

**OPINION 6**

THE US ENDORSES  
INDIA-TIBET TIES

**WORLD 8**

PUTIN CHALLENGES ARREST  
WARRANT DURING MONGOLIA VISIT

**MONEY 10**

MARKETS SETTLE FLAT AFTER RECORD  
RALLY; NIFTY GAINS FOR 14TH DAY

BHUBANESWAR, WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 4, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹4

Established 1864  
**the pioneer**

www.dailypioneer.com

SUMIT ON DEFENDING  
PARALYMPIC GOLD  
DESPITE BACK INJURY  
11 SPORTS



**Royal welcome for PM Modi in Brunei**



PM receives a ceremonial welcome in Brunei on Tuesday

PIB

**WB Government passes anti-rape Aparajita Bill**

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In the backdrop of a Statewide agitation for justice for the Kolkata lady doctor who was raped and murdered early this month while on duty turning fast into a movement for "change of the system that harbours rapists and the corrupt," the Mamata Banerjee Government of Bengal on Tuesday got an anti-rape "Aparajita" Bill passed unanimously. This makes West Bengal first State to bring in amendments to Central laws dealing with such offences.

The Opposition parties, however, called it a diversionary tactics in order to contain the Statewide unrest and assuage peoples' anti-Government feelings.

Notwithstanding stringent remarks from the Opposition Bench, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee asked Opposition leader Suwendu Adhikari to help get the Bill signed by Governor CV Ananda Bose and President Droupadi Murmu.

Apart from prescribing life imprisonment until death, the Bill, christened 'Aparajita Woman and Child Bill (West Bengal Criminal Laws and Amendment) 2024, provides for death penalty for a repeat



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee speaks during a Session of the State Legislative Assembly, in Kolkata, on Tuesday. The Aparajita Woman and Child (West Bengal Criminal Laws and Amendment) Bill 2024 was passed during the Session

PTI

offender in cases of rape and sexual offences that lead to a victim's death or leave her in a vegetative state.

The Bill was passed at a time when citizens including medical staff of Kolkata formed a 17-km long human chain from Patuli in South Kolkata to Ultadanga in the North. The Bill was also passed when a separate detachment of junior doctors and members of the civil society staged a joint rally in front of the Lal Bazar police headquarters demanding the resignation of Police Commissioner

Vineet Goyal for failing to act in an impartial manner. Saying that rape was a "curse on the human society and that there was a need for social reforms to stop such crimes, the Chief Minister said that "the Bill seeks to plug the loopholes in the central legislation."

She also appealed to the Opposition BJP to get the Governor's assent "instead of politicising the issue," even as Leader of Opposition attacked the Government for supporting a system where rapes and murders had become the

order of the day. "It is your Government and the police that had investigated the infamous Kamduni rape case in such a manner that all the accused save one got acquitted and even the one who was not got his death sentence commuted to life sentence ... if this was not the result of the Government's apathy to such cases then what is ... In Kamduni rape case the Government changed 16 Public Prosecutors to ensure that the rapists who were the members of the TMC get acquitted," Adhikari said.



**India's Air Defence gets future ready**

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With a view to sustaining the modernisation drive and operational readiness of the Armed forces, ten proposals worth ₹1,45 lakh crore were given the go-ahead on Tuesday. They include Future Ready Combat Vehicles, Air Defence Fire Control Radars, Dornier-228 aircraft, Next Generation Fast Patrol and Offshore Patrol Vessels.

Notably, of the total cost of proposals, 99 per cent is from indigenous sources under Buy (Indian) and Buy (Indian-Indigenously Designed Developed and Manufactured) categories, defence ministry said here.

Giving details, officials said Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), under the chairmanship of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh accorded Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for 10 capital acquisition proposals amounting to ₹1,44,716 crore.

The DAC is the apex body to clear acquisition proposals of the Armed forces. The final nod is given by Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS).

**Nine Naxalites killed in Bastar**

PTI ■ DANTEWADA

Nine Naxalites were killed in an encounter with security personnel in Bastar region of Chhattisgarh on Tuesday, a senior police official said. The gunfight broke out around 10.30 am in the forest along the border of Dantewada and Bijapur districts when a joint team of security forces was out on an anti-Naxal operation, Inspector General of Police,



Bastar Range Sundarraj P told PTI. Personnel belonging to the District Reserve Guard (DRG) and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) were involved in the operation, which was launched based on inputs about the presence of Naxalites belonging to its west Bastar division unit, he said. The intermittent exchange of fire lasted for a long duration, following which the bodies of nine Naxalites clad in 'uniform' were recovered from the spot, he said.

**Former chief of iconic Atlas Cycles shoots himself to death**



SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Former president of Atlas Cycles Salil Kapoor allegedly committed suicide at his Lutyen's Delhi home on APJ Abdul Kalam Marg on Tuesday afternoon. The 70-year-old man allegedly shot himself with his licensed pistol and was found dead on the ground floor of his three-storey house at around 1 pm.

According to a senior police officer, his manager found his body lying in a pool of blood near the puja room of his home. A suicide note was recovered in which Kapoor mentioned the name of about four to five people accusing them of harassing him.

The suicide note also mentions him facing some financial difficulties. He

wrote that he had 'financial burden' on him. He was reportedly living separately from his family including his wife and three children, who are currently based in Dubai. Another police officer said that Kapoor's manager and his family stayed with him in the three-storey building. He was rushed to All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) where the doctors declared him brought dead. The local police were informed, and they, along with forensic experts, visited the crime scene to collect the exhibits from the spot. Police said they are verifying and probing the matter from "all possible angles" and will take legal action further as needed.

In 2015, he was arrested from Uttarakhand by the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Delhi Police in two cases of cheating involving ₹9 crore. The first case involved a man, Satinder Nath Maira, who alleged that he had given ₹13 crore to Salil Kapoor's family friend Prashant Kapoor for investment.

Salil had issued seven post-dated cheques when asked to return the money, but all were dishonoured.



**Bestial cow vigilantes in Haryana arrested**

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI/FARIDABAD

A 19-year-old boy, studying in Class 12 in Haryana's Faridabad, was allegedly chased in a car and shot dead by a group of five cow vigilantes who mistook him for a cattle smuggler.

The victim was identified as Aryan Mishra. The members of vigilante group have been identified as Anil Kaushik, Varun, Krishna, Adesh, and Saurabh.

A Duster car in which the boy, Aryan, and his friends Harshit and Shanky as well as two other women seated in the back of the vehicle, was chased by the members of cow vigilante group on the night of August 23 for about 30 kilometres near Haryana's Gadhupuri on the Delhi-Agra National Highway.

During interrogation, the accused revealed that on the night of August 23, they had received information that some suspected cattle smugglers driving two SUVs were doing recce in the city. They mistook the victim and his friends, Shanky and Harshit, for those cattle smugglers and followed their car, a senior police officer said.

**Congress and AAP talk about Haryana Polls**

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party have reached an 'in-principal understanding' to fight next month's Haryana Assembly election together against the wishes of its State unit, though nothing has been finalised yet.

Sources said two rounds of talks between AAP MP Raghav Chadha and Congress's KC Venugopal have already been held.

The third round of meeting can be held on Wednesday. Sources said the AAP is reported to have demanded 10 seats, while the Congress is willing to give between five and seven only. The Congress is reportedly also willing to give one seat to the Samajwadi Party.

The deadline for nominations is October 4 with voting on October 5.

Against the wishes of its State unit, the Congress on Tuesday said it is in talks with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) for an alliance in Haryana though nothing has been finalised yet. According to sources, in its Central Election Committee (CEC) meeting on Monday evening, party leader Rahul Gandhi expressed interest in exploring the possibility of alliance with AAP for Assembly elections in Haryana.

Ironically, the State Congress leaders in Haryana have rejected the possibility of any alliance with AAP in the State. Recently, senior



Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi with party president Mallikarjun Kharge and party MP KC Venugopal during meeting with party secretaries and joint secretaries, in New Delhi, on Tuesday

PTI

Congress leader in Haryana, Kumari Selja ruled out the possibility of an alliance with AAP for the Assembly polls, saying her party is strong in the State and will fight the elections on its own.

Asked about the possibility of an alliance with AAP, AICC general secretary in-charge of Haryana Deepak Babaria said, "We are in talks with the AAP, but nothing has been finalised yet. As soon as something concrete emerges, we will inform you." Responding to another question, Babaria said, "We have to defeat the BJP, and therefore are against allowing anti-BJP votes to be divided." Meanwhile, AAP leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh has

welcomed reports claiming Rahul has shown interest in an alliance with Arvind Kejriwal-led party in poll-bound Haryana.

Polling for 90 Assembly seats in Haryana will be held on October 5 and counting of votes will be undertaken on October 8.

The Congress's Central Election Committee had met on Monday and cleared the names of 34 candidates for the Assembly polls in Haryana. "Today, a meeting was held for Haryana by the CEC. A list of 49 names was presented by the State's screening committee, out of which 34 have been approved and decision on 15 is pending," Babaria had said last evening.

**Shift from earlier stance HC Bench proposal 'under our consideration'**

**Asserts CM Majhi**

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

In a significant shift from his earlier stance, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Tuesday stated that the proposal for establishing a High Court Bench in western Odisha is "under consideration" by his government.

This statement came a day after he had informed the State Assembly that there was "no justification" for setting up a

High Court Bench in the State. Majhi asserted, "The issue of setting up a High Court Bench in western Odisha is under consideration of the government." His administration is dedicated to delivering speedy justice to the people, he added.

Opposition Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and Congress criticised Majhi for his conflicting statements.

BJP leader Jayanarayan Mishra, a veteran lawmaker from the western region, reiterated his party's demand for



a High Court Bench in western Odisha. "We (BJP) have not withdrawn the demand for a HC Bench in western Odisha. The CM referred to the Supreme Court judgment, but with the State's population and High Court cases increasing, why can't Odisha have a HC

Bench when a State like Uttar Pradesh has three?" Mishra questioned.

Balangir BJD MLA Kalikesh Singh Deo, who had raised the written question, expressed dissatisfaction with Majhi's response. "Today, the CM clarified that the matter is under consideration. He should provide an assurance on whether a Circuit or a Permanent Bench of the High Court will be set up in Balangir and specify a timeline," Singh Deo said.

Singh Deo further noted

that the Supreme Court had observed that the demand for a HC Circuit Bench had become obsolete with technological advancements, urging lawyers in Sambalpur to end their agitation, which turned violent in November 2022. "There was no verdict from the apex court against setting up a HC Bench. Technology is not a substitute for a second or Circuit Bench. Balangir has the first right for a Permanent Bench since it had one in the pre-Independence era," he added.

**Three crew members missing after Indian Coast Guard helicopter crash**

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Three crew members of Indian Coast Guard are missing after their helicopter on a rescue mission had to make a forced landing at sea off Porbandar on Monday, Coast Guard said here on Tuesday. Rescue mission was on to locate them.

Giving details, officials said the incident occurred on Monday night after the Coast Guard launched an operation around 11 pm to evacuate an injured crew member on board a tanker which was sailing close to Porbandar. While one of the four crew members on board the ICG's advanced light helicopter



(ALH) was rescued, a search operation was on for three others, it said. The force has deployed four ships and two aircraft to search and rescue the missing crew members.

Coast Guard said aircraft wreckage was located. The incident happened whilst the helicopter was approaching the vessel for the evacuation, it added.



# From village to medical college Gadaba tribe boy Ishak cracks NEET

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

In a remarkable achievement, Ishak Badnayak, a Gadaba tribal student from Lamptaput in Koraput district, has defied all odds to crack the prestigious National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) and pursue his dream of becoming a doctor.



Ishak, son of Buda Badnayak, a farmer of Hanamal village under Anakadeli panchayat in the district, studied up to Class-VII at the village. Later, he studied at the Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya in Mishingput and completed his matriculation examination.

Subsequently, he appeared

"I have faced a lot of hardships including financial crunch when I left for my higher studies. Despite that, I kept myself motivated for the challenges to come and followed my dream," said Ishak.

Expressing joy over his son's success, Buda said, "I borrowed money for my son's study. He had assured me that he would pay off all the loans once he became successful. As he has cracked NEET, I am very much delighted." "We are feeling very proud as a tribal boy from our village has cracked NEET. Besides, we also urge the Chief Minister to provide him necessary help for his studies," said Sanyasi Khara, a local resident.

With a strong determination to pursue a career in medical science, Ishak went to Madurai in Tamil Nadu for higher education where he scored 94% in the Plus 2 examinations.

for the NEET and cracked the competitive examination. Now, Ishak has returned to his village after getting admission to the MKCG Medical College in Brahmapur. His success has brought a wave of joy to his family and the entire village.

# No money, but Sanatan clears NEET



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Stick in one hand and an umbrella in the other, his day begins with helping his mother to graze cattle; rest of the time is spent in collecting firewood, turmeric and other forest produce.

This is about a tribal boy, who is aiming to touch the sky with his sheer determination.

Meet 19-year-old Sanatan Pradhan from a remote village in Balliguda in Kandhamal dis-

trict, who has cleared one of the toughest exams NEET in the very first attempt. Sanatan has also taken admission in the MKCG Medical College in Brahmapur to pursue his dream of becoming a doctor. But the poor financial condition of his family is now standing as a major hurdle to achieve his dream. Sanatan's story is certainly an inspiration for many who have all the resources. However, this tribal boy had defeated several adversities before cracking the NEET.

# Crorepati Talcher DDM arrested

After assets of Rs 5 crore found

PNS ■ CUTTACK

The Vigilance police on Tuesday arrested and forwarded to court Dharanidhar Nayak, Deputy Director of Mines (DDM), Talcher in Angul district, for possession of disproportionate assets (DA) worth Rs 5 crore (over 519%) of his known sources of income, which he could not account for satisfactorily.

The Vigilance during house searches of Nayak unearthed one 3-BHK flat at Surekha Orchid at SisuVihar in Patia, Bhubaneswar worth approx Rs 1.30 crore, one duplex with an area of 1,800 sqft at Sundarpada, Bhubaneswar, one double-storied market complex consisting of 15 shops in Telkoi, Keonjhar, another market complex building consisting of four shops in Telkoi, Keonjhar, one double-storied building with area of 2,000 sqft (under construction) in Telkoi, Keonjhar, one building



at village Chhamunda, Telkoi, with area of 2,000 sqft, 11 plots including three plots in prime areas of Bhubaneswar, one plot in Keonjhar town and rest seven plots in Telkoi, Keonjhar, cash of Rs 9,85,120 (Rs 5,58,820 from Patia flat and Rs 4,26,300 unearthed from residence of Nayak at Talcher), bank and insurance deposits of Rs 53,53,167, household articles worth Rs 54.70 lakh, one four-wheeler (TATA Punch) and two two-wheelers.

Besides, a loan of Rs 75 lakh taken in 2022 repaid in two years from suspected ill-gotten money was being verified.

Further investigation of the case was in progress.

# In State Low pressure to trigger heavy rains

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Tuesday issued an alert for thunderstorms and heavy rainfall activities in several parts of Odisha in the coming days.

A fresh low-pressure area is likely to form over the west-central and adjoining north-west Bay of Bengal around Thursday.

Thunderstorms with lightning are very likely to occur at isolated places in the districts of Baleswar, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapada, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khordha, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Gajapati, Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangpur, Rayagada, Kalahandi, said the IMD issuing a Yellow warning.

On Friday, heavy rainfall (7 to 11 cm) and thunderstorm with lightning are very likely to occur at isolated places in the districts of Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangpur, Rayagada, Gajapati and Kalahandi, said the weather office.

said the Regional Office of the IMD here.

On Thursday, thunderstorm with lightning is very likely to occur at isolated places in the districts of Baleswar, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapada, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khordha, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Gajapati, Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangpur, Rayagada, Kalahandi, said the IMD issuing a Yellow warning.

On Friday, heavy rainfall (7 to 11 cm) and thunderstorm with lightning are very likely to occur at isolated places in the districts of Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangpur, Rayagada, Gajapati and Kalahandi, said the weather office.

# 'Don't shift Excise Commissioner's office'

Demands Cuttack MLA Sofia

PNS ■ CUTTACK

Barabati-Cuttack Congress MLA Sofia Firdous has said that any attempt to shift the office of the Excise Commissioner from Cuttack to Bhubaneswar will be opposed.

On Monday, the MLA paid a surprise visit to the Excise Commissioner's office at CDA Krushak Bazaar and expressed resentment over the absence of senior officials during office hours. She expressed displeasure as several important files were lying on the ground at different locations inside the office without proper arrangement.

Firdous also warned of protests if the State Government takes steps to shift the Excise Commissioner's office from



Cuttack.

"The building is only three years old, but it is not being maintained properly. The Joint Commissioner was recently arrested. We want the office to be in Cuttack. We have held talks with the Excise Commissioner and brought the matter to the notice of the concerned minister. I have not got any

information regarding shifting, but we want the office to function in a full-fledged manner from Cuttack," said Firdous.

Cuttack Mayor Subash Singh said, "For the last 30 years, we have launched several agitations to retain the Orissa High Court and other institutions in Cuttack. We

have opposed shifting of offices from Cuttack. All the headquarters are in Cuttack. Some officers are reluctant to come to Cuttack. Such officials should be identified. We will oppose if any office is shifted from Cuttack."

Meanwhile, Excise Commissioner Narasingha Bhol said there is no proposal to shift the office from Cuttack.

"There is no proposal to shift the Excise Commissioner's office from Cuttack. There is a camp office in Bhubaneswar. Earlier, the Excise Department was under Revenue Department and hence, the Commissioner's office was functioning from the Revenue Board building. The Flying Squad office was shifted two years back after directions. Due to a lack of space in Cuttack, the lab and the godown were shifted to Bhubaneswar," said the Commissioner.

# BJP launches State membership drive



Targets to enroll 1 crore members

NALINI SAHU  
BHUBANESWAR

The BJP on Tuesday launched its membership drive in Odisha with senior leaders of the party pressing the designated toll-free numbers on their mobile phones.

The drive was launched by party State president Manmohan Samal in the presence of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and State in-charge Vijaypal Singh Tomart.

"The membership drive will continue for quite some days.

We will open membership drives at different market places, in front of colleges and universities," said Samal.

CM Majhi said the BJP would make an effort to enroll at least one crore members to establish it as the State's number one party.

The party issued a toll-free number (8800002024) for people to enroll them as BJP members. "People above 18 years of age can call up this number," Samal said.

"As part of the membership drive which is organised once every six years, we reach out to people moving door to door," Samal added.

# Student Cong decries non-holding of union polls

Threatens to take to streets

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Pradesh Student Congress on Tuesday said it is unfortunate that the students' union elections are not being held this year.

The BJP is following the footsteps of the BJD government. The Law Minister is saying that due to inadequate preparedness and shortage of time the students' union elections would not be held this year. But the truth is that instead of students' unions, the government machinery would be utilised to control all govern-



ment and government-aided colleges, alleged Student Congress State president Udit Pradhan.

Earlier, the BJD government on the pretext of violence had stopped students' union elections from 2017 to

2023. The ABVP had lodged a case in the Orissa High Court regarding the students' union elections, but now its stand has changed and it has welcomed the State Government decision not to hold elections, pointed out Pradhan.

The stopping of student elections is "murdering" of the democratic rights of students, he alleged.

The Student Congress would take to the streets in support of its demand for student elections, Pradhan said.

# Suniti Mund 'driven out' of BJP office



By party workers

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Unprecedented scenes were witnessed at the BJP State headquarters here on Tuesday when some members of the party's Mahila Morcha entered into a verbal duel with Suniti Mund, who was recently suspended from the party on the charge of anti-party activities.

The incident occurred when Suniti turned up at the party headquarters. She had come to meet the senior leaders and was waiting for them when she was driven out of the office by Mahila Morcha workers.

The workers claimed that as Suniti had been suspended from the party, she did not

have any right to come to the party office. As she was speaking to the media, she was opposed and asked to leave the party office.

BJP leader Subhasini Prusty said, "Suniti Mund has been suspended. As per protocol, she should not have come to the office. We had allowed her to wait. But when she started speaking to the media, we opposed and asked her to leave."

However, Suniti said, "False allegations have been levelled against me and the truth will soon come out. I am part of the BJP family."

Notably, Suniti Mund was the BJP's Bhubaneswar Mayor candidate in the last Municipal Corporation elections.

# Locals on looting spree as 2 containers float near S'bhaya coast

RAJESSH BEHERA  
KENDRAPADA

For the people of the seaside coastal Satabhaya village and its nearby villages under Rajnagar block, Monday was a memorable day as they got bounties. For, two containers that they came across floating ashore had a huge stock of food and stationery items, which they looted to their heart's content.

While two or three persons first saw the containers, soon there was a mad rush of locals as the news spread about the containers and the bounties they carried. The Baunsagadi river ghat witnessed a huge crowd of people falling upon one another to ferry the Patasala river to reach the Satabhaya coast to lay their hands on the goods from the containers.

According to sources, some



locals first came across the two huge containers floating ashore along the Satabhaya coast. First they were scared but later, on opening them they saw huge quantities of daily use items, including food stuffs, medicines, torch lights, umbrellas, cup plate sets, sarees, pants, shirts, chappals, mustard oil, biscuits, air bags, water bottles and several other items

inside.

Locals stated that while one container was floating near the coast, the other was located 100 metre away from the first container. While some locals, who were residing nearby Baunsagadi ferry ghat lifted the stuffs to their houses at a lightning speed, the others fearing police action hid the goods they collected at a

nearby forest so as to collect them back at night.

It was known that the containers belong to ITT Lines Private Limited as the name of the company was written in them. ITT Lines Private Limited is a shipping company of Kolkata.

Kendrapada SP Siddharth Kataria said as Satabhaya comes under Rajnagar Police

station, he had directed the IIC of Rajnagar to rush to the spot to take stock of the situation.

The containers that drifted in Bay of Bengal and came ashore near Satabhaya might belong to a Mumbai-registered sunken cargo ship MV ITT Puma which was en route Port Blair from Kolkata with a carrying capacity of 75 metric tons. It sank around 80 km from Kolkata (70 nautical miles) south of Sagar Island due to inclement weather on August 25.

The Coast Guard personnel rescued 11 persons in a sea-air coordinated operation but three crew members were missing.

Rajnagar DFO Sudarshan Gopinath Jadav said, "We got information on Monday about the containers floating near Satabhaya coast. When the forest personnel reached the spot, the containers had

been broken open and many daily use items and food stuffs were looted by the locals residing near the Satabhaya coast. The Forest personnel seized the remaining items from the containers."

