathis must take action against such illegal activities, Rane said. The Goa government has pulled up its sleeves in the wake of devastating landslides in Kerala's Wayanad district. In the future, new guidelines will be formulated, including requirement for soil stabilization reports from engineers, he added. While the TCP department has not granted any fresh permission for hill cutting, it is also the responsibility of other departments to act for prevention of illegal hill cutting. The minister, who recently drew flak after a real estate giant constructed buildings on a slope of a hill in Reis Magos village near Panaji, claimed that permission for that was not granted by him. "Regarding the case of Reis Magos, the project's conversion 'sanad' was obtained in 1994 and the change of zone was done in Regional Plan 2001.

Court convicts man for outraging woman's modesty by winking at her

PTI ■ IMPHAL

A court here has convicted a 22-year-old man for outraging the modesty of a woman by winking at her and holding her hand but refused to impose any sentence on him considering his age and the fact that he has no criminal antecedents. Magistrate Aarti Kulkarni observed that while the offence committed by the accused, Mohammed Kaif Fakir, deserves a sentence not less than life imprisonment, considering his age and the fact that he has no criminal antecedents, he should be given the benefit of probation. The order was passed on August 22. The court said it couldn't ignore the mental agony and harassment the woman underwent, but imposing a sentence on the accused would affect his future and his image in society. The court convicted Fakir under section 354 (outraging the modesty of a woman) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). The court ordered that Fakir be released after furnishing a



bond of Rs 15,000 and directed him to appear before the probation officer as and when called. As per the complaint lodged at Byculla police station in south Mumbai in April 2022, the woman had ordered groceries from a local shop, and the accused, who worked at the establishment, came to her house to deliver the same. The accused asked the woman for a glass of water, and when she was handing it over, he allegedly touched her hand inappropriately and winked at her. He touched her hand the second time while handing over the bag of groceries and again winked at her, she alleged. When the woman raised an alarm, the accused ran away. The woman then told her husband about the incident, and they lodged a police complaint. The accused claimed that he had touched the woman's hand by mistake and had no intention to outrage her modesty. The court held that although only the victim and the accused were present at the time of the incident, the evidence and the woman's statement were strong enough to prove the accused's complicity.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Step in the right direction

Modi Govt launches assured pension scheme for Central Govt Employees, amid concerns of financial implications

The Modi Government has announced the fixed pension scheme for the central government employees. This must be music to the ears of central employees who were not happy with the ongoing market-linked pension scheme and were demanding its scrapping. In a significant policy shift, the Indian government has approved a new pension scheme guaranteeing central government employees 50% of their base salary as a pension. This move marks a departure from the current National Pension Scheme (NPS), which links payouts to market returns. The newly introduced Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) is set to be implemented from April 1, 2025, and will impact over two million federal employees. The shift towards the UPS stems from growing dissatisfaction with the NPS, which was adopted in 2004 as part of a broader fiscal reform. Under the NPS, employees contribute 10% of their base salary, and the government adds 14%, with the eventual pension amount depending on the market returns from investments, primarily in federal debt. However, as some states began reverting to the older, more fiscally burdensome system of guaranteed pensions, the Modi government faced mounting pressure to reassess the NPS.



The decision to approve the UPS aligns with demands from trade unions and the Opposition parties, who have long advocated for a guaranteed minimum pension. The issue gained political traction during recent general elections, where the lack of pension security under the NPS became a contentious topic. The UPS guarantees that employees who have completed at least 25 years of service will receive 50% of their base salary, calculated over the last 12 months before retirement, as a pension. This assured payout provides a safety for retirees, addressing concerns about the volatility of market-linked pensions. While the UPS offers greater security for employees, it also imposes a significant financial burden on the government. The expected cost to the exchequer for the fiscal year 2024-25 is approximately Rs 62.5 billion. This annual expenditure is likely to fluctuate based on the number of employees retiring each year. However, the shift to the UPS raises several concerns. First, the financial sustainability of the scheme is a critical issue. The guaranteed nature of the pension could strain government finances, especially if economic growth slows or tax revenues decline. Additionally, the UPS may lead to disparities between central and state government employees. Moreover, there is a risk that the shift back to a defined benefit pension system could set a precedent for other sectors, potentially leading to broader demands for similar guarantees. This could exacerbate fiscal challenges, particularly in a country where social welfare spending is already under pressure. As India prepares to implement the UPS in 2025, careful management and ongoing evaluation will be essential to ensure that the benefits of the scheme are balanced against its fiscal impact.

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PICTALK



A painter gives final touches to the Goddess Durga's idol ahead of Durga pooja, in Kolkata

A new standard for global populism



SHIVAJI SARKAR

Kamala prioritises the everyday citizen over corporate interests and her message is getting traction not only in the US but across the globe

The global economic landscape could shift dramatically if the US Democratic Party's presidential nominee, Kamala Harris, succeeds in implementing her bold stance on prices and corporate control. This move could send shockwaves across the world, compelling nations like India to reconsider their current economic models—just as they did during the liberalization era when corporate power surged. It appears the tide is turning, as people worldwide demand freedom from the manipulative tactics that drive up prices. Harris's message is clear: Americans can no longer tolerate skyrocketing costs. Her aggressive, populist economic agenda aims to rein in corporate power and lower the cost of living, potentially setting a new standard for global economic policies.

A 74-year-old Indian blogger after a lavish Indian corporate marriage in July blurted out on X-twitter, "In my 74 years, I have not seen, or even heard of, a more tasteless, egotistical or pretentious wedding than the recent, 24X7 televised extravaganza. The perversity and its real portent lie elsewhere. "It lies in the way money was expended, at a time when the average Indian has never been worse off economically, when inequality and unemployment have reached record heights, when 67 percent of the country's wealth, when 800 million people have to be provided free/ subsidized foodgrains to survive".

Not much different is the weekend speech of Harris. She says, "We know that many Americans don't yet feel that progress in their lives. Costs are still too high and it feels too hard to get ahead." No wonder Republican nominee Donald Trump calls her too liberal. It seems so similar to the echoes of severe price rises and joblessness during the June Lok Sabha elections in India amid rows of mutton, muslim, mandir and mujra, mehngai and berojgari. Yes, Indians and Americans need food, a minimum quality of



life and freedom from organised oppression. Indians are certainly more concerned because with whatever rank in the world economy, it is nowhere near the US. If the American economy is not in good shape, Indians can at best be convalescing, post-COVID-19. But the stranglehold of the honchos in India is more gripping than in the US, which has strong anti-trust laws despite the protests from the big. Indian policies suit the big shops more with quite a few trillions being waved off in taxes and other benefits, including tailoring national and stock market policies. Harris instead, despite being the Vice President of the USA, empathising with the American people, says, "The bills add up. Food, rent, gas, back-to-school clothes, prescription medication. After that, for many families, there's not much left at the end of the month. As president, I will take on the high costs that matter most to most Americans." Those words any Indian voter would love to hear from their leaders. It follows a dozen proposals for improving the lives of Americans. Some like 3 million new housing units to the people seemingly have been picked up from Indian political party manifestos. Like India's PM Avas, she proposes to provide up to \$25,000 in down payment support for a million first-time home buy-



AMERICANS CAN NO LONGER TOLERATE SKYROCKETING COSTS. HER AGGRESSIVE, POPULIST ECONOMIC AGENDA AIMS TO REIN IN CORPORATE POWER AND LOWER THE COST OF LIVING, POTENTIALLY SETTING A NEW STANDARD FOR GLOBAL ECONOMIC POLICIES

ers. An addition is tax incentives for builders, who build affordable rental housing. It could be a welcome scenario for most Indians. As now being debated in India on capital gains tax indexation or also rentals, Harris is keen on preventing corporate landlords from using algorithmic price-setting tools to increase rents by large margins. It is gradually becoming a problem in areas in the national capital regions of Noida, Gurgaon, Delhi's Dwarka, Bengaluru, and Chennai. India has just started feeling it. Medical costs and health insurance fraud are the worst in the US. Many Indian companies now have emulated it. Medical expenses are increasing in India and the US. Both countries are discussing it intensely and often end up saying the United Kingdom has the best medical facilities. Harris promises to eliminate medical debt for millions of Americans, possibly by using federal funds to buy and forgive outstanding debt from health providers. She wants to limit Americans' annual out-of-pocket spending on prescription drugs to \$2,000. Thousands of kilometres apart the conditions are so similar! The one difference is that India wants to repeat the US insurance follies and they are trying to change it. Though in some cases like PM

JanAushadhi, India is doing better in providing generic medicines at low prices. Harris does not have that option and says would cap the out-of-pocket cost of insulin at \$35 per month for all. As direct benefit pensions are given to kisans in India, Harris would give a child tax credit that would provide \$6,000 per child to families for the first year of a baby's life. Indian budgetary novelties introduced as direct benefits or pensions in various ways have fascinated Harris. Each of Harris's proposals, whether in terms of food, medicine, housing or child care is "populist", involving government intervention against corporate interests on behalf of consumers. Socialism, direct or indirect, despite big companies ruling the roost, is returning to world politics. What Harris does may just create a flutter, but countries like India, who claim to be the next global leaders, have to tread more cautiously to safeguard the poor, farmers and the working class. Harris has borrowed quite a few of it from the Indian budget. Now it is India's turn to ensure how it could check the corporates to serve people's interests. The world is changing and India's populism is winning big one's heart.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CELEBRATING KRISHNA'S BIRTH

Madam — Krishna Janmashtami, the birthday of Lord Krishna, is a joyous celebration that embodies the triumph of love and divine joy over evil and negativity. This auspicious occasion marks the arrival of Krishna, the eighth avatar of Lord Vishnu, who brought hope and redemption to a world plagued by darkness and despair. As devotees around the world honor Krishna's birth, they are reminded of his profound teachings in the Bhagavad Gita, which emphasize the importance of spiritual growth, self-realization, and the eternal victory of good over evil. Through vibrant festivities, soulful bhajans, and heartfelt pujas, Krishna Janmashtami celebrates the unconditional love and divine joy that Krishna embodies, inspiring devotees to embrace their own spiritual journey and revel in the bliss of the divine.

Purva Pandya | Ujjain

STALIN'S NEW MOVE

Madam — As against the Sanatana Dharma before the Lok Sabha elections, the DMK has changed its stand now by a mix in the Dravidian model by supporting the individual's faith of choice and wanting to help them in their religious pursuits. By inaugurating the two-day Global Muthamizhil Murugan Conference, the Chief Minister of TN M K Stalin is bringing in a new colour other than black and red as he's well aware that this will help him in the forthcoming assembly elections to woo the votes of the Hindus by using the Murugan card to play to DMK's advantage. We welcome this change and are happy if something good for the people happens from the leadership of M K Stalin whom I respect for his flexibility of principle if he finds something worth it. One hopes Stalin's new found alliance with the Lord Murugan may bestow the blessings for the people for the prosperity of the state. A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

Unified pension scheme launched



This refers to the news report, "Unprecedented Unified Pension Scheme by Modi Government" (August 25). Though driven by the huge political pressure after jolts in recently held Lok Sabha polls, the NDA Government's decision to roll out a new guaranteed Unified Pension Scheme for its employees is a step in right direction. In fact, pension is a social welfare measure which is granted to ensure that a retired employee lives with dignity in his

old age. Reversing its 21 year old pension reforms partially, the Government has introduced OPS features like assured pensions, inflation-linked adjustments, family pensions, and a guaranteed minimum pension in the UPS. Employees are still required to contribute 10% of their basic pay and dearness allowance to UPS remains only major difference between the OPS and the UPS. The government will also contribute to the UPS, which will increase from 14% (currently contributed to NPS) to 18.5%. Thus, the UPS will lead to higher burden on the exchequer. Thus, it remains to be seen whether state governments adopt the UPS, which certainly would not augur well for their financial health.

