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ISRAELI AIRSTRIKE HITS SCHOOL IN GAZA

MONEY 6

INDIA STEEL PRODUCTION TO CROSS 300MT BY 2030

SPORT 8

DAVID'S MESSAGE TO GAMBHIR

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HOW MANY MORE?

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Border Action Team (BAT), comprising battle-hardened terrorists and elite special forces personnel of the Pakistan Army, on Saturday violated the February 2021 ceasefire agreement by launching a deadly strike on one of the forward Indian posts. The attack resulted in the martyrdom of an Indian Army soldier and left four others injured along the Line of Control in the Kamakari sector of Machhal, located in North Kashmir's Kupwara district.



File Photo

The BAT strike came mere hours after Prime Minister Narendra Modi issued a stern warning, asserting that the Indian Army would crush all terror attempts with full force.

During the firefight, one of the foreign terrorists was also neutralised. Preliminary reports indicate that a two to three-member BAT team lobbed grenades and unleashed a barrage of indiscriminate gunfire on the Indian troops.

At least five soldiers were injured in the BAT action, with one soldier later succumbing to his injuries at the base hospital. The soldier who laid down his life in the line of duty has

been identified as Rifleman Mohit Rathour. Since June 9, the day Modi took the oath of office for the third time, foreign terrorists have carried out at

least 10 terror attacks in the region. These attacks have resulted in the sacrifice of over a dozen soldiers and nine civilians in Jammu and

Kashmir. In the past week alone, three soldiers have lost their lives along the Line of Control in the Kupwara and Poonch districts. In a statement, a Srinagar-

based Defence Spokesman said, "Taking advantage of bad weather and poor visibility along Line of Control in Machhal Sector, a group of two to three armed

personnel crossed the LoC and fired on a forward Army post from a close range. Alert troops responded vigorously and in the ensuing exchange of fire,

one Pakistani intruder was killed along with the recovery of weapons, ammunition, and war-like stores. Identification and affiliation of this Pakistani national is being ascertained."

In the past, similar attempts by infiltrators, actively aided and abetted by the Pakistani Army, have sought to exploit the dense foliage and poor visibility conditions. However, these efforts have consistently, as they were today, been successfully thwarted and disrupted by the vigilant Indian forces.

The Indian Army is firm in its resolve and commitment to maintain the sanctity of the Line of Control and defeat the nefarious and inimical designs of the Pakistan Army, the spokesman added.

Meanwhile, to further step up security across the Jammu region, the Union Government has reportedly decided to rush over 2,000 BSF jawans to be deployed in the Samba sector to plug the routes of infiltration.

The decision to "immediately" move the two units from the anti-Naxal operations grid to Jammu was taken in the wake of the recent spate of terror attacks in the region.

A broader consensus emerged during recent high-level security review

meetings to bolster the anti-infiltration grid in the region. The Indian Army has already deployed more than 3,000 troops and 500 para commandos to flush out the foreign terrorists occupying 'Jammu Heights'.

In another related development, Jammu and Kashmir Police on Saturday released sketches of the three terrorists responsible for the recent killing of four soldiers, including a Captain in Doda district, and announced a cash reward of ₹15 lakh on their heads.

Doda in Jammu region has been rocked by several terror incidents since June, which is being seen by security agencies as an attempt by Pakistan-based terror handlers to revive terrorism in the hilly district.

Releasing the sketches of three terrorists, a police Spokesman in Doda said they are moving in the upper reaches of the district, especially in Dessa forest where an Army Captain and three soldiers were killed in a gunfight during an anti-terror operation on July 16.

J&K Police announced a cash reward of ₹5 lakh on each of these three terrorists, the spokesperson said, appealing to the general public to provide information about them and assuring that the identity of the informer will be kept a secret.

Setback for Vijay Mallaya

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Securities and Exchange Board of India has barred former liquor baron Vijay Mallaya from accessing the securities market for three years for routing funds to the Indian capital markets using his overseas bank accounts with UBS.

The regulator has also restrained Mallaya from associating with any listed company, directly or indirectly, for three years.

Sebi's investigation is based on the findings of Financial Conduct Authority, its counterpart in UK, for the period from January 1, 2006 to March 31, 2008.

It had suo-moto taken up the instant matter for further investigation based on the findings in the communication from the Financial Services Authority (now known as Financial Conduct Authority and hereinafter referred to as 'FSA/FCA') to ascertain whether there was any routing of funds to the Indian Securities Market by Mallaya, Chairman of the UB Group and individual controlling shareholder of United Spirits Limited ('USL') during the relevant period, through his bank accounts



with UBS AG, London ('UBS') in violation of the provisions of the SEBI Act, 1992, SEBI (Prohibition of Fraudulent and Unfair Trade Practices relating to Securities Market) Regulations, 2003 (hereinafter referred to as the 'PFUTP Regulations, 2003') and the rules and regulations framed thereunder during the period from January 01, 2006 to March 31, 2008. In its 37 pages order, the SEBI said the noticee (Vijay Mallaya) is hereby restrained from accessing the securities market and further prohibited from buying, selling or otherwise dealing in securities, directly or

indirectly, or being associated with the securities market in any manner, for a period of three (3) years from the date of this order.

"The noticee is further restrained from associating himself with any listed company or proposed to be listed company, in any capacity, directly or indirectly, for a period of three (3) year from the date of this order. Further, during the period of restraint, the existing holding of securities including the holding of units of mutual funds of the Noticee shall remain frozen," it said.

The investigation, prima facie, revealed that the noticee had used a sub-account i.e. Matterhorn Ventures, a Foreign Institutional Investor (FII), as an investment vehicle to indirectly trade in scrips of his own group entities in India i.e. Herbertsons Limited ('Herbertsons') and USL. Thus, the investigation revealed that the amounts paid to Matterhorn Ventures were routed by the Noticee by opening various beneficiary accounts with UBS and routing these funds through these accounts, indirectly, to the Indian Securities Market.



Prime Minister Modi to visit Ukraine

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to visit Ukraine next month, marking his first trip to the war-torn country since the conflict with Russia began two years ago. Following his Ukraine visit, Modi is also slated to travel to Poland, making it the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to the country in over 40 years.

India and Ukraine are exploring the possibility of Prime Minister Modi's visit on August 23-24, sources said on Saturday. The proposed visit comes amid renewed global efforts to bring peace to the eastern European nation, they added. Modi might visit Kyiv around Ukraine's National Day on August 24 and is expected to travel to Poland after concluding his trip to Ukraine, the sources said. Last month, the Prime

Minister held talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in Italy's Apulia. India and Ukraine are considering Modi's visit to Kyiv in the latter half of August, the sources said, noting that there is no final confirmation yet, as massive preparations in terms of logistics and related issues would be required.

During the meeting with Zelenskyy on June 14, Modi conveyed that India would continue to do everything within its means to support a peaceful resolution to the Russia-Ukraine conflict and emphasised that the path to peace is through "dialogue and diplomacy." Modi also told Zelenskyy that India believes in a "human-centric" approach to finding a solution to the conflict in Ukraine. At the meeting, the Ukrainian president invited the Prime Minister to visit Kyiv.

Mamata walks out, Nitish skips NITI Aayog meeting

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The NITI Aayog meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday, was marked by political fireworks rather than fostering the progression of the States. The meeting faced a boycott from States governed by INDIA Bloc parties, with the notable exception of West Bengal.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee made headlines by walking out of the NITI Aayog meeting. Adding to the political drama was the conspicuous absence of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, whose party JD(U) is the second largest in Modi's NDA coalition at the Centre. Intriguingly, Kumar opted to stay in Patna, where he convened a meeting to discuss JD(U)'s prospects for the upcoming Assembly elections in neighbouring Jharkhand, in alliance with the BJP.

To begin with, Mamata claimed that she was unfairly stopped midway through her speech, despite being the sole representative of the Opposition. She said her microphone was switched off after five minutes, while other Chief Ministers were allowed to speak for longer duration.



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee interacts with the media after walking out of a NITI Aayog meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in New Delhi, on Saturday

"This is insulting. I will not attend any further meeting. I have come out boycotting the meeting. (Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister) Chandrababu Naidu was given 20 minutes to speak. The Chief Ministers of Assam, Goa, Chhattisgarh spoke for 10-12 minutes. I was stopped from speaking after just five minutes," Mamata told reporters after coming out of the meeting. "This is unfair. I am the only one from the Opposition side. I attended this meeting because of the greater interest that cooperative federalism should be strengthened," she added.

However, PIB Factcheck, in a post on X, said it is "misleading" to say Mamata's microphone was switched off. "The clock only showed

that her speaking time was over," it said.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman rejected her claim that she was unfairly stopped midway in her speech. "CM Mamata attended the NITI Aayog meeting. We all heard her. Every CM was given the allotted time and that was displayed on the screen which was present before every table...She said in the media that her mic was put off. That is completely false. Every CM was given their due time to speak...It's unfortunate that the Mamata has claimed that her mic was switched off which is not true...She should speak the truth behind this rather than again build a narrative based on falsehood," the Finance Minister said.

Continued on Page 2

Team India's Olympic outfits become talk of virtual world

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The official outfits for Team India at the Paris Olympics 2024 were unveiled last week, sparking considerable buzz. Designed by the renowned Indian fashion designer Tarun Tahiliani in collaboration with Tasva, these outfits sought to blend traditional Indian attire with a contemporary twist.

However, the results were met with mixed reactions. Social media was ablaze with opinions following the opening ceremony late Saturday, as critics and supporters alike shared their thoughts on the distinctive attire. The men of Team India donned elegant kurta bundi sets, while the women graced the event in

matching saris, all meticulously designed in the vibrant colours of the Indian flag. The ensembles featured ikat-inspired prints and luxurious Banarasi brocade, intended to infuse a touch of elegance and sophistication. Tahiliani, a name synonymous with high fashion, said his goal was to honour India's rich cultural heritage while simultaneously appealing to an international audience at the Olympics.

Despite his good intentions, the outfits did not receive universal praise. Many netizens felt that the designs fell short of truly capturing the essence of Indian culture. Critics on social media labelled the designs as a "disgrace" to the rich heritage and culture of the country, calling them "cheap



designs." Some netizens were particularly disappointed with Tahiliani, wondering if he was

perhaps too preoccupied with high-profile events to give the Olympic outfits the attention they

deserved. While the outfits were undoubtedly stylish, many argued that they failed to showcase the

rich diversity of Indian textiles and craftsmanship that make Indian fashion so unique. Many people felt that more iconic elements, like vibrant colours and intricate embroidery, which are often associated with traditional Indian attire, were overlooked. "These outfits are beautiful, but they feel like a missed opportunity to showcase the true depth of Indian culture on a global platform like the Olympics," one critic wrote. Others lamented the missed chance to highlight the rich artisanal value of India's textiles and sustainable practices that bind the country's diverse communities together. "It's sad that such a renowned designer couldn't create an outfit that represents India's vibrant culture. Sadly, this is such a failure." This whole situation

highlighted the tricky balance between innovation and cultural authenticity in fashion design, especially for an event as prestigious as the Olympics, where countries proudly present their unique identities. As Team India geared up to take the world stage, the discussion about their outfits served as a reminder of how important it is to thoughtfully represent culture. In today's world, where cultural authenticity is increasingly valued, choosing Olympic attire was not just about looking good, it was about what these outfits said about the athletes and the nation they represented. Whether you loved or hated them, the outfits certainly got people talking and that's what fashion is all about, isn't it?

Mega PTM organised across Govt city schools



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A Mega Parents Teachers Meeting (PTM) was conducted across the Delhi government and MCD schools on Saturday. Delhi Education Minister Atishi visited some of these schools located in East of Kailash and Kalkaji, and interacted with the parents and students there. During the visit, the AAP minister encouraged parents to participate in the Mega PTM and said it was vital for discussing ways to improve children's learning and performance with teachers. "The Mega PTM brings parents and teachers together and helps them to make better strategies for the future of children. It is important because the responsibility for children's education and progress does not lie with

a single person. Our children will progress only when teachers and parents together pay attention to their studies," she said.

The education minister appealed to parents to spend at least half an hour with their children and try to understand their problems. "Due to the joint efforts of parents and teachers, schools under the Kejriwal government have been included in the top schools of the country."

And now, it is the turn to make MCD schools world-class. This initiative of Mega PTM is the result of the vision of CM Arvind Kejriwal, which has worked to increase the connection between parents and teachers. It will play an important role in bringing an education revolution in MCD schools," she said.

Modi meets CMs of BJP ruled States

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday held deliberations with chief ministers and deputy chief ministers of BJP-ruled states over a host of issues. The "mukhyamantri parishad" organised by the BJP at regular intervals is aimed at reviewing key schemes in states, following the best governance practices and the delivery of central government welfare initiatives.

Besides Modi, Union ministers Amit Shah and J P Nadda, who is also the party president, chief ministers Yogi Adityanath (Uttar Pradesh), Himanta Biswa Sarma (Assam), Bhajanlal Sharma (Rajasthan) and Mohan Charan Majhi (Odisha) were among the leaders who attended the first day of the two-day meeting here. Chief ministers of Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Haryana, Manipur and Chhattisgarh were also part of the deliberations. The leaders at times also take stock of the political situation. < The meeting includes two sessions where BJP leaders will discuss the Lok Sabha election results.

The agenda of the meeting include analysis of the 2024 Lok Sabha results to identify areas to be improved, strategy for the upcoming assembly polls and implementation of the states and centre's schemes at ground level.

Dhankhar leads plantation drive as part of Ek Ped Maa ke Naam campaign

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Saturday led a massive plantation drive in the National Capital as part of the ambitious "Ek Ped Maa ke Naam" campaign that aims at increasing the green cover and enriching the ecology. He planted a sapling in the honour of his mother Kesari Devi at the Asita, an ecological park developed by Delhi Development Authority (DDA) on the eastern floodplains of Yamuna opposite ITO in New Delhi.

Dhankhar planted a sapling of Tabebuia rosea (commonly known as rosy trumpet tree), a flowering tree species, along the greenway of Asita. His wife Sudesh Dhankhar also planted a sapling in the honour of her mother Bhagwati Devi at Asita. Delhi's Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena and Chairperson of the National Green Tribunal (NGT), Justice Prakash Srivastava also planted saplings in the honour of their mothers Vedvati Saxena and Kamla Srivastava, respectively, at the venue. The saplings planted at Asita included Jamun, Gular, Tabebuia, Arjun, Shisham, Guava, LARGESTROEMIA and JACARANDA. Simultaneously, a total of 1,11,111 trees were planted on Saturday in various parks and green belts of Delhi by the DDA, other agencies, students, RWAs, common Delhi residents and officials.

Dhankhar interacted with over 250 school children, who had assembled at Asita for the plantation drive, and administered them a pledge that they would also urge their family members to plant trees for a greener and sustainable Delhi. The school children too planted saplings at Asita Park with great enthusiasm. Speaking on the occasion, the Vice President appealed for making the "EkPedMaakeNaam" campaign a huge success and said tree plantation was the easiest, yet the most effective way of protecting our environment. He said as Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, he has also urged every Member of Parliament to plant at least 200 trees, as their contribution to protect the nature. Notably, on the World Environment Day this year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had launched the 'E k P e d M a a k e N a a m' Campaign, with an aim to increase the green cover and protect the environment. The Vice-President, who also went for bird-watching and took a ride of the Asita Park



along its wetlands and the grasslands, appreciated the DDA for painstakingly and scientifically restoring this stretch of the Yamuna floodplain into a bio-diversity park, which was just two years ago, lying as a polluted and degraded land under heavy encroachment. During the nature walk, Dhankhar was explained at length the scientific process of ecological succession used by DDA for restoration of Yamuna Flood Plains at Asita and several other locations in Delhi. Senior officers of Delhi Government and DDA, including Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar and DDA Vice Chairman Subhashish Panda also participated in the plantation drive at Asita, including trees in their mothers' name. It may be noted that Asita has been developed as a bio-diversity park over 225 acres of land on the Yamuna Floodplains, which was, till May 2022, under massive encroachment by squatters and stray cattle that were polluting Yamuna severely.

INBRIEF

TRANS BRAHMA LAUNCHES BOOK GEOPOLITICS REDEFINED
New Delhi: Trans Brahma proudly announces the successful launch of the revolutionary book "GEOPOLITICS REDEFINED"- Punctured Truths & Glamourised Lies" by renowned strategic thinker and polymath K. Siddhartha. The event, held on July 25, 2024, at the Constitution Club of India, Rafi Marg, New Delhi, was a resounding success, drawing a distinguished audience of diplomats, academics, and thought leaders. Dr. Vinay Sahasrabudhe, President of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), officiated the book launch, praising Siddhartha's work as "a crucial contribution to our understanding of modern geopolitics." The event featured engaging discussions on the book's themes, with panellists including Ambassador Deepak Vohra offering insightful commentary on the changing landscape of international relations.



ASSAM'S TANGLA STATION TO BE REDEVELOPED

Maligaon: In a bid to further enhance rail facilities in Northeast and Assam, Rs. 10,369 crores have been allocated in the interim Budget 2024-25 for Railway infrastructure projects. Under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS), 60 stations in Northeast are being redeveloped with world class amenities/facilities. Among the selected railway stations,



Tangla railway station in Assam will receive a significant facelift under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme at a cost of Rs. 14.14 crores. The revamping of this station will provide modern state-of-the-art amenities to the railway users.

Rain lashes parts of city

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Parts of Delhi on Saturday were lashed by rain, and the maximum temperature was recorded at 36.3 degrees Celsius, 1.4 notch above the season's average. The weather department has predicted a generally cloudy sky with light rain on Sunday. The maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to settle around 36 and 29 degrees Celsius.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the minimum temperature settled at 28.2 degrees Celsius, one notch above the season's average. The weather department has predicted a generally cloudy sky with light rain on Sunday. The maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to settle around 36 and 29 degrees Celsius.