"I have written a letter to the Coast Guard and the SP, Kendrapada requesting to conduct an inquiry in this regard," said Jagdev.

Meanwhile, the forest personnel have been directed to conduct patrolling at the coast to ensure whether some other containers were floating ashore. Strict patrolling has been going on at the Baunsagadi ferry ghat to restrict the entry of public as it comes under Bhitarkanika National Park.

As the containers are very heavy, the Forest Department will shift them with the help of a JCB machine, added DFO, Jadav.



# 'Survey can unravel any secret chamber in Ratna Bhandar'

**Says Law Minister Harichandan**  
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Ratna Bhandar houses the Jagannath Temple's precious jewels and ornaments. The chamber has been the subject of mystery and speculation for many years, with rumours about the presence of hidden treasures and secret passages.

There is a popular belief that

there are secret chambers or tunnels inside the treasury. Answering the deepest secret, Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan said that only a survey of Ratna Bhandar can bring clarity on whether there is any secret chamber or tunnel in the treasury.

"There may be. We have ordered a non-penetrating survey of Ratna Bhandar. Many people have doubts that there may be a secret Ratna Bhandar. We will study it further. The same people doubt

that there may be a tunnel. We will conduct a GPR survey to clarify all doubts. ASI will conduct the survey with IIT," Harichandan said.

He further added, "Survey by the ASI will give us a clear picture of what exactly is inside the Ratna Bhandar. If there are any secret chambers or tunnels, we will find out."

He also opened up on the allegations of 80kg gold and 200kg silver from 'Ratna Bhandar' illegally being

transported to Gujarat by a private jet.

"A respected person like Tathagata Satpathy should not make such comments on social media. He should ask pardon to the people of Odisha for his remarks. The entire world knows how the Ratna Bhandar was opened and the valuables were relocated to temporary treasure. We followed all the standard operating procedures. We have all the videography for proof," he stated.

# Chikiti hooch tragedy One more person dies; toll rises to 5

**16 arrested so far**  
PNS ■ BRAHMAMUR

The death toll in the Chikiti liquor tragedy in Ganjam district has surged to five after one more person undergoing treatment at the MKCG Medical College Hospital in Brahmampur died on Monday.

The deceased was identified as Pradeep Behera (30) of Jenapur in Chikiti town.

MKCG Hospital Superintendent Suchitra Das said, "Behera was on a ventilator support. He was also suffering from some other diseases."

At least 15 people from Jenapur and Karabalu were admitted to the hospital on August 19 after they consumed spurious country-made liquor from a vendor selling it at Maundapur village.

While nine persons were discharged after being cured, five people died

and two others are still undergoing treatment at the hospital, sources said.

At least 16 people have been arrested in connection with the hooch tragedy and huge quantities of liquor seized in raids conducted by the police and the Excise Department.

Following the hooch tragedy, excise officials and police swung into action and carried out raids at multiple liquor dens across Odisha including in Bhubaneswar. Notably, the Commissionerate police recently bulldozed several illegal country-liquor manufacturing units at Salia Sahi in the capital city and seized huge quantities of liquor.

# No-confidence against P'pur NAC chief



**PNS ■ CHHATRAPUR**

The political atmosphere in Purusottampur NAC has grown hot as nine Councillors including Vice-Chairman Krushna Chandra Panda submitted a no-confidence motion to Ganjam Collector Dibyajyothi Parida against NAC Chairperson Priyanka Gouda.

There are 13 Councillors at present in the NAC. One seat is vacant.

Independent candidate Gouda was elected as the Chairperson during the last NAC election. Several complaints against the Chairperson have prompted the Councillors to

take the step, a Councillor informed.

They alleged that the Chairperson is involved in massive corruption and is giving work orders to her own people without calling any regular meeting and without any tender. It is also alleged that she is taking decisions by changing rules as per her convenience.

Many Councillors including Archana Panda, K Pramod Kumar Achary, Sujata Behera, Bhabani Shankar Nahak, Girija Behera, Jamuna Behera, Lingaraj Behera and Bhaskar Behera were also present while submitting the demand letter to the district Collector.

# CDPO held taking bribe in Sundargarh

**RI, ARI, private person held in another operation**  
PNS ■ CUTTACK

The Vigilance police on Monday caught Jayashree Pattnaik, Child Development Project Officer (CDPO), Kutra in Sundargarh district, while accepting a bribe of Rs 2, 000 as first installment of

an overall demand of Rs 5,000 from a person.

Pattnaik had demanded the bribe from the complainant (an Anganwadi Worker for not giving adverse report against her following surprise visit to the Anganwadi Centre.

Following the trap, simultaneous searches were carried out on the residential house of S Pattnaik at Liploi, Rajgangpur, and her office

room. Later, Pattnaik was arrested and forwarded to court.

In another operation Aditya Prasad Senapati, RI, Podamari Revenue Circle and Titu Sethi, ARI of the same RI Circle under Sanakhemundi Tehsil in district Ganjam district along with Manoranjan Sahu (private person) were caught by Vigilance for accepting a bribe of Rs 5,000 from a person.

They had demanded the

bribe from the complainant for conversion of his agricultural land to homestead land in two mutation cases and for issuance of RoR (Land Patta) in favour of complainant.

Following the trap, simultaneous searches were carried out on the residential house of Senapat at Digapahandi and residential house of Sahu at Khajuripalli and their office room.

# In Sambalpur Elephant 'Kharsel' dies due to old age

**PNS ■ SAMBALPUR**

Sixty-five-year-old captive male elephant 'Kharsel' died on Monday due to old age under the Hirakud Wildlife Division in Sambalpur district, said the Hirakud Wildlife DFO.



The elephant was buried under a Ficus tree, the same place where it had spent its last years.

The authorities said Kharsel had a natural death due to old age. For the past five to six months, it had shown signs of declining health and was eating and walking slowly. It was on medication for age-related issues under Dr Indramani Nath, an expert from the Centre of Wildlife Studies in Bhubaneswar, who had also performed an eye surgery on the elephant in 2022 for age-related vision issues.

Kharsel had been captured

from the Kharsel Reserve Forest in Balangir district in 1998 after it had been responsible for multiple human deaths. After its capture, Kharsel became partially blind and attempted to escape several times in 2005-2009. In recent years, due to age-related issues like muscle pain and blurred vision, its movement within the Debrigarh Sanctuary was restricted and it was only allowed short walks to the Hirakud reservoir for bathing.

A memorial board on the burial ground is being prepared to honour Kharsel's memory.

# B'pur rly stn's modernisation under ABSS sought

**Kriyansustan Committee also draws attention to neglected projects in S Odisha**  
RAJEEV RATHAN ■ BRAHMAMUR

The Milita Kriyansustan Committee (Joint Action Committee) convened a Press meet here on Sunday in which an array of demands was raised pertaining to the development of railway communication networks in south Odisha.



ment among the public, it said.

The committee brought to the notice of the railway authorities some of the key issues along with significant infrastructure additions which though already have been sanctioned but they are pending since long. Prominent among them include: Brahmampur-Sambalpur New Rail line via Aska- Bhanjanagar- Phulbani- Boudh; Rayagada (Singapore Road)-Gopalpur New Rail line via Padmapur-Ramnaguda-Bankilli; Gopalpur-Talcher New Rail line via Tara Tarini Polasara-Buguda-Nayagada route; and Gunupur-Rayagada New Rail line. The committee said these rail lines require immediate attention of the authorities for their completion and commissioning.

# In Balangir Shop raided for selling duplicate medicines

**PNS ■ BALANGIR**

A joint team of Titilagarh and Chhattisgarh police raided a medicine shop in Balangir district on Monday night for allegedly selling duplicate medicines.

The crackdown by the police followed the allegation that the medicine shop named Ayesha Medical Store was supplying duplicate medicine to neighbouring Chhattisgarh.

The raid was carried out in the presence of a magistrate. Following the raid, the police have informed the Directorate of Drug Control about the incident.

Notably, the sale of duplicate medicine in the market is nothing new in Odisha.

In 2023, spurious blood pressure medicines 'Telma 40' and 'Telma AM' were seized in Cuttack. Subsequently, two persons allegedly involved in supplying spurious hypertension medicines to distributors in Cuttack were arrested from Bihar. Moreover, duplicate Clavam 625 capsules were also seized in Bhubaneswar and Jharsuguda in 2023. Besides, the Commissionerate police had recovered fake drugs worth Rs 2 lakh from a pharmaceutical distributor in Cuttack in 2023.

# In Phulbani Youths called upon to be leaders at Rotary meet



**BIRENDRA SUBUDHI ■ PHULBANI**

The Rotary Club, Phulbani, organised a seminar titled "Membership and Organizational Development." Rotary Governor Yagnasis Mohapatra was the chief guest and spoke about the importance of service attitude in human life through various examples.

He called upon the young generation to be leaders. Past Rotary Governor Debasis Mishra, who attended as one of the guests, praised the service programmes of Rotary in 220 countries around the world and said that development of leadership skills is not possible without social service.

He informed and appreciated the service work of Rotary Club of Phulbani in relation to the achievement of service and friendship which started Rotary since 1905.

On the occasion, zonal chair Mihir Panigrahi, assistant governor Mihir Ranjan Nayak, Rotary district secretary Sushant Mahapatra and advisor Indrajit Sahu participated and appreciated the various programmes being done by Phulbani Rotary.

The programme was presided over by club president Bipra Charan Patra. D Aruna gave the inaugural speech. On this occasion, the students who had excelled in the last board examination were felicitated. Three workers were honoured for planting more than 40,000 trees in various bare hills and creating a green belt. Secretary Bijay Krishna Patnaik gave vote of thanks.

tion to the achievement of service and friendship which started Rotary since 1905.

On the occasion, zonal chair Mihir Panigrahi, assistant governor Mihir Ranjan Nayak, Rotary district secretary Sushant Mahapatra and advisor Indrajit Sahu participated and appreciated the various programmes being done by Phulbani Rotary.

The programme was presided over by club president Bipra Charan Patra. D Aruna gave the inaugural speech. On this occasion, the students who had excelled in the last board examination were felicitated. Three workers were honoured for planting more than 40,000 trees in various bare hills and creating a green belt. Secretary Bijay Krishna Patnaik gave vote of thanks.

# Patnagarh parcel bomb blast Ex-CB IG Arun Bothra deposes in court

**PNS ■ BALANGIR**

Former Crime Branch IG Arun Bothra on Tuesday deposed before the Patnagarh Additional District Judge Court in Balangir district in connection with the wedding gift parcel bomb explosion case that claimed two lives, including a newlywed, in 2018.



According to sources, Bothra, who was leading the investigation then, appeared before the court as the sixtieth witness.

Bothra, as a witness, holds utmost significance in the case as he cracked the mystery surrounding the parcel bomb explosion and arrested the prime accused Punjilal Meher, an English Lecturer in the Bhainsa College.

During the investigation, Bothra recreated the entire crime scene and video-graphed the whole act how Meher manufactured the parcel bomb and sent it to the

victim's family through a courier.

Notably on February 23, 2018, Soumyasekhar Sahoo and his grandmother were killed in the explosion while unwrapping the parcel they had received as wedding gift by courier. Deceased Soumyasekhar's wife Reema Sahoo was critically injured in the incident. Meher allegedly hatched the conspiracy to settle personal scores with Sanjukta, mother of deceased Soumyasekhar, after she took over as the new Principal of the Bhainsa College.

# On his 95th Appearance Day & 40th Holy Vyasapuja Guru Gobinda Swami was known worldwide for his lectures

**RADHAKANTA DAS**

September 4 is ISKCON Guru, Baishnaba Acharya, preacher and philosopher Sri Srimad Gour Gobinda Swami Maharaj's 95th Holy Appearance Day and 40th Vyas Puja Utsav.

Gurudev was born on September 2, 1929 in Jagannathpur village of Jagatsinghpur district. His childhood name was Brajabandhu. As morning sows the day, his quality was marked from his childhood. What he heard once he remembered that forever. He was so talented that he analyzed the Gita, Bhagabata, Chaitanya Charitamruta just at the age of eight and gave very nice lectures to the villagers at his village temple.

He became a teacher for maintaining his family initially. Also, he continued his study. He passed with distinc-

tion in Bachelor degree in 1958 and post graduate degree in 1961. He married Basanti Debi, daughter of Kalyan Nandi of Patakura area of Kendrapada district in 1953 and started his family life.

Somehow or the other, he was not satisfied with the material life and wanted to search for the eternal truth of life. So he renounced his family life, job and became a Sanyasi. He left his house on April 10, 1974 and declared himself Gour Gopal instead of Brajabandhu. He started travelling from city to city all over India looking for a spiritual guru. At long last, he arrived at Vrindavan and met founder Acharya of ISKCON, Srila AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupad. Srila Maharaj accepted him as his disciple and directed him to translate his book, "Back to Godhead" from English to Hindi. Upon his satisfactory rendering of the work, Prabhupad directed



him to proceed to Hyderabad and translate all his writings in English to Hindi.

As per his direction, Gurudev proceeded to Mayapur. Prabhupad gave Harinam initiation and

changed his name from Gour Gopal to "Gour Govinda". Later, Prabhupad directed him to stay at Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar and help construct a new temple there on the donated land of Chhabi

Kanungo and continue his preaching programme there. The Sri Krishna Balamandir was inaugurated at Vrindavan in 1975. On the same tithi, Prabhupad declared him Gour Govinda Swami instead of Gour Govinda Das. His preaching programmes in Krishna consciousness were a roaring success both in India and abroad.

Gour Gobinda Swami travelled to the United States, the UK, the USSR, Canada, many Western countries, South Africa, Australia and Indonesia etc many a time while travelling various important cities of India and created thousands and thousands of followers and devotees. He constructed the Lotus Temple in the premises of ISKCON, Bhubaneswar and installed the deity, Radha Gopinath, there. He was instrumental in giving a new image to ISKCON, Bhubaneswar.

He took up many miracle

projects and started some amazing work during the year 1996. He started a Gosala and a farm project at Atala, Jagannathpur which is 14 km away from ISKCON, Bhubaneswar. He proposed to keep 108 cows in the Gosala. He started a Fassi plantation project at Dasapalla forest in Nayagarh for construction of chariots for the Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath, Puri and he also started the Dandabhanga project at Puri district. He organised Hare Krishna Utsav for three days in the Exhibition Ground, Bhubaneswar where devotees and intellectuals from all over the globe participated. He also modernised the Allarnath temple at Brahmagiri. The great preacher and Swami passed away while giving a lecture at the GBC conference at Mayapur, West Bengal in 1996.

(Das is State PRO, ISKCON, BBSR, Mob-9132090199)

# BJD holds demo against Dharamsala BDO



**PNS ■ JAJPUR**

BJD members on Tuesday staged a dharna in front of the BDO office in Dharamsala in Jajpur district against stalling of major developmental works in the rural areas.

"The BDO, in nexus with ruling party leaders, is trying to halt all the developmental works. So, we are staging a dharna to protest against the officer, said Binjharpur MLA Pramila Mallick.

Former Dharmasala MLA Pranab Balabantray said the

authorities are responsible for their failure to complete the development projects. Besides, the law and order situation is deteriorating in the State. The BJD members had met the DGP regarding the issue.

MLAs Byomakesh Ray, Debiranjan Tipathy and Biswaranjan Mallick alleged that the BDO recently misbehaved with some Panchayat Samiti Members and Sarapanchs, for which the government should take action against him.



# Modi: Brunei, Singapore are important partners in India's Act East policy



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As he embarked on a visit to Brunei and Singapore, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday that the two nations are "important partners" in India's 'Act East' policy and asserted that his visits would further strengthen the partnership with the two countries and the larger ASEAN region. Modi is on a two-nation visit from September 3-5, starting with Brunei.

"Today, I am embarking on a first ever bilateral visit to Brunei Darussalam. As we celebrate the 40 years of our diplomatic relations, I look forward to my meetings with His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah and other esteemed members of the

Royal family to advance our historical relationship to new heights," he said in his departure statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). The visit will further strengthen India's cooperation with Brunei in all existing sectors, including defence cooperation, trade and investment, energy, space technology, health cooperation, capacity building, culture as well as people-to-people exchanges and explore avenues for cooperation in newer sectors, the MEA earlier said. Modi's visit to Brunei is the first bilateral visit of an Indian prime minister to that country.

"From Brunei, I will travel to Singapore on September 4. I look forward to the opportunity to meet President

Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, Senior Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong. I will also meet with leaders of the Singapore's vibrant business community," Modi said.

The prime minister said he looked forward to his discussions to "deepen our Strategic Partnership with Singapore", particularly in new and emerging areas of advanced manufacturing, digitalisation, and sustainable development.

"Both countries are important partners in our Act East Policy and the Indo-Pacific Vision. I am confident that my visits would further strengthen our partnership with Brunei, Singapore and the larger ASEAN region," Modi said.

# CBSE conducts surprise inspections in crackdown on dummy schools

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) conducted a series of surprise inspections at 27 schools in Rajasthan and the national capital on Tuesday to check the 'dummy school' menace, top officials said.

The move comes six months after the board cancelled the affiliation of 20 schools for enrolling dummy students and ineligible candidates.

"These inspections were aimed at ensuring that the schools strictly adhering to the norms and bylaws set forth by CBSE. The inspections were carried out by 27 teams, each comprising a CBSE officer and a principal from a CBSE-affiliated school," CBSE Secretary Himanshu Gupta said.

"The inspections were meticulously planned and executed in a synchronized manner, taking place simultaneously across all selected schools within a short timeframe," he added.

Gupta said the approach was adopted to maintain the element of surprise, thereby ensuring that the information gathered about the operations and compliance of the schools is accurate and reflective of their everyday functioning.

"The findings from these inspections will be reviewed comprehensively, and appropriate actions will be taken in cases of non-compliance. CBSE reiterates its commitment to rigorous monitoring and will continue to conduct such surprise inspections to ensure that affiliated schools uphold the quality and standards expected by the board," he added.

Scores of students preparing for engineering and medical entrance exams prefer to take admission to dummy schools so that they can focus solely on their preparations for the competitive exams. They do not attend classes and straight-away appear in the board exams.

Aspirants also choose dummy schools keeping in mind the quota in medical and engineering institutes available for the students from certain states. For example, the candidates who have completed Classes 11 and 12 in Delhi are considered for admission in the medical colleges of the national capital under the Delhi State Quota.



# Congress questions RSS locus standi on caste census

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the RSS' comments on caste census, the Congress on Tuesday wondered whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi would "hijack" another of its guarantee and conduct the caste census now with the Sangh having "given the green signal".

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) on Monday said it has no objection to collecting data on specific communities or castes, provided that the information is used for their welfare and not exploited as a political tool for electoral gains.

Reacting to the remarks, Congress' general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said RSS's preaching on caste census raises some basic questions such as - does it have a veto power over caste census. "Who is the RSS to give permission for caste census? What does the RSS mean when it says caste census should not be misused for electioneering? Is it to be a judge or umpire?" Ramesh said in a social media post in Hindi.

Why has RSS maintained a "mysterious silence" on the need for a constitutional amendment to remove the 50 per cent cap on reservation for Dalits, Adivasis and OBCs, the Congress leader further asked. "Now that the RSS has given the green signal, will the non-biological Prime Minister

hijack another guarantee of Congress and conduct a caste census?" Ramesh said.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge had said on Monday night that the RSS should clearly tell the country whether it is in favour or against caste census.

"Is the Sangh Parivar, which is in favour of Manusmriti instead of the Constitution of the country, worried about the participation of Dalits, tribals, backward classes and poor-deprived society or not?" Kharge had said in a social media post in Hindi.

Addressing the media on Monday in Kerala's Palakkad after a three-day coordination conclave called Samanwaya Baithak, Sunil Ambekar, RSS Akhil Bharatiya Prachar Pramukh, said caste and caste-relations were a "very sensitive issue" for the Hindu society and it is an important issue "for our national unity and integrity". He was responding to a query on caste census.

So, it should be dealt with "very seriously" and not just on the basis of elections or politics. "So, as RSS thinks, yes, definitely for all welfare activities, addressing the particular community or caste which is lagging behind and so special attention is needed to some communities and caste. So, for that the government needs the numbers. It is very well practised...Earlier also it has taken. So, it can take it. No problem."

# Two insurgent groups to ink pact in presence of Amit Shah

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

An agreement will be signed between the central and Tripura governments and two insurgent groups of Tripura here on Wednesday, in presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, to end violence and bringing "lasting peace" in the Northeastern state.

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha and senior officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and Tripura government will also be present during the signing of the Memorandum of Settlement.

"In presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, a Memorandum of Settlement is to be signed among government of India, government of Tripura and representatives of National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) and All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF), in New Delhi on September 4," an official statement said.

The MHA has been working tirelessly to fulfil Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of developed Northeast, free from extremism, violence and conflict, it said.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, the government has signed 12 important agreements to bring peace and prosperity in the Northeast region, of which three relate to Tripura.

# SC moved by woman's long fight against divorce decree, calls system grossly injudicious

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The trials and tribulations of a woman fighting a protracted legal battle against a family court granting the decree of divorce to her estranged husband multiple times has moved the Supreme Court to the extent that it said the judicial system was "grossly injudicious" to her.

The woman, who got married in 1991, gave birth to a son a year later and was deserted by her husband. He filed for divorce in a family court in Karnataka which not once but thrice granted the decree of divorce in favour of her husband disregarding the fact that he was not paying anything either to her or their minor child for maintenance. The family court was asked multiple times by the high court, which the woman approached against the grant of divorce, to decide afresh the petition of her husband. Each time the man managed to get the divorce decree.

The high court, in the third instance, approved the family court's decision granting divorce to the husband on



payment of permanent alimony of Rs 20 lakh. The local court had awarded Rs 25 lakh to the woman.

The history of the matrimonial dispute, spanning nearly three decades without the woman getting sufficient money as alimony, caught the attention of a bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan.

The top court deprecated the manner in which the family court kept on passing the decrees of divorce.

"On perusal of the record, it seems to us that the judicial system has been grossly inju-

dicious to the appellant and her minor child, who has now attained majority. We say so for the reason that it is the respondent who subjected the appellant to extreme cruelty all these years, and never came forward to render any assistance for securing a better future for his own son or offered to pay even for his school education.

"The respondent's own mother has been staying with her daughter-in-law/appellant all these years and has come forward against him. The mechanical manner in which the family court kept on pass-

ing decrees of divorce against the appellant not only exhibit a lack of sensitivity, but also suggests a hidden prejudice against the appellant. The courts ought not to have accorded any premium to the respondent's own misdemeanours," the bench said.

