

OPINION 6 DEBUNKING CONSPIRACY THEORIES WITH AI

WORLD 8 TALIBAN SUSPENDS AF POLIO VAX DRIVES

MONEY 10 PIYUSH GOYAL LAUNCHES BHASKAR

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MODI'S 100 DAYS PROJECTS PUSH HISTORIC



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Projects worth over ₹15 lakh crores have been launched in the first 100 days of Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Government for a historic third term. The projects focussed on infrastructure,

farmers, middle class, women, and minorities, among others, according to a Government statement. Incidentally, the Government will complete first 100 days on Tuesday coinciding with Prime Minister Modi's birthday. Before hitting the campaign trail for the 2024 Lok Sabha

elections, Prime Minister Modi had given several tasks to officials to be completed within the first 100 days of the third NDA Government. The central Government has approved projects worth ₹3 lakh crore in 100 days with primary focus on roads, railways, ports and airways, the statement said.

Kejriwal to meet LG today, likely to tender resignation

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

A day after Arvind Kejriwal sent shockwaves across political circles saying that he would step down as the Chief Minister of Delhi, the AAP chief will meet Lieutenant Governor (LG) Vinai Kumar Saxena at 4.30 pm on Tuesday, during which he is likely to tender his resignation. Saxena has given him an appointment for a meeting at 4.30 pm on Tuesday. AAP had earlier said Kejriwal sought time for a meeting with the Lieutenant Governor. Regarding the final decision over the New Delhi CM, the AAP legislative party meeting will be held on Tuesday at CM's house. Meanwhile, the AAP's Political Affairs Committee (PAC) deliberated on the selection of the next chief ministerial candidate and the composition of the Delhi cabinet at Chief Minister's residence. The committee



File Photo: Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer

also reviewed strategies for the upcoming Haryana Assembly elections, as the party aims to broaden its political presence in the neighbouring state. Kejriwal held one-on-one talks with leaders of the Public Affairs Committee of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) for their feedback on who should be the next Chief Minister of the national capital. "During the meeting, he (Kejriwal) sought one on one feedback from each leader on his replacement. Tomorrow, the legislative party meeting is there and this discussion will go into the second round," Bharadwaj said after the meeting.

Capital to combat vector borne diseases

SAUMYA SHUKLA NEW DELHI

In the wake of two deaths by dengue reportedly in the national Capital including a 54-year-old patient who died at Lok Nayak Hospital and another at Safdarjung Hospital, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has intensified efforts to combat the spread of vector borne diseases including spraying and fogging of more than 4.20 lakh houses with insecticides. The two deaths due to dengue include a 54-year-old patient who died at Lok Nayak Hospital and another at Safdarjung Hospital. According to data by the MCD, a total of 675 cases of dengue have been reported this year till September 10. A total of 967 cases of vector borne diseases including 260 cases of malaria and 32 cases of chikungunya have been reported in the same period. The maximum numbers of dengue cases were witnessed in the Najafgarh zone with 103 cases, South zone with 71 cases, Central zone with 67 cases, Karol Bagh zone with 60 cases, Rohini zone with 56 cases, Shahdara South zone with 50 cases, West zone with 45 cases, Narela zone with 42 cases, Civil Lines zone with 40 cases, and City SP zone with 33 cases. The lowest was reported from Keshav Puram zone with 24 cases. Amid a surge in cases of the vector-borne



Photo: Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer

disease at several city hospitals in Delhi, the civic body is taking a multi-pronged approach with the officials visiting over 2.59 crore households, with 1,56,932 found to be breeding mosquito sites. "Breeding sites are destroyed on the spot, and homeowners are educated on health and hygiene practices," a senior MCD official said. He added that drains, water bodies, and surface water collections are sprayed weekly using manual and motorised sprayers and larvivorous fishes have been introduced at 213 locations in clean water collections. "23 special drives have been conducted to cover vulnerable areas such as police stations, construction sites, parks, hospitals, schools, Government offices, and DTC depots," he added.



MLA to reward ₹11 lakh to cut tongue of Rahul Gandhi

TN RAGHUNATHA MUMBAI

In a shocking development that has unleashed a massive controversy in Maharashtra, an MLA belonging to the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena on Monday announced a bounty of Rs 11 lakh to anyone who chops the tongue of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over the latter's purported comments on reservations. In a video clip that has gone viral landing the BJP-led MahaYuti Government in an embarrassing situation, Shiv Sena (Shinde) MLA Sanjay Gaikwad said: "While on foreign soil, Rahul Gandhi said that he wants to end reservations in India. This has exposed the Congress' true face. Gandhi's statement reveals his mindset that is inherently opposed to reservations. I will reward anyone who cuts off Rahul Gandhi's tongue with Rs 11 lakh".

Didi, doctors meet positive

SAUGAR SENGUPTA KOLKATA

With the crucial two-and-a-half-hour meeting between Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and the agitating junior doctors ending on a "positive note" the State Government is likely to announce "some very important decisions" pertaining to the doctors' demands on Tuesday, sources said. The agitating doctors had been demanding justice for the lady doctor of RG Kar Medical College and Hospital who was raped and murdered in the morning of August 8. Though the doctors had not come out of the meeting venue as minutes were still being written, sources privy to the proceedings said that the doctors had "vividly communicated to the Chief Minister" their demand including administrative actions against the erring officials of the Health Department including the Health Secretary and two directors of Health apart from Kolkata Police Commissioner Vineet Goyal. The Government side told the doctors that as certain decisions including those on administrative actions against the senior officials could be taken only after certain procedures, such issues could be addressed subsequently. On whether the doctors who had been on "cease work" would join duty right away was



A delegation of junior doctors moves to board a bus from their dhama site near Swasthya Bhawan for a meeting with West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at her Kalighat residence, in Kolkata, West Bengal, Monday PTI

not made clear as the sources from the doctors' side said that the delegation would speak to the media after a general body meeting that would take place around midnight at the sit-in site near Swasthya Bhawan Government. They however, said the "meeting has taken place in a very cordial atmosphere and both the sides were eager to cooperate". Earlier, the junior doctors on Monday evening reached Chief Minister's residence. This was hours after the Mamata Banerjee Government tried for "one last time" to break the 36-day impasse and offered a "constructive dialogue". The medics had been asking for punishment for those responsible for the August 9 felony and "destruction" of evidence; departmental action against arrested former RG Kar

INDI alliance divided on Article 370, says HM

MOHIT KANDHARI JAMMU

Launching a frontal attack on the pre-poll alliance partners, Congress and the National Conference on the last day of campaigning in Kishtwar, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday appealed to the voters in the region to punish these parties by voting in favour of the BJP as they (Congress-National Conference) have always "nurtured and nourished" terrorism. Shah vowed to "bury terrorism deep into the earth so that it would not be able to rear its head again." Addressing three back-to-back election rallies in the region Shah said there is a clear fight between the Congress-National Conference alliance and the BJP — one wanting to bring back Article 370, and the other committed to stopping it. Shah reiterated the Constitution's Article 370, which gave special status to J and K, is history and will never come back. The Home Minister also paid tributes to all those who have been killed in terror-related incidents, and specially referred to the deaths of BJP leaders Anil Parihar, Ajit Parihar and RSS leader



Union Home Minister Amit Shah speaks during a public meeting ahead of J&K Assembly elections, in Kishtwar district, Jammu & Kashmir, Monday PTI

Chanderkant Sharma. BJP has fielded former Minister Sunil Sharma from Padder-Nagseni and Shagun Parihar, daughter of Ajit Parihar, from Kishtwar assembly constituency. Reminding the voters about the promises made by the alliance partners in their election speeches and party manifestos, the Union Home Minister emphasised, "NC and Congress say that if they come to power, they will bring back Article 370. Modi revoked Article 370 and it has become history. It has no place in the Indian Constitution," he added. Shah said they will also not allow the NC-Congress to snatch reservations of Gujjars and Paharis. There will be only one

has resolved to wipe out terrorism and initiated some measures. "We have strengthened village defence guards and special police officers. We have replaced their obsolete rifles and they are being equipped with self-loading rifles...we are raising a security grid. Terrorists may come but they will be wiped out." He claimed that NC and Congress had said if they came to power, they would reconsider reservation to Paharis and Gujjars. "Firstly, the reservation would not have been possible, had Article 370 stayed here. Secondly, I am watching the Kashmir situation. Let me tell you that neither Farooq Abdullah nor Rahul Gandhi is going to form the Government," he said. Shah referred to Maharaja Hari Singh, Jammu and Kashmir's last king, and said he was banished from his State. "These parties (NC and Congress) not only insulted Maharaja Hari but also did not allow him to return home. His ashes came back. These parties, who insulted Maharaja Hari Singh, are responsible for the exodus of Pandits, denied rights to women and reservation to marginalised sections...will you bring them back?" he asked.

Will never surrender: Trump after assassination attempt

PTI WASHINGTON

Hours after another failed attempt on his life, former US President Donald Trump on Monday said he will never surrender and never stop fighting for Americans. The Republican presidential candidate also thanked the US Secret Service and other law enforcement officials for their "outstanding" job after what the FBI said was an apparent assassination attempt while playing golf on one of his golf courses in Florida's West Palm Beach. The former President remained unharmed in the latest assassination bid about two months after another attempt on his life at a Pennsylvania rally. "I am Donald J. Trump. FEAR NOT! I am safe and well, and no one was hurt. Thank God!", the Republican presidential candidate said on his campaign website. "There are people in this world who will do whatever it takes to stop us. I will not stop fighting for you. I will Never Surrender! I will always love you for supporting me. Through our UNITY we will Make America Great Again! I will Never Surrender!" Trump said. "THE JOB DONE WAS ABSOLUTELY



OUTSTANDING," the former President said in a post on Truth Social. "I would like to thank everyone for your concern and well wishes — It was certainly an interesting day! Most importantly, I want to thank the US Secret Service, Sheriff Ric Bradshaw and his Office of brave and dedicated patriots, and, all of the law enforcement, for the incredible job done today at Trump International in keeping me, as the 45th President of the United States, and the Republican nominee in the upcoming presidential election, SAFE," Trump said.

Local authorities said the US Secret Service agents protecting Trump fired at a man pointing an AK-style rifle with a scope while the former President was golfing with donor Steve Witkoff when shots were fired, CNN quoted a source familiar with the development as saying. President Joe Biden and Vice-President Kamala Harris were briefed and updated on the investigation. Harris, the Democratic presidential candidate and Trump's rival in the upcoming election, in a statement, said "violence has no place in America." "I have been briefed on reports of gunshots fired near former President Trump and his property in Florida, and I am glad he is safe. Violence has no place in America," Harris said on X. Biden echoed that thought in his statement, adding that he had directed his team to ensure the Secret Service "has every resource, capability and protective measure necessary to ensure the former President's continued safety." "As I have said many times, there is no place for political violence or any violence ever in our country," Biden said on X, adding that he was "relieved the former President is unharmed."

EID-E-MILAD-UN-NABI



Muslims take part in an Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi procession in Prayagraj, Monday, September 16, 2024 PTI



## Sedentary lifestyle affecting childrens' vision

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Sedentary lifestyle has negatively affected the vision of children, the eye specialist here said. It has been noted that over time, more children between the ages of five years and their teens are requiring vision spectacles due to weak eyesight. Considering this, eye specialists emphasised that cases of weak eyesight in young children have been on the rise due to various factors, including an increase of awareness.

Senior eye specialist at the Government Doon Medical College (GDMC) hospital, Dr Sushil Ojha said that he has observed a 50 per cent increase in cases of weak eyesight among children compared to past years. He attributed this rise to a defi-

ciency of vitamin A affecting children's eye health. Ojha said that he has noted a shift towards a diet lacking in essential nutrients such as iron and various vitamins, with children increasingly consuming fast food. Considering these factors, there has been an increase in cases of weakened eyesight among school-going children, particularly. In order to prevent these health issues related to eyesight among children, it is advised that parents ensure their children consume green leafy vegetables rich in vitamin A and engage in outdoor activities, he said.

Further, another eye specialist Dr Amit Singh said that he acknowledged the rise in cases of impaired eyesight

among children over time. However, he pointed out that solely attributing sedentary lifestyles to the decline in eyesight would be inaccurate. The primary cause of this increase seems to be improved awareness among parents regarding eye health. He also noted that sedentary lifestyles among children indirectly contribute to health problems that can have an impact on eyesight instead. Instances of impaired vision have grown increasingly prevalent among children aged five to 10. To mitigate this trend, it is imperative to promote a healthy lifestyle and monitor eye strain levels. He also emphasised that maintaining overall physical health is crucial for preserving children's optical well-being.

## Build quarters for ASHA workers in Dehradun: Bansal

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Dehradun district magistrate Savin Bansal instructed officials to develop a plan to construct Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) Ghar and dormitories in the unused rooms of every government hospital in Dehradun. He said this while speaking at programme held on Monday, where he interacted with ASHA workers to address the rising cases of dengue.

The programme was organised to intensively monitor dengue and malaria, along with understanding the challenges faced by the personnel working at ground zero, as well as finding solutions to these challenges. Bansal emphasised the need for field personnel to carry out their responsibilities with pride, responsibility and confidence. He also instructed high-level officers and office personnel to address the issues faced by the ground zero workers. Further, he directed the chief medical officer (CMO) to ensure timely payment to the ASHA personnel and to enhance facilities and



personnel for them. Additionally, he has also instructed CMO to develop an action plan for constructing residential facilities and dormitories in the vacant rooms of hospitals. Additionally, he highlighted that health is a top priority for everyone, and the responsibility of field personnel, along with government administration, is crucial in these tasks to keep the higher authorities informed about the area's situation.