Setback for Ajit as senior leader Babajani returns to Sharad led NCP

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In another major setback to the Ajit Pawar-led NCP in the run-up to the October 2024 Maharashtra Assembly polls, its senior leader from Parbhani and former MLC Abdullah Babajani Khan Durrani returned to the Opposition NCP and parent party headed by Sharad Pawar on Saturday.

Revealing that he was feeling "awkward" to continue in the NCP (Ajit Pawar), a constituent of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led MahaYuti because of his "ideological differences" with the BJP, Babajani Durrani -- Abdullah Babajani Khan Durrani is popularly known -- joined the NCP (SP) in the presence of Sharad Pawar at a function held in Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar (erstwhile Aurangabad). Babajani Durrani's return to the NCP comes a week after the NCP (Ajit Pawar)'s Pimpri unit chief Ajit Gavahane and



three other leaders quit the party and joined the rival NCP (Sharad Pawar). Speaking at the function where he was welcomed into the parent party which he had quit after a vertical split in the united NCP engineered by Ajit Pawar on July 2, 2023, Babajani Durrani said: "Two the split in the NCP, I had joined the Ajit Pawar-led party due to some reasons and also the advice I had received from some people. I have not betrayed Sharad Pawar ji. I have been with him

since 1980. At a time when the party set up in 1999 was growing, I had ensured the victory of several municipal councilors in the municipal councils of Pathri, Parthur and Osmanabad in Marathwada." "Parbhani is a stronghold of NCP. When the party split in July last year, I stayed with the Sharad Pawar-led group for the first two months. However, after that, for some inexplicable reasons and the advice I received, I joined the Ajit Pawar-led NCP," Babajani

Durrani said. "The Muslim minority community is under tremendous stress in my region. Muslims are disenchanted with the parties that are in alliance with the BJP. Under such circumstances it was awkward for me to continue with such a party (Ajit Pawar-led NCO) any longer, hence I am joining the NCP (SP)." Durrani's entry to the NCP (SP) came a day after his son Junaid met State NCP (Sharad Pawar faction) state chief Jayant Patil and conveyed his father's desire to join the Sharad Pawar-led party and sought ticket for his father to contest from the Pathri Assembly constituency, which is part of the Parbhani Lok Sabha constituency. An ex-MLA and two-time MLC who has long keen to contest the State Assembly polls, Durrani is likely to be fielded as a candidate from Pathri. His term as an MLC ended on Saturday.

NCRTC introduces new features in RRTS Connect application

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The National Capital Region (NCRTC) has introduced new features in the Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) Connect application, including ticket booking, live train tracking, and station navigation. According to the statement, the NCRTC has rolled out new updates to the RRTS Connect app, making travel on Namo Bharat trains smoother and more convenient. Available on Google Play and the Apple Store, the app now includes many new features alongside ticket booking, ensuring a more comfortable journey for passengers on the country's first Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) Corridor, it said.

"Passengers can book their journey tickets under the 'plan your journey' option on the app, with payments accepted via UPI, debit or credit card, and net banking. Users can also access their transaction histo-



ry to review details about their previous journeys and download invoices," it read. "NCRTC has introduced a live train tracking feature that shows passengers the real-time status and tracking of Namo Bharat trains available at their station in the next 30 minutes. Additionally, it provides information about the next station in the direction of Delhi or Meerut, the distance to it, and the estimated arrival time. The app also offers a complete timetable of train services, including start and end times for all days of the week," the statement said.

The feeder bus services feature on the app provides comprehensive information about bus stops near the starting point of the journey and the nearest available RRTS station, including bus arrival and departure times for better travel planning, it stated. Additionally, the RRTS passengers can book bikes, autos, and cabs at stations through a link to the Rapido app, allowing easy ride booking. These features effectively address the crucial need for last-mile connectivity, it said. The station facilities option provides extensive information to enhance your travel experience. It displays the name and location of the nearest RRTS station, along with key nearby landmarks. Details on drinking water and restroom availability, entry and exit gate status, and which gates are open for passengers are also included, the statement said. The app provides platform information, train directions,

and the operational status of lifts and escalators. Additionally, it offers parking information, showing the number of two-wheeler and four-wheeler parking spaces available. The app includes the complete station layout design of the platform and concourse levels, making navigation and planning easy, it stated. Furthermore, the contact number for the station control room is provided in the app. Passengers can contact the control room for assistance or send WhatsApp messages for help or suggestions. The app also provides information about major attractions near RRTS corridor stations and includes a system map for passengers to learn about all the stations on the corridor, it said. The lost and found feature on the app lists all recovered items, along with the date, time, and station where they were found, and includes the procedure for recovery, the statement added.

Three killed, two injured in Belapur building collapse

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Three persons were killed and two others injured, when a four-storey building collapsed at Belapur in Navi Mumbai in the early hours of Saturday. As many as 52 residents had a narrow escape as the ground-plus-three storied building "Indira Nivas" at Shahbazgaon village located near Belapur town in Navi Mumbai caved in like a proverbial pack of cards at around 4.30 am. The residents in the 10-year-old building, which housed 13

flats and three commercial shops, collapsed all of a sudden, when the residents were sleeping at their homes. All three persons killed in the mishap were migrants from Uttar Pradesh. They were identified as Mohammed Meraj Altaf Hussain (30), who hailed from Karanpur in Pratapgarh in Uttar Pradesh, Shafiq Ansari (29) and Miraj Saif Ansari, (24), both of whom belonged to Lohinda village in Jaunpur district. Two persons were injured in the mishap, while other residents managed to run out of the building as it crashed.

Alert issued in places along Krishna, Cauvery river basins due to heavy rain

PTI ■ BENGALURU

The Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre has urged people living in low-lying areas along eight rivers on the Krishna and Cauvery basins, which have recorded severe water level (above danger line), to be on high alert. As of Saturday, in Krishna basin, the water level in River Ghataprabha at the Gokak falls station in Belagavi, River Kumudvati in Kuppelur station in Haveri and River Tunga in Shivamogga, Mahishi and Chikkamagalur

districts is way past its danger level. In the Cauvery basin, River Hemavathi at Bettadamane station in Chikkamagalur, River Harangi at Mukkodlu station in Kodagu and River Cauvery in Kollegal station in Chamrajnagara are likely to flood low-lying areas. Except for River Harangi, water levels of all other rivers are consistently rising due to torrential rains in the basin areas. Meanwhile, district collector of Chamarajnagara, Shilpa Nag C T, issued a flood alert to low-lying villages.

Yogi Govt gears up to provide world-class health services Maha Kumbh-2025

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Yogi Adityasnath government is set to offer world-class health services to the devotees attending Maha Kumbh 2025, with a significant investment of approximately Rs 125 crore allocated for 18 health-related projects. This funding will be utilised to upgrade hospitals in the mela area, Prayagraj city, and community health centres and primary health centres located along routes leading to the event. The facilities will be equipped with advanced technology to enhance service quality. Under the guidance of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, 43 temporary hospitals will be established in the Mela area to ensure optimal health services for the devotees. Additionally, 305 beds will be reserved across four city hospitals. To ensure continuous care for the pilgrims coming to Prayagraj, doctors and paramedical staff will be on duty 24x7 to manage emergency situations effectively. Kumbh Mela Officer Vijay Kiran Anand stated that Chief Minister Yogi is continuously monitoring the preparations for Kumbh mela and giving necessary directions to ensure the grand and safe

organisation of Maha Kumbh 2025. As per his vision, 18 health-related projects are being implemented in Prayagraj at an estimated cost of around Rs 125 crore. To date, Rs 41.73 lakh have been released by the government for health-related works, and an additional Rs 57.97 lakh have been approved and will be released soon. Additional Director (Health) Dr Rakesh Sharma mentioned that the government initially allocated Rs 28 crore for upgrading four hospitals in the city — Motilal Nehru Hospital (Colvin), Tej Bahadur Sapru (Beli) Hospital, State Tuberculosis Hospital (Teliyaganj), and District Women's Hospital (Dufferin). These hospitals are reserving 305 beds for devotees, with 50 beds specifically reserved for female devotees at Dufferin Hospital. Furthermore, Rs 13.73 lakh have been allocated for ambulances, biomedical waste management, mortuary vehicles, disaster management and office expenses. This fund will be used to deploy 125 road ambulances, 20 river ambulances and one air ambulance. Joint Director of Health, Dr Vivek Kumar Mishra, stated that to accommodate the needs

of devotees, the Maha Kumbh Mela area has been divided into 25 sectors. Accordingly, 43 temporary hospitals with a total of 380 beds are being established in the Mela area. This includes a 100-bed central temporary hospital, two 25-bed sub-central temporary hospitals, two 20-bed infectious disease temporary hospitals, and eight 20-bed temporary hospitals in eight sectors. These hospitals will cover approximately three sectors of the Mela area. Additionally, 10 first aid posts with one bed each and 20 outpatient health posts are being set up. These health posts will be located at parking lots, stalls and other locations. A budget of Rs 14.25 lakh has been allocated for these facilities. Furthermore, Rs 10 crore will be spent to control vector-borne diseases in the Mela area. To cover the costs of food, surgical items and local purchase of medicines for patients admitted to these hospitals, Rs 12.73 lakh is being spent. Additionally, Rs 21.24 lakh is being spent on upgrading 12 community health centres (CHCs), two primary health centres (PHCs), a post-mortem house, and a drug warehouse located on the way to the Mela area.

Mamata...

From Page 1

Mamata said she mentioned during the meeting that the BJP-led Centre presented a politically-biased Budget and asked why it was discriminating among States. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin came out in support of his West Bengal counterpart. Opposition parties have alleged that the States ruled by them have been ignored in the Union Budget presented recently in the Lok Sabha. Chief Ministers of the INDIA Bloc -- Stalin (DMK), Kerala's Pinarayi Vijayan (CPI-M), Punjab's Bhagwant Mann (Aam Aadmi Party), Congress's Siddaramaiah (Karnataka), Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu (Himachal Pradesh) and Revanth Reddy (Telangana), and Jharkhand's Hemant Soren (Jharkhand Mukti Morcha) -- skipped the NITI Aayog meeting. The cause for Bihar CM's absence from the crucial meeting could not be known immediately and the State was represented by Deputy Chief Ministers Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha. Kumar, who after the Centre's announcement of the decline of Special Status Category quipped last week that all will know everything "slowly, slowly," chaired a meeting of his party at his official residence. The meeting was attended by JD(U) working president Sanjay Kumar Jha, among others. In his address to the ninth Governing Council meeting at

the Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre, Modi called upon the States to take advantage of technological and geo-political changes to make India a developed nation by 2047. He also asked the States to make policies which are conducive for attracting international investments. NITI Aayog in a series of social media posts said the Prime Minister emphasised the need to make India a developed nation by 2047 and states can play an active role in achieving this aim as they are directly connected with the people. "Viksit Bharat @ 2047 is the ambition of every Indian. States can play an active role to achieve this aim as they are directly connected with the people," NITI Aayog said in a post on X quoting Modi. Modi further said this decade is of technological and geo-political changes, and also of opportunities. "India should grab these opportunities and make our policies conducive for international investments. This is the stepping stone for progress to make India a developed nation," he added. "Reforms like #NER schemes like #Mudra, #P M V i s h w a k a r m a , #PMSvanidhi, reforms in criminal justice system etc. Should be utilised for bringing about transformational change in Indian society and economy," NITI Aayog said in another post on X quoting Modi.

CSIR-NEIST scientist, official among 4 arrested by CBI on bribery charges

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has arrested four people, including an official and a principal scientist of the Jorhat-based CSIR-NEIST for allegedly taking a bribe of Rs 8 lakh from a businessman to pass an equipment purchase contract, officials said on Saturday. The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-North East Institute of Science and Technology (CSIR-NEIST) is a research and development organisation based in Assam's Jorhat. The Institute's Controller of Stores and Purchase (COSP) Praveer Mohan Verma and Principal Scientist Prasenjit Manna were taking the bribe from Kangkan Kashyap of KKK Technologies Pvt. Ltd and his brother Angkan Borpujari for favouring the company and passing a bill for the supply of a spectrophotometer and its associated software, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) alleged. The probe agency laid a trap and arrested Manna, Verma and Borpujari in Jorhat on Friday, and Kashyap from Guwahati on Saturday, the officials said. The CBI has also conducted searches at 18 locations in Assam, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi, they said.

Chhattisgarh will play key role in making India developed nation: CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Saturday said Chhattisgarh will play a pivotal role in making India a developed country by 2047.

At present, the state's GSDP is Rs 5.05 lakh crore, which is targeted to be increased to Rs 10 lakh crore in the next five years, he said.

The Chief Minister said this while highlighting the state's development plan at the meeting of the governing council of NITI Aayog in New Delhi.

He told the meeting about the state's priorities and efforts being made in the fields of education, human resource development, health and technological advancement.

Emphasizing the role of youth in the development of



the state, the Chief Minister said the main focus of Chhattisgarh was on preparing skilled human

resources. Education in Chhattisgarh is being linked to vocational skills and

training. Its aim is to give such capabilities to the students that prepare them for employment.

“At present, the state's GSDP is Rs 5.05 lakh crore, which is targeted to be increased to Rs 10 lakh crore in the next five years”

He shared the plan for better availability of health services, sustainable development, and preservation of the culture and tradition of the state.

Along with the expansion of Artificial Intelligence and IT sector, emphasis will also be laid on the development of physical structures like roads, buildings and digital facilities like internet, mobile network, he stated.

Poisonous gas in well kills three in C'garh

STAFF REPORTER ■ BEMETARA

Three persons suffocated to death after inhaling suspected poisonous gas in a well in Bemetara district in Chhattisgarh, police said on Saturday.

The incident occurred in Kua village under Nawagarh development block area on Friday, Bemetara Additional Superintendent of Police Jyoti Singh said.

The deceased have been identified as Aatmaram Sahu (55), Ramkumar Dhruv (45) and Rakesh Sahu (25).

As per preliminary information, Aatmaram entered the well to do some work related to a motor pump and fainted.

After he fell into the water, his relatives shouted for help prompting two others to enter the water body.

When nobody came out,



locals alerted the authorities. The exact cause of death

will be known after the post-mortem.

Govt officer held over financial irregularities

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAJNANDGAON

Chhattisgarh Police on Saturday arrested a 47-year-old government officer over financial irregularities worth Rs 2.61 crore.

Geetanjali Gajbhiye was arrested from Bilaspur city and brought to Rajnandgaon city, Rajnandgaon Superintendent of Police Mohit Garg said.

She was posted as Assistant Director in the Fisheries Department in Rajnandgaon city.

Gajbhiye had obtained approval of Rs. 2.16 crore sanctioned from the department for cage culture fisheries work by giving misleading information and forged documents to secure the money.



Gajbhiye, who was on the run, was nabbed from

Bilaspur. A court sent her to prison.

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Union Minister of Labour and Employment Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya said on Saturday that the Union budget 2024-25 will help achieve the goal of a developed India as it prioritises education, employment and skill training as well as inclusive development.

Speaking to the media in Raipur, he said that crores of youth will benefit from three employment-focused schemes.

“Today we are spending Rs 11 lakh crore rupees on infrastructure. After 2 years, this will be hiked to Rs 14 lakh crore.”

The life of ordinary people will improve.

Union budget will spur development: Mandaviya



Emphasis has been laid on uplifting the poor, women,

youth and farmers. Higher minimum support prices for

all main crops have been announced. Pradhan Mantri

Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana has been extended for 5 years, which will benefit more than 80 crore people, he said.

A provision of Rs 1.52 lakh crore has been made to boost agricultural productivity and develop climate-friendly varieties, he said.

In view of inclusive development and social justice, the Pradhan Mantri Janjati Unnat Gram campaign will be extended to all tribal-dominated regions, benefiting five crore people, he said.

For women-led development, an allocation of over Rs. 3 lakh crore has been made for schemes focusing on women and girls, he said. The Micro Small and Medium Enterprises will be encouraged through various initiatives.



Glimpses of relief work in the flood-hit areas of Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district.

Congress proves to be strong opposition in Chhattisgarh: Baij

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Congress in Chhattisgarh on Saturday said that it was a strong opposition in the state to safeguard the interest of the common people.

In a joint press conference, PCC chief Deepak Baij, former Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel and Leader of Opposition Charandas Mahant said the party had in the last few days fought the battle of the common man.

“We raised the issues of deteriorating law and order, issues of farmers, tribals, labourers, women and youth and showed the mirror to the BJP in the Assembly”, Baij said.

The Sai government has failed on all fronts in its seven months tenure, he said.



Citing the Balodabazar arson case and mob lynching at Arang, Baghel said the law and order situation in the state had worsened in comparable to what it was

during Congress' five year's tenure.

People in the tribal heartland of Bastar, Surguja, Kawardha and Jashpur are gripped by water-borne

diseases and are dying, Baghel said.

More than 11,000 people there are affected by diarrhoea and more than 22,000 are gripped by malaria, he added.

Drive against sickle cell anaemia stepped up

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAJNANDGAON

A total of 22,205 people have been tested for sickle cell anaemia in Chhattisgarh's Rajnandgaon district, exceeding the target of 20,000, an official communiqué said. Of these, 546 tested positive and 71 were found to be carriers.

Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr. Netram Navratna said the goal was to test everyone under the age 40 in the district.

For this, the health



department is continuously conducting camps in schools, colleges and Anganwadi centres.

The government has also emphasised screening newborns to curb the infant mortality rate.

Minor boy injured in IED blast in Bijapur

STAFF REPORTER ■ BIJAPUR

A minor boy was injured on Saturday when an improvised explosive device planted by Maoists to target security forces exploded in Bijapur district in Chhattisgarh.

The incident took place near Pidiya village around 2.30 pm when Hidma Kawasi (10) had gone to the jungle to graze goats, Bijapur Superintendent of Police Jitendra Kumar

Yadav said. The boy accidentally stepped on the IED triggering the blast, causing serious injuries to his legs and hands.