Manoj Parashar | Ghaziabad

PM MODI BROKERS PEACE

Madam — Modi's visit to Kyiv will strengthen India-Ukraine bilateral relationship. Like with Russia in March 24 Modi is likely to have had the message of peace with Zelenskyy about ending the war and restoring peace. The catch is both Russia and Ukraine are not keen in fighting any further but both wanting to end the war on their own terms. Kyiv does not want to compromise on its sovereignty and territorial integrity which could lead to an instability and even a revolution in Ukraine. Kyiv wants to retrieve all the Ukrainian territory occupied by Russia something that Russia is unwilling to do. The US and NATO have rejected Russia's demand to end the war. Under this situation it is extremely unlikely that a peace can be brokered by PM Modi as an one off attempt. Unlike other leaders of the world PM Modi enjoys a special relationship with Putin who in his words has called Modi as his best friend. India also in none of the resolu-

tions passed by the UN has gone against Moscow. While on the same lines has been maintaining good equation with Zelenskyy (post his ire after having a hug with Putin in March 24) through telephone calls and the sidelines meetings in summits. With Modi's Aug 23 personal visit and signing of the trade agreements and India's commitment to be on the side of the PEACE and just a not a neutral country one can expect PM Modi will make attempts for a peace talk between the two warring leaders. Besides, PM Modi's initiative also takes care of the growing Chinese influence in the region and places India at par with it if not above, India must be more proactive in the region to safeguard its own interests. With US already started feeling the heat of recession and a leadership change in the offing one can see the light at the end of the tunnel!

Gopalaswamy J | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

The risk of monetising public education

Commercialisation of these institutions undermines their core mission which is to provide inclusive, affordable high-quality education to all

The Vice-Chancellor of JNU, Prof. C Santhishree D Pandit recently remarked that the country's top university is facing a financial crunch with little regular income generated from its resources. The VC has decided to repurpose the university's properties with private participation. This culture of looking at public academic institutions as a source of revenue has been rhyming among our policy-makers during the past several years. One reason is the huge prime land area holding maintained by the public sector institutions and another is the change in the societal perception. Today's society evaluates everything based on money. The primary objective of public sector academic institutions is to offer an inclusive and excellent education to all sections of the population. Central to these institutions is the concept of education as a public good—a valuable asset that has advantages for society as a whole, rather than solely for individuals. Education, in this view, is not simply a product that can be purchased and



sold, but rather a profound process that moulds individuals into knowledgeable, reflective members of society who are capable of making meaningful contributions to the collective welfare. Their value should be assessed based on the number of enlightened minds generated by these institutions. As we can see it's these enlightened minds who are driving the wheel of the government machinery, and the nation's progress. Public sector academic institutions have been under growing pressure in recent decades to implement business-oriented strategies, which include prioritising income creation. The transition has been prompted by several circumstances, such as decreases in government financing, increasing operational expenses, and the expanding

impact of market ideology in public policy. Consequently, numerous public universities and colleges have resorted to alternate sources of income, such as raising tuition fees, extending online programs, providing executive education courses, renting out spaces and forming alliances with private industry. Private parties, if allowed to rent out spaces, should work closely with the academic and research community of the university. It should also help in imparting knowledge and transformation to students. In many NTIs, the guest house rate has been increased tenfold, as mandated by the policymakers. Unfortunately, people who visit these institutions including academicians and parents of students have to pay more than what is the market rate in that area. Although these initiatives can offer significant financial support, they also pose a potential threat of altering the core purpose of public sector institutions. It can be detrimental to maintaining high academic standards and fostering a wide range of intellectual perspectives.

Additionally, it can generate pressures to give higher priority to programs and research areas that provide greater profits, perhaps overlooking subjects that are less financially rewarding but equally crucial for societal progress. It is vital to provide students with a well-rounded education that encourages critical thinking and broad-based knowledge. Public sector academic institutions hold a distinct and crucial role in maintaining the social fabric of the nation. Their objective is not to earn financial gain but rather to generate enlightened minds capable of critical thinking, and contribute to the development of the nation. The great minds working in every field, including the bureaucrats and political leaders are groomed by these public sector institutions. For this to continue, we should not put a price tag on every facility a public sector university offers to the student or society at large.

(The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies; views are personal)



BIJU DHARMAPALAN



FIRST COLUMN

LIVE IN THE PRESENT

MOMENT, IT MATTERS MOST

One needs to inculcate habits of equanimity, and remaining calm, whatever the circumstance



RAVI VALLURI

The romance was in the air as India attained freedom from the British yoke. The period was the 1950s as India embarked upon the socialistic pattern to revive the country, which had inherited an impecunious economy. Two bright students from coastal Andhra landed in rain-washed Delhi University to pursue their dreams. To remain connected with their past, they made recurrent trips to the New Delhi Railway Station to receive students arriving in droves from their state and revive those nostalgic moments. When it is repetitively said, "Those good old days!", in one stroke we send a signal to our Universe that the present is not congenial. As Buddha says, "The mind is everything. What you think you become." If we live in the past, we keep fretting and fuming about the missed opportunities and those past impressions create roadblocks in our physical and metaphysical advancement.

On completion of their studies, the more aspiring students stayed back and the less enterprising ones returned home. The person in Delhi aspired to be a civil servant like his more illustrious siblings and their children. But destiny had carved out its plan. His friends and acquaintances qualified for the coveted job, a sinecure that eluded him. So, the mind became envious of his siblings, their children and friends and started implanting his failed mission upon his children, much to their discomfort. How does one reach that state of 'present moment'? Before dwelling on some techniques, it will be useful to read a fas-



cinating Buddhist parable. One afternoon a Buddhist monk was carrying a bucket filled with water in a dense forest. Suddenly he heard a rustle. It was a tiger, smacking its lips and intently looking at the potential prey. The monk ran for his life, with the tiger in pursuit. The monk reached a precipice and had a choice to make, either be devoured by the ferocious tiger or jump off the cliff. Death stared in his face. The monk jumped and fortuitously clung onto a branch of a strawberry tree. He ate the strawberry—considering it to be his last meal—and thoroughly relished it. The monk had never had such a meal, as was absolutely in the present moment. A simple yet profound technique of sadhana is to be a witness to all the actions and activities that take place. The actor in us becomes the spectator too. This is what is espoused in the esoteric philosophy of Ashtavakra Gita (a classic dialogue between King Janaka—who himself was a Raj Rishi—and the sage Ashtavakra).

Any individual, householder or seeker needs to inculcate habits of equanimity, equilibrium, and equipoise to remain calm, whatever the circumstance or situation, to be contented and remain in the present moment. The protagonist who stayed back in Delhi could fulfil his dreams only partially. His son did qualify for the civil services, but could not join the service of his choice; this was due to excessive pressure applied by family members already in the elite services. Eventually, the son turned into an alcoholic. Perhaps it was because both father and son were not grateful to the Universe and did not adhere to the Law of Gratefulness.

Thus, lives were ruined. Meanwhile, the friend who returned home did not lose his way in the sands of time. He became a trade union leader and politician, living in the present. "Life is one big road with lots of signs. So, when you are riding through the ruts, do not complicate your mind. Flee from hate, mischief, and jealousy," sang Bob Marley.

(The writer is a faculty at Art of Living, views expressed are personal)

Catalyst for cinematic evolution and excellence



CHAITANYA K PRASAD

The 70th National Film Awards once again celebrated the rich tapestry of Indian cinema, where diverse languages and cultures converged to showcase the best talent

The National Film Awards: A Platform for The Great Leap Forward. At the 70th National Film Awards, India's cinematic excellence once again took centre stage, showcasing vibrant and diverse storytelling from across the nation's many languages. Southern cinema emerged as a dominant force this year, with films and artists from the region sweeping some of the most prestigious honours. The Malayalam film 'Aattam' captured the Swarna Kamal for Best Feature Film, while the Kannada blockbuster 'Kantara' clinched the title of Best Popular Film.

Rishab Shetty, the driving force behind 'Kantara', took home the Best Actor award, sharing the limelight with Nithya Menon and Manasi Parekh, who shared Best Actresses for the Tamil film 'Thiruchitrambalam' and Gujarati film 'Kutch Express' respectively. Meanwhile, the Haryana film 'Fouja' gathered acclaim, earning Pramod Kumar the award for Best Debut Director, while Pavan Raj Malhotra secured Best Supporting Actor. The epic Tamil drama 'Ponniyin Selvan: I' also made its mark, with AR Rahman's power-packed music earning him the Best Music Director (Background Music) award, alongside wins for Best Sound Design by Anand Krishnamoorthi and Best Cinematography by Ravi Varman. In the Hindi cinema category, 'Gulmohar' emerged as the Best Hindi Film, adding another feather to Sharmila Tagore's illustrious cap with her third National Film Award.

This year's awards not only celebrated individual excellence but also highlighted the ever-evolving and dynamic landscape of Indian cinema. The lifeline and longevity of any artist and any film is fuelled by the adrenaline of 4A's "Acknowledgment, Awards, Appreciation, and Applause". Globally, awards are given for excellence in the celluloid space which has opened a new phase of creativity, innovation perspective perspective-building through storytelling and film narration. Since its inception in 1954, the National Film Awards for Excellence in Cinema have symbolised the journey of excellence and creativity. The awards have offered an equal platform to cinemas of various languages, cultures, diversities, themes, and perspectives, where all the creative energies of India converge to speak the unified language of artistic excellence. These awards in the last seventy-odd years have showcased the gold standard of filmmaking across different verticals reinventing and shaping the diverse landscape of cinema in this country.

Each edition of the National Film Awards has strengthened inclusivity and converged the diversity of celluloid space seamlessly. The National Film Awards are unique in terms of their magnitude, canvas, and spectrum. Every award ceremony has been an opportunity to witness the emergence of different forms and categories of cinema that reflect continuity and legacy. The landscape of the National Film Awards is deep and insightful, promoting diversity, storytelling, and narration.

It has truly elevated parallel, regional, and experimental cinema; voiced social concerns; and embraced and adapted to contemporary standards, content, and style



THIS YEAR'S AWARDS NOT ONLY CELEBRATED INDIVIDUAL EXCELLENCE BUT ALSO HIGHLIGHTED THE EVER-EVOLVING AND DYNAMIC LANDSCAPE OF INDIAN CINEMA

of presentation. Over the years, Indian cinema has witnessed a remarkable evolution, with regional films gaining recognition for their artistic brilliance. It all began in 1954, as the film "Mirza Ghalib" made history as the first recipient of the Best Feature Film award.

This milestone paved the way for a treasure trove of cinematic gems from various regions. Bengali cinema, in particular, has been a shining beacon, with timeless classics like Satyajit Ray's "Pathar Panchali", "Apur Sansar", and "Charulata" earning the prestigious Swarna Kamal. The legendary Soumitra Chatterjee a revered Bengali actor has been lauded for his performances in classics like "Apur Sansar" and "Charulata," earning him National Film Awards for his works.

The spotlight has also turned to Southern cinema, which has produced its own set of trailblazers. In 1965, the Malayalam masterpiece "Chemmeen" captivated audiences and critics alike, winning the Best Feature Film award. Kannada cinema made a powerful statement with "Chomana Dudi" in 1976, sweeping the National Awards for Best Feature Film, Best Actor, and Best Story. Tamil cinema joined this illustrious list in 1990 when Murrupakkam became the first Tamil film to clinch the Best Feature Film award.

The northeastern region of India has also produced its share of winners at the National Film Awards, bringing regional tales to the national stage. "Halodhia Chorai Baodhan Khai", the first Assamese film to win the Swarna Kamal for the Best Feature Film in 1987. Rima Das, a director has been recognized for her movies "Village Rockstars" and "Bulbul Can Sing," which capture the essence of life in Assam by portraying simplicity and resilience. At the 60th National Film Awards, Jahnur Barua's Assamese film "Baandhon" won

the Best Feature Film in the category while "Ko;Yad", a Missing film won the Best Feature Film in the non-Eighth Schedule language category. At the 62nd National Film Awards the movie "Phum Shang", from Manipur was honoured with the Best Investigative Film award showcasing the contributions of filmmakers from North East India.

Such examples also prove that the National Film Awards serve as a crucible for bringing together a convergence of ideas, creativity, and talent. They offer hope that creativity knows no barriers in India, allowing unknown filmmakers and names to become stars. One of the most coveted awards of the National Film Awards is the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, India's highest award in the field of cinema honouring the artists' lifetime achievement. Named after Shri Dadasaheb Phalke, the visionary often hailed as the father of Indian cinema, this award is a tribute to those whose contributions have indelibly shaped the landscape of Indian filmmaking.