The court, however, said it cannot be oblivious of the fact that the parties are living separately since 1992 and therefore sustained the decree of divorce granted by the family court conditionally.

Frowning upon the misdemeanours of the husband, the bench said the claim of irretrievable breakdown of marriage cannot be used to the advantage of a party solely responsible for "tearing down the marital relationship."

The apex court not only enhanced the alimony of Rs 20 lakh by Rs 10 lakh more but also ordered that the house currently occupied by the woman, her son, and her mother-in-law will remain with them and barred the man from interfering with the peaceful possession of the property.

"If the respondent owns any other immovable property, the son of the parties shall have preferential ownership rights in the same irrespective of any transfer of title by the respondent.

This direction is necessitated for the reason that he (the couple's son) has an indefeasible and enforceable right to seek maintenance and adequate amount towards his school and higher education," the bench said.

Making the directions compulsorily enforceable, the top court warned the man that non-compliance would automatically render the decree of divorce "null and void".

It asked the man to pay the alimony within three months with seven per cent annual interest since August 3, 2006, the day the first decree of divorce was passed.

"Similarly, if the respondent fails to pay the above awarded amount to the appellant within the stipulated time, the family court is directed to take coercive action against him in accordance with law," the bench said in a recent order.

# Government notifies constitution of 23rd Law Commission for 3 years tenure

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The government has notified the constitution of the 23rd Law Commission for a period of three years, with a provision to appoint serving Supreme Court and high court judges as its chairperson and members.

The panel advises the government on complex legal issues. Once it is constituted, the government initiates the process of appointing its chief and members.

According to an order of the Ministry of Law and Justice, the term of the 22nd Law Commission ended on August 31 and the new panel has been constituted with effect from September 1.

Though the notification relating to the constitution of the 21st and 22nd law commissions, issued in September 2015 and February 2020 respectively, had provisions for appointing serving SC and HC judges as chairpersons and members, in the recent past, either retired top court judges or former chief justices of high courts have head-

ed the body.

On August 31, the term of the 22nd Law Commission, which was without a chairperson for the past few months, ended with its key report on the uniform civil code (UCC) still in the works.

The report prepared by the law panel on simultaneous elections is ready and pending submission to the law ministry. People aware of the procedure noted that the report cannot be submitted in the absence of a chairperson. Justice (ret'd) Ritu Raj Awasthi, who headed the 22nd law panel, was appointed a member of the anti-corruption watchdog Lokpal a few months ago. A high-level committee headed by former president Ram Nath Kovind submitted a report on 'one nation, one election' in March. Last year, the 22nd commission had initiated fresh consultations on the UCC. After obtaining suggestions from a cross-section of society, it was in the process of preparing a draft report when Justice Awasthi was appointed to the Lokpal.

According to the order, the

panel will have a full-time chairperson and four full-time members, including member-secretary. The secretary of the Department of Legal Affairs and the secretary of the Legislative Department will be its ex-officio members. There cannot be more than five part-time members, according to the order.

It said the chairperson/members "who are serving judges of the Supreme Court/High Court shall perform their functions on a whole-time basis up to the date of retirement from the Supreme Court/High Court or expiry of the term of the Commission, whichever be earlier."

The time spent by them in the performance of such functions as chairperson or member of the Commission will be treated as "actual service".

The order noted that in case "other category" of persons are appointed as chairperson or full-time members, the chairperson will be entitled a pay of Rs 2.50 lakh (fixed) per month. In case of members, a pay of Rs 2.25 lakh (fixed) per month will be admissible.

# WHO issues first ever guidelines on managing antibiotic pollution

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The World Health Organization (WHO) has issued its first-ever guidelines on managing antibiotic pollution to address the global health threat posed by pharmaceutical waste from antibiotic manufacturing companies that has added the risk of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) or superbugs.

The guidance sets targets to mitigate risks of AMR and protect aquatic life from antibiotic contamination, addressing a largely unregulated issue where environmental emissions from pharmaceutical production often go unchecked.

The framing of guidelines is crucial in the context of India too, where active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) manufacturing poses significant environmental challenges. Wastewater from these plants frequently contains harmful byproducts that contaminate local water sources.

This pollution not only affects ecosystems but also public health by potentially spreading antibiotic resistance, which as per the WHO is a top 10 global public health threat. A study last year found that, in 2019, it was responsible for 1.27 million deaths.

Studies reveal that the most common antibiotics found in water sources include Sulfamethoxazole which has



been detected in 96 per cent of analyzed samples; Trimethoprim, frequently found in water sources and often present alongside sulfamethoxazole while Ciprofloxacin is another commonly detected antibiotic.

Additionally, various other antibiotics have been identified in water sources, including tetracyclines, macrolides, fluoroquinolones, and beta-lactams.

"Pharmaceutical waste from antibiotic manufacturing can facilitate the emergence of new super bugs, which can spread globally and threaten our health. Controlling pollution from antibiotic production contributes to keeping these life-saving medicines effective for everyone," said Dr Yukiko Nakatani, WHO Assistant Director-General for AMR ad interim.

Globally, there is a lack of accessible information on the environmental damage caused by manufacturing of medicines. "The guidance provides

an independent and impartial scientific basis for regulators, procurers, inspectors, and industry themselves to include robust antibiotic pollution control in their standards," added Dr Maria Neira, Director, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Health, WHO.

Welcoming the move, Professor and Dr Sangeeta Sharma, from Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences (IHBAS) and President of the Delhi Society for Promotion of Rational Use of Drugs (DSPRUD), highlighted that antibiotics and resistance genes loaded pharmaceutical wastewater poses a significant environmental threat. "This risk is exacerbated by inadequate treatment processes and irresponsible disposal practices," she added.

The guidance sets health-focused goals to minimize the risk of AMR emergence and spread, and also outlines objectives to mitigate risks to aquatic life from antibiotics used in humans, animals, or plants. It covers all steps from the manufacturing of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) and formulation into finished products, including primary packaging. Efforts to tackle this problem could also involve international collaboration and support, as the impact of such pollution can extend beyond national borders, as per the WHO document.

# Centre in process of framing policy to balance salt intake

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre is in the process of framing a policy that balances salt intake to combat rising non-communicable disease (NCD) such as cardiovascular diseases and hypertension while ensuring adequate iodine levels to prevent deficiency disorders.

Moving forward, a policy-based approach that balances salt reduction with adequate iodine supplementation is essential for better health outcomes is in the offing, indicated Dr Shikha Vardhan, ADG, National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NP-NCD), Union Health Ministry here at a meeting led by Nutrition International, WHO-India, Resolve to Save Lives, and the Iodine Global Network.

Among others, the meet was attended by experts from NP-NCD and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) which is deliberating in this regard to address the double health burden of high salt intake and low iodine level.

Dr. Vardhan also mentioned that the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) is revising the National Iodine Deficiency Disorders Control Programme guidelines to ensure optimal iodine nutrition. This action comes in response to concerns that no



State in India is completely free from Iodine Deficiency Disorders (IDD), as reported by the Ministry in Parliament in 2022. Iodine is an essential micronutrient, needed daily in amounts of 100-150 micrograms for normal growth and development.

Experts noted that current WHO guidelines recommend limiting salt intake to less than 5 grams per day, but in India, people consume nearly twice this amount, leaving them majorly vulnerable to hypertension. Currently, an estimated 220 million people in India are suffering from hypertension.

Dr Alka Rao of FSSAI highlighted ongoing efforts like the Eat Right campaign to support healthier choices. The meeting called for more nationally representative data on sodium and iodine intake

that could aid in making informed policy decisions and tailoring interventions effectively.

Under the National Iodine Deficiency Disorders Control Programme (NIDDPC), the goal is to bring the prevalence of IDD to below 5 percent in the country and to ensure 100 percent consumption of adequately iodated salt (15ppm) at the household level.

The experts at the meet also suggested that in addition to mass awareness campaigns, innovative strategies that promote the use of low sodium salt substitutes that have proven to be effective should be explored. Policies should be implemented to reduce salt intake from all sources, including restaurant meals, public procurement, packaged foods, and to reinforce mandatory iodization, said the experts.

# Road crashes leading cause of deaths from unintentional injuries in India: Report

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Road crashes remain the leading cause of deaths from unintentional injuries in India, accounting for over 43 per cent of such fatalities, with overspeeding being the primary factor, according to a new report released by the Union Ministry of Health here.

The "National Strategy for Prevention of Unintentional Injury," report which was released at the "Safety 2024" World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion, highlights that while drowning, falls, poisoning, and burns also contribute to unintentional injury deaths, road traffic crashes (RTCs) are the most significant concern.

The report reveals that in 2022, there were 430,504 deaths from unintentional injuries and 170,924 from intentional injuries, with RTCs making up 43.7 per cent of unintentional injury deaths.

It also noted that despite efforts to improve road safety, India continues to grapple with a high number of fatalities due to road traffic injuries (RTIs). The mortality ratio remains constant at approximately 86 per cent for males and 14 per cent for females.

"Over-speeding is the leading cause of these deaths, account-

ing for a staggering 75.2 per cent of fatalities. Other major contributing factors include driving on the wrong side of the road (5.8 per cent) and driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs (2.5 per cent). "Analysis of RTIs reveals a significant disparity in mortality rates based on location. Rural areas bear the brunt of RTI fatalities, with a staggering 67.8 per cent of deaths occurring there compared to 32.2 per cent in urban areas. Furthermore, the data suggests that open areas and residential zones might be particularly dangerous, with potentially higher fatality rates compared to other locations," it said.

National highways, which have a share of only 2.1 per cent of the total road length in the country, account for the maximum number of road fatalities and were responsible for 45 lives per 100 km in 2022.

The three-day conference, hosted by IIT Delhi and co-sponsored by WHO, aims to address these issues through a comprehensive approach that includes safer infrastructure and protection for vulnerable road users. International experts are focusing on improving coordination, strengthening research, and integrating injury prevention with global health strategies to build a safer future for all.



# Research should be encouraged in education system: President Murmu

PTI ■ PUNE

President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday stressed the need to encourage research in the education system, and said research scholars in India are capable of finding solutions to the problems not only faced by the country but by the world.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 gives impetus to research, she noted while addressing the 21st convocation ceremony at Symbiosis International (Deemed University) in Pune. Murmu also urged students to pursue excellence and not to equate success with material possessions like money, a big house or a car. "I am confident that the young generation is working hard towards the development of the country. People of the country possess a lot of talent and skill. "I want you to understand the requirements of the society and using your knowledge, come up with solutions that can help in the development of the masses, especially those who are marginalised, and it can encourage sustainability," the President said. Through the government



schemes, like Start-Up India, Skill India and Stand-Up India, the young generation can achieve its aims, she said. "I would like to tell everyone here that research should be encouraged in the education system. Research scholars from India are capable of finding solutions not only to the problems within the country but from the world. In the National Education Policy, the research has been given impetus," the President added.

The President urged professors, faculty members, and alumni of Symbiosis University to promote research in the education

system. Years of research lead to new inventions and provide new solutions to challenges, the President noted, adding that multi-disciplinary research centres are working in many areas, including water resource management, stem cell, nano-science, and climate change at Symbiosis University. The President advised students to try to achieve excellence in every task. "You must have heard the saying 'Chase excellence and success will follow'. But many times it happens that some people consider having more money, a big house, a big car,

and other things as a sign of success," she said. Murmu expressed confidence that students will understand the true meaning of success and undertake work which will also improve the standard of living of others. Students can bring a positive change in the country and abroad with their personality and knowledge, she said. "Students can make effective contributions in management, healthcare, law, social sciences, and other fields through innovation, artificial intelligence, and machine learning," she said. The President urged students to understand the culture of different communities and regions in India and their needs. Based on this knowledge of regions and communities, students should create software, healthcare products, and marketing strategies that help in the development of everyone, especially the underprivileged sections, and also promote sustainability, the President said. Initiatives like Start-up India, Skill India, Make in India and Digital India will also help students in achieving their goals.

# BJP aims to enrol two crore primary members in Gujarat

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

The Bharatiya Janata Party aims to enrol 2 crore primary members in Gujarat, the home state of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, a senior leader said on Tuesday. Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and state BJP president CR Paatil renewed their party membership at an event in Ahmedabad as part of the party's nationwide membership drive. The Gujarat BJP unit launched an enrollment drive, a day after PM Modi asked BJP members in Delhi to expand the party during the membership program in a way that a maximum number of its women candidates are elected to Lok Sabha and assemblies when 33 per cent reservation for women in legislatures comes into force. Paatil, also the union Jal Shakti minister, stressed that the Central leadership had not set any specific target for Gujarat. "However, the state unit will aim to enrol at least 2 crore members and secure top position among other states". Paatil suggested enrolling women and those workers of the BJP who have not renewed



their primary memberships. "The BJP is the only party where you must renew your primary membership every six years. It applies to everyone, irrespective of the position they are holding. This is necessary to avoid stagnancy. Though the Central leadership has not set any target for us, we will try to enrol 2 crore members during this drive in Gujarat. This will be our target," Paatil told the gathering. Prominent BJP leaders from Gujarat, including former chief minister Vijay Rupani, ex-deputy CM Nitin Patel, MPs, MLAs, and several former and incumbent ministers attended the event and renewed their membership. Paatil said the 2-crore enrolment target is achievable

given that nearly 1.19 crore members were registered with BJP in the previous drive six years ago. He said BJP received 1.88 crore votes in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. "We must ensure Gujarat becomes a number one unit in terms of membership. To achieve this target, you need to enrol those who were with us earlier but didn't renew their memberships for some reason. We can enrol women as party workers during this drive," said Paatil. He acknowledged that the BJP's performance in Lok Sabha elections caused "despair". "Our tally went down maybe because of some mistakes committed by us. In Gujarat, I accept responsibility for the loss of one seat (Banaskantha). But, we need to emerge out of this atmosphere of despair. A strong organisation is necessary for winning elections," he said. CM Patel exhorted BJP workers to work unitedly to make India the number one country. "BJP is the only party where a common party worker can become the country's PM. For us, the country always comes first. We all need to work to make our country number one," said Patel.

# Manipur Police needs assistance from Central forces: DGP

PTI ■ IMPHAL

Manipur Director General of Police Rajiv Singh on Tuesday said that the police alone cannot deal with the situation in the violence-hit state and continued assistance from central forces was required. More than 200 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Imphal Valley-based Meiteis and adjoining hills-based Kukis since May last year. The conflict took a new turn recently as militants deployed drones to launch bomb attacks on villages of the rival community. Two persons have been killed and 12 others injured in two drone and gun attacks in Sejam Chirang and nearby Koutruk in Imphal West district in the last two days. Singh, however, asserted that Manipur Police would do everything in its capability to counter the drones. Speaking to reporters after visiting Koutruk and Kadangband areas, he said, "This is a new thing and things have escalated. We are taking it very seriously." "We have spoken to NSG (National Security Guards), and more experts are coming. We have constituted a committee to critically examine the drones. We will soon search for means to deal with the drone attacks. We have some means to deal with drones and we are trying to deploy those," he said. "We are conducting operations at the place from where attacks occurred... Operations have been conducted yesterday and today and items have been seized. Further combing operations would be conducted," Singh added. On demands for the removal of central forces for their alleged inability to stem violence, the DGP said state forces alone cannot handle the situation due to manpower issues and assistance of central forces was a necessity. "The Centre is providing us with all support and they are worried over the situation. We are working together to tackle it. Right now, there is requirement for manpower and state police alone could not provide it as they are deployed in other normal law and order duties. So obviously, we need central forces," he said.

# Wild animal attacks claim 68 lives in Odisha this year, says Minister

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

At least 68 people were killed in attacks by elephants and other wild animals in Odisha during the current year, state Forest Minister Ganesh Ram Singhkhuntia told the Assembly on Tuesday. While replying to a written question of BJD legislator Arun Kumar Sahoo, the minister said besides human casualties, 1,087 houses and crops over 2315.79 acres were also damaged in incidents of the human-wildlife conflict in different forest divisions of the state during the current year. To prevent human habitations located near forest areas from elephant and other wild animal attacks, the government has been taking steps for the roll-out of an artificial intelligence (AI) supported e-surveillance project at Bharatpur area in Chandaka forest division, Hindol of Dhenkanal division and Bantala in Angul division on a pilot basis, he stated. With the help of AI, the forest



officials can monitor the movement of wild animals and accordingly, human habitations can be put on alert in advance, the minister said. A maximum of 14 people were killed in such wild animal attacks in the Dhenkanal forest division, while eight such deaths were reported from the Keonjhar forest division, the minister said. Similarly, wild animal attacks claimed six human lives in each of the Bonai and Rourkela forest divisions, five people were killed in such attacks in the Angul forest division.

The Athagarh and Baripada divisions reported four human deaths each. Ram Singhkhuntia has informed that the government has so far received 9,168 complaints seeking compensation for the loss incurred due to elephants and other wild animals. The government has sanctioned compensation of Rs 51.92 crore, of which Rs 4.19 crore has been distributed to the affected families while Rs 99.58 lakh compensation money is yet to be distributed. In another written statement to the House, the forest minister said there is a provision to provide compensation of Rs 20,000 per acre for damage to standing paddy and other cereal crops. For commercial crops, the compensation amount is Rs 25,000 per acre, he said. According to official sources, the forest department is also providing an ex-gratia of Rs 6 lakh to the next of kin of the person, who died in the wild animal attack in the state.

# Accord top priority to reprocess e-waste recycling: Minister

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Forest and Environment Minister B Eshwar Khandre said on Tuesday there is a dire need to adopt the practices of regeneration of solid waste, which is posing a grave threat to nature. Speaking at the 5th Re-Commerce Expo, being held here till September 5, he said the need of the hour is to give top priority to regenerate and reprocess e-waste, batteries, and other electronic goods. "This will not only be economically viable but also environmentally friendly," Khandre added. According to the Minister, the collapse of hills and earth sinking at Shirur in Kerala and Wayanad in Kerala were a warning for us. "We need to be vigilant and make plans to avoid such tragedies. Pollution is rampant in the atmosphere as well as in water due to increase in electronic goods, batteries as well as industrial pollution. It is our duty to protect mankind from these vagaries of nature that are



posing a grave threat to the world," Khandre added. He emphasised the need to blend the development and production process without damaging ecology and environment. "There are huge opportunities for the younger generation to work on this subject," he added. Venkatreddy D Patil, CEO of Urdhva Management, organisers of Re-Expo, said: "Our main aim is to strengthen processing for which the number of partners should increase. We need to re-process mobile, batteries and laptops and put it to use without harming the ecology and environment."

# TN will gain from Mekedatu dam: Karnataka Deputy CM

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Stating that a favourable monsoon system this time has been a solace to both Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Tuesday claimed that Tamil Nadu stood to gain from the Mekedatu dam project in his state. Referring to the copious inflows into the Cauvery river, which led to the neighbouring state release the surplus water to Tamil Nadu, he told reporters here that the Mekedatu balancing reservoir project would benefit Tamil Nadu more than Karnataka. Responding to a question from reporters on Tamil Nadu's opposition to the controversial dam project, Shivakumar, who was in the city to study Chennai's model of solid waste management, replied that "the Mekedatu balancing reservoir would benefit Tamil Nadu more". "But I don't want to discuss the Mekedatu dam issue now. Rain god has helped both the states. (I hope) Good sense will prevail upon Tamil Nadu



people...Mekedatu dam will benefit Tamil Nadu more than Karnataka," he said. Shivakumar was on a visit to Chennai with a team of over 15 officials to inspect the solid waste management and see how CNG is produced. "I am very impressed with the cleaning facility in Chennai. I congratulated the government and the entire team. They have taken a different approach. This visit was a good learning process for all of us," he told reporters after visiting the Srinivasa solid waste management unit here. In a series of posts on the social media platform 'X', he said the team visited Mahashakti Bio-Enercon's Biogas manufacturing and supply facility in Madhavaram to understand its operational model and effectiveness.

# Goa Govt to review New India Literacy Mission implementation

PTI ■ PANAJI

The Goa government has decided to review the implementation of the New India Literacy Mission (NILM) in the run-up to its ambitious target to achieve 100 per cent literacy in the state by December 19 this year, an official said. Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has directed senior panchayat and municipal officials to provide a list of illiterate people in areas under their jurisdiction or issue a certificate confirming that their ward, locality, village or city is fully literate. Sawant on Monday chaired a meeting of the National Education Policy (NEP) steering committee which discussed its implementation and the NILM, a government spokesman said. "Reviewing the (status of the implementation of) literacy mission, the chief minister instructed directors of panchayats and municipal administration to direct secretaries and chief officers to provide a list of illiterates in their respective areas or to issue a certificate confirming that the ward, locality, village, or city is literate," he said. The chief minister also reviewed the implementation of NEP in the school education system, the spokesperson said. "The Education secretary briefed the chief minister on

the current status of NEP 2020 implementation," he said, adding that the state curriculum framework for the foundational and secondary stages has been officially notified. "The curriculum for the first two foundational stages has been developed and distributed to all schools. Art and vocational education teachers have been allocated to all schools to introduce art education as part of the NEP-2020 implementation," he added. The meeting was told that 80 mathematics and science teachers had undergone training at the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru. The chief minister was told that the state curriculum development committees for the preparatory and middle stages are developing curricula for NEP implementation, starting from the next academic year. The Centrally-sponsored Scheme namely, "New India Literacy Programme" was launched for implementation during five years from the FYs 2022-23 to 2026-27 which will be implemented with Central and state funds. The scheme aims to cover a target of 5 crore non-literates in the age group of 15 years and above. Kerala is the only state in India with a 100% literacy rate.