He was rushed to a security camp in Mutvendi where he was administered preliminary treatment before being referred to the Bijapur district hospital.

Maoists use IEDs to target security personnel in interior pockets of Bastar region.

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE
 11.Tender Notice No.: E-R-T-54-24-25 Dated: 23.07.2024
 Name of Work: Construction of RUB in lieu of Level Crossing No. RV-20 at Km. 27/1-2 between MNDH-LAE stations of Raipur Division. Tender Value: ₹ 19,81,33,799/-. EMD: ₹ 11,40,700/-
 Submission of Tender: Up to 11.00 Hrs. on 20.08.2024. Opening of Tender: At 11.00 Hrs. on 20.08.2024.
 For further details/purchase of tender document, eligibility criteria & the complete details for the above work, please contact office of the Sr. DEN (Co.)/Raipur or refer/download tender document which is available on our website: www.ireps.gov.in
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आम सूचना
 सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि कंपनी के स्वामित्व की 2 गुणा 600 मेगावॉट कोयला आधारित विद्युत संयंत्र, जो कि छत्तीसगढ़ राज्य के सक्ती जिला में ग्राम सिंघोतराई, बेनीपाली, ओडेकरा तथा निमोही में स्थापित है, द्वारा विद्युत अधिनियम, 2003 के प्रावधानों और उसके अंतर्गत बनाई गई नियमावली के अंतर्गत स्थापित 24 किलोमीटर लंबी 400 केवी एथेना-रायगढ़ पुलिंग केंद्र (कोतरा के पास) डी/सी (बवाड) पारेषण लाइन (ट्रांसमिशन लाइन) जिला सक्ती, तहसील उमरा के ग्राम ओडेकरा, सराईपाली, केनापाली, कवली, दुमरपाली व बेलादुला तथा जिला रायगढ़, तहसील रायगढ़ के ग्राम नवापारा, जुनवाणी, बरपाही, बोकसामुड़ा, सारडामाल, बालमगोड़ा, औरभांटा, कुरमपाली, कोतरा, तरेकेला व बनशिया से होकर गुजरी है। इस पारेषण लाइन को विद्युत मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार, विद्युत अधिनियम, 2003 की धारा 164 के अंतर्गत, अंतर-राज्यीय विद्युत पारेषण के लिए, अंतर-राज्यीय पारेषण लाइनों हेतु भारतीय टेलीग्राम अधिनियम, 1985 में प्रदत्त शक्तियों के अंतर्गत 25 वर्षों के लिए अनुमोदन प्रदान किया जा चुका है। उक्त उल्लेखित पारेषण लाइन की चार्जिंग इस सूचना के प्रकाशन के 15 दिवस के भीतर की जाएगी।
 वास्तो वेदांता लिमिटेड
 2 गुणा 600 मेगावॉट तापीय विद्युत संयंत्र (पूर्व में एथेना छत्तीसगढ़ पावर लिमिटेड) परियोजना निदेशक

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Emergency a dark period: Dhankhar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Describing Emergency as a "painful, dark" period, Rajya Sabha Chairperson Jagdeep Dhankhar on Saturday said if that period is ignored, the Parliament has done well. Addressing new MPs of the Rajya Sabha at an orientation programme here, Dhankhar said, "There has been only one painful, heart wrenching dark period and that was when Emergency was declared." During the period, the Constitution was reduced to just a paper, he said. "It was shredded and leaders were jailed. MISA (Maintenance of Internal Security Act) became a draconian word. One of the senior politicians of the country, Lalu Prasad Yadav, was so moved and touched by the atrocities of the Emergency that he named his child Misa," he said. Misa Bharti was a member of Rajya Sabha and is currently a Lok Sabha MP. "That was the sentiment. If we ignore that dark period, our parliament



has performed very well. It has done excellently," Dhankhar told the new RS MPs. He also lauded the members of Parliament, saying they have contributed to the growth of the nation. He said undignified behaviour during House proceedings to score a political point is a blow to the spirit of democra-

cy. He also lamented that members these days are not willing to listen to the views of others. "You are free to disagree with the views of others. To ignore the other point of view is not part of parliamentary practice," Dhankhar told new Rajya Sabha members at an orientation programme. He said some members try to

find space in newspapers, give media statements immediately after leaving the House and use social media to grab eyeballs. "Members come a minute before their speech and leave immediately. Your presence is not there that you adopt a hit-and-run strategy," he said. Dhankhar said Parliament has been a citadel of constitution-

al values and liberties. At times, there have been issues, but House leaders have shown the way using wisdom, he added. "But the situation now is worrisome. Undignified behaviour is being used as a political weapon, which is a blow to the spirit of democracy," he told the members.

Modi, Shah laud CRPF role on raising day

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday praised the role of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) on the occasion of its raising day. Modi lauded the CRPF's unwavering dedication and relentless service to the nation on the force's raising day on Saturday. The CRPF is the country's largest organisation of its kind under the Union Government and is primarily engaged in counter-insurgency work in coordination with states. It is the country's premier central police force, entrusted with maintaining internal security. It was originally established as the Crown Representative's Police on July 27, 1939. "My greetings to all CRPF personnel," Modi said in a social media post. "Their unwavering dedication and relentless service to the nation are truly



commendable. They have always stood for the highest standards of courage and commitment. Their role in keeping our nation safe is also paramount," the prime minister added in the post. Home Minister Shah greeted CRPF personnel and their families on the occasion of the force's raising day, saying its brave soldiers exerted all their might for National security without ever caring for their lives and emerged victorious every time.

"Greetings to CRPF personnel and their family members on their Raising Day. Since its inception, the @crpfindia has taken National security as its mission," Shah said in a social media post. "The brave soldiers of the force have exerted all their might to accomplish this goal without ever caring for their lives and have emerged victorious every time. I bow to the martyrs of the CRPF who laid down their lives in the line of duty," he added.

Treatment meted out to Mamata unacceptable, says Congress

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday said the treatment meted out to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at a NITI Aayog meeting here was "unacceptable". The Opposition party's scathing criticism of the Government think tank came after Banerjee walked out of the 9th Governing Council meeting of the NITI Aayog, claiming she was unfairly stopped midway through her speech. The Government rejected Banerjee's charges, saying the time allotted to her for speaking at the meeting was over. The Congress alleged the Niti Aayog has functioned as a "drumbeater" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was chairing the meeting, since it was set up 10 years ago. The meeting was boycotted by



Congress party Chief Ministers over alleged discrimination against non-NDA-ruled states in the Union Budget. Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said, "Since it was established ten years ago, NITI Aayog has been an attached office of the PMO and has functioned as a drumbeater for the non-biological PM." It has not advanced the cause of cooperative federalism in any manner, he said.

"Its functioning has been blatantly partisan, and it is anything but professional and independent," Ramesh alleged. "It muzzles all divergent and dissenting viewpoints, which are the very essence of an open democracy. Its meetings are a farce to be reckoned with." Its treatment of the West Bengal CM today, although typical of the NITI Aayog, is "unacceptable", Ramesh said in a social media post.

Hepatitis B leads to severe illness, deaths due to liver cancer: Experts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Despite being preventable and treatable, chronic hepatitis B and C has respectively afflicted approximately 40 million and 6 to 12 million people in India with specific regions, including Ladakh, Arunachal Pradesh, and several tribal belt areas showing notably higher prevalence rates, experts said on the eve of the World Hepatitis Day on Saturday. These chronic infections, particularly hepatitis B, are leading to severe illnesses and deaths due to liver cancer, cirrhosis, and liver failure. The WHO 2024 Global Hepatitis Report highlights India as one of the nations with the highest global burden of hepatitis B and C. In Southeast Asia, almost 75 per cent of liver cirrhosis cases are attributed to hepatitis B and C infections, according to the WHO. On the eve of World

Hepatitis Day, the WHO issued a critical call for Southeast Asian countries to intensify their efforts in providing universal access to the prevention, vaccination, diagnosis, and treatment of viral hepatitis B and C. Dr Saima Wazed, the WHO's Regional Director for Southeast Asia, stressed the urgency, stating, "We have the knowledge and tools to prevent, diagnose, and treat viral hepatitis, yet people with chronic hepatitis B and C are still waiting to access the services they need. We need to accelerate efforts to deliver equitable services closer to communities, at the primary healthcare level." In India, Dr Apurva Pande, consultant in the Gastroenterology and Hepatology Department at Fortis Hospital Greater Noida, highlighted the local situation, saying, "Hepatitis B and C are among the most com-



mon infections in India. During our clinical practice, we see a considerable number of cases from our district and surrounding areas. Especially during the monsoon season, cases of hepatitis A and E rise due to contaminated food and water." Dr Pande said hepatitis B infection is more prevalent in regions such as Ladakh (12.7 per cent), Arunachal Pradesh

(21.2 per cent), and the Nicobar Islands (23.3 per cent), including the Shompens (37.8 per cent) and Jarwa (65 per cent) tribal communities. Conversely, hepatitis C is more widespread in northeastern India, among tribal populations, and in Punjab. Dr Praveen Kumar, CEO of Fortis Hospital Greater Noida, pointed out that "Symptoms of hepatitis can include fatigue,

fever, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and jaundice (yellowing of the eyes and skin). If you experience any of these symptoms, it is crucial to consult a doctor." Dr Shiv Kumar Sarin, Director and Chancellor of the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS) in Delhi, emphasised the importance of hepatitis prevention and combating associated stigma. "The theme for this year, 'It's Time for Action,' underscores the urgent need for enhanced prevention, diagnosis, and treatment strategies," he stated. The institute also organised events aimed to educate school children about hepatitis and its prevention. There are five main strains of the hepatitis virus — types A, B, C, D, and E. While they all cause liver disease, they differ in transmission modes, illness severity, geographical distribution, and prevention methods.



Bengal CM's act at NITI Aayog meet planned: BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP took a swipe at West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for walking out of a NITI Aayog meeting here on Saturday, and said it was premeditated and aimed at grabbing headlines. BJP General Secretary (organisation) B L Santhosh said, "It is very easy to grab headlines in our country. First, tell I am the only 'Opposition CM' attending Niti Aayog meeting. Come out & tell 'I boycotted since mic was switched off'. Now whole day TVs will display the same. No work. No discussion. That's Didi to you." Banerjee walked out of the meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, claiming that she was unfairly stopped midway in her speech, despite being the sole representative of the opposition. The Government, however, rejected her claim and said her speaking time was over. The BJP's IT department head Amit Malviya alleged that Banerjee's walkout from the meeting was premeditated and for the cameras. In a social media post, he said: "It is sad to see a Chief Minister reduce serious issues of governance to theatrics. People of West Bengal are suffering as a consequence of her confrontational politics." Malviya also posted a journalist's comments prior to the meeting that there is a view that chief ministers like Banerjee and Hemant Soren, both from the Opposition camp, may walk out.

SC to hear ED plea challenging HC's order granting bail to CM Hemant Soren

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on July 29 an Enforcement Directorate plea challenging the Jharkhand High Court's order granting bail to Chief Minister Hemant Soren in a money laundering case linked to an alleged land scam. A bench of Justices B R Gavai and K V Viswanathan is scheduled to hear the federal agency's plea against the June 28 order of the high court. Soren, the Executive President of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), had resigned as Chief Minister shortly before the ED arrested him on January 31 in the case. After coming out of jail on bail in the case, he took oath as the Chief Minister of Jharkhand on July 4. Earlier during the hearing in the high court, the ED's counsel had argued that if Soren was released on bail, he might commit a similar offence and referred to cases against ED officers in the SC/ST police station.



"Though the conduct of the petitioner has been sought to be highlighted by the Enforcement Directorate on account of the First Information Report instituted by the petitioner against the officials of the ED, but on an overall conspectus of the case, there is no likelihood of the petitioner committing a

similar nature of offence," the high court had said. The single-bench order had also mentioned that the consequence of the findings recorded by the court "satisfies the condition as at section 45 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 to the effect that there is reason

to believe that the petitioner is not guilty of the offence as alleged". Soren's lawyer had argued strongly for his bail, contending that he was falsely implicated in a criminal case by the central agency. The ED, opposing Soren's bail plea, had alleged that he misused his position as the Chief Minister to "unlawfully" acquire 8.86 acres of land in the Bargain area in the state capital. The agency had claimed that during the probe, Soren's media consultant Abhishek Prasad admitted that the JMM leader instructed him to manipulate official records to change the ownership details of the plot. The ED had also claimed that the original owner of the land, Raj Kumar Pahan, had tried to lodge a complaint when his land was usurped but it was never acted upon. Soren had been summoned multiple times by the ED before he was questioned at his residence and subsequently arrested on January 31.

Indian astronaut will travel to International Space Station

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

One of the four Indian astronauts undergoing training for the Gaganyaan mission will travel to the International Space Station as part of a collaborative effort with NASA, Union Minister Jitendra Singh has informed the Lok Sabha. In a written reply, Singh said NASA has identified a private entity Axiom Space and ISRO had signed a Space Flight Agreement with the American firm for the joint mission to the International Space Station (ISS). During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US last year, President Joe Biden announced that India and the US were collaborating to send an Indian astronaut to the ISS in 2024. India's Astronaut Selection Board had selected four astronauts from the group of test pilots from the Indian Air



Force for the Gaganyaan mission, India's first human space flight planned to take place next year. "All four astronauts have undergone training on a spaceflight basic module in Russia. Currently, astronauts are undergoing training at ISRO's Astronauts Training Facility (ATF) in Bengaluru for the Gaganyaan Mission," Singh said. The minister said two out of three semesters of the Gaganyaan training programme have been completed while independent training simulators and static mockup simulators have been realised. Sharing an update on the Gaganyaan mission, Singh said ground testing of propulsion systems stages, including solid,

liquid and cryogenic engine, towards human rating of the launch vehicle has been completed. Design and realisation of five types of crew escape system solid motors has been completed, he said. The Union minister said static testing of all five types of solid motors too has been completed. Also, the first Test Vehicle mission (TV-D1) for performance validation of crew escape system and parachute deployment has been successfully accomplished, he added. Singh said designs of the crew module and service module structure have been completed and various parachute systems have been tested through integrated main parachute airdrop test and rail track rocket sled tests. The ground test programme towards human rating of the Crew Module Propulsion System has been completed and the Service Module

Propulsion System test programme is nearing completion, the minister told Lok Sabha. He said characterisation of the Thermal Protection System has been completed. Critical ground facilities such as Orbital Module Preparation Facility (OMPF), Astronaut Training Facility (ATF) and Oxygen Testing Facility have been operationalised and works on the Mission Control Centre (MCC) facilities and establishment of Ground Station networks were nearing completion, Singh said. The minister said solid and liquid propulsion stages of human-rated launch vehicle was ready for flight integration and the C32 cryogenic stage was nearing completion. The crew module and service module structure realisation has been completed and flight integration activities were in progress, he added.



Genetic, environmental factors influence T1D risk, says study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Children are nearly twice as likely to develop type 1 diabetes (T1D) if their father has the condition compared to if their mother has it, a groundbreaking research, the largest of its kind has said. To be presented next month at the Annual Meeting of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD), this research uncovers significant insights into the genetic and environmental factors influencing T1D risk. It suggests that exposure to T1D in the womb confers long-term protection against the condition in children with affected mothers relative to those with affected fathers. "Individuals with a family history of type 1 diabetes are 8-15 times more likely to develop the autoimmune condition — however, studies have shown the risk is higher if the affected relative is the father rather than the mother. We wanted to understand this more," said Dr Lowri Allen, Lead Researcher, Diabetes Research Group, Cardiff University. He added, "Previous studies have suggested that maternal type 1 diabetes is associated with relative protection against type 1 diabetes in offspring during early life. We wanted to know if this relative maternal protection from type 1 diabetes is confined just to childhood. We were also interested in what might be responsible for the effect." To find out more, Dr Allen, Professor Richard Oram, of the Department of Clinical and Biomedical Sciences, University of Exeter Medical School, Exeter, UK, and colleagues in the UK,

Sweden and US performed a meta-analysis of data from five studies (BOX, Better Diabetes Diagnosis, TrialNet Pathway to Prevention Study, Type 1 Diabetes Genetic Consortium and StartRight) that contained information about individuals with T1D and their parents. The analysis involved 11,475 individuals with T1D who were diagnosed when they were between 0 and 88 years old. The results show they were almost twice as likely (1.8 times more likely) to have a father with T1D as a mother with the condition. This was the case for individuals who were diagnosed with T1D in childhood (=18 years) and as adults (>18 years). Individuals with mothers with T1D were diagnosed at a similar age to those with fathers with T1D. Taken together, our findings suggest the relative protection associated with having a mother versus father with type 1 diabetes is a long-term effect that extends into adult life," said Dr Allen. The researchers also used a genetic risk score that takes into account more than 60 different genes known to be associated with T1D, to compare the inherited genetic risk of T1D in individuals with affected mothers and fathers. Individuals with mothers with T1D had similar scores to those whose fathers had T1D, suggesting their relative protection against T1D wasn't due to the genes they had inherited. However, the timing of the parent's diagnosis was important. An individual was only more likely to have a father, rather than a mother, with T1D, if the parent was diagnosed before the individual was born, said the study.

Israeli airstrike hits school in Gaza, killing at least 30

AP ■ DEIR AL-BALAH (GAZA STRIP)

Israeli airstrikes hit a school and a hospital in central Gaza on Saturday as the country's negotiators prepared to meet international mediators to discuss a proposed cease-fire.

The evacuation order is in response to rocket fire that Israel said originated from the area. The military said it planned an operation against Hamas militants in the city, including parts of Muwasi, the crowded tent camp in an area where Israel has told thousands of Palestinians to seek refuge throughout the war.

and Egyptian spy chief Abbas Kamel on Sunday, according to officials from the US and Egypt who spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorised to discuss the plans. It's the second evacuation order issued in a week that has included striking part of the humanitarian zone, a 60-square-kilometer (roughly 20-square-mile) blanketed with tent camps that lack sanitation and medical facilities and have limited access to aid.

