



**WORLD 5**  
HAMAS CLEARS WAY FOR POSSIBLE CEASE-FIRE

**MONEY 6**  
GOVT MAINSTREAMED STARTUPS: PAYTM FOUNDER

**SPORT 7**  
RAJAWAT STUNS WORLD NUMBER 4 ANTONSEN

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## Terrorists Encountered in Kashmir; one Jawan martyred



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

A jawan of the Indian Army on Saturday was martyred during an encounter with a group of heavily armed terrorists in the South Kashmir district of Kulgam. Till the time of filing the report, the security forces were engaged with the terrorists at two locations in the valley. According to a spokesman of the Jammu and Kashmir police, the first gunfight took place in Modergam village of the south Kashmir district after security forces launched a cordon and search operation there following specific inputs about the presence of terrorists. The terrorists opened fire at the security forces and an encounter broke out. The officials said a soldier of the Indian Army sustained fatal injuries in the exchange of fire. In another gunfight,

contact with terrorists was established in the Frisal Chinnigam area of Kulgam. "Police and security forces are on the job. Further details shall follow," Kashmir Zone Police said in a post on X. Meanwhile, the Director General of Police RR Swain Saturday said the adversary across the border is using foreign mercenaries to create a fear psychosis among the people to sustain terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. Interacting with the media in Doda after promoting seven special police officers (SPOs) as constables for their exemplary bravery during a recent anti-terrorist operation in the Gandoh area of the district, the police chief said people are fully cooperating with the security agencies and it is a matter of time when the terrorists start getting eliminated. Three foreign terrorists were killed in a gunfight in the

Gandoh area of the Doda district on June 26. This was the first encounter in Gandoh in more than a decade. Without naming Pakistan, Swain said, "Our adversary and enemy has posed a challenge, thinking that this is a border area and they can take advantage of it by pushing foreign terrorists to revive militancy by creating fear (among the people). "They (foreign terrorists) are not in big numbers and we are fully determined to defeat them, like we have done in the past, with the help of other forces and cooperation of the public," he said. The DGP said the foreign mercenaries do not belong to anyone and they also do not fall in the ambit of law. "They are involved in mass killings, taking sheep without paying money and their aim is to create fear and force the public into submission and create disturbance. But it cannot be achieved because the people are with us and we will fight them out," the DGP said. "Police and its security partners are fully determined and committed to defeating the terrorists with the active support of village defence guards, SPOs and commoners. It is only a question of time when they will start getting killed, and they will start getting eliminated," he added.



## Bhole Baba breaks silence

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Following the stampede at his "satsang" in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras a few days ago, which resulted in the death of 121 people earlier this week, Bhole Baba, the former constable-turned-self-styled godman, expressed his sorrow over the incident. He said he is "deeply saddened" by the loss of lives, conveying his condolences and sympathy to the grieving families. "May God give us the strength to bear this pain. Please keep faith in the Government and the administration. I have faith that anyone who created the chaos would not be spared. Through my lawyer AP Singh, I have requested the members of the committee to stand with the bereaved families and the injured and help them throughout their lives," said Bhole Baba in a video statement. Meanwhile, Devprakash Madhukar, the key accused in the July 2 Hathras stampede, was on Saturday sent to 14-day judicial custody by a magistrate

court, officials said. Besides, Sanju Yadav, another suspect who has been arrested in connection with the case, was also sent to jail for the same duration, they said. Earlier in the day, Hathras Superintendent of Police Nipun Agarwal told reporters that the police would apply in the court to get the remand of Madhukar and other suspects. "Devprakash Madhukar and Sanju Yadav were produced before the judicial magistrate's court today and both were sent in judicial remand for 14 days," Assistant Prosecution Officer Uma Shankar Yadav told reporters. The APO said Ramprakash Shakya, who too has been arrested in the stampede case, would be produced in the court on Sunday since he was arrested after Madhukar and Yadav and has some police formalities pending. Madhukar was arrested from Delhi's Najafgarh area late on Friday night by a Special Operations Group of the Hathras police.

## PM Modi Budget Ready

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

Narendra Modi's third tenure as Prime Minister is all set to present its eleventh annual Budget consecutively and with this Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, serving her second consecutive term as Finance Minister, will become first Finance Minister to present seven consecutive Union Budgets, surpassing Morarji Desai, who presented six consecutive annual Budget of the Government of India. Interestingly the Budget will also be the first one in the new Parliament which was inaugurated last September during which the historic Women Reservation Bill was passed. President Droupadi Murmu on Saturday approved the proposal for summoning of both Houses of Parliament for the Budget Session, 2024 from July 22, to August 12 and the Union Budget 2024-25 will be presented in Lok Sabha on July 23. This will be the first Budget presented by the Government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's NDA third term. An interim Budget was presented in February ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, which were held in April-June and a Special Session concluded early this week where the new MPs took oath and new Council of Ministers were introduced besides the Presidential address to joint sitting was conducted. In her address to a joint sitting



of Parliament, she had said major social and economic decisions will be a highlight of the Budget. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju announced Budget Session will be held between July 22 and August 12 and Sitharaman will present the Budget on July 23. "President of India, on the recommendation of Government of India, has approved the proposal for summoning of both the Houses of Parliament for the Budget Session, 2024 from July 22, 2024 to August 12, 2024 (subject to exigencies of Parliamentary Business)." Given the key NDA partners — TDP and JD(U) — have shared their demands to the PM and separately to the Cabinet Ministers, including Sitharaman, the Budget is expected to give more weightage on the welfare aspects. Interestingly the crucial portfolios like, finance, home, defence, agriculture, roads and rails are with the BJP. The Union Budget plays a pivotal role in outlining the

government's economic priorities, fiscal strategies, and expenditure plans for the year ahead. It is keenly awaited by various stakeholders including businesses, investors, economists, and the general public for its implications on economic growth, sectoral allocations, taxation policies, and welfare measures. Sources said that a series of meetings with various political, social and economical including industrial stakeholders are on the anvil in the next fortnight, a usual practise, before the budget is shaped and prepared. Sources said the Economic Survey will be tabled in both the House — Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha — when the Parliament meets on July 22. Sitharaman has already met with economists, finance and capital market experts and industry bodies for pre-budget consultations. Sitharaman also chaired a meeting with Finance Ministers of different States and Union Territories towards the end of June to take suggestions for the upcoming Union Budget.

## Monsoon's merciless march

Assam situation grim

Amarnath Yatra stalled

Lightning strikes Bihar

Himachal, U'khand disrupted

PNS ■ ASSAM

Assam's flood situation remained critical on Saturday with over 24.50 lakh people reeling under the deluge in 30 districts and major rivers flowing above the danger mark at several places, an official bulletin said. The toll in this year's flood was 52 and 12 others lost their lives due to landslides and storms. The Brahmaputra river is flowing above the danger mark at Nimatighat, Guwahati, Goalpara and Dhubri. Its tributaries Burhi Dihing at Chenimari, Dikhou at Sivasagar, Disang at Nanglamuraghat, Dhansiri at Numaligarh, Jia Bharali at NT Road crossing, and Kopili at Kamrup and Dharamtul are also flowing above the danger levels. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma held a meeting with officials after returning from the severely affected Dibrugarh district and reviewed the flood situation in the State. Assam's famed Kaziranga National Park (KNP) has claimed the lives of 114 wild animals while 95 others have been rescued till Saturday, an official said. The animal mortality in the KNP has increased from 77 till Friday. The dead animals include four rhinos and 94 hog deer due to drowning in the KNP and 11 others during treatment.



File Photo: PTI

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

The Amarnath Yatra was temporarily suspended on both routes to the cave shrine on Saturday as a precautionary measure due to heavy rainfall, officials said. Intermittent heavy rainfall has been seen along the Baltal and Pahalgam routes since last night, they said. The decision to temporarily suspend the yatra was taken as a precautionary measure to ensure the safety of the pilgrims, the officials added. The number of devotees who have visited the 3,800-metre-high cave shrine and had 'darshan' of the naturally formed ice lingam has crossed 1.50 lakh. The Amarnath Yatra began on June 29 from the twin tracks — the traditional 48-km Nunwan-Pahalgam route in Anantnag and the 14-km shorter but steeper Baltal route in Ganderbal — and will culminate on August 19.

PNS ■ PATNA

Nine people were killed after being struck by lightning in six districts of Bihar in the last 24 hours, officials said on Saturday. The lightning deaths were reported from Jehanabad, Madhepura, East Champaran, Rohtas, Saran and Supaul districts, they said. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar expressed grief over the death of nine people due to lightning and announced an ex-gratia of ₹4 lakh to each of the deceased's family members. According to a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) on Saturday, Jehanabad district reported three deaths followed by two in Madhepura, one each in East Champaran, Rohtas, Saran and Supaul. The CM urged people to follow advisories issued by the Disaster Management Department.

PNS ■ UTTARAKHAND

Heavy rain disrupted daily life in Uttarakhand. Daily life was disrupted in the Hill State as the rain triggered numerous landslides, blocking key roads, including the national highway leading to Badrinath with a five-year-old drowned in a rainwater-filled pit in Dehradun and a teenager in a Haridwar rivulet. Landslides triggered by heavy rains over the past few days have left the Badrinath National Highway blocked at more than half a dozen places, including Kameda between Gauchar and Rudraprayag, Bhanir Pani near Pipalkoti, Pagalnala near Tangni, Pinola between Joshimath and Badrinath and at Kanchanganga beyond Hanumanchatti. National Highways Authority of India and Border Roads Organisation personnel are busy clearing the roads. Also, heavy rain lashed parts of Himachal, including Kangra's Dharamshala and Palampur where rainfall levels exceeded the 200-mm mark. According to the emergency operation centre, 62 roads, including 38 in Mandi, 14 Kullu, five in Shimla, four in Sirmour and one in Kangra district, are closed for traffic following torrential rains on Saturday evening.

## Malda Mangoes Multiply

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

For the first time in many decades perhaps Indians are getting to taste their own mangoes — sweet, fleshy, soft and smooth. Malda aam or Malda mango to be specific. The reason: Slumped export market owing to low yield, yet high price. The upshot: Crops are experiencing a bumper sale in the domestic outlets so to say. Says Afroz Bhai an orchard owner in Old Malda, "Not on many occasions you have a high quality product with a sluggish export... This year the export market has slumped because of high

quality and low quantity... the price fetched abroad is not as remunerative as the market would expect and so we are forced to sell it indoors." This year the Malda mango that you get for ₹80-₹120 in Kolkata is being sold at ₹100-₹150 per kilogram in Delhi, the Bengal Horticulture department officials said. The wholesale prices surged by about 50-60 per cent due to low yield and high quality. "We expected higher price abroad when we were booking customers from England or Dubai... they showed interest but owing to higher price they backtracked and then the mango route was diverted to



internal markets," said Roop Kanjilal a mango expert and a whole-seller of fruits, adding how this year the customers in Delhi played a "compensatory role" insofar as mango market is concerned. "About 17 tonnes of mango

was sold alone in the Delhi Mango festival... and though other varieties like Himsagar, Lakshman Bhog were in demand Langra for its high quality yield sold hugely," said a member of West Bengal Exporters' Coordination Committee. Malda is a historical medieval town where the Malda mango originated perhaps during the time of the Nawabs of Bengal one of whom loved the aroma of the fruit so much that he got a row of several varieties like Madhukulkuli and Begam Khas planted in his backyard apparently to please and enamour his queens in sleep.

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# 196 candidates selected, 25 get on-spot appointment letters, 318 shortlisted in Chas Employment fair

PNS : BOKARO

One-day Datopant Thengadi Employment Fair was organized by the Sub-Regional Employment Office, Bokaro, under the aegis of the Jharkhand Government's Department of Labor, Employment, Training, and Skill Development at the Industrial Training Institute (ITI) Chas campus on Saturday.

The fair was inaugurated by Deputy Development Commissioner Girija Shankar Prasad, Additional Municipal Commissioner Anant Kumar, and District Employment Officer Manoj Manjeet.



Prasad emphasized the government's aim to connect as many candidates as possible with employment and livelihood opportunities matching their skills and qualifications. A total of 22 companies par-

ticipated in the fair, offering jobs to candidates from various blocks of the district. He encouraged students to not view any job as insignificant and shared examples to illustrate his point. Additional

Municipal Commissioner Chas Anant Kumar highlighted the importance of such fairs in providing a platform for both employers and job seekers. He stressed the need for technical prepared-

ness among youth to seize local employment opportunities and advised candidates to register with the employment office to receive job fair notifications via SMS.

District Employment Officer Manoj Manjeet announced plans to organize employment fairs in August and September 2024, aiming to provide more employment opportunities for local youth under the Jharkhand State Employment Act 2021 and the Rules 2022, ensuring 75% of jobs for local candidates.

Notably at the fair, 196 candidates were selected, with 25 receiving appointment letters on the spot. Additionally, 318 candidates

were shortlisted.

Twenty-two companies participated in the employment fair where approximately 2,000 applicants participated against a total of 1,505 vacancies. The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Kishore Kumar Sinha, with Shweta Ranjan managing the stage. Present at the event were Principal of ITI Chas Shiv Kumar Prasad, District Skill Coordinator Santosh Chaudhary, Kishore Kumar Sinha, Kasinath Hansda, Sunil Kumar, Santosh Kumar, Indra Kumar, Chandan Kumar Das, Jaydev Kumar, Jayprakash, Ashok Kumar, Murari Paswan, Radheshyam, Nandu Kumar etc

## Books and Stationery Distribution at Deepansh Shiksha Kendra

PNS : BOKARO

In a heartwarming event, books, stationery kits, and school bags were distributed to young students at the first assembly of Deepansh Shiksha Kendra, a school run under the aegis of DPS Bokaro for children from marginalized communities.



Principal Dr. A.S. Gangwar personally handed out the supplies, bringing joy to the children. In his address, Dr. Gangwar urged the students to work hard, respect their teachers, parents, and elders, and maintain their health through regular yoga and good deeds. He encouraged them to learn from failures and not compare themselves to others. The event featured performances by the students, including 'Ganesh Vandana' by Aakriti (Class VI), an inspirational song by Class V, and recitations by Divyanshu (Class II) and Class IV students. The principal also awarded certificates and medals for perfect attendance. Dr. Sarita Gangwar, In-Charge of Deepansh, highlighted DPS Bokaro's dedication to educating underprivileged children for over two decades. The 'Deepansh' initiative provides free education to more than 350 children, integrating them into mainstream society with quality education and co-curricular activities.

# Achieve set indicators with coordination: Dr. Banushree Velpandian



VINOD PRASAD : LOHARDAGA

Under the ambitious program of the Central Government, the Totality Campaign was started at the district level on Saturday at Nagar Bhawan, Lohardaga. This campaign was inaugurated by lighting the lamp by senior expert of NITI Aayog, Dr. Banushree Velpandian, Deputy Commissioner Dr. Waghmare Prasad Krishna, District Council President Reena Kumari and other guests. On this occasion, the Chief Guest, said that being an aspirational district, we have to achieve success in some prescribed indicators in the Totality Campaign. In this, work has to be done according to one's physical capacity and mental determination. Some points have been set in the fields of health, agriculture, women and child development, self-help groups and education, in which work has to be done

rapidly for success. We all have three months to achieve these indicators. Farmers, pregnant women, young men, women and children are part of this campaign. Everyone has to achieve the prescribed indicators with coordination. The administration and the people have to do this work together. To make them socially and economically capable. We all have to move forward organically.

Deputy Commissioner Dr. Waghmare Prasad Krishna said at the launch of the campaign that this scheme of the Central Government has been started for the betterment of the sectors of health, self-help, education, agriculture and self-help groups. According to the Health Department, the first three months are very important for pregnant women. Providing food on time is a very important step. After this, when the child is born, all the vaccinations sched-

uled for the age of 9 to 12 months are important.

ZIP President Reena Kumari also addressed. An oath was administered by the Deputy Commissioner to all the attendees of the program to achieve the prescribed indicators. A signature campaign was conducted by all the guests to achieve these indicators and selfies were also taken at the selfie point. Soil health cards were distributed symbolically among five farmers in the program. The stall was inspected by the guests and food distribution program was conducted at the stall of Child Development Project. On behalf of District Public Relations, a presentation was also given on the indicators determined by Loknath Lohra Kala Jatha. In the program, ITDA Project Director Sushma Neelam Soreng, Additional Collector Jitendra Munda, Sub-Divisional Officer Amit Kumar, District Council Vice President Vinod Oraon, Cairo District Council Member Sukhdev Oraon, Senha District Council Member Radha Tirkey, Kisco District Council Member Sandeep Kumar, Pesharar District Council Member All the officials and public representatives including Ruby Kumari, social worker Chandrashekar Aggarwal were present.

## Jeevan organises workshop on 'Empowering Oneself Emotionally'

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

The suicide prevention centre, Jeevan, Jamshedpur, conducted a workshop titled "Empowering Oneself Emotionally" for NCC cadets. The workshop was organised at NIT, Adityapur, and saw participation from approximately 700 NCC cadets.

Based on its tagline 'Life is Precious, Let's Talk', the centre conducted an hour-long workshop aimed to provide cadets with essential tips on identifying and understanding stressors. During the session, cadets engaged in a stress audit and learned techniques to quantify and manage their stress levels effectively.

The session was attended by several officers and trainers, all of whom highly appreciated the initiative. Cadets were encouraged to reach out to Jeevan for support if they ever felt overwhelmed by stress.

Jeevan extended an invitation to other organisations interested in hosting similar workshops in their respective areas. Additionally, Jeevan provides ongoing emotional support and assistance for individuals experiencing mental health issues. Their helpline is available every day from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm, ensuring a confidential and non-judgmental space for anyone seeking help. For assistance or to arrange a workshop, contact Jeevan at their helpline numbers: 9297777499 / 9297777500.

This initiative underscores Jeevan's commitment to promoting mental health awareness and providing crucial support to those in need, reinforcing the importance of emotional empowerment and stress management among the youth.



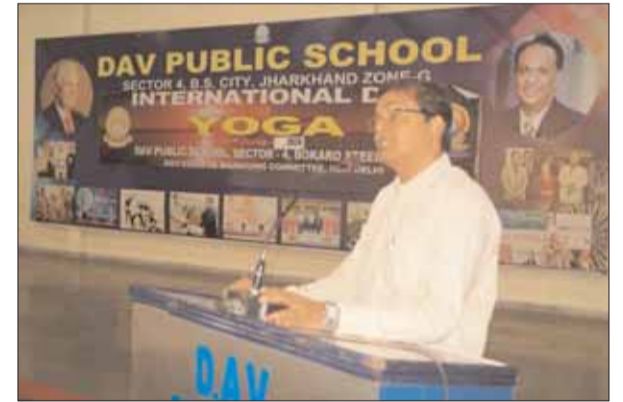
## DAV-4 Bokaro Principal emphasises on Teacher-Student-Parent triangular bond

R SHARMA : BOKARO

In a commendable display of humility and dedication to tradition, Principal Sarbendu Sekhar Kar of DAV Bokaro Sector 4 stands out for his grounded approach to leadership. Despite holding a prominent position, he consistently emphasizes the importance of staying connected to one's roots. His vision extends beyond the conventional boundaries of educational institutions, advocating for a revival of the age-old "Guru-Shishya" tradition.

Principal Kar highlighted that in today's world, there is a significant disconnect between teachers, students, and parents. He emphasized that to truly foster societal growth, it is essential to bridge these gaps. Strengthening this triangular relationship in every possible way is a priority.

He believes that the relationship between teachers and students should transcend the confines of duty hours, fostering a bond characterized by mutual respect and deep personal connection. This approach, he asserts, will not only enhance the learning experience but also instill timeless values in the students, shaping them into well-rounded individuals.



The principal's efforts are a reminder of the enduring relevance of traditional wisdom in modern education. By promoting such a holistic approach, he aims to create an environment where students are not just academically proficient but also ethically grounded, paving the way for a more enlightened and compassionate society. In his own words, "Education is not merely about imparting knowledge but about nurturing a spirit of inquiry, respect, and interconnectedness. The Guru-Shishya tradition embodies these principles, and its revival can significantly transform the educational landscape."