Further, CMO Dr Sanjay Jain said the DM that the honorarium received from the State budget has been paid to ASHA workers until August. The incentives for ASHA workers for various programmes under NHM have been paid until June. The demand for incentives for the months of July, August and September has been submitted to the NHM Office in Uttarakhand. This payment will be processed as soon as the budget is received, he added.

## SCPCR tells Education Dept to establish POCSO committees in schools

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) has directed the Education department to ensure the establishment of POCSO committees in both private and government schools. Member of the SCPCR, Vinod Kaparwan highlighted the increase in cases of unacceptable activities such as sexual harassment and ragging in schools. Consequently, the establishment of the POCSO committees has become crucial in schools. Following recent incidents, the commission has sent a letter to the Education department to monitor and establish POCSO committees in private schools as well, he added. Kaparwan further noted that many schools in Dehradun claim to have a POCSO committee but do not follow the required procedures. He emphasised that it is customary for the committee members to conduct regular meetings once the committee is established. He further added that instructions have also been given to the Education department to ensure

the establishment of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) in both private and government schools. He emphasised that failure to comply with this directive will result in strict actions being taken by the commission.

Commenting about the recent incident of ragging at the Welhams Boys school, Kaparwan noted during the inspection that the school lacked a POCSO committee on its premises. As a result, the commission has summoned them to provide their legal documents on September 20. Additionally, approximately 10 schools in the Dehradun district have been summoned on the same date for the establishment of a POCSO committee, he informed.

It can be recalled that recently the chairperson of the SCPCR Geeta Khanna also prioritised the proper implementation of the POCSO committee at the private school, along with teacher training for the functioning of the POCSO Committee.

## U'khand Govt should educate devotees about Ganesh Visarjan

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The State government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should take the lead in educating devotees about the importance of not causing harm to water bodies during Ganesh Visarjan, the experts said. This year, the Ganesh Chaturthi festival began on September 7 and saw an increase in enthusiasm among the city resi-

to understand the importance of water bodies in their lives. He noted that idols made of plaster and cement dissolve in water over time, posing a threat to water bodies. The pollution caused by harmful materials and toxic colours affects aquatic animals and indirectly impacts the health of the local community. Further, the delay in idol de-

Additionally, the secretary of the Society of Pollution and Environmental Conservation Scientists (SPECS) Brij Mohan Sharma said that the use of toxic colours during Ganesh Visarjan can have adverse effects on water bodies. He highlighted that Ganesh idols crafted from plaster and cement can also harm water bodies, leading to

## CM celebrates birth anniversary with visually impaired students

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami celebrated his birthday in a unique manner on Monday by spending time with the visually impaired students. He visited the National Institute for Empowerment of Persons with Visual Disabilities (NIEPVD) in the morning and celebrated his birthday by cake cutting and

dents. The CM added that the word Divyang is made prevalent by PM Modi. He said that the State is facing the challenge posed by the natural disasters at many places and requested the people and his supporters to visit the disaster affected areas and help the people. He said that PM Modi has professed that the third decade of the



distributing sweets. Speaking on the occasion, the CM said that he feels happy whenever he meets the students of the NIEPVD. Wishing for the bright future of the students, Dhami expressed confidence that they will succeed in whichever field they choose in life.

He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi is working for the overall development of the Divyang stu-

21st century will be of Uttarakhand and the State government is striving hard to fulfil this dream of the PM. The students of the model school of the institute presented a souvenir made by them to the CM on his birthday.

The CM inaugurated a football tournament of the institute on the occasion. Cabinet minister Ganesh Joshi, vice chairperson of the State disaster management committee Vinay Rohilla, Mahanagar president Sidharth Agarwal, principal of the institute Amit Sharma, BJP leaders PK Agarwal, Laxmi Agarwal and others were present on the occasion.

## Transport department to hold counselling for students safety in school vehicles

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

In response to rising concerns over child safety considering recent sexual assault cases, the Transport department in Dehradun will hold counselling and training sessions for school vehicle operators in October. This session will cover safety protocols, child psychology, appropriate behaviour, communication with children and topics such as good touch and bad touch with guidance provided by experts, the regional transport officer (Enforcement) Shailesh Tiwari said. He told The Pioneer that the department has initiated new measures to ensure a secure environment for students commuting in school vehicles such as vans and buses. Initially, the department will be focussing on vans as they are compact and children are more vulnerable in them in comparison to buses. A meeting was held with school vehicle owners and van drivers last week in which several important aspects related to the safe transportation of school children were discussed.

He said, "The meeting focused on how drivers should behave with children, leading to a decision to initiate a verification drive in coordination with the police. This drive will include a thorough inspection of drivers' licenses and Aadhaar cards to ensure the authenticity of the vehicle operators. We will also provide them counselling under the supervision of experts." He said that the department has issued key instructions to the van drivers. "We asked



them to ensure that no female students are to be seated in the driver's cabin. If the vehicle carries only female students, a partition or grill must be installed between the driver and the students. The owner's and driver's name along with a mobile number should be clearly displayed on the outside of the vehicle. A list containing the names of all students, their parents' names, addresses and mobile numbers must be kept in the vehicle for inspection by authorities if required. The vehicle owner should avoid frequent changes of drivers. Owners are also responsible for conducting independent verification of drivers and keeping copies of their Aadhaar cards and driving licenses. Tiwari said that the RTO enforcement team will also start checking vehicles this week and raise awareness among parents to ensure these instructions are being followed in Dehradun. These measures are

being put in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students commuting to and from schools, providing peace of mind to parents and guardians across Dehradun. Tiwari also appealed to parents to remain vigilant, advising them to gather complete information about the vehicle owners and drivers and regularly check in with their children about the drivers' behaviour.



dents. However, it has been noted that during the immersion of Ganesh idols in various water bodies of Dehradun in areas including Maldevta, Tapkeshwar and others, people contaminate the water with colours and other materials. Experts have emphasised the detrimental effects of toxic colours and Ganesh idols made from harmful substances on the water bodies.

Talking to The Pioneer, assistant professor of geology at Doon University, Rajeev Saran Ahluwalia expressed his appreciation for religious rituals but emphasised the need for people

composition can reduce oxygen levels in the water. To combat these issues, Ahluwalia suggested using organic materials for idols and opting for immersion in a small home tank instead of water bodies. He stressed the importance of government and NGOs working together to raise awareness about not polluting water bodies during activities like Ganesh Visarjan. Instead of conducting Visarjan at water bodies, the government can consider restricting this practice and designate specific areas for devotees to dissolve Ganesh idols in water, suggested the individual, he added.

negative impacts on flora, fauna, biodiversity and more. Sharma recommended that individuals should take responsibility for environmental health by choosing eco-friendly Ganesh idols made from materials like cow dung and clay. Moreover, he urged the State government to impose restrictions on the sale of Ganesh idols made from harmful materials to protect water bodies. Sharma also stressed the need for collaboration between NGOs and the government to educate the public about the significance of preserving water bodies.



Municipal Corporation of Dehradun officials interact with a local resident while checking sanitation in the city on Monday

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Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Grihum Housing Finance Limited (formerly known as Poonawalla Housing Finance Limited) as the name Poonawalla Housing Finance Limited changed to Grihum Housing Finance Limited with effect from 17 Nov 2023 (Previously known as Magma Housing Finance Limited and originally incorporated with name of GE Money Housing Finance Public Limited Company) herein after referred as Secured Creditor of the above Corporate/ Register office under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (hereinafter referred as the "said Act") and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued a demand notice below dated calling upon the below Borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.	The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules 2002 on this 12th Day of September 2024.	The borrowers in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of secured Creditor the amount and interest thereon.	The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. Details of Property taken in possession are herein below.		
SR. NO.	NAME OF BORROWERS	DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY	POSSESSION TAKEN DATE	DATE OF STATUTORY DEMAND NOTICE	AMOUNT IN DEMAND NOTICE (RS.)
1.	KAMNI YADAV, OM PRAKASH YADAV	All That Piece And Parcel Of Residential House On Part Of Plot No-7, Khasra No 1677 M Situated At Vivek Kunj, Vill- Salempur Mehdood-2, Pargana-Roorkee, Tehsil & Dist- Haridwar Adm. 644. Sq. Ft. City Of Haridwar, Salempur Chowk, Uttarakhand-249402 East By:- Plot No-6, West By :- Property Of Sheela Devi, North By:-Property Of Sheela Devi, South By:-Rasta Z2 Ft Wd.	12-09-2024	08-12-2023	Loan No. HM0173H18100536 Rs.1076483.85/-Rupees Ten Lakh Seventy Six Thousand Four Hundred EightyThree Paise Eighty Five Only) payable as on 08/12/2023 along with interest @ 15.5 p.a. till the realization.
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The General public is informed that I have changed my name from Pradeep Kumar (old name) to Pradeep Kumar Khattri (new name). In future, I should be known as Pradeep Kumar Khattri S/o Rattan Singh Khattri, R/o Near OBC Bank Balawala, Dehradun Uttarakhand

As per my son's Army record, my incorrect name recorded as Pratap Singh, correct name is Partap Singh Aadhar No. 719680894936 F/o 18000015X Hav Sunil Kumar, VILL- Anchra Kalan, POST-TEH- Safidra, DIST- Jind, Haryana -126112

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## Uttarakhand to give 50 % subsidy in electricity bill to 11.50 lakh consumers

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

In a major decision, the Uttarakhand government has decided to slash the electricity bill of the consumers using less than 100 units of electricity in a month by half.

The chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami announced this measure for 11.50 lakh Below Poverty Line (BPL) electricity consumers in the State on his birthday on Monday. The CM said that the State government will give 50 per cent subsidy to the consumers using less than 100 units in a month. In the snow covered areas of high Himalayan mountain ranges the consumers using up to 200 units in a month will get the benefit of the subsidy. The consumers having maximum demand of one Kilowatt will be eligible for the subsidy.

The CM made this announcement in a programme organized at his residence on Monday. He also unveiled five Asian Development Bank (ADB) funded projects of the Power Transmission Corporation of Uttarakhand Limited (PTCUL) on the occasion.

These projects include construction of 220 KV GIS



substation at Selaqui and associated power line works, 132 KV GIS substations at Aara Ghar, Lohaghat, Dhaulakheda and Khatima II.

The CM also inaugurated the centrally funded RDSS scheme in which 16 lakh smart meters will be installed in the Garhwal and Kumaon circles of the Uttarakhand Power Corporation Limited (UPCL) on the occasion. The ADB funded Uttarakhand climate resilient power system development project was also inaugurated by the CM. The power lines in Dehradun city will be installed underground under the project. The total project cost is Rs

977 Crores. The CM also handed over the possession letters to 101 beneficiaries of the Laxmi Awas Yojana (under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana) of Shikarpur, Roorkee and Haridwar. Speaking on the occasion, the CM said that the State government is moving forward in the path of development in every field. He said that the power projects unveiled

today will help in improving power distribution and supply. This will also help in strengthening the economy of the State. He added that the installation of the smart meters will help in solving the problems of the people and strengthen the power supply system.

Speaking on the occasion cabinet minister Premchand Agarwal said that the CM has given many gifts to the people of the State on his birthday. He said that the CM has developed a new work culture in the State.

Cabinet minister Rekha Arya, Rajya Sabha MP Rekha Mahendra Bhatt, Rajya Sabha MP Kalpana Saini, chief secretary Radha Raturi, secretary R Meenakshi Sundaram, UPCL MD Anil Kumar, PTCUL MD PC Dhyani and others were present on the occasion.

## Haridwar jewellery heist- One killed in encounter, another arrested

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

One accused robber was shot dead in an encounter on Sunday night while the other was arrested hours later on Monday afternoon in Haridwar district. The duo was going on a motorcycle when they were hailed by the police for a check, but the duo tried to escape and shot at the police. Addressing a Press conference in the Police headquarters in Dehradun on Monday, the officiating director general of police Abhinav Kumar said that the encounter occurred in the Bahadrabad area around 10:30 PM on Sunday, as police chased down suspects involved in the daylight robbery at Shri Balaji Jewellers in Jwalapur, Haridwar, on September 1. Kumar said,

"The police team was conducting a routine check of suspicious persons and vehicles at BHEL junction. The police attempted to stop two men on a motorcycle without a num-



ber plate, both of whom had covered their faces with white cloth. The pillion rider fired at the police team in an attempt to escape toward Bahadrabad market. The police pursued the suspects, who fled in the direction of Bhagwanpur Road. The suspects' motorcycle slipped on a speed breaker near a bridge that forced them to abandon the vehicle and flee on foot. They fired at

the police while running toward the forest. The officers, after issuing repeated warnings to surrender, returned fire in self defense, injuring one suspect. The second suspect escaped under the cover of darkness." He said that a forensic team was called to the scene and a bag containing jewellery looted on September 1 was recovered. The injured suspect, identified as Satender

Pal alias Lucky (32) from Muktsar, Punjab, was declared dead at the hospital. He had a reward of Rs one lakh on his head and had previous criminal cases registered in Punjab.

The police also recovered a .32-bore pistol, along with live and empty cartridges and a motorcycle. Kumar said that on Monday at around 1:45 PM, Haridwar police arrested two more suspects, Gurdeep Singh alias Moni and Jaideep Singh alias Mana, from near Khayati Dhaba.