Israel's punishing air and ground campaign. In November, the military said the area could still be struck and that it was "not a safe zone, but it is a safer place than any other" in Gaza.

Kamala Harris officially declares candidature for US presidency

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Vice President Kamala Harris on Saturday officially signed her forms, declaring her candidacy for the post of President of the US and voiced confidence that she would win the high-stakes election on November 5.

campaign last Sunday, hours after President Joe Biden, 81, withdrew from the race for a second term. She is, however, yet to be officially declared as the presidential candidate by the Democrats.



Democrats will officially nominate her for president during a virtual roll call vote early next month.

The party will meet for its convention in Chicago starting August 19. Harris, who was a senator from California before she was elected vice president, quickly hit the campaign trail with events in Wisconsin, Indiana and Texas.

Orban warns of EU's demise, backs Trump in anti-Western speech

AP ■ BAILE TUSNAD (ROMANIA)

Hungary's nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban said on Saturday that the European Union was sliding toward oblivion in a rambling anti-Western speech in which he warned of a new, Asia-oriented "world order" while throwing his support for Donald Trump's US presidential bid.

Ukraine. Orbán is widely considered to have the warmest relations with the Kremlin among all EU leaders. On Ukraine, Orbán cast doubt on the war-torn country becoming either a member of NATO or the EU. "We Europeans do not have the money for it. Ukraine will revert to the position of a buffer state," he said, adding that international security guarantees "will be enshrined in an agreement between the US and Russia".

nationalist liberal state to a nation-state" and reshaped a slew of conservative tropes that Trump is being penalised unfairly to prevent his electoral bid. "That is why they want to put him in prison. That's why they want to take away his assets. And if that doesn't work, that's why they want to kill him," Orbán said, referring to an assassination attempt on Trump at a Pennsylvania rally this month.

Jamaat-e-Islami's protest against power price, tax hike continues

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's rightwing Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) on Saturday vowed to continue its protest in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi as the party's sit-in entered the second day to press the government to reduce electricity price and taxes on the salaried class.

Trump continues to target Harris

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Kamala Harris will be the "most extreme radical liberal president in American history" if she is elected, Donald Trump has said, as he intensified his attacks on his Democratic rival in the presidential polls in November.

administration with millions of people crossing, and she was the border czar," Trump said in a speech at Turning Point USA's "The Believers Summit" in West Palm Beach, Florida.

San Francisco — a liberal city long used as shorthand by conservatives eager to denigrate Democrats. "Our task is to defeat socialism, to defeat Marxism, communism, to defeat the cartels and the criminals and the human traffickers, trafficking women. That means defeating Kamala Harris in a landslide. We want a landslide this November. We want something too big to rig," he said.

and bloodthirsty rapists and drug dealers charge across our borders by the tens of thousands a day. I will throw the killers, criminals, and illegal aliens and gang members the hell out of our country," he said.

Morari Babu to recite Ram Katha at United Nations

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Indian spiritual leader Morari Babu will recite Ram Katha for the first time at the UN headquarters in New York to spread the timeless relevance of the Ramcharitmanas, one of the most revered Hindu scriptures.

Mexican kingpin's arrest likely to set off violent power struggle

AP ■ MEXICO CITY

A new era is coming for Mexico's powerful Sinaloa cartel in the wake of the capture by US authorities of Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada, the last of the grand old Mexican drug traffickers.

operator, skilled at corrupting officials and having an ability to negotiate with everyone, including rivals. Removing him from the criminal landscape could set off an internal war for control of the cartel that has a global reach — as has occurred with the arrest or killings of other kingpins — and open the door to the more violent inclinations of a younger generation of Sinaloa traffickers, experts say.

There is "significant potential for high escalation of violence across Mexico," said Vanda Felbab-Brown, a senior fellow in the Strobe Talbott Center for Security, Strategy and Technology at the Brookings Institution. That "is bad for Mexico, it's bad for the United States, as well as the possibility that the even more vicious (Jalisco New Generation cartel) will rise to even greater importance."

US, China air global differences

AP ■ VIENTIANE (LAOS)

The United States and China on Saturday renewed their mutual grievances as Secretary of State Antony Blinken and his Chinese counterpart held their sixth meeting since last year amid an uncertain political situation in the US and growing concerns about China's increasing assertiveness in Asia and elsewhere.



reunify by force if necessary. The top US diplomat also scolded China for "destabilizing actions in the South China Sea" and "affirmed the United States' support for freedom of navigation and overflight and the peaceful resolution of disputes, consistent with international law," Miller said.

tals in Europe believe Russia is using to ramp up the production of weapons for use in its war against Ukraine. Blinken "made clear that if (China) does not act to address this threat to European security, the United States will continue to take appropriate measures to do so," Miller said.

Asked whether the Chinese had responded to those sanctions in the way the US and its allies would like, a senior State Department official replied: "Not enough. Not enough that our concerns have been put to rest." The official spoke to reporters on condition of anonymity to discuss the private diplomatic meeting.

TikTok collected US user views on issues like abortion, gun control

AP ■ WASHINGTON

In a fresh broadside against one of the world's most popular technology companies, the Justice Department late Friday accused TikTok of harnessing the capability to gather bulk information on users based on views on divisive social issues like gun control, abortion and religion.

mation that has wound up being stored on Chinese servers and accessible to ByteDance employees in China, federal officials said. One of Lark's internal search tools, the filing states, permits ByteDance and TikTok employees in the US and China to gather information on users' content or expressions, including views on sensitive topics, such as abortion or religion. Last year, the Wall Street Journal reported TikTok had tracked users who watched LGBTQ+ content through a dashboard the company said it had since deleted.

more than 170 million Americans. Under a law signed by President Joe Biden in April, the company could face a ban in a few months if it doesn't break ties with ByteDance.

to covertly manipulate that algorithm; China could for example further its existing malign influence operations and amplify its efforts to undermine trust in our democracy and exacerbate social divisions," the brief states.

accessible to the two companies. Nothing in the redacted brief "changes the fact that the Constitution is on our side," TikTok spokesperson Alex Haurek said in a statement. "The TikTok ban would silence 170 million Americans' voices, violating the 1st Amendment," Haurek said. "As we've said before, the government has never put forth proof of its claims, including when Congress passed this unconstitutional law. Today, once again, the government is taking this unprecedented step while hiding behind secret information. We remain confident we will prevail in court."

of certain words. Certain policies of the tool applied to ByteDance users in China, where the company operates a similar app called Douyin that follows Beijing's strict censorship rules. But Justice Department officials said other policies may have been applied to TikTok users outside of China. TikTok was investigating the existence of these policies and whether they had ever been used in the US in, or around, 2022, officials said. The government points to the Lark data transfers to explain why federal officials do not believe that Project Texas, TikTok's USD 1.5 billion mitigation plan to store US user data on servers owned and maintained by the tech giant Oracle, is sufficient to guard against national security concerns.

Justice Department officials are asking the court to allow a classified version of its legal brief, which won't be

Justice Department officials are asking the court to allow a classified version of its legal brief, which won't be

Govt to decide on sugar MSP hike in coming days: Food Secy

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The government is likely to take a decision on increasing the minimum selling price (MSP) of sugar within the next few days, Union Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra said on Saturday.

Speaking on the sidelines of a conference organised by All India Sugar Trade Association (AISTA), Chopra said, "We are discussing the MSP (proposal). In the coming days, we will hopefully take a call."

MSP of sugar has remained unchanged at Rs 31 per kg since 2019, despite annual hikes in the fair and remunerative price (FRP) paid to sugarcane farmers. Industry bodies, including National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories (NFCFSF), have urged the government to raise the MSP to at least Rs 42 per kg to help mills sustain operations amid rising production costs. Chopra noted that sugar production for the 2024-25 season (October-September)



looks promising, with the area sown to sugarcane increasing to 58 lakh hectare so far from 57 lakh hectare during the same period last year. For the 2023-24 season, sugar production is estimated at 32 million tonne, lower than 32.8 million tonne in the previous season, but sufficient to meet the domestic demand of 27 million tonne. Earlier, addressing the event, the food secretary also mentioned that the agriculture ministry is conducting research to

evaluate water requirements for ethanol production from various feedstocks, with preliminary findings suggesting that ethanol from sugarcane may require less water than ethanol from maize and rice. Meanwhile, G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant on Saturday advocated for a "long-term predictability and consistency policy" for the sugar sector, which he said would be crucial in making India a developed economy by 2047. Kant's comments come as the industry presses for lifting a sugar export ban and

increasing the minimum selling price of sugar in line with cane prices, among other demands. "I totally agree that we need a long-term predictability and consistency of the policy. Otherwise, it will be difficult for the sector," Kant said at a conference organized by All India Sugar Trade Association (AISTA). Highlighting the sector's importance, Kant noted that sugar contributes 1.1 per cent to the country's GDP and plays a pivotal role in reducing crude import bills, energy transition, promoting circular economy, and achieving net zero emissions. "The sugar industry will be a major driver to make India a developed economy by 2047," he added. Kant urged the industry to explore diversification beyond ethanol and invest in research for developing high-yielding, low water-consuming cane varieties, given India's limited water resources compared to the top producer Brazil.

India steel production to cross 300MT by 2030: Official

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Expressing optimism in steel demand amid headwinds, a senior central government official said on Saturday that the domestic production is likely to cross 300 million tonnes by 2030. The ministry also does not foresee any hurdles in capacity addition due to decarbonisation efforts in the steel sector and will soon release a draft roadmap seeking public opinion to reduce the carbon footprint in the steel sector, which accounts for 12 per cent of total emissions, Steel Secretary Nagaendra Nath Sinha said. "The current steel demand remains strong with infrastructure push from the government and expecting a growth of about 10 per cent. The GDP is also growing robustly, and with continued emphasis on infrastructure from both government and private sectors, steel demand will continue to stay strong," Sinha said, while addressing members of the Bharat Chamber of Commerce (BCC).



Finished steel output during 2023-24 was 138.5 million tonnes, up 12.4 per cent year-on-year. To achieve 300 million tonnes of installed capacity, a CAGR of 12 per cent would be required. From January to April 2024, steel production was 49.5 million tonnes, a jump of 8.5 per cent, BCC president N G Khaitan said. Sinha also stated that some steel makers were not reporting production and sales data accurately, and the ministry feels there are gaps. He urged companies to report correctly to support policy framing.

The steel makers complain of several headwinds like iron ore shortage, cheap steel imports and policy shortcomings. The steel makers of eastern India raised serious concerns about iron ore shortages in the sector and suggested several steps to address the 53 million tonne iron ore shortage in the Indian steel industry. Asked about steel import concerns from the industry, Sinha said imports in quantity are only 5 per cent of consumption, but there are complaints about hot-rolled coil from Vietnam, which the

Directorate General of Trade Remedies, under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, has taken up. Speaking about the decarbonisation roadmap, Sinha said the government had set up 14 task forces on this and, after inter-ministerial discussions, the report will be released for public feedback soon. The roadmap focuses on increased hydrogen use in the steel industry and carbon capture, among others. The short-term target for the government aims at about a 20 per cent reduction in carbon intensity. Currently, the average carbon intensity is 2.5 tonnes per tonne of steel production. A consortium has been planned with labs, IITs, primary and secondary steel makers, and equipment makers to develop indigenous green technology. Sinha stated that the steel ministry has written to the Finance Ministry to support keeping Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd as a "going concern" during times of crisis so it does not lose its valuation.

About 151 GW renewable capacity under implementation in India: Minister Pralhad

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Renewable energy projects of about 151 GW capacity are under various stages of implementation in the country, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi has said. The Minister for New and Renewable Energy further said that around 76.42 GW of renewable energy capacity will be operationalized in next 3-4 years. "The government is taking several initiatives to prioritise renewable energy. Nearly 151 GW of renewable projects are being implemented, and 76.42 GW will be operationalized in 3-4 years," he said addressing a session at 'Mercom India Renewables Summit 2024' in the national capital on Friday. The tendering process for 76.42 GW capacity of projects has already been completed, the minister said. The renewable energy capacity has increased over



2.5 times from 76 GW in 2014 to more than 195 GW as of June 2024, Joshi said. The solar power capacity witnessed a steep jump from just 3 GW in 2014 to more than 85 GW now while wind power capacity increased from 21 GW to more than 46 GW, the minister added. "The recent bidding trajectory has been a great initiative. If government agencies continue to exceed their targets and start

mandating auctions through PPA/PSA signing, as a part of the trajectory, we will witness a significant increase in installations in the coming years," Raj Prabhhu, CEO of Mercom Capital Group said. The installations are poised to take off in a big way starting this year as the market enters the next level of growth and becomes one of the top three solar markets in the world, he added.

Himachal to develop ₹350-cr medical devices park with own resources

PTI ■ SHIMLA

The Union government would have no stake in Rs 350-crore Medical Device Park coming up at Nalagarh in Solan district as the state government has decided to construct the park from its own resources and return Rs 30 crore received from the centre, according to a release. The decision has been taken in the interest of the state. The project would come up in over 265 acres of land and in case Rs 30 crore received from the centre was not returned, the land would have been provided to industrialists at the rate of Re 1 per square meter, electricity at Rs 3 per unit and water, maintenance and warehouse facilities, free of cost for ten years, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said. The state government has so far spent Rs 74.95 crore for the project, a statement issued here on Saturday said. Keeping the interests of the state and steering out of the



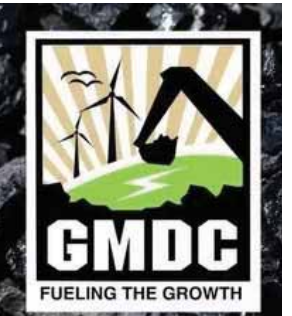
bindings, the government has decided to build the Park by itself as the project when commissioned would accrue benefits amounting to Rs 500 crore from the sale of land and other resources in the next five to seven years, he added. The state government will take a loan from SIDBI (Small Industries Development Bank of India) under the cluster development scheme for the construction of the medical device park and with restructuring of the project, 25 per cent of the land will be allotted exclusively for medical device industries and

75 per cent for other strategic industries, he said. The industrial park will be developed as a modern industrial hub which will become a perennial source of income for the state government along with economic development and better infrastructure in the coming years, he said. Earlier also the state government had decided not to take help from any private agency in the Bulk Drug Park being built at Haroli of Una district and the government will provide Rs 1,000 crore from its own resources, the statement added.

GMDC Q1 profit falls 16% to ₹184 cr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation (GMDC) has reported 15.8 per cent decline in consolidated profit at Rs 184.05 crore for the quarter ended June 30, 2024. The company had logged a profit of Rs 218.70 crore in the year-ago period, GMDC said in a filing. However, income during April-June FY25 increased to Rs 877.90 crore from Rs 826.77 crore in the year-ago period. The total lignite production during the quarter increased to 22.96 lakh tonne from 18.27 lakh tonne in the year-ago period. Revenue from thermal projects increased to Rs 28 crore as against Rs 17 crore in March quarter FY24. Revenue from wind



projects rose 67 per cent to Rs 40 crore in Q1FY25 compared to Rs 24 crore in Q4FY24. In a statement, GMDC Managing Director Roopwanti Singh said April-June proved to be a pivotal quarter for the company whose strategic initiatives paid off with a remarkable revenue from operations. GMDC is the country's second-largest lignite-producing company and the top merchant seller of lignite.

PNB records its highest ever quarterly profit of ₹3,252 cr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Punjab National Bank (PNB) on Saturday reported its highest ever quarterly standalone profit at Rs 3,252 crore in April-June FY25 helped by decline in bad loans and improvement in interest income. The state-owned bank had posted a net profit of Rs 1,255 crore in June quarter FY24. This is the highest ever quarterly profit recorded by the bank on account of improvement in various parameters, including net interest income, recovery and CASA, Managing Director Atul Kumar Goel said. Total income in the quarter rose to Rs 32,166 crore from Rs 28,579 crore in the same period a year ago. The lender's interest income also increased to Rs 28,556 crore from Rs 25,145 crore in the same quarter a year ago, as per a regulatory filing. Net Interest Income (NII) increased to Rs 10,476 crore in Q1 FY25 from Rs 9,504 crore earlier, showing an improvement of 10.23 per cent. Gross Non Performing Assets (NPAs) declined to 4.98 per cent of gross advances by June 2024 from 7.73 per cent in the same quarter a year ago. Similarly, net NPAs declined to 0.60 per cent from 1.98 per cent. As a result, provisions for bad loans came down drastically to Rs 792 crore in April-June FY25 as against Rs 4,374



crore in the year-ago period. Provision Coverage Ratio improved to 95.9 per cent as of June 2024 from 89.83 per cent a year ago. On a consolidated basis, the bank reported a net profit of Rs 3,976 crore in the quarter under review as against Rs 1,342 crore a year ago. The consolidated financial result of the bank comprises five subsidiaries and 15 associates. The capital adequacy ratio of the bank improved to 15.79 per cent at the end of June 2024 compared to 15.54 per cent in the year-ago period. With improvement in capital position, Goel said, the bank has decided to cut the proposed share sale size through Qualified Institutional Placement (QIP) to Rs 5,000 crore from an earlier estimate of Rs 7,500 crore. Asked when the capital will be raised, he said the bank is evaluating the opportune time for that. Besides, he said, the board has given approval to raise Rs 7,000 crore from Tier I bonds and Rs 3,000 crore from Tier II bonds to fund business growth.