# Andhra CM directs officials to pull up socks, ensure last mile food delivery for flood victims

PTI ■ AMARAVATI

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday directed all officials in the state to pull up their socks and work efficiently in extending relief and helping flood victims, following the unprecedented rainfall and floods, especially in Vijayawada. The chief minister said he is undertaking surprise inspections in the flood-affected areas and directly eliciting feedback from the people through the Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) mode. "People are undergoing hardships. Snakes and

scorpions are even entering upper floor residences. I am conducting IVRS and receiving information that food is not reaching some places. Rise up to the occasion and work with humanity," said Naidu, addressing a press conference at NTR District Collectorate. Noting that he was sending the messages received through IVRS directly to officials, along with the phone numbers, the CM appealed to people to pass on correct information. He said that sending real-time information would empower him to take action accordingly and observed that IAS officers have been



deployed on the ground. Further, the CM ordered officials to ensure food distribution to the last mile at any cost and said that he would take stern action in case of lapses. People have already suffered

enough for two days and there is no need for them to suffer further, he said. Observing that people were crowding relief vehicles at Ajit Singh Nagar in Vijayawada, the worst affected, Naidu directed officials to stop them

at main centres and fan out to every ward secretariat for efficient last mile distribution of food and other necessities. According to a government release, 2,684 km long roadways were damaged in the recent torrential downpours and over 1.8 lakh agricultural fields suffered crop losses, affecting farmers in 20 districts. As of Tuesday, 323 trains were cancelled in Vijayawada, 170 diverted and 12 partially cancelled. The number of flood-affected people rose to 6.4 lakh across the state and 190 relief camps were set up. As many as 44,041 people were accommodated in the relief

camps. Five choppers, two from the Navy and three from the Air Force, are dropping food items and airlifting people from marooned places. The choppers dropped 4,870 kg of food items and rescued 21 people until now, the release added. Meanwhile, several families have started temporarily vacating their homes in the Ajit Singh Nagar area since Monday in the light of waterlogging and power cuts. An Ajit Singh Nagar resident said their family waded through waist-deep waters for about two kilometres and then travelled further to reach Vijayawada railway station.

# Removal of encroachments on lakes to be priority for Govt: Telangana CM

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Tuesday said removal of encroachments on lakes and 'nalas' (drains) would be a priority for the state government in view of the damage caused by them. At a review meeting with ministers and officials at Mahabubabad district Collectorate after visiting flood-hit areas, he asked officials across the state to prepare reports on encroachments on waterbodies like lakes. "Let's take concrete measures



to remove the encroachments by following the modalities. The government would take it as a special action plan. We will take the removal of encroachments on lakes and 'nalas' (drains) as a priority," he said. He said it is an inexcusable

crime to build houses, farmhouses or sell off land by encroaching on waterbodies like lakes. Observing that such encroachments are causing bigger damage (by leading to flooding of residential localities) compared to nature's fury, he said the problem of occupying waterbodies illegally should be put to an end. The state government has set up the Hyderabad Disaster Response and Assets Protection Agency (HYDRA) to remove encroachments, he said. There would be an adverse

impact if "nature is attacked" for selfish gains, Reddy said, citing the examples of Uttarakhand or even Hyderabad. He said a special drive would be initiated against encroachments on lakes across the state even if the encroachers are public representatives or influential people. "I am giving directives to all district Collectorates in Telangana from here. If any lakes or 'nalas' (drains) are encroached in your area, you list them out. If there are any cases in courts, appoint lawyers to resolve them."

# Assam: 28 foreigners shifted to transit camp after tribunal's verdict

PTI ■ BARPETA (ASSAM)

A total of 28 people, including nine women, from Barpeta district of Assam were shifted to a transit camp in Goalpara after they were declared foreigners by a tribunal, police said on Tuesday. It was a heart-wrenching scene for the family members when their dear ones were packed in a bus at the office of the Superintendent of Police on Monday and taken to the dedicated detention centre, now called a transit camp. Barpeta Superintendent of Police Sushanta Biswa Sarma said, "These people were declared foreigners by the Foreigners Tribunal after

proper hearings. As per its order, we carried out the transfer of these foreign nationals to the camp. The Tribunals are quasi-judicial bodies that decide the citizenship status of persons living in Assam who are suspected to be foreigners. Around 100 Foreigners Tribunals functioning in Assam. According to the protocol, these people will be sent back to their country of origin after due process by the Ministry of External Affairs, provided they do not move to the Gauhati High Court. Sarma said that the group, comprising nine women and 19 men, was escorted under heavy security to the transit camp at Matia in Goalpara district.





www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

## A strategic pivot

Amid rising regional tensions, Indo-US defence ties are strengthening, marking a significant strategic shift in South Asia

India has solidified its defence partnership with the United States through two pivotal agreements, signaling a deepening American commitment to South Asia at a time when China's military influence is expanding across the region. The agreements, secured during Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's recent four-day visit to the United States, include a Security of Supply Arrangement (SOSA) and a Memorandum of Agreement on the Assignment of Liaison Officers. These developments underscore a significant shift in the dynamics of Indo-US relations, with both nations moving closer in their defence cooperation. The SOSA, a non-binding bilateral pact, is designed to prioritise support for defence-related goods and services between the two countries. This agreement is particularly crucial in addressing supply chain vulnerabilities that are critical to national security. Under the SOSA, India will receive assurances from Washington's Defence Priorities and Allocations System,



while Indian companies will provide priority support to the United States. India's inclusion in the elite group of 18 SOSA partners, which includes nations like Australia, Canada, and Britain, marks a significant step in defence cooperation.

In effect it means if either of two nations ended up in combat with an adversary, the SOSA could help accelerate the delivery of crucial weapons and materials required for defence, thereby ensuring robust supply chains in times of crisis. India and the United States have already established several key strategic agreements, including the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) signed in 2016

and real-time intelligence sharing since 2018 under the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA). These agreements, alongside the new SOSA, create a framework for expedited deliveries of contracted goods and services, potentially streamlining defence commerce between the two nations. In 2019, the signing of the Industrial Security Annex marked another significant step, allowing the sharing of classified US information with private Indian defence firms—a departure from previous restrictions. The Reciprocal Defence Procurement Agreement could further streamline defence commerce, enabling private companies in both countries to bid on each other's contracts. Indeed, a technologically advanced Indian military aligns with American interests. The recent Indo-US defence agreements mark a significant milestone in the evolving relationship between the two nations. As China's influence continues to grow across South Asia, particularly in Islamabad and the Maldives, these agreements provide a foundation for enhanced collaboration and a shared commitment to regional stability. With these developments, India and the United States are poised to further deepen their defence ties, building a partnership that could play a crucial role in shaping the future of the region.

### PICTALK



Devotees carry an idol of Lord Ganesha ahead of the Ganesh Chaturthi festival, in Mumbai

# The US endorses India-Tibet ties



ASHOK K MEHTA

The recent visit of a bipartisan delegation of U S lawmakers to New Delhi and Dharamshala marks a significant moment in the US diplomacy in the region

**A** Tibet festival started on 3 September at India International Centre New Delhi to celebrate its rich Buddhist heritage, culture and identity. The Sikyong (head) of Central Tibet Administration, Penpa Tshering, will preside over various activities to highlight Tibet's geo-strategic, spiritual and cultural importance for India.

His Holiness Dalai Lama at 89, is in a New York hospital for medical treatment but is considered in good health. US Special Coordinator on Tibet, Uzra Jeyasmet met him which elicited "immediate (solemn) protest from China". Foreign Affairs spokesperson Mao Ning said: "we don't allow Dalai Lama to engage in political activities in the US". Backchannel talks between the Dalai Lama envoy and China have been going on for an undisclosed period though Beijing does not confirm them. Talks are being pushed by the US House Resolution Resolve Tibet Act July 2024 which calls for restoration of its full autonomy. India needs to add its voice for Tibet's autonomy both internally and externally as part of a broader coalition. India's recognition of full Chinese sovereignty over Tibet was based on Beijing granting and implementing Tibet's autonomy. Instead, China has quashed Tibet's autonomy and trade treaties opening for India to take a more nuanced position.

Two issues require GoI's prompt attention: the Dalai Lama succession; and the border issue including restoration of peace and tranquillity and full disengagement in east Ladakh. The visit of a bipartisan US delegation of lawmakers to Dharamshala and Delhi and being received both by Dalai Lama and Prime Minister Narendra Modi was significant. China biter Nancy Pelosi had some unpleasant things to say about President Xi Jinping that drew Chinese ire. On the ground, the sinicisation process of Xijiang (Tibet) started in the mid-1960s. The time-tested method of injecting 7.5 mn Han Chinese into Tibet along with neutralization of Tibetan



Buddhism by deploying Chinese monks in Tibetan monasteries was designed to change the heart and soul of Tibet. Soon militarisation and infrastructure construction began which has hurt the environment. USD 5.8bn was spent on the Sichuan to Tibet railways system which is being extended to borders with India, Nepal and Bhutan. A new border law has led to the building of 628 well-off border villages close to or encroached into neighbouring countries. In 1965 Convenience Police Stations were constructed as a key security innovation: Big Brother is Watching. By 2011 Tibet Autonomous Region advertised for 2500 police stations with 458 designated for Lhasa alone. By 2016, this grid-style social management of Tibet had recruited thousands of Han Chinese and some Tibetan policemen. A Chinese Communist Party (CCP) political secretary has always kept a hawk-eye vigil over Tibet which is run by the CCP from Beijing. Internal policing has resulted in fostering a feeling of 'otherness' by the surveillance drive. There are reports that attempts are being made to recruit Tibetans into the PLA including some forcible intake. The day is not far when some Nepalese might opt to join PLA for other than the South West Theatre Command in



THE VISIT OF A BIPARTISAN US DELEGATION OF LAWMAKERS TO DHARAMSALA AND DELHI AND BEING RECEIVED BOTH BY DALAI LAMA AND PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI WAS SIGNIFICANT

Tibet. This will be the result of the ill-conceived Agniveer policy. The Chinese Renaming Campaign has resulted in what Forum for Non-Violent Alternatives (FNVA) has called "Thread of Beads: an analysis of renaming 62 locations in India's Arunachal Pradesh since 2017: China claims that 90 per cent of Zangnan (Arunachal Pradesh) is illegally occupied by India. Chief Minister Assam, Himanta Biswa Sarma, has suggested renaming 62 locations in Tibet. This is not likely to irk the Chinese. The Chinese renaming drive was done in four phases in 2017, 2021, 2023 and 2024.

It had been supplemented by salami-slicing into Nepal and Bhutan by building Xiakong villages (well-off) in contested areas to strengthen their claims to them. While Nepal and Bhutan are pretending this has not happened or happening, India is building some 600 vibrant villages for which funds have been released. Numerous encroachments have taken place in India also. The strategic importance of Tibet for India cannot be overstated. The root of the border problem and the Tibet issue is India's failure to comprehend its significance in time and act. In C Eastern Command, Lt Gen Sir Francis Tucker had foreseen in 1946 in a paper he

wrote that India must prevent China from occupying Tibet and be prepared to occupy it. This did not happen for which we are paying now. The priority for now is to coordinate with Dalai Lama to articulate his succession. The Dalai Lama has been silent on it for some time now but has spoken and written about it in the past.

The Chinese are bound to appoint their own Dalai Lama as they appointed a Panchen Lama (second to Dalai Lama) Gyaltsen Norbu. This must be preempted. The CTA is preparing a new map of Tibet with the help of cartographic experts from Princeton University in the US. The issue of the map and India announcing the contours of its Tibet policy including the border and full disengagement of PLA from its intrusions in east Ladakh have to be coordinated with CTA. A succession policy should also be outlined. With Tibetans migrating to the US and soon the majority of Tibetans residing there than in India, the Tibet issue may vanish leaving Delhi with no potential leverage against Beijing.

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff; views are personal)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### TIP OF THE ICEBERG

Madam —The Justice Hema Committee report was only the tip of the iceberg against the sexual harassment. What we need is the solution and not confrontation anymore to the ongoing unpalatable issue. The time has changed and we are in the midst of gender equality. The world has become thickly competitive and along with freedom comes the package of jealousy, comparing with each other and at the end taking the pressure of enhancing the social status which is at times caused by giving up their own personal liberty and rights. The ongoing sexual harassment is not just there in one particular industry.

It's a rapid fire spreading across industries and globally. Cinema industry is in the eyes of the public because the glamour attached to celebrities is coming to light quickly. Today our culture has changed and values eroded. The Hon'ble Supreme Court permits living together and there are couples united this way. Some relationship breaks lead to mental turmoil by physical assault. The ratio of hate, love changed overnight, ending up in a divorce. All this is happening only because of economic independence of the once a weaker sex. There's no more weaker sex as we can conclude and in many places women are the stronger sex challenges men in many fields.

Where is the actual problem then? The problem starts with the anticipation by comparison to improve upon the social status. Even the luxuries became needs from wants under the current trend. When the background to the issue is such, how can we fix men alone as the reasons for the harassment? It was surprising to observe that a very senior artist after having acted in more than 200 movies has come out with her grievances that can't be taken at face value. One thing is to be noted that when someone is looking for an opportunity they shouldn't try it out as a chance since the very word 'Chance' dilutes the talents and ends up in a compromise and thereby the merits is taking

#### Need for the caste census



In the absence of fresh data, government agencies are still formulating policies and allocating subsidies based on the data accrued from the 2011 Census. The government estimated that around 810 million people required food assistance for 5 more years. However, this estimate is based on the 2011 census. Economists pointed out that more than 100 million deserving Indians would not get the benefit of the 5-year

extension of free ration because of the government's failure to conduct the long-due population census. A government cannot function without updating necessary and detailed data on the population of the country every ten years. So, census and caste census should immediately and simultaneously be undertaken. A caste census will not add to the cost of conducting a census. A caste census can be done only by adding a question or two to the questionnaire for the census. Caste hatred and caste nepotism are like fractures in our society. After a suspected fracture, a doctor always takes decisions after doing at least an X-ray. Any action on caste reservation must similarly be taken after collecting necessary data by conducting a caste census.

Sujit De | Kolkata

the back seat.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

#### RAINS WRECK HAVOC IN TELUGU STATES

Madam — The heavy rains have wreaked havoc in both Telugu states. The way Vijayawada has been inundated leaving lakhs of people got vacated to safe places and scores of people dead is unprecedented. The state governments have geared up their relief operations. The centre should come forward with all its might to help out the states in their most trying times. The seasons in India have been acting extreme with a regularity. The hot summer with abnormal levels of temperatures is now followed by rainy season with heavy down pours. There should be proper preparedness to mitigate the fury of nature. Raising green cover and decreasing carbon print will help in long run.

DVG Sankara Rao | Vizianagaram

#### BREAK ON RELIGIOUS BREAK

Madam — While it may be true that the CM of Assam has not done justice to his

constitutional post on numerous occasions vis-a-vis the Muslims of the state, his move to put a brake on the two-hour break for Friday prayers in the state Assembly can hardly be compared with Hitler's treatment of the Jews. Hitler wanted a total extermination of the Jews and was unapologetic about targeting millions of them.

Has Sarma given a similar call to eliminate Muslims from the state of Assam? All that he has done is to put an end to a practice that allowed Muslims to avail of a two-hour break as a matter of right, in order to fulfil their religious obligations.

Imagine the chaos that would ensue if professionals of other denominations were to press for similar breaks in the course of their duties? Is there anything that is more holy and sacred and pleasing to one's Creator than the performance of prescribed duties?

Avinash Godbole | Dewas

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## Citation manipulation is undermining research integrity

As institutions chase rankings, the very foundation of scientific inquiry is at risk, calling for urgent reforms in how research quality is assessed and rewarded

The mushrooming of predatory journals, fake research publications, and manipulated citations compromises the integrity of academic research. In the latest NIRF 2024 rankings, serious concerns were raised regarding the dropping ranking of many prestigious national institutions. Many mediocre institutions climbed to a higher level than institutions of national repute. Though the purpose of accreditations and rankings is to improve the quality of each institution through a competitive spirit, one major point of concern is that many institutions climbed the ladder through a single parameter, the publication metrics. The over-emphasis on publication spoils our country's academic and research environment. Even people who don't know how to write a paper properly publish one paper per month. There was a time when a researcher used to publish one or two papers per year. Even at the international level, people have expressed reservations about citation metrics. In a recent issue of Nature (published on



20th August), a team of researchers led by Yasir Zaki explicitly shows that a citation black market is operating in our society. The citation black market is the unscrupulous act of exchanging citations to enhance research articles' perceived influence unduly. The citation black market functions through the following mechanisms,

1. **Citation Cartels:** Citation cartels are groups of researchers who agree to quote each other's work a lot, even if it has nothing to do with the current topic. These cartels can change citation metrics in a big way, giving the wrong impression of how important and influential the study is.

2. **Paid Citations:** Citations may sometimes be available for purchase by researchers or publications. This phenomenon is especially widespread

in predatory publications, which frequently give primacy to financial gain above academic honesty. To enhance their citation counts, researchers may compensate these journals to incorporate their work into other publications, therefore artificially inflating their citation metrics. The study published in the journal Nature found that the companies were charging \$300 for 50 citations and \$500 for 100 citations.

3. **Coercive Citation:** Journal editors or reviewers can also manipulate citations by pushing writers to include certain papers, usually their own, to boost the number of citations for specific journals or articles. This can make the peer review process less reliable and tilt the research towards certain people or groups. Many people have been practising this to boost their scientometrics level. The intense pressure on academics to publish frequently and in high-impact journals drives this booming citation black market. The obsession with the impact factor as a factor of academic or scientific excel-

lence has incentivized citation manipulation. The study showed that Google Scholar (and ResearchGate), is manipulable. Despite the conspicuous vulnerabilities, these are used to judge the quality of a researcher. The 'citation black market' has several detrimental effects on the scientific community and society. The government should reconsider its reliance on citation-based metrics, such as the impact factor, as the primary indicators of research quality.

Alternative metrics, such as article-level, open peer reviews, and qualitative research impact assessments, should be explored and adopted. Metrics evaluating the social impact of research—that of policy, industry, or public understanding—should also be considered. This strategy can inspire effort in addressing practical problems and acknowledges the broader benefits of research to society.

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



BIJU DHARMAPALAN





## FIRST COLUMN

### GENERATION Z'S FASHION DILEMMA

Can Gen Z find a sustainable balance between personal style and financial responsibility?



SHAINY SHARMA

Fashion has always been a form of self-expression and identity, but for Millennials or Generation Z (Gen Z); Generation Alpha (Gen Alpha) and many more, it has taken on new dimensions. The generation, growing up in the digital age, is deeply influenced by social media, fast fashion and the need for constant reinvention. Moreover, the spending habits of Gen Z on fashion are notable not just for the frequency of purchases but also for the psychological and financial implications. While many in this generation are still students or early in their careers, they tend to spend a substantial portion of their disposable income on clothing and accessories. The constant bombardment of new trends and must-have items can create a sense of urgency and FOMO, leading to impulsive purchases, driven by the fear of missing out on trends or sales, which is a common behaviour among the current generation. This generation is also more likely to engage in buy now, pay later schemes, which can further lead to debt accumulation if not managed carefully. The desire to maintain a certain image can result in financial strain, as spending on fashion takes precedence over saving for the future. Algorithms on social media platforms are designed to show users content that aligns with their interests, including fashion. This means that as users scroll, they are often presented with targeted ads and influencer promotions that encourage them to buy more, even if they don't need anything. Social media is a major driver of contemporary fashion, influ-



encing how trends are created, spread and consumed. While it has democratized fashion, giving individuals more influence and visibility at the same time it has also contributed to the challenges of fast fashion, overconsumption and sustainability issues. Thus, while social media is not solely responsible for fashion, it is undoubtedly one of the most powerful forces shaping the industry today. As a result, fashion has become both a passion and a source of significant expenditure for the generation, driving new consumer behaviours and reshaping the fashion industry. Fashion is not just about clothing rather it is a vital tool for expressing individuality and belonging. In a world where social media plays a dominant role, the clothes one wears are often seen as an extension of one's brand. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok and Pinterest allow users to curate and showcase their style to a global audience, reinforcing the importance of fashion as a form of self-expression. The desire to create a unique and ever-evolving identity pushes this generation to frequently update their wardrobes. Mindless scrolling for fashion is a double-edged sword. While it provides entertainment and easy access to the latest trends, it can lead to impulsive buying, overconsumption and a detachment from sustainable and ethical practices. Being mindful of how much time is spent on these platforms and making conscious decisions about purchases can help mitigate these effects. The need to stand out while simultaneously fitting in with peer groups creates a paradoxical demand for both originality and conformity, leading to increased spending on fashion items. Fast fashion brands, have capitalized on this behaviour by offering affordable, trendy clothing that changes frequently. These brands release new collections at a rapid pace, allowing consumers of every generation to keep up with the latest styles without breaking the bank—at least in the short term. However, the low prices and frequent purchases add up, leading to significant overall spending. As this generation continues to mature, it will be interesting to see how their fashion consumption evolves and whether a balance can be struck between the desire for personal style and the need for ethical, sustainable practices. (The writer is a faculty at Art of Living, views expressed are personal)

# UPA: Addressing employee aspirations



B K SINGH

Unified Pension Scheme promises a guaranteed pension for long-serving employees, but at a significant fiscal cost to the exchequer



The old pension scheme (OPS) has been a big burden on the union and states' budget of the country. In one of the economic reforms, it was shelved for employees joining government services in 2004 and later. The new scheme was called the National Pension Scheme (NPS), where the employee had to contribute 10% of the salary during the entire period of service. Initially, the government too was to make a matching contribution of 10%, which was later increased to 14%. The corpus generated for pension this way was invested in government securities, shares and corporate bonds, which had daily net asset value like mutual funds. At the time of retirement, at least 40% of the corpus is to be used for purchasing an annuity. The NPS scheme does not guarantee a monthly pension equivalent to 50% of the last salary drawn.

This led to resentment among the government employees and opposition parties especially Congress saw an opportunity to keep the BJP-led central government in the dock. Among several freebies, Congress also promised in the election manifesto to revert to OPS in states they came to power. Montek Singh Ahluwalia has gone on record to bring home the point that the economy of the country will be ruined if OPS is revived for employees who joined service in and after 2004. Many experts have also concurred with the views. Congress won the Himachal Pradesh Assembly election on the promise to revert to OPS but did not implement it. Subsequently in the Telangana election and also in the Lok Sabha 2024 election, the revival of OPS was not again brought up in the manifesto. BJP having disappointed with the Lok Sabha results in Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh had to make a tightrope walk and find a middle ground between OPS and NPS. The central government now proposes a United Pension Scheme (UPS) for employees whose service lasts for 25 years



THE NEW SCHEME WAS CALLED THE NATIONAL PENSION SCHEME (NPS), WHERE THE EMPLOYEE HAD TO CONTRIBUTE 10% OF THE SALARY DURING THE ENTIRE PERIOD OF SERVICE. INITIALLY, THE GOVERNMENT TOO WAS TO MAKE A MATCHING CONTRIBUTION OF 10%, WHICH WAS LATER INCREASED TO 14%

or more to get a pension of 50% of the average of the preceding twelve months' salary before the super annulation. The pension amount will be inflation-adjusted in dearness allowance twice a year. It has also a provision for a 60% family pension, for all diseased employees. The scheme does not benefit those who served for less than ten years. However, a monthly pension of Rs 10,000 has been guaranteed for employees who retired after serving for at least ten years. An additional sweetener has also been brought in the provision for the payment of a lump sum amount linking it with the duration of service in the government. The scheme will come into effect from 1st April 2025 and will benefit 23 lakh employees of the central Government if they opt for it. Further, if all states also opt for the scheme, 90 lakh employees will be benefited in the country. The Maharashtra government, where the Assembly election is due shortly, has already opted for the scheme. UPS is also a contributory scheme like NPS, where employees' contributions remain unchanged at 10% and the government matching contribution is increased from 14% to 18.5%. If the monthly salary of the employee is Rs 50,000, the annual increase in the corpus is 3%, equivalent to a compound annual growth of 8%. SBI, LIC and UTI ate three managers of corpus for employees' pensions. SBI offers 9.75% and LIC 9.56% interest on the fund. Currently, in NPS, government employee has three options for investment and 95% of subscribers allow 65% investment in government securities, 15% in equities and the remaining 20% in corporate debt.