Teachers at DAV Bokaro have embraced this vision, engaging with students beyond the classroom to understand their aspirations and challenges better. This deepened interaction is fostering a community spirit that is rarely seen in contemporary educational settings. Students, too, are responding positively, expressing that this approach makes them feel valued and understood. They are developing a greater sense of responsibility and are more motivated to excel not just for academic success but for personal growth. As educational institutions across the country look for ways to adapt to the changing demands of the 21st century, DAV Bokaro's principal sets a compelling example. His initiative highlights that sometimes, the path forward can be found by looking back and embracing the wisdom of the past.

## St. Thomas Day celebrated at St. Joseph Church, Golmuri

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

The Kerala Catholic Association celebrated St. Thomas Day at St. Joseph Church, Golmuri, with fervor and enthusiasm. Established in 1960, the association currently boasts over 130 member families.

The celebration commenced with a holy mass led by several esteemed priests, including Father John Ottapalackal, Father Alwin, Father Jhony Vidyatehil, Father K.M. Joseph, Father Sebastian Putthenpura, Father Martin, Father P.D. Jhony, Father Rho, and Father Akshay, who was the chief celebrant.

Following the mass, a vibrant cultural program was organized by the children and members of the Kerala Catholic Association. The event began with a short prayer and a welcome speech by Mr. A.L. Abraham, the President of the association. The program featured a variety of performances, includ-



ing dances, songs, quizzes, and a Kerala Marriage Dance enactment by the ladies. Musical performances included guitar and drums, and the message of "Christ is the King" resonated through the songs. A quiz related to St. Thomas added an educational aspect to the celebration. The event concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Mrs. Preethi Jiju, the Secretary of the association. The celebration ended on a delightful note with a delicious lunch for all attendees. Every year, the Kerala

Catholic Association undertakes various projects to assist the poor and needy or organizes donation drives. This year's celebration was no exception, as it highlighted the association's commitment to community service and togetherness.

"All the committee members worked very hard to make this program a grand success. It was indeed a team effort that made the celebration truly special!" echoed the sentiments of all the Fathers, capturing the essence of the day's events.

## New pipe in blast furnace inaugurated in BSL

PNS : BOKARO

The Capital Repair (Mechanical) Department of BSL inaugurated the replacement of a 650-meter, 1000-mm diameter pipe inside the blast furnace joint water tunnel of BF Line No. 03 near tunnel opening No. 6 of Blast Furnace #3. The inauguration was conducted by BSL's Director Incharge, B.K. Tiwari. The ceremony was attended by Executive Director (HR and additional charge of operations) Rajan Prasad, Executive Director (Finance and Accounts) Suresh Rangani, Chief General Manager, and other



senior officials, Director Incharge Tiwari congratulated the Capital Repair (Mechanical) and Water

Management departments for completing this challenging task and called for the adoption of similar challeng-

ing projects in the future. He also honored some of the contract workers involved in this project. This pipeline, established in 1972, had been in continuous use for the past five decades. It is critical for supplying water to the blast furnace, ensuring its smooth operation. Under the leadership of Chief General Manager (Maintenance) P.K. Baisakhia, Chief General Manager (Mechanical) V.K. Singh, and Head of Capital Repair (Mechanical) Prakash Kumar, the officials of the Capital Repair (Mechanical) and Water Management departments undertook the task of replacing the entire L-

3 pipeline without affecting the smooth production of the blast furnace. Notably under the leadership of General Manager of Capital Repair-Mechanical, Prakash Kumar, Assistant General Managers Manish and Venkateshwar Kumar, Senior Managers V.K. Verma, Amit Kumar, and D.P. Singh, Deputy Manager Amit Chaudhary, Assistant Manager Abhishek Arora, and other departmental employees, along with contract workers, successfully faced the challenges of replacing the pipe. All tasks were executed successfully and on time.

## Tata Steel employee dies in accidental fall from overhead crane

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

In a tragic incident, a Tata Steel employee died in an accidental fall from an overhead crane inside the company premises early on Saturday morning.

The deceased, identified as Naresh Prasad (32), was an NS grade worker and crane operator. The mishap occurred at around 4:00 am while Naresh Prasad was climbing to the crane installed at a considerable

height. His absence went unnoticed initially, but fellow workers started searching for him after he remained incommunicable for a long time.

Naresh was found lying on the ground in critical condition. The safety department officials immediately rushed him to Tata Main Hospital, where doctors on emergency duty declared him dead.

The company management has confirmed the unfortunate incident and has

set up a high-level enquiry into the mishap. Tata Steel has consoled the demise of Naresh Prasad and expressed solidarity with the bereaved family.

A resident of Kadma Main Road, Naresh was the father of two children and had joined Tata Steel three years ago. His father, also a Tata Steel employee, had secured a job in the company through a job-for-job scheme.

A communication issued by the company said:

PNS : RANCHI

Xavier Institute of Social Service (XISS), Ranchi inaugurated the new academic session of batch 2024-26 in the Fr Michael Van den Bogaert Auditorium in its campus on Saturday. The inaugural session was attended by Chief Guest, Pawan Kumar Singh, Director, IIM Tiruchirappalli along with guests Salil Lal, Executive Officer & CHRO, Maruti Suzuki India Limited and an esteemed alumnus of the institution, Suparna Prasad Dev, Deputy Director in Ministry of Defence, Government of India, along with all faculty members and students from four programmes of XISS namely Human Resource Management, Rural Management, Financial Management, and Marketing Management participated in the inauguration. Chief Guest, Pawan

Kumar Singh, Director, IIM Tiruchirappalli, and an esteemed alumnus of the institute addressed the audience and said, "Maintaining a balance of humility and assertiveness is an excellent approach for growth in young managers you aspire to become. Without your effort you will not achieve anything in life; but you will not achieve anything worthy due to your effort alone."

Dr Joseph Marianus Kujur, Director, XISS in his address welcomed the incoming batch and said, "The students are beginning a new chapter in their lives and going on a transformative journey in pursuit of excellence and for this one must slog, work-hard and make sacrifices. XISS will be a medium to teach you how to turn negatives into positives. The young minds will be shaped in conformity with the vision and mission of the institution." The Maruti



Suzuki XISS Awanish Kumar Dev Memorial Scholarship, is constituted in the memory of Late Mr Awanish Dev, GM Plant HR, Maruti-Suzuki India Ltd. who was an alumnus of XISS PM&IR batch 1982-84. He lost his life during a workers' unrest at the auto major's Manesar plant on July 18, 2012. XISS with Maruti Suzuki India Ltd. has jointly set up

the Maruti Suzuki XISS Awanish Kumar Dev Memorial Trust where the purpose of the scholarship is to encourage competitiveness and learning amongst the HR specialization students at XISS, Ranchi. During the Inaugural Ceremony the names of winners of the Maruti Suzuki XISS Awanish Kumar Dev Memorial Scholarship of

batch 2023-25 declared by Suparna Dev, wife of Late Awanish Kumar Dev and Salil Lal. Anirban Nandi, Khushi Poddar and Khyati Raj of HRM Programme of batch 2023-25 were each awarded with Rupees One Lakh only as the winners of the memorial scholarship this year which has been awarded since 2013.

# CM Hemant Soren assures full support to youths' startups

## Govt has positive thoughts about industries and businessmen of State: CM

PNS : RANCHI

Chief Minister Hemant Soren today attended the "Srujan" Startup Conclave organized by the Federation of Jharkhand Chamber of Commerce and Industries in the Aryabhata Auditorium of Ranchi University Campus as the Chief Guest. On this occasion, he said that the government has a positive attitude towards all the industries in the state and the new industries that are going to come up. There should be maximum investment in the state. More and more employment opportunities should be created. Our government will fully support the industries and those setting up the industries.

The Chief Minister told the Jharkhand Chambers that there are many such industries in Jharkhand which are years old. Generation after generation of entrepreneurs are doing business here. All



Chief Minister Hemant Soren, Finance Minister Dr Rameshwar Oraon, FJCCI president Kishore Mantri along with others during the "Srujan" Startup Conclave organized by the Federation of Jharkhand Chamber of Commerce and Industries in Ranchi on Saturday. PNS

of them have been seeing the changing form of Jharkhand. They are well aware of the

economic, social and geographical conditions here. Others cannot understand

this state as well as they can. In such a situation, our aim is to develop the state in all

aspects together with you.

The Chief Minister said that the state government has made a startup policy. However, the startups in this state are a little behind in the promotion they should have received. But, the government will soon take concrete steps to strengthen and promote startups. The government will move forward with the idea that youth should get employment through startups and also provide employment to others.

The Chief Minister said that after independence, the policy makers of the country understood the importance of this state. As a result, many big industries were established in our state. Many industrial groups like Tata and Birla set up their industries. Most of the activities of Coal India are being conducted in this state. The country's first fertilizer industry, mining institute and 'Heavy Engineering Corporation Limited' (HEC), famous as the



Chief Minister Hemant Soren addresses a gathering during the "Srujan" Startup Conclave organized by the Federation of Jharkhand Chamber of Commerce and Industries in Ranchi on Saturday. PNS

mother of the industry, are also established in our state. But, as time progressed and

the circumstances became such that many industries here were closed. The indus-

tries which were supposed to expand, kept shrinking. Due to this, people also became unemployed. But, our government wants to lay such a foundation for industries, whose benefits can be availed by people generation after generation. Whatever suggestion Jharkhand Chambers will have in this, it will be implemented positively and will give full cooperation.

On this occasion, Rajya Sabha MP Mahua Maji, MLA Rameshwar Oraon, former Rajya Sabha MP Mahesh Poddar, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Avinash Kumar, Secretary of Information Technology and e-Governance Department Vipra Bhal, President of Federation of Jharkhand Chamber of Commerce and Industries Kishore Mantri, former President Vinay Agarwal, Vice President Aditya Malhotra, Secretary Pares Gani and other members were present.

# MARANDI EXHORTS PARTY WORKERS TO TOIL FOR DOUBLE ENGINE GOVT



State BJP President Babul Marandi addresses party workers during a Vijay Sankalp Sabha in Hazaribagh on Saturday. Pix by Vinay Murmu

PNS : RANCHI

State BJP President and former Chief Minister Babul Marandi today attended the Vijay Sankalp Sabha and Karyakarta Samman program of Hazaribagh Assembly constituency as the chief guest. Honouring

the workers by giving them shawls, Marandi said that the capital of BJP is the workers. The party leaders remain attached to the stage, garlands and mikes but a common worker quietly does extraordinary work for the party. He said that only the ordinary worker of

the booth fights the battle on the ground. Be it the Panna Pramukh or the committee of the booth. All deserve congratulations. He said that only the worker answers the questions of the public at every step, only the worker does door to door contact. Therefore, giving respect to the workers is the duty of the party. He said that the Modi government for the third time is the result of the tireless hard work of the workers, which the people of Congress, JMM and Indi Alliance are unable to digest today. They cannot tolerate that the son of a tea seller becomes the Prime Minister of India for the third time. He said that in the Lok Sabha elections, Indi Alliance resorted to lies and false propaganda. Various kinds of rumours were spread but the people of the country gave them a befitting reply. He said that not

only Modi government was formed at the Centre but BJP NDA governments were formed in many states. He said that in Jharkhand also NDA got 81 lakh votes, won 9 seats while INDI Thugbandhan was reduced to 5 seats with 66 lakh votes. NDA has won 52 assembly seats in the state. Many ministers including the then Chief Minister of the state could not make Indi Thugbandhan win in their assembly constituencies.

He said that today the condition of the state is going from bad to worse. Law and order is in shambles. Businessmen get calls from criminals, ransom is demanded. Not a single industrialist is ready to set up an industry. Police officers have mastered extortion. Competitive examinations of youth are falling prey to corruption. Jobs are being sold for lakhs. He said

that there is loot of sand, stone, coal and land.

The demography of Santhal Pargana is changing. According to the census report of 1951 to 2011, the population of tribals is decreasing rapidly and the Muslim population is increasing unexpectedly day by day. It seems that in a few days the existence of tribals will end from Santhal Pargana.

He said that in such a situation, the public is looking towards BJP and NDA with hopeful eyes. We have to give voice to the feelings of the public. He said that the public is fed up with the lies and breach of promises of the Thugbandhan government. He said that today we all should pledge through Vijay Sankalp Sabha to uproot the corrupt, useless Hemant government and form a strong double engine government.

# Security forces destroy 35 IEDs in Gumla

PNS : RANCHI

Security forces in Gumla achieved a big success as they destroyed about 35 IEDs, foiling the plans of Naxalites.

Naxalites had planted these IEDs on the road to target the police. First, 5 IED bombs were recovered from the under-construction Kutma-Bamda road, which were later defused by the bomb squad and Jaguar police team on Friday night. At the same time, about 30 IED bombs have been recovered from the Harinakhad area, which were defused on Saturday. There has been a stir in the area due to the discovery of IEDs. The search operation is still on.

According to the police, the villagers saw a wire coming out of the ground in the village, they immediately informed the police about it. After which Gumla police called the bomb squad from Ranchi. The police squad reached the village with the team and investigated.



Where about 5 can bombs were recovered and defused. Even before this, bombs buried in the ground have been recovered in many villages of Gumla. Many people have also been injured by these bombs.

Gumla SP Shambhu Kumar Singh, confirming the incident, said that a large quantity of can bombs have been recovered, more recovery is expected. The team has returned on Friday night due to security reasons. He said that the team will reach the village on Saturday as well

and conduct a search operation. It will also be investigated how old the bomb planted is.

The villagers said that the activities of the Naxalites have stopped for some time, due to which the police were claiming the area to be Naxal-free. Last year also, the police and villagers came under the grip of IED bombs in this area. Also, earlier Naxal sub-zonal commander Budheshwar was also killed in a Maoist-police encounter. This area used to be a safe zone for the Maoists.

# Initial testing at BAU indicates apple can be grown in Ranchi also

PNS : RANCHI

Temperate fruit apple is primarily cultivated in Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, the hills of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand and to some extent in north eastern States and Punjab also. However, initial experiments at Birsa Agricultural University (BAU) have indicated that it can be grown in Ranchi also.

At Horticultural Biodiversity Park of BAU, three apple varieties viz., Scarlet spur, Jeromin and Anna were planted during February 2022. The variety Anna is having fruiting this year. At this Park, Anna variety is having 18 plants. Last year too this variety gave some fruits. But other two varieties didn't give any fruiting. Anna variety performed very well and having good growth and development during this period. All the plants were brought from Dr YS Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Solan, Himachal Pradesh.



Some mortality has also been observed in these varieties over the period of last two years. Flowering in apple plants starts in February while fruits mature in July- August.

In Charge of Biodiversity Park Dr Abdul Majid Ansari said "This was only pilot trial, just to see the fruiting ability of the variety. Anna variety is able to produce fruits in Ranchi condition. "Its quality, taste, and yield per hectare, with full package of practices for this region will be needed for its final recommendation. It requires further experi-

mentation, and then only can be in a position to recommend for commercial cultivation on large scale. Upland, sandy loam soil rich in organic matter and irrigation facility is required for its successful cultivation," he added.

BAU Vice Chancellor Dr SC Dubey visited the park along with Dean Forestry Dr MS Malik and Director Research Dr PK Singhand suggested evaluating more number of varieties and developing suitable package of practices to explore the possibility of apple cultivation in Jharkhand.



Rich in vitamin C, fibre, and potassium, apples, appreciated for their heart-healthy qualities, boost immunity, aid digestion and weight management, and provide antioxidants to combat colds and infections. Apples also improve skin and hair, decrease cholesterol and support lung function.

# DPS Ranchi shines in Ranchi Mind Fest 2024

Ritu Raj's Team Excels in General Quiz, Hansraj College's Ashmit Bags Trophy in Cryptic Crossword Contest

PNS : RANCHI

The Ranchi Mind Fest, organized by the Crossword Association of Jharkhand (CAJ), Leafam Ventures, and the Jharkhand Police Department, and sponsored by the State Bank of India, was a hub of excitement and fun. Students from various schools and colleges participated in the General Quiz and the Cryptic Crossword Contest. Among them, students from Delhi Public School (DPS), Ranchi, excelled in both contests with flying colors. Ritu Raj, Shabd Mishra, and Atharva Pandey, all from DPS Ranchi, clinched the first prize in the General Quiz Contest, while Ashmit Raj from Hansraj College, Delhi, secured the first position in the Cryptic Crossword Contest. Archana Thakur and Sunil Thakur were awarded the "Star Performer" trophy for their excellent performance in both contests. The winners were awarded by the Chief Guest, Ajay Kumar Singh, DGP Jharkhand, and Chief Mentor of the event, RERA-Bihar Chairman Vivek Kumar Singh, along with other dignitaries and distinguished guests present at the event. Senior Officers from the Jharkhand Government who graced the event included Kumar Sanjay, Chief Commissioner of Income Tax, Bihar and Jharkhand Region, Vishwajit Sinha, AGM, SBI, Shashi Singh, Director



Primary Education, AP Singh, IAS (Retd), President, CWAJ, RK Mallik, ADG, Headquarters, Prashant Singh, CMD, Jharkhand Police Housing Corporation, Ajoy Kumar Singh, Principal Secretary, Department of Health, Medical Education and Family Welfare, Rakesh Ranjan, Commandant, JAP-1, Prabhat Kumar, Advisor, Central Mine Planning & Design Institute Limited (CMPDI), Raj Narayan Singh, Secretary, CWAJ and Alkshishwar Singh, Executive Member, CWAJ.

Participants were awarded in the School, College, and Open categories in both contests.

**WINNERS OF THE GENERAL QUIZ:**  
1 First Prize: Ritu Raj, Shabd Mishra,

Atharva Pandey (DPS, Ranchi)  
2 Second Prize: Ayan Arif, Ananya Priyadarshi, Krish (DPS, Ranchi)  
3 Third Prize: Akshat Verma, Ashish Tiwari, Aditya Singh (DPS, Ranchi)  
**WINNERS OF THE CRYPTIC CROSSWORD CONTEST:**  
1 First Prize: Ashmit Raj (Hansraj College)  
2 Second Prize: Chaitanya Tiwari (DPS, Ranchi)  
3 Third Prize: Shabd Mishra (DPS, Ranchi)

Alan Cowell conducted a brief session on cryptic crosswords to apprise the students of the skill. Volunteers from the Jharkhand Armed Police contributed to making the event a grand success.

# Rath Yatra today: Proper security, facilities for devotees in place

PNS : RANCHI

Deputy Commissioner, Ranchi Rahul Kumar Sinha and Senior Superintendent of Police, Ranchi Chandan Sinha reviewed the preparations and security arrangements for the Jagannathpur Rath Yatra fair on Saturday. During this, Superintendent of Police (City) Rajkumar Mehta and officials of the temple committee were also present.

While reviewing the arrangements in the fair premises, the senior officials gave necessary instructions to the officials of the temple committee. While inspecting the Rath Yatra route from

Jagannathpur temple to Mausi Bari, the DC directed to ensure the convenience of movement of devotees. SSP Chandan Sinha instructed the shopkeepers to set up their shops only till the designated place so that no devotee faces inconvenience during the Rath Yatra.

The DC said that the Rath Yatra will start with full rituals tomorrow at 03:30 pm, for which all the arrangements of law and order have been made. Keeping in mind that the devotees do not face any kind of problem, 24-hour electricity, mobile toilets, water, fire fighting and ambulance have been arranged.



Priest performs arti on the occasion of 'Netradan' ahead of annual Rath Yatra at Jagannathpur in Ranchi on Saturday. Pix by Vinay Murmu

The SSP informed that strong arrangements have been made for security, five watch towers and CCTVs have been installed in the

fair premises. He informed that magistrates and police officers have been deputed at all important places. Senior officers/magis-

trates/ police officers have been deputed to maintain law and order and peace during the entire fair period. From the point of view of law and order, magistrates/ police officers have been deputed in the main temple premises and Mausi Bari temple, fair area, fair patrol, drop barrier gate in two shifts.

During the fair, sufficient number of doctors and their colleagues will be deputed at the fair site in two shifts. The Civil Surgeon Ranchi has been ordered to ensure the deputation of the medical team with necessary medicines. The fire officer has also been asked to ensure

the availability of fire vehicles at the fair site till the end of the fair. The temple committee has been asked to organize the fair in such a way that the movement of ambulances, fire vehicles/law and order vehicles etc. can take place in all areas without any hindrance.

During the fair, the police will keep a close watch on anti-social elements/miscreants. The Parichari Pravar, Police Center, Ranchi has been ordered to depute policemen in plain clothes in the fair ground apart from the deputation site, so that the hooligans and anti-social elements can be monitored. Apart from this, orders have

also been given to depute sufficient women police in women dominated areas.