PepsiCo India revenue in April-December 2023 at ₹5,954 cr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

PepsiCo India Holdings' consolidated revenue from operations during April-December 2023 was at Rs 5,954.16 crore and profit was Rs 217.26 crore, according to financial data accessed by business intelligence platform Tofler. Total income, which also includes other income, was at Rs 6,094.70 crore in the nine-month period. The company has changed its financial year from April-March to January-December, hence it has come out with three quarters results of 2023. It follows the calendar year as financial year from January 2024. During the nine months, its



revenue from sales in the domestic market was at Rs 5,533.63 crore. Exports contributed Rs 266.19 crore to the total revenue of the company, which is not a publicly listed entity. Revenue from the snacks business in which it operates with brands including Kurkure, Lays, Doritos and Quaker was at Rs 4,763.29 crore. PepsiCo India's revenue from

the beverages business in which it operates with fizzy-based drinks and juices with brands such as PepsiCo, 7up, slice, Tropicana, and Gatorade was at Rs 1,036.53 crore for the nine months. Advertising promotional expenses in April-December 2023 were at Rs 694.52 crore. On the results, a PepsiCo India Spokesperson said: "In this 9-month period compared to the earlier 12-

month period, PepsiCo India delivered resilient topline performance amid a challenging external environment." "Demand for our brands remained robust backed by strong marketing campaigns, marketplace execution, and consistent focus on end-to-end productivity. "We remain committed to our growth in India and continue to invest behind our brands and marketplace infrastructure to build scale while maintaining margins in what will remain a high-demand market for many years." For financial year 2022-23, which was of 12 months, PepsiCo India's revenue from operations was at Rs 8,203.19

crore and its total profit was at Rs 267.43 crore. Total income was Rs 8,302.34 crore. Earlier this month, during an investors' call, PepsiCo Chairman and CEO Ramon Laguarta said India is a "high demand market", where it is investing to scale up the infrastructure. The company is investing in the brands to build up scale to capture the growth opportunity, he had said. "We continue to see a lot of growth in many parts of the AMESA (Africa, Middle East & South Asia) region, in particular India is a big growth space for us and it's an investment area for sure," Laguarta had said. In the second quarter (April-

June) of 2024, its global parent company PepsiCo logged double-digit growth in beverages volume and convenience foods unit volume in the Indian market. For the first quarter (January-March), the New York-headquartered multinational reported a "high single-digit growth" in its beverage unit volume and a "double-digit growth" in convenient foods business in the Indian market. PepsiCo entered India in 1989 and has grown to become one of the largest MNCs engaged in the business of manufacture and trading of aerated and non-aerated beverage products, juice and juice-based drinks and packed food products.

Budget important step towards building new India: MoS Pankaj

PTI ■ GORAKHPUR

Union Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary on Saturday said that this year's budget is an important step towards building a new India, and is dedicated to the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Chaudhary, who was in Gorakhpur on Saturday, in a post on X in Hindi, said, "Addressed the media friends in a specially organized press conference on Budget-2024 in Gorakhpur. This budget is an important step towards building a new India. It is dedicated to the vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi Ji and building a new India."



Speaking with reporters at the Circuit House, Chaudhary emphasized that this year's budget has been crafted by keeping the interests of the citizens in mind. "GST has been reduced, and

significant relief has been provided in the tax slabs," he said. The 2024-25 budget aims to transform India into a developed nation by 2047, focusing on four key areas: women, the poor, farmers,

and youth. "This budget is entirely dedicated to employment and business. It is designed to boost GDP growth and create job opportunities, while also further developing the education sector. This year's budget is inclusive of all regions and sections of society," he said. On the comparison between Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, Chaudhary criticized the opposition for not highlighting the positive aspects. "The overall budget has been increased, including the Railway Budget. The opposition should acknowledge these improvements," he said. He assured that Uttar Pradesh

has received a significant budget allocation when analysed department-wise. The Union minister reiterated that the budget has been increased across various sectors, including agriculture, education, and the military, reinforcing the government's commitment to comprehensive development. Seven-time MP Pankaj Chaudhary, who took oath as minister of state for the second time in the new BJP-led NDA government, started his political career as a corporator of the Gorakhpur Municipal Corporation in Uttar Pradesh. Pankaj Chaudhary currently represents Maharajanji constituency in the Lok Sabha.

IFB Industries Q1 revenue up 16.9%

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

IFB Industries Ltd on Saturday reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 37.54 crore for the first quarter ended in June 2024, helped by the engineering and home appliances business. The company had posted a consolidated net loss of Rs 0.62 crore in the April-June quarter a year ago, according to a regulatory filing from IFB Industries. Its revenue from operations was up 16.87 per cent during the quarter under review. It was Rs 1,085.91 crore in the year-ago period. Total expenses of IFB Industries in the June quarter were up 12.24 per cent to Rs 1,222.14 crore.

MANU SETS SIGHTS ON OLYMPICS GLORY, STORMS INTO 10M AIR PISTOL FINALS

PTI ■ CHATEAUROUX/PARIS

Manu Bhaker made a statement of intent by storming into the 10m air pistol finals on a day when most of her compatriots endured a forgettable outing at the shooting range before shuttler Lakshya Sen and paddler Harmeet Desai dazzled on debut in India's sedate start at the Olympic Games on Saturday. Bhaker, who is competing in her second Olympics, seemed determined to wipe off the memories of her tearful past outing as she qualified third for the 10m air pistol women's final which will be held on Sunday afternoon at the Chateauroux Shooting Centre. The shooters have drawn a blank at every Olympics after 2012 and the apprehensions began to set in early for this one too before Bhaker decided to take control. The 22-year-old, who hails from Jhajjar in Haryana, shot 580 in the qualifications in which Hungarian ace Veronika Major claimed the top spot with a score of 582. The other Indian in the field,

Rhythm Sangwan, ended 15th with an underwhelming 573. Bhaker, who was in control for the major part of the one hour 15 minute session, will have to maintain the same composure in the all-important final. India has not won an Olympic medal in shooting since 2012 and Bhaker is well placed to end that lean run. Standing at a distance, Bhaker's personal coach Jaspal Rana could not stop his tears before saying that the job was only half done. "What happened today doesn't matter anymore. Tomorrow is when it counts. We start afresh," he told PTI before pointing out the heat factor at the range with the air conditioning not being the most effective. "She needed to take time and drink a lot of water as it was hot," he added. At the other end of the spectrum was Sarabjot Singh, who felt the pressure on his Games debut to narrowly miss out on a final berth in the men's 10m air pistol. Both he and Arjuna Singh Cheema showed promise before



finishing ninth and 18th with scores of 577 and 544 respectively. Germany's Robin Walter, who also shot 577, grabbed the last qualifying spot after managing to shoot one inner 10 (X) more than Sarabjot's 16, leaving the Indian heartbroken. Coach Samresh Jung tried to console him but Sarabjot

knew he had missed the opportunity of a lifetime. As many as 17 out of the 21 Indian shooters here are competing in the Olympics for the first time and are bound to feel pressure despite the best possible preparation. "There are only two types of people who don't feel pressure. One are the dead and others are fools. He is neither dead nor a fool," said Jung who expects Sarabjot to bounce back in the mixed team event. At the rifle range, Indians were eliminated from the 10m mixed team qualifications. Ramita Jindal and Arjun Babuta finished sixth with a total score of 628.7, while Elavenil Valarivan and Sandeep Singh ended 12th with an aggregate score of 626.3. SEN AND DESAI ADD SHEEN IN EVENING: Sen, who worked on his front-court alertness and closing stage composure, in the build-up to the Games, gave a demonstration of the improvements in the match against Cordon. The Indian was unnerved despite conceding a big lead in the second game and staved off four match points before sealing the deal against the reigning Pan American champion in 42 minutes. The gold-medallist from the 2022 Commonwealth Games will face Julien Carraggi of Belgium on Monday in his second group match. In table tennis, Desai had no trouble in getting the better of his opponent, ranked 538th in the world, in a one-sided preliminary round match that lasted exactly 30 minutes. The 31-year-old from Surat, who was part of the side that clinched the team gold medal at the Commonwealth Games in 2018 and 2022, is an established name in the Indian TT circuit. He has been toiling for many years in his quest to compete at the Olympics, having played in all other top global competitions. PANWAR MOVES TO REPECHAGE IN ROWING: India's lone rower at Games, Balraj Panwar moved to the repechage after finishing fourth in heat 1 of the men's singles scull competition.



China wins first diving gold

AP ■ SAINT-DENIS (FRANCE)

One down. Seven to go. China won its first gold medal in diving on Saturday on the first full day of competition in the Paris Olympics, a perfect start for the team of Chang Yani and Chen Yiwen. China has ruled diving for decades, and three years ago in Tokyo, it won seven of eight gold medals. But, it's never pulled off the elusive gold sweep. That's the goal this time. The Chinese were first on Saturday in the women's synchronized 3-meter springboard with 337.68 points on five dives. They were followed by Sarah Bacon and Cassidy Cook of the United States with 314.64 points and the British team of Yasmin Harper and Scarlett Mew Jensen with bronze and 302.28 points. The same Chinese duo also

won gold in the last three world championships and were heavy favourites going in. The crowd, heavy with Chinese fans and flags, chanted "jiaoyou" - roughly translated "let's go" - each time the Chinese walked out to dive. This event was added in 2000, and Chinese women have won gold six times in seven Games. The only loss was to Russia in 2000. China won three years ago in Tokyo with Shi Tingmao and Wang Han. Starting with the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics where China claimed its first diving gold, it had won 47 of 64 gold medals in diving. Add to that 23 silver and 10 bronze. If you start counting from the 2008 Beijing Olympics, China won 27 of 32 gold at the Olympics. These are the numbers before Paris. Now, add another gold to the total and watch the numbers climb as the Olympics roll on in Paris.

Olympic cyclists criticise streets of Paris

AP ■ PARIS

Remco Evenepoel was unimpressed by the rough roads that Olympic cyclists had to cover in the time trial through Paris on Saturday, while Nino Schurter was just as critical of the gravel covering the man-made mountain bike course in nearby Elancourt. Evenepoel, fresh off his third-place finish in the Tour de France, described the first and last five kilometres of the time trial as bad roads being made worse by the rain, which made for a damp opening ceremony on Friday night and continued into Saturday when the start of skateboarding had to be postponed due to the weather. The time trial began upstream from the Eiffel Tower on the Esplanade. It covered 32.4 kilometres (19.8 miles) past Place de la Bastille and through the Polygone de Vincennes, before finishing at the gilded Pont Alexandre III bridge over the Seine River.



"Quite some beautiful sightseeing as well," Evenepoel acknowledged, "but the road surface is pretty bad in the beginning and in the end. So, that might be a problem if you have black spots in front of your eyes in the last kilometres. It's not so nice." The Belgian is the reigning time trial world champion and won the first of two time trials during the Tour de France. Meanwhile, at Elancourt Hill about 40 kilometres (24.8 miles) outside of Paris, the Olympic mountain bike course was carved through the site of a former sandstone quarry-turned-landfill.

It was regenerated into a park in the 1980s, and one of the highest points in the region now offers sprawling vistas of the Eiffel Tower, La Defense and the forests around Paris. The course was designed by South African expert Nick Floros, who also designed the mountain bike venue for the 2016 Rio and 2020 Tokyo Games, and features man-made jumps and rock gardens with stretches of gravel-covered paths. The women's competition is Sunday and the men cover the same course on Monday. "It's slippery. It's quite loose," said Schurter, a three-time Olympic medalist and the champion in Rio. "If you go fast it's super slippery. I hope the gravel still goes a bit to the side and makes it less loose everywhere. You can feel there was no mountain biking before and it's 100% man-made, like we saw in London and in Rio. "It could be a bit more natural," Schurter acknowledged, "but in general it's nice."



Katie starts Olympic swimming with fastest time in 400 free prelims, just ahead of Titmus

AP ■ NANTERRE (FRANCE)

Katie Ledecky fired the first salvo in her duel with Ariarne Titmus, posting the fastest time in the preliminaries of the women's 400-meter freestyle Saturday as the swimming competition began at the Paris Olympics. In one of the most highly anticipated events of the Games, Ledecky claimed the prime No. 4 lane for the evening final with a time of four minutes, 2.19 seconds. Titmus, the Australian star known as "The Terminator," got off to a fast start but couldn't hold off the hard-charging Ledecky on the final lap. Titmus posted the second-fastest time of the heats in 4:02.46, setting up a side-by-side showdown with the American in the evening final. Titmus is the reigning Olympic champion in the 400 free, knocking off Ledecky at the Tokyo Games three years ago. The Aussie also holds the world record of 3:55.38 - a sign that she's got a lot left to give in the final. Also, keep an eye on Canadian phenom Summer McIntosh, who should be in the medal mix after going 4:02.65 in the prelims for the fourth-fastest time. She was just behind New Zealand's Erika Fairweather (4:02.55). Tokyo bronze medalist Li Bingjie and Chinese teammate Liu Yaxin finished ninth and 10th, respectively, and failed to advance to the final. Their team has been under intense scrutiny after reports that nearly two dozen swimmers tested positive for a banned substance before the 2021 Olympics, but were not sanctioned. Ledecky is looking to add to her haul of six individual gold medals - already the most by any female swimmer in Olympic history.

Olympic organisers apologise for introducing South Korean athletes as North Korea

AP ■ PARIS

Olympic Games organisers said they deeply apologise for introducing South Korean athletes as North Korea during the opening ceremony in Paris. As the South Korean athletes waved their nation's flag on a boat floating down the Seine River Friday evening, they were announced in both French and English as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. South Korea is the

Republic of Korea. "We deeply apologise for the mistake that occurred when introducing the Korean team during the opening ceremony broadcast," the International Olympic Committee said in a post on X in Korean. The South Korean Ministry of Culture Sports and Tourism Vice Minister Jang Mi Ran requested a meeting with IOC President Thomas Bach over the incident, the ministry said in a statement on Saturday. It said the ministry also asked

South Korea's Foreign Ministry to file "a strong government-level complaint" with the French government. The statement said South Korea's Olympic committee separately asked the organizers of the Paris Games to prevent the recurrence of similar incidents. IOC spokesperson Mark Adams on Saturday called the error "clearly deeply regrettable." "An operational mistake was made. We can only apologize,

American cowbell clanging will be raucous again at Paris Games

AP ■ PARIS

she was not to hear the US national anthem as regularly at worlds last year. "Australia coming out on top of the world is one thing, but it is just so much sweeter beating America," she said. "There were a couple of nights, particularly the first night of competition, where we did not have to hear Star-Spangled Banner ring out through the stadium and I cannot tell you how happy that made me. "If I never hear that song again it will be too soon. So, bring on Paris. That's all I have to say, US, stop being sore losers. ...



Indians fail to qualify for 10m mixed rifle and men's pistol finals

PTI ■ CHATEAUROUX (FRANCE)

Sarabjot Singh and Arjun Singh Cheema sparked in patches but could not make the men's 10m air pistol final after both the air rifle mixed teams also fell by the wayside during qualification in a disappointing start for Indian shooters in the Olympic Games here on Saturday. Sarabjot finished ninth with a total score of 577 in the qualifications while Arjun ended way behind at 18th with 574. Germany's Robin Walter, who also shot 577, grabbed the last (eighth) qualifying spot after managing to shoot one inner 10 (X) more than Sarabjot's 16. A perfect 100 in the fourth series propelled the 22-year-old Sarabjot into the top-three after a poor start but he failed to sustain the momentum and fizzled out.

Cheema shot 10 perfect 10s off his last 10 shots, which lifted him to the fourth position but he too lost the plot after promising much. The 23-year-old Cheema collected 97 points from Series 2 (8, 10, 10, 10, 9, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10) and was placed 10th in the list. He collected 96 points from Series 1. However, a poor 7 followed by a 9 from Cheema saw him slip outside the top eight. Both Cheema and Sarabjot were part of the Indian side that won the 10m air pistol team gold at the Asian Games in Hangzhou last year. DISAPPOINTMENT IN MIXED RIFLE EVENT: Earlier in the day, the Indian shooters were eliminated in the 10m air rifle mixed team qualifications stage. Ramita Jindal and Arjun Babuta finished sixth with a total score

of 628.7, while Elavenil Valarivan and Sandeep Singh ended 12th with an aggregate score of 626.3. The duo of Ramita and Babuta came close and was placed fifth with three shots remaining but fell 1.0 point short of the medal round cut-off. Babuta enjoyed a fine start in the second relay and had a sequence that read 10.5, 10.6, 10.5, 10.9, while Ramita managed 10.2, 10.7, 10.3, 10.1 in the second series. But, to get into the bronze medal round, they needed to do more than what they eventually achieved. Shooters from China, Korea and Kazakhstan dominated the qualifications. China eventually won the first gold medal of the Games in this event after qualifying as the top team for the finals. A side has to get to the top four to enter the medal matches.

American cowbell clanging will be raucous again at Paris Games

Before Tokyo three years ago, the US Olympic swim coaches pondered how to best support their athletes and help fire them up before a race, given there were no family or friends or fans in the stands. They turned to clanging cowbells. While spectators return to the pool in Paris on Saturday, American women's coach Todd DeSorbo and his staff plan to continue what worked so well - even if it's not popular with the rival Australians or others. Given that most everybody at the pool by now has heard about the Aussies' disdain for the noise, the rivalry could reach new decibels at these Summer Games. Australian star Cate Campbell, who is rarely afraid to speak her mind, referred to the Americans as "such, such sore losers" after Australia won more gold medals at the world championships last year in Fukuoka, Japan, and expressed her disgust with all the cowbells ringing out. "I've never wanted to punch someone more and steal the cowbell, and I really hope that someone did," Campbell said in an interview with Australia's "Today" show last year. You better believe the Americans heard about that and took notice. Michael Phelps hopes Campbell's complaints only provide more motivation for the US, saying, "I would watch that thing every single day, give me that little extra."