This award was introduced in 1969 and was presented to Devika Rani. Since then this distinguished honour has been awarded to Waheeda Rehman, Satyajit Ray, B.N. Reddy, L.V. Prasad, Bhupen Hazarika, Sivaji Ganesan, B.R. Chopra, Soumitra Chatterjee, Lata Mangeshkar, Raj Kapoor, Shyam Benegal, Amitabh Bachchan and Rajnikant are some of the renowned names who have been recognized for their lasting impact and their outstanding contribution to cinema. The National Film Awards also spotlight the significance of non-feature films by inspiring emerging directors to experiment and push boundaries.

This platform has nurtured talent, with acclaimed works like "Ek Tha Gaon" and "An engineered Dream", the Marathi film "Girni" and the Bengali film "Aamaar Katha: Story of Binodini" winners at the 52nd and the 62nd

National Film Awards. These awards bring attention to themes and innovative storytelling approaches demonstrating that Indian cinema thrives on creativity and embraces diversity beyond commercial considerations. The non-feature segment of awards over the years has acted as a catalyst for young film-makers who have unleashed their creativity across diverse subjects and narratives. This segment has showcased a unique simplicity, aesthetics and deep understanding of filmmaking and creativity. The recent changes to the regulations for the 70th National Film Awards demonstrate an evident wave of evolution. Changes like renaming awards and merging categories reflect an approach to acknowledging excellence in filmmaking.

The National Film Awards of India have witnessed several historic moments that have not only enhanced the country's cinematic excellence but also served as a stepping stone to celluloid success and international acclaim. One such landmark was the recognition of Satyajit Ray's "Pathar Panchali" in 1956, which won the Best Feature Film award and subsequently brought Indian cinema to global attention. Another significant milestone was Aamir Khan's "Lagaan" in 2001, which not only won the National Film Award for Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment but also earned an Academy Award nomination for Best Foreign Language Film. The National Film Awards have played an instrumental role in shaping the course of Indian cinema. By celebrating a variety of perspectives and pushing boundaries the awards not only recognize exceptional achievements but also inspire upcoming filmmakers and artists.

(The writer is former additional DG, DFF and Festival Director, IFFI; views are personal. Inputs provided by Zoya Ahmad and Vaishnavi Srinivasan)

How personalised and adaptive technologies are shaping the future of education

The future of education is personal, adaptive, and brimming with possibilities for individual success. It's time to embrace this change

The education system is witnessing a revolutionary shift, one that promises to reshape how we learn, grow, and succeed. At the core of this transformation lies advanced personalized and adaptive learning - a groundbreaking approach set to redefine the educational landscape.

With the global adaptive learning market projected to reach \$5.3 billion by 2025 and the personalized learning market expected to soar to \$19.86 billion by 2030, it's clear that these technologies are more than just a passing trend.

Unpacking Personalized and Adaptive Learning
Personalized learning crafts educational experiences that resonate with each student's



VEDANT HAMIRWASIA

unique needs, skills, and interests. It's about creating learning journeys that allow individuals to flourish in their way. Adaptive learning takes this concept further, using AI to adjust content difficulty and style in real time based on student performance.

It's like having a high-tech tutor that ensures learning is always challenging but never overwhelming.

The Power of Data-Driven Insights: One of the most exciting aspects of these systems is their ability to harness data for good. Through sophisticated learning analytics, educators gain unprecedented insights into each student's progress.

This foresight allows for timely interventions, ensuring no student falls behind. Predictive analytics even allows these systems to anticipate which students might struggle, enabling proactive support measures.

Customized Learning Paths: Gone are the days of one-size-fits-all education. Advanced personalized learning creates individual learning plans that adapt to each student's unique learning style.

Whether you're a visual learner who thrives on interactive simulations or prefer diving deep into text-based explanations, these systems have you covered. The flexibility extends to pacing as well, allowing students to linger on challenging concepts or race ahead in areas they excel.

Engagement, the Secret Sauce of Success: Engagement is crucial for effective learning, and these technologies serve it up in spades.

Interactive content, gamification elements, and multimedia experiences make learning feel less like a chore and more like an adventure. By catering to diverse learning preferences, these systems ensure that every stu-



dent finds their groove and stays motivated.

Levelling the Playing Field: Perhaps one of the most profound impacts of these technologies is their poten-

tial to promote equity in education.

Assistive features embedded within these systems support students with disabilities, offering tools like

text-to-speech and customized interfaces. This push for inclusivity ensures that quality, personalized education is accessible to all, regardless of individual challenges.

The Benefits and Challenges Ahead: The benefits of advanced personalized and adaptive learning are clear and compelling. Studies consistently show improved learning outcomes, increased student engagement, and the potential to bridge achievement gaps.

However, it's important to acknowledge the challenges that come with this educational revolution. Privacy concerns surrounding student data and the persistent digital divide are hurdles

that must be addressed thoughtfully. Embracing the Future of Education
The educational landscape is evolving rapidly, propelled by the transformative potential of advanced personalized and adaptive learning.

By embracing these technologies thoughtfully and addressing the challenges head-on, we can create an educational landscape where every student has the opportunity to thrive, learn, and reach their full potential. The future of education is personal, adaptive, and brimming with possibilities for individual success. It's time to embrace this change and unlock the potential of every learner.

(The author is director, ODA Class; views are personal)

Khamenei open to America over nuclear talks

AP ■ DUBAI

Iran's supreme leader opened the door Tuesday to renewed negotiations with the United States over his country's rapidly advancing nuclear program, telling its civilian government there was "no barrier" to engaging with its "enemy."



"We have long said that we ultimately view diplomacy as the best way to achieve an effective, sustainable solution with regard to Iran's nuclear program," it said. "However, we are far away from anything like that right now given Iran's escalations across the board, including its nuclear escalations and its failure to cooperate" with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations nuclear watchdog.

'US, China aim to avoid conflict in Beijing talks'

AP ■ BEIJING

The United States and China are working to ensure the competition between them does not veer into conflict, a top White House official said Tuesday as the two sides started talks on a relationship that has been severely tested during President Joe Biden's term in office.

committed to managing this important relationship responsibly," Sullivan said in brief remarks to media before the talks began. The goal of his visit, which lasts through Thursday, is limited — to try to maintain communication in a relationship that broke down for the better part of a year in 2022-23 and was only nursed back over several months.

Office, noted that the China-US relationship has gone through twists and turns in past few years. "The key," he said, "is to keep to the overall direction of mutual respect, peaceful co-existence, and win-win cooperation."

US relations in the past year through strategic communication, and to avoid new crises in the next few months," he said. The Biden administration has taken a tough line on China, viewing it as a strategic competitor, restricting the access of its companies to advanced technology and confronting the rising power as it seeks to exert influence over Taiwan and the South China Sea.

drifted across the US before being shot down by the US military. Sullivan has been Biden's point person for often unannounced talks with Wang, who is the foreign minister as well as the ruling Communist Party's top foreign policy official.

than, they have met two more times in a third country, Malta and Thailand. This week will mark their first talks in Beijing.

'Hasina's ouster watershed for student activism'

PTI ■ DHAKA

The recent student movement in Bangladesh, culminating in the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, marks a watershed moment in the nation's political landscape, fuelled by a 70-year legacy of student activism from the 1952 Language Movement to the Liberation War and beyond.

5 more murder cases filed against B'desh ousted PM

Dhaka (PTI): Five more murder cases have been filed against Bangladesh's ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina taking the total number of cases filed against the Awami League leader to 71, a media report said on Tuesday.



Hossain. Former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan, Awami League general secretary Obaidul Quader, former Awami League lawmakers Shamim Osman and Ramesh Chandra are among the accused, The Daily Star said.

Basila of Mohammadpur on July 19. In the third case, Hasina and 91 others were sued for the death of one Miraz Hossain at Sanarpar in the city's Demra area on August 5.

Ex-minister held

Dhaka (PTI): Bangladesh police on Tuesday arrested former junior minister for information and broadcasting Mohammad Ali Arafat, an accused in several cases, including one filed over the killing of a student during the anti-government protests.

accounts of Arafat and his wife. Arafat was arrested a day after left-leaning Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JASOD) president Hasanul Haque Inu was detained from a relative's house in Dhaka while police sought a court order for him to be placed under a 10-day remand for questioning in a murder charge.

Starmer warns of 'painful' budget ahead in speech

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Tuesday gave the first indication of some tough tax measures in store in the October budget in the first keynote address of his premiership since taking charge at 10 Downing Street last month.

we are in," said Starmer. "I promised that this government would serve people like you — apprentices, teachers, nurses, small business owners, firefighters, those serving our community and our country every day," he said, with reference to the Downing Street gathering.

violent clashes didn't just "betray the sickness" left in the wake of the former government's "cynical conflict of populism" but also revealed that the cure was to be found in the "coming together of a country."

Israeli military rescues hostage abducted in October Hamas attack

Jerusalem (AP): The Israeli military said Tuesday that it has rescued one of the scores of people abducted in Hamas' October 7 attack, which ignited the ongoing war in Gaza.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed over 40,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials, who do not say how many were fighters. It has displaced 90 per cent of Gaza's 2.3 million people from their homes and caused heavy destruction across the besieged territory.

French judge extends police custody for Telegram CEO

Paris (AP): A French investigative judge extended police custody for the CEO of the popular messaging app Telegram, Pavel Durov, prosecutors said on Tuesday.

Turkish-backed authorities arrest Syrian journalist

Idlib (AP): A local journalist in rebel-held northwestern Syria who works with international news agencies was arrested by Turkish-backed authorities, his wife and rights groups said Tuesday.

Turkey. Local military police held Taha for two hours before she was released following protests from journalists and residents, she said in a video.

WH pressured FB over some COVID-19 content during pandemic: Zuckerberg

Washington (AP): Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg says senior Biden administration officials pressured Facebook to "censor" some COVID-19 content during the pandemic and vowed that the social media giant would push back if it faced such demands again.



ken about it," Zuckerberg wrote in the letter dated August 26 and posted on the committee's Facebook page and to its account on X.

ticularly as allegations have emerged that some posts were deleted or restricted wrongly. "I also think we made some choices that, with the benefit of hindsight and new information, we wouldn't make today," he said, without elaborating.

mation they present." Experts warn this year's US election could be swamped by misinformation on social media with the proliferation of artificial intelligence and other tools to produce false news stories and content that could mislead voters.

Dam collapse in Sudan kills at least 30

Cairo (AP): The collapse of the Arbaat Dam in Sudan's eastern Red Sea state over the weekend flooded nearby homes and killed at least 30 people following heavy rains, a UN agency said.

US judge pauses Biden's plan on spousal legal status

Houston (PTI): A Texas court has put a temporary pause on President Biden's ambitious plan to fast-track permanent residency for illegal migrants married to American citizens, a move that could hamper the hopes of approximately half a million such spouses, including several thousand Indian-Americans.

tain non-citizen spouses and children apply for lawful permanent residence — a status that they are already eligible for — without leaving the country, the White House said.

order, which followed a lawsuit filed by 16 Republican-led states arguing that the programme would "incentivise illegal immigration and will irreparably harm" the states, the New York Post reported.

Ukraine troops control nearly 500 sq miles of Kursk region

AP ■ KYIV

The chief of Ukraine's army said ON Tuesday that the country's troops control nearly 1,300 square kilometres (500 square miles) of Russia's Kursk region since their surprise incursion three weeks ago.

Gen Oleksandr Syrskyi also said that Ukraine has captured 594 Russian prisoners in its operation.

"The enemy drags troops from other directions, in such way weakening them. They attempt to create a ring of defence around our offensive group of troops and plan counter-offensive actions," Syrskyi said, commenting on the situation in the Kursk region. The seized territory is roughly the size of Los Angeles.

His claim, which could not be independently confirmed, came hours after Ukraine endured a second consecutive barrage of nighttime air and missile attacks from Russia.

Five people were reported killed and 16 injured in the attacks, which President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said included 81 drones, as well as cruise and ballistic missiles. He said four people died, but the governor of the Zaporizhzhia region later said a fifth person had died there from burns in the attacks.

"We will undoubtedly respond to Russia for this and all other attacks. Crimes against humanity cannot go unpunished," Zelenskyy wrote on X.

The Kursk operation, the largest incursion into Russia since World War II, forced some 130,000 residents to evacuate their homes. Russia has sent reinforcements into the region, but it was not clear to what extent these movements might be weakening Russia's position in eastern Ukraine, where it was making slow advances in efforts to gain ground in the Kharkiv region.