An order has been issued for a complete ban on the sale of illegal liquor and hadiya in and around the fair premises till the end of the fair. The Assistant Excise Commissioner has been asked to ensure a complete ban on the sale of illegal liquor/Hadiya in and around the fair premises.

Classes will remain closed in the schools falling in the fair area till 17.07.2024. The District Education Officer, District Education Superintendent have been ordered to ensure compensation classes in lieu of this.

The concerned officials have also been directed to coordinate and ensure arrangements for cleanliness, drinking water supply, mobile toilets, traffic system, watch tower and stage arrangements etc. in the Rath Yatra fair.

The fair will be organized between 06:00 am to 09:00 pm. Police station in-charge Dhurva / Jagannathpur has been ordered to ensure that the operation of swings etc. is stopped after 09:00 pm. Sub-divisional Officer, Sadar, Ranchi and Superintendent of Police, Nagar will be in complete charge of law and order on the occasion of Rath Yatra Fair.

# PM Modi, Starmer recall India-UK historic relations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday spoke to newly elected British Prime Minister Keir Starmer as the two leaders agreed to work towards an early conclusion of a mutually beneficial India-UK free trade agreement, a statement from Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said. Modi congratulated him on assuming charge and a remarkable victory of his Labour Party in the election. The statement said both the leaders recalled the historic relations between the India and the UK and reaffirmed their commitment to further deepen and advance the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the countries. Appreciating the positive contributions of the Indian community in the social, economic and political development of the UK, they agreed to continue to promote the close people-to-people ties. Modi also extended an invitation to Starmer for an early visit to India as the two leaders agreed to remain in touch, the statement said. In a social media post, Modi said, "Pleased to speak with



@Keir\_Starmer. Congratulated him on being elected as the Prime Minister of the UK. We remain committed to deepening Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and robust India-UK economic ties for the progress and prosperity of our peoples and global good." Modi had congratulated Starmer on his win via social media post on Friday. He also thanked outgoing prime minister Rishi Sunak for "your admirable leadership of the UK and your active contribution to deepening the ties between India and the UK during your term in office. Best wishes to

you and your family for the future." In a significant shift in the political scene, Labour secured 412 out of 650 seats in the House of Commons, marking their best performance since Tony Blair's 1997 victory. The Conservatives won only 121 seats, marking their worst-ever result and ending Rishi Sunak's leadership of both the country and his party. As regards the proposed trade pact, Starmer's election manifesto included plans for Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with India, stressing shared values and strategic partnership. The India-UK Free Trade

Agreement (FTA) negotiations, which began in January 2022, aim to enhance economic ties by providing access to India's large and growing market, bypassing high tariff barriers. The agreement covers 26 chapters, including goods, services, investments, and intellectual property rights. Bilateral trade between India and the UK increased to USD 21.34 billion in 2023-24 from USD 20.36 billion in 2022-23. Starmer's stance on an FTA with India is articulated in Labour's 2024 election manifesto, which outlines plans for forging a "new strategic partnership with India, including a free trade agreement, as well as deepening cooperation in security, education, technology, and climate change." Addressing the India Global Forum (IGF) last year, Starmer said his vision for a revamped Labour Party is to pass FTA. "What my Labour government will seek with India is a relationship based on our shared values of democracy and aspiration. That will seek a free trade agreement (FTA), we share that ambition, but also a new strategic partnership for global security, climate security, economic security," he said.

# Demand for NEET-UG retest, SC-monitored paper leak probe echo

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday demanded that the medical entrance examination NEET-UG be conducted again and all "paper leak scams" thoroughly investigated under the Supreme Court's supervision. Amid the growing clamour for the cancellation of the controversy-ridden NEET-UG 2024 over alleged malpractices, the Centre and the National Testing Agency (NTA) told the apex court on Friday that scrapping it without any proof of large-scale breach of confidentiality would be counterproductive as it could "seriously jeopardise" lakhs of honest candidates. The NTA, which conducts the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses, and the Union education ministry have been at the centre of media debates and protests by students and political parties over alleged large-scale malpractices ranging from question paper leaks to impersonation in the test held on May 5. In a social media post in Hindi, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the Modi government has told the Supreme Court that no paper has been leaked in NEET-UG. "This blatant lie is being told to lakhs of youths. Their future is being ruined," Kharge said. The Congress leader pointed out that the education ministry has said that "there have been irregularities or cheating only at a few places" but this is "misleading." The BJP-RSS has promoted the "education mafia" by taking control of the entire education system, he claimed. "Be it NCERT books or leakage in exams, the Modi government is bent on destroying our education system," Kharge alleged.



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# Counselling for NEET-UG likely by end of this month

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Initially planned for the first week of July, the counselling for controversy-ridden National Eligibility cum Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG), 2024 is now anticipated to commence by the end of this month, according to highly placed sources in the Union Health Ministry. However, the date is yet to be officially notified by the counselling authorities, causing anxiety among students awaiting admission. The issuance of permission letters to certain medical colleges is ongoing, with expectations of additional seats being included in the process. On Friday the Centre and the National Testing Agency (NTA) had told the Supreme Court that scrapping it without any proof of large-scale breach of confidentiality would be counterproductive as it could "seriously jeopardise" lakhs of honest candidates. As the case is still in the court, there is not much clarity on the counselling issue. However, the sources said the process of issuing permission letters to some medical col-



leges was still underway and additional seats were likely to be added. "The date of counselling will be announced once the exercise gets over to ensure seats of the new colleges can be taken up in the first round itself," the source said. The apex court last month refused to defer the counselling process. It was hearing a petition seeking a direction to pause the process for two days. The NTA, which conducts NEET-UG for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses, and the Union education ministry have been at the centre of media debates and protests by students and political parties over alleged large-scale malpractice — ranging from question paper leaks to impersonation — in the test held on May 5.

# IMA seeks deletion of section from new law to prevent criminal prosecution of doctors

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, stressing the need for proper implementation of protective provisions for doctors in cases of alleged medical negligence, as per the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). The IMA emphasised that doctors typically do not have criminal intent when treating patients. Therefore, their actions should not attract criminal prosecution under Section 106.1 of the BNS, which cur-



rently allows for criminal charges against doctors in cases of alleged negligence.

The IMA also requested that investigating officers invoke Section 26 of the BNS, which

recognises that doctors fall outside the purview of criminal law for actions taken during patient treatment unless there is evidence of recklessness. They argued that cases should be referred to expert committees for opinion in rare instances of recklessness. Dr RV Asokan, IMA President, advocated for the deletion of Section 106.1 to prevent the unjust criminal prosecution of doctors. He asserts that without criminal intent, doctors should only be held accountable under civil law. The letter also highlighted the increasing violence against doctors and hospitals, describing it as a "national shame" and an

epidemic that creates an atmosphere of fear and mistrust in healthcare facilities. "The government should introduce a central law to protect doctors from such violence as existing state laws have been ineffective in securing convictions," said the letter. Acknowledging the government's past efforts to protect doctors, including the amendment of the Epidemic Diseases Act during the COVID-19 pandemic, which shielded healthcare professionals from violence, the doctor's body has called for further legislative action to ensure comprehensive protection for medical practitioners.

# NHRC asks Centre, States to frame policy to protect beggars

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a bustling urban area of Mumbai, 10-year-old Reshu was found begging on the streets during school hours. Upon investigation, it was discovered that Reshu was brought to Mumbai from a rural village in Bihar by a local trafficker promising her parents a better life for their daughter. Instead, she was forced to beg on the streets under threat of violence and withheld food if she didn't meet daily quotas set by her handler. Fatima Begum, a widow and mother of three, from a rural village in Uttar Pradesh took up begging following her husband's sudden demise due to illness, with no formal education or vocational skills, she made the difficult decision to migrate to Bengaluru in search of work. Faced with mounting debts and the pressure to provide food and shelter for her children, Fatima resorted to begging on the streets of the Silicon city. Tragically, Reshu and Fatima Begum are among lakhs of beggars seeking alms on the street in the country. According to the 2011 census, there were more than 4,13,000 (4.13 lakh) beggars and vagrants in India. Now, for the first time coming to the rescue of such vagrants, the National Human Rights



Commission (NHRC) has now issued a comprehensive advisory to the Central and State governments seeking framing of a national policy for their protection and rehabilitation, drafting welfare schemes with financial assistance and vocational training and creating a national database among others. The top rights body also took cognizance that despite a number of initiatives and welfare programmes implemented by the central and state governments, begging persisted across the country. Children between the ages of six and 14 who are engaged in begging should be registered and enrolled in schools under the Right to Education Act. Shelter home residents are

encouraged to participate in skill development and vocational training programs facilitated by government-recognized vocational centers, empowering them to pursue sustainable livelihoods. Support from NGOs and Civil Society: NGOs and civil society groups are encouraged to assist shelter home residents in forming self-help groups. They can also facilitate access to loans for self-employment, promoting economic independence and social integration. These recommendations collectively aim to eradicate forced begging, protect the rights of vulnerable individuals, and provide pathways for their rehabilitation and dignified livelihoods.

# Future of labourers in danger: Rahul

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Termining the country's labourers as "builders of India", Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday claimed that under the Narendra Modi government their future was in danger, and asserted that he will ensure that they get their full rights and respect. The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha made the remarks in a social media post in Hindi as he shared a video of his recent interaction with daily wage workers at Guru Tegh Bahadur Nagar in Delhi during which listened to their problems. "In Narendra Modi's government, the 'builders of India' are facing terrible hardships," Gandhi said in his post. The daily wage workers are forced to run their households for four days with a single day's earnings, he said. They have no savings and are living off the burden of paying interest, he added. "I got a chance to meet street vendors and daily wage workers in GTB Nagar and get to know their struggles," Gandhi said. "The future of the families of those who are building the 'India of the future' is in danger. I will ensure that the hardworking labourers of India get their full rights, security and respect - this is my resolution," Rahul Gandhi asserted. After meeting the daily wage labourers on Thursday, Rahul Gandhi had said providing full rights and respect to those involved in manual labour is the mission of his life. In the video, Rahul Gandhi is seen working with the labourers in laying the stone on a staircase. He listened to the problems of the workers who said that their biggest issue was not finding work on a daily basis.

# Foreign medical exam held smoothly

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Foreign Medical Graduate Examination (FMGE) 2024 began smoothly on Saturday and no untoward incident was reported, Health Ministry officials said. The command centre to monitor the examination has been set up at the National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) headquarters in Delhi, they said. "The content was successfully downloaded at all test centres.



The examination started at all examination centres smoothly. A team of officers from MHA has visited NBEMS HQ. No untoward incidence has been reported," an official said.

The FMGE is a screening test for medical graduates to become eligible to practice medicine in the country. The June 2024 examination for foreign medical graduates were being held at 71 centres in 50 cities of 21 states. The examination will be held on two shifts -- 9 am to 11.30 am and 2 pm to 4.30 pm. According to officials, 255 appraisers were appointed for 71 centres and 53 faculty members were in the flying squad. Apart from this, Directorate General of Health Services

(DGHS) has nominated 71 members to visit the examination centres. 42 NBEMS staff have been deputed at the centres, with 35,819 candidates scheduled to take the exam on Saturday, officials said. A command centre has been set up at the NBEMS headquarter, Dwarka where members of the governing body, officials of the NBEMS, technical team of 20 TCS officials, senior police officers are monitoring the progress of the examination.

# Modi pays tribute to Syama Prasad Mookerjee



Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid homage to BJP ideologue Syama Prasad Mookerjee on his 123rd birth anniversary on Saturday. Modi said Mookerjee made India proud with his fierce nationalistic ideas, and that his sacrifice and dedication to the motherland will always inspire people. Mookerjee was one of the founders of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, the forerunner to the Bharatiya Janata Party. He was a member of Jawaharlal

Nehru's Cabinet, which he quit in protest over his differences with the prime minister and then formed the Jana Sangh with support from the RSS. Mookerjee died in 1953 following his arrest in Jammu and Kashmir during his agitation against the restriction imposed there on Indian citizens who were not from the state. He was opposed to the special status given to the state. Modi had described his government's decision to revoke Article 370, which granted the state special rights, in 2019 as a fulfilment of Mookerjee's wish.

# Apex court to hear on July 8 plea on free sanitary pads for Class 6-12 girl students

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on July 8 a plea seeking directions to the Centre and states to provide free sanitary pads to girl students of class 6-12 and ensure separate female toilet facilities in all government-aided and residential schools. A bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J P Pardiwala and Manoj Misra is scheduled to hear the plea of Congress leader and social worker Jaya Thakur in which she has highlighted the difficulties faced by adolescent females from poor backgrounds in the schools. During the last hearing of the matter on February 5, Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati informed that the Centre is in the process of collating all necessary material to form a national policy on the distribution of menstrual hygiene products to school-going girls in terms of the orders dated April 10, 2023, and November 6, 2023. On June 13, the Union education ministry, in an advisory to schools, said girl students should be allowed to take necessary restroom breaks during board exams for classes 10 and 12 and free sanitary napkins



must be made available at all examination centres. The Supreme Court is set to reopen on July 8 after summer vacation. On November 6, the top court directed the Centre to lay down a national model for building toilets commensurate with the number of girl students in all government-aided and residential schools across the country. While emphasising uniform procedure, it also asked the Union government about the policy it has formulated for the distribution of sanitary napkins to female school students nationally. During the hearing, the Centre informed the apex court that a draft national policy for the distribution of sanitary napkins

free of cost to school-going girls has been formulated and sent to stakeholders to elicit their comments. The top court earlier warned the states, which had not submitted their response to the Centre on formulating a uniform national policy on menstrual hygiene for girls studying in schools, that it would take recourse to the "coercive arm of the law" if they failed to do so. On April 10, the apex court appointed the secretary of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW) as the nodal officer to coordinate with states and UTs and collect relevant data for formulating a national policy. It noted that MoHFW, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Jal Shakti have

schemes on menstrual hygiene management. The court also ordered all states and UTs to submit their menstrual hygiene management strategies and plans that are being executed with the help of funds provided by the Centre or through their own resources to the Mission Steering Group of the National Health Mission within four weeks. The apex court said the states and UTs shall also indicate to the Mission Steering Group of the National Health Mission the appropriate ratio of female toilets for residential and non-residential schools in their respective territories. It asked all states and UTs to also indicate the steps which have been taken to provide low-cost sanitary pads and vending machines in schools and their appropriate disposal. The plea filed by Congress leader Thakur has said adolescent females from poor backgrounds between the ages of 11 and 18 years face serious difficulties in receiving education, a constitutional right under Article 21A of the Constitution. "These are adolescent females who are not equipped with and are also not educated by their parents about menstruation and menstrual hygiene," the petition said.

# Free anti-rabies vaccination drive held

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Immunologicals Limited (IIL), a leading manufacturer of animal rabies vaccine (Raksharab) and human rabies vaccine (Abhayrab) in the country has conducted free anti-rabies vaccination to over a lakh canine across the country on the eve of the Zoonosis Day. It is one of the largest drives to create social awareness about "One Health", which means healthy co-existence of animals, human beings and ecosystem. Diseases that are transmitted from animals to humans and vice-versa are known as Zoonotic diseases. The drive was conducted at around 100 centres across 21 states in the country through veterinary dispensaries and NGOs. "Seventy percent of all emerging diseases such as Rabies, Swine Flu, Brucellosis, Leptospirosis, and Zoonotic diseases, Nipah, Zika etc that affect humans are zoonotic in nature. In India, occurrence of Rabies is prevalent and accounts for more than 90% of all zoonotic cases reported in the country, said Dr K Anand Kumar, MD, IIL.

# Reformist Pezeshkian wins Iran's presidential runoff poll

AP ■ DUBAI

Reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian won Iran's runoff presidential election Saturday, besting hard-liner Saeed Jalili by promising to reach out to the West and ease enforcement on the country's mandatory headscarf law after years of sanctions and protests squeezing the Islamic Republic. Pezeshkian promised no radical changes to Iran's Shiite theocracy in his campaign and long has held Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as the final arbiter of all matters of state in the country. But even Pezeshkian's modest aims will be challenged by an Iranian government still largely held by hard-liners, the ongoing Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip, and Western fears over Tehran enriching uranium to near-weapons-grade levels. A vote count offered by authorities put Pezeshkian as the winner with 16.3 million votes to Jalili's 13.5 million in Friday's election. Overall, Iran's Interior Ministry said 30 million people voted in an election held without internationally recog-

nized monitors. Supporters of Pezeshkian, a heart surgeon and longtime lawmaker, entered the streets of Tehran and other cities before dawn to celebrate as his lead grew over Jalili, a hard-line former nuclear negotiator. "Dear people of Iran, the elections are over and this is just the beginning of our cooperation," Pezeshkian wrote on the social platform X, still banned in Iran. "The difficult path ahead will not be smooth except with your companionship, empathy and trust. I extend my hand to you and I swear on my honor that I will not leave you alone on this path. Do not leave me alone." Pezeshkian's win still sees Iran at a delicate moment, with tensions high in the Mideast over the Israel-Hamas war, Iran's advancing nuclear program, and a looming election in the United States that could put any chance of a detente between Tehran and Washington at risk. Pezeshkian's victory also wasn't a rout of Jalili, meaning he'll have to carefully navigate Iran's internal politics as the doctor



Election officials count ballots for the presidential election at a polling station in Tehran on Saturday. Iran held a runoff presidential election on Friday that pitted a hard-line former nuclear negotiator against a reformist lawmaker. AP/PTI

has never held a sensitive, high-level security post. The first round of voting June 28 saw the lowest turnout in the history of the Islamic Republic since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Iranian officials have long pointed to turnout as a sign of support for the country's Shiite theocracy, which has been under strain after years of sanctions crushing Iran's economy, mass demonstrations and

intense crackdowns on all dissent. Government officials up to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei predicted a higher participation rate as voting got underway, with state television airing images of modest lines at some polling centers across the country. However, online videos purported to show some polls empty while a survey of sever-

al dozen sites in the capital, Tehran, saw light traffic amid a heavy security presence on the streets. Authorities put the turnout in Friday's election at 49.6%, still historically low for an Iranian presidential election. They counted 607,575 voided votes in the contest — which often are a sign of protest by those who feel obligated to cast a ballot but reject both candidates.

"I don't expect anything from him — I am happy that the vote put the brake on hard-liners," said bank employee Fatemeh Babaei, who voted for Pezeshkian. "I hope Pezeshkian can return administration to a way in which all people can feel there is a tomorrow." Taher Khalili, a Kurdish-origin Iranian who runs a small tailor shop in Tehran, offered another reason to be hopeful while handing out candy to passers-by. "In the end, someone from my hometown and the west of Iran came to power," Khalili said. "I hope he will make economy better for small businesses."

Pezeshkian, who speaks Azeri, Farsi and Kurdish, campaigned on outreach to Iran's many ethnicities. He represents the first Iranian president from western Iran in decades — something people hope will aid the county as those in the West are considered more tolerant because of the ethnic and religious diversity in their area. The election came amid heightened regional tensions. In April, Iran launched its first-

## Russian strikes leave thousands in north Ukraine sans power, water

AP ■ KYIV

Russian strikes overnight left over 100,000 households without power in northern Ukraine and cut off the water supply to a regional capital, Ukrainian authorities reported Saturday, while civilian casualties rose sharply in the country's embattled east. The northern Sumy region, which borders Russia, was plunged into dark after Russian strikes late Friday damaged energy infrastructure, the Ukrainian Energy Ministry said. Hours later, the Ukrainian public broadcaster reported that Russian drones hit the provincial capital, also called Sumy, cutting off water by hitting power lines that feed its system of pumps. Russian state agency RIA cited a local pro-Kremlin "underground" leader as saying that Moscow's forces overnight hit a plant producing rocket ammunition in the city, which had a pre-war population of over 256,000. The report didn't specify what weapon was used, and the claim could not be independently verified. Explosions rocked the city during an air raid warning early Saturday, according to Ukrainian media reports. In the Donetsk region in the east, Russian shelling on Friday and overnight killed 11 civilians and wounded 43, local Gov. Vadym Filashkin reported on Saturday. Five people died in the town of Selydove southeast of Pokrovsk, the eastern city that has emerged as a front-line hotspot. The Ukrainian General Staff on Saturday morning said that Ukrainian and Russian forces clashed 45 times near Pokrovsk over the previous day. According to Filashkin, three more people died in Chasiv Yar, the strategically located town in Donetsk that has been reduced to rubble under a monthlong Russian assault. A Ukrainian military spokesperson on Thursday told the AP that Ukrainian forces had retreated from a neighbourhood on the outskirts of Chasiv Yar. The town's elevated location gives it strategic importance, and military analysts say its fall would put nearby cities in jeopardy. It could also compromise critical Ukrainian supply routes and bring Russia closer to its stated aim of seizing the entire Donetsk region. According to the Ukrainian General Staff, Russian forces on Friday and overnight launched six rocket strikes and 55 airstrikes across Ukraine, and used more than 70 "glide bombs" — retrofitted Soviet-era weapons that have wrought devastation in the country in recent weeks.