American cowbell clanging will be raucous again at Paris Games



American Abbey Weitzeil said last month at the U.S. Trials: "We're all bringing the cowbell. "Whenever comments are made about your country or your jobs, it's all competitive. I think we all are competitive, our competitive side comes out, so we're all bringing the cowbell, extra loud!" DeSorbo didn't realize the motivational tactic would cause an international uproar. "That was an interesting thing," he said. "I think that not having fans in the stands you had to create an environment to help them get excited, to help them get motivated. I do think if you can't get motivated by the opportunity to win an Olympic medal, then I don't know what would motivate you, but the fans and the spectators certainly help." "Being in an environment where we as a coaching staff had to create that excitement for them, I think probably the cowbells were probably rang louder at that Olympics than ever before because of that. "And, that might be part of why there's a little bit of trash-talking going on back and forth about that because it was really loud in '21 and probably since then it has been." Indeed, the clanging isn't always popular with some athletes from opposing countries. American Hunter Armstrong spoke about the 4x100 freestyle relay foursome chasing a world record in Paris while making sure to point out, "We definitely want that world record, but most importantly we need more cowbell." Campbell shared how thrilled

NATA 2024
NATIONAL APTITUDE TEST IN ARCHITECTURE

CA
Council of Architecture
The Statutory Authority of Government of India under the Architects Act, 1972

IMPORTANT PUBLIC NOTICE
CONDUCT OF ADDITIONAL TESTS FOR NATA 2024

The Council of Architecture has decided to conduct additional tests for NATA 2024 on 10th & 24th August, 2024 (in two sessions) in order to provide more opportunity to eligible aspirants for admission to 1st year of 5-year B.Arch. degree programme.

The candidates qualifying in the above tests shall be considered for admission only against the vacant/unfilled seats in the programme available at various Institutions. Centralized Admission counselling process in the states shall continue as per their respective schedules.

Registration shall commence from 28.07.2024. For further details on registration and NATA 2024, please visit the NATA website www.nata.in.

New Delhi
July 28, 2024

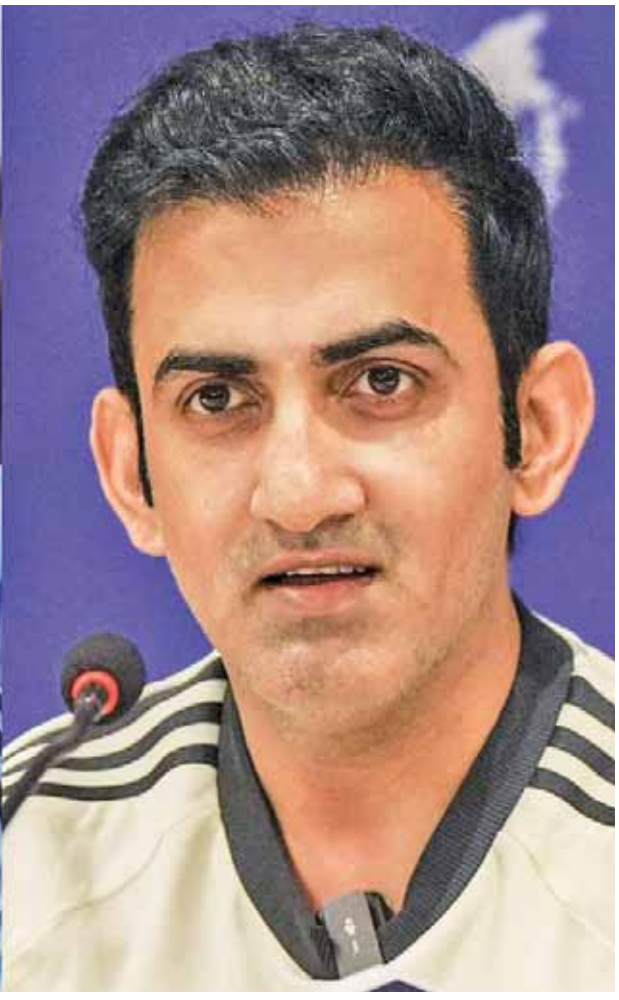
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In most heated of times, exhale, take a step back: Dravid's message to Gambhir

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Former India coach Rahul Dravid passed a lead to his successor Gautam Gambhir in taming the tough situations he is bound to encounter - "exhale, take a step back", a message that left the latter "emotional."
Dravid vacated the hot seat after India's triumph in the T20 World Cup in the Americas last month, and Gambhir took over the reins of the team from the on-going whiteball tour to Sri Lanka.
"From one Indian cricket coach to another, one last thing. In the most heated of times, exhale, take a step back. I wish you the very best Gautam. I am sure you will take the Indian team to even greater heights," Dravid said in a video posted by BCCI on its 'X' handle.
Dravid's dry wit came to the fore even amidst that touching message.
"Even if it's difficult for you, crack a smile. Whatever else happens, that will shock people," he said, eliciting a wide smile from Gambhir.
Gambhir sounded moved while thanking his predecessor for the wise words. "I don't get too emotional but I think this message actually made me a lot emotional

which normally I shouldn't. But it's a great message. "It's massive shoes that I can hopefully fill. Hopefully, I can do that with absolute honesty, transparency and hopefully, I can make the entire nation and more importantly, the person I have always looked up to - Rahul Bhai - proud," he said.
Dravid was certain that Gambhir, who carried a never-say-die attitude in his playing days, will bring his fighting qualities to the coaching job as well.
"As your teammate, I saw you giving it your all on the field. As your batting partner and fellow fielder, I saw your resilience and refusal to surrender. Across many IPL seasons, I noted your desire to win, your assistance to younger players and your drive to extract the best out of your team on the field.
"I know how dedicated and passionate you are about Indian cricket and I am sure you will bring all these qualities into the new job," he said.
The 51-year-old, however, offered a word of caution to his one-time teammate about living under constant scrutiny. "As you know, the expectations will be high and the scrutiny will be intense," he said, also



reminding that there will be overwhelming support for him from all quarters.
"But even in the worst of times you will never be alone. You will have the support of the players, your support staff, the leaders of the past, the management and never forget for whom you play - for fans who are very demanding but will always be behind the team."
Dravid hoped that Gambhir will have a fully-fit squad to work with, and will have the assistance of fortune in crunch moments.
"I also hope that you will also have the availability of fully fit players in every squad. Good luck with that. I also wish you a little bit of luck, as you know that all of us coaches need to make us look that little bit wiser and smarter than we actually are," he noted.
The former Indian captain also urged Gambhir to forge a strong bond with the team members - something he managed to do during his tenure.
"Hello Gautam, and welcome to the most exciting job in our world, as coach of the Indian cricket team. It's been three weeks since I ended my stint with the Indian team in a manner that was beyond my dreams, both in Barbados and

a few days later in that unforgettable evening in Mumbai.
"More than anything else I will cherish the memories and friendships I made in my time with the squad. As you take over the role of India coach, it's what I wish for you as well," he added.
Gambhir imbibed Dravid's words in their true sense, and said he has not seen a more "selfless" servant of Indian cricket.
"I don't know how to react because this message means so much to me. The reason is not because it comes from the person who I have succeeded but from a person who I have always looked up to when I was playing.
"I have always felt that and I said it in a lot of my interviews - I think the most selfless cricketer I have actually ever played with. Rahul bhai has done anything and everything Indian cricket needed."
Gambhir said Dravid's association with Indian cricket is a text book for others to learn from.
"I think there is so much to learn from, not only for me but for the next generation and the current generation as well. That's how important Indian cricket is, not me, not individuals," he said.

Kevin hopefully will play for US in its Olympic opener against Serbia

AP ■ PARIS
There is hope that Kevin Durant will play for the US in its Olympic opener against Serbia on Sunday, which means the men's national team may have 12 players available for the first time this summer. That is unless something else happens.
The Americans open their path toward what they hope is a fifth consecutive Olympic gold medal when they take on three-time NBA MVP Nikola Jokic and World Cup finalist Serbia in the opener for both teams at the Paris Games.
Durant missed all five exhibition games the US played coming into Paris because of a calf strain, and coach Steve Kerr stopped short of definitively saying Saturday that he is in the line-up for the opener.
"Hopefully," Kerr said. Durant was on the floor for practice, while presumed starting centre Joel Embiid was not because of illness.
Kerr said he didn't expect Embiid to miss Sunday's game. "I'm confident we'll have everybody ready tomorrow," Kerr said.
There have been signs in recent days that USA Basketball expects Durant - a three-time gold medalist, now bidding to become the first player who can say he's a four-time Olympic men's basketball champion - will be ready to go.
First, it didn't replace him on the roster. Second, it released clips of a Thursday scrimmage where Durant was active and even had a reverse dunk (plus got dunked on by Anthony Edwards, who idolizes him). And third, Kerr insisted earlier in the week that he wasn't concerned about Durant's status.
"We'll see how things go in practice today," Kerr said Saturday. "So far, so good. He came through the scrimmage two days ago pretty well."
The team convened for its first summer practice in Las Vegas on July 6, about a week and a half after Durant strained the calf.
He couldn't participate in practices there, didn't play in the first exhibition win over Canada before the Americans left for their overseas legs of the pre-Olympic tour and



then the waiting game was on.
Durant did some on-court work in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, but missed two more exhibitions there against Serbia and Australia.
He did more work in London but missed the two exhibitions the US played there against South Sudan and Germany as well. He said he made the best of the situation.
"It's been incredible," Durant said. "I mean, I haven't played yet, but just being on the sideline, on the bench, I've got more energy than I've had in the past. I hate not playing, but just watching these guys, how they operate, it's just been incredible."
In Olympic play, Durant has been incredible as well.
Before Durant came along, Adrian Dantley had the highest scoring average for a US men's player in an Olympic tournament; he averaged 19.3 points at the 1976 Montreal Games.
That's now fourth on the single Olympics US list behind Durant's 20.7 points per game at the Tokyo Games three years ago, Durant's 19.5 points per game at the 2012 London Games and Durant's 19.4 points per game at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games.
He has scored 435 points in Olympic play, the most in US men's history, 99 more than Carmelo Anthony. He is third in rebounds for the U.S. Men with 118, seven behind

Anthony and six behind David Robinson. He is the all-time US men's leader in Olympic 3-pointers made with 74 and the all-time leader in free throws made with 69.
"Instant impact. Instant impact," U.S. Forward LeBron James said when asked about what Durant would add to the mix when he returns.
"He looked extremely well the other day in practice. Obviously, his wind, his rhythm is going to continue to come, but to be able to get him back, it makes a huge impact for our club."
And, if all that wasn't enough, there's this: The US is 21-1 in Olympic games with Durant in the line-up, and he's won a pair of NBA championships with Kerr during their three seasons together with the Golden State Warriors.
"I know how hard he works because I've seen it up close and personal for three years, and I know the level that he's trying to get to competitively to be his best self and why he is the all-time leading scorer in (U.S.) Olympic history," Warriors guard and first-time Olympian Stephen Curry said.
"So, you thrive off of that, that preparation to give you confidence that says Hey, we're here for business, but we're also here to continue to learn from each other.

Great Britain rides strong effort of Olympic veterans to early lead in men's gymnastics qualifying

AP ■ PARIS
Great Britain surged to an early lead during men's gymnastics qualifying, posting a team total of 256.561 to finish ahead of the United States in the first of three subdivisions Saturday.
The Americans, who finished third at the 2023 world championships ahead of Great Britain, dealt with issues on the high bar and pommel horse to finish second at 253.229.
The US arrived in Paris believing it had a legitimate chance to medal in the team competition for the first time since earning a bronze in Beijing 16 years ago.
There is work to be done after the British put on a largely mistake-free clinic across six rotations.
Jake Jarman (84.897) and Joe



Stephen Nedorosick, a specialist whose 15.200 likely earned him a spot in the event finals and gave his teammates some early momentum.
It didn't last. Brody Malone, who returned from a horrific leg injury to win his third US championship in June, fell twice on a high bar and once on a pommel horse to scuttle

his chances of returning to the all-around finals.
Instead, Frederick Richard and Paul Juda will represent the Americans. While Richard - who earned bronze in the all-around at the 2023 world championships - is expected to advance, Juda's performance is a bit of a surprise.
The 23-year-old - who unabashedly broke down in tears after being named to the five-man Olympic squad - thrust his arms into the air after his dismount on floor exercise. His all-around total of 82.865 was fourth among early qualifiers, trailing only Richard (83.498), Jarman and Fraser.
Qualifying continues later Saturday, with longtime rivals and gold medal favourites Japan and China competing in the second of three subdivisions.

Landale scores 20 points, Australia powers past Spain 92-80 to open Olympic basketball tournament

AP ■ VILLENEUVE-D'ASCQ (FRANCE)
Jock Landale had 20 points and nine rebounds, and Australia beat Spain 92-80 Saturday to open the group stage of the Olympic basketball tournament in Lille.
Patty Mills added 19 points and Josh Giddey contributed 17 to lift Australia to victory in Group A, including Greece and Canada. Australia next meets Canada on Tuesday while Spain will face Greece.
Australia led by as many as 14 points before Spain surged and used a 9-0 run to take its first lead of the game, 56-54, in the third quarter. The Aussies responded with a 15-4 spurt to close the period and never trailed again.
Santi Aldama finished with 17 points for Spain. Sergio Llull added 17 for the Spaniards, who connected on 12 3-pointers, but shot 39% overall from the



field for the game at Pierre Mauroy Stadium.
Australia established its presence in the paint early, scoring 42 in the paint for the game and holding a 46-34 rebounding edge.

The Aussies led 49-42 at halftime. Australia sprinted out to a 31-17 lead, with Jock Landale scoring eight early points.
Spain then used a 10-0 run that started late in the first quarter and continued into the second to get back in the game.
The Aussies' momentum also was disrupted by a heated exchange late in the first quarter.
With 2:13 remaining in the period, Spain's Usman Garuba set a hard screen on Australia's Josh Green, sending him stumbling backwards.
Green took exception and got in Garuba's face. Garuba slapped Green's hand away and Will Magnay stepped in to defend his teammate, prompting Garuba to shove him.
Referees reviewed the incident and accessed double unsportsmanlike fouls on Garuba and Magnay.



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Swiatek starts 2024 Olympics tennis event with win at site of her French Open triumphs

AP ■ PARIS
Iga Swiatek shook off a bit of a dip in the first round of the Paris Olympics tennis competition and grabbed the last four games to beat Romania's Irina-Camelia Begu 6-2, 7-5 on Saturday under a closed roof at Roland Garros, the site of the No. 1-ranked Polish player's four French Open titles.
Swiatek, who won a third consecutive championship at Court Philippe Chatrier just seven weeks ago, got broken in that same stadium to trail 5-3 in the second set before getting back to her usual clay-court expertise. She wrapped up the victory by breaking at love when Begu double-faulted on the last point.
Day 1 of tennis began with showers that might have contributed to slow lines for umbrella-toting spectators at the facility's security checks near entrances and postponed by hours the start of matches at the 10 courts without retractable roofs.
It's a good thing the French tennis federation built a pair of covers recently: 15,000-capacity Chatrier added one in 2020, and the second-



largest arena, 10,000-capacity Court Suzanne Lenglen, has one as of this year.
Italy's Jasmine Paolini, who was the runner-up to Swiatek at the French Open in June and to Barbora Krejickova at Wimbledon two weeks ago, was the first tennis player to win a match at these Summer Games, eliminating Romania's Ana Bogdan 7-5, 6-3 at Lenglen.
Among the other big names from the

sport scheduled to play later Saturday were reigning French Open and Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz - facing Lebanon's Hady Habib in singles in the afternoon and pairing with Spanish teammate Rafael Nadal in doubles at night - along with 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic of Serbia and four-time major champion Naomi Osaka.
Nadal has won a record 14 of his 22 Slam titles at Roland Garros and owns Olympic gold medals in singles and doubles. He carried the torch and rode on a boat in the Seine River with retired tennis star Serena Williams during the drenched opening ceremony Friday night.
Coco Gauff, the female flag bearer for the United States on Friday, was slated to make her Olympic debut Saturday with Jessica Pegula in doubles.
Gauff won the French Open doubles title with Katerina Siniakova of the Czech Republic last month and the US Open singles trophy last September.
+Three years ago, Gauff missed the Tokyo Games after testing positive for COVID-19 right before she was supposed to fly to Japan.

Honda India riders impress in Asia Road Racing Championship

PTI ■ LOMBOK (INDONESIA)
The riders of the IDEMITSU Honda Racing India team impressed in Race 1 of Round 4 of the 2024 FIM Asia Road Racing Championship in Indonesia on Sunday.
The Indian duo of Kavin Quintal and Mohsin Paramban completed the race with determination and consistency at Pertamina Mandalika International Circuit.
Starting strong from the 27th position on the grid, Chennai's 19-year-old rising star, Kavin Quintal, swiftly moved up after the first lap and maintained consistency throughout the race.
Leveraging his experience and executing strategic moves effectively, he gave tough competition to international riders and continued to elevate his performance despite an injury. He finished the race at 19th position with



a total time of 18:37.226.
Kavin's teammate, Mohsin Paramban from Mallapuram, started the race from 21st on the grid and delivered a good performance on international soil.
He maintained consistency throughout the race, navigating the track and crossing the chequered flag at 22nd position with a total time of 18:44.784.
Both the riders, however, could not secure any points

for the team in Race 1 of Round 4.
Quintal, "I began this round on a strong note, but yesterday's crash and my subsequent injury disrupted my plans for the race. Despite the tough competition, I'm pleased that we performed well and made no mistakes today.
"Having recovered well, I'm optimistic about securing better results and earning points for the team in tomorrow's race."
Paramban added, "Today's round was quite challenging, and my focus was on maintaining consistency throughout the race. I managed to hold my position and stay focused.
"Taking the lessons learned, I will be pushing harder tomorrow to achieve better results. Working closely with our instructors, we will refine our strategies to compete effectively and secure a better position for the team."

"It is not part of a true culture to tame tigers, any more than it is to make sheep ferocious"
— Henry David Thoreau



INTERNATIONAL TIGER DAY

Forests, which are essential carbon sinks and wildlife habitats, play a crucial role in combating climate change.