Since the corpus is not large enough to earn 50% of the average of the last twelve months' salary, the government's matching contribution has been increased from 14% to 18.5%. Cabinet Secretary TV Somanathan on UPS said, "definitely fiscally more prudent." "It remains within the same architecture of contributory funded scheme. This is the critical difference. The OPS is unfunded, non-contributory scheme, this is funded, contributory scheme. The only difference in the changes made is to give an assurance and not leave things to the vagaries of market forces. But otherwise the structure of UPS has best elements of both (OPS and NPS)", he said. Economists think that UPS balances the fiscal cost and the aspiration of the employee. The increased cost of living will be taken care of because the real pension would not change as it is indexed to inflation. In NPS, if inflation goes up real pension comes down. Nevertheless, the scheme would put an extra burden of Rs 6250 crores on the government in the first year. This has been done to satisfy 23 lakh beneficiaries, who are vocal political constituencies and no political party would easily ignore their demand. It is expected that most states would adopt UPS, without bothering for additional financial burden. With the announcement of UPS, opposition parties are stepping up their demand for restoration of OPS. Economists have been consistently warning against the restoration; it has the potential to make the growth sluggish and hamper the progress of the nation. It also impacts the lives of the poor. Economic Advisory

Council to the Prime Minister has suggested that reverting to OPS will be catastrophic for poor populations and would crowd out private investments in states that revert to it. Reserve Bank of India in January 2023 had flagged concerns about the government finances for states opting to revert to OPS last year. RBI had already cautioned that the move would lead to accumulation of liabilities, which can become a major risk in future. RBI had also said that states were expected to incur a 16% rise in pension expenditure at Rs 4,63,436 Crores as against Rs 3,99, 813 crores in the previous year. Pension outgo under NPS is Rs 4 lakh crores, which would be Rs 17 lakh crores if OPS is reverted. At present Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Punjab have reverted to OPS. Since then BJP has come back to power in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh and it is hoped that both governments will continue with NPS and opt for UPS with effect from 1st April 2025. Punjab is governed by AAP and their main agenda is to remain in power and not to be concerned about the state's finances. UPS itself is causing a financial burden on the Central government of Rs 6250 crores in the first year. If all the states opt for it, the total economic burden on central and all state governments would be of the order of Rs 25,000 crores in the first year. Let there be no politics and political parties be conscious of maintaining fiscal discipline. (The writer is a retired Principal Chief Conservator of Forests -Head of Forest Force- Karnataka; views are personal)

# Policy rollbacks: The unseen cost of ignoring stakeholder consultation

There have been a number of high-profile policy rollbacks, underscoring the need for consultation and consensus-building before implementing major reforms

Since the Modi Government 1.0, India has witnessed a series of high-profile policy rollbacks that highlight a critical issue in governance: the need for broader consultation and consensus-building before introducing significant reforms. The latest example is the rollback of the lateral entry scheme, which sought to bring professionals from outside the traditional civil services into government roles. While the merits and demerits of such a policy can be debated, the rapid reversal following its announcement points to a deeper, more systemic issue—the lack of comprehensive stakeholder engagement. This pattern is not new. The government's



JAIDEEP VAIDEESWAR

attempts to implement sweeping reforms have repeatedly stumbled due to insufficient consultation. The Land Acquisition Bill, the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) paired with the National Register of Citizens (NRC), and the Farm Laws all serve as prime examples. In each case, the policies were introduced with minimal input from those most affected—be it farmers, minority

communities, or state governments. The predictable outcome has been an intense public backlash, forcing the government to either backpedal or face prolonged unrest. The trend is concerning. Policymaking in a diverse democracy like India requires not only a vision but also the patience to engage with a wide range of stakeholders. This includes not just the obvious beneficiaries or those directly affected but also civil society, industry experts, and regional representatives. The lack of such engagement has led to a growing distrust between the government and the public, where every new announcement is met with suspicion rather than optimism. Moreover, the need for broader consultation

becomes even more pressing when considering the long-term impact of these policies. Short-term political gains or expedient decision-making may lead to swift policy announcements, but the absence of robust dialogue with stakeholders can result in policies that are unsustainable or unimplementable in the long run. Take, for instance, the recent discussion in the media on potential additional restrictions on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the tobacco sector. While the government may have had reasons for this move, the absence of dialogue with stakeholders—particularly tobacco farmers—has exacerbated concerns. Tobacco provides livelihood



to 36 million people including 6 million farmers and 20 million farm labour engaged in tobacco farming. Since the huge scale of investment of \$4 trillion that the finance minister pointed to at the recent Voice of Global South Summit, it is clear that the FDI is the only way to protect farmers. Similarly, both the ill-conceived Tax Collection at Source (TCS) on foreign travel and now the introduction of the new Tax Clearance

Certificate requirement for Indians travelling abroad are poorly thought through and have virtually no machinery to provide certificates on an emergency basis. The repeated lack of consensus-building not only undermines the effectiveness of policies but also erodes public trust in governance. It creates an environment where even well-intentioned reforms are viewed with scepticism, and the potential benefits are overshadowed by the immediate backlash. This is particularly damaging in a country as diverse as India, where the success of any policy hinges on its acceptance across different regions, communities, and economic strata. Furthermore, these repeated rollbacks damage India's

international reputation, as global investors and partners begin to view the country as an uncertain policy environment. This uncertainty not only affects domestic stakeholders but also risks deterring foreign investment, which is crucial for driving economic growth and development in a rapidly globalizing world. Moving forward, the government must adopt a more inclusive approach to policymaking. This means going beyond the corridors of power in New Delhi and engaging with stakeholders at the grassroots level. It means recognizing that the voices of citizens, small business owners, and regional leaders, are not just peripheral—they are central to the success of any

reform. It also means being open to feedback and willing to make adjustments before policies are finalized, rather than being forced into a retreat after the fact. India's growth story is too important to be derailed by avoidable missteps in policy formulation. By fostering a culture of consultation and consensus, the government can ensure that its reforms not only achieve their intended goals but also enjoy the support and trust of the people. The lesson from recent rollbacks is clear: no matter how well-conceived a policy may be, it cannot succeed without the buy-in of those it is meant to serve. (The writer is a former consultant to MyGov. Views expressed are personal)



# Putin challenges arrest warrant during Mongolia visit

## 11 killed, 13 injured in China bus crash

AP ■ ULAANBAATAR

Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Mongolia on Tuesday with no sign that the host country would bow to calls to arrest him on an international warrant for alleged war crimes stemming from the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The trip is Putin's first to a member country of the International Criminal Court since it issued the warrant about 18 months ago. Ahead of his visit, Ukraine called on Mongolia to hand Putin over to the court in The Hague, and the European Union expressed concern that Mongolia might not execute the warrant.

A spokesperson for Putin said last week that the Kremlin wasn't worried.

The warrant puts the Mongolian government in a difficult position. After decades under communism with close ties to the Soviet Union, it transitioned to democracy in the 1990s and has built relations with the United States, Japan and other new partners. But it remains economically dependent on its two much larger and more powerful neighbours, Russia and China. Russia supplies the landlocked country with most of its fuel and a sizeable



Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, walks with Mongolian President Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh, left, during welcoming ceremony at Sukhbaatar Square in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, Tuesday. AP/PTI

amount of its electricity. The ICC has accused Putin of being responsible for the abductions of children from Ukraine, where the fighting has raged for 2½ years. Member countries are required by the court's founding treaty, the Rome Statute, to detain suspects if an

arrest warrant has been issued, but Mongolia needs to maintain good relations with Russia and the court lacks a mechanism to enforce its warrants. The Russian leader was welcomed in the main square in Ulaanbaatar, the capital, by an honour guard dressed in

vivid red and blue uniforms styled on those of the personal guard of 13th century ruler Genghis Khan, the founder of the Mongol Empire. He and Mongolian President Khurelsukh Ukhnaa walked up the red-carpeted steps of the Government Palace and bowed

before a statue of Genghis Khan before entering the building for their meetings.

A small group of protesters who tried to unfurl a Ukrainian flag before the welcome ceremony were taken away by police.

The two governments signed agreements for a feasibility study and the design of an upgrade to a power plant in Ulaanbaatar and to ensure the continuous supply of aviation fuel to Mongolia. Putin also outlined plans to develop the rail system between the two countries. He invited the Mongolian president to attend a summit of the BRICS nations — a group that includes Russia and China among others — in the Russian city of Kazan in late October. Khurelsukh accepted, according to Russian state news agency RIA Novosti. On Monday, the EU expressed concern that the ICC warrant might not be executed and said it had shared its concern with Mongolian authorities.

"Mongolia, like all other countries, has the right to develop its international ties according to its own interests," European Commission spokeswoman Nabila Massrali said. But she added, "Mongolia is a state party to the Rome Statute of the ICC since 2002, with the

legal obligations that it entails." More than 50 Russians outside the country have signed an open letter urging the government of Mongolia to "immediately detain Vladimir Putin upon his arrival".

The signers include Vladimir Kara-Murza, who was freed from a Russian prison in August in the biggest East-West prisoner swap since the Cold War. Dmitry Medvedev, the deputy secretary of Russia's Security Council, denounced the warrant against Putin as "illegal" in an online statement Tuesday and those who would try to carry it out as "madmen". Putin, on his first visit to Mongolia in five years, will join a ceremony to mark the 85th anniversary of a joint Soviet and Mongolian victory over Japan's army that controlled Manchuria in northeast China. Thousands of soldiers on both sides died in 1939 in months of fighting over the border's location between Manchuria and Mongolia.

"I am very delighted about Putin's visit to Mongolia," said Yansanjav Demdendorj, a retired economist, citing Russia's role against Japan. "If we think of the ... battle, it's Russians who helped free Mongolia." Putin has made a series of overseas trips in recent

months to try to counter the international isolation he faces over the invasion of Ukraine. He visited China in May, made a trip to North Korea and Vietnam in June and went to Kazakhstan in July for a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. But Kenneth Roth, the former longtime director of Human Rights Watch, described Putin's trip to Mongolia as "a sign of weakness", posting on X that the Russian leader "could manage a trip only to a country with a tiny population of 3.4 million that lives in Russia's shadow".

Last year, Putin joined a meeting in Johannesburg by video link after the South African government lobbied against him showing up for the BRICS summit. South Africa, an ICC member, was condemned by activists and its main opposition party in 2015 when it didn't arrest then-Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir during a visit. Enkhgerel Seded, who studies at a university in Moscow, said that historically, countries with friendly relations don't arrest heads-of-state on official visits. "Our country has obligations toward the international community," she said.

Beijing (PTI): At least 11 persons were killed and 13 injured when a bus rrammed into a crowd of students at the gate of a middle school in east China's Shandong province on Tuesday, police said. A rental bus hired for transporting students "lost control" and crashed into pedestrians in Taian city around 7.30 a.m., the police said. Among 13 injured, at least one person remains in critical condition while others are stable, the police said. The bus driver has been detained and an investigation has been initiated into the cause of the accident, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. It is not clear if the incident is an accident or an intentional attack on children. Attacks on kindergarten schools by "disgruntled elements" are common in China. In June, a man launched an attack at a school bus stop in Jiangsu province, killing one person and injuring two others. In March, a man in Dezhou city of Shandong province drove into a crowd outside a local junior school, killing two pedestrians and severely injuring six people.

# 129 people killed in Congo prison jailbreak attempt

AP ■ KINSHASA

An attempted jailbreak in Congo's main prison left 129 people dead, including some who were shot and others who died in a stampede at the overcrowded facility, authorities said Tuesday. Activists alleged the death toll was higher but did not provide a figure.

A provisional assessment showed that 24 inmates were fatally shot by "warning" shots fired by guards as they tried to escape from the Makala Central Prison in the capital of Kinshasa early on Monday, Congolese Interior Minister Jacquemin Shabani said on the social platform X.

"There are also 59 injured people taken into care by the government, as well as some cases of women raped," he said, adding that order has now been restored at the prison, part of which was burned in the attempted jailbreak. He did not elaborate on the incidents of rape. The prison holds both male and female inmates. It was not known if all 129 fatalities were inmates. Also, it wasn't immediately clear how the stampede occurred as details of the jailbreak remained sparse. Makala, Congo's largest penitentiary with a capacity for 1,500 people, holds over 12,000 inmates, most of whom are awaiting trial, Amnesty International said in its latest country report.

The facility has recorded previous jailbreaks, including in 2017 when members of a religious sect stormed the prison and freed dozens of inmates. Gunfire inside the prison started around midnight on Sunday and lasted into Monday morning, local residents in the area said. "Shots were ringing out everywhere," said Stephane Matondo, who lives nearby, adding that military vehicles arrived shortly after and that the main road to the prison was blocked.

Videos posted online show bodies lying on the ground inside the prison, many of them with visible injuries. Another video shows inmates carrying bodies that appeared to be lifeless onto a vehicle.

There were no signs of forced entry into the prison, which is located in the city center, 5 kilometers from the presidential palace.

The attempted escape was plotted from inside the prison by inmates in one of the wings, Mbemba Kabuya, the deputy justice minister, told the local Top Congo FM radio.

In the hours following the attack, officials visited the prison as authorities convened a panel to investigate the incident. Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi, who is in China on an official visit, has not publicly commented on the incident.

Calling for an independent investigation, rights groups and the opposition accused the government of using excessive force and covering up the true death toll. An earlier statement from a senior government official on Monday said that only two people died.

Martin Fayulu, an opposition leader, compared the death toll to "summary executions" and said it was an "unacceptable crime that cannot go unpunished."

Makala — among other prisons in Congo — is so overcrowded that inmates often starve to death, activists say. Scores of prisoners have been released in recent months as part of efforts to reduce the number of inmates. Justice Minister Constant Mutamba called the attempted jailbreak a "premeditated act of sabotage" and promised a "stern response." His deputy, Samuel Mbemba Kabuya, blamed the country's magistrates and judges for the overcrowding in prisons, saying people are quickly jailed at the early stage of their trials.

# Yemen Houthi rebels target oil tanker in Red Sea

Dubai (AP): An attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels targeted a Panama-flagged oil tanker in the Red Sea on Monday, authorities said, as a nearby Saudi-flagged tanker ship also allegedly came under fire from the group. The attacks are believed to be the latest in the Iranian-backed rebels' campaign that has disrupted the USD 1 trillion in goods that pass through the Red Sea each year over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip and has halted some aid shipments to conflict-ravaged Sudan and Yemen.

The new attacks on oil tankers also came amid efforts to salvage the still-burning Sounion oil tanker earlier hit by the Houthis, seeking to head off the potential ecological disaster posed by its cargo of 1 million barrels of crude oil. In Monday's first assault, two ballistic missiles hit the oil tanker Blue Lagoon I and a third exploded near the ship, the multinational Joint Maritime Information Centre overseen by the US Navy said. "All crew on board are safe (no injury reported)," the centre said. "The vessel sustained minimal damage but does not require assistance."

Houthi military spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree claimed responsibility for the attack on the Blue Lagoon I late Monday night. The Blue Lagoon I is travelling south through the Red Sea to an unlisted destination. The vessel was coming from Russia's port of Ust-Luga on the Baltic Sea and had been broadcasting that it had Russian-origin cargo on board. In recent months, the Blue Lagoon I travelled to India, which gets more than 40 per cent of its oil imports from Russia despite Moscow's ongoing war on Ukraine and the international sanctions it faces over it. The Greek-based firm operating the ship could not be reached. The Joint Maritime Information Centre said it assessed that the ship "was targeted due to other vessels within its company structure making recent port calls in Israel."

# Suspect arrested for alleged Mossad money transfer

Ankara (Turkiye) (AP): Turkish police have arrested a suspect believed to have been transferring money to operatives from Israel's Mossad intelligence agency in Turkiye, the state-run news agency reported on Tuesday.

The suspect, identified as Liridon Rexhepi from Kosovo, entered Turkiye on August 25, and was detained last Friday and formally arrested on Tuesday, the Anadolu Agency said. The report said he had confessed during interrogation that he conducted the money transfers.

Since January, Turkish authorities have detained dozens of people, among them private investigators, on charges of collecting data on individuals, mostly Palestinians residing in Turkiye, for the Israeli intelligence.

Israel has not commented on the arrests in Turkiye.

Since the start of the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been one of the strongest critics of Israel's military actions there and has praised Palestinian Hamas militants as a liberation group.

In May, Turkiye halted all trade with Israel and has also applied to participate in a genocide case against Israel at an international court.

# Could mass protests in Israel push Netanyahu towards ceasefire deal?

Tel Aviv (AP): Israelis were plunged into grief and anger this weekend after the military said six hostages were killed by their captors in Gaza just as troops were closing in on their location. The rage sparked massive protests and a general strike — the most intense domestic pressure on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu since the start of the war nearly 11 months ago. Many Israelis blame Netanyahu for the mounting number of dead hostages and are calling for a cease-fire agreement to free the remaining roughly 100 captives — even if that means ending the conflict. Sunday's demonstrations were the largest show of support for a hostage deal since October 7, when Hamas-led militants stormed into Israel and kidnapped 250 people.

But Netanyahu has faced fierce pressure to reach a cease-fire agreement before, from key governing partners to top security officials and even Israel's most important international ally, the US. Yet a deal to wind down the war in Gaza remains



Palestinian activist Khairi Hanoon waves the Palestinian flag as a convoy of Israeli military armored vehicles drives by during an army raid in Tulkarem, West Bank, on Tuesday. AP/PTI

elusive. Throughout the war, critics have claimed Netanyahu has put his political survival above all else, including the fate of the hostages. His rule relies on support from two ultranationalist parties that were once at the fringes of Israeli politics but

now hold key positions in government.

Headed by Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, they oppose any deal that ends the war or sets free Palestinian prisoners convicted of killing Israelis.

They have vowed to topple the government should Netanyahu agree to a cease-fire — a step that would trigger elections that could remove Netanyahu from office. "What he cares about is his political survival," said Reuven Hazan, a political scientist at Jerusalem's Hebrew University. "His political survival with Ben-Gvir and Smotrich doesn't allow him to end the war and bring back the hostages." Netanyahu blames Hamas for the lack of a deal. Looming over the prime minister is also his ongoing trial on corruption charges. If Netanyahu is voted out of power, he will lose his platform to rail against the judicial system, which he accuses of being biased. He also wouldn't be able to move ahead with his government's planned changes to the legal system that critics say could affect the trial and help him avoid a conviction. Netanyahu says he has the country's best interests in mind and insists that the military operation in Gaza is the best way to bring about the hostages' freedom.

# China-linked network mimics Americans to influence US politics

Washington (AP): When he first emerged on social media, the user known as Harlan claimed to be a New Yorker and an Army veteran who supported Donald Trump for president. Harlan said he was 29, and his profile picture showed a smiling, handsome young man. A few months later, Harlan underwent a transformation. Now, he claimed to be 31 and from Florida.

New research into Chinese disinformation networks targeting American voters shows Harlan's claims were as fictitious as his profile picture, which analysts think was created using artificial intelligence.

As voters prepare to cast their ballots this fall, China has been making its own plans, cultivating networks of fake social media users designed to mimic Americans. Whoever or wherever he really is, Harlan is a small part of a larger effort by US adversaries to use social media to influence and upend America's political debate.

The account was traced back to Spamouflage, a Chinese disinformation group, by analysts at Graphika, a New York-based firm that tracks online networks. Known to online researchers for several years, Spamouflage earned its moniker through its habit of spreading large amounts of seemingly unrelated content alongside disinformation.

"One of the world's largest covert online influence operations — an operation run by Chinese state actors — has become more aggressive in its efforts to infiltrate

and to sway US political conversations ahead of the election," Jack Stubbs, Graphika's chief intelligence officer, told The Associated Press. Intelligence and national security officials have said that Russia, China and Iran have all mounted online influence operations targeting US voters ahead of the November election. Russia remains the top threat, intelligence officials say, even as Iran has become more aggressive in recent months, covertly supporting US protests against the war in Gaza and attempting to hack into the email systems of the two presidential candidates.

China, however, has taken a more cautious, nuanced approach. Beijing sees little advantage in supporting one presi-

dential candidate over the other, intelligence analysts say. Instead, China's disinformation efforts focus on campaign issues particularly important to Beijing — such as American policy toward Taiwan — while seeking to undermine confidence in elections, voting and the US in general. Officials have said it's a longer-term effort that will continue well past Election Day as China and other authoritarian nations try to use the internet to erode support for democracy. A message left with the Chinese Embassy in Washington was not immediately returned. Compared with armed conflict or economic sanctions, online influence operations can be a low-cost, low-risk means of flexing geopolitical power.

# Fierce storm blows out of northern Philippines after leaving 14 dead

AP ■ MANILA

A fierce storm was blowing out of the northern Philippines Tuesday after leaving at least 14 people dead in landslides, floods and swollen rivers, disaster-response officials said. Tropical Storm Yagi swept past Paoy town in Ilocos Norte province into the South China Sea with sustained winds of up to 75 kilometers (47 miles) per hour and gusts of up to 125 kph (78 mph), according to the weather bureau.

It was forecast to strengthen into a typhoon as it barrels north-westward over the sea toward southern China.

Storm warnings remained in most northern Philippine provinces, where residents were warned of the lingering danger



Volunteers and rescuers pull a rope to move debris during search and rescue operations for missing residents after a landslide caused by Tropical Storm Yagi, locally called Enteng, hit their village at San Luis, Antipolo city, Rizal province, Philippines on Tuesday. AP/PTI

of landslides in rain-soaked mountain villages and floodings in the farming lowlands of

Luzon, the country's most populous region. Locally called Enteng, Yagi

enhanced seasonal monsoon rains and unleashed downpours across Luzon, including in the densely populated capital region, metropolitan Manila, where classes and government work remained suspended Tuesday.