The duo, also residents of Muktsar, Punjab, was found with eight stolen gold chains from the robbery. The police recovered jewellery worth about Rs 50 lakh from the three accused. The DGP said that efforts are ongoing to apprehend two remaining suspects, Subhash from Delhi and Aman from Pindi, Punjab.

## Two minor sisters jump in Ganga to save brother, still missing

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Two girls were swept away by the strong currents of the Ganga river in the vicinity of Geeta Kutir Ashram near Haripur Kalan in Raiwala, Dehradun on Monday morning. The officials informed that the incident occurred at about 11 AM when three siblings went to bathe at the Ganga Ghat in Raiwala.

The younger brother was swept away by the strong currents, prompting both the sisters to jump into the river to

Disaster Response Force (SDRF) rushed to the site. A search operation, led by sub inspector of SDRF Pankaj Kharola, was conducted late till evening using rafts and deep diving equipment. However, the rescue team did not find either of the missing girls.

The officials said that it is quite unlikely that the girls would have survived but they will resume the search for them on Tuesday. Besides this, the SDRF's comman-



save him. Though the boy was rescued by locals, the two sisters were swept away in the river, the officials said.

They stated that upon receiving the information, the local police and the State

dant Arpan Yaduvanshi also appealed to the people to not go near water bodies and asked parents to refrain children from visiting such places without any adult supervision, especially during monsoon.

## Govt teachers suspend agitation following CM's assurance


PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Rajkeeya Shikshak Sangh (RSS) suspended the fast unto death at the State Education Directorate on Monday. The Education director Liladhar Vyas offered fruit juice to the agitating teachers to break the fast.

The initiative to break the fast of the teachers was taken by the chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami who sent his coordinator Dalbir Singh Danu to the agitation site of the teachers. The president of the RSS Ram Singh Chauhan said that the association is suspending its agitation on the assurance given by CM Dhami and senior officers of the department. He claimed that the representative of the CM has given an assurance that the State government


will start proceedings to annul the Uttarakhand State education teaching cadre service regulation- 2022. Chauhan said that the government has also assured that the interests of the teachers will be protected. The RSS started its agitation on the demand for cancellation of the Headmaster recruitment examination and starting the process of departmental promotions.

Under pressure from the agitating teachers the government cancelled the headmaster recruitment examination but the RSS continued its protest demanding that 100 per cent posts of Principals and headmasters in the government schools should be filled by promotion.



Government of India

# Most significant decision of 100 Days of Modi 3.0



## 3 Crore New Houses with Amenities for the Nation with a budget of ₹5.36 Lakh Crore

by Prime Minister Narendra Modi

<p>For the beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Gramin</p> <h3>2 Crore New Houses</h3> <p>Distribution of <b>15 Lakh</b> Awas sanction letters</p> <p>Inauguration of <b>36 Lakh</b> completed houses</p> <p>Digital transfer of the first instalment of <b>₹3180 crore</b> directly into the bank accounts of 10 lakh beneficiaries</p> <p>Launch of <b>Awas+ 2024</b> mobile App</p>	<p>For the beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban</p> <h3>1 Crore New Houses</h3> <p>Grih Pravesh of <b>4 Lakh</b> PMAY-Urban Houses</p> <p>Distribution of House Keys to beneficiaries</p> <p>Launch of PMAY-Urban 2.0 Scheme Guidelines</p>
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**Shri Raghubar Das**  
Hon'ble Governor, Odisha

**Shri Mohan Charan Majhi**  
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha

**Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan**  
Hon'ble Union Minister of Rural Development and Agriculture

**Shri Manohar Lal**  
Hon'ble Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs and Power

**Shri Ashwini Vaishnav**  
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# Naval commanders conference to address China, Israel-Hamas conflict



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

China's growing assertiveness in the Ind-Pacific region and South China Sea and ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict will figure prominently in the Naval commanders' conference here from September 17 to 20. Giving details, officials said here on Monday, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will address the second edition of Naval Commanders' Conference. It is the apex level biannual event facilitating deliberations on significant strategic,

operational and administrative issues between the Naval Commanders. Held against the backdrop of evolving geo-political and geo-strategic dynamics, regional challenges and complexity in maritime security situation in West Asia, the Conference plays a crucial role in shaping future course of Indian Navy. During the Conference, Rajnath will address the Naval Commanders on matters pertaining to national security and national expectations. The Chief of Defence Staff along with the Chiefs of Indian Army

and Indian Air Force will engage with Naval Commanders to foster collaborations amongst the three Services across spectrum of conflict and convergence towards theaterisation. The Conference will commence with the inaugural address by the Chief of the Naval Staff and he will review major Operational, Materiel, Logistic, HR Development, Training and Administrative activities pursued by the Indian Navy over last six months and deliberate upon key milestones to be crossed to safeguard maritime interests.

The Indian Navy has responded with strength and resolve against emerging threats of drones and missiles affecting safety of trade, demonstrating its capability as Preferred Security Responder in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The Commanders will also review the ongoing Naval projects to enhance indigenisation through 'Make in India' in consonance with the vision of complete 'Aatmanirbharta' by 2047.

Towards Navy's commitment to protect India's maritime interests in the region, the Conference would witness comprehensive review of the Operational preparedness, inter alia discussions on the Navy's capability enhancement plan, promoting national vision of indigenisation, self-reliance and realising combat effectiveness of Naval forces. The Commanders' Conference as pivotal platform upholds Navy's commitment to safeguard India's maritime interests and Navy's status as a 'combat ready, credible, cohesive and future ready force'.

# Air Force Association celebrates 44th Annual Day



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Air Force Association (AFA) celebrated its 44th Annual Day on Monday. As part of the celebrations, the President of Air Force Association, Air Chief Marshal R K S Bhaduria (Retired) laid a wreath at the National War Memorial here on behalf of all IAF Veterans in the morning to honour those Armed Forces personnel who have made the supreme sacrifice for the nation. This was followed by the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held at Air Force Auditorium, Subroto Park, New

Delhi on the same day, IAF said. Chief of the Air Staff (CAS), Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari was the Chief Guest for the AGM. The meeting also had several retired Chiefs of the Air Staff, and serving officers in attendance.

Air Force Association is a welfare organization in the non-governmental sector, actively involved in the welfare of air veterans and their families. The Association is also deeply committed in alleviating the sufferings of widows and destitute children. The Association was established in 1980 under the patronage of Marshal of the Air Force Arjan Singh. It has 20 branches spread all over the country. In addition, it has two branches in UK and Australia. It has nearly 98,494 Air Veteran members and 7,470 Spouse members. Chief of the Air Staff (CAS), Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari was the Chief Guest for the AGM. The meeting also had several retired Chiefs of the Air Staff, and serving officers in attendance.



# SC to hear muslim plea on Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah dispute

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Tuesday a plea of the Muslim side against the Allahabad High Court order rejecting their petition challenging the maintainability of 18 cases related to the Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah dispute in Mathura. A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Sanjay Kumar will hear the plea filed by the Committee of Management Trust, Shahi Masjid Idgah against the August 1 order of the high court. The mosque management committee's plea has been filed through advocate RHA Sikander. On August 1, the high court rejected the plea challenging the maintainability of 18 cases related to the temple-mosque dispute in Mathura, and ruled that the "religious character" of Shahi Idgah needs to be determined. The high court had dismissed the Muslim side's contention that the suits filed by Hindu litigants relating to the dispute over the Shahi Idgah mosque complex adjoining the Krishna Janmabhoomi temple violated the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, and were thus not maintainable. The 1991 Act prohibits changing the religious character of any shrine from what existed on the day of the country's Independence. It exempted only the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute from its purview. The cases filed by the Hindu side seek the "removal" of the Aurangzeb-era mosque they claim was built after demolishing a temple that once stood there. In its ruling, the high court had said the 1991 Act did not define the term "religious character" and the "disputed" place cannot have a dual religious character -- of a temple and a mosque, which are "adverse to each other" -- at the same

time. "Either the place is a temple or a mosque. Thus, I find that the religious character of the disputed place as it existed on August 15, 1947 is to be determined by documentary as well as oral evidence led by both the parties," the high court judge had said. Justice Mayank Kumar Jain of the high court had concluded that the cases "do not appear to be barred by any provisions of the Wafk Act, 1995; the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991; the Specific Relief Act, 1963; the Limitation Act, 1963 and Order XIII Rule 3A of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908." On August 9, the top court had extended its stay till November on the operation of the Allahabad High Court order that allowed a court-monitored survey of the Shahi Idgah mosque complex. A bench headed by Justice Sanjiv Khanna had ordered continuation of the stay the apex court had imposed on January 16 on the operation of the December 14, 2023 order of the high court. The high court in its December 14, 2023 order had allowed a court-monitored survey of the Shahi Idgah mosque complex and agreed to the appointment of a court commissioner to oversee it. The Hindu side claims the premises hold signs suggesting that a temple once existed at the site. A bunch of petitions has been filed by the mosque management committee in the apex court including the one challenging the May 26, 2023 order of the high court transferring to itself all matters related to the dispute pending before a Mathura court. In Mathura, a suit was filed in the court of Civil Judge Senior Division (III) for shifting the Shahi Idgah mosque, claiming that it was constructed on a part of the 13.37 acre land of the Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi Trust.



# Cambridge researchers unveil blueprint behind floral patterns in Hibiscus

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Do you know flowers not only captivate with their colors but also guide pollinators like bees with their intricate patterns, much like a road map to their nectar? A team of researchers from the University of Cambridge's Sainsbury Laboratory has unveiled a hidden blueprint behind these floral designs, particularly in hibiscus flowers (Gudhal in Hindi). They found that bees prefer larger bullseyes over smaller ones and fly 25% faster between artificial flower discs with larger bullseyes -- potentially boosting efficiency for both bees and blossoms. This blueprint, laid down early in petal formation, determines the size and shape of the eye-catching bullseye patterns that can significantly influence a flower's appeal to pollinators, said the study published in Science Advances. "Remarkably, bees are drawn to larger bullseyes, which could boost their foraging efficiency by 25%. This discovery not only deepens our understanding of how plants attract pollinators but also reveals the sophisticated strategies flowers use to evolve and thrive in their ecological niches," explained Dr Edwige Moyroud, main author of the study understanding the mechanisms underlying pattern formation in petals. The researchers discovered that

a pre-pattern forms on the petal surface very early in the flower's development, long before the petal displays any discernible color. "The petal acts like a 'paint-by-numbers' canvas, where different regions are predetermined to develop specific colours and textures long before they start looking different from one another." The research also revealed that plants can precisely regulate and alter the shape and size of these patterns through various mechanisms, which could influence plant evolution. By refining these designs, plants might enhance their ability to attract pollinators or potentially draw different insect species. "If a trait can be produced by different methods, it gives evolution more options to modify it and create diversity, similar to an artist with a large palette or a builder with an extensive set of tools. By studying how bullseye patterns change, what we are really trying to understand is how nature generates biodiversity." Lead author Dr. Lucie Riglet said in the study that she explored the mechanism behind hibiscus petal patterns by studying the development of petals in three hibiscus flowers that had identical overall sizes but varied bullseye patterns. She observed that the pre-pattern starts as a tiny, crescent-shaped area long before the bullseye becomes visible on petals smaller than 0.2mm.

# President Murmu to inaugurate 8th India Water Week 2024

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu will inaugurate the four-day 8th India Water Week 2024 to be kicked off from Tuesday, bringing international and domestic water experts under a platform to deliberate on issues beyond conventional solutions and exploring innovative approaches to address the complexities of water management in the 21st century. Addressing the media during the Curtain Raiser Press Conference here on Monday, Secretary (Jal Shakti) Debashree Mukherjee said that the theme of the mega event is 'Partnerships and Cooperation for Inclusive Water Development and Management'. "Our theme underscores a



fundamental truth: achieving sustainable water management requires collaboration across all sectors and levels," she added. Mukherjee further informed that the event, the eighth in the series, will be inaugurated in the presence of Union Minister of Jal Shakti CR Paatil and Minister of State Raj Bhushan Choudhary. It is being organized by the Ministry of Jal Shakti. The event will feature distin-

guished delegates, including experts in the field of water resources from various countries, as well as ministers and senior officers from Central and State Governments, faculty from various academic institutions, representatives from non-governmental organizations, and civil society. The aim is to initiate regular and systematic discussions and talks with eminent stakeholders through seminars, exhibi-

tions, and other parallel sessions to build public awareness and gain support for implementing key strategies for the conservation, preservation, and optimal use of available water, said a statement here. At the event, while representatives from the government sector will share their vision and perspectives on the water sector, global experts will present their insightful and thought-provoking ideas. The Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj, participating as a partner ministry, will showcase its efforts to advance sustainable water practices in rural India. It is promoting Water-Sufficient Villages as part of its initiative on the Localization of Sustainable Development Goals through targeted panchayat development plans by converging resources.

# Congress claims Modi in his 100 days proved weak PM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With Modi 3.0 completing 100 days, the Congress on Monday claimed that Narendra Modi in his third term had proven to be a "weak" prime minister who was dependent on crutches and setting new records for U-turns. Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinete said the past 100 days had weighed heavily on the nation's farmers, youth, women, infrastructure, Railways, and overall peace. These hundred days have proven that Modi has neither a solution nor a vision for the country's problems, she said at a press conference at the AICC headquarters. Modi's "habit" of turning a blind eye to issues and running away from challenges continues to persist, she



claimed. "Each moment of the government in these 100 days has been marked by instability, indecision and immaturity. There have been multiple attempts to inflate a punctured balloon but the thorn pricked by the public in the Lok Sabha elections, has not given Narendra Modi any chance to rise again," she said. "Do you remember the tall claims made during the election campaign that Narendra Modi was planning for the first 100 days? Where is that plan now?