Strengthening tiger conservation programs is vital to protect their ecosystems, benefiting both tigers and humans, writes **BK SINGH** on the eve of International Tiger Day

DON'T LET THE ROAR DIE DOWN

Scientific studies have consistently brought out that the planet Earth is warming at a faster pace than ever before. The report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned of the consequences of frequent and destructive climatic catastrophes if the global rise in temperature is not contained within 1.5 degrees Celsius concerning pre-industrial (1850–1900 levels). Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) dealing with the European Union's 'earth observation program' launched in January 2023, has recently taken stock of the project and found that June 2024 marks the 13th month of global temperature at 1.50 C above pre industrial levels. The monthly average surface air temperature from June 2023 to June 2024 was 16.660C and was .760C higher than the average for 1991-2020 and 1.640C above pre industrial 1850-1900 levels. So far 2023 has been the warmest year on record, but 2024 is on course to break this.

We are left with no option but to transition away from fossil fuel consumption and develop renewable energy with speed and scale. Forests are the biggest carbon sink that can suck CO2 emitted into the atmosphere due to industrial activities and fossil fuel burning. It is the home of wild animals. Forests not only provide food and shelter to wild animals but also provide a series of ecological services necessary for the survival of mankind. Tiger is at the apex of wild animals. If a tiger is saved, other wild animals and the forests are secure. Project Tiger was launched in India in 1973 by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi covering nine tiger-bearing areas extending over 16338 sq km of good quality forests across the country namely Corbett, Kaziranga, Melghat, Bandipur etc. Since then many more areas have been added to the list and by now there are 53 Tiger Reserves (TRs) in India. To commemorate 50 years of Project Tiger an international conference was held at Mysuru on 9th April 2023, which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The most important takeaway of the conference was the launch of the international big cat alliance to protect seven species namely tiger, leopard, jaguar, lion, snow leopard, puma and cheetah worldwide. Among 94 member countries harbouring these species, the Ministers from India, Armenia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Suriname, Tanzania, Vientiane, and Vietnam presented the status of conservation of big cat species in their country. They also pledged to conserve the species. Forests and wildlife have a symbiotic relationship and both cannot survive without the other.



BK SINGH

PROJECT TIGER WAS LAUNCHED IN INDIA IN 1973 BY THE THEN PRIME MINISTER INDIRA GANDHI COVERING NINE TIGER-BEARING AREAS EXTENDING OVER 16338 SQ KM OF GOOD QUALITY FORESTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY NAMELY CORBETT, KAZIRANGA, MELGHAT, BANDIPUR ETC. SINCE THEN MANY MORE AREAS HAVE BEEN ADDED TO THE LIST AND BY NOW THERE ARE 53 TIGER RESERVES (TRS) IN INDIA. TO COMMEMORATE 50 YEARS OF PROJECT TIGER AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WAS HELD AT MYSURU ON 9TH APRIL 2023, WHICH WAS INAUGURATED BY PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI

In this long journey of 50 years, the Project tiger coverage has been increased from 9 to 53 sites. The area under Project Tiger management has also been increased from 16338 sq km to 75000 sq km. Though tiger security was the focus in all 53 tiger reserves of the country, aggressive activities of interstate poaching gangs who killed tigers at will and decimated tigers from many reserves namely Sariska (Rajasthan), Panna (Madhya Pradesh), Buxa (West Bengal), Namdapha and Kamlang (Arunachal Pradesh) and Dampa (Mizoram). Project Tiger was revamped when the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) was brought in 2006 and enabling provisions were made in the Wildlife (Protection) Act through amendment. A robust methodology for All India Tiger estimation was developed by our Scientists at the Wildlife Institute of India and experts from NTCA and used for tiger estimation in the same year. First first-ever exercise was carried out in all forest areas of the country, which revealed that India had 1411 tigers in the wild. Thereafter the estimation was repeated every four years that was in 2010, 2014, 2018 and 2022 which brought out the tiger numbers as 1710, 2226, 2967 and 3682 respectively.

An increasing trend in tiger numbers has been noticed, but the most worrying part that surfaced was the shrinkage in the areas of tiger occupancy. Though the recovery of tigers has grown from 1411 to 3682, the area of its occupancy has declined. From 92,000 sq km area in the first cycle of estimation in 2006, it has been reduced to 88,000 sq km in the fourth cycle in 2018. Despite all stringent measures the fragmentation of habitats and encroachments in forest lands have continued resulting in the loss of tiger-occupied areas. The western Ghats landscape itself has lost 527 sq km of tiger occupancy in four years between 2014 and 2018. North northeastern part of the country has lost more than 6000 sq km area under tiger occupancy in this period. Survey of India biannual report, which was last published in 2021 has assessed the change in forest cover of all tiger reserves over a decade (from 2011 to 2021). The report brings out that the forest cover has decreased by 22.62 sq km (0.04%) in this period. Twenty tiger reserves have gained in forest cover, while the remaining 33 have lost. While Buxa (West Bengal, Annamalai (Tamil Nadu) and Indravati (Chhattisgarh) have gained, Kawal (Telangana), Bhadra

(Karnataka) and Sunderbans (West Bengal) have lost.

The latest tiger estimation report about the Western Ghats landscape reads, "Majority of tiger populations remain stable and some have declined, a significant reduction of tiger occupancy has been observed throughout the landscape." Central Indian Highlands and Eastern Ghats landscape are reported to have added tigers but several threats are looming large; The report adds "High concentration of mining activity poses a significant challenge to conservation. The forests of this region are under threat from various activities, despite their high biodiversity and conservation significance. - Tiger occupancy declined in states of Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Telangana." The description from the north eastern landscape is no different. It indicates some major threats the region is facing "The landscape has experienced extensive change in land-use patterns in the past, leading to severe loss of natural habitat." Overall, the report is positive about the increase in tiger numbers from 2967 to at least 3167; the loss in the Western Ghats

landscape has been wiped out by the gains in the central Indian landscape. Human-carnivore conflict is prevalent in several landscapes, especially where buffer forests are disturbed due to human and livestock presence. When an area of occupancy decreases and the number increases, tigers are bound to stray outside the reserve and come in conflict with humans. Forest department faces challenges across the tiger landscapes; the conflicts can disturb the relationship with communities. The country should pledge to focus on conservation even outside tiger reserves. Diversion of natural forests, whether inside or outside the tiger reserve is detrimental to conservation. There is a mechanism for paying

compensation for the loss of human life as well as livestock, but the community has to be taken in confidence. Losing tigers would mean losing tree cover and vice versa. Loss of forest cover is the loss of sink for Carbon dioxide and further warming of the planet.

The writer is retired Principal Chief Conservator of Forests Karnataka; views are personalK

Image Source: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on X post



RICH LEGACY OF INDIA'S TIMELESS CUISINE

With global trends and multinational narratives challenging the nutritional value of traditional Indian dishes, it is crucial to preserve the unique flavours and benefits that define Indian cuisine, writes **ANIL RAJPUT**

Air, water, and food are essential for life, and in India, they have had a revered status from the beginning of civilisation. In this article, I will focus on the third—Indian Food and cuisine! The history and deep connection of Bharat with food are perhaps among the oldest in the world; it is actually timeless. The people of early Vedic civilisations in India were nomadic pastoralists who practiced elaborate rituals to placate their gods. Agni, the god of fire, was considered the mouth through which the gods ate their sacrifices, and one of his favourite foods was ghee (clarified butter), which remains popular to this day. The Indus Valley Civilisation that spanned from 3300 BCE to 1300 BCE was known for barley, millet, ragi, amaranth, wheat, sorghum, rice, as well as oilseeds such as sesame, linseed, and mustard.



frontiers of India. The biryani, a celebratory meal made using meat, rice, yogurt, onion, and spices, originated in Persia but evolved in India during this era. Biryani now has multiple variants across the country, with the most popular ones credited to the Mughals and the nizams of Hyderabad. The Islamic conquest of India also introduced fruits such as apricots, melons, and plums, as well as a rich gravy style of cooking. Kebabs cooked over coals and pilaf became popular during this period and are still classified as Mughlai cuisine in present-day India. To the east, in West Bengal and Odisha, the amount of spice used in cooking decreases, and the use of mustard oil is more common. There is much importance given in this region to 'Shadrasa' or the six basic flavours in Ayurveda, with particular emphasis on tikta (the bitter taste). The cuisine of northeastern India is rice-based—rice is grown on terraced fields in the region's hilly terrain—and freshwater fish appears in many dishes, as does pork, mutton, and chicken. This reflects the cohesive nature of Indian regional cuisines, where the use of local ingredients and the customisation/ modification



A Pillar of Corporate Leadership

ANIL RAJPUT'S leadership journey, marked by strategic roles and impactful projects, showcases his deep understanding of finance, policy matters, and stakeholder management

Anil Rajput serves as a Member, Corporate Management Committee and Head of Corporate Affairs at ITC Limited, a leading Indian conglomerate with diversified presence in FMCG, hotels, information technology, packaging, paperboards and agribusiness.

Anil Rajput joined ITC in 1976, and in the course of last 48 years, he has held various positions in the organisation. Starting his career in the finance function, he was seconded to International Travel House Limited in 1983 as part of the start-up team. During his tenure with International Travel House

Limited, he assumed the charge of General Manager-Travel at the age of 27 and laid a strong foundation for its domestic network across India.

Upon completion of his secondment in International Travel House Limited in 1989, he was assigned the responsibility in ITC's Hotels Division as Divisional Project Controller. In this assignment with the Hotels Division, he was tasked with the critical functions of finance, projects and development. He has been closely associated with iconic hotel projects like ITC Grand Maratha, Mumbai, ITC Sonar Bangla, Kolkata and ITC Grand Central, Mumbai. In the year 2003, he held the position of Vice-President - Project



Finance & Development, before he moved to ITC's Corporate Affairs function as Vice President, Corporate Affairs. Anil Rajput has been heading the Corporate Affairs Division since 2007. He is the first corporate affairs chief of

ITC to be designated as its President. With a keen global perspective, clear and deep understanding of policy matters, he is highly attuned to the developments, nuances and impact of regulatory and policy issues. Over the years, he has forged effective and strategic relationships with key stakeholders in the government, public affairs, media and the industry chambers.

In his capacity as President, Corporate Affairs he also represents the organisation in all major industry Chambers of the country like CII, FICCI, ASSOCHAM, PHD, and International Chamber of Commerce. He is on the

Executive Committee of FICCI, ASSOCHAM, and PHD and he chairs/co-chairs various sectoral committees in these chambers. He holds the Membership of Academic / Professional organisations such as FMS and Skal International. He is a Non-Official Member of the Managing Body of the Indian Red Cross Society (Delhi Branch) and Secretary, Cuisine India Society.

He is also a Non-Executive Director on the Board of International Travel House, a subsidiary of ITC Ltd, engaged in the Travel & Tourism Business, since May 2000. Anil Rajput is an alumnus of Faculty of Management Studies, Delhi University.



Foreign invasions have had a profound impact on Indian food. When Alexander came to India in 350 BCE, several parts of the country were introduced to fresh herbs like mint, coriander, oregano, and essential oils like olive oil. The Turk-Mongol conqueror Timur brought the precursor of Biryani when he arrived at the



of dishes from different regions is done with perfection. In southern India, rice is the staple food, and it is eaten with sambhar, a watery stew comprising lentils, tamarind, and vegetables. Many fruits and vegetables are pickled and

consumed with meals, and coconut oil and gingelly (sesame) oils are used as the mediums for cooking. Seafood is common along the coast, along with high sugar and salt content, which is scientifically supported due to the high humidity and the resulting loss of body fluids from excessive perspiration in these regions. Within southern India, there are also diverse cuisines—

Andhra, Tamil, Chettinad, Kerala, and Mangalore, among others. Each region cooks sambhar differently and uses different varieties of rice. Tamil cuisine classifies food into six tastes—sweet, sour, salty, bitter, pungent, and astringent—and aspires to include each taste in every main meal.

The west coast of India has its own distinct cuisines. In Goa,

rice and fish are staples. Goan Hindu cuisine is less spicy and includes many vegetables, though little onion and garlic. Portuguese cuisine in Goa includes meat and uses a vinegar-based gravy (vindaloo) for many dishes. The arrival of New World vegetables by way of the Portuguese in the 16th century resulted in further changes to Indian cuisines. They introduced chilies, tomatoes,

potatoes, and peanuts, and brought beans, corn, cashews, peppers, and more from the Americas. Vinegar, which is used to season achar and chutneys, was also introduced by them in India.

In coastal Maharashtra, fish and rice are quite common. Mutton Kohlapuri is famed, and then there is the legendary Pav Bhaji. Things

change within the state as well, and we find the increased consumption of millets and groundnuts in inland areas instead of rice and coconut. Further north, Gujarat is predominantly vegetarian, and most dishes have some sweetness due to the use of sugar. This is quite unique to the state and indicative of the sheer variety and changes.

A CULINARY SYMPHONY

CHEF PRATEEK SADHU and **CHEF MANISH MEHROTRA** Shine at Indian Accent Pop-Up

FOODFREAK



Pawan Soni
Food critic and founder of the Big F Awards

I had long yearned to savor Chef Prateek Sadhu's cuisine, which I had heard so much about. However, during my brief visit to Mumbai, I only had time for lunch, and his ingredient-driven restaurant, 'Masque,' was only open for dinner. Later, I learned about his new restaurant, 'Naar'-meaning fire in Kashmiri-near Kasauli, where all dishes are cooked over a wood fire, symbolising the passion of the entire team to deliver something extraordinary. Chef Manish Mehrotra, a household name, has given



India a strong contender in Asia's 50 Best Restaurants with Indian Accent. So, when Rohit Khattar, the media-shy promoter of Indian Accent and other popular restaurants, invited me to a unique pop-up at Indian Accent featuring both Chef Prateek and Chef Manish, I immediately said yes with great excitement. The event was graced by many luminaries from the culinary world, including Vir Sanghvi, Rocky Mohan, Rocky Singh, and Sourish da, with whom I had the pleasure of sharing a table



and discussing each dish as it arrived. While I could detail the 12 exquisite courses we enjoyed, I'll focus on a few standout dishes: **DIRTY TOAST BY CHEF SADHU:** This fluffy fermented wheat bread topped with trout, flavoured with Kashundi and perhaps a



hint of ketchup, was both comforting and gourmet. **GHEE LAMB BY CHEF MEHROTRA:** This dish exemplified the principle that less is more. The best meat from the shank was cooked with just four ingredients—ghee, salt, red chili, and garlic. The result was a flavour explosion, and I

guarantee you won't find better meat. **LEMON CRAB BY CHEF MEHROTRA:** Cooked with Karnataka's byadgi chili, it boasted vibrant color and flavour without being overly spicy, and was served with dried shrimp poppadom for an added crunch. **PAHADI PORK BY CHEF**

SADHU: This dish, served with bakharkhani, white butter, and fermented bamboo shoot pickle, featured a perfect fat-meat ratio and was my overall favourite. The handmade noodles called sundar-kala were also delightful. Each course was expertly paired with wine, and the desserts, such as the classic Kashmiri shufta served like a pinwheel paneer, were equally delicious. Unfortunately, the pop-up is already over. It was priced at Rs. 9800 per person for both vegetarian and non-vegetarian offerings. The food was so exceptional that I am already planning a visit to Naar to enjoy a meal in its serene environment.



Photos: Pankaj Kumar

A DAZZLING DEBUT IN THE WORLD OF KUCHIPUDI

Aadya Gupta's breathtaking Kuchipudi debut, Rangapravesham, showcased her years of dedication and passion. Guided by the esteemed Drs. Raja Radha Reddy and Guru Kaushalya Reddy, Aadya's performance beautifully highlighted her mastery of the classical art form, illustrating her journey from student to accomplished dancer, writes **SAKSHI PRIYA**

As one steps into Kamani Auditorium, they are immediately transported into the heart of a spellbinding Kuchipudi recital - Rangapravesham. This cherished milestone, marking a dancer's formal debut, was brilliantly embodied by Aadya Gupta. Under the esteemed guidance of Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri awardees Drs. Raja Radha Reddy and Guru Kaushalya

Reddy, Aadya's performance was a radiant showcase of her dedication and passion. Her recital not only highlighted years of rigorous training but also celebrated her remarkable journey from an earnest student to a consummate performer. The evening was more than just a performance; it was a celebration of art and tradition that captivated everyone present. The audience's presence in the hall was a tribute to the enduring

appreciation for Kuchipudi, as people from all age groups came together to admire the rich heritage of this classical dance form. The non-stop applause and standing ovation from the audience, spanning from children to elders, underscored the universal appeal and excellence of Aadya's performance. This enthusiastic response highlighted not only her individual talent but also the remarkable mentorship of her Gurus.