At least 14 people died in landslides, floods and swollen rivers in northern and central provinces, including in Antipolo, a popular Roman Catholic pilgrimage city and tourism destination west of Manila where at least three residents, including a pregnant woman, died in a hillside landslide that buried shanties and four others drowned in creeks and rivers, Antipolo's disaster mitigation officer Enrillito Bernardo Jr. told The Associated Press by telephone.

# Venezuelan judge issues arrest warrant for opposition's former presidential candidate

Caracas (AP): A Venezuelan judge on Monday issued an arrest warrant for the opposition's former presidential candidate Edmundo González as part of a criminal investigation into the results of a disputed election.

The warrant was issued at the request of authorities who accuse González, a former diplomat, of various crimes including conspiracy, falsifying documents and usurpation of powers. The warrant comes just over a month after election officials declared President Nicolás Maduro the winner of an election that his opponents say he lost.

Authorities sought the warrant after González failed to appear three times to answer questions from prosecutors in a criminal investigation stemming from the disputed elec-

tion results. Ruling party-loyal electoral authorities declared Maduro the victor of the July 28 election, hours after polls closed. They did not show any detailed results to back up their claim as they had offered in previous presidential elections.

The lack of transparency has drawn international condemnation against Maduro and his allies.

The opposition, however, managed to obtain more than 80% of vote tally sheets, which are printed by every electronic voting machine, and said they show Maduro lost by a wide margin against González. González was summoned to the prosecutor's office as recently as Friday. Attorney General Tarek William Saab opened the investigation against González after he and

opposition leader María Corina Machado revealed what they said were the results shown in the tally sheets and published them online.

Maduro's ruling party and the National Electoral Council have refused to publish their copies of tally sheets that the electronic voting machines printed after polls closed.

Instead, as international pressure mounts to release a breakdown of results, Maduro asked the country's high court to audit the electoral process. The Supreme Tribunal of Justice, stacked with Maduro loyalists, concluded on Aug. 22 that the vote counts published by the opposition were false and certified Maduro's victory. González, 75, has not made any public appearances since the day after the election. His campaign did not immediately

respond to a request for comment from The Associated Press.

González has questioned the prosecutors' actions for lack of due process guarantees and accused Saab, a longtime Maduro ally, of being a "political accuser" who "condemns in advance." He rejected the interview summons arguing, among other issues, that they did not specify the condition under which he was expected to appear.

"They have lost all sense of reality," Machado, referring to Maduro's government, wrote on X after the attorney general's office published the warrant request on Instagram. "By threatening the President Elect, they only manage to unite us more and increase the support of Venezuelans and the world for Edmundo González."



# Russian missile strike kills 41, wounds 180 in Poltava city

**AP ■ KYIV**  
Two Russian ballistic missiles struck an educational facility and nearby hospital in a central-eastern region of Ukraine, killing at least 41 people and wounding 180 others, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Tuesday.  
The strike occurred in the city of Poltava, the capital of the region of the same name, officials said. Poltava is located about 110 kilometres (70 miles) from the border with Russia and about 350 kilometres (200 miles) southeast of Kyiv.  
The strike appeared to be one of the deadliest carried out by Russian forces since the war began more than 900 days ago on February 24, 2022.



“One of the buildings of the Institute of Communications was partially destroyed. People found themselves under the rubble. Many were saved,” Zelenskyy said in a video posted on his Telegram channel. “All necessary services are involved in the rescue operation,” he added. He said he had ordered “a full and prompt investigation” into what happened. Zelenskyy didn’t provide any further details. The missiles hit shortly after the air raid alert sounded, when many people were on their way to a bomb shelter, Ukraine’s Defence Ministry said, describing the strike as “barbaric.”  
Rescue crews and medics saved 25 people, 11 of them dug out from the rubble, a Defence Ministry statement said.

# Senior Balochistan leader resigns

**PTI ■ ISLAMABAD**  
Pakistan’s veteran politician and Balochistan National Party-Mengal chief Sardar Akhtar Mengal Tuesday resigned from Parliament, complaining that the restive province has consistently been marginalised and ignored by the House. The 61-year-old leader was elected as a member of the National Assembly in the February 8 general elections from his native Khuzdar area. His resignation - which awaits acceptance - comes amid heightened security tensions in Balochistan after recent attacks and increased protests over the past months against enforced disappearances. Citing frustration over the lack of interest in Balochistan’s issues, Mengal announced his resignation during a press briefing outside the Parliament House. “Today, I had decided to speak in the National Assembly about



Balochistan’s problems but there is no interest in the restive province’s matters,” Mengal said. He expressed deep concern over the situation in his home province, saying, “Parliamentarians themselves said that Balochistan is slipping from our hands.” “I say Balochistan has not just slipped but it’s already gone. Many lives have been lost in

Balochistan. Everyone should have come together on this issue,” he said. Mengal also criticised the lack of an open dialogue on the troubled province. “Whenever this issue is brought up, it’s blacked out. If you disagree with what I say, listen patiently. If you still find my words wrong, I accept any punishment,” he urged. “Even if you want to encounter

or kill me outside Parliament, go ahead, but at least listen. We have no one, and no one listens to us,” he said. More than 50 people, including over 10 security personnel, were killed on August 26 in one of the worst days of violence in Balochistan. Balochistan, bordering Iran and Afghanistan, is home to a long-running violent insurgency. The province faces a double threat by the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and Baloch militants. Baloch insurgent groups have previously carried out several attacks targeting the USD 60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects. The separatist Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) is opposed to China’s investments in Balochistan and accuses China and Pakistan of exploitation of the resource-rich province, a charge rejected by the authorities.

# Kishida to visit S Korea for summit on improving ties

**Seoul (AP):** Japan’s prime minister will arrive on Friday in South Korea for what will likely be the last summit between the two leaders, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol’s office said on Tuesday. It said outgoing Prime Minister Fumio Kishida’s two-day visit was arranged after he “actively expressed hope” to end his term on a high note in bilateral relations. In what would be their 12th summit talks, the leaders will discuss further developing two-way ties and strengthening the countries’ cooperation in regional and global issues, the office said. A series of local election losses earlier in the year sparked calls for change within Japan’s governing party, which was also dealing with a fundraising scandal. Kishida announced in August that he’ll step down after the Liberal Democratic Party picks a new leader on September 27. “Prime Minister Kishida is expected to continue to provide constructive advice to his successor on foreign policies and the future development of South Korea-Japan relations based on his experience,” Yoon’s office said in a statement.

# Pak’s veteran politician to hold talks with army to end political stalemate

**PTI ■ ISLAMABAD**  
Pakistan’s veteran politician Mehmood Khan Achakzai has stunned his foes and friends alike by saying that he is ready to hold talks with the powerful military establishment to end the current political stalemate in the country. Achakzai, the president of the Pakhtun-khwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP), made the announcement on Monday on the floor of the National Assembly. “I will hold negotiations. I will talk to every institution. I will also talk to the establishment,” Achakzai said, adding that he would like to give them a passage for honourable retreat.  
Achakzai’s statement came as Defence Minister Khawaja Asif during a heated debate in the parliament spoke about Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party’s (PTI) effort to hold talks with the establishment,

and asked if the Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) leader was ready to have a dialogue with the army. Asif hoped the ethnic Pashtun politician would reply negatively due to his lifelong opposition to the role of the army in politics. Achakzai, appointed as leader of the recently created opposition alliance Tehreek-e-Insaf party (TTAP), has been mandated by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party to hold talks with the powerful military. Jailed former prime minister Imran Khan’s PTI dominates the TTAP, the alliance for the protection of the constitution of Pakistan. The PTI opposes talks with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif-led government but is keen upon holding a dialogue with the army to end its political plight. Khan, who on Monday said he was ready to hold talks with the army, had earlier mandated Achakzai to hold talks with anyone. “We

will tell the establishment that you are our establishment. You are dear to us. You are our army, our institution. Please be kind to us and [it’s] enough. Sit with us,” Achakzai said. The supremacy of the Constitution is the only solution and this whole house has consensus on this, the grand-old politician said, adding that even Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) chief Nawaz Sharif and President Asif Zardari agree on this. Achakzai further said the politicians the army and everyone was responsible for the present situation facing the country and that the time had come to move forward. “Come, sit together, including the Chief of Army Staff. We should sit together to find the solution to the prevailing crisis, which has not descended from the sky,” he said. The issue of talks with the PTI has been in the air for quite some time with the government, time and again, precondi-

tioning the talks with 71-year-old Khan’s apology for the May 9 violence. The PTI, however, maintained that it would hold talks only with the army. There is a difference of opinion on the approach to the dialogue as the government wants the PTI to accept the outcome of the February 8 elections and cooperate in tackling economic, political and security challenges facing the country. In contrast, the PTI asserts the government came to power through a bogus electoral process by stealing its mandate and insists that any talks will focus on giving the party its due share in the government. Khan’s party claims that it won majority seats in the election and holds the right to form the government. The majority of PTI leaders, including Khan, face cases linked with corruption as well as last year’s May 9 violence and the government scares them by holding their military trial.

# Imran Khan approaches HC to prevent his possible transfer to military for trial

**Islamabad (PTI):** Jailed former prime minister Imran Khan on Tuesday approached a high court to prevent his possible transfer to the military for trial in the cases concerning the violence on May 9 last year, two days after Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said a military trial of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party founder was “possible”. Khan filed a petition in the Islamabad High Court (IHC) through his lawyer, Uzair Karamat Bhandari, to ensure that he remains under civilian jurisdiction. He made Secretary of Law, Secretary of Interior, Inspector Generals of Islamabad and Punjab, the Director General of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), and the Inspector General of Prisons as respondents in the plea. The 71-year-old leader requested in the plea that the court issue an order to the authorities, restraining them from handing him over to military custody and ensuring his trial



remains within the civilian judicial system. The plea comes on the heels of a warning by Defence Minister Asif on Sunday that a military trial of Khan was “possible” in cases linked to the May 9, 2023 violence. The former premier faced at least a dozen of such cases. The civilian authorities already handed over to the military more than one hundred people arrested for their alleged involvement in the riots that broke out in the country after Khan’s arrest.

Khan fears a similar fate and he has already filed a similar petition on July 25 in the Lahore High Court through the same lawyer. The aim of such petitions seems preemptive as he wants to influence any decision to transfer his custody to the military. On May 9 last year, violent protests erupted after Khan’s arrest by paramilitary Rangers from the premises of the Islamabad High Court in connection with an alleged corruption case. His party workers allegedly vandalised a dozen military installations, including the Jinnah House (Lahore Corps Commander House), the Mianwali airbase and the ISI building in Faisalabad. A mob also attacked the Army headquarters in Rawalpindi. Khan was arrested on August 5 last year after his conviction in the first Toshakhana corruption case filed by the Election Commission of Pakistan. Since then, he has been in jail in different cases.

# Bill approved to guarantee burial rights in Sri Lanka

**Colombo (PTI):** A draft bill that would grant the right to every individual in Sri Lanka to decide whether that person’s body should be disposed of by burial or cremation has been approved, a cabinet note said on Tuesday. Forced cremations during the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic had caused much heartburn among the island nation’s 9 per cent Muslim minority residents. The “Burial and Cremation Rights Bill” seeks to pacify the aggrieved minority. “The right to decide whether the body of the dead person should be buried or cremated to be entrusted with the deceased individual’s closest relative considering the deceased individual’s preferences,” the note said. The bill was approved on Monday after which Minister of Justice M U M Ali Sabry posted on X: “Today, the Cabinet of Ministers approved taking steps necessary to pass the ‘Burial and Cremation Rights Bill,’ a proposal I strongly advocated for.” “This crucial piece of legislation ensures the right of every indi-

# Bill approved to guarantee burial rights in Sri Lanka

vidual to choose between burial and cremation, respecting personal and religious beliefs. Together, we will uphold dignity and justice for all,” he added in his post. During the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2020 and 2021, an expert panel appointed by the then government had decided that there existed a serious risk of water contamination if bodies of patients who died of the virus were to be allowed burials. The government didn’t relent even in the face of concerns raised by Islamic nations on the decision. The current dispensation earlier this year extended an apology to the Muslim minority on the issue and said compensation could be granted to those aggrieved by the forced cremation decision. The act of cremating a dead body is forbidden in Islam and the callous disregard for religious rites by the state has understandably caused distress amongst the Muslim community, Amnesty International had then said.

# N Korea shows new exploding drone crashing into target

**Seoul (AP):** North Korean leader Kim Jong Un supervised a demonstration of new exploding drones designed to crash into targets, state media said on Monday, as the US and South Korea engage in joint military drills. North Korea test photos showed a white drone with X-shaped tails and wings supposedly crashing into and destroying a target resembling South Korea’s main K-2 battle tank. Most combat drones stand off from targets and fire missiles. The North’s official Korean Central News Agency said Saturday’s test involved various types of drones built to fly different ranges to attack enemy targets on land and sea and flew along various routes before accurately hitting test targets. After the test, Kim pledged to spur the development of drones that explode on impact, conduct reconnaissance or attack targets underwater to boost his country’s war readiness, saying the North’s military should be equipped with advanced

# N Korea shows new exploding drone crashing into target

drones “as early as possible”, KCNA said. The drone test came as the US and South Korean militaries conduct the large-scale Ulchi Freedom Shield drills, which continue through Thursday. The exercises focus on enhancing their readiness against North Korean threats and include computer-simulated war games and live-fire training, with a combined aerial drill involving 60 warplanes that began its three-day run on Monday. South Korea’s air force said the drill, which kicked off with precision-bombing demonstrations that included South Korean F-35 and F-16 fighter jets, is aimed at coping with North Korean threats posed by drones, cruise missiles and artillery. The United States and South Korea also began Monday a separate amphibious landing drill involving dozens of aircraft and vessels from their navies and marines, including US F-35 fighters and amphibious assault ship USS Boxer. South Korea’s military said the Ssangyong Exercise, which will

# new exploding drone crashing into target

continue through September 7, is aimed at sharpening combat interoperability. Lee Chang Hyun, spokesperson of South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff, said during a briefing that South Korea’s military was closely examining North Korea’s drone capabilities and that the South’s military is equipped with systems to detect and intercept them, without providing further details. Some analysts suggest the North Korean drones shown in state media photos resemble Russia’s Zala Lancet-3 drones, and Lee said the South was looking into the possibility Russia had helped North Korea acquire its drone capability. “We are aware that during the past exchanges between North Korea and Russia that some (drones) were given (to North Korea) as gifts,” Lee said. “We would need to analyze various aspects, including whether (North Korea) would have modified to improve their capabilities or other possibilities.” North Korea and Russia have been aligning closely in the face

# Pakistan witnessed 59 terror attacks in August

**Islamabad (PTI):** In continued increase in terror attacks, a total of 59 terrorist attacks occurred across Pakistan in August 2024 killing 84 people compared to 38 such attacks in the previous month, a media report said on Tuesday. The August attacks take the total number of attacks in 2024 to 325, according to the digital database of security incidents managed by the Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), an Islamabad-based think-tank. These incidents include 29 attacks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 28 in Balochistan and two in Punjab, the PIPS data said, adding, as many as 84 people were killed and 166 others were injured, newspaper The Dawn said. Also, since 2006, there have been 17,846 terrorist incidents in which 24,373 people have been killed and 48,085 others injured, according to the PIPS database. Balochistan experienced 28 terrorist incidents during August 2024, which resulted in 57 deaths and injuries to another 84 people.

# Pakistan witnessed 59 terror attacks in August

of their separate confrontations with the US Kim Jong Un and Russian President Vladimir Putin held summits this June and in September last year. Washington and its allies have accused the countries of expanding an alleged arms arrangement in which North Korea provides Putin with badly needed munitions to prolong Russia’s fighting in Ukraine in exchange for economic aid and technologies to upgrade Kim’s nuclear-armed military. Animosity on the Korean Peninsula is high as Kim uses Russia’s war against Ukraine as a distraction while he strengthens his nuclear-armed military and issues verbal threats of conflict toward Washington and Seoul. While most of the international attention has been focused on his long-range missiles designed to reach the US mainland, Kim has also been expanding weapons targeting rival South Korea, most notably short-range missiles and artillery systems the North has described as nuclear-capable.

# Pope begins Asia tour, celebrating religious freedom

**Jakarta (AP):** Pope Francis arrived in Indonesia on Tuesday at the start of the longest trip of his pontificate, hoping to encourage its Catholic community and celebrate the tradition of interfaith harmony in a country with the world’s largest Muslim population. After an overnight flight from Rome, Francis was wheeled off the plane in his wheelchair and onto the tarmac for a welcoming ceremony under Jakarta’s perennial hazy, humid and polluted skies. Two children wearing traditional clothes handed him a bouquet of vegetables, fruits, spices and flowers. Francis planned to rest for the remainder of the day, given the rigors of an 11-day voyage zigzagging across time zones that will also take him to Papua New Guinea, East Timor and Singapore.

However, the Vatican said the 87-year-old pope met with a group of refugees, migrants and sick people at the Vatican residence in Jakarta. Outside the residence, he was greeted by well-wishers eager to catch sight of the first pope to visit since St. John Paul II in 1989. “When I saw him in the car I was so touched, goosebumps,” said Fanfan, a 49-year-old housewife from West Jakarta who uses only one name. “I hope he will hopefully appear in front of me to wave his hand again.” Francis’ first full day of activities begins Wednesday with visits to the country’s political leaders and meetings with Indonesian clergy who are helping to fuel the growth of the Catholic Church in Asia. Indonesian President Joko Widodo welcomed the pope, saying in a broadcast statement



that “Indonesia and the Vatican have the same commitment to fostering peace and brotherhood, as well as ensuring the welfare of humanity.” The highlight of Francis’ first stop will be his participation Thursday in an interfaith meeting in Jakarta’s iconic Istiqlal mosque with repre-

sentatives of the six religions that are officially recognised in Indonesia: Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Catholicism and Protestantism. The mosque, the largest in Southeast Asia, sits across a piazza from the capital’s main Catholic cathedral, Our Lady of Assumption, and the two are

so close to each other that the Muslim call to prayer can be heard during Mass. Their proximity is not coincidental, but strongly willed as a symbol of religious freedom and tolerance that is enshrined in Indonesia’s Constitution. The buildings are also linked by an underground “Tunnel of Friendship” which Francis will visit with the grand imam, Nasaruddin Umar, before they sign a joint declaration. While Francis will want to highlight Indonesia’s tradition of religious tolerance, the country’s image as a moderate Muslim nation has been undermined by flare-ups of intolerance. In 2021, a militant Islamic couple blew themselves up outside a packed Catholic cathedral on Indonesia’s Sulawesi island during a Palm Sunday Mass, injuring at least 20 people. “We have no problem with the

visit. He’s a guest and we will welcome him,” said Eldy, a 64-year-old retired government worker who uses one name and was out walking during a car-free day in Jakarta on Sunday. “He wants to visit our Istiqlal mosque, he can do it.” Even though Catholics make up only 3 per cent of Indonesia’s population, the sheer number of Indonesians — 275 million — makes the archipelago home to the third-largest Christian community in Asia, after the Philippines and China. As a result, thousands are expected to throng to Francis’ events this week, which include a Mass on Thursday afternoon at Jakarta’s main stadium expected to draw some 60,000 people. City authorities have urged residents to work from home that day given roadblocks and crowds.

**Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot**  
Sadiq Road, Faridkot- 151203 Ph. 01639-256232, 256236

**E-TENDER NOTICE**

**E-tenders are invited for the procurement of following items upto 18.09.2024**

- 1) Extension of Committee Hall of Senate Block at both floors of BFUHS, Faridkot
- 2) Providing 04 nos. 4 Tr. Tower Indoor Unit with 2 numbers 10 HP VRV Cold/Hot AC units in Senate Hall of BFUHS, Faridkot
- 3) Providing of Housekeeping services
- 4) Purchase of LAN networking 5) Supply of Computer and UPS 6) Purchase of Projector and IT equipments 7) SSMA Services of various photocopier machines 8) Purchase of Advanced Laparoscopy Vessel Sealing system

**E-tenders are invited for the procurement of following items upto 25.09.2024**

- 1) Rate contract for procurement of Xerox Toner and Copy Cartridges for Xerox make photocopier machine
- 2) Operation of Canteen/Tuck shops at various locations at Guru Gobind Singh Medical Hospital, Faridkot
- 3) Pest control services
- 4) Signing rate contract for Lab material 5) Signing rate contract for IHC Reagent 6) Re-Construction of damaged boundary wall around TB ward of GGS Medical Hospital, Faridkot
- 7) Supply and installation of LT Panel, Main Cable & Power point in Main Operation Theater at GGS Medical Hospital, Faridkot
- 8) Providing, installation, testing & Commissioning of Silent type 160 KVA DG set 3 phase 415 volt with AMF panel, CPCB iv & cabling, foundation platform for guest house at GGS Medical Residential campus, Faridkot
- 9) Subscription of Journals and other e resources for HSLIBNET (Health Sciences Library Network).

**E-tenders are invited for the procurement of following items with pre bid meeting upto 07.10.2024**

- 1) To develop Mobile Application 2) Skin graft Mesher 3) Bio Safety Cabinet 4) Gel Doc System

**Note:** Pre-bid meeting shall be held. Please refer tender document for Date, time and venue for pre-bid meeting

Terms and conditions can be downloaded from <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in>. The tender will be accepted in E-Tender mode only. Bidder can also download tender notification and document from the University website i.e. [www.bfuhs.ac.in](http://www.bfuhs.ac.in)

**Registrar**  
nil/12/219/2023/37241 Dated CHD :- 9/3/2024



# Markets settle flat after record rally; Nifty gains for 14th day

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty took a breather after a record rally and ended on a flat note on Tuesday, with the 50-stock index settling in the green for the 14th straight session. Halting its 10-day rally, the 30-share BSE Sensex dipped 4.40 points or 0.01 per cent to settle at 82,555.44. During the day, it dropped 159.08 points or 0.19 per cent to 82,400.76. The NSE Nifty eked out a marginal gain of 1.15 points to settle at 25,279.85, its highest-ever closing level. Among the 30 Sensex firms, Bajaj Finance, Infosys, Adani Ports, JSW Steel, HCL Tech, Bharti Airtel, IndusInd Bank and Tata Motors were the biggest laggards. ICICI Bank, Bajaj Finserv, Titan, Nestle and HDFC Bank were among the gainers. In Asian markets, Seoul,



Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled lower. European markets were quoting in the negative territory. The US markets were closed on Monday for the Labour Day holiday. "Amid mixed global signals and the absence of significant new catalysts, aside from the

anticipated Fed rate cut, which is already factored in, the domestic market took a breather. Mild caution emerged due to a recent slowdown in manufacturing activities, which indicates a slowdown in demand," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial

Services. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 1,735.46 crore on Monday, according to exchange data. The Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 1.79 per cent to USD 76.13 a barrel. Surging for the 10th straight session on Monday, the BSE benchmark jumped 194.07 points or 0.24 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 82,559.84. During the day, it surged 359.51 points or 0.43 per cent to reach a new intra-day record peak of 82,725.28. The Nifty climbed 42.80 points or 0.17 per cent to settle at a lifetime closing high of 25,278.70, taking its winning run to the 13th day in a row. During the day, it soared 97.75 points or 0.38 per cent to hit a fresh all-time intra-day peak of 25,333.65.