The Russian Defence Ministry said Tuesday that Ukraine has suffered heavy casualties in Kursk — some 6,600 troops either killed or injured — and that more than 70 tanks have been destroyed along with

5 people killed in missiles and drones strike across Ukraine

AP ■ KYIV

Nighttime Russian drone and missile attacks struck across Ukraine, killing at least five people on Tuesday, a day after a heavy barrage pounded energy facilities throughout the country.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the attacks included 81 drones, as well as cruise and ballistic missiles and that 16 people were injured. He said four people died, but the governor of the Zaporizhzhia region later said a fifth person had died there from burns in the attacks.

"We will undoubtedly respond to Russia for this and all other attacks. Crimes against humanity cannot go unpunished," Zelenskyy wrote on X. In the Kyiv region, which had struggled with blackouts after Monday's onslaught, five air alerts were called during the night. The regional administration said air defenses destroyed all the drones and missiles but that falling debris set off forest fires.

After the Monday barrage across Ukraine of more than 100 missiles and a similar number of drones, Prime



Minister Denys Shmyhal said "the energy infrastructure has once again become the target of Russian terrorists" and urged Ukraine's allies to provide it with long-range weapons and permission to use them on targets inside Russia.

President Joe Biden called Monday's Russian attack on energy infrastructure "outrageous" and said he had "re-authorized US air defence exports so they are sent to Ukraine first." He also said the US was "surging energy equipment to Ukraine to repair its systems and strengthen the resilience of Ukraine's energy grid."

The Russian Defence Ministry said the attacks used "long-range precision air- and sea-

based weapons and strike drones against critical energy infrastructure facilities that support the operation of Ukraine's military-industrial complex. All designated targets were hit."

In Russia, meanwhile, officials reported four Ukrainian missiles were shot down over the Kursk region, where Russian forces are fighting Ukrainian troops that made a surprise incursion this month. The fighting in the region has raised concerns about the nuclear power plant there.

International Atomic Energy Agency chief Rafael Grossi arrived inspected the plant on Tuesday, but did not immediately give a public assessment.

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The Russian Defence Ministry said the attacks used "long-range precision air- and sea-

Japan protests after Chinese plane violates its airspace

AP ■ TOKYO

Japan's top government spokesperson said on Tuesday a Chinese military aircraft had briefly entered Japanese airspace the day before, calling the incident an "absolutely unacceptable" territorial violation and safety threat.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said that a Chinese Y-9 reconnaissance plane briefly entered Japan's southwestern airspace Monday, forcing its military to scramble fighter jets. He added that it was the first time the Japanese Self Defense Force detected a Chinese military aircraft in Japan's airspace.

"The Chinese military aircraft's incursion into Japan's airspace not only is a serious violation of our territorial rights but also a safety threat," Hayashi told a regular news conference. "We found it absolutely unacceptable." The Chinese Y-9 reconnaissance plane circled above Danjo Island off the southwest coast of Japan's main southern island of Kyushu for two minutes, the Joint Staff of the Japanese Self Defense Force said late Monday, adding that officials were analyzing the latest Chinese military activity.

The Joint Staff said Japan scrambled fighter jets and warned the Chinese plane to leave.

Hayashi stressed that China's military activity around Japan in recent years has become "increasingly expanding and intensifying." Hayashi said Japan will continue watching Chinese military activity and do its utmost to respond to possible anti-airspace violations. The Foreign Ministry said in a statement that Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Masataka Okano summoned acting Chinese Ambassador Shi Yong to strongly protest the airspace violation. Okano also demanded that China take steps to avoid such incidents.

According to Japan's military, it scrambled jets nearly 669 times between April 2023 and March 2024, about 70% of the time against Chinese military aircraft, though that did not include airspace violations.

Philippine defence chief says China is 'the biggest disruptor of peace'

AP ■ MANILA

The Philippine defence chief said Tuesday that China is "the biggest disruptor" of peace in Southeast Asia and called for stronger international censure over its aggression in the South China Sea, a day after China blocked Philippine vessels from delivering food to a Coast Guard ship at the Sabina Shoal.

Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr spoke at an international military conference organized in Manila by the US Indo-Pacific Command amid a spike in clashes between China and the Philippines in the disputed South China Sea and in its airspace.

China is "the biggest disruptor of international peace" in Southeast Asia, Teodoro told the conference, which was attended by military officials and senior diplomats from the US and allied countries.

He later told reporters on the sidelines of the conference that international statements of concern against China's increasingly assertive actions in the disputed waters and elsewhere were "not

enough."

"The antidote is a stronger collective multilateral action against China," Teodoro said, adding that diplomats and defense officials should determine those stronger steps.

Pressed by reporters to be more specific, Teodoro said a UN Security Council resolution condemning and ordering a stop to Chinese acts of aggression would be a strong step but acknowledged the difficulty of pursuing that. "The world is not that perfect," Teodoro said.

There was no immediate reaction from Chinese officials. China, like its geopolitical rival the US, is one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and has power to veto such an adversarial step.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations has paid "attention" to China's aggressive actions but should do much more, Teodoro said. The 10-nation Southeast Asian bloc includes the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei, which have South China Sea claims that overlap with each other, as well as China's and Taiwan's.

"ASEAN, to remain relevant and credible, cannot continue to ignore what China is doing in the South China Sea," Teodoro said.

In the latest incident in the South China Sea, Philippine officials said China deployed "an excessive force" of 40 ships that blocked two Philippine vessels from delivering food and other supplies to Manila's largest coast guard ship in the disputed Sabina Shoal in the latest flare-up of their territorial disputes in the busy sea passage. China and the Philippines blamed each other for the confrontation on Monday in Sabina Shoal, an uninhabited atoll both countries claim that has become the latest flashpoint in the Spratlys, the most hotly disputed region of the sea passage that is a key global trade and security route. China and the Philippines have separately deployed coast guard ships to Sabina in recent months on suspicion the other may act to take control of and build structures in the fishing atoll.

China calls for more support for Ukraine peace plan with Brazil

AP ■ BANGKOK

China called on Tuesday for more countries to endorse its peace plan for Ukraine, after a round of diplomacy with Indonesia, Brazil and South Africa to support its plan.

Envoy Li Hui called the three countries representative of the Global South and "important forces in promoting world peace" who share similar positions with China. "They have maintained communication with both Russia and Ukraine and stay committed to a political settlement to the crisis through dialogue and negotiation," said Li, China's special envoy for Eurasian affairs.

China and Brazil issued a joint peace plan earlier this year that calls for a peace conference with both Ukraine and Russia

and no expansion of the battlefield. China and Russia were absent from a peace summit hosted in Switzerland in June. Russia was not invited while China chose not to attend.

Initially, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said China had pressured other countries to not attend the peace summit. But since then, Ukraine has recognized China's role in a peace process, given its close relationship with Russia, with the Ukrainian foreign minister paying a visit to the country in July, the first since the war began.

While a diplomatic dialogue between Russia and Ukraine so far appears out of reach, the war has shifted. In August Ukraine opened a new front in the war by attacking the Russian oblast of Kursk, in a surprise move that made clear Russia was also vulnerable. Zelenskyy has said the aim was to create a buffer zone to protect Ukraine from attacks. Li noted the incursion and criticized Western support for Ukraine. "All sides are worried that the West continues to relax conditions for Ukraine to strike the Russian territory with aided weapons," Li said. "And recent developments on the battlefield confirmed these kind of worries." The US and NATO have called China an enabler of Russia in the war. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg then said China provides equipment, microelectronics and tools that are "enabling Russia to build the missiles, to build the bombs, to build the aircraft, to build the weapons they use to attack Ukraine."

Nishan-e-Imtiaz (Military) awarded to top Chinese general

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Commander of the Ground Forces of the People's Liberation Army of China General Li Qiaoming was on Tuesday conferred the Nishan-e-Imtiaz, one of the top honours in Pakistan, for his "unwavering commitment" in promoting close cooperation between the militaries of the two all-weather friends.

Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif and Army Chief General Asim Munir participated during a special investiture ceremony at the President's House and attended by service chiefs and parliamentarians.

"The citation at the ceremony highlighted General Li Qiaoming's four-decade career, noting his significant contributions to the Chinese military. His intellect, administrative skills, and dedication have earned him a reputation as a courageous and capable officer, crucial in promoting peace and stability in China and beyond," the state-run news agency Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) said.

"General Li is renowned for his exceptional professionalism and skills in maintaining peace and stability around China. As a friend of Pakistan, he greatly strengthened Pak-China military relations with unwavering commitment," it said.

Earlier on Monday, Qiaoming met with Prime Minister Sharif and discussed various aspects of the Pakistan-China friendship, particularly the bilateral defence and strategic partnership, the report said. Sharif underscored that Pakistan and China are All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partners and trusted friends and highlighted that the deep-rooted ties between the two nations enjoy broad public, political, and institutional support in Pakistan, "making them indispensable for the progress and development of both countries." The Prime Minister expressed satisfaction at the deepening military-to-military exchanges and noted that the defence and strategic ties between Pakistan and China are vital for peace and stability in the region.

Malaysian ex-leader charged with sedition for mocking former king

AP ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Former Malaysian Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin was charged Tuesday with sedition over a speech he made that allegedly questioned the integrity of the country's previous king, Muhyiddin, who led Malaysia from March 2020 until August 2021, pleaded not guilty in a court in northeast Kelantan state. According to the charge sheet, Muhyiddin made the seditious remarks last month during a by-election campaign in Kelantan.

Nine ethnic Malay state rulers take turns as Malaysia's king for five-year terms under the country's rotating monarchy, which began when Malaysia gained independence from Britain in 1957. The monarchy plays a largely ceremonial role, but are revered by the nation's majority Muslims.

In his speech on August 14, Muhyiddin had questioned why then-King Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah

didn't invite him to be prime minister following a hung Parliament in November 2022. Muhyiddin had claimed he had the backing of majority lawmakers.

Muhyiddin's Islamic nationalist bloc received stronger-than-expected support from Malays, who account for two-thirds of Malaysia's 34 million people. Sultan Abdullah appointed then-opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim as prime minister after Anwar cobbled up support from rival parties to form a unity government.

Sultan Abdullah from central Pahang state, who ended his reign on Jan. 30 this year, didn't comment on the case. But his son issued a strong rebuke to Muhyiddin, saying his remarks were dangerous and could divide the people and undermine the royal institution. Muhyiddin was questioned by police following complaints against him. He had denied insulting the royalty, saying his remarks were factu-

PM Sharif reiterates 'resolve' to root out terrorism from Pakistan

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Tuesday strongly condemned the terrorist attacks in the restive Balochistan province as he reiterated the unwavering resolve of his government to root out terrorism from the country.

Heavily armed Baloch gunmen killed at least 37 people in separate attacks in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province on Monday, as insurgent attacks spiked in the region bordering Iran and Afghanistan.

Chairing a Cabinet meeting a day after violence in Balochistan stunned the country, Sharif strongly condemned the terrorist incidents that resulted in the death of innocent Pakistanis including the security personnel, state-run Radio Pakistan reported. He said the sacrifices rendered by the people and the Armed Forces of Pakistan in the war

against terrorism will not go waste. "The entire nation is committed for complete elimination of terrorism from the country," he said.

Prime Minister Sharif said all available resources would be provided to the Armed Forces to curb terrorism. He said time has come to eliminate terrorism. "We need to move forward towards this path with firm resolve," he said.

He said doors of dialogue are open for those who believe in Pakistan and its Constitution. However, no talks will be held with the enemies and terrorists, he added. Referring to the terrorist incidents, he said it is no secret now that the terrorists of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, operating from Afghanistan, are behind terrorist attacks. He said the government has already sensitized the Afghan government on the issue.

He said the terrorist acts being carried out in Balochistan are

aimed at creating anarchy and disturbance in Pakistan and to disrupt the steps being taken by the government for development of the country. However, their nefarious designs could not terrorize the people and disrupt the development process.

Prime Minister Sharif stressed the need for forging unity, saying such despicable designs are only meant to impede the country's progress, ongoing CPEC projects in Balochistan and undermine the time-tested friendship between Pakistan and China.

He announced to soon visit Balochistan to hold in-depth deliberations on the situation and decide on immediate measures to deal with it.