Because from day one, Modi has proven to be a weak prime minister, dependent on crutches, setting new records for U-turns," Shrinete said and cited alleged U-turns on issues of lateral entry in civil services, broadcast bill, Waqf bill, indoxation and NPS. Posing questions to the prime minister, Shrinete asked if he had any plan or vision for the next five years. "Do you have a plan to improve relations with our neighbouring countries? Do you have a plan to address the economy, income inequality, unemployment, inflation, or women's safety?" Shrinete asked. "Besides blowing the whistle on corruption, what have you done? In fact, all those you called corrupt are now in the BJP. Are you planning to legitimise corruption now?"

# SC to hear pleas on demolition of properties of person accused of crime

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Tuesday pleas which have raised grievances that properties of persons, who are accused of some crime, were being demolished in several States. While hearing these petitions on September 2, the apex court had questioned how can anybody's house be demolished just because he was an accused. The apex court had said it proposes to lay down certain guidelines on the issue that would be enforceable across the country. "How can anybody's house be demolished only because he is an accused? Even if he is a convict, still it can't be done without following the procedure as

prescribed by law," observed the bench comprising Justices B R Gavi and K V Viswanathan. However, the court dais it will not protect any unauthorised construction or encroachment on public roads. "We propose to lay down certain guidelines on 'pan-India basis' so that the concerns with regard to the issues raised are taken care of," the bench had said on September 2. It had asked the counsel appearing for the parties to give suggestions so that the court can frame appropriate guidelines. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for Uttar Pradesh, had referred to an earlier affidavit filed by the state in the matter. He had said the affidavit states

that merely because a person was alleged to have been a part of some offence can never be a ground for demolition of his immovable property. According to Mehta, the state has said demolition of an immovable property can take place "only for violation of and in accordance with the procedure prescribed in the respective applicable municipal law or law governing development authorities of the area". The top law officer had said no immovable property can be demolished solely on the ground that the owner or occupant of such property was involved in a criminal offence. The counsel appearing for one of the petitioners had said almost every state was now indulging in this and demolishing properties.

# Congress to chair external affairs, agriculture, rural development committees in LS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress will chair the parliamentary standing committees on external affairs, agriculture, and rural development in the Lok Sabha and education in the Rajya Sabha, party sources said on Monday, with talks between the government and the opposition over the panels' chairship concluding. In all, the Congress is set to have the chairship of four department-related standing committees — three in the Lok Sabha and one in the Rajya Sabha. The Congress will chair the Department Related Standing Committee on External Affairs; Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food Processing; Rural



Development and Panchayati Raj in the Lok Sabha; and Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports in the Rajya Sabha, a source told. Significantly, the Congress will chair the crucial committee on external affairs after a gap of five years. Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor headed

the panel on external affairs between September 2014 and May 2019. The Congress last held the chairship of two department-related standing committees in the Rajya Sabha and one in the Lok Sabha. While Jairam Ramesh headed the committee on Science and Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Abhishek Singhvi chaired the panel on Commerce. Tharoor headed the Committee on Chemicals and Fertilisers in the Lok Sabha. Talks have been going on for quite some time over chairship of the department-related standing committees, with the government and opposition bargaining hard over control of key committees such as external affairs, defence, finance and home.

# Varicose veins linked to serious health risks, new treatments enhance safety, effectiveness

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Often dismissed as merely a cosmetic nuisance, Varicose veins, the enlarged and twisted veins typically found in the legs, can pose significant health risks and should not be underestimated, health experts have warned. For individuals with varicose veins face up to a five-fold increased risk of developing deep vein thrombosis (DVT), a potentially life-threatening condition. Varicose veins are also linked to peripheral arterial disease and other vascular disorders, caution health experts. In a study published online in Cureus, Chukwuyem Ekhaton, Neuro-Oncology from New York Institute of Technology, College of Osteopathic Medicine, Old Westbury, USA said while some individuals remain asymptomatic, others experience discomfort such as

pain, itching, and throbbing. "If left untreated, chronic venous insufficiency can progress to more severe stages, leading to complications like edema, skin changes, ulcers, and bleeding. Recent advancements in treatment have enhanced safety, effectiveness, and long-term success, said co-author Sophia B Bellegarde, Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, American University of Antigua, Coolidge, ATG. Dr. Vimal Bhandari, former head of the National Organ Transplant and Tissue Organisation (NOTTO) and Professor of Surgery at ESI Hospital and Medical College, explained, "The condition arises when the valves within veins fail to function properly, leading to blood pooling and causing the veins to become twisted and enlarged. This malfunction is not only a cosmetic issue but a



precursor to serious complications if left untreated." He advised seeking medical attention if varicose veins cause discomfort, swelling, or affect daily activities. Symptoms such as persistent pain, swelling, skin ulcers, sudden vein enlargement, or changes in skin color or texture should prompt a consultation with a healthcare provider. Early intervention can prevent complications such as venous ulcers, redness, eczema, and, in severe

cases, ruptured veins. Diagnosis of varicose veins and related complications often involves a Doppler ultrasound, which helps detect issues like DVT. Treatments include modern techniques such as radiofrequency ablation, which burns the affected veins to close them off and improve blood flow, said Dr Achintya Sharma, Senior Consultant and Incharge of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery at Max Hospital and Tirath Ram Shah

Hospital. He highlighted the prevalence of varicose veins, noting they affect approximately 40-60% of women, often due to factors like pregnancy and weight gain, and 15-30% of men. "Modern methods focus on minimally invasive procedures rather than traditional invasive surgeries. Options include compression therapy, sclerotherapy, and laser therapy. Sclerotherapy involves injecting a solution into the vein to cause it to collapse and fade over time." Dr Aakash Patel from Shalby Hospitals, Ahmedabad talked about the Glue therapy, a minimally invasive and highly effective solution for treating varicose veins. He said that the therapy allows patients to return to their daily activities with minimal downtime. It has been effectively used in the United States and Europe for the last 5 years.

# I want Haryana to be number one once again: Congress veteran Hooda

PTI N ROHTAK

"I want to fight this battle for myself but for you... I want Haryana to be number one once again." Congress veteran Bhopinder Singh Hooda declared from the dais while addressing a poll rally in his home constituency Garhi Sampla-Kiloi here a few days ago. The former Haryana chief minister, who turned 77 on Sunday, has remained a four-time MP from Rohtak and defeated former deputy prime minister Devi Lal from the parliamentary seat in the 1990s. Although the Congress has made it clear that its MLAs and the high command will pick the chief minister if the party wins the elections, Jat stalwart Hooda is virtually the face of the Congress for the upcoming Assembly polls. The Congress is contesting 89 seats - except Bhiwani which it has left for the CPI(M) --

and the majority of these have gone to Hooda loyalists or those considered close to him. Besides, the party has re-fielded all 28 sitting MLAs, most of whom owe allegiance to Hooda. In the recently concluded Lok Sabha polls, barring the Sirsa seat contested and won by his bete noire Kumari Selja, Hooda's choice prevailed in the remaining eight of the nine constituencies from where the Congress contested. It won five seats, including Sirsa, while its INDIA bloc ally AAP unsuccessfully fought the Kurukshetra seat. In the Assembly polls, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is fighting solo after talks with the Congress to stitch an alliance did not materialise. It is believed that Hooda was opposed to any tie-up with the Arvind Kejriwal-led party for the Assembly polls. Notwithstanding opposition from some of his detractors

within the party, Hooda has managed to maintain a tight grip on the affairs of the Haryana Congress. The Garhi Sampla-Kiloi assembly segment, a Jat-dominated rural constituency in Rohtak from where the former chief minister is seeking a re-election, came into being in 2007, following the delimitation of constituencies. It is considered as a "gadhi" (bastion) of the Hooda family. Before the delimitation, this seat was known as Kiloi. In 2005, the Congress high command handpicked Hooda, who was then a Rohtak MP, to be the chief minister of the state after the party returned to power winning 67 seats. Hooda had edged out party veteran Bhajan Lal from the chief ministerial race and remained in office till 2014. After filing his nomination papers last week, Hooda told the people of his constituency, "You gave me a chance.



Whatever I am today, it is due to you and your blessings". He said even at this age, he wanted to fight an "aar paar ki ladai (do-or-die battle)", not for himself, but for the people of the state and sought their support to oust the BJP from power. "I want our state to be number one once again in all spheres," he asserted. Hooda reiterated that in the next month's elections, people will "reject the vote katu (vote cutter) parties" and there will be a direct fight between the BJP and the Congress, which has been out of power for more than a decade. Asked how confident he is about Congress' victory, Hooda said, "We will win with a big majority. Chhattis biradari (people of all sections) have made up their minds to bring Congress back

to power. The BJP is on its way out and the Congress is coming back to power." Hooda said when he got the opportunity to run the government, Haryana was way ahead in various developmental parameters -- per capita income, investments, law and order, employment generation, welfare of farmers and poor, among others. "But today, the state has fallen behind. Unemployment is at its peak, crime is increasing and people are feeling insecure," he said. Hooda said the people are fed up with the 10-year rule of the BJP. Slamming the BJP's claims of ensuring a transparent administration, equitable development and jobs on merit, the Congress leader said, "Everyone knows their claims on development are hollow and this government has been hit by various scams". "But they are experts in event management and they always

try to cover up their failures," he said. Hooda has assured doubling of pension for the elderly, filling up of two lakh "vacant" posts, 300 units of free electricity and gas cylinders at Rs 500 each, and restoration of the old pension scheme for government employees if the Congress comes to power. The BJP has fielded 35-year-old Manju Hooda, Rohtak Zila Parishad chairperson, against the senior Congress leader in Garhi Sampla-Kiloi. Asked if she considers the contest a challenge, Manju Hooda said, "I have been among the people and getting their work done (as Zila Parishad chairperson). I have ensured development. So, I don't look at it as a challenge. I trust the hard work which I have been putting in and I am confident that the people will give their blessings to me," she said. Before the withdrawal of nominations, 11 candidates

from the INLD, the JJP, the AAP and some Independents were in the fray from the constituency. Among the Independents is 26-year-old Amit Hooda, a commerce graduate, who is currently pursuing his post-graduation. "I come from a non-political background and this is my first election. I have always been motivated by my grandfather who did a lot of social service. I also wanted to do something for my people, so that is the inspiration behind my fighting election," he said. Meanwhile, Rajender, a Congress supporter claimed that Hooda will win by a huge margin as Garhi Sampla-Kiloi is his pocket borough. A BJP supporter, however, claimed that Manju Hooda would emerge victorious as she has the support of the people, especially the youth, due to her work and the development carried out by the BJP government in the state.

## BJP may back sitting MLA, withdrawn nomination: Jangra

PTI CHANDIGARH

Rohitash Jangra on Monday said he has withdrawn his nomination and hinted that the party may back sitting MLA Gopal Kanda, who has been supporting the state government. Kanda is the supremo of the Haryana Lokhit Party (HLP) and is seeking re-election from the Sirsa Assembly seat. "I have withdrawn my nomination. The decision has been taken in the interest of the state and the country... We have to ensure a 'Congress-mukt Haryana'," Jangra told PTI over the phone. Asked if he had withdrawn in the HLP leader's favour, Jangra said, "Gopal Kanda has supported us (BJP) for five years. We have taken this decision for Sirsa's development." However, Interacting with



reporters in Sirsa later, Jangra said, "The party had given the ticket and it was the party's directive (regarding withdrawing of nomination)". The BJP, like the Congress, will now be contesting 89 of the 90 Assembly seats in the state. The Congress has left the Bhiwani seat for CPI(M).

Last week, the BJP released its third and final list of candidates for the Haryana polls, in which the party fielded Jangra from Sirsa. The Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) said on Thursday that it was extending support to Kanda in Sirsa. However, following the BJP's

withdrawal of its candidate, INLD leader Abhay Chautala said he would hold discussions with his party leaders to decide whether to continue supporting Kanda. "If they (BJP) have supported Gopal Kanda and if he has taken their support...I will speak to Kanda regarding this and discuss the issue within our party and then take a decision (on whether to continue support to Kanda)", Kanda told reporters while campaigning in his Ellenabad constituency in Sirsa district. The INLD is contesting the assembly polls in alliance with the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). Meanwhile, speaking to reporters in Sirsa after withdrawing his nomination, Jangra said he has been associated with the BJP for more than four decades and had fought the Zila Parishad polls in 1994. Senior BJP leader and former MP Ashok Tanwar, who

accompanied Jangra, said, "There is only one aim which is to form a BJP government for the third time and to have a Congress-mukt Bharat and Congress-mukt Sirsa". Reacting to Congress allegations that the BJP had "surrendered" before Kanda, Tanwar said, that the opposition party had surrendered before foreign powers. "On foreign soil, they give statements to weaken the country. And those who have accepted defeat can say anything. We have to keep the Congress at bay," he added. Polling for the 90 Assembly seats in Haryana will be held on October 5 and the votes will be counted on October 8. The ruling BJP is eyeing a hat-trick of wins but faces a stiff challenge from a resurgent Congress, which is looking to cash in on the anti-incumbency factor.