# Hamas clears the way for a possible cease-fire after dropping key demand

AP ■ DEIR-AL-BALAH

Hamas has given initial approval for a US-backed proposal for a phased cease-fire deal in Gaza, dropping a key demand that Israel give an up-front commitment for a complete end to the war, a Hamas and an Egyptian official said Saturday. The apparent compromise by the militant group — which controlled Gaza before triggering the war with an October 7 attack on Israel — could help deliver the first pause in fighting since last November and set the stage for further talks on ending a devastating nine-month war. But all sides cautioned that a deal is still not guaranteed. The two officials, who spoke on conditions of anonymity to discuss the ongoing negotiations, said Washington's phased deal will first include a "full and complete" six-week cease-fire that would see the release of a number of hostages, including women, the elderly and the wounded, in exchange for the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners. During these 42 days, Israeli forces would also withdraw from densely populated areas of Gaza and allow the return of displaced people to their homes

in northern Gaza, the pair said. Over that period, Hamas, Israel and the mediators would also negotiate the terms of the second phase that could see the release of the remaining male hostages, both civilians and soldiers, the officials said. In return, Israel would free additional Palestinian prisoners and detainees. The third phase would see the return of any remaining hostages, including bodies of dead captives, and the start of a yearlong reconstruction project. Hamas still wants "written guarantees" from mediators that Israel will continue to negotiate a permanent cease-fire deal once the first phase goes into effect, the two officials said. The Hamas representative told The Associated Press the group's approval came after it received "verbal commitments and guarantees" from the mediators that the war won't be resumed and that negotiations will continue until a permanent cease-fire is reached. "Now we want these guarantees on paper," he said. Months of on-again off-again cease-fire talks have stumbled over Hamas' demand that any deal include a complete end to the war. Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu has offered to pause the fighting, but not end it altogether until Israel reaches its goals of destroying Hamas' military and governing capabilities and returning all hostages held by the militant group. Hamas has previously expressed concern Israel will restart the war after the hostages are released. Likewise, Israeli officials have said they are worried Hamas will draw out the talks and the initial cease-fire indefinitely, without releasing all the hostages. Netanyahu's office did not respond to requests for comment, and there was no immediate comment from Washington. On Friday, the Israeli prime minister confirmed that the Mossad spy agency's chief had paid a lightning visit to Qatar, one of the key mediators. But his office said "gaps between the parties" remained. Israel launched the war in Gaza after Hamas' October attack, in which militants stormed into southern Israel, killed some 1,200 people — mostly civilians — and abducted about 250. Since then, the Israeli air and ground offensive has killed more than 38,000 people in Gaza, according to the territo-

ry's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between combatants and civilians in its count. The offensive has caused widespread devastation and unleashed a humanitarian crisis that has left hundreds of thousands of people on the brink of famine, according to international officials. Israel says Hamas is still holding about 120 hostages — about a third of which Israel believes to have died. In line with previous proposals, the deal would see around 600 trucks of humanitarian aid entering Gaza daily — including 50 fuel trucks — with 300 bound for the hard-hit north-east of the enclave, the officials said. Following Israel's assault on the southernmost city of Rafah, aid supplies entering Gaza have been reduced to a trickle. Saturday's news comes as fighting and Israel's ariel bombardment in Gaza continues unabated. In the central city of Deir al-Balah, funeral prayers were held for 12 Palestinians, including five children and two women, killed in three separate strikes in central Gaza on Friday and Saturday, according to hospital officials. The bodies of the dead were taken to al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital.

# Now we get to work, Starmer to Cabinet Rwanda plan to be scrapped

AP ■ LONDON

Prime Minister Keir Starmer held his first Cabinet meeting Saturday as his new government takes on the massive challenge of fixing a heap of domestic woes and winning over a public weary from years of austerity, political chaos and a battered economy. Starmer welcomed the new ministers around the table at 10 Downing St., saying it had been the honour of his life to be asked by King Charles III to form a government in a ceremony that officially elevated him to prime minister. "We have a huge amount of work to do, so now we get on with our work," he said. Starmer's Labour Party delivered the biggest blow to the Conservatives in their two-century history Friday in a landslide victory on a platform of change. Among a raft of problems they face are boosting a sluggish economy, fixing a broken health care system, and restoring trust in government. "Just because Labour won a big landslide doesn't mean all the problems that the Conservative government has

arriving across the English Channel, failing to live up to ex-Prime Minister's Rishi Sunak's pledge to "stop the boats." Starmer has said he will scrap the Conservatives controversial plan to deport asylum-seekers to Rwanda. The plan had cost hundreds of millions of pounds (dollars) without a single flight taking off. "Labour is going to need to find a solution to the small boats coming across the channel," Bale said. "It's going to ditch the Rwanda scheme, but it's going to have to come up with other solutions to deal with that particular problem." Suella Braverman, a Conservative hard liner on immigration who is a possible contender to replace Sunak as party leader, criticised Starmer's plan to end the Rwanda pact. "Years of hard work, acts of Parliament, millions of pounds spent on a scheme which had it been delivered properly would have worked," she said Saturday. "There are big problems on the horizon which will be I'm afraid caused by Keir Starmer."

Conservatives struggled to contain the flow of migrants

# Imran's party postpones Islamabad rally after cancellation of NOC

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Saturday postponed its rally in the suburbs of Islamabad after revocation of its permission by the authorities, citing security concerns. The party was set to organise its power show at Tarnol at 6 pm for which it had secured a no-objection certificate (NOC) from the Islamabad deputy commissioner. However, the city administration on Friday cancelled the permission saying that the NOC issued by the deputy commissioner was reviewed afresh in the wake of security concerns. An official press release said the chief commissioner decided to cancel the

certificate issued for the political gathering in view of the current security situation, the advent of Muharram, security concerns and reports of law enforcement agencies. Initially, the PTI leadership had threatened to go ahead with the rally despite the cancellation of permission. PTI leader Omar Ayub Khan told reporters late last night that his party would go ahead with the planned meeting "come what may". However, there was a change of stance and today Omar accompanied by PTI chief Gohar Khan said at a press conference that the planned rally had been postponed until after the Muharram. "God willing [...] we will hold it after Ashura through a legal process," Omar said, adding that the PTI would not sit after

one rally but it would hold several other rallies in Lahore, Karachi and other cities. Gohar Khan claimed that several PTI workers had been picked up in recent days, vowing to take the matter before the court. "We strongly condemn this state brutality," he said. Earlier in the day, the party filed a petition in the Islamabad High Court (IHC) seeking contempt proceedings against the Islamabad district administration and police for cancelling the NOC. It stated that the party had approached the IHC for permission for the rally and during the hearing of its petition, the court was told by the administration that permission had been granted for the rally.

# Former Pak PM forms new party

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi on Saturday formally launched a new political party with the mission to change the system and restore respect for the Constitution of the country. The main slogan of the Awaam Pakistan Party is: 'Badlien gaen nizam' (we will change the system) and its membership is open to anyone and everyone who can contribute for the development of the country. Abbasi, 65, served as a prime minister from August 2017 to May 2018 when the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) chief Nawaz Sharif was disqualified by the Supreme Court. Abbasi clarified that the party's ideology is helping the people of Pakistan and taking responsibility for them.



Ukrainian servicemen carry a portrait and coffin of British combat medic, volunteer, Peter Fouche, 49 who was killed on June 27 during his work in East Ukraine, at the funeral ceremony on the city's main square in Kyiv, Ukraine on Saturday. Peter was founder of a charity organization, which provides vehicles, drones and other needs to Ukrainian servicemen. AP/PTI

# Biden asserts only 'Lord Almighty' can drive him out of race

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Joe Biden has dismissed concerns about his health and doubts about his re-election bid in November, brushing off a poor performance in the presidential debate as a "bad episode" and insisting that only "the Lord Almighty" could persuade him to exit the race. Biden, 81, said this on Friday in a television interview, a week after his disastrous debate performance in Atlanta against his Republican rival Donald Trump, following which some of his own Democratic Party leaders started urging him to

step down and his approval rating plummeted. In the 22-minute high-stakes interview on ABC News aimed at quelling a burgeoning rebellion in the Democratic party, Biden, who is seeking a second term, said he had "a bad night" and he was "exhausted" and "sick" during his first presidential debate with Trump. He asserted that only the "Lord Almighty" could make him drop out of the race to win the November 5 election. He claimed that he is "running the world" and no one is "more qualified" to be president. Asked whether he would be willing to have an independent

cognitive evaluation and release the results to the American people, Biden said: "Look, I have a cognitive test every single day. Every day I've had tests. Everything I do. You know, not only am I campaigning, I'm running the world." The president said in the interview that he was "sick" before the debate. Asked whether it was a bad episode or a sign of a more serious condition, Biden dismissed those concerns. "It was a bad episode. No indication of any serious condition. I was exhausted. I didn't listen to my instincts in terms of preparing and — and a bad

night," Biden said during his first interview after the debate, adding that his top party leadership are asking him to stay in the race. "Because I was sick. I was feeling terrible. Matter of fact the docs (doctors are) with me. I asked if they did a COVID test because they were trying to figure out what was wrong. They did a test to see whether or not I had some infection, a virus. I didn't. I just had a really bad cold," he said and reiterated multiple times that he was running for the presidency. Blaming himself for the bad debate night in Atlanta, Biden said, "Yeah, look. The whole

way I prepared, nobody's fault but mine. I prepared what I usually would do sitting down as I did come back with foreign leaders or the National Security Council for explicit detail," adding that Trump "lied 28 times" during the debate. Biden said none of the major Democratic party leaders have asked him to drop out and asserted that he would withdraw only if the "Lord Almighty" asked him to. "If the Lord Almighty came down and said 'Joe, get out of the race,' I'd get out of the race. The Lord Almighty's not coming down," he added. The president tried to avoid

questions on both his mental fitness and cognitive tests. "Do you dispute that there have been more lapses, especially in the last seven months?" Biden was asked. "Can I run the 100 in 10 flat? No. But I'm still in good shape," he responded. "Are you more frail?" he was asked. "No. Come keep my schedule," he said. Biden alleged that Trump is a pathological liar. Asked by the interviewer whether he was being honest with himself about his ability to beat Trump, Biden said, "Yes, Yes, yes, yes." He pointed to previous polls

that showed he couldn't win in 2020 as proof and subsequent down-ballot elections, denying extensive polling that reflects a race where he is trailing. In a reaction to Biden's interview, Indian American Congressman Ro Khanna, according to The New York Times, said he expected "complete transparency" from the White House and a willingness to answer "many legitimate questions" from the news media and voters about the president's abilities. "He has to earn that trust, and that requires more than one interview," Khanna was quoted as saying by the daily.

ABC News said it offered a similar one-on-one interview to Trump, 78, but the former president declined. Earlier during a rally in the battleground state of Wisconsin, Biden asserted that he is in the race and will win the election again. "We had a little debate last week. Can't say it was my best performance. But ever since then, there's been a lot of speculation. What's Joe going to do? Is he going to stay in the race? Is he going to drop out? What's he going to do? Well, here's my answer. I am running and going to win again," Biden told his cheering supporters.





# RAJAWAT STUNS WORLD NUMBER 4 ANTONSEN

PTI ■ CALGARY (CANADA)

Continuing his dream run, rising Indian shuttler Priyanshu Rajawat stunned top seed and world number four Anders Antonsen of Denmark to cruise into the semifinals of the Canada Open here. World number 39 Rajawat defeated Antonsen 21-11, 17-21, 21-19 in a gruelling one hour 19 minutes quarterfinal on Friday night. However, the women's doubles pair of Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand made a quarterfinal exit.

The third-seeded Indians were handed a 18-21 21-19 16-21 defeat by Chinese Taipei's Pei Shan Hsieh and En-Tzu Hung. The win against Antonsen is the 22-year-old Rajawat's first-ever victory over a top-10 player. He will take on Alex Lanier of France in what will be his second World Tour Super 500 semifinal. Rajawat was off to a bright start, taking a 7-4 lead in the opening game before Antonsen levelled it at 9-9. The Indian then picked up five points on the trot to gain the upper hand and while the

Dane tried to fashion a comeback, Rajawat claimed seven successive points to take the first game. Trailing 0-1, Antonsen made a strong comeback in the second game and although Rajawat matched him, even levelling the game at 17, he lost four straight points as the world No. 4 forced a decider. In the final game, Rajawat initially led 5-1, but Antonsen responded with six consecutive points, bringing the score to 7-5 in favour of the Danish player. Rajawat staged a comeback by

winning three points but the experienced Dane entered the mid-game break with a slender 11-10 lead. With little differentiating the two players, it could have been anybody's game but at 19-19 Rajawat won back-to-back points to seal the match. Rajawat is the only Indian left in the competition. He had pulled off victories against higher-ranked opponents -- world number 24 Rasmus Gemke of Denmark and Japan's Takuma Obayashi, ranked 33rd, in the first and second rounds respectively.

# All Olympics-bound Indian athletes, including Neeraj Chopra, fit: IOA CMO Pardiwala

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Renowned sports medicine expert Dr Dinshaw Pardiwala on Sunday said that all the Indian athletes participating in the Paris Olympics, including ace javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra, were "fit enough" to perform on the big stage when the quadrennial showpiece gets underway on July 26. Pardiwala, the chief medical officer (CMO) of the nearly 120-strong Indian contingent for the Paris Games, added that his 13-member team will render the best possible medical assistance to the contingent in the areas of injury management, sports nutrition, mental conditioning, sports massage, recovery and sleep. "All the athletes that are going for the Olympics are fit right now. Some athletes will have minor niggles here and there. I am not going to be discussing any specific injuries to any athlete that they've had in the past, but all of them who are there are because they are going to be capable and they're gonna be fit enough to perform," he said. Pardiwala has treated some of the top athletes, including India wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant, who suffered serious injuries during a car crash, and Tokyo Games silver medalist weightlifter Mirabai Chanu. The Indian Olympic Association, Sports Ministry and the Sports Authority of India have brought together a team of top medical experts, headed by Pardiwala, to give the best rest and recovery facilities to the athletes as they bid to better the seven-medal haul at the Tokyo Olympics.



"This is the first time the Indian athletes will have a recovery room and a preparational rehabilitation room to make them game ready," said Pardiwala. In the past, athletes had to visit a common polyclinic for approximately 10,000 competitors to avail physiotherapy and recovery services, and getting slots was time consuming. But this time around, the 13-member medical team will take care of those aspects as well so that the athletes only focus on their events and "not waste time" thinking about rest and recovery. "It will be open 24x7. We've also got a sleep therapist on board because, over the years, one of the concerns has been inadequate sleep for rest and recovery. Time zones are different, the pressures and anxiety is there. So, to ensure athletes don't land up with inadequate sleep, we've got a

sleep therapist on board who will address all these concerns," he said. "We've already started sleep therapy sessions and we are also going to have some sleep pods for helping our athletes on the sleep aspect," he said. Several athletes have personal physios, mental trainers and nutritionists, and Pardiwala said for those who cannot take their support staff to Paris, his team had already coordinated with them and will help them in every possible way. "Ever since the sports science team was announced, the first thing we have done is start knowing our athletes in three different aspects -- sports medicine, sports nutrition and mental conditioning. We have visited national camps, competitions etc to know their needs better." With warm weather expected during the Games and the Paris Olympics not promoting air-conditioning in the

Athletes' Village, there is a genuine concern about rest and recovery of the athletes. Pardiwala said, "Yes, there is not going to be air-conditioning per se supplied by the organisers in the Village. Their main issue is they want it to be a green Olympics, and if we want it to be green Olympics, then we don't want air-conditioning to be there because that is not environmentally friendly. "Several contingents have said 'our athletes are used to temperature-controlled environments'. They (Paris organisers) have a sort of geothermal system where there will be a temperature within the Village of at least 5-7 degrees less than the ambient temperature. And the expected temperature in Paris is supposed to be between 18 and 26 degrees C. If ambient temperature is 5-6 degrees less, I think it's going to be quite OK," he reasoned.



# Sable, Jena up against world class field in Paris League in tune-up to Olympics

PTI ■ PARIS

Top Indian 3000m steeplechaser Avinash Sable and javelin thrower Kishore Jena will hope to fine tune their Olympics preparations in the Paris league of the prestigious Diamond League one-day meeting series on Sunday. Reigning Olympic and world champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra has opted out of the Paris DL apparently due to adductor niggle that has been troubling him for the past couple of months. Both Sable and Jena have not been in the best of forms and have not competed in too many events ahead of the Paris Games but they would be looking to get acclimatised to the conditions of the city which will host the Olympics. Athletics competitions in the Olympics begin on August 1. The 29-year-old Sable has competed in just two 3000m steeplechase events, one at the Portland Track Festival in the USA, where he has been training, and the other at the National Inter-State Championships in Panchkula, Haryana last week. He had clocked 8:21.85 at Portland and 8:31.75 in Panchkula, while he has a personal best of 8:11.20. After winning gold at the National Inter-State Championships, Sable had vowed to make amends for mistakes he committed in the last few years and deliver a memorable show at the Paris Olympics with a different approach. "I committed mistakes in the last two years. I had gone with good fitness in the two world championships (2022 and 2023) but could not do well at both. I want to make amends, hope that this Olympics will be my best," said the reigning

Asian Games gold medalist. On Sunday, he will be up against Kenyan Abraham Kibiwot, the 2023 World Championships bronze medalist and gold winner at the 2022 Commonwealth Games where Sable had won a silver. Another Kenyan, Simon Kiprop Koeh, the 2023 Diamond League champion, will also be a top-three contender on Sunday in the absence of reigning Olympic champion Soufiane El Bakkali of Morocco and Lamecha Girma of Ethiopia. In five Diamond League appearances so far in his career, Sable's best show has been a fifth-place finish. Jena has also had a forgettable season so far with efforts of 76.31m in Doha Diamond League and 75.49m in the Federation Cup before an 80.84m throw to win a bronze at the National Inter-State Championships. He has a personal best of 87.54m which he did while winning a silver in the Hangzhou Asian Games in 2023. Jena, who will be competing in his second Diamond League on Sunday after Doha, had revealed that he was coping with a minor left ankle pain, which he felt after the Federation Cup (May 15-19) in Bhubaneswar. "The pain has reduced and it's almost all right now," he had said in Panchkula last week. He will be up against the likes of Tokyo Olympics silver medalist and 2023 Diamond League champion Jakub Vadlejch of Czech Republic, former world champion Anderson Peters of Grenada and reigning Commonwealth Games medalist and 2023 World Championships silver winner Arshad Nadeem of Pakistan.

# Ronaldo heading home as France beats Portugal 5-3 in penalty shootout in Euro 2024 quarterfinals

AP ■ HAMBURG

France's heartache in penalty shootouts is over. So is Cristiano Ronaldo's last-ever European Championship. In a clash of the soccer superstars, it was Kylian Mbappé - and not Ronaldo, his idol - advancing to a semifinal match against Spain as France beat Portugal 5-3 in a shootout following a 0-0 draw on Friday. Portugal substitute Joao Felix hit a post with the only miss in the shootout and Theo Hernandez showed no sign of pressure by converting the clinching kick into the top corner. It was a record sixth and final European Championship for the 39-year-old Ronaldo, who scored Portugal's first penalty in the shootout and ended up consoling fellow veteran Pepe afterward as the 41-year-old defender cried on his captain's shoulder. "We need to go through this moment of our loss, which is very painful," Pepe said. Ronaldo's 20-year career in the Euros included the title in 2016 - when Portugal beat France in the final - and it remains to be seen if the five-time world player of the year will continue



playing for his country through to the 2026 World Cup, when he will be aged 41. "Everything is too raw," said Portugal coach Roberto Martinez, when asked if that was Ronaldo's last game for his country. "We are suffering a defeat as a team - there are no individual decisions at this point."