Meanwhile, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited Balochistan on Tuesday to support the provincial government in its efforts to tackle militancy. "My aim to visit is to let you all and the people of Balochistan know that the federal interior minister is standing behind the Balochistan chief minister. Whatever decision he (chief minister Bugti) makes, we will support him," he told the media in Quetta flanked by Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti.

Naqvi ruled out any fresh operation, saying that a police station house officer was enough to tackle the law and order with proper and timely response. "They are terrorists and our civil armed forces, armed forces, and the police know how to combat them," the minister said.

If anything happens to me, Army chief & DG ISI responsible: Imran Khan

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan on Tuesday reiterated that the Army and the ISI are responsible for his condition and expressed fear for his life.

Khan, 71, lodged at the Adiala Jail since last year, also blamed the current dispensation for being averse to criticism, for deteriorating law-and-order situation across the country, and also for ruining Pakistan's cricket that is facing repeated defeats.

In a post on X from jail, Khan repeated claims about rigged elections and said only a government with a genuine mandate will be able to plan for fundamental reforms.

"The ISI controls all administrative matters related to my imprisonment. I'm saying it again: if anything happens to me, the Army Chief and DG ISI will be responsible," the founder of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party said in a detailed post on X.

Khan's comments come two days after the Pakistan government said that the

former prime minister's trial in cases concerning the violence on May 9 last year might go to the military courts.

"The events and vandalism on May 9 last year invited the application of the Army Act since military installations were attacked and damaged," Government spokesperson for legal affairs Barrister Aqeel Malik had said. On May 9 last year, violent protests erupted after Khan's arrest by paramilitary Rangers from the premises of the Islamabad High Court in connection with an alleged corruption case.

His party workers allegedly vandalised a dozen military installations, including the Jinnah House (Lahore Corps Commander House), the Mianwali airbase and the ISI building in Faisalabad. A mob also attacked the Army headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi.

Khan's longish post on X started with "reminding" the nation of the two attempts on his life: first in Wazirabad, Punjab province and then again at the Judicial Complex in Islamabad.

The ISI stole the CCTV footage from

Wazirabad, and the night before the attack in Islamabad, the ISI had taken control of the area where it happened, he claimed.

"In their panic, they have made my conditions in jail even tougher. The staff assigned to ensure that my food isn't poisoned has been changed for the fourth time," he wrote.

He also described the conditions of his and his wife Bushra's cell — "rats fall from the top when she prays — and said the court has been informed about it. Khan further said that he had already explained why the Islamabad rally was postponed and how it had nothing to do with "contacts with the establishment."

This entire government runs on lies; I don't even read the news about them. I have no contact with the establishment. If we do hold talks with them, it will only be for the sake of the country and the constitution," the PTI supremo added.

Drawing a parallel to the situation that unfolded in Bangladesh, he also came up with a curt comment: "Cattle can be

herded in a desired direction, not humans" and said, "The Army Chief, Chief Justice, and Police Chief were all loyal to the Prime Minister (in Bangladesh), but when the people took to the streets, they won their rights."

Anyone critical of the regime is labelled a digital terrorist. When internet services were shut down, people protested, but those in power couldn't handle the criticism. No one is permitted to even voice their problems. The nation blames a specific institution for this," he added.

What are his qualifications? Under him, the law-and-order situation across the country is deteriorating," the PTI leader asked and described terror attack incidents in KP and Balochistan. The former cricketer-turned-politician rued about "the embarrassing defeat against Bangladesh" on Monday and said it set a new low.

He also lamented the current condition of cricket in Pakistan, saying: "The blame for all of this collapse falls on one institution."

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Tender Enquiry No. 1704/C&I/O&M/PC-2583 Dated: 23-08-2024
Chief Engineer/ O&M (P&P Cell-I), GHTP, Lehra Mohabbat, invites E-tender for the Procurement of RTDs and thermocouple for Stage-I & II Units, GHTP, Lehra Mohabbat, Quantity as per NIT. For detailed NIT & tender specification please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 23-08-2024 at 17:00 Hrs. onwards.
Note:- Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> GHTP-73/24

76155/12/3350/2023/37011 Dated CHD :- 8/27/2024

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Ref. : MD/MK/04/NIT/1410 Date : 27.08.2024

TENDER NOTICE
MPMKVVCL, Bhopal, invites following bids from manufacturers through e-tendering :-

Tender Specification Number	Particulars	Approx. Value (Rs. Lakh)	Tender Fee including GST (in Rs.)	Date of Pre-Bid Conference	Date of Opening of Tender
MD/MK/04/1082	Rate Contract for 140 Kg 8 Mtr. Long PCC Pole	2808.30	23600	05.09.24 at 3:00 PM	17.09.2024 at 3:00 PM

Other details and full Tender documents would be available on Company website <https://portal.mpcz.in> & Govt. Website <https://mptenders.gov.in> shortly.
M.P. Madhyam/116105/2024 CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER (PROC.)

Markets settle almost flat

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Stock market benchmark Sindices Sensex and Nifty ended on a flat note after a volatile session on Tuesday due to the emergence of profit-taking near record high levels amid rising geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and Ukraine.

The NSE gauge, however, hit a new lifetime peak of 25,017. According to traders, profit booking in metal, consumer durable and FMCG shares negated gains in telecom, teck and IT stocks. After oscillating between highs and lows, the 30-share BSE Sensex eked out a marginal gain of 13.65 points or 0.02 per cent to settle at 81,711.76 — its sixth consecutive session of rise. During the day, it hit a high of 81,919.11 and a low of 81,600.51. The NSE Nifty ended almost flat, up 7.15 points or 0.03 per cent, at 25,017.75 — its ninth straight session of gains.

The domestic market witnessed profit-booking near record highs. While the positive expectations regarding a potential rate cut by the Fed in September remain, the recent geopolitical tensions



and rising crude oil prices have made investors cautious amid high valuations. "Further, the recent shift in FII stance towards the domestic market and the anticipation that the RBI will align with the Fed's actions are expected to foster a positive outlook in the near term," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services. On the Sensex chart, Bajaj Finserv, Maruti, Larsen & Toubro, Bajaj Finance, Infosys, Axis Bank and ICICI Bank were the biggest gainers.

In contrast, Hindustan Unilever, JSW Steel, Titan, NTPC and Tata Motors were

among the laggards. In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.58 per cent, and smallcap index went up by 0.50 per cent.

Among the indices, telecommunication jumped 1.13 per cent, teck (0.70 per cent), financial services (0.68 per cent) and healthcare (0.44 per cent). On the other hand, metal, consumer durables, power, commodities and consumer discretionary were among the laggards.

Trading session lacked momentum due to weak investor participation on

account of Janmashtami and ended almost unchanged from its previous close. Weak US market cues and subdued Asian indices prompted local investors to book profit towards the fag-end, indicating that intraday volatility will continue amid growing geopolitical tensions and sluggish global growth," Prashant Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

In Asian markets, Tokyo and Hong Kong settled in the positive territory, while Seoul and Shanghai ended lower.

European markets were trading higher in mid-session deals. The US markets ended mostly lower in the overnight trade on Monday.

"There are both headwinds and tailwinds for the market now. Headwinds are coming from the escalation of geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and Ukraine. Brent crude has shot up above USD 81. The strongest tailwind comes from the expected rate cuts by the Fed which will spill over to other central banks, including the RBI," said VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services.

GCCs offering up to 20 per cent higher salaries than IT services: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Global Capability Centres (GCCs) in India are offering up to 20 per cent higher salaries as compared with the IT services, especially at entry and mid levels, a report said on Tuesday. According to the report by TeamLease Digital, India has over 1,600 GCCs employing over 1.66 million professionals. It is poised to welcome 800 new GCCs in the next 5-6 years, which shows the country's growing prominence as a global tech hub.

GCCs are centralized units established by multinational companies to manage specific business functions or processes, leveraging cost advantages, a skilled workforce, and favourable business environments in strategic locations worldwide. GCCs play a vital role in driving efficiency and innovation across sectors such as IT, finance, and research and development.

On the other hand, IT products & services encompass development, production, and management



of hardware, software, networks, and services that enable organizations in the creation, management and optimization of or access to information and business processes.

"GCCs are rapidly surpassing the IT sector in the talent market, especially at entry and mid levels. They offer salaries that are, on an average, 12-20 per cent higher than those in IT services and non-tech industries," TeamLease Digital CEO Neeti Sharma said quoting the report.

This wage premium underscores the growing influence of GCCs as they attract top talent from the IT sector to fuel their expansion, signalling a shift in market dynamics where GCCs are emerging as the dominant

force, she added. The 'Digital Skills and Salary Primer for FY25' report is based on an analysis of 15,000 job roles from the 3 sectors, including GCCs, IT services and non-tech sectors.

Currently, in GCCs, there are more opportunities for people with 0-10 years experience. The senior level has a wider salary gap for many of the functional areas, and the premium for niche skills is also higher.

The report further showed that there is a growing trend of setting up GCCs in tier-II cities like Kolkata, Ahmedabad, and Vadodara, which indicates a geographical diversification of tech opportunities across the country.

Skills that are seeing an increasing demand in GCCs are PyTorch, AWS, DevOps, NLP, Kubernetes, Fabric, Hyperledger, Tableau, SQL, and ServiceNow, the report added.

In GCCs, the percentage of women tech professionals is expected to increase to 35 per cent from the current 25 per cent by 2027.

Over 200 global players to take part in Bharat Battery Show 2025



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Over 200 global players are likely to showcase cutting-edge battery and charging infra technologies at the Bharat Battery Show in January 2025. Industry body India Energy Storage Alliance (IESA), in a statement, said it is organising the Bharat Battery Show at the second Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025.

According to the statement, the Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025 led by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry is set to be held on January 17-22, 2025, across three major venues — Bharat Mandapam, Yashobhoomi (IICC) Dwarka, and India Expo Center & Mart, Greater Noida.

IESA, as a key industry partner, has been entrusted with the organisation of the Battery Tech Pavilion, Recycling Pavilion, and Charging Infra Pavilion under the umbrella of the Bharat Battery Show.

Bharat Battery Show — part of the Bharat Mobility — will be organised at the central Delhi venue Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, from 19 to 21 January 2025.

The Bharat Battery Show (an expo on batteries and charging) will feature cutting-edge technologies in battery storage, battery recycling, and charging infrastructure, reflecting IESAs commitment to driving the adoption of clean energy and sustainable mobility solutions in India.

IESA said that it is expecting 200+ global players to showcase their cutting-edge battery and charging infra technologies during this event. Some of the key firms already confirmed include Amara Raja, Replus Engitech, Epsilon Advanced Materials, Advik Hitech, Amphenol FCL, Bry-Air (Asia), Elcom International, EMO Energy, HENN Indo Pacific, Maestrotech Systems, Neenjas Electric, Polyprotic Chemicals, Huge Hippo Energy, MNE components, Hioki, Glida, Ipower batteries, and Molsynth, among others.

Rupee falls 5 paise to close at 83.92 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee depreciated by 5 paise to close at 83.92 (provisional) against the American currency on Tuesday, on overnight jump in crude oil prices and a surge in commodity prices.

However, positive domestic markets and a soft US dollar cushioned the downside, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.91 and touched an intra-day low of 83.95 against the US dollar.

The domestic currency finally settled at 83.92 (provisional), 5 paise lower from its previous close. On Monday, the Indian rupee settled for the day 3 paise higher at 83.87 against the American currency.

"We expect the rupee to trade with a slight positive bias on rise in global risk sentiments amid dovish Fed speak and



rising expectations of a rate cut by the Fed in September. "However, geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and rising crude oil prices may cap sharp upside. Traders may take cues from US consumer confidence data," Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, said.

Forex traders said the rupee is likely to remain within a narrow range as the Reserve Bank of India has been actively intervening in the market, consistently absorbing inflows.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.05 per cent lower at 100.79.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, declined 0.87 per cent to USD 80.72 per barrel. On the domestic equity market front, Sensex rose 13.65 points, or 0.02 per cent, to close at 81,711.76 points. The Nifty closed 7.15 points, or 0.03 per cent, up at 25,017.75 points.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets on Monday, as they purchased shares worth Rs 483.36 crore, according to exchange data. Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Monday said the central bank is constantly working on policies, systems, and platforms to make the country's financial sector strong, nimble and customer centric.