## Great need to improve basic facilities all over Gurugram: Badshahpur BJP candidate

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

BJP candidate from Badshahpur assembly constituency and former minister Rao Narbir Singh said that there is a great need to improve basic facilities all over Gurugram including Badshahpur. "Most of the government schools and hospitals here are in a bad condition. The weak hands leading Badshahpur during the last five years are responsible for these conditions. If the people of Badshahpur support him and send him to the assembly, then every government school in Gurugram will become a model school like a private school," he said. Rao Narbir Singh said that during the last 20 years, the condition of Gurugram has



changed rapidly. The population here has exceeded 30 lakhs but the resources are still limited. The common man of Gurugram is still not able to get the full benefit of government facilities because the arrangements here have never been given proper attention. He further said in 2014, the people of Badshahpur elected him to the Vidhan Sabha and the BJP government made him a cabinet minister. Singh, while explaining his plan, said that this time he

wants to improve the system of government schools and government medical facilities. There are 827 government schools in Gurugram. To make all these government schools model schools, cooperation will be taken from multinational companies. There are more than 400 MNC offices here, with whose help the condition of every government school will be improved and made the best," he added. Apart from this, it is necessary to have four civil hospitals in the four corners of Gurugram. "There should also be four vegetable markets here so that the people of this city with a population of millions do not have to face any kind of problem. I also want to build a dozen more underpasses and flyovers in Gurugram so that there is no problem at all," he asserted.

## Will try to make Gurugram most modern city in State: BJP candidate

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

BJP candidate from the Gurgaon seat, Mukesh Sharma, said that he will try to make Gurgaon the most modern city of the state; only then will Gurgaon be recognized on the lines of Indore in India and Singapore abroad. During a public meeting, he asserted that in the last 10 years, the saffron party has done a lot of work for Gurgaon, but being an industrial hub, the population of Gurgaon is increasing day by day. Accordingly, there is a need to increase the infrastructure in Gurgaon. "The city's bus stand is a basic problem in Gurgaon; for this, he is continuously making efforts, and after becoming an MLA, he is assuring that the bus stand of Gurgaon will be no less than an airport. Here, air-conditioned rooms, free Wi-Fi, clean toilets and drinking water will be arranged for



the passengers to sit," he said. He further said that there are big private hospitals in Gurgaon, which is also known as a medical hub. People come here for treatment not only from the country but from many countries, but economically weaker people can not afford these expensive, and due to this, they have to face serious diseases and some untoward incidents happen. "Soon there will be a grand government hospital in Gurgaon. Not only this, there will be a

very big medical college here, where people can get free treatment," he said. Apart from this, Deputy Commissioner and District Election Officer Gurugram, Nishant Kumar Yadav said a total of 47 candidates from the four assembly constituencies of the district are in the fray. He said that on Monday, 7 candidates from the Pataudi Assembly, 13 from the Badshahpur Assembly, 17 from the Gurgaon Assembly and 10 from the Sohna Assembly are in the poll battle.

## Last day of campaigning for J and K Assembly polls

PNS ■ JAMMU

The high-octane campaigning for all 24 Assembly constituencies spread across seven districts of Jammu and Kashmir came to a close on Monday evening with top leaders of the BJP, National Conference, Congress, Peoples Democratic Party, and a new entrant, the supremo of the Awami Ittehad Party making a last-minute effort to woo voters. The candidates conducted roadshows and public meetings before winding up their two-week-long hectic campaigning ahead of the first round of polling on September 18. The high-profile Assembly constituencies of Doda, Kishtwar, Banihal, Padder-Nagseni, Bhaderwah, Bijbehara-Srigufwara, Pulwama, and Kulgam are to be watched out in the first phase of polling in which over 23.27 lakh voters will decide the fate of 219 candidates in the fray.



Out of nine female candidates in the fray, five are contesting from the Kashmir division while four others are from the Jammu division. Candidates fighting elections from the Kashmir division include 37-year-old Iltija Mufti, daughter of PDP Chief and former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti from Bijbehara-Srigufwara constituency on Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) ticket, Afroza Bano as an independent from Kulgam and Sakeena Masood Itoo from D

H Pora constituency on National Conference ticket. The political parties have deployed a large number of women cadres to reach out to the women voters in their respective constituencies. Candidates contesting from the Jammu division include Shagun Parihar from Kishtwar on a BJP ticket, Meenakshi Bhagat on Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) from Bhaderwah, Meenakshi Kalra an independent candidate from Doda West, Pooja Thakur from Padder-Nagsani

on NC ticket. 29-year-old Shagun Parihar is challenging former minister Sajjad Ahmed Kitchloo of the National Conference while Pooja Thakur of NC is contesting against BJP organization secretary Sunil Sharma. Meanwhile, the Peoples Democratic Party has fielded its youth leader Waheed-ur-Rehman Parra from the South Kashmir constituency of Pulwama. He is fighting against Mohd Khalil Band of the National Conference. Parra unsuccessfully contested the Lok Sabha polls in May 2024. Another constituency of Pahalgam is witnessing a triangular contest between Altaf Ahmad Wani of the National Conference, Shabir Ahmed Sediqui of the PDP, and Rafi Ahmed Mir of JKAPNI. From Kulgam, CPI (M) leader Mohd Yusuf Tarigami is defending his turf for the fifth time in a row. Tarigami has won all four previous Assembly elections of 1996, 2002, 2008 and 2014. This time he is facing a tough

challenge from an Independent candidate Sayar Ahmad Reshi supported by the banned Jammat-e-Islami. The Kokernag Assembly segment, reserved as an ST category seat, is also witnessing an interesting contest between Zafar Ali Khatana of the National Conference and Haroon Rashid Khatana of the PDP. BJP has also fielded its candidate Roshan Hussain Shah Gojar. Six independent candidates are also in the fray from the reserved seat to try their luck. According to official sources, out of 23.27 lakh voters 5.66 lakh youths are eligible to exercise their electoral franchise during Phase-I polling. These 5.66 lakh young electors are between the age group of 18-29 and include 1,23,922 First Time Voters between the age of 18-19 years, with 65542 of them male and 58380 female electors. In Phase- I, 28,310 Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) and 15,774 voters above the age of 85 are eligible to cast their vote.

## Kin mourn deaths of ten people in three-storey house collapse

PNS ■ MEERUT

Never before had so many bodies lined up at the graveyard at the same time. Two days after a three-storey house collapsed, killing 10 people, residents of Zakir Colony recount with a shudder the loud explosion, the clouds of dust and the terrible aftermath of the tragedy. Not far away, seven-year-old Riya retells the horror of seeing her home crumble right in front of her eyes, killing her father and sister. Her entire family was inside when it happened on Saturday afternoon. The burial was held late on Sunday evening. Shops and markets remained shut in view of the last rites procession. "There was a loud explosion when it happened. Clouds of dust engulfed the area and in no time, the three-storey building had turned into rubble," said Naseem, a resident of the locality. Fifteen people were trapped under the debris of the col-



lapsed structure. Five persons injured in the incident are under treatment in hospitals. Riya, who lost her father Sajid (40) and sister Sania (15), has been very quiet since the incident, her relatives said. When mediapersons asked her about the incident, she said she saw the house collapse right in front of her eyes as she was playing just outside. All of her family was inside. Riya's mother is still battling for life in the hospital. Sajid's relative Hafiz Shahrukh said he was unable to understand whether to take care of the injured relatives or make

arrangements for burial of the dead. Others in the locality said Farhana (27), who was among the 10 who died, was seven-month pregnant. As the bodies arrived in the locality on Sunday, a day after the incident, residents were overwhelmed with emotion. Around 6 pm, the 'Namaz-e-Janaza' was read before the burial. Some people of the locality came out on the street to express their condolence as the last procession of the victims was taken out. Grieving family members and neighbours went to pay their

last respects at the graveyard. A small crowd had to stand outside for the last rites. Meanwhile, the site of the house collapse has been sealed by authorities. Leaders of many political parties, including ministers, met family members of the victims and offered their condolences. UP minister Dharampal Singh, who met the family members on Monday, also inspected the site where the building collapsed. Speaking to reporters, Singh, who is the minister in-charge of Meerut, called it a "painful and unfortunate" incident. "People were sleeping. They had no idea what kind of calamity would happen," the minister said. "UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath ji is very sensitive towards such incidents. I have come here today on his instructions. We will provide more help than expected. We will even make arrangements for the livelihood of the kin of the victims," he said.

UP Minister of State for Energy Somendra Tomar met the relatives of the victims late on Sunday evening. Tomar, who is also the Meerut South MLA, assured family members of all possible help from the government. Leaders of Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party, Congress and Azad Samaj Party (Kanshi Ram) also met the victims' kin. ASP district president Surendra Singh Rachauti demanded that the government should immediately pay a compensation of Rs 10 lakh to family of each deceased and Rs 5 lakh to kin of injured persons. Houses for the victims' families should also be built, he said. Congress MP from Saharanpur Lok Sabha constituency Imran Masood said "The government should provide all possible help to the family members of the deceased persons. Top leadership of the Congress party will be informed about the entire incident and all possible help will be provided at the party level," he said.

## Family of deceased boy refuses compensation by WB Government

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Turning down the compensation of Rs 2 lakh, the family of a 10-year-old boy who died at a state-run hospital in Dakshin Dinajpur district rejected the West Bengal government's claim that the ongoing agitation of the junior doctors caused his death. Shivam Sharma, a class 3 student, was injured in a road accident, following which he was taken to the Balurghat hospital. His family alleged that he died there due to the negligence of a senior physician who despite being on duty was late in attending him. "There are no junior doctors at this hospital. And he died on August 12, three days after the incident at the RG Kar hospital when the agitation by the junior doctors was at a nascent stage. So any claim that he was a victim of junior



doctors' cease work is wrong," said Shivam's uncle Anand Sharma. Shivam died as the senior medic on duty did not attend him on time, he alleged. "Instead of passing the buck, the authorities must take action against the senior physician whose negligence took away a precious life," he said. Turning down the compensation offered by the state government, he said, "We want action against the guilty,

not monetary help." Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday announced that the state government would pay a compensation of Rs 2 lakh each to the families of 29 people who died allegedly after not getting treatment due to the ongoing cease work of the junior doctors. Shivam was among them. Officers of the state Health Department could not be reached for comment.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

# Damage control

### Kejriwal's resignation announcement sparks speculation about the move and the future of AAP

In a move that has surprised many, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is set to resign on September 17. As speculations swirl about the reasons behind his decision, political observers are divided—some see it as a strategic manoeuvre, while others suggest it might be a forced move driven by internal and external pressures. The resignation raises serious questions about the future of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and crucially, who might succeed him as the next Delhi chief minister. Kejriwal, known for his populist style of politics, has in the past made many bold announcements that appeared to be strategic gambles, often aimed at galvanising his voter base. His decision to step down as Delhi's Chief Minister in 2014 over the Jan Lokpal Bill is a notable example. The Congress party maintains that this upcoming resignation could be another political gimmick, designed to keep Kejriwal in the spotlight or shift the narrative around AAP's recent challenges, especially when the Delhi elections are just months away.



Interestingly, Kejriwal did not resign while he was in jail and ran the Delhi government from behind the bars. He maintains that it is the BJP's design to embroil non-BJP chief ministers into false cases of corruption and send them to jail, make them resign and split their party. He is vocal about it and implores other CMs not to resign come what may. However, there are also compelling arguments that this resignation may be more than just a stunt, an attempt to revive the party. His resignation is perhaps a necessary response to salvage his image as an honest and selfless leader and boost his party's standing in the

upcoming elections. He would have an advantage when he goes to voters and tells them about his resignation and plays a victim card. Regardless of whether Kejriwal's resignation is a tactic or a forced measure, it undeniably leaves AAP at a critical juncture. Kejriwal has been the face of the party since its inception, and his exit from the Delhi Chief Minister's office could destabilise the party's core support base. More so as second-in-command, Manish Sisodia will also not be named as the new CM. AAP has worked hard to position itself as an alternative to the national parties, with a focus on governance, education, healthcare, and anti-corruption measures. However, the party's fortunes have largely depended on Kejriwal's leadership. His potential resignation could either pave the way for the party to mature into a broader, more stable entity or expose its dependency on a single individual. The pressing question now is: Who could be the next CM? Many AAP leader could take his place—Sanjay Singh, Atishi Marlena, Raghav Chadha or even his wife Sunita but it would be Kejriwal's choice for sure. As AAP looks ahead, the question remains: can the party make a comeback in the next elections despite its top brass embroiled in serious charges of corruption and wrongdoing. Well, Delhities would know better.

## PICTALK



Folk artists take part in a human chain organised as part of 'International Democracy Day' celebrations, in Bengaluru PTI

# A cup of garam chai: The essence of India

### In India, tea is a symbol of unity, ritual, and tradition. This humble drink connects regions, cultures and generations, creating cherished memories, one sip at a time

In India, tea transcends mere consumption; it embodies a lifestyle. Whether in the bustling streets of Mumbai or the serene backwaters of Kerala, the clinking of tea cups resonates, marking the essence of every region in the country. Whether it is scorching summers or bone-chilling winters, tea is a remedy that brings Indians together to start the day, refuel, or simply enjoy a moment of solace.



brew crafted entirely from milk. Next come the imaginative elements: cardamom for an aromatic boost, ginger to add a warm, spicy flair, or masala for its rich, intricate taste. The possibilities are limitless, reflecting the boundless diversity that India embodies. But what unites us all is the essence of tea. It's not just about the flavours, but the moments it creates. Picture a rainy monsoon day, the air fresh and invigorating, with a warm cup of tea cradled in your hand. You take a sip, relishing the warmth, as you nibble on fresh theplas or crispy pakoras. Perhaps it's one of those crisp early winter mornings when you are cocooned in your blanket, your chai infused with ginger

to stir your senses as you savour that buttery paratha. These experiences are not just about satisfying a craving but about creating memories and connections, one cup at a time. Tea doesn't just complement Indian food—it enhances it. Whether it's dunking biscuits into a hot cup of chai, enjoying a slice of cake alongside tea, or savouring it with savoury snacks like samosas, this beverage possesses an enchanting quality that enhances any meal. Tea is often the centrepiece of these culinary experiences. There's an unsaid rule in many households: the tea must always be hot, plentiful, and perfectly brewed. Once the kettle is on, everything else fades into the background. The allure of tea

resides in its egalitarian nature. From the opulent palace kitchens to the humble street-side vendor offering steaming cups of chai in traditional clay cups known as kulaks, tea is savoured across all levels of society. It represents a delightful indulgence, a tiny joy amidst the chaos of everyday life.