The victory ended the recent heartbreak of Mbappé and France in shootouts, having lost in them at their last two major tournaments - in the last 16 at the Euros in 2021 and in the 2022 World Cup final. Before that, the French were also defeated on spot kicks by Italy in the 2006 World Cup final so it had been 26

years - since beating the Italians in the quarterfinals of the World Cup in 1998 - that Les Bleus had been victorious in a shootout. Mbappé didn't even take a penalty this time, having been substituted during halftime of extra time following a couple of knocks to his broken nose that was covered by a protective mask. France coach Didier Deschamps said his captain was tired, too. Les Bleus didn't need their star player, as Ousmane Dembele, Youssouf Fofana, Jules Kounde and Bradley Barcola all found the net in the shootout - held at the end housing Portugal's vocal fans - before Hernandez's coup de grace set off jubilant scenes for the French inside the stadium in Hamburg. "It wasn't easy," France goalkeeper Mike Maignan said. "We didn't always play that great, it was a complicated game. "We got to the penalty shootout and didn't waver. We can be proud of ourselves." France will play Spain in the semifinals after its extra-time win over Germany in Stuttgart earlier Friday, with Les Bleus staying on course for a third European Championship title after 1984 and 2000.

# Badminton body holds event for coaches



PNS ■ GURUGRAM

The 11-day residential Coaches Development Programme, organised by Badminton Association of India (BAI) in collaboration with REC Limited and the Sports Authority of India (SAI) simultaneously at the National Centre of Excellence (NCE), Guwahati and Raipur, concluded today with a total of 53 participants from 22 States of India being trained in grassroots coaching methodologies.

# Merino's last-gasp goal sends Spain to Euro 2024 semis after dramatic extra-time win over Germany

AP ■ STUTTGART (GERMANY)

Spain and its fans celebrated as if they'd won the European Championship. After eliminating tournament host Germany in a thrilling quarterfinal, Luis de la Fuente's team has a great chance to lift the trophy in Berlin next week. Spain snatched a 2-1 win in extra time on Friday thanks to substitute Mikel Merino's header in the 119th minute. Merino celebrated by running around the corner flag, mimicking his father Miguel Merino's celebration after he scored in the same stadium for Osasuna in the UEFA Cup against Stuttgart in 1991. "I knew that there was very little time left and that it was one of the last attacks we would have," Merino said. "I didn't believe that it had gone in until a couple of seconds later. When you get 30 slaps on your back it sinks in real quick. "I am very happy for me and the entire team. It all comes down to one moment (the goal), but there is so much work behind it, all the training, the hope, the faith, and the belief in ourselves." Extra time came only after Florian Wirtz's equalizer in the last minute of regulation.



Dani Olmo, who set up Merino's winner, netted the opener early in the second half. All three goals came from substitutes. Spain defender Dani Carvajal was sent off late in extra time for a second yellow card and will be suspended from Tuesday's semifinal against France. Fellow defender Robin le Normand will also miss that match after picking up another booking. France knocked out Portugal and Cristiano Ronaldo in a penalty shootout 5-3. Spain eliminated the host of a major tournament for the first time in 10 attempts. Germany players were morose

and coach Julian Nagelsmann looked on with his hands on hips and his face etched with disappointment. "We were so close, that's what makes it so bitter," Germany midfielder Toni Kroos said after the final match of his excellent career. The 2014 World Cup winner had said he was retiring when Germany's campaign ended. "We all had a big goal that we wanted to achieve together," Kroos added. "And this dream we all had has been simply shattered now." Teammates who might also have played their last international included captain Ilkay Gundogan, Thomas

Muller and Manuel Neuer. Despite the disappointment and the "hurt," Nagelsmann managed to crack a joke during his news conference: "It's hurting also that we have to wait two years to become world champion." The quarterfinal pitted the Euros' only three-time champions, the teams who have played the best soccer at Euro 2024, and it didn't disappoint. There was a blistering pace from the start with crunching tackles and end-to-end action. Kroos was lucky not to be booked for a mistimed challenge that upended Spain midfielder Pedri. Another hefty challenge moments later forced Pedri to leave injured and in tears. He was replaced by Olmo in the eighth minute, the fastest replacement in Euros history. "Pedri is in pain. It deserved a red card," De la Fuente said. He added it was too early to know if the young Barcelona midfielder would recover by Tuesday. From the resulting free kick, Lamine Yamal almost became the youngest ever goal-scorer at the tournament but the 16-year-old's effort flashed past the right post.



# Bhambri-Olivetti pair ousted from Wimbledon

PTI ■ LONDON

India's Yuki Bhambri and his French partner Albano Olivetti made a second-round exit from the Wimbledon Championships after losing to Germany's Kevin Krawietz and Tim Puetz in three sets here. The Indo-French pair squandered a one-game lead to go down 6-4 4-6 3-6 to the eighth seed Germans in two hours, five minutes on Friday. Bhambri and Olivetti had downed the Kazakh duo of Alexander Bublik and

Alexander Shevchenko in the opening round. On Saturday, veteran Rohan Bopanna and his Australian partner Mathew Ebden will be in action. The second seeds, who are the reigning Australian Open champions, will face Germany's Hendrik Jellens and Constantin Frantzen in the second round. Bopanna is the only Indian left in the tournament as Olympic-bound Sumit Nagal and N Sriram bowed out of the tournament earlier this week.

# India Women look to bounce back in do-or-die 2nd T20I against South Africa

**PTI ■ CHENNAI**

A 12-run defeat in the first game putting them on the backfoot, India Women would look to dish out an improved batting and fielding performance in the second T20 International and bounce back in the three-match series against South Africa here on Sunday.

Dropped catches and batters' lack of intent in the middle overs had cost India dear in the opening match on Friday, as they could only score 177 for 4 in 20 overs after South Africa had posted 189 for 4, thanks to Tazmin Brits (81) and Marizanne Kapp (57).

It was South Africa's first win in the ongoing tour. They had earlier suffered a 0-3 whitewash in the ODI series followed by a 10-wicket loss in the one-off Test in the tour spanning close to a month now.

Both the camps have concerns to deal with following Friday's match. India's Richa Ghosh and



South Africa's Brits had gone off the field with concussion and cramps respectively. As per the BCCI's statement, Richa had "neck pain and dizziness" following a failed catch attempt, with the ball hitting her face. Her face too seemingly hit the ground.

"She has been sent for further scans & the BCCI Medical Team is monitoring her progress," read the BCCI's statement.

As for Brits, she had to be stretched out of the field with a severe contusion on her right lower leg. However, she did come for the post-match press conference and affirmed that she would be good to go in the upcoming games.

For the hosts, while their bowling performance was decent, the poor fielding caught everyone off-guard, with three dropped catches and a few mis-fields.

The fielding flop show will definitely be one aspect that will be playing at the back of the home

players' minds on Sunday, especially given that head coach Amol Muzumdar is extremely strict about it.

As for batting, the Indian top order needs to add a bit more flair, barring Smriti Mandhana, who has been in fine touch lately.

However, the Indian middle order has been efficient, thanks to captain Harmanpreet Kaur and Jemimah Rodrigues, who made 35 and 53 not out respectively on Friday.

The South Africans clicked with the bat, especially the top order. The likes of Brits and Kapp, along with skipper Laura Wolvaardt and Chloe Tryon, are expected to come in handy yet again on Sunday.

Also, it was an all-round bowling performance, with four different wicket-takers.

However, Eliz-Mari Marx might be under the scanner, having given away 36 runs in her three overs in the first match.

The Chepauk pitch on Friday was

above par and is expected to be more or less the same on Sunday. Although there was low bounce and mild dew on Friday, playing the sweep shots effectively will be a good choice, given how the Proteas executed them perfectly.

**THE TEAMS (FROM):**  
**India Women:** Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana (vc), Uma Chetry (wk), Richa Ghosh (wk), Dayalan Hemalatha, Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma, Amanjot Kaur, Shreyanka Patil, Sajeevan Sajana, Deepthi Sharma, Asha Sobhana, Arundhati Reddy, Renuka Singh, Shabnam Shakil, Pooja Vastrakar and Radha Yadav.  
**South Africa Women:** Laura Wolvaardt (c), Tazmin Brits, Mieke de Ridder (wk), Sinalo Jaftha (wk), Anneke Bosch, Nadine de Klerk, Annerie Dercksen, Marizanne Kapp, Sune Luus, Chloe Tryon, Ayabonga Khaka, Masabata Klaas, Eliz-Mari Marx, Nonkululeko Mlaba and Tumi Sekhukhune.

## Made some errors as a bowling unit: Radha Yadav on 1st T20I loss

**PTI ■ CHENNAI**

India spinner Radha Yadav admitted that the bowling unit made some errors during their 12-run loss to South Africa in the opening women's T20I here, adding that the pacers should have relied more on yorkers.

India bowlers were at the receiving end of some formidable batting by Tazmin Brits (81) and Marizanne Kapp (57), who helped South Africa set an imposing 190-run target for the hosts.

"It was important to know which length and pace to bowl at on this wicket. We did make some errors as a bowling unit; maybe gave away 10-15 extra runs," said Radha during the post-match media interaction on Friday.

The South Africans used the sweep shot effectively with the pitch offering low bounce. "We needed to hit them (at yorker length) since the ball was skidding," she added.

Asked about the animated discussion that happened on the field when the Proteas were batting, Radha said that it was about setting up an attacking field.

"We were discussing about making them play where the fielders were stationed and also look to attack and take wickets. But, they did bat well. "We need to back our plans and quickly



judge how the wicket is playing out. It will make things a lot easier for us." India will play the second T20I here on Sunday and they will have to improve their catching skills to level the three-match series.

India dropped three catches, which cost them dear on Friday but Radha said it was just a bad day in office.

"I think it was just a bad day. All are brilliant fielders in our group, and everyone has been putting in hard work

and training. We'll look to bounce back," she said.

**WE NEED THESE WINS: TAZMIN BRITS**

South African star batter Tazmin Brits was thrilled to have drawn first blood in the WT20Is after the massive Test loss and feels that winning the series will give them confidence for the upcoming T20 World Cup in Bangladesh.

"We need these wins and the confidence in our locker room. With this confidence, we cannot just reach the semis but actually win the World Cup. Winning this game was good, but winning the next two would be even better," she said.

She admitted that it was hard for her to play Pooja Vastrakar, India's most economical bowler in the match.

She also lauded the excellent communication with her skipper Laura Wolvaardt and Kapp while batting.

"She (Pooja) is a great bowler. But the other spinners made it easy. Also, good communication from the other end helped.

"It's difficult to see what you are doing wrong due to your head position. So, it was nice to get that information and advice from the other end," she said.

South Africa's batting has been in focus, having managed a 300-plus score during the second ODI and also scoring heavily in the second innings of the one-off Test, which they lost by 10 wickets.

She credited batting coach Baakier Abrahams for the improvement.

"You need to be fearless against all T20I teams. But, to use that in the actual game is always difficult. It's nice to have a batting coach who's helping in not just swinging but also to know your game better," she said.

## Didn't like chopping and changing, tried to help captain deliver his vision: Dravid

**PTI ■ MUMBAI**

As Rahul Dravid bids farewell to Team India, the legend said that during his tenure as head coach, he abhorred chopping and changing the side too much and always tried to be a foil for skipper Rohit Sharma so that he could devise his own winning strategies.

Dravid's coaching stint came to an end with India winning the T20 World Cup in Barbados last week, defeating South Africa and bringing home the trophy for the second time after 2007.

"I'm someone who actually likes continuity and don't like to chop and change too many things because I believe that creates a lot of instability and doesn't create very good environment," said Dravid in a video posted by BCCI on Saturday. "I feel that I am a part of the team whose responsibility is to create the right professional, safe, secure environment that doesn't really have a fear of failure as such but is challenging enough to push people. That has always been my endeavour."

Dravid said that the period when the players were coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic was a tough one for him as he had just taken over as coach and "never envisaged" that he would have to work with half a dozen captains.

"One of the things that we really had to manage, especially in the early part of my coaching tenure here with India. We were at the back-end of the Covid restrictions. We really had to manage their workloads through all the three different formats. There were a few injuries and it led to me working with something like 5-6 captains in the first 8-10 months of me being here."

"It was definitely something that I hadn't envisaged, or not something that I thought about, but it just sort of organically happened."

Under Dravid's tutelage, India thrashed England in the five-match Test series at home and the team also reached the 2023 ODI World Cup final.

While Covid put a lot of restrictions on players and they virtually lived out of a 'bubble case' at all times, the pandemic



also had its up side as a lot of youngsters got a chance to be a part of the India team environment.

"The other thing that happened, which was very nice to see is, because we played so much of cricket after Covid and we had to cram in a lot of series, it meant that we had to almost, at times, have two teams playing at the same time in different parts of the world.

"Over the last 2-1/2 years, especially in white-ball cricket and lately towards the back-end (of my career) even in red-ball cricket, we were able to give a lot of youngsters a lot of opportunities, bring a lot of people into the side."

"Some of them developed and stayed on in the side a little bit longer, but some of them, they were there because at that point of time maybe some of the seniors were resting."

Dravid's relationship with Indian stalwarts like Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli dates back to the time when he was at the fag end of his cricketing career while the two were finding their feet in international cricket.

"I've really enjoyed working with Rohit, someone I knew as a young boy. Just to see him grow as a person and grow as a leader in Indian cricket, what someone like him has been able to contribute to the team over the last 10-12 years, both as a player and now as a leader, has been a real tribute to him and the effort that he's put in."

"I've really enjoyed getting to know him as a person as well and enjoyed seeing his commitment and his care for the team; to just try and get the environment right where everyone feels safe and secure and enjoys themselves. It's something that I'll miss."

"Even with someone like Virat. In the initial days, just a couple of series with him as a captain, just a couple of matches. Getting to know him as well and to see how he goes about his business, the professionalism that he continues to display...His desired to improve, to get better. It's been fascinating for me to watch."

Dravid said he always believed in the process because of which, at times, he was misunderstood as not being result-oriented.

"For me that's (results), of course it's important. I keep saying and people think, 'Oh, I think result are not important'. Of course, results are important."

"I'm in the business to produce results. But it's always like, as a coach, to think about what is it that I can control to help the results and at the end of the day our responsibility should be to try and help the captain deliver his vision and his philosophy of how he wants the team to play."

"Of course, to win cricket games is a given. You try to win as much as you can. You start with that. But I always look back on what is it that leads to the winning? How do you win more games and what is the process required to win more games?"

"For me, the vision was to try and get that process right. Ticking all of those boxes. 'Are we challenging the players enough? Are we practicing well enough? Are we prepared tactically, technically? Are we supporting the players as best as we possibly can, Are we creating the right environment?"

## Shooter Jitu Rai retires from Army to focus on grooming youngsters

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Asian Games gold-medallist marksman Jitu Rai, who debunked the myth that a humble background can hinder success at the highest level, has decided to retire from the Indian Army to train young athletes to become world-beaters.

Born in the Sankhuwa Sabha district of Nepal, the 36-year-old Khel Ratna and Padma Shri awardee, was the only Indian shooter to win a gold at the 2014 Incheon Asian Games, an achievement which helped him rise up the ranks to become Honorary Captain in the Army.

Rai, who served most of his 17-and-a-half-year tenure with 11 Gorkha Regiment in Lucknow, announced his retirement from the Army on social media.

"I am Honorary Capt. Jitu Rai, SM, VSM, Olympian shooter, Padma Shree Awardee Dhayan Chandra Ratna Awardee and Arjun awardee. Would like to inform all that my journey of 17 years 6 months in Indian Army was completed on 1st July, 2024."

"The Army has given me more than what I deserved. I took this opportunity to thank all my senior officers, coaches, officials, colleagues and juniors who have helped me in every walk of life," Rai wrote on Facebook.

"I have always played for the nation and Army and I will continue to do the same through my experience sharing and coaching to the upcoming shooters. I will always carry discipline, dedication and faithfulness towards my nation taught by the Army throughout my career," Rai added.

**SHOOTING ACADEMY IN PIPELINE:** Rai, who competed at the Rio Olympics 2016 and finished last in the 10m air pistol final, further said he plans to open an academy in near future.



"I have taken retirement from the Army to make a foray into coaching. I will try to compete as much as I can but will also like to share my experiences

with younger generation," Rai told PTI from Bagdogra in West Bengal.

"I plan to open a shooting academy though I have not decided the location. It would be wrong on my part if I don't share my shooting experiences. If I get the opportunity to be a part of the national coaching staff that would be great."

"I have also heard that the national shooting federation (NRAI) has also advertised for the post of high-performance coach, so I will apply. If they (federation) gives me the opportunity then I will be really happy," he said.

Besides the Asian Games gold in 50m pistol and bronze in 10m air pistol at Incheon, Rai also won gold medals at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow (2014) and Gold Coast (2018).

The World Championships silver-medallist in 2014 Granada also has two World Cup gold medals in Maribor and New Delhi.

## India women's 23-member squad for Myanmar friendlies announced

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

The All India Football Federation on Saturday announced a 23-member senior women's squad for the two friendly matches against Myanmar to be played in Yangon on July 9 and 12.

The goalkeeping department comprises Shreya Hooda, Elangbam Panthoi Chanu and Maibam Linthoingambi Devi while Loitongbam Ashalata Devi, Hemam Shilky Devi, Sanju, Wangkhem Linthoingambi Devi and Aruna Bag will handle the defence.

As for the midfield, the likes of Naorem Priyangka Devi, Sangita Basfore, Karthika

Ngamuthu, Neha, Nongmaithem Ratanbala Devi and Mousumi Murmu have been included in the department.

Meanwhile, the forward section consists of Kajol Hubert Dsouza, Anju Tamang, Soumya Guguloth, Sandhya Ranganathan, Karishma Purushottam Shirvoikar, Lynda Kom Serto, Pyari Xaxa, Jyoti and Rimpa Haldar.

"My team is a mix of senior and junior players. I am satisfied with the combination of the squad. After playing Uzbekistan last month, we started our National camp within the next 10 days," head coach Chaoba Devi said in an AIFF release.

"All the players are fit, which is a good sign. They didn't want to relax; they were undergoing intense training at their respective clubs."

Chaoba added that the team had excellent preparations during the training camp at the National Centre of Excellence in Kolkata and backed having youngsters in the starting XI.

India's last assignment was in Uzbekistan on May 31 and June 4 where they lost 0-3 and 0-0 to the hosts.

"We played with Uzbekistan last month, which was also a higher-ranked team. Playing against higher-ranked teams benefits our players as they can have intense matches and get ready to play in big



tournaments," Chaoba said.. While the Indians are currently ranked 67th in the FIFA Rankings, Myanmar is ranked 54th. However, Chaoba insisted that more than the ranking, the quality of these clashes matters, besides crediting the Indian

Women's League (IWL) for helping in scouting new talents.

"Ranking does matter. The federation is also trying to arrange for more exposure tours. If we play more such games, the team will improve. We need to play quality games. "A well laid-out plan should be there. We need to inform the girls well in time to keep them prepared. There is a lot of activity going on around Indian women's football, and we need future players."

"We have scouted talents from IWL and IWL 2. We coaches can get the best of the talents and select the best ones," she asserted.

**INDIAN SQUAD FOR MYANMAR FRIENDLIES:**  
**Goalkeepers:** Shreya Hooda, Elangbam Panthoi Chanu, Maibam Linthoingambi Devi.  
**Defenders:** Loitongbam Ashalata Devi, Hemam Shilky Devi, Sanju, Wangkhem Linthoingambi Devi, Aruna Bag.  
**Midfielders:** Naorem Priyangka Devi, Sangita Basfore, Karthika Ngamuthu, Neha, Nongmaithem Ratanbala Devi, Mousumi Murmu.  
**Forwards:** Kajol Hubert Dsouza, Anju Tamang, Soumya Guguloth, Sandhya Ranganathan, Karishma Purushottam Shirvoikar, Lynda Kom Serto, Pyari Xaxa, Jyoti, Rimpa Haldar.