India-Oman free trade pact talks at advanced stage: Official

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Discussions for the proposed free trade agreement (FTA) between India and Oman are at an advanced stage and both sides hope to conclude the pact early, Indian Ambassador to Oman Amit Narang said on Tuesday.

The pact will give a significant push to bilateral trade and investment ties between the two countries, he said.

The pact, officially known as the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), is expected to boost Indian exports to the west Asian country by eliminating duties, especially on petroleum products, textiles, electronics, pharmaceuticals, machinery, and iron and steel.

"Discussions for a bilateral CEPA with Oman are at an advanced stage. We hope to conclude these discussions early and once this is done, this will be a significant push



to bilateral, not just trade, but also bilateral investment ties," Narang said.

Addressing an event organised by Ficci here, the Indian Ambassador to Oman also highlighted the significant potential for enhancing direct shipping links between the two nations as a large part of Indian exports to Oman come not directly but through the UAE.

He said the India-Oman bilateral trade, which crossed USD 12 billion in 2022-23, has moderated and settled at USD 8 billion in FY24.

"Between 2021 and 2023 the

commodities globally," Narang said.

He pointed out that a large part of Indian exports to Oman come not directly but through the UAE and these are not reflected in the India-Oman bilateral trade but in India's trade with the UAE, adding that there is potential for enhancing direct shipping links.

"Currently, I understand that there are two shipping lines... There is therefore huge potential for direct shipping to reduce cost of bilateral trade and that will have a significant impact in further improving our bilateral trade figures," Narang said.

"In the past financial year, the bilateral trade has moderated a little bit, it has settled to USD 8 billion... Moderation is mainly on account of over dominance of hydrocarbons in the bilateral trade," Narang said.

"India imports a lot of oil and fertilisers from Oman and this decline in the value terms of the trade this year is a reflection of the decline in values of these two

commodities globally," Narang said.

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India ranks 31st in JLL's Global Real Estate Transparency Index

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Global property consultant JLL on Tuesday said that India's top real estate markets have entered into a 'transparent' zone for the first time, driven by institutionalisation of commercial assets and improvement in data access.

JLL has released its 'Global Real Estate Transparency Index, 2024', which showed that India's tier-I markets have entered into the 'transparent' zone for the first time with a composite score of 2.44. India ranks 31st in the list of 89 countries.

The consultant noted that "India has made a remarkable leap forward in JLL's Global Real Estate Transparency Index 2024, reaching the transparent tier for the first time." This progress is a result of institutionalisation in the commercial market and



improved access to diverse real estate data sets, it said.

"India is the top global improver in the 2024 index, making significant strides in transaction processes and market fundamentals," JLL said, the country is leading the global front in enhancing transparency, with expanded data coverage and improved data quality across various property sectors. There are 13 countries featured in the high-transparency zone. The United Kingdom is at the top (with a score of 1.24) in

and Slovakia. The remaining countries are in 'semi-transparent', Low transparency and opaque zones. "India is the top global improver, with greater data coverage and quality across both core and niche property sectors — ranging from industrial to data centres - as institutionalisation in the market increases.

"A more proactive financial regulator, new climate risk disclosure guidelines, streamlined building regulations and digitised land records have also contributed to its leading cities entering the 'Transparent' tier," the report mentioned. Samantak Das, Chief Economist and Head-Research, India, JLL, said, "Increasing institutional participation, along with a push for transparency, has led to the adoption of best industry practices in India's commercial real estate

market." Notably, he said four existing listed REITs have driven growth in stabilised commercial assets, while standardised market valuation processes and REIT regulations have fostered market-based approaches. "Regulatory enhancements such as RERA and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code have improved investor protection, while digital land registry records and strict monitoring by RBI and SEBI have created a robust regulatory landscape," Das said.

Karan Singh Sodi, Senior Managing Director (Mumbai MMR & Gujarat) and Head - Alternatives, India, JLL said, India's ascent to the transparent tier in JLL's Global Real Estate Transparency Index underscores the industry's cohesive efforts and governmental backing.

Auto majors to offer 1.5-3 per cent discount on purchase of new vehicles against scrappage certificate

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the festive season, several passenger and commercial vehicle manufacturers have agreed to offer discounts of 1.5-3 per cent on new vehicle purchase against scrapped old vehicles after a meeting with Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, an official statement said on Tuesday.

The statement further said Mercedes Benz India has offered a flat discount of Rs 25,000, which will be over and above all existing discounts. Union Road Transport and Highways (RT&H) Minister Nitin Gadkari on Tuesday chaired a meeting with the SIAM delegation at Bharat Mandapam, where he addressed pressing issues in the automobile industry.

"During this interaction, responding positively to the advice of the minister RT&H



and recognising the importance of Fleet Modernisation and Circular Economy, multiple Commercial Vehicle Manufacturers and multiple passenger vehicle manufacturers have agreed to offer discounts for a limited period against a certificate of deposit (Scrappage Certificate)," the statement said.

It said commercial vehicle manufacturers are willing to offer discounts for a limited period of two years and

passenger vehicle manufacturers are willing to offer discounts for a limited period of one year.

The statement noted that these discounts will further incentivise the scrapping of vehicles, thereby ensuring the plying of safer, cleaner and more efficient vehicles on roads.

As per the statement, passenger vehicle manufacturers namely Maruti Suzuki India Ltd, Tata Motors, Mahindra & Mahindra, Hyundai Motor India, Kia Motors, Toyota Kirloskar Motor, Honda Cars, JSW MG Motor, Renault India, Nissan India and Skoda Volkswagen India, will offer discount of 1.5 per cent of the ex-showroom price of new car or Rs 20,000, whichever is less, against the passenger vehicle scrapped by the owner in the last 6 months.

Gold climbs ₹550 to ₹74,350 per 10 gm; silver rallies ₹1,200

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices climbed Rs 550 to Rs 74,350 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday on the back of fresh demand from local jewellers.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 73,800 per 10 grams in the previous session on Friday. Silver prices also rallied Rs 1,200 to Rs 88,200 per kilogram on Tuesday from Rs 87,000 per kg in the previous close, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also jumped Rs 550 to Rs 74,000 per 10 grams.



Traders attributed the rise in yellow prices due to a pick-up in demand by local jewellers and retailers in the domestic market. The bullion markets were closed in New Delhi on Monday on account of Krishna Janmashtami. In the Asian trading hours, gold is trading at USD 2,543.90 per ounce, down USD 11.30 per ounce.

"Gold declined marginally on Tuesday, weighed down by better than expected US macro data and an uptick in US Treasury yields," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

According to Manav Modi, Senior Analyst, Commodity Research, MOFSL, gold prices fell but remained in sight of record highs it hit last week as the prospect of lower US interest rates battered the US dollar and presented a brighter outlook for metal markets. Further, bullion surged to record highs last week, as market participants welcomed

dovish comments from the Federal Reserve. Some safe haven demand also buoyed gold as ceasefire talks between Israel and Hamas yielded few results, while hostilities in the Middle East persisted, Modi added. Additionally, silver was quoted lower at USD 30.34 per ounce in the global markets.

"Traders will focus on the US consumer confidence data going to be released later on Tuesday which will provide more insights on the direction of the bullion prices," Navneet Damani, Group Senior VP of Commodity Research at Motilal Oswal Financial Services (MOFSL), said.

Coal India's contribution to Govt exchequer rises 2 per cent in April-July

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Coal India Ltd's contribution to the government's exchequer rose 2.06 per cent to Rs 20,071.96 crore in the April-July period of the ongoing fiscal year.

Coal India Ltd (CIL), which accounts for over 80 per cent of domestic coal output, paid Rs 19,666.04 crore to the government exchequer in the year-ago period, according to provisional figures of the coal ministry. Total levies paid to the government in July went up to Rs 4,992.48 crore from Rs 4,789.42 crore paid a year earlier.



The amount paid to the Centre and state governments include royalties, GST, cess on coal, and other levies. Coal production generates substantial revenue for both central and state governments. Of the total amount paid to the government exchequer in the first four months of FY24,

maximum amount of Rs 4,417.12 crore was made to the state government of Jharkhand, followed by Rs 4,319.67 crore to the Odisha government, Rs 3,950.41 crore to Chhattisgarh, Rs 3,526.27 crore to Madhya Pradesh, and Rs 2,086.35 crore to Maharashtra, among others.

State governments are entitled to receiving 14 per cent of royalty on the sale price of coal and 30 per cent of the royalty as contribution towards the proposed district mineral foundations (DMFs) -- which are meant to support people affected by various projects -- and two per cent of

NMET from dry-fuel produced by the coal companies and also the private sector.

In case of captive, commercial mines, states are also entitled to receiving the revenue share offered by the auction holder in a transparent bidding process.

Apart from this, state governments also benefit from increased employment, land compensation, increased investment in allied infrastructure like railways, road and several other economic benefits. Coal India is aiming to produce 838 MT of coal in the ongoing financial year.

PARALYMPICS

INDIA EYE RECORD HAUL WITH LARGEST EVER CONTINGENT IN FRAY AT PARIS

PTI ■ PARIS

Beaten by life but not by its many challenges, an 84-strong contingent of Indian para-athletes, the largest ever in the country's history and a heady mix of youth and experience, would be eyeing an unparalleled gold rush when the Paralympic Games begin here on Wednesday. India won a record 19 medals, including five gold, in the Tokyo Paralympics in 2021 for a 24th-place finish in the overall rankings. Three years on, the country's target is more than 25 medals with a double-digit haul in gold. What has fuelled this ambition is the size of the contingent and the exceptional performances in the past one year. India won a record 111 medals, including 29 gold, at the Hangzhou Asian Para Games last year. This was followed by unprecedented success at the World Para Athletics Championships in May where the country snared 17 medals, including half a dozen gold for a sixth-place finish in the overall standings. Several medal winners in Hangzhou are in this Paralympics team, including top stars like world record-



holding javelin thrower Sumit Antil (F64) and rifle shooter Avani Lekhara (10m Air Rifle Standing SH1). Both of them would be defending their gold medals won in Tokyo. The Games, as much a celebration of sporting skills as human endurance, club athletes with similar functional abilities in terms of movement, coordination and balance into various classifications. The "degree and nature of their eligible impairments" decide these groups. For India, the para-athletics team has been a major medal giver in the past and this time too, it is expected to be the

biggest contributor with as many as 38 names in fray. Other top medal contenders include the likes of para-archer Sheetal Devi, who shoots with her legs as she was born without arms, landmine blast survivors Hokato Sema (shot putter) and Narayana Konganapalle (rower) and several other accident amputees. India is competing in 12 sports this time, as against nine by a 54-member team in Tokyo. Shooter Manish Narwal and shuttler Krishna Nagar are also among those who would be looking to defend their gold medals won in Tokyo.

Antil, whose left leg was amputated owing to an accident when he was 17, had also won gold in the para world championships in May and he is hoping to cross the 75m mark in Paris at the same venue where his able-bodied counterpart Neeraj Chopra won an Olympic silver earlier this month. Lekhara was the best performer in Tokyo with one gold and a bronze and one of the two athletes to win two medals, the other being Singhraj Adhana (silver and bronze). Adhana, however, could not make the current team.

Lekhara was the first Indian woman to win a Paralympic gold medal. She is now primed to join the club of three medal winners in the Paralympics. Current Paralympics Committee of India (PCI) President Devendra Jhajharia, a javelin thrower, is the most decorated Indian Paralympian with two gold (2004 Athens and 2016 Rio) and a silver (2021 Tokyo). Joginder Singh Bedi won three medals in the 1984 Paralympics (silver in shot put, a bronze each in javelin and discus throw). Deepthi Jeevanji (women's 400m T20; intellectual disability), Rio Olympics gold-medallist Mariyappan Thangavelu (men's high jump - T63), whose right leg was disabled after being run over by a bus, and Yogesh Kathuniya (men's Discus Throw - F56), born with a neurological disorder that damaged his nervous system, would be also aiming to add to their existing Paralympic medal tally. Shuttlar Krishna Nagar (men's singles SH6), who has overcome the disadvantage of his short height, is also looking good to defend his gold medal won in Tokyo, more so after winning the title in the World Para Badminton Championships in Thailand in

February. The other gold winner in Tokyo, Pramod Bhagat, is, however, serving suspension after whereabouts failure. Suhas Yathiraj (Men's Singles SL4 and Mixed Doubles SL3-SU5), who won a silver in Tokyo, will again be a medal contender. In para-archery, Sheetal and Harvinder Singh will be among the medal contenders. Harvinder had won a bronze in Tokyo in men's individual recurve open. Sheetal, the first and the only international para archery champion without upper limbs, bagged two gold medals in a stunning performance in the Asian Para Games in women's individual compound and mixed doubles, and a silver in the women's doubles compound event. In table tennis, after winning a silver in class 4 event in Tokyo, Bhavinaben Patel will hope to better the colour of the medal. The wheelchair-bound player is competing in women's singles S4 and women's doubles D10 events. Antil and shot putter Bhagyashri Jadhav, who won a silver in the F34 event in Asian Para Games, will be the joint flag bearers at Wednesday's Opening Ceremony to be held outside a stadium for the first time in the history of Paralympic Games.