For countless individuals, the day remains uninitiated until that initial sip of tea is savoured. In a nation as vast and varied as India, finding something that brings us all together is uncommon; however, it is precisely this connection that tea fosters through collective rituals and appreciation. The next time you enjoy your tea, keep in mind: that it's more than just a beverage. It embodies the essence of tradition and ritual, a vibrant celebration of all that distinguishes India. Served with hot parathas or a delectable slice of cake, tea weaves through the vibrant cultural fabric of the nation, connecting us, sip by sip.

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



RACHNA LAKHPATRI

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

As the digital age unfolds, one thing is clear: conspiracy theories have never been easier to spread, nor harder to debunk. In 2024, as humanity embraces cutting-edge technologies like artificial intelligence, it's a strange paradox that ancient prophecies and far-fetched theories still hold a powerful grip on the collective imagination. From claims that the Moon landing was faked to the spread of false narratives about the COVID-19 pandemic, conspiracy theories shape our perception of world events, offering an alluring—if misleading—explanation for the chaotic times we live in.

Our fascination with the unknown has deep historical roots. Figures like the 16th-century mystic Nostradamus and the blind Bulgarian prophet Baba Vanga have captivated millions with their supposed ability to foresee global disasters, political upheavals, and even pandemics. For centuries, people have tried to align Nostradamus' cryptic quatrains with real-world events, from the rise of Hitler to the assassination of JFK. Similarly, Baba Vanga's alleged predictions of 9/11, Brexit, and natural disasters have only fueled modern fears of impending doom. Yet, despite the scepticism that surrounds their claims, these figures remain symbols of the human desire to make sense of a world that often seems beyond our control. In today's world, conspiracy theories have evolved. No longer confined to whispered conversations in dimly lit rooms, they now dominate social media platforms and news outlets.

The Flat Earth Society, which defies centuries of scientific evidence to insist that the Earth is flat, finds new believers daily. The widely debunked theory that NASA staged the 1969 Moon landing still draws attention, as do theories that connect Nostradamus' prophecies to modern political figures like Donald Trump. While such theories may seem harmless or even entertaining to some, the consequences are often real and dangerous. The COVID-19 pandemic, for exam-



ple, was a breeding ground for conspiracy theories. False claims that the virus was engineered as a bioweapon, or that 5G technology spread the disease, circulated rapidly. These beliefs not only stoked fear but also fueled vaccine resistance, leading to a slower public health response. As artificial intelligence continues to revolutionize our world, it's also becoming a powerful tool for both the spread of and the fight against conspiracy theories. AI itself has become a subject of suspicion, with some fearing it as a means of mass surveillance or control.

But AI is also being deployed to combat misinformation. Researchers have recently begun experimenting with AI chatbots, like GPT-4, to engage with conspiracy theorists directly. In a controlled study, participants were invited to express their beliefs in specific conspiracy theories.

The AI then engaged them in a three-round dialogue, offering counterarguments and evidence to debunk their claims. Remarkably, these conversations led to a 20% reduction in participants' belief in their chosen conspiracy theory, and the effect lasted for at least two months. While these results are promising, they only scratch the surface of a much larger issue. Conspiracy theories persist because they provide simple, emotionally charged explana-



AI IS ALSO BEING DEPLOYED TO COMBAT MISINFORMATION. RESEARCHERS HAVE RECENTLY BEGUN EXPERIMENTING WITH AI CHATBOTS, LIKE GPT-4, TO ENGAGE WITH CONSPIRACY THEORISTS DIRECTLY

tions for complex global events. In times of uncertainty, people naturally seek out answers that make sense of their fears. Whether it's the belief that the U.S. government orchestrated the 9/11 attacks or that NASA faked the Moon landing to win the space race, these theories offer a false sense of order in a disorderly world. Social media algorithms amplify these ideas, often pushing the most extreme narratives into the spotlight, further fueling distrust and division.

Even AI, with its potential to debunk misinformation, cannot overcome the deep-seated fear and scepticism that drive people to embrace conspiracy theories in the first place. The rise of AI has sparked its own set of conspiracies, with some claiming that it's part of a grand plot for world domination or that it's being used to control the masses. As much as AI can engage and educate, its ability to change hearts and minds is limited when faced with the sheer emotional power of fear and distrust. And it's not just AI or social media that keeps conspiracy theories alive. Historical events like the 9/11 attacks, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the AIDS epidemic have all been used to fuel false narratives. One long-standing theory claims that HIV was a man-made biological weapon designed to target specific

populations, particularly African Americans and Latinos. Despite decades of scientific research disproving such claims, these ideas continue to find an audience among those who mistrust government and scientific authorities. At the heart of every conspiracy theory lies a fundamental distrust of authority. As Roman historian Tacitus once observed, when governments or those in power lose the trust of the people, manipulation and suspicion take root.

And in today's hyper-connected world, these suspicions spread with unprecedented speed. Yet, there is hope. While AI alone cannot solve the problem of misinformation, it can be a valuable tool in the broader effort to rebuild trust and foster dialogue. The challenge is not just to debunk falsehoods but to address the deeper emotional and psychological needs that drive people to believe in them in the first place. It requires a concerted effort from governments, media, educators, and individuals to promote transparency, critical thinking, and open communication. As the world becomes more connected, the stakes grow higher. Misinformation, once confined to fringe groups, now has the power to shape global events.

(The writer is an associate professor; views are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### KEJRIWAL TO RESIGN

Madam — Kejriwal's move to resign and call for fresh elections to Delhi Assembly is a ploy to assert his position in the party and capitalize incarceration sympathy in to popularity. The SC's bail condition in any case bars him from entering the secretariat and permits signing only such orders which are to be sent to LG for his assent which effectively debars him as a functional CM. This condition will require an alternative CM until the term ends in February 25 which is too long a period in politics by which time the alternative leader chosen, can marginalize Kejriwal, to assert his leadership position. AAP now has a chance to negotiate a deal with Congress by bartering seats in Haryana for a possible coalition in Delhi elections and can fight to regain it's hold on Delhi. The victory thus scored in Delhi assembly election apart from giving a morale booster for Kejriwal and his supporters in AAP will also help him assert his leadership position in the party. He will also move the court subsequently, as popularly elected leader of the assembly, for relaxation in the bail conditions which court may also consider with some conditions which bears relation to the charges framed.

Gopalaswamy J | Chennai

### NEED FOR MORE EXPRESS TRAINS

Madam— It is with reference to the news: P M Modi flags of Vande Metro, inaugurates four Vande Bharat trains in Bihar - September 16. Recently Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated four Vande Bharat trains in Bihar and Vande Metro in Gujarat. As Railway Minister said these trains not only reflect the success of the "Make in India" initiative but also set new global standards of speed, safety and service. In the fast moving world Vande Bharat trains, Tejas Express, Shatabdi Express and Duroto trains are must for Indian Railways. But these premium trains to attract niche clientele in spe-

### A politician and a gentleman



Heaping praises on any big figures from any walk of life after their demise is a common trend but the septuagenarian veteran Marxist leader and general secretary of the CPI(M) Sitaram Yechury was one of the select few national political personalities who was always held in the highest esteem by all

his peers across the political divide, irrespective of divergence of views. Verily, the departed Communist leader's out-of-the-blue passing away has left the his party orphaned and, hence, it will take time to find his befitting replacement notwithstanding, the void his demise has caused in the national political space can never be filled adequately.

Sitaram Yechury has left a deep void in the national political arena. Revered by peers across political divides, his untimely demise has orphaned his party, leaving a leadership gap that will take time to fill. Despite political differences, Yechury's ability to command respect from all corners remains unparalleled. His absence will be profoundly felt, and the space he occupied will be difficult to replace. A true stalwart, his legacy will endure. Rest in peace, Sitaram Yechury.

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

### PRISONER NO 626710

Madam — Umar Khalid has completed four years in jail without trial. He was arrested under the UAPA on September 14, 2020, in connection with the Delhi riots. Recently, the Supreme Court has ruled that courts cannot decline bail, even under the special anti-terror law UAPA, and other offences, once the accused satisfies his prima facie innocence. But he and 11 others have still been awaiting trial in jail. Khalid is accused of making two speeches that instigated protestors to block roads. A documentary, "Prisoner No. 626710 is Present", on him has shown his controversial speech in Maharashtra in 2020 in its entirety. It is reported that he urged the people in that speech to use Gandhian means to oppose the new citizenship laws, which sparked fears of disenfranchisement. If it is true, then it means that Mahatma Gandhi could have faced the UAPA had he still been alive.

Sujit De | Kolkata

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

P Victor Selvaraj | Tirunelveli



## FIRST COLUMN

### KARMIC CYCLES AND VEDIC WISDOM

Shradh rituals help ancestral souls go beyond cycle of birth and death



ASHWINI GURUJI

The soul incarnates into a physical body which is made up of the five elements in various permutations and combinations, reincarnating birth after birth depending on the kind of karmas that one does in a lifetime. Certain souls do not reincarnate, either because they are finished with their karmic cycle of the lok (the Prithvi lok) or because they are stuck in a different dimension of existence and are unable to manifest in the human body, as their karmic balance is not sufficient to entitle them for human birth. These souls either remain suspended as energies and are called ghosts and spirits or they go to a different dimension of existence called the pitr lok or the lok of the ancestors.

Whatever dimension or level of existence they are in unless they have been freed from the cycle of birth and death, they need energy from their offspring to offset their karmic balance to enable them to reincarnate again. Shradhs are an important part of the Hindu/Vedic culture and cater to these ancestors' needs. On these days the constellations are such that the gateways to the other dimensions open and they are allowed to visit the earth to meet their near and dear ones. These ancestors depend on their children and grandchildren to do good deeds in their name and to chant specific mantras, both these acts free the souls from bondages of these not-desired yonis or levels of existence.

It is the basic duty of the family members to perform certain rites and do charity and guardian in the names of their close ones. At present and age, the youth of the country has no idea about the power and efficacy of the Vedic sciences and the phenomenal knowledge of the Vedic



mantras and rituals, the present education system is to be blamed for this as it is completely based on what the colonial masters chose for us, they were fearful of the power of the Vedas and hence destroyed the gurukul system and ensured that we were taught redundant sciences and tweaked history to their advantage the purpose was so that the coming generations lose faith in their culture and follow the colonial masters blindly. The result that they wanted is visible today.

For the younger generations who might be thinking by now that this article reeks of Hinduism and is a fairy tale based on fiction, I would like to point out certain facts of history. In the ancient world, the main cultures flourishing around 4000 years back were the Egyptians, the Mesopotamians, the Romans, the Mayans etc. and of course our very own culture. None of the present day religions or schools of thought were present, except the Hindu religion and the Vedic thought. All the cultures are prevalent believed in the other world and travelling of the soul to other dimensions.

The pyramids are aligned in the north-south direction and the shafts in them are pointing towards the three main stars of the Orion belt which the scientists of today say could be the birthplace of stars and human origin. The technology to move such heavy stones to build pyramids is still not available to mankind. As a matter of fact, scientists are to date baffled by them, they were further baffled when they found high doses of radioactivity in the bones indicating an atomic explosion of the human remains at Mohenjo Daro. 4000 years back when these civilisations were flourishing, at that time the third guy or the diaper yug was in process, if we just try to go back further to the treta yug and read about the various weapons used in the Ramayana war, we would realise that our ancestors knew the way the creation functions and the secrets of the lokas and the world of energy. The hindu culture is the only culture that predates all the other cultures and is still the largest practised religion, its mantras and practices are not mumbo jumbo but they are a gift of a highly advanced civilisation to the present day humans. That's why it has survived till date.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher; views are personal)

# Social business promises inclusive development

Social businesses have the potential to blend financial sustainability with solutions to social issues like poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation



UTTAM CHAKROBARTY

The deliberations of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across the globe are getting louder. However, SDGs have much to do with inclusive development in India. Nevertheless, as India marches towards becoming a global economic powerhouse, the challenge of inclusive development remains a daunting task. Despite robust economic growth, disparities in wealth, education, healthcare, and opportunities persist, leaving large segments of the population marginalized. In this context, the concept of social business has garnered increasing attention as a solution that addresses both social and economic challenges simultaneously.