The evening's celebration was enhanced by a meticulous attention to detail in every aspect of the performance. The light design added a captivating depth to the visual experience, enhancing the emotional impact of the dance. The costumes and makeup, elegant and alluring, played a crucial role in bringing the traditional essence of Kuchipudi to life, ensuring that each movement was complemented by its visual presentation. A particularly magical aspect of the performance was the live orchestra, whose contribution was essential to the recital's success. The musicians created a soothing and heavenly auditory experience, particularly in the Raga Ragamaalika, which accompanied the piece "Chhaap Tilak Sab Cheeni." The harmonious balance and deeply devotional quality of the music elevated Aadya's performance, creating a rich, immersive experience that resonated deeply with the audience. The symbiotic relationship between the dancer and the musicians underscored the true essence of classical performance, highlighting the integral role of live music in enhancing the beauty and emotional depth of the dance. The program featured a range of pieces that demonstrated Aadya's mastery over Kuchipudi's expressive depth and technical brilliance. She began with "Shree Venkateshwara Stothram," a devotional piece that set a serene tone for

the evening. This was followed by "Jathikattu" in Raag Maand and Taal Khanda Chapu, a dynamic dance that showcased her precision and rhythmic mastery. One of the evening's highlights was "Bhamakalapam," a narrative dance that vividly portrayed Satyabhama's intense love for Krishna. Aadya's nuanced performance captured the emotional complexity of the character, showcasing her ability to convey deep emotions through her dance. Her rendition of "Chhaap Tilak Sab Cheeni," a poem by the 14th-century Sufi mystic Amir Khusro, was another standout, blending romantic and devotional themes in a mesmerizing performance. The recital concluded with "Tarangam," a traditional Kuchipudi piece celebrating Lord Krishna's childhood stories. Aadya's skillful execution of intricate footwork on a brass plate was a breathtaking display of her virtuosity and command over the dance form. Drs. Raja and Radha Reddy, along with Kaushalya Reddy, have played a pivotal role in promoting Kuchipudi globally. Their unique choreographic style and ability to blend tradition with modern sensibilities have garnered them numerous accolades. Natya Tarangini,

founded in 1976, stands as a testament to their dedication and vision, nurturing countless dancers over the years. Aadya's journey, shaped by the disciplined and compassionate guidance of her Gurus, reflects the transformative power of Kuchipudi. The institute's focus on technical precision and emotional depth has enabled her to perform on prestigious platforms across India. This debut marks not just an achievement but a new beginning for Aadya, promising greater heights in her dance journey. Aadya Gupta's Rangapravesham was a radiant celebration of her talent and dedication. The performance, accentuated by beautiful lighting, elegant costumes and a supportive audience, was a seamless blend of technical brilliance and emotional depth. The live orchestra's contribution added a magical dimension, making the evening an immersive experience that beautifully highlighted the essence of Kuchipudi. The overwhelming appreciation from attendees, coupled with the meticulous execution of every element of the recital, left a lasting impression. With the unwavering support of her family, friends and mentors, Aadya is poised to achieve even greater success in her future endeavors.



A Celebration of Connection

M-tastic's inaugural Mother & Kids Exhibition offers a perfect blend of quality shopping and interactive fun. This vibrant event celebrates the special bond between mothers and children, featuring curated products and engaging activities that create unforgettable family moments, says **TEAM AGENDA**



In a world where family moments meet unforgettable experiences, M-tastic's inaugural Mother & Kids Exhibition has set a new benchmark for joy and connection. This enchanting event celebrates the special bond between mothers and their children, blending quality shopping, imaginative play and creative activities into a magical experience for families. Founded by Suryashi Juneja and Surbhi Sachdeva, the exhibition reflects their combined expertise and passion. Suryashi, a seasoned chartered accountant with a background in logistics, and Surbhi, who holds dual MBAs and extensive corporate experience, have crafted an event dedicated to enhancing family life. Their goal is to bridge the gap between emerging homegrown brands and discerning parents, providing a premier platform for quality brands and enthusiastic parents to connect and discover. The exhibition features a curated selection of products catering to every child's needs. Visitors are greeted with chic clothing, imaginative toys, innovative educational tools and stylish accessories. Highlights include the Norah Kids Collection and PNK by

Isha Arora, which offer adorable pink dresses capturing the essence of childhood wonder. Tiny COCO adds to the excitement with its chic finds for little minds, appealing to both children and their parents. Beyond shopping, the event is a celebration of creativity and fun. Children can participate in art workshops, science experiments, dynamic STEM projects and cupcake decorating. Face painting, gel nail art and a dedicated play area provide endless entertainment, while older kids enjoy exciting games. The creative free art corner stands out, allowing children to express their artistic talents and share special moments with their families. Seeing their faces light up with joy and concentration highlights the simple yet profound pleasures of childhood. A standout feature is the face painting, adding a special touch of joy to the event. Children and mothers are thrilled to see their favourite stars and characters come to life with vibrant designs. A particularly heartwarming sight was a little girl with a doll painted on her face in sparkling glitter, capturing the fun and creativity that define the exhibition. The event also includes free nail art by the talented Vaishali

Nagpal. Her decision to offer this service at no charge underscores the significance of such exhibitions in providing small businesses with a valuable platform. Vaishali's work adds glamour to the day and highlights how events like M-tastics play a crucial role in supporting the visibility and growth of emerging brands. This commitment enriches the experience for all attendees. Another highlight is the variety of stalls. Rakhi stands by a mother-daughter duo buzzing with activity as children eagerly choose their favourite designs, reflecting the creativity and personal touch of the event. The Ritwik Collection, featuring handmade tote bags and file folders crafted by a mother-son duo, exemplifies collaborative creativity and practical products from small businesses. M-tastic's dedication to a holistic experience is evident in its food offerings. Health-conscious parents will appreciate the homemade bakery items and granola bites from Pinks & Grumps, crafted without preservatives. Sanchita's Gourmet Medleys provides a selection of additive-free snacks, including Nutri Hexas cheese basil crackers and Millet Murukku. This focus on wholesome, artisanal products underscores the organizer's commitment to creating a nurturing environment for families. In essence, M-tastic's Mother & Kids Exhibition resonates with laughter, joy and discovery. It has set a new standard for family-centric celebrations and illuminated the beauty of shared experiences. Families leave with hands full of delightful finds and hearts brimming with cherished memories, experiencing a renewed sense of wonder and connection. M-tastic's dedication to thoughtful curation and the joy of family moments ensures that this exhibition will be remembered as a radiant chapter in the story of family celebrations.

Discover the Depths of Abstraction

Tejinder Kanda's latest exhibition is a vivid exploration of the human psyche, inviting viewers to delve into the realm of self-discovery through a mesmerising display of abstract artistry

BY **TEAM AGENDA**

Tejinder Kanda's latest exhibition, "In-Within," at the Shridharani Art Gallery, is a profound exploration of the human psyche through abstract art. Kanda, a celebrated contemporary artist known for his evocative and thought-provoking pieces, continues to push the boundaries of abstraction with this new series. The exhibition features 32 artworks, each painted with acrylic on canvas, offering viewers an opportunity to engage with art that is both visually stunning and deeply introspective. Kanda's work in this exhibition showcases a mastery of abstract techniques, utilising impasto methods and a vibrant palette to create canvases that evoke a powerful emotional response. The use of impasto techniques adds a tactile dimension to his work, inviting viewers to experience the paintings not just visually, but almost physically. This adds depth and complexity, drawing the audience into the layered and textured world Kanda creates. The swirling strokes and tonal gradations are reminiscent of the Abstract Expressionist movement, echoing the work of artists like Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko. However, Kanda's approach is distinct in its exploration of the "unidentified and unknown," pushing beyond the traditional confines of abstraction. Kanda's versatility as an artist is evident in his wide range of influences and mediums. While this exhibition focuses on acrylic paintings, Kanda's artistic practice extends to vibrant silk-screen prints and ceramics, showcasing his ability to adapt and explore various forms of artistic expression. This diversity is a monument to Kanda's commitment to exploring the creative process in its many facets, providing a richer context for understanding his work. It also speaks to his broader artistic philosophy that art is not confined to a single medium or style, but is a continually evolving dialogue between artist, material,



Photos: Pankaj Kumar

and audience. The palette in "In-Within" is notably varied, ranging from earthy tones of reds and browns to cool blues, purples and greens. This wide spectrum of color not only reflects Kanda's skillful use of color theory but also the emotional depth of his work. He also incorporates pinks, pastels and yellows, which are traditionally seen as more feminine colors. However, Kanda employs them with a vigorous application and powerful strokes that inject a masculine energy into his paintings, subverting traditional color associations.

This interplay of color and technique creates a dynamic tension in the artwork, allowing viewers to experience a range of emotions from calmness and contentment to intensity and excitement. One of the most compelling aspects of Kanda's work is his ability to capture the passage of time and emotion. The fluid application of watered-down acrylics allows him to layer colors in a way that reflects his emotions and thoughts at the moment of creation. This technique gives his work a sense of immediacy and authenticity, inviting viewers to

connect with the artist's emotional journey. It's as if each painting captures a fleeting moment in Kanda's personal exploration of his own psyche, offering a glimpse into his inner world. The exhibition is curated by Georgina Maddox, who highlights the transformative power of abstraction in Kanda's work. Maddox emphasises how abstraction goes beyond the physical realm, allowing viewers to connect with the intangible essence of the world. In this regard, Kanda's work invites the audience to engage in a shared journey of self-discovery. His art dissolves the boundaries between the physical and the metaphysical, revealing the true essence of the human experience. In "In-Within," Tejinder Kanda offers more than just an art exhibition; he provides a profound and introspective experience that invites viewers to look beyond the surface and engage with the deeper layers of meaning and emotion embedded in his work. This series represents a significant milestone in Kanda's artistic journey, as he delves into the depths of his psyche, translating his internal exploration into a visually stunning and emotive body of work. The exhibition is a tribute to Kanda's skill and creativity, offering a compelling exploration of the human condition that is both intimate and universal. "In-Within" offers a unique opportunity to experience the transformative power of abstract art in a profoundly personal and meaningful way.

THE JNANI MUST KEEP EVER IN HIS MIND THE "OM TAT SAT", THAT IS, OM THE ONLY REAL EXISTENCE —SWAMI VIVEKANANDA



YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

This week, you may sense a feeling of constraint or restriction in your enthusiasm and energy. External influences might be causing you to perceive barriers that don't actually exist. It's advisable to approach situations with care and thoughtful planning...

Lucky number 2 | **Lucky colour** Coral **Lucky day** Monday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

This week, your creative energies and nurturing spirit are heightened, making it an ideal time for artistic projects and deepening relationships. Express your true self and foster meaningful connections with those close to you...

Lucky number 15 | **Lucky colour** Saffron **Lucky day** Sunday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

This week, you may encounter challenges or unexpected setbacks. The universe is encouraging you to stay strong and keep going. When facing obstacles, draw on your innate ability to adapt and find creative solutions...

Lucky number 20 | **Lucky colour** Green **Lucky day** Thursday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week brings a strong focus on self-reflection. While reminiscing about the past can offer valuable insights, it's crucial not to get lost in thoughts of what might have been. You might find yourself feeling somewhat disconnected or unsatisfied with where you are right now...

Lucky number 12 | **Lucky colour** Denim Blue **Lucky day** Wednesday



VRIGO Aug 23-Sep 22

This week presents a challenge to your meticulous planning and dedication. You may face unexpected delays or setbacks that test your ability to stay on track. Despite these obstacles, it's crucial to maintain your focus and adjust your strategies accordingly...

Lucky number 10 | **Lucky colour** Pink **Lucky day** Saturday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This week, your drive for achievement is exceptionally strong. You'll find yourself encouraged to take decisive steps toward your objectives, infused with an energy and zeal that will fuel your pursuits. This is an excellent time to embrace new opportunities and invest your efforts in inventive projects...

Lucky number 23 | **Lucky colour** Lemon **Lucky day** Tuesday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

This week calls for careful decision-making as you might find yourself drawn toward quick fixes or unhelpful attachments. The current cosmic setup might challenge your resistance to immediate pleasures, emphasizing the importance of choices that support your future aspirations...

Lucky number 8 | **Lucky colour** Lilac **Lucky day** Tuesday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

This week, you may encounter some challenging interactions that could test your diplomatic abilities. It's a time when differing views might surface, prompting the need for thoughtful negotiation and tactful communication. To keep the peace and ensure all parties feel valued, it's essential to listen actively and propose solutions that accommodate diverse viewpoints...

Lucky number 4 | **Lucky colour** Yellow **Lucky day** Wednesday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

This week focuses on cultivating tranquility and a sense of security. It's an excellent time to foster your personal connections and ensure your living space is a haven of comfort. Engage closely with your friends and family, showing gratitude and relishing quiet, serene moments together. You might find that your support network is particularly uplifting now...

Lucky number 19 | **Lucky colour** Red **Lucky day** Friday



CANCER June 21-July 22

This week, your intuitive senses are exceptionally acute. Embrace your profound emotional insight and heightened sense of justice. Current influences favor straightforward communication and assertive actions. It's a prime moment to advocate for your values and defend your positions. You'll find that clarity comes easily now, enhancing your ability to navigate complex issues and generate innovative solutions...

Lucky number 6 | **Lucky colour** Emerald Green **Lucky day** Friday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

This week is centered on deep personal reflection and embracing solitude. Current celestial alignments prompt a journey into your own feelings, urging you to connect deeply with your inner guidance. Dedicate moments for personal introspection, perhaps through journaling, as this process will help refine your clarity and vision. Trust your internal compass to guide you through any uncertainties or decisions that arise...

Lucky number 11 | **Lucky colour** Gold **Lucky day** Saturday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

This week focuses on finding peace and stability. Planetary influences encourage nurturing your relationships and creating a sense of comfort at home. Connect with loved ones, express appreciation, and enjoy moments of tranquility. You may find yourself surrounded by supportive friends or family, fostering a positive and nurturing atmosphere. Take time to appreciate the blessings in your life and celebrate achievements with those close to you...

Lucky number 22 | **Lucky colour** Teal **Lucky day** Monday

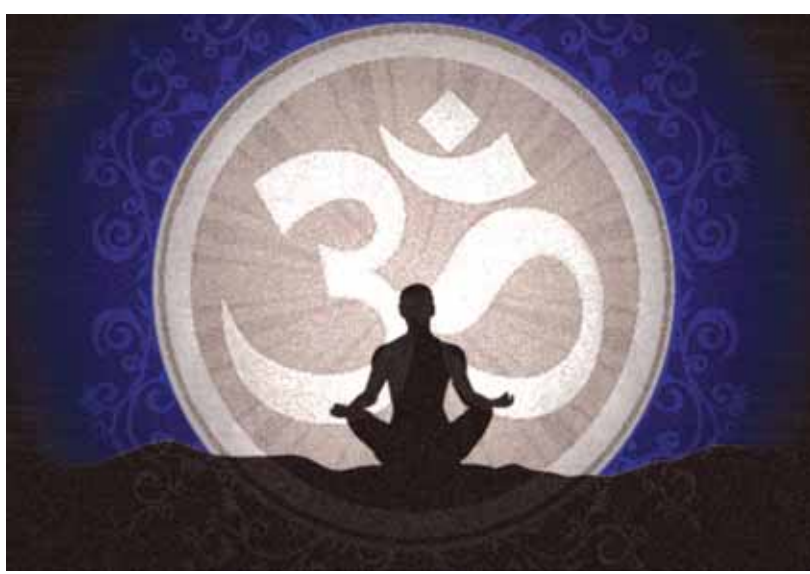
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ASTROTURF
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Three dimensions of 'Om?'

'Om?' is supposedly indivisible but said to have in its womb three modes of Shakti - Sata, Rajasa, and Tamasa, and so termed as Shakti-trinity. Each of them is marked with individual specific functional aspects of creation process. They are also identified with attributes manifested in human beings. It doesn't mean that Om split into three different modes. Om sound corresponds to causal stress arising at primordial source, which when gravitated, three different energy variants inherent with the primordial source got excited. The word Shakti need not be mistaken as being synonymous with energy as we understand in modern sense. Here, it is worth adding that mechanically excited energy does not have a drive of its own. It will move the way it gets directed. Shakti on the contrary, is believed to be a self-intelligent force, which involuntarily subscribes to self-evolved design parameters underlying the making of this world. It is in this sense that Shakti is perceived as self-conscious enough to follow nature driven design parameters. Had it not been true, a dynamic world would not

have spontaneously come into being, which has been doing its rounds in an orderly fashion since time immemorial, and with absolute precision. And all through its run, the forces in play remain in perfect harmony and balance. We call Sata, Rajasa, and Tamasa, as three modes of Shakti. They are marked with three functional aspects of the world process. The three, working in unison, excited a creation chain that progressively evolved into the manifest plural world. Self-intelligent that they supposedly are, led them get drawn towards each other to carry forward the creation chain. It is pertinent to note here that though the three are believed to be marked with varying attributes, they do not have any relevance in isolation. They carry meaning only when acting in support of each other as a collective organism to carry forward the creation chain. Though at different stages of evolutionary chain, the attribute of one or the other may be prominently in evidence, but simultaneously the other two would be playing a supportive role from the background. As per the second law of



thermodynamics, once there is entropy (disorder), it multiplies. So, following causal stress (disorder) at the primal-source, energy trinity got excited. That followed random mutation of the three modes of energy, which led to emergence of voluminous streams of

differentiated energies. Evolved thus, step-by-step, the corporeal world of forms and names together with all dynamic mechanisms' operative in between. And since matter and energy are inter-convertible, so has the world with form and name come out of forces

in play in the world process. Here, it may not be out of place to draw a parallel between emergence of three Shakti variants and the nuclear fission process. Following nuclear fission, each nuclei of a radioactive substance splits into three and then multiply in geometric progression. It sounds reason, if we hypothesize that the Big-Bag event would be nothing short of nuclear reaction type of an event. Even the issuance of energies with a roaring Hum? sound as described in Indian scriptures should also fall in the same category. Inferential logic would suggest that it would be quite fair to hypothesize the Primal-Source as the self-intelligent 'Energy-Whole'. The issuance of the inlaid constituents set into motion the creation chain, which finally culminated in the manifest plural world. Premise on which the shakti-trinity stand. Out of the above three Shakti variants, Sata (the eternal reality) supposedly carries in its womb the seeds of creation - the radical potential to manifest into a world with form and name. Rajasa is said to be the activating force, which

stirs up the seeds of creation. Tamasa, with its inherent sense of inertia has the capacity to bind whatever is subtle within the limitation of form. On this strength, it holds on what Rajasa stirred up, and then objectifies them into form-existence with name. It is something like forces of two opposite polarities such as male and female principles converging for the sake of creation. Sata, further lends support to provide temporary stability to the objectified form-existence, which could be captured by our cognitive instruments. Here again, the convergence of the three Shakti variants, provides the ground necessary for us to have a feel of the presence of "The fundamental element of Consciousness" in the form of life sparks available to all dynamic existences. The Shakti variants, thus, serve as three aspects of creative intelligences of nature, vital to carry forward the world process. *The issue continues.....*
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