"See how the Ganga flows by and what a nice building! I like this place. This is the ideal kind of place for a Math"  
— Swami Vivekananda



BKP SINHA



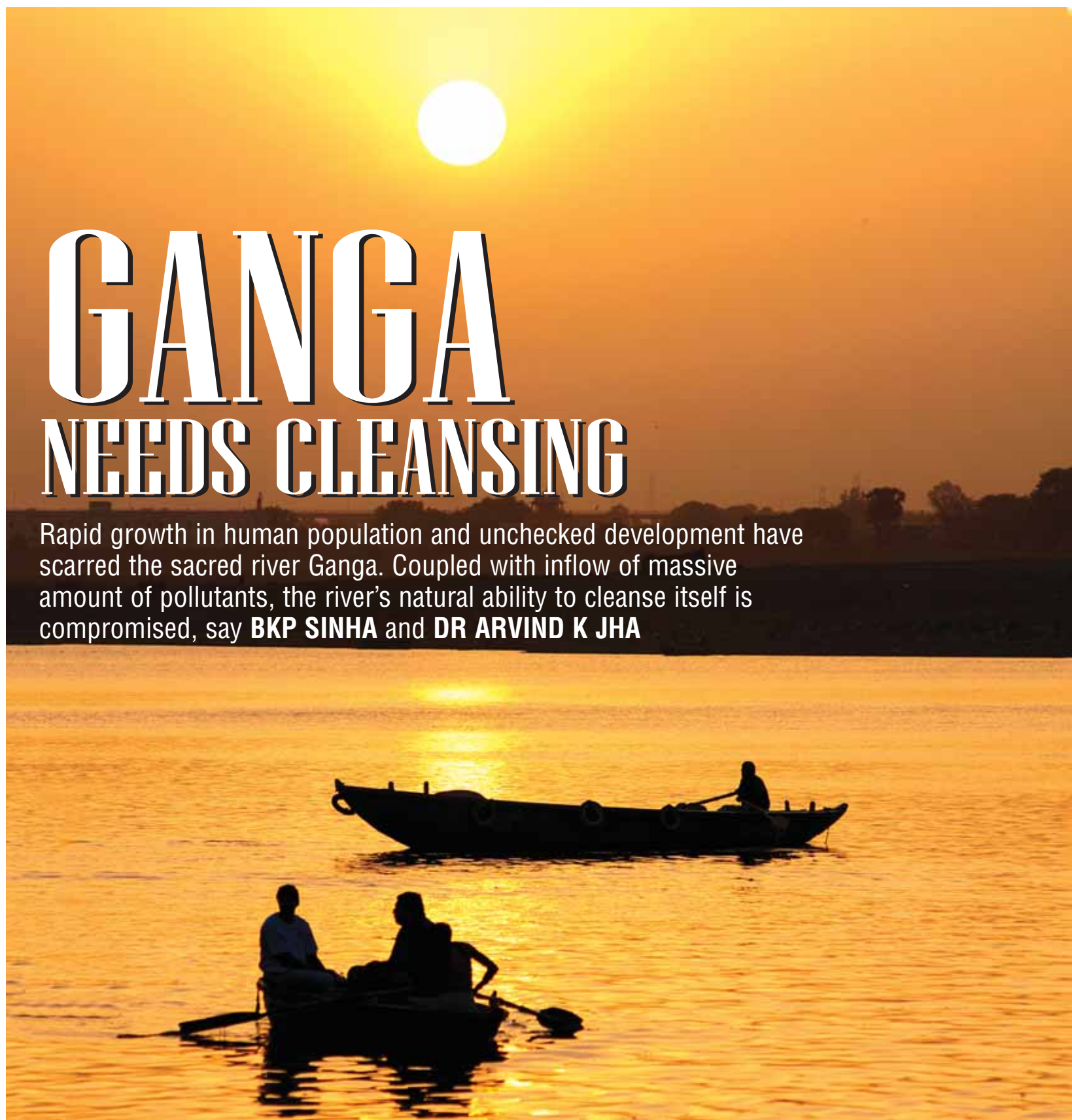
DR ARVIND K JHA

The Ganga River, also known as the Ganges, is the longest river in India with the most populated basin, the home to 600 million people. Originating from the Gangotri glacier in Uttarakhand, it embarks on a journey of 2,525 kilometers, meandering through five states - Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, and West Bengal before it merges with the Bay of Bengal. It nourishes a variety of life forms, provides livelihoods to people, and contributes to country's economy, trade, and commerce. The Ganga basin, spanning an area of 10.16 lakh square kilometers, contributes around 40% of the country's GDP. As per Hindu mythology, the river is believed to have descended from heaven when King Bhagiratha performed intense austerities for the river to descend to Earth. Considering river's immense force, Lord Shiva received the celestial river in his matted locks releasing it in a controlled flow. The Ganga is revered as a goddess; its journey symbolizes purity, life, and redemption; and its water is believed to wash away sins and facilitate *Moksha*, the liberation from the cycle of life and death. The Ganga itself, however, is under severe threat today.

The rapid growth in human population and unchecked development have degraded its catchments. With obstruction and diversion of its flow coupled with inflow of massive amount of pollutants from industrial, human, and agricultural sources, its natural ability to cleanse itself is compromised. The polluted water in the changed flow regime poses serious threat to humans and river's own biodiversity alike. While the future of 140 fish species and 90 amphibian species is threatened, Gharial and endangered Ganges River dolphin respectively are classified by IUCN as critically endangered and endangered. Severity of the issue that impacts the life, health and livelihoods of people and even undermines the cultural and spiritual significance of the Ganga deserves to be realized in its entirety and tackled with promptitude. Efforts have been made to clean and preserve the Ganga. During the late 1980s the Ganga Action Plan was implemented. This initiative led primarily to

## GANGA NEEDS CLEANSING

Rapid growth in human population and unchecked development have scarred the sacred river Ganga. Coupled with inflow of massive amount of pollutants, the river's natural ability to cleanse itself is compromised, say **BKP SINHA** and **DR ARVIND K JHA**



Photos: Pankaj Kumar/The Pioneer

the construction of wastewater treatment facilities at selected places in addition to the closure of a number of polluting industrial plants along the river. In 2008, the Ganga was declared as the national river of India. Subsequently, in 2014, the Government of India initiated the Namami Gange project that aimed to rejuvenate and protect the Ganga River by addressing pollution sources and promoting sustainable practices for improving its biological richness. The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), popularly known as the Namami Gange Mission, was billed as a "scientific programme" by the Indian government that aimed to clean the river using advanced technologies at a project cost of INR 20,000 crores with the dual objectives of effective abatement of pollution and conservation and rejuvenation of the Ganga River.

EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO CLEAN AND PRESERVE THE GANGA. DURING THE LATE 1980S THE GANGA ACTION PLAN WAS IMPLEMENTED. THIS INITIATIVE LED PRIMARILY TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITIES AT SELECTED PLACES IN ADDITION TO THE CLOSURE OF A NUMBER OF POLLUTING INDUSTRIAL PLANTS ALONG THE RIVER. IN 2008, THE GANGA WAS DECLARED AS THE NATIONAL RIVER OF INDIA

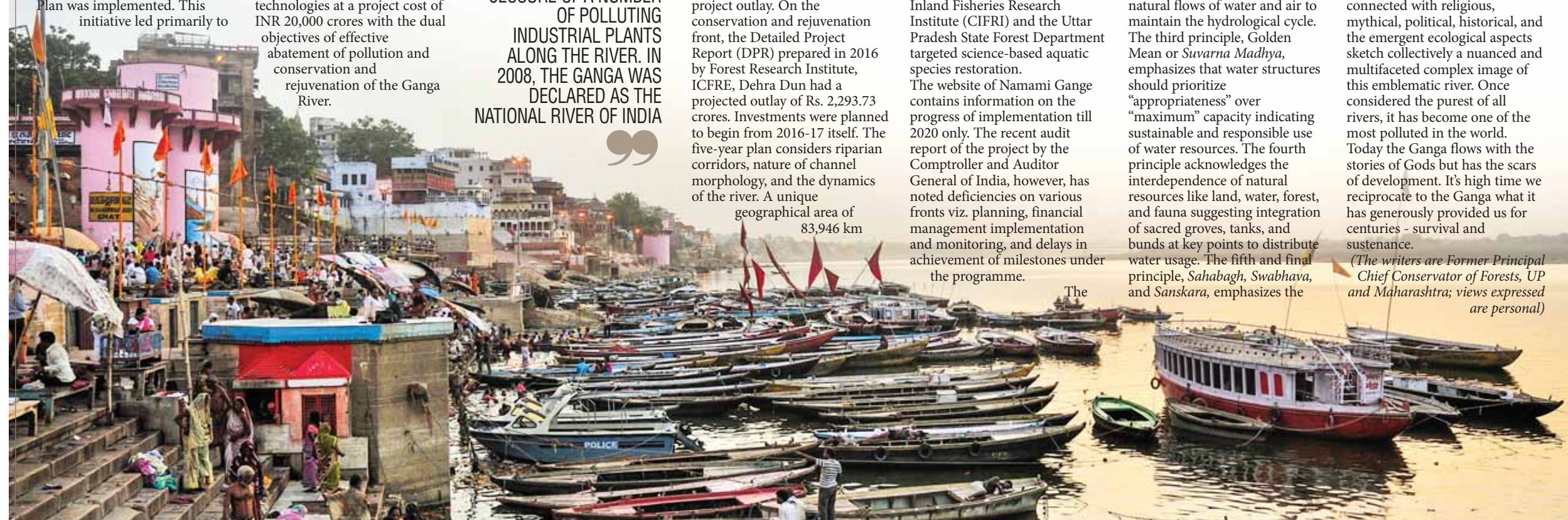
The Ministry of Water Resources, River Development, and Ganga Rejuvenation (MWRRDG) issued a notification on 7th October 2016, defining the River Ganga to include the entire length of six head-streams in the State of Uttarakhand, namely, Rivers Alakananda, Dhauri Ganga, Nandakini, Pinder, Mandakini and Bhagirathi, as well as the main stem of the river up to Ganga Sagar, including all its tributaries up to Ganga Sagar. The establishment of sewerage treatment plants and sewerage networks with a primary focus on bioremediation figured predominantly in the Namami Gange project and accounted for about 80 percent of the overall project outlay. On the conservation and rejuvenation front, the Detailed Project Report (DPR) prepared in 2016 by Forest Research Institute, ICFRE, Dehra Dun had a projected outlay of Rs. 2,293.73 crores. Investments were planned to begin from 2016-17 itself. The five-year plan considers riparian corridors, nature of channel morphology, and the dynamics of the river. A unique geographical area of 83,946 km

delineated as 'Ganga riverscape' along the Ganga has been identified for planning, assessment, and implementation of measures that include activities like reforestation or afforestation, managing vegetation to prevent soil erosion, and creating buffer zones to protect the river from pollutants. Further, the Wildlife Institute of India prepared the 'Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation' plan with focus on development of local level 'Ganga Prahari' volunteers for playing a crucial role in conserving the ecological integrity of the Ganga and reducing the direct dependency of locals on the river. The projects of the Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute (CIFRI) and the Uttar Pradesh State Forest Department targeted science-based aquatic species restoration. The website of Namami Gange contains information on the progress of implementation till 2020 only. The recent audit report of the project by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, however, has noted deficiencies on various fronts viz. planning, financial management implementation and monitoring, and delays in achievement of milestones under the programme.

The current scenario warrants improvement not only on the above aspects but also introduction of innovative and effective approach. In this context, one can draw inspiration from an ancient text by Sage Kashyapa on agriculture. He outlined five principles for water resources development. The first principle, *Udhgamsthana*, suggests that conservation should commence at the river's source. This includes construction of temples for protection, management of upper catchments, and redirecting streams and rivulets to enrich river's source. The second principle, *Nyunatam Gati-avarodh*, advocates for minimal disruption to the natural flows of water and air to maintain the hydrological cycle. The third principle, *Golden Mean or Suvarna Madhya*, emphasizes that water structures should prioritize "appropriateness" over "maximum" capacity indicating sustainable and responsible use of water resources. The fourth principle acknowledges the interdependence of natural resources like land, water, forest, and fauna suggesting integration of sacred groves, tanks, and bunds at key points to distribute water usage. The fifth and final principle, *Sahabagh, Swabhava, and Sanskara*, emphasizes the

need for community participation that takes care of the needs of all stakeholders. The concept of Rejuvenation defined as 'restoring a living entity to a previously agreed state of health and wellness' is most relevant in the context of the Ganga. Given the definition of Ganga by the MWRRDG, it's high time that the rejuvenation approach for Ganga targets the entire riverscape in an integrated manner while drawing and utilizing funds from all concerned departments. All the tributaries require treatment to ensure they remain clean and flowing and contribute to the flow of the Ganga. In order to foster larger community engagement in the rejuvenation mission, catchment areas of tributaries can be named after revered personalities or temples at their origin, followed by the suffix 'Namami Gange Van'. For instance, the catchment of Ramganga, originating from the Doodhatoli ranges of Pauri in Uttarakhand, could be named 'Veer Chandra Singh Gadhwal: Namami Gange Van'. Similarly, as the Ghagra river converges with the Ganga after the confluence of Mahakali (Sharda) at Tanakpur housing the Purnagiri temple, the catchment could be named 'Purnagiri: Namami Gange Van'. Likewise, the catchments of Gomati in Pilibhit could be named Vashishtha, that of Sai river meeting Gomti in Parsa village (Hardoi) as Adi-Ganga, that of Saryu and lower Ghagra as Ram, and those of Gandak, Kosi, and Budhi Gandak as Valmiki, Kausika, and Champakaranya respectively. The origin of Ganga's tributary, the Sone River at Amarkantak could bear the name Sone, the catchment of Punpun river originating in Jharkhand as Punpun, and the Namami Gange Van of Damodar, Mayurakshi, Ajay, Bansloi, and Ghumani could respectively be prefixed with the names Sarhul, Trikut, Ajay, Venu, and Rajmahal. Restoration of suitable forest cover, construction of water conservation structures, keeping river beds encroachment-free, prevention of water diversion, and curbing exploitative livelihood systems near the banks shall have to be prioritized in these areas as in the main stream of the Ganga. The overarching strategy for rejuvenation must combine pollution prevention through stricter regulations and rigorous implementation in order to transform Ganga's biological profile making it 'NIRMAL' and the restoration of status of its stream to 'AVIRAL'. In 2017, the Uttarakhand High Court declared the rivers Ganga and Yamuna as 'legal persons' with all corresponding rights of a living person. Considering it together with the concepts of spiritual ecology and earth stewardship, one should come up with innovative strategies in the Indian context. Standing on its banks, one is left with a profound sense of awe and a lingering question—what will the next chapter in the Ganga's story be? The narratives connected with religious, mythical, political, historical, and the emergent ecological aspects sketch collectively a nuanced and multifaceted complex image of this emblematic river. Once considered the purest of all rivers, it has become one of the most polluted in the world. Today the Ganga flows with the stories of Gods but with the scars of development. It's high time we reciprocate to the Ganga what it has generously provided us for centuries - survival and sustenance.

(The writers are Former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, UP and Maharashtra; views expressed are personal)





CHESA VEGLIA ST MORITZ



THE NEWEST AND BIGGEST OUTDOOR POOL AT ST MORITZ



BADRUTT'S PALACE

# ST. MORITZ SUMMER'S RICH ALPINE PALETTE

Apart from being famous for its enchanting winter charm, St. Moritz also changes its appearance during the summer. It unveils a collection of lush green scenery which offers plenty of opportunities to enjoy nature, engage in thrilling sports, and fully embrace the peaceful Alpine way of life

BY **AKANKSHA DEAN**

Setting off on an enchanting Swiss journey armed with an eight-day Swiss Travel Pass and a carefully crafted plan, my travels unfolded like a dream aboard a selection of prestigious panoramic trains - the Bernina Express, Glacier Express,

and GoldenPass. The quintessential Swiss adventure began with my first lengthy train ride from Zürich to Chur. Emerging from a dark tunnel, the train revealed a stunning mountain view against the vast sky, almost like a scene from a perfectly set movie. This

was the Switzerland I had always imagined - reminiscent of the landscapes found in Heidi's stories and the ads for Ricola. The sight of quaint chapels perched daringly on rocky cliffs amid lush meadows and glimmering peaks brought me immense joy. Changing trains at Chur, I arrived in the elegant town of St. Moritz. Despite its small year-round population of under 6,000 residents, this former host of the Olympics and luxurious mountain escape has captured the hearts of the wealthy and famous. During the summer, St. Moritz transforms into a place that feels more like the Mediterranean than northern Europe, with most days filled with abundant sunshine.

**A SUMMER EXTRAVAGANZA** With just a single word, Badrutt's Palace exudes allure. It's renowned among a select few for its post-ski parties in the King's Social House, chance meetings with well-heeled billionaires in Moncler gear, and hosting one of the most sought-after New Year's Eve celebrations globally. Additionally, it conjures images of lavish bedrooms with views of the frozen lake, making it a top choice for winter getaways among the elite. Another facet of Badrutt's, lesser-known but equally captivating, comes alive in St. Moritz during the summer. This version offers a fresh experience



waiting to be explored. During our stay, our suite featured a balcony opening to a picturesque terrace. On our first night, we enjoyed a horse-drawn carriage ride, soaking in the stunning scenery of the lake, the majestic mountains, and the vast Engadin valley. In the summer, the mountains transform from a monochrome landscape of snow and rock to a vibrant tapestry of colours and textures. From lush green forests hugging the calm blue lake to vivid emerald meadows and the rugged peaks dusted with remnants of winter snow, the view

from our balcony was awe-inspiring. Unlike many hotels that claim to be palaces, Badrutt's lives up to its regal status. The grand state rooms exude a palace-like atmosphere, inviting guests to wander in elegant attire. While casual wear is allowed, formal dress seems more appropriate. In Le Restaurant and Le Relais, the elegant dining options call for formal attire to match the graceful setting. The ambiance is truly exceptional and sets Badrutt's apart as a regal retreat where luxury meets sophistication effortlessly.

**SUMPTUOUS FEASTS, MOUNTAIN MAJESTY**

As I set foot on Paradiso Mountain Club & Restaurant for my initial summer escapade under the stewardship of Badrutt's Palace Hotel, I awaited eagerly the promise of sun-soaked days amidst stunning vistas. Paradiso, embodying a steadfast commitment to local traditions and unwavering standards of excellence and openness, presents a menu that encapsulates the essence of St. Moritz's Mountain lifestyle - a tribute to delectable fare, pure mountain breezes, and abundant sunshine. The dining experience at Badrutt's transcended mere expectations. Our culinary voyage led us to the enchanting Chesa Veglia, a quaint heritage abode just

a skip across the street, metamorphosed into what can only be described as the epitome of high-class pizzerias. Here, within this tucked-away gem, Badrutt's Palace seemed to unfurl a more carefree, laid-back persona, akin to a majestic retreat momentarily letting loose, bedecked in an Italian leather bracelet, relishing in copious servings of Ornellaia. The pizzas served were sheer perfection - a symphony of flavours that would satisfy even the most discerning pizza aficionado. The ambiance at Chesa Veglia exuded an air of joviality, with the staff mirroring the joy and enthusiasm of the guests, creating an atmosphere where every bite felt infused with a sense of shared merriment and contentment.

**RECHARGE IN ENGADIN**

Nestled in the heart of Palace Wellness, we had the pleasure of enjoying a refreshing swim in the newest and largest outdoor pool in St. Moritz at a luxurious hotel in Engadin. The pool overlooks breath-taking views of the mountains and the lake, creating a picturesque backdrop for a delightful lunch at La Diale. The restaurant's name, which means 'mountain fairy' in Romansh, reflects its deep connection to the surrounding environment and offers a light and wholesome

menu. Even on the one cloudy day we experienced during our week-long stay, we found solace in the expansive indoor pool area, complete with its own artificial rock mountain perfect for kids to dive off. The deep-tissue massages at the spa were as rejuvenating as expected, adding to the overall relaxation experience in a mountain spa setting. St. Moritz's charm in the summer goes beyond extravagant lunches, indulgent spa treatments at Palace Coiffeur, savouring ice creams at Gelateria, and admiring the panoramic views of the lake. Engaging in activities like kitesurfing on Lake Silvaplana, sailing on Lake St. Moritz, and exploring the scenic nature trails by bike or on foot offers guests of Badrutt's Palace a diverse range of outdoor adventures at their fingertips. Moreover, the distinction of Badrutt's Palace as one of the World's 50 Best Hotels further solidifies its reputation as a top-tier destination for discerning travellers.