Of late, this alternative paradigm for development is getting a boost in the country. Social business is a powerful model designed to tackle pressing social problems - poverty, inequality, healthcare and education - while operating in a financially sustainable way. Unlike traditional businesses, which prioritize profit maximization for shareholders, social businesses are driven by a mission to solve societal issues, and any profits generated are reinvested into the business to scale its impact. This innovative approach to entrepreneurship is particularly relevant in India, where the scope for addressing societal gaps through market-driven solutions is immense. The Genesis of Social Business Over the past decade, India has witnessed a surge in interest in social entrepreneurship. Fueled by rising awareness of social issues, a growing youth population, and the rise of impact investment funds, the country is now home to a plethora of social businesses across sectors.

Organizations like SELCO, which provides affordable solar lighting to low-income households, and Araku Coffee, which empowers tribal farmers through sustainable agriculture practices, exemplify how businesses can be a force for good. India's unique landscape of socio-economic diversity also presents a fertile ground for social innovation. Entrepreneurs are finding creative ways to solve challenges related to agriculture, healthcare, sanitation, education, and financial inclusion. For example, Amul, India's dairy cooperative giant, operates on principles that align closely with social business, ensuring fair wages for farmers while providing quality products to consumers. Similarly, Goonj, a non-profit working in rural India, converts urban waste into useful products, addressing both poverty and waste management. An Alternative Path India, with a population of over 1.4 billion, faces an array of socio-economic challenges.

Although the country has made significant progress in areas like technology and infrastructure, millions continue to struggle with basic needs like clean water, healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. Traditional government interventions and charity-driven models, while vital, often fail to create sustainable and scalable solutions. This is where the social business model comes in—bridging the gap between business and social responsibility. Facets of Social Business India's healthcare sector, while rapidly growing, remains highly unequal. Millions of people, particularly in rural areas, lack access to quality medical services. Social businesses like Narayana Health, founded by Dr. Devi Shetty, are addressing this issue by providing low-cost, high-quality



WITH THE RISE OF A NEW GENERATION OF SOCIALLY CONSCIOUS ENTREPRENEURS, SUPPORTED BY IMPACT INVESTORS AND TECHNOLOGY, THE POTENTIAL FOR SOCIAL BUSINESS TO DRIVE CHANGE IS GREATER THAN EVER

healthcare to the masses.

The education sector in India faces challenges of accessibility, quality, and affordability, particularly in rural and marginalized communities. Social enterprises like Teach for India are working to bridge the gap by bringing talented individuals to teach in under-resourced schools. Agriculture remains the backbone of India's economy, employing over 50% of the population. However, smallholder farmers often struggle with access to markets, credit, and sustainable practices. Social businesses like DeHaan, which offers end-to-end agricultural services including input distribution, crop advisory, and market linkage, are empowering farmers and improving their incomes. India's push towards renewable energy, in line with its commitments to combat climate change, has opened up a new frontier for social businesses.

The rise of eco-friendly and sustainable products, driven by social businesses, has also led to a growing market for sustainable fashion and organic products in urban areas.

**Growing Graph of Social Business** A critical enabler of social business in India has been the rise of impact investing. Impact investors, unlike traditional venture capitalists, seek to generate not just financial returns but also measurable social and environmental impact. The growth of funds like Aavishkaar, Acumen, and Omidyar Network has provided crucial capital to early-stage social businesses, allowing them to scale and deepen their impact. The Indian government has also recognized the potential of social businesses to drive inclusive growth. Programs like Startup India, which provides financial support, mentorship, and tax incentives, have been extended to social enterprises, encouraging more entrepreneurs to tackle pressing social issues. Not All Roses Many social businesses, especially those operating in rural areas, struggle to secure the necessary funding to scale their operations. Traditional financial institu-

tions often view social enterprises as high-risk, given their focus on impact rather than profit maximization. Although impact investing is on the rise, the availability of patient capital—long-term, low-return investments necessary for social businesses to thrive—is still limited. One of the biggest challenges for social businesses is scaling their impact while maintaining financial sustainability. Often, social enterprises are deeply rooted in local contexts, which can make it difficult to replicate their models across different geographies. Additionally, scaling can sometimes dilute the focus on the social mission, as businesses seek profitability to sustain growth. The regulatory environment for social businesses in India is still evolving. Navigating complex bureaucratic processes, securing the necessary permits, and dealing with multiple government agencies can be time-consuming and expensive. There is also a lack of clear legal recognition for social businesses, which often operate in a grey area between non-profit organizations and traditional for-profit companies.

**Measuring Social Impact:** Unlike traditional businesses, where success is measured purely in terms of financial performance, social businesses must demonstrate their social impact. However, measuring impact can be complex, and there is no standardized framework for doing so. Many social businesses struggle to strike a balance between maximizing their impact and ensuring that they remain financially viable. India's booming tech industry has become a key driver of social innovation. The proliferation of smartphones and internet connectivity has enabled social businesses to reach remote and underserved populations more effectively. From fintech solutions that provide micro-loans to rural entrepreneurs, to edtech platforms offering quality education at scale, technology is unlocking new opportunities for social businesses to deepen their impact. One notable example is the Jan Dhan-

Aadhaar-Mobile (JAM) trinity, a government initiative that has expanded financial inclusion by linking bank accounts to mobile numbers and Aadhaar (India's biometric identification system). This digital infrastructure has empowered social businesses to deliver services like digital payments, insurance, and healthcare more efficiently.

#### The Way Forward

As India continues its journey toward becoming an inclusive, equitable, and sustainable society, social businesses will play an increasingly important role. With the rise of a new generation of socially conscious entrepreneurs, supported by impact investors and technology, the potential for social business to drive change is greater than ever. The COVID-19 accelerated the momentum for social entrepreneurship in India, with many seeing social businesses as a key pillar in the country's post-pandemic recovery. However, for the social business movement to truly take off, greater support from the government, investors, and civil society is essential.

Policymakers must create an enabling environment through targeted incentives and streamlined regulations. Meanwhile, impact investors need to provide more patient capital to allow social enterprises to grow sustainably. Precisely, social business represents a powerful tool for driving inclusive development in India. By addressing social problems through innovative, financially viable solutions, social businesses can empower individuals, uplift communities, and contribute to a more equitable and prosperous society.

As India continues to evolve, the role of social business will only grow in importance, offering hope for a future where economic growth and social progress go hand in hand.

(The writer is an Associate professor at the School of management, Presidency University, Bengaluru; views expressed are personal)

## Empowering teachers, empowering India: Paving the path to becoming Vishwa Guru

With the National Education Policy 2020 and NCTE programs paving the way, India is poised to reclaim its status as a global beacon of knowledge

PM quotes 'Education is not just a way to gain knowledge but a means to transform the world'. It is our teachers who will lead this transformation, making India not only a land of knowledge but a beacon of hope and wisdom for the entire world. Teacher's Day, celebrated few days back, serves as a poignant reminder of the selfless contributions made by teachers throughout their careers.

It allows students to express their gratitude, love, and respect for the people who have guided and inspired them to become true citizens. The celebration is a vehicle for recognising the immeasurable value teachers bring to society and emphasising the importance of education



PANKAJ ARORA

as a pillar of the nation. India now moves closer to realizing its dream of becoming a Vishwa Guru, the teaching profession continues to be a vital force in this journey, as India is well on its way to reclaiming its ancient mantle. India's rich educational heritage is deeply rooted in its culture, recapitulating the legacy of Indian education, where teachers are equated

with creators 'Brahma, the creator of the universe' in Hindu philosophy. This essence of the guru-shishya (teacher-student) relationship, where knowledge was imparted by sages in gurukuls, gave a strong emphasis on the holistic development of children. The teachers or 'Gurus' were revered, holding a status that was even higher than that of emperors. India's ancient universities like Nalanda and Takshashila were some of the earliest global learning centres of learning for the world. India's ancient texts, such as the Vedas and Upanishads, have long been sources of wisdom for the world. As India strives to reclaim its position as a global leader in knowledge, the role of teach-

ers becomes even more crucial who are at the centre of this transformation. The time is ripe for the youth of India to embrace the teaching profession; by investing in the teaching profession and addressing its challenges, India can build a strong foundation for a future where it leads not just in power, but in wisdom and knowledge as well. The role of teachers in this endeavour is indispensable, making them the true architects of India's bright future, by inspiring curiosity, encouraging critical thinking, and instilling values, they are shaping the future leaders of the world. Prime Minister Modi's vision for India as a global leader is not just about economic growth or technological advancement; it is



about creating a society where knowledge, wisdom, and values are cherished. As India marches towards its goal of becoming a Vishwa Guru, the teaching profession will be playing a pivotal role in shaping this vision. Teachers are the torchbearers

of knowledge, and their empowerment is crucial when India embarks on its mission of becoming a Vishwa Guru. India's aspiration to become a Vishwa Guru is deeply intertwined with its education system, where National Education

Policy (NEP) 2020 has emerged as a significant step in this direction, focusing on improving teacher education, and professional development, and creating a conducive environment for teaching and learning. The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes a more flexible, multidisciplinary approach to education, places a strong focus on the professional development of teachers.

For India to truly become a Vishwa Guru, it must invest in its teachers, who serve as architects of the nation's future through their unwavering dedication. This is where NCTE is playing a pivotal role in providing them with the resources, training, and support they

need to excel in their profession. The flagship programs of NCTE are instrumental in elevating the status of teachers in society, by giving them the right support & training. India's teachers will undoubtedly lead the way in shaping the future of the world. It recognizes that to nurture future leaders, teachers themselves must be continuously learning and adapting to new pedagogies to ensure that they are equipped to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

(The writer is the Chairperson, National Council for Teacher Education, Ministry of Education, New Delhi and Professor of Education in the Department of Education, University of Delhi; views are personal)

# Taliban suspends Af polio vax drives

AP ■ DUBAI

The Taliban have suspended polio vaccination campaigns in Afghanistan, the UN said on Monday. It's a devastating setback for polio eradication, since the virus is one of the world's most infectious and any unvaccinated groups of children where the virus is spreading could undo years of progress. Afghanistan is one of two countries in which the spread of the potentially fatal, paralyzing disease has never been stopped. The other is Pakistan. It's likely that the Taliban's decision will have major repercussions for other countries in the region and beyond.

News of the suspension was relayed to UN agencies right before the September immunisation campaign was due to start. No reason was given for the suspension, and no one from the Taliban-controlled government was immediately available for comment.

A top official from the World Health Organisation said it was aware of discussions to move away from house-to-house vaccinations and instead have immunisations in places like mosques.



The WHO has confirmed 18 polio cases in Afghanistan this year, all but two in the south of the country. That's up from six cases in 2023.

"The Global Polio Eradication Initiative is aware of the recent policy discussions on shifting from house-to-house polio vaccination campaigns to site-to-site vaccination in parts of Afghanistan," said Dr. Hamid Jafari from the WHO.

"Partners are in the process of discussing and understanding the scope and impact of any change in current policy." Polio campaigns in neighbour-

ing Pakistan are regularly marred by violence. Militants target vaccination teams and police assigned to protect them, falsely claiming that the campaigns are a Western conspiracy to sterilise children.

As recently as August, the WHO reported that Afghanistan and Pakistan were continuing to implement an "intensive and synchronised campaign" focusing on improved vaccination coverage in endemic zones and an effective and timely response to detections elsewhere.

During a June 2024 nationwide campaign, Afghanistan used a house-to-house vaccination strategy for the first time in five years, a tactic that helped to reach the majority of children targeted, the WHO said.

But southern Kandahar province, the base of Taliban supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada, used site-to-site or mosque-to-mosque vaccination campaigns, which are less effective than going to people's homes.

Kandahar continues to have a large pool of susceptible children because it is not carrying out house-to-house vaccinations, the WHO said. "The overall women's inclusion in vaccination campaigns remains around 20 per cent in Afghanistan, leading to inadequate access to all children in some areas," it said. Any setback in Afghanistan poses a risk to the program in Pakistan due to high population movement, the WHO warned last month.

Pakistani health official Anwarul Haq said the polio virus would eventually spread and continue affecting children in both countries if vaccination campaigns aren't run regularly and in a synchronized manner.

"Afghanistan is the only neighbour from where Afghan people in large numbers come to Pakistan and then go back," said Haq, the coordinator at the National Emergency Operation Centre for Polio Eradication. "People from other neighbouring countries, like India and Iran, don't come to Pakistan in large numbers."

There needs to be a united effort to eliminate the disease, he told The Associated Press. The campaign suspension is the latest obstacle in what has become a problematic global effort to stop polio. The initiative, which costs about USD 1 billion every year, has missed multiple deadlines to wipe out the disease and technical mistakes in the vaccination strategy set by WHO and partners have been costly.

The oral vaccine has also inadvertently seeded outbreaks in dozens of countries across Africa, Asia and the Middle East and now accounts for the majority of polio cases worldwide. This was seen most recently in Gaza, where a baby was partially paralysed by a mutated strain of polio first seen in the oral vaccine, marking the territory's first case in more than 25 years.

# Ex-BBC news anchor gets suspended sentence

AP ■ LONDON

Former BBC news anchor Huw Edwards, once one of the most prominent media figures in Britain, was given a suspended prison sentence Monday for images of child sexual abuse on his phone.

Edwards, 63, pleaded guilty in Westminster Magistrates' Court in July to three counts of making indecent images of children, a charge related to photos sent to him on the WhatsApp messaging service by a man convicted of distributing images of child sex abuse. Chief Magistrate Paul Goldspring sentenced Edwards to a six-month prison term suspended for two years. He will be listed on a sex offenders register for seven years.

"It is not an exaggeration to say your long-earned reputation is in tatters," Goldspring said. Edwards' fall from grace over the past year has caused turmoil for the BBC after it was revealed the publicly funded broadcaster paid him about 200,000 pounds (USD 263,000) for five months of his salary after he had been arrested

in November while on leave. The BBC has asked him to pay it back.