US OPEN 16-year-old Californian Iva Jovic beats Magda in first round

AP ■ NEW YORK

Iva Jovic, a 16-year-old from California, became the youngest American to win a women's main-draw match at the U.S. Open since 2000, eliminating 2023 Australian Open semifinalist Magda Linette of Poland 6-4, 6-3. "Surprised, but not surprised," Jovic said on Monday about the result against someone who's been ranked in the top 20. "I just had a plan about what I was going to do before we started, and there weren't that many needs for crazy adjustments, because it was going well," Jovic said. "So just kind of sticking to that."

Just keep working. I'm on a good path, but there's a lot more to do." She earned a wild-card entry for the main bracket at the year's last Grand Slam tournament by winning the U.S. Tennis Association Girls' 18s national championship. She also paired with Tyra Grant there to take the doubles title, which gave them a wild card for women's doubles at Flushing Meadows; the USA granted Jovic and another American teen, Kaylan Bigun, a spot in the mixed doubles field, too. Jovic and Grant teamed up to win junior doubles titles at the Australian Open in January and Wimbledon in July; they also were the runners-up at the French Open in June. Jovic's favorite players are 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic - he's Serbian, and so are her roots; after the English portion of her news conference concluded Monday, she answered questions in Serbian - and Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Belinda Bencic. Why? "Djokovic, I mean, do I need to say? We all know how great he is," Jovic responded. "And then Belinda, she just takes the ball so early and her footwork is very cutting the angle, so she just makes her opponents feel kind of suffocated. That's what I would like to try to do." Jovic would love the chance to have a conversation with Djokovic, but their lone interaction so far was when she asked if he would mind posing for a photo.

GRAND CHESS TOUR Gukesh holds Caruana; Firouzja consolidates lead



PTI ■ SAINT LOUIS (USA)

Grandmaster D Gukesh played out a hard-fought draw yet again, signing peace with top seed and local favourite Fabiano Caruana, while Frenchman Alireza Firouzja stretched his lead by a full point after the seventh round of Sinquefeld Cup, which is a part of the Grand Chess Tour. The other Indian in fray, R Praggnanandhaa, drew his seventh game on the trot to remain on a fifty per cent score. Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia was happy with a quick draw as Praggnanandhaa decided to save his energy. With just two rounds to come, Firouzja, who put it across world champion Ding Liren of China, has five points in his kitty and Caruana continues to trail him a full point behind. As many as five players -- Wesley So of United States, Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France, Gukesh and Praggnanandhaa -- share the third spot on 3.5 points each. A half point behind are Liren and Nepomniachtchi while Dutchman Anish Giri is still at the bottom of

the table on 2.5 points. Besides Firouzja's victory, Abdusattorov halted So's party with a clinical performance. In the other game of the day, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave drew with Giri. Gukesh continued with his uncompromising play but found Caruana adequately prepared in an Italian opening game. The Indian was much worse in the ensuing endgame but Caruana missed out on his 39th turn when he could have gotten a real advantage. Exchanges at regular intervals thereafter ensured the draw for the Indian. Praggnanandhaa got nothing as white against Nepomniachtchi's Petroff defense and the Chennai-based player had to be content with repetition of moves very early in the middle game. The game lasted a mere 19 moves. The day belonged to Firouzja, who came up with fine resources in a complicated middle game against Liren. The Italian opening has been doing well for the Frenchman and he knocked down a couple of pawns when Liren erred in the middle game allowing the white to invade his camp. The rest was easy. Results round 7: Alireza Firouzja (Fra, 5) beat Ding Liren (Chn, 3); R Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 3.5) drew with Ian Nepomniachtchi (Fid, 2.5); Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb, 3.5) beat Wesley So (Usa, 3.5); Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra, 3.5) drew with Anish Giri (Ned, 2.5); Fabiano Caruana (Usa, 4) drew with D Gukesh (Ind, 3.5).

Coco begins her US Open title defense with an easy win after a two-match losing streak

AP ■ NEW YORK

The chant rang out in cavernous Arthur Ashe Stadium at the U.S. Open before Coco Gauff's first service game of her first match of her first Grand Slam tournament as a defending champion: "Here we go, Coco! Here we go!" Coming to Flushing Meadows off a series of early exits at other events, Gauff already was down 1-0 to Varvara Gracheva on Monday, having dropped the match's initial game at love by making four groundstroke errors. What followed was a tough, tight game, featuring 14 points across eight minutes and three break chances for Gracheva. The important part, of course, was that Gauff saved all of those break points, claimed that game, and suddenly was in complete control on the way to a 6-2, 6-0 victory that not only



put the 20-year-old American in the second round but also told her - and everyone else - that her game is in better shape than it appeared lately. "The last couple of weeks were tough, and I was like, I have to do this and do that, but I don't have to prove anything to anyone except myself. So ... (these) two weeks are just about proving all the

expectations that I have on myself," the No. 3-seeded Gauff said. "I have many more years coming back here and I'm not going to win every year. Just that perspective and just having the belief that I can - but not the expectation that I should." Day 1 at the year's last Grand Slam tournament went about as well as possible for Gauff

and another young American featured in Ashe, 13th-seeded Ben Shelton, a semifinalist a year ago who beat 2020 champion Dominic Thiem 6-4, 6-2, 6-2. It was the last U.S. Open match for Thiem, who turns 31 next week and is retiring after this season. "Obviously she plays with a lot of passion," Shelton, 21, said about Gauff. "You could tell that she cares out there. She's into it every time that she's on the court. I think that's something that the people love." Gauff was not the only past U.S. Open champ on Monday's schedule: The night session in Ashe began with 2017 winner Sloane Stephens blowing a huge lead against Clara Burel and losing 0-6, 7-5, 7-5 after taking the first nine games, followed by Novak Djokovic - whose collection of 24 Slam titles includes last year's in New York - against Radu Albot.

India to face West Indies, South Africa in Women's T20 World Cup warm-up matches

PTI ■ DUBAI

India will take on West Indies and South Africa in their two Women's T20 World Cup warm-up fixtures in Dubai, the International Cricket Council announced on Tuesday. India will take on West Indies on September 29 while Harmanpreet Kaur and Co. Are slated to play South Africa on October 1. All 10 teams that have qualified for the Women's T20 World Cup will participate in the practice games, with every side playing two warm-up games each. The warm-up fixtures will start on September 28 with Pakistan taking on Scotland and Sri Lanka facing Bangladesh.

Defending champion Australia will face arch-rival England on September 29, followed by West Indies on October 1 in Dubai. The warm-up fixtures will be 20 overs per side and will not have international T20 status, allowing teams to field all members of their 15-player squad. No two sides who belong to the same group will take on each other in the warm-up round. India has been clubbed in group A alongside Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan and Sri Lanka while group B comprises England, South Africa, West Indies, Scotland and Bangladesh. The competition, starting October 3, was moved to the

UAE by the ICC following the ongoing political unrest in Bangladesh, the original host. **WARM-UP FIXTURES:** September 28: Pakistan v Scotland (Sevens, Dubai) September 28: Sri Lanka v Bangladesh (ICCA1, Dubai) September 29: New Zealand v South Africa (Sevens, Dubai) September 29: India v West Indies (ICCA2, Dubai) September 29: Australia v England (ICCA1, Dubai) September 30: Sri Lanka v Scotland (Sevens, Dubai) September 30: Bangladesh v Pakistan (ICCA2, Dubai) October 1: West Indies v Australia (Sevens, Dubai) October 1: England v New Zealand (ICCA2, Dubai)

Nigeria hires German coach Bruno in bid to get World Cup qualifying back on track

PTI ■ LAGOS (NIGERIA)

Nigeria hired German coach Bruno Labbadia on Tuesday to lead the men's national soccer team in a bid to get its flagging World Cup qualifying campaign back on track. "The appointment is with immediate effect" said Mohammed Sanusi, the general secretary of the Nigeria Football Federation. The 58-year-old Labbadia has been out of work since April 2023 when he was fired by Stuttgart after failing to arrest its slide to the bottom of the Bundesliga. Nigeria is second from bottom in its 2026 World Cup qualifying group after failing to win any of its opening four

games. The Super Eagles drew 1-1 with both Lesotho and Zimbabwe in November last year before Portuguese coach Jose Peseiro led the team to the final of the Africa Cup of Nations. Nigeria lost the final to the host nation Ivory Coast in February. The NFF promoted Peseiro's assistant, Finidi George, to the top position in April after the Portuguese departed. But, the former right winger was unable to improve the team's fortunes in World Cup qualifying. George oversaw a 1-1 draw with South Africa followed by a 2-1 defeat in Benin in June. George then reportedly resigned after not being told of the NFF's plans to appoint a

technical advisor to oversee his work. The NFF did not publicly acknowledge the resignation. Labbadia only oversaw two wins from his 12 games in charge of Stuttgart during his second stint at the club - one each in the league and German Cup. His successor, Sebastian Hoeneß, ultimately saved Stuttgart from relegation and led the team to a club-record points total last season. Labbadia previously coached Hertha Berlin, Wolfsburg, Hamburger SV, Bayer Leverkusen and Darmstadt. As a goal-scoring forward, he helped Bayern Munich and Kaiserslautern win Bundesliga titles in the 1990s.

Duleep Trophy: Indisposed Siraj ruled out, Jadeja allowed more rest

PTI ■ MUMBAI, AUG 27 (PTI)

Seamer Mohammed Siraj will miss the Duleep Trophy's first round games due to illness while veteran all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja has been allowed an extended period of rest by the BCCI's national selection committee, which announced a few changes to the participating squads on Tuesday. The first round of the Duleep Trophy, comprising two matches, will be held from

September 5-8 with India A taking on India B at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru and India C facing off against India D at the Rural Development Trust Stadium A in Ananthapur. Siraj, who was a part of India's last away assignment in Sri Lanka, along with Umran Malik have both been ruled out of the first round games and have been replaced by Navdeep Saini and Gaurav Yadav respectively. "Both Siraj and Malik are



suffering from an illness and are not expected to be fit in time for their Duleep Trophy fixtures," the BCCI informed in a release. "All-rounder Ravindra Jadeja has also been released from the Team B squad," the board added. Jadeja was last seen in action in the T20 World Cup final in June against South Africa and was rested from the ODI series in Sri Lanka. The 32-year-old Yadav, who hails from Madhya Pradesh, took 41 wickets in seven

matches for Pondicherry in the last season of Ranji Trophy to finish as the second highest wicket-taker in the country's premier domestic competition. **REVISED SQUADS:** **India A:** Shubman Gill (c), Mayank Agarwal, Riyan Parag, Dhruv Jurel (wk), KL Rahul, Tilak Varma, Shivam Dube, Tanush Kotian, Kuldeep Yadav, Akash Deep, Prasad Krishna, Khaleel Ahmed, Avesh Khan, Vidwath

Kaverappa, Kumar Kushagra, Shaswat Rawat. **India B:** Abhimanyu Easwaran (c), Yashvi Jaiswal, Sarfaraz Khan, Rishabh Pant (wk), Musheer Khan, Nitish Kumar Reddy*, Washington Sundar, Navdeep Saini, Yash Dayal, Mukesh Kumar, Rahul Chahar, R Sai Kishore, Mohit Awasthi, N Jagadeesan (wk). **India C:** Rituraj Gaikwad (c), Sai Sudharsan, Rajat Patidar, Abishek Porel (wk), Suryakumar Yadav, B Indrajith, Hrithik Shokeen,

Manav Suthar, Gaurav Yadav, Vyshak Vijaykumar, Anshul Khambhoj, Himanshu Chauhan, Mayank Markande, Aryan Juyal (wk), Sandeep Warrier. **India D:** Shreyas Iyer (c), Atharva Taide, Yash Dube, Devdutt Padikkal, Ishan Kishan (wk), Ricky Bhui, Saransh Jain, Axar Patel, Arshdeep Singh, Aditya Thakare, Harshit Rana, Tushar Deshpande, Akash Sengupta, KS Bharat (wk), Saurabh Kumar.