# Domestic saving to remain top net lender in coming decades: RBI Deputy

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Reserve Bank Deputy Governor Michael Debabrata Patra on Tuesday said domestic saving has largely financed the investment needs of the economy and will remain the top net lender in coming decades. In a keynote address at the Financing 3.0 Summit: Preparing for Viksit Bharat organised by the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) here, the deputy governor said that recently, the net financial savings of households has almost halved from 2020-21 levels due to behavioural changes in the form of unwinding of prudential savings accumulated during the pandemic and shifting from financial assets to physical assets like housing. "Going forward, boosted by rising incomes, households will likely build back their financial assets. This process has already begun. Households' financial assets have increased from 10.6 per cent of GDP during 2011-17 to 11.5 per cent during 2017-23 (excluding



the pandemic year)," Patra said. Their physical savings have also risen in the post-pandemic years to over 12 per cent of GDP and could rise further, he said, adding they had reached 16 per cent of GDP in 2010-11. "Accordingly, households will remain the top net lenders to the rest of the economy in the coming decades," the senior RBI official said. He further said the private corporate sector has drastically reduced its net borrowings from the rest of the economy, reflecting a combination of rising internal accruals and subdued capacity creation. Looking ahead, Patra said its net borrowing requirement is likely to rise on the back of a revival in the capex cycle. "These financing requirements will largely be

resources expands, the volume of external financing and its composition may undergo fundamental shifts, but in the light of past experiences, external debt sustainability will remain a policy priority," Patra said. During his address, Patra also delved into India's growth story and the fact that the country is riding on the cusp of a distinct demographic advantage. He said a productive workforce is critical for value creation in an economy, while capital would play an important supportive role. CII Director General Chandrajit Banerjee, in his welcome address, lauded the performance of India's external sector and underscored the role of the RBI in ensuring that its financing is stable, sustainable, and aligned with the country's economic policies. He said greater investment can be useful to garner more financing in physical infrastructure, components for the digital economy, as well as emerging sectors like renewable energy, warehousing, semiconductor ecosystem, and data centres.

# Rupee falls five paise against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee declined 5 paise to 83.96 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, tracking a strong greenback against major currencies overseas and a sluggish trend in domestic equities. However, lower crude oil prices in international markets capped the decline in the local unit, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened 3 paise lower at 83.94 against the American currency and traded in the range of 83.94-83.98 during the day. It finally settled at 83.96 (provisional) against the US dollar, 5 paise lower than its previous close. On Monday, the domestic currency settled at 83.91. "The rupee in tandem with Asian currencies fell to its support zone of 83.97 as the



Reserve Bank of India seemed to present at 83.97 to protect any further weakness in the currency. There was good amount of FPI and oil companies outflow which resulted in the rupee reaching near to the all-time low of 83.97," Anil Kumar Bhasani, Head of Treasury and Executive Director of Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP, said. Meanwhile, Sensex recovered most of its losses to settle at 82,555.44 for the day, 4.40 points below its previous close, while the Nifty inched

up 1.15 points to 25,279.85. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was up 0.15 per cent at 101.80. Brent crude, the international oil benchmark, declined 2.1 per cent to 76.26 in futures trade. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets on Monday, as they purchased shares worth Rs 1,735.46 crore, according to exchange data.

# Bajaj Housing Finance IPO to open on Sep 9

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Bajaj Housing Finance on Tuesday said it has fixed a price band of Rs 66-70 per share for its Rs 6,560-crore initial share sale. The initial public offering (IPO) will open for public subscription on September 9 and conclude on September 11 and the bidding for anchor investors will open for a day on September 6, the company announced. The proposed IPO comprises a fresh issue of equity shares of up to Rs 3,560 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of equity shares to the tune of Rs 3,000 crore by parent Bajaj Finance. The share sale is being conducted to comply with the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) regulations, which require upper-layer non-banking finance companies to be listed on stock exchanges by September 2025. Proceeds from the fresh issue



will be used to augment the company's capital base to meet future capital requirements. Investors can make a bid for a minimum of 214 equity shares and in multiples of 214 equity shares thereafter. Bajaj Housing Finance is a non-deposit-taking Housing Finance Company registered with the National Housing Bank since September 2015. It offers financial solutions for

purchasing and renovating residential and commercial properties. It has been identified and categorised as an "upper layer" NBFC by the RBI in India and its comprehensive mortgage products include home loans, loans against property, lease rental discounting and developer financing. For the entire financial year 2023-24, the housing lender

posted a net profit of Rs 1,731 crore, marking a growth of 38 per cent from Rs 1,258 crore in FY23. Aadhar Housing Finance and India Shelter Finance are two housing finance companies that have been listed on the stock exchanges in recent months. In June, Bajaj Housing Finance filed preliminary papers with Sebi for a Rs 7,000 crore IPO, comprising fresh shares worth Rs 4,000 crore and an OFS component of Rs 3,000 crore by its parent. The market regulator gave its clearance to the company's maiden public issue earlier this month. Kotak Mahindra Capital Company Ltd, Axis Capital, IIFL Securities, BofA Securities India Ltd, SBI Capital Markets Ltd, Goldman Sachs (India) Securities Private Ltd and JM Financial Ltd are book-running lead managers that will manage the company's public issue.

# World Bank projects India to grow at seven per cent in FY25

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian economy is projected to grow at 7 per cent in the current financial year on the back of recovery in the agriculture sector and rural demand. According to the World Bank Report released on Tuesday, India's growth continues to be strong despite a challenging global environment. The growth rate of India, which accounts for the bulk of the South Asia region, is expected to remain strong at 7 per cent in 2024-25, the World Bank said in the India Development Update. Recovery in agriculture will partially offset a marginal moderation in industry, it said, adding that services will remain robust.

# SRM University hosts 4th convocation ceremony

PNS ■ ANDHRA PRADESH

SRM University-AP hosted its prestigious 4th Convocation Ceremony on September 02, 2024, felicitating the graduates with their well-earned degrees for scholastic excellence. The monumental event was graced by the honourable presence of Chief Guest Padma Bhushan Senapathy Kris Gopalakrishnan, Chairman-Axilor Ventures and Co-founder of Infosys; Guest of Honour Mr Rohit Kapoor, Chief Executive Officer, Food Marketplace, Swiggy; Founder Chancellor of SRM Group of Institutions

Dr T R Paarivendhar, Pro-Chancellor of SRM University-AP Dr P Sathyanarayanan; Vice Chancellor Prof. Manoj K Arora, Registrar Dr R Premkumar; Dean-Academic Affairs Dr Vinayak Kalluri; Other dignitaries, Faculty, staff and parents of the graduating batch. 1,018 graduates, including 24 PhD scholars, were conferred their degrees on this momentous occasion, and 18 Gold Medalists, 5 Silver Medalists, and 5 Bronze Medalists were recognised for their outstanding achievements. "We are a multidisciplinary research-



intensive university where education revolves around 5 I's - Integrative curricula, Interdisciplinary Research and Learning, Innovation, Industry and International

Collaborations and Inclusivity," stated Vice Chancellor, Prof. Manoj K Arora, in his welcome address. During his briefing about the annual report, Prof.

Arora also highlighted the university's stellar growth and accomplishments in the past academic year. "In the last academic year, we have relaunched the Liberal Arts

school with 3 new departments, implemented a revamped curricula that is adaptive and responsible to changing needs and expanded our industrial partnerships. Our faculty now consists of 350 in number, contributing to 688 publications, 108 published patents, 24 sponsored research and industry projects, 21 startups, along with students." Chief Guest Padma Bhushan Kris Gopalakrishnan, renowned global business & technology thought leader, delivered the much-anticipated convocation address to the graduating Class of 2024. With an analogy to the Paris

Olympics 2024, Mr Kris Gopalakrishnan ignited the graduating batch with key takeaways to ensure remarkable success in all their future endeavours. He stated, "The knowledge and skillset that you have acquired from your university will equip you to face the problems that the world poses. The strength of the university lies with the alumni. Remember to contribute to the society, your nation and moreover your alma mater." Mr Rohit Kapoor, the esteemed Guest of Honour, applauded the students for their outstanding achievements and expressed

his deep respect for SRM University-AP for establishing a new-age institute and preparing the students for an impactful future. "We must strive towards world-class standards in the case of academics, research, and innovation and deriving nobility in becoming the superior version of yourselves," advised Mr Kapoor. The ceremony also witnessed the auspicious presence of Founder Chancellor Dr T R Paarivendhar, who congratulated the young students for this remarkable achievement and advised, "Knowledge is power."

# INBRIEF

## MIXED REALITY TRAINING MODULES FOR ADVANCED KNOWLEDGE OF RAILWAY STAFFS

**MALIGAON:** In order to improve the knowledge of railway staffs on safety related aspects, Northeast Frontier Railway has introduced an innovative Virtual Reality & Mixed Reality (VR & MR) training module at its Multi-Disciplinary Zonal Training Institute (MDZTI), Alipurduar.

## GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PATENTED GNDU FACULTY'S 5 INNOVATIVE GADGETS

**AMRITSAR:** The Guru Nanak Dev University announces the patenting of five equipment related to the Gym Apparatus- Gym Equipment, Gym Equipment for Shoulder Exercise, Stress Relieving Equipment, Hand Exerciser Resilience Equipment and Shoulder & Arm Wheel Apparatus.

## POWERGRID ACQUIRES 'BHADLA-III & BIKANER-III TRANSMISSION LIMITED' UNDER TBCC

**MAHARASHTRA:** Power Grid Corporation of India has acquired "Bhadla-III & Bikaner-III Transmission Limited", for the Transmission System Project for System Strengthening for interconnections of Bhadla-III & Bikaner-III Complex.

## RECPCDL HANDS OVER TUMKUR-II REZ

**GURUGRAM:** REC Power Development and Consultancy Limited, handed over a project specific SPV (Special Purpose Vehicle), viz, Tumkur-II REZ Power Transmission Limited to M/s G.R. Infraprojects Limited (GRIL).

# Mahindra launches new Jawa 42 FJ motorcycle

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Mahindra Group-owned premium motorcycle firm Classic Legends, which has three premium motorcycle brands under it, is running a marathon and will navigate any challenge in rebuilding the resurrected brands like Jawa, Group Chairman Anand Mahindra has said. Speaking at the launch of all-new Jawa 42 FJ motorcycle here, Mahindra also said that stories build brands and brands are nothing but aggregation of stories. The latest offering from the Classic Legends is priced at Rs 1.99-lakh onwards. In October 2016, Mahindra & Mahindra, through its subsidiary Classic Legends Private Limited (CLPL), signed a licensing deal to launch motorcycles under the Jawa brand name in India and other East Asian countries. The same year, the company acquired British motorcycle brand BSA as well. "Stories build brands. Brands are nothing but aggregations of stories. Why they were formed, how they were formed. How they were built.



How they grow. New brands tell new stories. And often all resurrected brands also tell new stories," Mahindra said at the launch. "We are privileged at Classic Legends to have the opportunity to both resurrect an old brand and to build new stories, a new history. However, contradictory that might sound," he said. All of us have challenges, all of us are looking forward to the excitement that this brand will bring, he said, adding, "we are running a marathon, we may fall, we may sweat

(but) we will rise up," Mahindra stated. Noting that Classic Legends is one of the growth Gems at the Group, Mahindra Group CEO and Managing Director Anish Shah said the company is well positioned at the second spot in the premium motorcycle segment in the country and is looking forward to acquiring the top slot. "The 2024 Jawa 42 embodies our design-led approach to motorcycle engineering. We've taken our time with this bike, pushing the

boundaries of the 'price-performance' matrix. As pioneers of neo-classics in India, the 42 FJ is a testament to our challenger spirit and disruptive approach," said Anupam Thareja, Co-founder of Jawa Yezdi Motorcycles. "We are trying to make an Indian Global two-wheeler company," he added. With the expansion of the '42 Life' series, Jawa has extended the ideal balance of design, price, and performance across motorcycle formats, to appeal to a wide swathe of discerning riders, the company said.



# Gold and silver price slip

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices slipped Rs 50 to Rs 74,050 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had finished at Rs 74,100 per 10 grams in the previous session on Monday. Silver prices also slumped by Rs 250 to Rs 85,250 per kilogram on Tuesday. It had closed at Rs 85,500 per kg in the previous close. Additionally, gold of 99.5 per cent purity fell by Rs 50 to Rs 73,700 per 10 grams. On the global front, Comex gold is trading at USD 2,531.40 per ounce, up by USD 3.80 per ounce or 0.15 per cent. "Gold fluctuated in a narrow range on Tuesday as traders remained sidelined ahead of US job market data that may

influence the US Federal Reserve's (Fed) interest rate-cutting path," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. However, silver was quoted 1.81 per cent lower at USD 28.62 per ounce in the international markets. During the week, traders will focus on various job reports, including Jolts job openings, ADP Non-farm employment change, non-farm payrolls and unemployment data, which will impact the Fed's policy decision and could provide direction for gold prices, Gandhi added. Anticipation of an interest rate cut at the upcoming US Fed meeting would likely keep gold prices elevated, according to Angel One's Prathamesh Mallya. DVP-Research of Non-Agri Commodities and Currencies.



# 'SWEET' SACRIFICE AND SLEEPLESS NIGHTS

PTI ■ PARIS

Carrying a back injury for more than a year, history-making Indian javelin thrower Sumit Antil's path to Paralympic glory was paved with a 'sweet sacrifice' and several sleepless nights. The 26-year-old faced a tough choice in the build-up to the Paralympics — give up his favourite sweets or put his career at risk due to rapid weight gain and a back injury that troubled him before the Asian Para Games in Hangzhou last year where he won a gold. On the advice of his physio, Antil grudgingly gave up sweets, followed a strict training regimen and shed around 12 kilograms in just two months. His sacrifice paid off on Monday when the Sonepat-lad became the first Indian man and only the second Indian overall to defend a Paralympic title, clinching gold in the F64 category with a record throw of 70.59m. This new mark bettered his previous Paralympic best of 68.55m set in Tokyo Paralympics three years ago. "I've reduced around 10-12 kilos. My physio, Vipin Bhai, told me that the weight was putting pressure on my spine. So, I cut out sweets, which are my favourite, and focused on eating right," he revealed in a media interaction here.

Fixing his back by taking adequate rest is the first thing Antil will do after his return to India. "I was not at 100 per cent. I had to take a painkiller before my throw, and even during training, I haven't been at my best. The first priority is to fix my back after we return to India because rest is crucial with the type of injury I have. "With competitions so close, I haven't been able to rest properly and have constantly taken precautions to protect my back. I've been careful with every movement to avoid aggravating it further," he added. He also thanked his coach (Arun Kumar) for always knowing what he needed, staying up nights to plan his schedule, and putting in tremendous effort. He said his coach had worked even harder than him. "I also started doing CrossFit workouts, sprints, and trained hard. It's been two years with my coach, and he's like an elder brother to me. He knows exactly what I need and when I need it. "I've seen him stay up nights to plan my schedule. My team has put in a tremendous effort for me, and I feel truly blessed to have them," he said. "Once you reach a certain level, the responsibility on you increases, and all eyes are on you. Hopefully, after this, I'll finally get some rest. I've been continuously on the field for

## SUMIT ANTIL ON DEFENDING PARALYMPIC GOLD DESPITE BACK INJURY



the past two to three years." He said he sustained the injury in 2023 ahead of the Asian Para Games and kept competing in back-to-back tournaments. Antil dreamed of becoming a wrestler and was inspired by Olympic bronze-medallist Yogeshwar Dutt. However, in 2015, his life changed when a tractor accident led to the amputation of his left leg below the knee. Undeterred, Sumit was introduced to para-sports in 2017 by a fellow athlete from his village. Despite the pain and challenges of training with a prosthetic leg, he found his new passion in javelin. Under coach Naval Singh's guidance, Sumit's relentless dedication transformed him into a champion. The F64 category, in which he competes, is designated for athletes with lower limb impairments, including those using prosthetics or dealing with leg length discrepancies. SLEEPLESS NIGHTS: Antil said after struggling with sleep and increased nervousness due to the high expectations of people around him, he was now feeling relaxed. "I think it's been three nights since I've had proper sleep. When you're at a certain level, and people expect things from you, the nervousness increases," he said. "Back in Tokyo, no one knew

me, and I didn't feel that much pressure; I could sleep peacefully. But this time, the last 3-4 days have been extremely stressful," he revealed. However, his throw was short of his own world record of 73.29m and he seemed a tad unhappy with this. "I'm used to a different synthetic track, here (on Mondotrack) I was slipping, I was not able to feel the runway with my legs. "I know my coach is not that happy but will do it in coming competitions," he rued. ONE OF A KIND: SANGWAN: Paralympic Committee of India vice president Satya Prakash Sangwan, who is also the chief de mission for the Indian squad here, said he always knew Antil would script history. "Since 2017, I've seen how hard he works and how down-to-earth he has been from day one. I knew right from the start that he would make history. Athletes like him are rare. You can see how humble he is from winning gold in Tokyo and here as well," he said. "His dedication to his sport and his country is unmatched; he doesn't get distracted by anything else. I've never come across an athlete who remains so humble and down-to-earth, even after achieving so much success. I am truly proud of Sumit," he added.

## There is sadness, I aimed for gold in Paris: Paralympic silver medallist shuttler Suhas

PTI ■ PARIS

Indian para-shuttler Suhas Yathiraj is an emotional mess after his second successive Paralympic silver. A part of him is proud of the achievement but then he is also grappling with feelings of "sadness and disappointment" at missing out on gold. The 41-year-old went into the opening Games as world no.1 and was expected to fetch gold in men's singles SL4 category. However, he ended with a silver, going down in straight games to Lucas Mazur of France in the summit clash on Monday evening. "...Coming here as world no.1 and as world champion, there was pressure and expectations on me. I too expected that I would do well here. Ideally I would have liked to win gold medal, which is every player's dream," he said on Tuesday. "Winning the silver is a mixed feeling, there is sadness and disappointment of missing the gold. But when the feeling sinks in then you will realise qualifying for Paralympics and representing your country was a big thing. "And winning the silver is a proud moment and I feel extremely humbled and grateful," added the 2007 batch IAS officer. Suhas looked tentative in the summit clash and was no match for the formidable Frenchman, losing 9-21 13-21. It was the same opponent against whom the Indian had lost in the Tokyo Paralympics final. Asked to compare the two silver medals, Suhas said: "Earlier the country and myself didn't have the belief that we



can win medals in Paralympics badminton. I had no idea what my performance would be. That was a different kind of feeling. "Both the silver medals had their challenges. As I said, the first time people don't take you so seriously until you perform at the highest level. But playing under expectations in itself is a different kind of pressure." Born with a congenital deformity in his left ankle, which significantly affected his mobility, Suhas competes in SL4 category which is meant for athletes competing while standing with less severe impairment than in SL3. The gold might have eluded him again, but Suhas said the journey has been enjoyable. "When I started this Paralympics qualification journey, I had not played for one-two years and was world no. 39. From there to reach

top-12 and then qualify for Level-1 tournaments and from there to win Asian Para Games gold, world championships gold, become world no.1... You need to enjoy this journey," he said. Suhas, an Arjuna awardee, feels Tokyo 2020 was a "watershed moment" for Indian Olympic and Paralympic sports. "There is huge change that para sports has witnessed. Tokyo 2020 was watershed moment for Indian para sports and Indian Olympic sports in general. "Everyone knows cricket is popular in India but in the last many years, the way Olympic sports and Paralympics sports have received support from the society is unimaginable. "In the coming years it will only grow and that will improve our medal tally as well," he signed off.

## Chelsea sells Angelo Gabriel to Saudi club to continue unlikely career arc of Brazilian teen

AP ■ LONDON

The unlikely career arc of Brazilian teenager Angelo Gabriel continued when he completed a move to Saudi team Al Nassr for a reported USD 25 million on Tuesday, a year after joining Chelsea from Santos. In the year he was on Chelsea's books after a USD 17 million move, Gabriel never played for the English club because he went on loan to Strasbourg - one of the teams run by Chelsea's American investors. The 19-year-old Gabriel was part of Chelsea's squad for the preseason tour of the United States but has left on a



permanent deal to Al Nassr - where Cristiano Ronaldo where Cristiano Ronaldo the move was announced a day after the Saudi transfer window shut and will help

Chelsea meet financial rules in the Premier League and UEFA. Another teenage Brazilian, Deivid Washington, joined Chelsea from Santos last year around the same time as Gabriel and reportedly came close to making a permanent move to Strasbourg. "We wish Angelo the very best as he begins the next chapter in his career and thank him for his efforts during his time with Chelsea," the English team said. Gabriel became the youngest player in the history of Brazil's national championship at the time when he made his senior debut for Santos at 15 years, 308 days.



## Bopanna-Sutjiadi pair enters US Open mixed doubles semis

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Veteran Indian tennis star Rohan Bopanna and his Indonesian partner Aldila Sutjiadi entered the semifinals of the US Open mixed doubles with a hard-fought win over Australian Matthew Ebden and Barbora Krejickova of the Czech Republic here. The eighth seeded Indian-Indonesian pair registered a 7-6(4) 2-6 10-7 win over fourth seeds Ebden and Krejickova in the quarterfinal that lasted one hour and 33 minutes on Monday night. Bopanna and Sutjiadi had earlier defeated Australian duo of John Pears and Katerina Siniakova of the Czech Republic 0-6 7-6(5) 10-7 in a second-round match. Bopanna and Sutjiadi will play American pair of Donald Young and Taylor Townsend in the semifinals. The 44-year-old Bopanna had already crashed out of the men's doubles competition after he and his partner Ebden, seeded second, lost 1-6 5-7 to the 16th seed Argentine combination of Maximo Gonzalez and Andres Molteni in the third round.