*Akanksha Dean is an independent food & travel writer, a chef and a catalyst and is the first Indian to have trained at Osteria Francescana, in Modena, Italy, rated as the world's best restaurant in the World's 50 Best Restaurants, in 2016 and 2018 and currently in the Best of The Best Category.*

# Rejoice in the Monsoon Magic This Season

Embark on a journey to charming monsoon retreats for a blissful vacation, writes **SHARMILA CHAND**

With monsoons round the corner, it is time to plan a vacation to soak in the beauty of nature. Immerse in the rich tapestry of exotic destinations across the country. From the mist-laden cliffs of the Western Ghats to the tranquil backwaters of Kerala, and lush green landscape of Goa, enjoy an alluring escape into nature's lap. Let the droplets of rain be musical notes and characteristic scent of the wet earth allure all your senses.

Rain Soaked Offerings At Radisson Blu Resort and Spa, Alibaug

After braving a hot summer, you deserve to cool off and enjoy the rainy season, and a luxury resort lets you do that while providing every comfort your heart could desire.

Whether you are traveling on holiday or business, the Radisson Blu Resort & Spa, Alibaug invites guests to experience unparalleled luxury and the tranquility of natural beauty.

Guests can enjoy a leisurely walk around the landscaped gardens, or simply sit beside the stillness of the Lotus pond. For adventure seekers, the resort offers activities such as guided cycling tours, nature trails, and bird watching. By being close to historical sites such as the Kolaba Fort and Alibaug Beach, there are also opportunities for exploration and adventure to ensure a rich and fulfilling stay for all. Radisson Blu Resort & Spa, Alibaug is designed around wellness and relaxation, with moments of mindfulness offered in the form of daily yoga and meditation sessions - the resort provides a sanctuary for rejuvenation of the body and mind.

**RAINDROPS AT THE MACHAN - A TREEHOUSE RESORT, LONAVALA**

The Machan, a unique eco-resort located near Mumbai and Pune, offers a selection of tree-houses that ascend 30-45 feet above ground level, allowing visitors to stay in 'treetop' accommodations. Nestled in Jambulne, a 'biodiversity hotspot' as one of the 25 globally, The Machan is a great destination for nature lovers. On the property, visitors can participate in a number of



activities such as trekking, bird watching, and exploring historic sites. The resort also offers comfortably furnished chalets and "tree houses." Feeling a bit adventurous? Start your day with a rush of adrenaline by waking up in the 'Tree House' perched 30 to 45 feet above the forest floor in Jambulne. The experience of the monsoon season at the Machan will usher in a sense of tranquility as you enjoy your endless supply of hot beverages and snacks. Along with the unique and luxurious tree house accommodations, The Machan has much to offer to keep one busy during their stay. With guided nature walks, bird watching and historical forts and caves nearby, there's always something to do. A stay at the Machan during the monsoon season rewards you with abundant waterfalls, cool breezes and lush greenery for a truly ethereal experience as you enjoy your hot drinks and comforting snacks. Plus, the resort recycles 80% of its grey water and is almost entirely powered by renewable solar and wind energy. So when you book your monsoon getaway here, you aren't just rewarding your soul - you're doing your bit for sustainability.



**ENCHANTING VIEWS OF NERUL RIVER AT HILTON GOA RESORT**

Nestled in the picturesque hills of Saipem, Hilton Goa Resort is a synonym for luxury and tranquility. It provides enchanting views of lush greens and Nerul River. The resort will offer you an incredible opportunity to escape from the hustle and bustle. Relax by one of the excellent four outdoor pools or break a sweat in the well-outfitted fitness center. The restaurant with a patio on the resort offers a unique dining experience with mesmerizing coastal views of Goa, while the Doce cafe and Coco lounge bar provide the taste buds with an extensive range of patisserie and Mediterranean flavors.

When it comes to families, the kids club ensures your kids have a good time as you relax. The resort's location is convenient for exploring attractions such as Aguada Fort and Panjim, with Vagator Beach only being a 30-minute drive away for even more sea, sun and sand. If you are looking for a romantic getaway, family vacation, or corporate-relaxation, the resort's event facilities and group travel services offer all you will need. In Hilton Goa you can sip your morning coffee and watch the raindrops fall on the lush greenery outside as the

clouds wash away the heat of the summer. Take a dip in one of the four outdoor pools, hit the gym at the fitness centre, or simply walk about outside and enjoy the pitter-patter of the raindrops.

**WATCH RAINDROPS ON PADDY FIELDS AT EVOLVE BACK, COORG**

One can only imagine what it feels like to be woken up by the smell of coffee and the cold mountain breeze. That's exactly what a monsoon trip to the 300-acre Evolve Back resort in Coorg will buy you. The private pool villas are traditionally furnished as they were in ancient times, making them perfect for outdoor experiences whether you are alone or with family members. For quiet moments, the Reading Lounge is an ideal spot. Here, you can enjoy a cup of freshly brewed coffee while watching the rain fall on the lush paddy fields, creating a perfect ambiance for relaxation and reflection. Visit to Evolve Back is incomplete without taking part in its rich coffee culture. Right inside this place is a Coffee Museum where people have opportunities to journey through history while learning about processes involved in growing coffee plants and beans. Just by stepping into the plantation field and walking across lush coffee farms one can find better appreciation for their favorite morning drink. The resort also offers a range of cultural and wildlife experiences that highlight the region's biodiversity and heritage. Guided nature walks, bird watching tours, and interactions with local artisans provide a comprehensive understanding of Coorg's rich ecosystem and traditions. Whether you're seeking

adventure, relaxation or want to curl up with coffee in the Reading Lounge while watching the rain fall on the lush paddy fields Evolve Back, Coorg is your destination.

**MISTY LANDSCAPES AT RIVERMIST RESORT CHIKMAGALUR**

In the lap of the Western Ghats, Chikmagalur is known for its lush coffee plantations and misty landscapes. In the monsoons, it transforms into a vibrant tapestry of green, punctuated by cascading waterfalls and blooming flora, making it a sanctuary for rare bird species, elusive animals, and unique insects. Hidden amidst this mountainscape, is a boutique getaway called RiverMist Resorts. Perfectly situated with the Charmady Ghats in the backdrop, it provides guests with an authentic experience of this region. Traditional Malnad architecture, and local cuisine adds to its charm. Unique nature centric activities and luxury accommodations that offer mesmerising views of the mountains from wooden cottages on stilts to the Luxury Pavilion that features glamping tents with outdoor jacuzzis and showers, is an experience to behold. RiverMist Resorts is more than a place to stay; it's a story in itself. Upon arrival, guests cross a river in a 4x4 vehicle, setting the tone for the



adventures ahead. The resort boasts an infinity pool that overlooks the surrounding hills, providing a peaceful spot to relax while enjoying the vistas. Nature walks led by an in-house naturalists offers a fun and insightful journey through the diverse flora and fauna. They guide guests along winding trails through the property, revealing smaller natural wonders that you may have otherwise missed. The resort's private waterfall is in full gush during the monsoons, offering a peaceful escape to sit and enjoy the soothing sounds of flowing water.

Another highlight is the Nature Connect. Every evening, as it gets dark, guests are encouraged to gather by the pool area and soak in the sounds of nature. All the lights of the resort are switched off for ten minutes and amidst the darkness, your sense of hearing begins to heighten as the sounds of birds and animals slowly waking up become louder, your eyes adjust to the darkness and you see fireflies and more stars. You begin to feel one with nature in the true sense. As night falls, the bonfire is then lit and you are welcome to join the naturalist on a night trail. Further, RiverMist organises monsoon treks to Ballarayana Durga, Kudremukh and Nethravathi peaks for the trekking enthusiasts. If not, you can opt to go offroading around the estate or even drive up to explore the Rani Jhari viewpoint which is close by.

So if you are someone who enjoys the beautiful synergy of monsoons, mountains and meaningful experiences, RiverMist Resort is an ideal destination.

**MONSOON BLISS AT COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT GOA COLVA**

Courtyard by Marriott Goa Colva offers a unique and enchanting monsoon getaway. Its comfortable accommodations and amenities, combined with the lush beauty of Goa's landscape, provide an idyllic setting for relaxation and rejuvenation. Whether savouring local cuisine, exploring the lush surroundings, or simply enjoying a serene stay, guests are guaranteed an unforgettable experience that captures the essence of Goa's monsoon magic. The hotel's recent opening in the midst of the rainy season perfectly showcases a different, greener side of Goa, making it a must-visit destination for those seeking a blend of serenity and revelry. Located in the serene village of Colva in South Goa, the hotel offers an immersive experience of Goa's lush, rain-kissed scenery, surrounded by verdant paddy fields and swaying coconut farms. The monsoon season breathes new life into the region, and the resort provides the perfect setting to witness this transformation. As the rain begins to fall, the surroundings of the hotel come alive with a symphony of nature's sounds and sights. The paddy fields turn a vibrant green, creating a stunning contrast against the moody grey skies. The coconut palms, tall and graceful, sway gently in the breeze, adding to the picturesque scenery. The hotel is designed to blend seamlessly with this lush environment, offering guests a comfortable and welcoming retreat amidst nature's bounty. Nestled away from the bustling tourist hubs, the hotel

provides a peaceful haven where guests can truly relax and unwind. The monsoon amplifies this sense of tranquility, as the rains cool the air and the landscape transforms into a bright green paradise. Guests can take leisurely walks or cycle through the surrounding locale, breathing in the fresh, rain-scented air, or simply relax on their private balconies, soaking in the serene views.

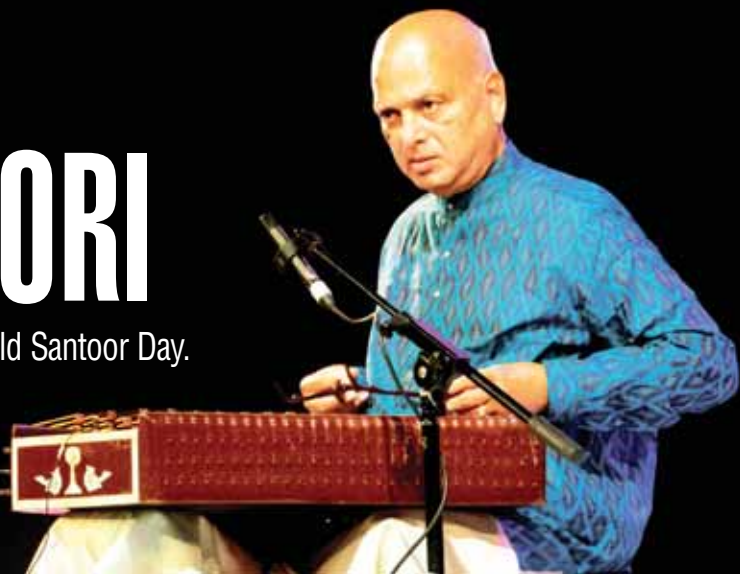
Courtyard by Marriott Goa Colva is more than just a hotel; it is a tribute to the destination itself. It offers the serenity of South Goa married to the vibrancy of North Goa, presenting guests with a different side of the region. This blend creates a unique experience that combines relaxation with excitement, making it an ideal destination for all kinds of travelers. Dining at Courtyard by Marriott Goa Colva is an experience in itself, especially during the monsoons. Colva Kitchen, the hotel's all-day dining restaurant, offers a menu that celebrates the flavours of the region, with an emphasis on fresh, locally sourced ingredients. Guests can savor a variety of local delicacies, from traditional breakfast specials to flavourful Goan curries, ending with warm desserts. With its large glass windows, this dining area provides a perfect vantage point to watch the monsoon showers, with the sound of raindrops creating a soothing backdrop to the culinary delights.

The hotel also offers a range of activities designed to make the most of the monsoon season. Guests can indulge in spa treatments that utilize natural ingredients, providing a holistic and rejuvenating experience. The hotel's pool offers a unique opportunity to swim in the rain, adding a touch of magic to the monsoon experience. For those looking to explore, the hotel organizes guided tours of the surrounding village routes and paddy fields, providing an intimate glimpse into the local way of life. Families can enjoy quality time at the hotel's Kids Club, which offers engaging activities for children.

*Sharmila Chand is an author and independent journalist who writes on Travel, Food and Lifestyle*

# A RESOUNDING TRIBUTE TO PANDIT BHAJAN SOPORI

A symphony of strings fills the air as the world unites to celebrate the first World Santoor Day. This poignant tribute honors the legendary **PANDIT BHAJAN SOPORI**, the "Saint of Santoor," while ushering in a new tradition that celebrates the instrument's captivating melody and rich cultural legacy says **SAKSHI PRIYA**



In an extraordinary celebration of music and heritage, the inaugural World Santoor Day brought the global music community together in a magnificent tribute to the legendary Santoor maestro, Pandit Bhajan Sopori. Hosted by the Sopori Academy of Music and Performing Arts (SaMaPa) last week, this event marked not only the birth anniversary of Pandit Bhajan Sopori but also established a new tradition in the world of classical music. The choice of 22 June for World Santoor Day is profoundly fitting, honouring the 76th birth anniversary of Pandit Bhajan Sopori, celebrated as the 'Saint of Santoor' and the 'King of Strings'. His unparalleled contributions to the Santoor and Indian classical music have left an indelible mark, and this day served as a perfect homage to his legacy.

The evening at Triveni Kala Sangam was nothing short of spectacular. The event featured an impressive lineup of performances by distinguished Santoor players like Pandit Abhay Rustum Sopori and Padmashri Pandit Satish Vyas. The programme included a rich tapestry of Indian classical music, Kashmiri Sufiana and Iranian, Chinese and Argentinian artists, showcasing the Santoor's universal appeal. The celebration began with heartfelt tributes to Pandit Bhajan Sopori, followed by a captivating performance of Kashmiri Sufiyana Mausiki by Ustad Shabir Saazanawaz. Maestro Siamak Aghaei from Iran mesmerised the audience with his classical Santur piece, while disciples of Pandit Bhajan Sopori, including Dr Mi Xuanyen from China and Guido Estrada from Argentina, added an



international dimension with their renditions, all presented via online projector. The live performances were a testament to the enduring legacy of Pandit Bhajan Sopori. Divyansh Srivastava, a disciple of Pandit Bhajan Sopori and Pandit Abhay Sopori, opened the live

segment with a mesmerising rendition of Raga Kaushik Dhvani, followed by a series of intricate compositions in the Sopori Baaj style. Pandit Abhay Rustum Sopori himself took the stage, presenting Raag Jog with a blend of Tantra and Gayaki, accompanied by Ustad Akram



Khan on Tabla. The evening culminated with Padmashri Satish Vyas, accompanied by Pandit Ram Kumar Mishra on Tabla, who performed Raag

Rageshwari with remarkable finesse, leaving the audience spellbound. Pandit Abhay Rustum Sopori eloquently captured the spirit of the day, stating, "There couldn't be a better event than 'World Santoor Day' to pay tribute to a legend like Pandit Bhajan Sopori. This day will promote greater appreciation and understanding of the Santoor and its cultural philosophy. Papa's contribution to the Santoor is immense, and this day will honour his legacy. This day shall not only honour the Indian Santoor but also similar instruments worldwide, such as the Santur in Iran,

Santouri in Greece, Yangqin in America and Cimbalom or Hackbrett in Europe." Prof. Aparna Sopori, Chairperson of SaMaPa, emphasised the historical and cultural significance of the Santoor, noting, "World Santoor Day will spotlight the rich heritage, historical significance and legacy of the Santoor, or Shatatantri Veena, on a global stage, emphasising its deep roots in Kashmir Shaivism culture." The event also saw tributes and wishes from renowned personalities through video messages, including AR Rahman, Kailash Kher, Anup Jalota, Pt. Vishwa Mohan Bhatt, Vidushi Sumitra Guha, Ustad Akram Khan, Ustad Rafiuddin Sabri, Siddharth Kak, Dr Agni Shekhar, and Utpal Kaul. The presence of many eminent musicians, such as Pt. Rajinder Prasanna, Pt. Chetan Joshi, Pt. Bholanath Mishra, Ustad Asghar Hussain, Ustad Saeed Zafar Khan, Pt. Ajay P Jha, and Pt. Ajay Prasanna, added to the

occasion's grandeur. Sohrab Sopori expressed his gratitude and vision for the future, saying, "This first edition is being celebrated in cities across India and around the world. We are fortunate to have so many voices come together to mark 22 June as World Santoor Day. From next year, it will be organised in a grander way with more cities and musicians joining hands." Reflecting on Pandit Bhajan Sopori's enduring legacy, Pt. Vijay Shankar Mishra remarked, "Pandit Bhajan Sopori's legacy is great. He was a visionary, keeping things simple yet broad enough to touch the souls of music lovers through his music. His contribution is immense, and Abhay Rustum Sopori is carrying it forward to the next generation. He will always be among us." Padmashri Pandit Satish Vyas echoed these sentiments, stating, "It is a great occasion and I am delighted to present my recital here and pay my tributes to Pandit Bhajan Sopori." Attending the first World Santoor Day was an experience steeped in both reverence and celebration. The event not only honoured the profound legacy of Pandit Bhajan Sopori but also showcased the Santoor's rich cultural heritage and its universal resonance. The evening's performances were a powerful reminder of music's ability to transcend boundaries and connect souls. As the Santoor's enchanting melodies filled the air, one couldn't help but feel a deep sense of gratitude for the maestros who continue to enrich our lives with their art. The first World Santoor Day was a resounding success, setting a high standard for future celebrations. It was a fitting tribute to a legend and a testament to the timeless beauty of the Santoor.



Photo: Pankaj Kumar

## A Celebration of Artistic Diversity and Creative Dialogue

Step into the dynamic realm of art at CONFLUENCE 24, where each masterpiece narrates an alluring tale. This lively gathering of established and emerging artists explored diverse creative practices, embracing art and community for an enriching week-long celebration. says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

In the world of art, where every individual in the exhibition appreciates and understands the worth of each artist, the immersive experience of CONFLUENCE 24 truly stood out. The Welham Old Boys Society (WOBS) proudly presented this spectacular event, a week-long art exhibition and community engagement initiative held at The Stainless Gallery, New Delhi. This second edition of CONFLUENCE 24 was an evolving platform that supported diverse creative practices and upheld constructive dialogue across multiple communities. During this eight-day group art exhibition, featuring established and emerging artists, architects, designers and photographers from diverse backgrounds, the exhibition featured prominent Indian artists Anupam Sud and Ananda Moy Banerji, both renowned for their significant contributions to art education. Akshay Raj Singh Rathore's artwork, grounded in social realities and Viveek Sharma's powerful pieces offered immersive and thought-provoking experiences for visitors. Amongst the artists from the younger generation, New York-based photographer Nanki Singh stood out with her focus on social documentaries. Her work, "Aaine Tak Ka Safar," was immersive and beautiful, featuring a series of photographs depicting survivors of acid attacks. Kunal Batra, a water-colourist photographer, enthralled viewers with his artwork that evoked the serene beauty of Himalayan landscapes, complete with charming huts that felt like scenes from a dreamy, fairytale-like midnight. Artist Divyam Raghunath, presented his work on subconscious interpretation, titled "Architectural Demise." His journey began with photographing Indian urban architecture, which he used as references in his paintings. However, the mesmerising aspect of his work was his ability to paint without direct

references, relying instead on his imagination. As he explained, "I let the brushstroke create curiosity within the painting," which added a unique beauty to his art. His architectural pieces formed abstract shapes, with one painting inspired by Bangalore's MG Road. Exhibition attendees perceived his work in diverse ways, some recalling the Durga Puja of Kolkata, while others were reminded of the streets of Japan, showcasing the varied perspectives his art elicited. Delhi-based sculptor Pratima Narang's iconic sculptures, 'Divide' and 'Gaze,' added significant value to the exhibition with their beautiful craftsmanship. A journal depicting a "Trip to the Andamans" was also displayed, resonating deeply with visitors by capturing every detail of the journey in a visually appealing form. Artist Saksham Singh's paintings, created with natural pigments like turmeric and pomegranate, highlighted the connection to nature using everyday materials. His other works, made with indigo, were inspired by his experiences in the forests and grasslands of Bangalore and the Western Ghats. Singh aimed to help people connect with nature, finding landscapes within themselves as well as outside. Photographer Aliza Mirza's lino-cut depictions of the 'Nasreen Building' were truly immersive and glorious. Additionally, artist Guncha Sharma's beautiful depictions of European streets, adorned with pink bougainvilleas under the summer sun, and her hand-painted rhododendrons transported viewers back to childhood holidays in the hills. Her work combined the tactile texture of hand-painting with a vibrant mix of colours, creating an evocative and nostalgic experience for all who viewed it. CONFLUENCE 24 unfolded as a mesmerising window of artistic expression, showing a rich array of artworks by talents like Usha Chengappa, Archita Bharadwaj,

Harshi Agarwal and Tushar Sharma. The exhibition further illuminated the creative landscape with the contributions of educators like Nirupama Sekhri, photographers including Dr. Abhishek Gaurav and Harsh Bansal, wildlife conservationist Mohit Dang and the promising advertising student Ujjwal Gupta, captivating visitors with their unique perspectives and creative flair. After the well-deserved success of the first edition, Rohit Jaiswal, President of Welham Old Boys Society, and his team were enthusiastic about staging this year's CONFLUENCE 24. The focus on art education, particularly in regions facing multiple challenges, underscored the exhibition's commitment to assist and promote creative talent. As one artist at the exhibition poignantly noted, "Nothing is more valuable for us than having people here see every artwork and create their own understanding and thoughts. It feels surreal." CONFLUENCE 24, a week-long collective gathering featuring photography, architecture, design, conversations, sessions and more. This evolving platform supported diverse creative practices and encouraged constructive dialogue within and across multiple communities. Visitors at The Stainless Gallery witnessed the beauty and depth of CONFLUENCE 24, where every piece of art told a story and every individual found a unique connection. As the curtains close on CONFLUENCE 24, the echoes of creativity and the spirit of artistic expression linger on. The exhibition not only showcased the immense talent of artists but also served as a platform for meaningful conversations and reflections. It was a celebration of art, culture and creativity, reminding us of the profound impact of artistic expression on our lives. CONFLUENCE 24 was more than an exhibition; it was a tribute to the power of art to inspire, provoke thought and bring people together.