HOPEFULLY, WE WILL BREAK FINAL BARRIER IN T20 WC: HARMANPREET

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur remained optimistic that India can grab their maiden global title in the upcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup, and said conditions in the UAE could work to their advantage.

The International Cricket Council has recently shifted the showpiece, to be held between October 3 and 20, to the UAE from Bangladesh owing to the political unrest in the latter nation.

"Whenever we play on this kind of stage (World Cup), we always want to do well. We have always done well in the past as well, and hopefully, this time we will break that final barrier and go all the way," Harmanpreet told PTI videos.

Harmanpreet was on Tuesday appointed as the captain of the Indian team for the T20 World Cup.

The 35-year-old did not read too much into the venue shift, and said the conditions in the UAE are quite similar to India.

"We have not played much cricket in the UAE. But the conditions in the UAE are going to be similar to Indian conditions."



"We will see how the conditions play out (there) and try to adjust ourselves to the conditions as soon as possible," said Harmanpreet, who led India to the final of the 2020 T20 World Cup.

Irrespective of the playing conditions, she wanted the team to dish out a "positive" game in the World Cup.

"As a team, we learn from our defeats and break those barriers that are pushing us back. Hopefully this time we can express ourselves in a more positive way in the World Cup," she said.

Harmanpreet also backed the Indian bowlers, who floundered in the recent Asia Cup final against Sri Lanka, to deliver in the World Cup.

"The bowlers are working really hard as a team and, hopefully, in this World Cup we tick all the boxes."

Harmanpreet, who led Mumbai Indians to WPL victory last year, said the key to winning the World Cup will be to keep themselves in the present.

"It is always important for us to play good cricket, keeping ourselves in the present. Whatever the situation is in front of us... we go there and evaluate (it) as soon as possible," she signed off.



Jeev, Jyoti among Indian stars to compete in country's inaugural Legends Tour

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian golfing greats Jeev Milkha Singh and Jyoti Randhawa will be among 64 international players vying for top honours in the inaugural HSBC India Legends Championships to be played at Jaypee Greens course at Greater Noida from August 30 to September 1.

The first Legends Tour tournament in the country, which will have USD 0.5 million as prize purse, will also see 2005 US Open champion Michael Campbell of New Zealand in action.

The winner of the HSBC India Legends Championship is set to take home USD 74,250, while the runner-up will receive USD 49,000. The third-place finisher will pocket USD 32,700.

The event will be played over 54 holes and it will be preceded by a star-studded Pro-Am event on August 28 and 29, which will see top golfers play alongside amateurs.

The Legends Tour is a professional golf tour for male golfers aged 50 and over, run by the PGA European Tour. It began as European Senior Tour in 1992 and was rechristened as Legends Tour since 2020.

Jeev is the host of the tournament, co-sanctioned by the Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI). The event will see a participation from 17 countries.

Randhawa qualified after winning the Legends Tour's tough and challenging Qualifying School finals in Turkey.

"Since I am the host, I will ensure that I don't win the tournament this weekend," the 52-year-old Jeev joked at the press conference to launch the tournament.

"It's great for the country's golfers and for world golf in general. Golfing career is over when you are 40 or 45. But with the Legends Tour, you can have a second innings after reaching 50 years."

"Now, you can play golf as a career till 60."

Randhawa, also 52, said not only the money, a golfer can also maintain the competitive spirit by continuing to play in the Legends Tour.

"It's good for the budding Indian golfers and amateurs. They will now know that a golfer can play another 10 years after retirement," he said.

"By playing in the Legends Tour, you are keeping your golfing passion and competitive spirit intact as well as keeping yourself fit."

Jeev (twice Asia No. 1 in 2006 and 2008) and Randhawa (once Asia No. 1 in 2002) are well-known names around the world with numerous appearances in Majors too.

Jeev has won four times each on the European and Japan Tours, one on the Korean Tour besides six times on the Asian Tour. Randhawa has won eight times on the Asian Tour and once in Japan.

Jeev, who has played all four Majors, was the first Indian to tee up at the Masters at the Augusta National in 2007. He was a former captain of Asia in EurAsia Cup (Europe vs Asia team event). He has five top 10 finishes on the Legends Tour since 2022.

Besides Jeev and Randhawa, there are other seven Indians in the fray. They are Mukesh Kumar, Digvijay Singh, Harmeet Kahlon, Vijay Kumar, all past winners on the Asian Tour, Amandeep Johl, Vishal Singh and Sanjay Kumar.

The 55-year-old Campbell, who has also won 15 other tournaments around the world, said, "I started playing golf when I was 10. My grandmother told me that time when I achieve success, I should remember I have two hands, one for receiving and another for giving back," he said.

"Legends Tour is great in that way. You keep playing after retirement and inspire youngsters to take up the game. We have to give back to the game."

US OPEN

Djokovic starts his bid for record 25th Grand Slam title with straight-set win

AP ■ NEW YORK

Novak Djokovic began his bid for a record 25th Grand Slam title and tied Roger Federer with his 89th match win at the U.S. Open by defeating qualifier Radu Albot of Moldova 6-2, 6-2, 6-4.

The second-seeded Djokovic, again wearing a gray sleeve over his surgically repaired right knee, was competing for the first time since claiming an Olympic gold medal three weeks ago at the Paris Games, the last significant achievement that was missing from his resume.

"It's always challenging to start, particularly when you haven't played on this surface for five, six months,

and coming off an Olympic gold and playing on clay.

I haven't had any official matches before the U.S. Open. So I'm expecting to be probably challenged a little bit more in the opening rounds," he said.

"Hopefully, I can play better each day." He said his knee, which was operated on in early June, feels fine.

Djokovic, a 37-year-old from Serbia, improved to 18-0 in first-round matches at Flushing Meadows and is now 89-13 overall at the hard-court tournament, which he's won four times, including a year ago. He's never lost earlier than the third round at the U.S. Open; Albot never has been past the third round in 30 appearances at majors.



The retired Federer went 89-14 in New York, with five consecutive championships from 2004 to 2008.

He's the most recent man to win the U.S. Open at least twice in a row. Among men, only Jimmy Connors, who went 98-17, won more matches than Djokovic and Federer at the event.

Djokovic never has lost a Grand Slam match to someone ranked as low as No. 138 Albot. And Albot is now 0-12 against opponents ranked in the top 10.

Next up for Djokovic is a countryman, familiar opponent and friend, Laslo Djere, who advanced with a 6-7 (7), 6-1, 6-7 (7), 6-4, 6-2 victory over Jan-Lennard Struff. A year ago, Djokovic

met Djere in the third round at the U.S. Open; Djere took the first two sets before Djokovic came through in five.

"It's a guaranteed third round for one of the Serbian guys. Hopefully it's going to be me. But Djere is a guy that really likes playing on a big stage.

I think he also loves the conditions here. It's a bit quicker. Ball stays low. He has a very flat backhand particularly and very good serve, great return. He's physically as fit as anybody," Djokovic said.

"I remember very well our match. It was a very tough match. I'm going to try to analyze that and hopefully do some things even better than I did last year."

New Champions League format promises more

AP ■ GENEVA

The new Champions League format this season will see more teams playing more games for more prize money. On Thursday, the Union of European Football Associations makes the draw in Monaco for the match schedule of the new single-standings league phase that replaces the traditional group stage.

The first new Champions League format since 2003 promises more of almost everything that Europe's wealthiest and most influential clubs wanted from UEFA.

There are four more places in a 36-team lineup; at least eight games each instead of six; Champions League games scheduled in January for the first time; a prize money rise of at least 25% to a minimum of 2.5 billion euros (USD 2.8 billion).

There also was more evidence, at UEFA's European Championship this summer, that constant expansion of international competitions is leaving players tired and unable to perform at their best year-round. The new league phase in European club soccer's marquee event will have 144 total games compared to 96 in the group stage last season. The "key aims," UEFA said, is to "improve competitive balance

and sporting interest and in the process increase the number of meaningful matches - matches with something at stake for both sides - throughout the competition."

In the eighth and final round, all 36 teams play on the same January 29 evening to finalize the standings which will decide which eight teams advance directly to the pre-quarterfinals - and with what seedings in a tennis-like knockout bracket - as well as which 16 go into a new knockout playoff round in February, and which 12 are eliminated.

"We simulated that qualification should be possible with an average of 7.6 points, which means two victories and two draws," said UEFA's head of competitions strategy, Stéphane Anselmo.

Why change such a successful competition?

Money, mostly, though that's not the only reason. The Champions League in Europe has for the past 32 years showcased the highest quality play in world soccer. It let UEFA steer billions of euros (dollars) of prize money to clubs that pay the highest transfer fees and salaries.

Still, influential officials at the European Club Association (ECA) got bored of the group



stage, saying it was too repetitive and lacked drama. They wanted more games against stronger opponents that would be more valued by broadcasters, viewers and new fans worldwide. Their leverage over UEFA was potentially launching their breakaway competition. The road to agreeing on the format was rocky. A controversial first proposal in 2019, favoring storied clubs, was stopped by a backlash from mid-ranked clubs

and domestic leagues. There was intense turmoil sparked by the failed Super League launch in April 2021 by most of the same club officials who negotiated Champions League reform with UEFA.

Final format approval came in May 2022 - when Real Madrid, Barcelona and Juventus were exiled from the talks and still pursued UEFA in court - and it was broadly what the rebel Super League clubs had negotiated.

What is the new format?

Out goes the group-stage format played for 21 seasons where 32 teams were put into eight groups of four teams from a seeded draw. The top two in each group advanced to the pre-quarterfinals. Groups gave each team six games from September into December, playing each rival once at home and once away.

In comes a single-standings league - 36 teams each playing eight

games against eight different opponents through January.

The top eight in the standings go directly to the pre-quarterfinals in March. Teams ranked ninth to 24th go into the knockout playoffs in February. The bottom 12 teams are eliminated.

In the playoffs, teams ranked Nos. 9-16 are seeded in the draw to play second legs at home against unseeded teams Nos. 17-24.

Who gets the four extra places?

Two for countries whose teams collectively had the best record in UEFA club competitions in the previous season. That was Italy and Germany so the fifth-placed teams in Serie A and the Bundesliga qualified: Bologna and Borussia Dortmund.

The fifth-ranked national league (based on five years of results in UEFA club competitions) gets a third direct entry. That is currently France and Brest was third in Ligue 1.

An extra place goes to the qualifying rounds path for national champions from lower-ranked countries. They now play for five total qualifying places instead of four last season.

How will the draw be done?

The 36 teams come out of four seeding pots graded by each team's "UEFA club coefficient" - its ranking by results in five years of

European competitions. The top-seeded pot contains recent Champions League winners and beaten finalists, plus Leipzig and Barcelona.

When a team's ball is drawn, its slate of eight opponents - two from each seeding pot, one to play at home and one away - will be allocated by a software program and displayed within seconds.

Match dates will be confirmed Saturday, to avoid city clashes with Europa League and Conference League games being drawn Friday in Monaco. Those lower-tier competitions also are a 36-team single-standings league. Conference League teams play just six games.

Billion-dollar prize money fund

Winning the Champions League title in 2023 earned Manchester City 135 million euros (USD 151 million) from UEFA. This season's winner can reach 150 million euros (USD 168 million), with total competition revenue boosted by selling 189 total games instead of 125.

Commercial strategy is managed by a UEFA-ECA joint venture, and new sponsors for the Champions League include a cryptocurrency trading platform and a betting site. Each of the 36 teams gets a basic 18.6 million euros (USD 20.8 million), then 2.1 million euros (USD 2.4 million).