## Indian recurve archer Pooja enters quarterfinals

PTI ■ PARIS

World Para Championship silver medallist Pooja Jatyan beat Yagmur Sengul of Turkey in straight sets to storm into the quarterfinals of recurve women's open archery competition at the Paris Paralympics on Tuesday. The 27-year-old, who got a bye into the pre-quarters after finishing inside top-9 in the ranking round, won 6-0 and will face Tokyo Paralympics bronze medallist Wu Chunyan of China in the quarters later in the day. The second-seeded Chunyan defeated Oyuun-Erdene Buyanjargal of Mongolia in her pre-quarterfinal match. Pooja took the first set by hitting three 9s in a row. Continuing her stronghold, she totalled 26 points while her



opponent struggled with a 22 to concede a 2-0 lead to the Indian. The archer from Gurgaon faced some resistance from Sengul in the third set when she hit two 9s and an 8, but Pooja remained calm to edge the Turkey archer by one point and seal the win. In 1997, when Pooja was just two months old, a high fever and a wrong injection due to medical negligence changed

her life forever, resulting in polio in her left leg. Despite these setbacks, Pooja's resilience shone through as she embraced archery in her childhood. Pooja won a silver medal in the Women's Team event at the Asian Para Championship 2023. In 2024, she continued her success by securing a silver medal at the 8th Fazza Para Archery World Ranking Tournament and claiming gold medals in both the Women's Team and Mixed Team events at the Para Archery European Cup 2nd Leg. In the recurve open category, archers shoot from a standing position at a distance of 70m at a 122cm target made up of 10 concentric circles scoring from 10 points down to 1 point from the centre outwards.

## No. 1 Jannik Sinner gets past Tommy Paul to set up quarterfinal against Daniil Medvedev

AP ■ NEW YORK

Top-seeded Jannik Sinner reached the U.S. Open quarterfinals by shaking off a slow start and coming through in the clutch at the end of tiebreakers that decided the first two sets, then pulling away to get past No. 14 Tommy Paul 7-6(3) 7-6(5) 6-1. Two weeks removed from being cleared in a doping case stemming from two positive tests in March, Sinner moved into a showdown against 2021 champion Daniil Medvedev, the only past winner at Flushing Meadows still in the men's field. Sinner, a 23-year-old from Italy, claimed his first Grand Slam title at the Australian Open in January by defeating Medvedev in five sets in the final after dropping the first two. They also met in the Wimbledon quarterfinals in July, and Medvedev won that one. "It's going to be a lot of running," Sinner said, "so

hopefully (I'll) be ready physically." Against Paul on Monday night, Sinner was not at his best at the outset, falling behind by a double-break at 4-1 after 20 minutes at Arthur Ashe Stadium. "That's where you want to be. ... It's definitely different than any other setting," Paul said. "It's electric." A loud crowd was backing the American, to no one's surprise. As the match went on, plenty of chants of "U-S-A!" or "Let's go, Tommy! Let's go!" rang out. There also were several moments where spectators clapped after faults by Sinner - considered poor etiquette in tennis, that drew repeated admonishments from the chair umpire, who pleaded for no noise between first and second serves. Sinner finished the initial set with 15 unforced errors on the forehand side alone, but he cleaned that up quickly and closed the match with just six of the rest of the way. "There are some ups and



downs, obviously, in best-of-five. That's normal to have," Sinner said. "But finding my rhythm in the end of the match hopefully helps ... In the next match." Everything hinged on the tiebreakers. The first was tied 3-3, before Sinner grabbed the last four points. Paul led 5-4 in the second, but Sinner took the last three points. That meant Sinner has now won 14 of his past 15 tiebreakers, a stretch that dates

to a tournament in Halle, Germany, in June. The lone exception was one he lost against Medvedev at Wimbledon. Sinner dropped the first set he played at the US Open, but he's won the next 12. Paul was trying to get his third career quarterfinal and first at Flushing Meadows. He also was trying to become the first American to beat a man ranked No. 1 at the US Open since Andre Agassi eliminated

Lleyton Hewitt in 2002. Instead, Paul fell to 0-6 at majors against players ranked in the top 10. Sinner improved to 32-2 with four titles on hard courts in 2024 and he's now reached at least the quarterfinals at all four Slams this year. Earlier on Monday, the No. 5-seeded Medvedev picked up a 6-0 6-1 6-3 victory over Nuno Borges that briefly was interrupted early in the third set when the electronic line-calling system was shut down because of a fire alarm. The other quarterfinal on the top half of the men's bracket will be No. 10 Alex de Minaur vs No. 25 Jack Draper. De Minaur beat Jordan Thompson 6-0 3-6 6-3 7-5 in an all-Australian matchup, while Draper became the first British man in the US Open quarterfinals since Andy Murray in 2016 by defeating Tomas Machac 6-3 6-1 6-2. The men's quarterfinals on Tuesday are No. 4 Alexander Zverev vs No.

## Rafael Nadal tells a Spanish TV show he doesn't think Jannik Sinner intended to dope

AP ■ NEW YORK

Rafael Nadal told a Spanish television show that he doesn't think Jannik Sinner intended to use a banned substance and that the current No 1-ranked man didn't receive preferential treatment when he was cleared of doping after testing positive twice in March for trace amounts of an anabolic steroid. "I trust that he wasn't punished because those who judged this case determined quite clearly that there was nothing to punish. ... I don't believe the sentence has anything to do with him being No 1 in the world," 22-time major champion Nadal said in an interview with "El Hormiguero" on Monday. Sinner played Tommy Paul in the fourth round of the US Open on Monday night. The International Tennis Integrity Agency said on August 20 that it was determined the banned performance-enhancer entered Sinner's system unintentionally through a massage from his physiotherapist, and that is why the player was not suspended. Asked about the matter in New York before the



US Open began, Novak Djokovic said he gets why some tennis players question whether there's a double-standard in the sport. Nadal, who sat out the US Open, said: "I believe in someone's good faith. I know Sinner; I don't believe that Sinner wanted to dope." "In the end, justice is justice, and I believe in justice," Nadal said. "I believe in the bodies that have to make decisions and that they do it based on what they believe is right.



# IT'S TIME TO MAKE AMENDS: PAT CUMMINS ON TEST SERIES AGAINST INDIA

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australian captain Pat Cummins is looking at the upcoming five-match rubber against India as a chance to "make amends" for the successive Test series defeats at home against their fierce rivals.

He said the next Border-Gavaskar Trophy, which will start on November 22 in Perth, promises to be a 50-50 affair.

India retained the trophy in the last four series, from 2016-17 to 2022-23. India had defeated Australia in their own backyard in the last two series in 2018-19 and 2020-21.

Cummins said Australia are hoping to draw confidence from their win over India in the World Test Championships Final at London last year.

"The last two series here in Australia, we haven't been successful, so it's been a long time. Hopefully, it's time to make amends," Cummins told Star Sports.

"You know, we've played them (India) plenty of times where they've beaten us, but we've also had plenty of wins against them as well, which we'll draw confidence from. The most recent Test match was, of course, the World Test Championship in neutral conditions, and we came out on top in that match.

"It's always fiercely competitive, and it always feels like it's 50-50. I'm 10 out of 10 excited for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy," he added.



Senior batter Steve Smith agreed with the skipper and said it will be a "big summer" for Australia against a "well-balanced" Indian team.

"...You know, it's going to be a great series. You know, India have been playing outstanding cricket. We've

been playing really good cricket the last couple of years. You know, we haven't beaten India in the last two times they've come out here," he said.

"Obviously got a terrific side, very well-balanced team, all bases covered. So, you know, they've played

really good cricket out here. They've played good cricket when we've been over in India as well, where we know they're very, very difficult to beat. So it's going to be a big summer. It's going to be an exciting one."

Pacer Mitchell Starc highlighted the

importance of the rivalry by keeping it at par with the Ashes.

"For Australian cricket, you've got the Ashes and then you've got the Border Gavaskar Trophy in there. I mean there's a long history in the Ashes but that Border Gavaskar rivalry, if you like, has just grown from strength to strength over each series.

"And now we see it as a five Test match series which is fantastic for not only the rivalry but for the Test series as well. Whether it's the calibre of player, the calibre of matches that we see as fans and as cricketers just continues to grow strength on strength each series," he said.

"Now (with) India obviously winning a number of series in a row, it's created even a bigger rivalry between the two countries. I mean both teams are well known to one another, we play each other very often across the formats, so I'm sure it'll be another exciting series," Starc added.

All-rounder Glenn Maxwell said an India-Australia contest in any format has become a must-watch affair now.

"I think over the last few years, definitely, it feels like the two teams sort of swap places in the rankings quite a bit. Whichever format it is, you will always see these two teams at number one at some stage around the world," Maxwell said.

"The different contests we've had in both countries across all formats certainly provide a lot of highlights for the rest of the world. It's always must-watch cricket whenever these two teams are playing."



## Bangladesh thump Pakistan by 6 wickets in 2nd Test to complete historic sweep

AP ■ RAWALPINDI (PAKISTAN)

Bangladesh completed a six-wicket victory over here on Tuesday and achieved an historic sweep of their two-Test series.

Needing 143 more runs on the final day with 10 wickets in hand, Bangladesh knocked them off for the loss of four wickets when Shakib Al Hasan hit the winning boundary.

Bangladesh recorded only its second bilateral series win of two or more Tests away from home; the last was against the West Indies in 2009.

The tourists won the opening Test by 10 wickets and required just four days in the second after the first day was washed out in Rawalpindi.

The visitors' second innings finished on 185-4, and Shakib was 21 not out and Mushfiqur Rahim 22 not out.

Bangladesh was 26-6 in the

first innings but Litton Das and Mehidy Hasan Miraz led a gallant recovery.

Fast bowlers Hasan Mahmud, Nahid Rana and Taskin Ahmed dismissed Pakistan for 172 in the second innings to leave Bangladesh a victory target of 184 in four sessions.

The Bangladesh top order showed plenty of resilience to flatten Pakistan plans of a dramatic comeback, with meaningful contributions from opener Zakir Hasan (40), captain Najmul Hossain Shanto (38) and Mominul Haque (34).

They extended Pakistan's miserable home record in Tests to 10 matches without a win. Pakistan's last home win was in December 2021 against South Africa at Rawalpindi.

Shan Masood has suffered a second consecutive clean sweep since he was elevated to the test skipper last year, having lost to Australia 3-0.

## WTC Final to be played at Lord's from June 11-15 next year: ICC

PTI ■ DUBAI

The third World Test Championship (WTC) final will be played at the iconic Lord's between June 11 and 15 next year, announced the International Cricket Council on Tuesday.

The ICC has marked June 16 as the reserve day, if required.

"The ICC World Test Championship Final has quickly become one of the most anticipated events in the crick-

eting calendar and we are pleased to announce the dates for the 2025 edition," said ICC CEO Geoff Allardice in a statement. The Lord's is hosting the WTC final for the first time as Southampton (2021) and the Oval (2023) were the venues for the two previous title matches.

India featured in those two finals, but lost to New Zealand in the inaugural match and last year they were defeated by Australia. Currently, Rohit Sharma's India are sitting in pole

position ahead of reigning champions Australia. India will face the Aussies in an away five-match series later this year in the race to the WTC Final.

However, New Zealand (third), England (fourth), Sri Lanka (fifth), South Africa (sixth) and Bangladesh (seventh) are still in contention for a place in the one-off decider next year. However, Pakistan suffered a huge setback as Bangladesh inflicted a 0-2 defeat on them in the just-concluded two-match home series.

## NZ award central contracts to Nathan Smith and Josh Clarkson

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

Promising all-rounders Nathan Smith and Josh Clarkson have been awarded New Zealand's central contract for the first time, replacing Devon Conway and Finn Allen in the 20-member list.

Clarkson has played three ODIs and six T20Is for the Black Caps since debuting against Bangladesh in Dunedin at the end of last year, while Smith was the standout performer for Wellington during the most recent Plunket Shield season at the

domestic level in New Zealand.

The two spots were left vacant after Conway and Allen declined the offers last month.

Conway, who has signed up for Joburg Super Kings in SAT20, has signed a casual agreement with NZC that will make him available for all internationals except for the Sri Lanka white-ball matches in January.

New Zealand coach Gary Stead said Smith and Clarkson deserved their first central contracts and believes the duo can make an impact at

international level over the coming months.

"Nathan's been on our radar for a while having been a significant performer in domestic cricket for some time," Stead was quoted as saying in a New Zealand Cricket statement.

"Josh has been involved in both white ball squads over the past twelve months which shows the strides he's made in his game," he said.

"Josh will provide depth and added value given the volume of white-ball cricket on the horizon."

Both Smith and Clarkson have also represented New Zealand at Under-19 level at the 2016 ICC Under-19 World Cup in Bangladesh, alongside fellow contracted players Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Ben Sears.

**NZ CENTRAL CONTRACT 2024-25:** Tom Blundell, Michael Bracewell, Mark Chapman, Josh Clarkson, Jacob Duffy, Matt Henry, Kyle Jamieson, Tom Latham, Daryl Mitchell, Henry Nicholls, Will O'Rourke, Ajaz Patel, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Mitchell Santner, Ben Sears, Nathan Smith, Ish Sodhi, Tim Southee, Will Young.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, KHORDHA (R&B) DIVISION, KHORDHA  
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)  
E-mail: [pwdoff\\_khd@yahoo.com](mailto:pwdoff_khd@yahoo.com)  
Letter No.4175 Dt.30.08.2024  
Tender Call Notice No. 06/2024-25

The Superintending Engineer, Khurda (R&B) Division, Khurda on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in Double cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible class of contractors having valid registration certificate for execution of the Civil works as detailed below:

- Nature of Work : Civil Work
- No of Work : 02 Nos
- Tender Cost : Rs.10000.00 (Online)
- Class of Contractor : 'B' class Contractor
- Available of Bid documents in the web site : From Dt.10.09.2024 at 12.00 Noon to Dt.24.09.2024 at 5.00 PM
- Date of opening of Bids : Dt.25.09.2024 at 11.30 A.M
- Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the Website: <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. Any information regarding Addendum / Corrigendum / Cancellation of tender can be available in the said website.

Executive Engineer, Khurda (R&B) Division, Khurda  
OIPR-34089110002425

## Can't rest on laurels, time to start afresh and retain ACT title: Harmanpreet

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Indian men's hockey team captain Harmanpreet Singh said it's time to move on from the euphoria of a second successive Olympic bronze medal if the side desires to retain its Asian Champions Trophy title in Hulanbui, China this month.

Under Harmanpreet's leadership, India won a second successive bronze medal for the first time in over half-a-century at the Olympics in Paris recently. But Harmanpreet said it's time to move and start afresh after a deserving break for the Asian showpiece to be held from September 8 to 17.

"With a brief break after the Paris Olympics, the team is ready to take on the best hockey playing nations in Asia and prove its mettle.

"We had a good outing in Paris but hockey is a very close game, we cannot rest on our laurels," the skipper said before leaving for China in the early hours on Tuesday.

"The aim will be to play high-octane hockey and retain our title."

Besides India, the Asian Champions Trophy will feature Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Japan and hosts China.

India will begin their campaign against China on September 8, followed by a match against Japan on September 9.

After a one-day break, India will take on Malaysia on September 11, followed by Korea on September 12 and arch-rivals Pakistan on



September 14.

The top four teams will advance to the semifinals slated for September 16, with final scheduled for September 17.

India are the most successful team in the tournament with four titles, followed by Pakistan (3).

India won the last edition in Chennai, beating Malaysia 4-3 in the final.

Vice captain Vivek Sagar Prasad said the side has a few new players in the team this time around, who have immense potential and are eager to perform.

"We will do our best to create a nurturing environment for them on the way to our title defence," he said.

## FIFA says \$6.5 billion of international spending in transfer window

AP ■ ZURICH

Spending on transfer fees in international men's player deals cooled off during the mid-year trading period, according to International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) research published on Tuesday.

FIFA said clubs committed to spend USD 6.46 billion on buying players in cross-border deals during the June-to-September transfer window - down from USD 7.43 billion in the same period a year ago.

The average transfer fees paid by clubs in Europe, by far the richest market, was USD 3.13 million compared to USD 3.8 million a year ago.

The FIFA study is not a complete guide because it does not count the biggest transfer deal of the European offseason, nor does it include moves by players between two clubs in the same country.

Kylian Mbappé joined Real Madrid without a transfer fee being paid because the France star was a free agent after



letting his contract expire at Paris Saint-Germain. Still, Madrid had to pay Mbappé a signing bonus variously reported as between USD 110 million and USD 165 million.

The biggest transfer fees in cross-border deals were Julián Alvarez's move from Manchester City to Atletico Madrid, reported to be about 75 million euros (USD 83 million) and Leny Yoro from Lille to Manchester United for a reported 62 million euros (USD 69 million).

The FIFA study does not include deals involving two clubs in the same country where the player's registration

is not transferred between member federations. Deals in the top-10 biggest transfer fees not counting toward the FIFA figures include Dominic Solanke from Bournemouth to Tottenham, Pedro Neto from Wolves to Chelsea and Teun Koopmeiners from Atalanta to Juventus.

## Tearful Luis Suárez announces Uruguay retirement

AP ■ MONTEVIDEO (URUGUAY)

Striker Luis Suárez will play his last game for Uruguay on Friday. Suárez was emotional as he announced he was ending a 17-year international career after the World Cup qualifier against Paraguay at Centenario Stadium.

"It hurts to say it, but Friday will be my last match with my country's national team," Suárez said late Monday, unable to hold back tears at a press conference.

"I am retiring because I want to step aside. I am 37 years old, there are a lot of talented players, and I know it would be difficult to get to the next World Cup.

"It is comforting to know I can retire on my terms and not have to retire due to injuries, or to not being called up. I want to say goodbye here, with my people. This is the ideal moment."

Suárez debuted in 2007 and is Uruguay's all-time leading scorer with 69 goals in 142 matches. He played in four World Cups and five Copa America.

He helped to lead the team to the title at the 2011 Copa, where he scored twice in the semifinals and the match-winner in the final and was named player of the tournament.

"It's very difficult, but I want to be relaxed when I play my last game with the national team," he said. "I will be just as excited as I was for my first national team appearance in 2007 when I was a 19-year-old kid.

"Now, I am a veteran, an older player, whatever you want to call it, with an incredible history with the national team and I will give my life for the team on Friday."

In the 2010 World Cup quarter-finals, Suárez prevented Ghana from



scoring an extra-time winner with his hand on the goal line and was red-carded. Ghana missed the resulting penalty kick, Uruguay won a penalty shootout and reached the semifinals for the first time in 40 years.

Suárez was hailed at home as a saviour, but he was scorned at the 2014 World Cup when he bit Italy defender Giorgio Chiellini in their last group game.

It was the third of four times in his career he bit a player. FIFA banned Suarez for nine games, the longest ban in

World Cup history, and he missed the rest of the tournament and the 2015 Copa America.

"My fear has always been that my lasting image for my children and all Uruguayan fans would be of 2014," Suárez said.

"I have gotten past that. And, I hope the people have also forgotten and they are left with all the great moments I lived in our stadium, with all the things our team accomplished, in Copas America, in World Cups."

He reached 100 caps at the 2018 World Cup and was twice named man of the match en route to the quarterfinals. But in 2022, Uruguay didn't get out of their group.

Suárez will continue at Inter Miami, which he has previously said will be his last club. He's also had a stellar career at clubs including Barcelona, Liverpool, Ajax and Atletico Madrid.

OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI, JALESWAR, BALASORE.  
i-111 No. 4892 Date - 02.09.2024

**"e" Procurement Notice**  
Bid Identification No. PSJLS\_02/2024-25.

Bid Documents consisting of Work, Estimated Cost, Cost of Tender Paper, EMD, time of completion, class of contractors and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in Government website i.e., [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in)

- Name of the Work : Construction of Hostel Building in KGBV, Khuard.
- No. of works : 01 No.
- Estimated Cost : 84,47,458.00
- Period of Completion : 300 days.
- Bid Submission Start Date : 10.09.2024 at 10:00 A.M.
- Bid Submission Closing Date : 25.09.2024 upto 05:00 P.M.
- Bid Opening Date : 26.09.2024 at 11:00 A.M.
- Name of Officer inviting Bid : Block Development Officer, Jaleswar

Further details can be seen from the procurement portal i.e. [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in)  
OIPR-19146/11/0002/2425

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA  
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES  
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,  
DEOGARH IRRIGATION DIVISION, DEOGARH  
E-mail id: [sedid821@gmail.com](mailto:sedid821@gmail.com)  
**e-Procurement Notice No. SEDID-02/2024-25**  
Bid Identification No. SEDID-02(01)/2024-25 to SEDID-02(06)/2024-25  
No. 881 Date:- 30.08.2024

Bid documents consisting of work, estimated amount put to tender, cost of tender paper, EMD, time of completion, class of contractor, the set of terms & conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in e-procurement portal <https://tendersodisha.gov.in> complete online process only.

1. Nature of Works	: Road, Building & Canal Works
2. Nos. of works	: 06(Six)
3. Bid Identification No.	: SEDID-02(01)/2024-25 to SEDID-02(06)/2024-25
4. Estimated Cost	: 4.48 Lakhs to 15.95Lakhs
5. Earnest Money Deposit	: Referred to DTCN
6. Cost of Tender Paper	: Referred to DTCN
7. Period of Completion	: Referred to DTCN
8. Date and Time of availability of Bid Document in the Portal	: Dt: 05.09.2024 at 11.00 AM to Dt: 18.09.2024 up to 05.00 PM.
9. Last Date / Time for receipt of Bids in the Portal	: Dt: 18.09.2024 up to 05.00 PM.
10. Date of Bid opening	: Dt: 19.09.2024 at 11.00 AM.
11. Clarification seeking date	: Dt: 05.09.2024 at 11.00 AM to 18.09.2024 at 05.00 PM
12. Date of Lottery (if required)	: Will be intimated later on.

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. Any addendum/ corrigendum/ cancellation of tender can also be seen in said website.  
OIPR-32505/11/0002/2425  
Superintending Engineer, Deogarh Irrigation Division, Deogarh.