## CAPTURING HOPE THROUGH THE LENS

In the bustling world of photography, Nanki Singh stands out as a beacon of compassion and change. This young, New York-based photographer has made waves with her powerful exhibition "Aaine Tak Ka Safar" which shines a light on the lives of acid attack survivors in India. Singh's work goes beyond mere images; it's a call for empathy and action says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

Photographers are the lens of everyone's life as they have the power to deliver a message that needs to be seen by everyone. Every photograph has the ability to share unspoken messages to the world that words can't express. This is where Nanki Singh excels, using her photography not just to capture moments, but to tell compelling stories that resonate deeply with audiences around the globe. Nanki Singh is an emerging New York-based photographer who is passionate about social photography. Her work reflects a deep involvement and an undeniable soul, making her lens a viaduct that connects the hearts and minds of viewers to diverse stories, emotions, and journeys. Focusing largely on the determined women of India, Singh offers a glimpse into their often challenging lives, creating powerful narratives that demand attention and inspire change. Nanki Singh's journey as a photographer began in an unexpected manner. As a shy and diffident schoolgirl, she struggled to express her thoughts until she started experimenting with her cousin's camera. It was during a holiday to Namibia at the age of 16, while shooting wildlife on a borrowed camera, that Singh discovered her voice. The diversity of the world around her became her muse, and through photography, she found a means to articulate her innermost thoughts and feelings. "Fashion, weddings, and product photography are enjoyable, and I love being in a studio, but it is photo-documentation that truly captivates me," Singh reflects. This love for capturing real-life stories led her to focus on social issues, with a particular emphasis on the struggles and triumphs of women in India. Singh's latest exhibition, "Aaine Tak Ka Safar," at the Confluence 24 art exhibition holds special significance for her. The title, which translates to "Journey to the Mirror," was inspired by the stories of acid attack survivors who found it



Photos: Pankaj Kumar

excruciatingly difficult to look at themselves in the mirror post-attack. While society often considers their physical pain, medical journey and psychological trauma, the everyday anguish of facing a mirror is frequently overlooked. Singh wanted to highlight this overlooked aspect and offer viewers a glimpse into the survivors' mirrors. Her collaboration with the Chhanv Foundation, an organisation supporting acid attack survivors, was pivotal. Singh's initial attempts to work with medical professionals were stifled by restrictions that threatened her artistic voice. However, Chhanv Foundation welcomed her interpretation, allowing her to portray the survivors not as victims, but as strong, resilient individuals who had worked hard to overcome unimaginable pain and trauma. Starting this project at the age of 18, Singh faced numerous challenges, the foremost being making the survivors feel comfortable and at ease. "I set very strict boundaries for myself," she explains. "I was always mindful of their trauma and decided to sensitively depict their story without sensationalising it. I gave them full agency over how they were portrayed, engaging them in discussions about their representation." Her creative process was slow and deliberate, nurtured over four years. She embraced a simple, documentary style, ensuring her subjects were depicted true to their personalities. "My work should aim to empower the subjects and give them a voice," Singh states. "It's crucial to represent women authentically and respectfully,



avoiding stereotypes and clichés." The reaction of the survivors to being photographed and having their stories shared was overwhelmingly positive. Singh's empathetic approach and long-term commitment made the survivors comfortable with her being their voice. They drew her into their lives with their positivity, resilience and strength. Singh always "Photography raises awareness and drives societal change by capturing and sharing the stark realities of issues like acid attacks in a way that is accessible and emotionally engaging." Through her visual storytelling, Singh humanises victims, educates the public, challenges societal norms, and inspires action. The impact of Singh's work is profound. By presenting these images to the public, she provokes deeper reflection on cultural and societal norms. "How does our society perpetuate conditions that

enable such acts?" she asks. "What roles do power dynamics, gender roles and lack of legal protections play?" These are the questions Singh hopes her work will inspire viewers to consider. Singh's exhibitions have garnered attention both in New York and New Delhi. While the Chelsea exhibition was a success, raising \$13,000 for the survivor's cafe, Singh found the Delhi exhibition particularly meaningful. "What made The Confluence '24 in Delhi exhibition better was the girls' presence," she says. "I have always felt it was their story and they were there that day to tell it." Nanki Singh's "Aaine Tak Ka Safar" is more than an exhibition; it is a powerful narrative of strength, resilience and hope. Through her empathetic and authentic approach, Singh bridges the gap between viewers and the often overlooked stories of acid attack survivors. Her work not only raises awareness but also inspires change, challenging societal norms and advocating for justice. In a world where brutalities like acid attacks reveal a disturbing undercurrent of violence and misogyny, Singh's photography serves as a beacon of hope and a call to action. Her lens captures not just images, but the very essence of human experience, making the invisible visible and the forgotten remembered. Through her work, Nanki Singh continues to prove that photography has the power to change the world. Nanki Singh is not just a photographer to watch - she's a vital voice in the ongoing dialogue about gender, violence and human rights in India and beyond.



**YOUR WEEK AHEAD**

MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19

This week brings a wave of potential transformations across various aspects of your life, including relationships and career. It's a time when being open and receptive could lead to significant benefits. Sticking rigidly to the old ways might cause regret later, so it's essential to shift from introspection to active engagement with the world. Make use of different communication platforms—whether online or in-person—to connect with others. A significant, unexpected shift is on the horizon that could dynamically alter your current trajectory. Life constantly evolves, and embracing change fuels growth. Midweek, expect an unexpected positive turn, potentially enhancing your financial or personal life. For those in collaborative ventures, harmony and smooth operations are anticipated, leading to greater achievements and a more balanced professional environment.

**Lucky number 2 | Lucky colour White  
Lucky day Tuesday**



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

In life, challenges and obstacles are inevitable, but your inherent bravery steers you toward your objectives. Your current phase demands persistence; success is within reach through continued effort and clear leadership. As the week progresses, you may find yourself more emotionally vulnerable, facing feelings of neglect or emotional distance in personal connections. Patience will be your ally, as this is merely a passing storm. The weekend promises a shift towards stability and strengthening of bonds. Expect an overall improvement in well-being and financial matters, alongside an enriching social life. Communication flows more smoothly, and relationships bring satisfaction and joy. Everything aligns, bringing you to a state of fulfillment and happiness.

**Lucky number 5 | Lucky colour Sea Green  
Lucky day Saturday**



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

Navigating through life's complexities might sometimes seem daunting due to your fluctuating motivations. To counter this, clarify your objectives and harness your inner strengths. This week, you may find yourself swept up in a wave of nostalgia, prompting a potential trip to reconnect with friends, family, or colleagues. Such reunions can spark joy and lead to unexpected positive outcomes. Meanwhile, there might be surprising gains, potentially through financial boosts or inherited assets. This surge of positivity will invigorate you, enhancing your vitality. As the week closes, embrace your role as the architect of your fate. Feel the guiding presence that subtly steers you, helping you harmonize your emotions, desires, and holistic wellness, aligning you with your true course.

**Lucky number 10 | Lucky colour Off-white  
Lucky day Thursday**



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

This week, you embody the essence of prosperity and success. With a firm grasp on reality, you push toward your ambitions with unwavering determination and focus, broadening your horizons and leaving a notable impact on those around you. Your disciplined approach to pleasure ensures that your actions remain measured and effective, underpinning your achievements. You are master of your desires, not a servant to them, and you show a genuine regard for the emotions and well-being of others. This week, however, requires you to adopt a more stringent discipline to prevent potential setbacks. Those in leadership or top positions should pay close attention to this advice. As the week concludes, your generosity and service to others will bring fruitful outcomes, enriching your life materially and spiritually.

**Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour Blue  
Lucky day Friday**



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22

This week focuses on correcting past mistakes and learning from them, emphasizing that every action leads to a consequence. For those in search of employment, opportunities may arise unexpectedly. Those already working can anticipate a significant increase in activity, which promises to be beneficial. Relationships may undergo transformations; if you are in a committed partnership, it could face challenges. Exercise caution and avoid hastiness to maintain harmony. Taking time for quiet reflection can enrich your insights. Your investments are likely to yield favorable outcomes, so continue with your current strategies. You will experience heightened vitality across physical and emotional spheres. Over the weekend, consider reassessing aspects of your life that no longer contribute positively, such as unfulfilling relationships or careers, and think about embracing new beginnings.

**Lucky number 6 | Lucky colour Orange  
Lucky day Wednesday**



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

You possess a unique blend of innovation and intuitive insight, fueling your creative endeavors and imbuing your projects with a dynamic energy. Your exceptional organizational abilities and mild-mannered approach inspire collaboration among peers and partners. With a grand vision for your professional pursuits, you skillfully balance imaginative efforts with seasoned expertise, driving impressive outcomes that enhance your standing and influence in your field. By mentoring your juniors effectively, you enrich your enterprise, as they commit wholeheartedly to overcoming current challenges. Your focus remains firmly on professional growth, prioritizing work over personal matters. Your dedication is complete, promising substantial achievements. As the week closes, you seek solace in quiet moments spent with close ones, recharging from your diligent efforts.

**Lucky number 9 | Lucky colour Brown  
Lucky day Saturday**



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

This week, it's essential for you to take a step back and focus on relaxation. The recent pressures have left you feeling drained, and now is the perfect time for self-care and recovery. Reflecting on your current circumstances will be beneficial, allowing you to gather strength and clarity. Find time for solitude to help restore your energy and uplift your spirit. Despite any challenges that may appear, your resilience and determination will see you through, keeping you focused on your objectives. You might receive some uplifting news that boosts your morale. You might also find yourself embarking on a new journey, which could be a literal trip or a metaphorical exploration of personal growth. Ensure you prioritize your well-being and protect your interests, especially towards the week's end when you may encounter a competitive individual.

**Lucky number 8 | Lucky colour Yellow  
Lucky day Friday**



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

The week begins on a subdued note, with a noticeable dip in your energy and enthusiasm. Health concerns might surface, slightly disrupting your usual pace. Financially, it's a time for caution rather than worry, reminding you that sometimes, stepping back is as strategic as forging ahead. Remember, minor setbacks should not overshadow your larger goals. It's crucial to tune into your inner guidance during these moments, identifying any areas of your life that may require recalibration. As the week progresses, expect a shift towards abundance. These interactions are set to expand your social network significantly. Amidst this busyness, dedicating time to introspection will clarify your objectives. The latter part of the week is optimal for reflection, allowing you to strategize and make informed decisions that will influence your future success.

**Lucky number 3 | Lucky colour Teal  
Lucky day Sunday**



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

You are brimming with energy and excitement, yet you may find yourself at a crossroads, unsure of how to set your objectives. Venturing into new projects will require your focus and endurance. Significant financial commitments could become a source of stress, particularly in managing funds, loans, and income. It's crucial to allocate time to plan your finances carefully. During this period, stay vigilant as slight distractions could complicate your current situation. You might consider borrowing or accessing funds through other means, which could open doors to new opportunities. Embrace the possibility of forming new bonds that enrich your life. Expressing your deepest feelings with someone close or reconnecting with an old friend or family could bring great joy and fulfillment to your life. Enjoy this enriching time.

**Lucky number 4 | Lucky colour Navy Blue  
Lucky day Wednesday**



**CANCER** June 21-July 22

This week ushers in a fresh wave of youthful vigor and an eagerness to embrace all facets of learning. You're on the brink of a significant event that promises to enhance your material well-being. Known for your diligence and financial prudence, this period rewards your efforts with abundant opportunities for enjoyment, financial gain, and relaxation, marking a well-earned period of success. A burst of inspiration strikes you, paving the way for a novel artistic direction. Your imagination is lively and reminiscent of a child's wonder, setting the stage for delightful surprises. This week may bring joyous announcements related to new beginnings in the family. Your inherent belief in your abilities propels you forward in a world filled with challenges, while your creative and spirited approach continues to open new avenues for joy and self-discovery.

**Lucky number 7 | Lucky colour Pink  
Lucky day Thursday**



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

Your resilience and focus are the pillars of your strength, enabling you to lead and shape situations positively according to your will. You naturally inspire and motivate those around you, with your disciplined approach, light-heartedness, and ability to connect with peers, earning their respect and support. An opportunity for travel appears on your horizon, potentially linked to work or a family vacation. This journey, possibly to a distant place, promises to be rewarding and fulfilling. As the week concludes, a festive atmosphere prevails, marked by celebrations, gatherings, and special events that recognize your accomplishments. Indulge in some personal pampering through shopping or a spa day, which will leave you feeling rejuvenated and admired by all.

**Lucky number 1 | Lucky colour Mustard  
Lucky day Monday**



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

If you have lofty aspirations for your love life or are hoping for significant achievements in your professional endeavors, it's important to stay grounded rather than getting lost in daydreams. Embrace a practical mindset, as it could open doors to positive opportunities. You may find that your partner has high expectations that are difficult to meet, leading to potential misunderstandings and disappointments. Challenges in relationships could lead to emotional strains or even separations, so tread carefully. Family, particularly parents, can be pivotal in steering your life in a new direction. Address any health and emotional concerns with innovative strategies. As the week concludes, you might find yourself drawn to spiritual activities, perhaps organizing or participating in a spiritual gathering, which could also coincide with a promising new professional opportunity.

**Lucky number 13 | Lucky colour Magenta  
Lucky day Sunday**

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**WHO IS A FOOL?**

*One who feels too much or one who feels too little? The neglect of the mind, the seat of intellect, breeds a state of perpetual flux and discontent. However, transcending the fickleness of the mind lies the realm of intellect, the beacon of wisdom that guides us through life's tumultuous seas*

**GURUSPEAK**



Sri Sri Ravi Shankar  
Spiritual Guru

**W**hich is more important: the objects we desire, or the senses through which we experience them? The senses are actually more important than the objects themselves. For instance, your eyes are more valuable than a television, your ears more precious than music, and your tongue more important than delicious food. Our skin, too, is more crucial than the things we touch.

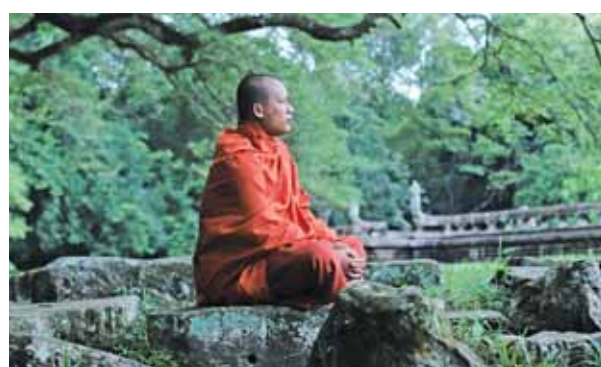
But what do fools do? They do not realize this truth and give more importance to sense objects than the senses. They know that looking at the TV for too long harms their eyesight yet they continue watching television for hours. They understand that overeating is bad for their health, yet they prioritize food over their well-being. Knowing that our senses are more important than the objects of senses is the first step.

The mind is even more

important than the senses. Often, we do things without being fully present—our minds are elsewhere. In such a state, our actions lose their meaning, and we become depressed. When the mind is neglected and only the senses and their objects are cared for, depression sets in. Depression arises from prioritizing material desires over the needs of the mind. If you want certain type of food, and you don't get that, you feel low. The fool attends to the senses over the mind.

What is the nature of the mind? It fluctuates, much like the moon's phases. The mind is often compared to the moon, which waxes and wanes. Just as the moon is not constant, our minds too are in a constant state of flux.

Beyond the mind lies our intelligence, or intellect. If we merely follow our minds, we will experience constant ups and downs without any sense of purpose. People who are driven solely by their minds often end up feeling more miserable. Their minds may tell them to



seek solitude, but even in silence, they remain unhappy. That's why in many schools of thought it's said: kill the mind. In the military they teach you to kill the mind. In schools and colleges the discipline is imposed on you, you are asked to kill the mind. The key to overcoming the mind is discipline, which can only be understood by the intellect. Discipline is what can truly control the mind's erratic tendencies.

Discipline kills the tendencies of the mind. It is a quality of the intellect. Intellect, therefore, is more important than the mind. It is the intellect that guides us with wisdom, distinguishing between right and wrong. Fools follow the mind, going with their whims and fancies, like a rolling stone. Fools will start a business and close it, and start another, then close it...because of their cravings and aversions. What is the big deal about your feelings, your mind's likes and dislikes? One who does

not care for the feelings will reach the Self.

Who cares for your feelings? It comes for a moment and passes away. Experience it, don't run away from it.

Instead of your feelings, go by your dedication and commitment. Your life is dedicated to a cause on this planet. That brings out valour, vigour, peace, and stability from within you. Otherwise, you'll feel good one moment and bad the next. Haven't you experienced feeling miserable even in the best situations?

When we don't worry about our feelings much, then we get established in the wisdom. And being established in wisdom brings you to your Self which is Peace, Joy, and Love. Self is the Power. Your emotions make you very weak and they also make you very strong. When your emotions are positive it makes you sensitive to the truth, it makes you subtle, delicate, and it takes you into a deep meditation.

I was watching the news few

days back. A lady received an Oscar award and was struggling to speak, shivering with excitement. She looked absolutely miserable. She could not handle that excitement of the Oscar award. She looked absolutely miserable. It's just a piece of metal! Holding it, she exclaimed, "This is the greatest moment in my life, what I've craved for!" How foolish! A few judges praised her performance. How many such people have come to this planet, died, and more will come, yet she puts her whole life behind that piece of metal? Someone tells you, "You are good." Don't you already know that? You wanted some judge to give you this award. Such idiocy! Anyone with a little intelligence would see how foolish it is to seek validation from others. You don't need to break down over that little piece of metal. Do you see what I'm saying? Gracefully accept it. Suppose you are given the Oscar, what will you do? If you shiver there, you better not say you have done Art of Living course!

The mind, if left unchecked, can lead to misery and confusion. People often prioritize their feelings over their intellect, constantly seeking validation and approval from others. They become slaves to their emotions, constantly seeking external validation.

We must be willing to commit ourselves fully to a cause, regardless of the challenges we may face. This commitment is what separates the brave from the timid, the lions from the chickens. Life's challenges are meant to be embraced with courage and determination. Knowledge, enlightenment is only for brave people, not for people who chicken out and run away here and there.

So we must learn to prioritize our intellect over our emotions, our commitment over our desires. By doing so, we can lead a more meaningful and fulfilling life, free from the ups and downs of the mind. Life is a journey, and it is up to us to navigate it with wisdom and courage.