"We are appalled by his crimes," the BBC said in a statement after the sentencing. "He has betrayed not just the BBC, but audiences who put their trust in him."

Edwards had been one of the BBC's top earners when he was suspended in July 2023 over separate claims made last year involving a teenager he allegedly paid for sexually explicit photos. Police investigated and decided not to bring charges. Although Edwards was not publicly named at the time those allegations surfaced, his wife later revealed he was the news presenter investigated and said he was hospitalised for serious mental health issues. He never returned to the air but the BBC kept him on the payroll until he resigned in April for health reasons.

Edwards began his BBC career in Wales four decades ago. He went on to become lead anchor on the nighttime news for two decades and led the coverage of the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II in 2022 as well as

election coverage. The BBC said at the time of his guilty plea that it was shocked to hear the details of the charges against him.

More than 375 sexual images were sent to him on WhatsApp between December 2020 and August 2021. More than 40 were indecent images of children, including seven classified as "category A" — the most indecent — with children estimated to be between 13 and 15. One child was aged between 7 and 9. In chats with Alex Williams, who was later convicted of distributing child sex abuse images, Edwards was asked if he wanted sexual images of a person whose "age could be discerned as being between 14 and 16," and Edwards replied, "yes xxx," prosecutor Ian Hope said.

"From that chat in December 2020, Alex Williams said that he had a file of vids and pics for you of someone special," Hope said. Edwards asked who the subject and was then sent three images that appeared to be the same person who appeared to be aged 14 to 16, Hope said.

# 3 journos allegedly attempting to flee Bangladesh arrested

PTI ■ DHAKA

Three journalists and another person were taken into custody while allegedly attempting to flee Bangladesh through the northern Mymensingh border with India, the police said on Monday. Prominent journalists Mozammel Babu, the chief editor of the private Ekatoor TV, and Bhorer Kagoj editor Shyamol Dutta, who were among the four detained while attempting to flee in a car early on Monday, were considered close to ousted premier Sheikh Hasina's regime and face "several cases" in Dhaka.

Others taken into custody included Ekatoor TV reporter Mahbabur Rahman and driver Selim, the police said. They were initially detained by the neighbourhood police near the zero line of the Dhobaura border of Mymensingh district at 6 am, the police said. The vil-



lagers later handed them over to Mymensingh police, it said. Private Samoy TV channel reported that Babu and Dutta, both prominent faces, were assaulted by locals who snatched away the money they were carrying before calling the police.

"They are now in our custody and their safety has been ensured during their stay in the police station. We have enhanced the security vigil," a police officer said. The official

said the Mymensingh police were awaiting concerned officials to take them to Dhaka for required legal procedures. The police in Dhaka on August 21 arrested another journalist couple Farzana Rupa and Shakil Ahmed while they were preparing to onboard a France-bound aircraft. The couple has been charged with murder during the anti-reservation students movement that eventually turned out to be a mass upheaval leading to the ouster of the Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government on August 5. Identical murder charges have been lodged against several other journalists, drawing concern from international journalist rights groups and watchdogs. The interim government of Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus indicated they were unlikely to be arrested until thorough investigations into the allegations against them.

# Israeli airstrikes kill 16 in Gaza

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Jerusalem (AP): Palestinian officials say Israeli airstrikes have killed 16 people in the Gaza Strip, including five women and four children. A strike early Monday flattened a home in the built-up Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza, killing at least 10 people, including four women and two children. The Awda Hospital, which received the bodies, confirmed the toll and said another 13 people were wounded.

Hospital records show that the dead included a mother, her child and her five siblings.

Another strike on a home in Gaza City killed six people, including a woman and two children, according to the Civil Defence, first responders who operate under the Hamas-run government. Israel says it only targets militants and accuses Hamas and other armed groups of endangering civilians by operating in residential areas. The military rarely comments on individual strikes, which often kill women and children.

# Houthis down another US-made drone

AP ■ DUBAI

Yemen's Houthi rebels claimed Monday that they shot down another American-made MQ-9 Reaper drone, with video circulating online showing what appeared to be a surface-to-air missile strike and flaming wreckage strewn across the ground. The U.S. military did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the Houthis' claim of downing of a drone over the country's southwestern Dhamar province. The Houthis have exaggerated claims in the past in their ongoing campaign targeting shipping in the Red Sea over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.

However, the online video bolstered the claim, particularly after two recent claims by the Houthis included no evidence. Other videos showed armed rebels gathered around the flaming wreckage, a propeller similar to those used by the armed drone visible in the



flames. One attempted to pick up a piece of the metal before dropping it due to the heat. Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree, a Houthi military spokesperson, identified the drone as an MQ-9, without elaborating on how he came to the determination. He said it was the third downed by the group in a week, though the other two claims did not include similar video or other evidence. The U.S. military similarly has not acknowledged losing any aircraft. Saree said the Houthis used a locally produced missile.

CIA over Yemen for years. The Houthis have targeted more than 80 merchant vessels with missiles and drones since the war in Gaza started in October. They seized one vessel and sank two in the campaign that has also killed four sailors. Other missiles and drones have either been intercepted by a U.S.-led coalition in the Red Sea or failed to reach their targets, which have included Western military vessels as well.

The rebels maintain that they target ships linked to Israel, the U.S., or the U.K. to force an end to Israel's campaign against Hamas in Gaza. However, many of the ships attacked have little or no connection to the conflict, including some bound for Iran. Those attacks include a barrage that struck the Greek-flagged oil tanker Sounion in the Red Sea. Salvagers have begun towing away the burning oil tanker, hoping to avoid a catastrophic leak of its 1 million barrels of oil on board.

# French EU commissioner resigns after attacking leadership of top official

AP ■ BRUSSELS

An influential French member of the European Union's powerful executive branch resigned on Monday, calling into question the leadership of European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen just as she tries to assemble a new team for the next five years. Thierry Breton, a French business executive and commissioner for the EU's vast internal market who recently clashed with tech billionaire Elon Musk, suggested that von der Leyen had gone behind his back to get another French official named in his place to the next commission.

In a post on social media platform X containing his resignation letter to the EU's top official, Breton said that von der Leyen's move was "further testimony to questionable governance -- I have to conclude that I can no longer exercise my

duties in the college". The commission proposes legislation for the 27 EU member countries and ensures that the rules governing the world's biggest trading bloc are respected. It's made up of a College of commissioners with a range of portfolios similar to those of government ministers, including agriculture, economic, competition, security or migration policy.

With an eye to keeping a gender balance within the commission for her second term at the helm, von der Leyen had asked each member country to supply the name of a male and female candidate for policy commissioner. Most only proposed one candidate, often a man.

The commission chief, a former German defence minister, has been pressuring smaller countries to change their minds. In recent weeks, a man who was the preferred candi-

date of the government in Slovenia withdrew and a woman was proposed in his place. Von der Leyen decides which country gets which portfolio, and some of them, like those involving trade or finance or EU enlargement, are coveted by certain countries. Plum jobs like the post of "vice president" -- the commission has seven of these -- are also much sought after. Breton suggested that he was a victim of these political machinations. Few days ago, in the very final stretch of negotiations on the composition of the future College, you asked France to withdraw my name -- for personal reasons that in no instance you have discussed directly with me -- and offered, as a political trade-off, an allegedly more influential portfolio for France in the future College," he wrote in his resignation letter.

"You will now be proposed a

different candidate," he said. It was not immediately clear who French President Emmanuel Macron might name in his place. Macron's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In any case, nothing is set in stone. The commission nominees must still pass a grilling in the European Parliament to take office.

Breton has irritated some in the commission with his go-it-alone approach. Acting last month without von der Leyen's approval, he took to X to warn Musk of possible "amplification of harmful content" by broadcasting an interview with former US President Donald Trump. Musk, who owns the social media platform, posted a derogatory reply. Trump campaign spokesperson Steven Cheung urged the EU to "mind their own business instead of trying to meddle in the US presidential election."

# Starmer, Meloni discuss curbing migrant boats to UK and Italy

AP ■ ROME

Rome (AP): UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer is meeting Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni in Rome on Monday, as the two very different politicians, from left and right, seek common cause to curb migrants reaching their shores by boat. The visit comes after at least eight seaborne migrants died off the French coast over the weekend. Support for Ukraine is also on the agenda for the trip, part of Starmer's effort to reset relations with European neighbours after Britain's acrimonious 2020 departure from the European Union.

The centre-left Labour Party prime minister isn't a natural ally of Meloni, who heads the far-right Brothers of Italy party. But migration has climbed the UK political agenda, and Starmer hopes Italy's tough approach can help him stop people fleeing war and poverty trying to cross the English Channel in flimsy, overcrowded boats.

More than 22,000 migrants have made the perilous crossing from France so far this year, a slight increase from the same period in 2023.

Several dozen people have perished in their attempts, including the eight killed when a boat carrying some 60 people ran

aground on rocks late Saturday. The same day, 14 boats carrying 801 migrants reached Britain.

Starmer promised "a new era of international enforcement to dismantle these networks, protect our shores and bring order to the asylum system."

"No more gimmicks," he said before his trip to Rome -- a reference to the previous Conservative government's scuttled plan to send some asylum-seekers on a one-way trip to Rwanda.

Meloni pledged a crackdown on migration after taking office in 2022, aiming to deter would-be refugees from paying smugglers to make the dangerous Mediterranean crossing to Italy. Her nationalist conservative government has signed deals with individual African countries to block departures, imposed limits on the work of humanitarian rescue ships, cracked down on traffickers and taken measures to deter people from setting off.

Italy also has signed a deal with Albania under which some adult male migrants rescued at sea while trying to reach Italy would be taken instead to Albania while their asylum claims are processed.

The number of migrants arriving in Italy

by boat in the first half of this year was down 60 per cent from 2023, according to the country's Interior Ministry.

Starmer wants to learn from Italy's mix of tough enforcement and international cooperation, though Italy's approach has been criticised by refugee groups and others alarmed by Europe's increasingly strict asylum rules, growing xenophobia and hostile treatment of migrants.

The leader of Italy's right-wing League, Matteo Salvini, who is deputy prime minister in Meloni's government, has been accused by prosecutors of alleged kidnapping for his decision to prevent a rescue ship carrying more than 100 migrants from landing in Italy when he was interior minister in 2019. British Home Secretary Yvette Cooper defended the government's decision to seek advice from Italy's right-wing administration, saying "we've always had a history of working with governments that have different political parties that are not aligned". She said the UK was interested in Italy's experience in fighting organised crime, as well as its deals with countries such as Tunisia to stop migrants' journeys before they reach the sea, and its deal with Albania.

# Columnists resign from Jewish Chronicle over Gaza articles fabrication claims

London (AP): Three prominent columnists have resigned from the newspaper Jewish Chronicle over allegations it published fabricated articles about the Israel-Hamas war.

The resignations on Sunday came after the London-based newspaper removed multiple articles by a freelance journalist and apologized to readers, saying it conducted an investigation into the writer and was "not satisfied with some of his claims". The newspaper did not specify which articles by the journalist, Elon Perry, were problematic. Among other claims, Perry -- who described himself as a commando in the Israel Defense Forces -- alleged that Hamas leader Yahya

Sinwar planned to smuggle himself and Israeli hostages out of Gaza through the border area with Egypt known as the Philadelphi corridor. The claims were questioned by Israeli media outlets.

Long-time Jewish Chronicle columnist Jonathan Freedland resigned in protest on Sunday, saying "the latest scandal brings great disgrace on the paper" and that it has "departed from the traditions that built its reputation as the world's oldest Jewish newspaper". "Too often, the JC (Jewish Chronicle) reads like a partisan, ideological instrument, its judgements political rather than journalistic," Freedland wrote on the social media platform X.



In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, people brace for rain on a street as Typhoon Bebinca made landfall in Shanghai, China, Monday.

# Typhoon Bebinca makes landfall in Shanghai

PTI ■ BEIJING

Bebinca, the strongest typhoon to have hit China's Shanghai city in 75 years packing wind speed of 42 meters, made landfall on Monday bringing the megacity of 25 million to a grinding halt.

The typhoon, with the maximum wind force near its center reaching 42 meters per second, churned ashore at the Lingang area of Shanghai's Pudong District, the Shanghai central meteorological observatory said. The city has already mobilised thousands of relief and rescue workers to attend to emergencies.

Bebinca is believed to be the strongest typhoon to land in Shanghai in 75 years. It is the 13th typhoon to hit China this year.

Bebinca is believed to be strongest typhoon to land in Shanghai in 75 years

The State Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters on Sunday activated a Level IV emergency response for east China's Anhui Province and raised the response in Shanghai and Zhejiang to Level III, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. Bebinca has already led to flight cancellations over Shanghai and the suspension of passenger ferry operations in the city. Shanghai Railway Station has announced plans to suspend passenger trains on

several routes passing through the city from Sunday to Monday. More than 414,000 people in the megacity of 25 million have been relocated by the end of Sunday, and all highways in the city were closed in anticipation of the typhoon, Hong Kong based South China Morning Post reported.

All flights from Pudong and Hongqiao airports were cancelled from 8 pm on Sunday. Ferries have stopped running, while bus services have been suspended in the waterfront district of Fengxian. The operator of Shanghai's airports stated that temporary rest areas have been prepared for passengers, and in-house catering vendors and convenience stores have been instructed to offer continuous service.



# Constitutional changes to keep him jailed: Imran

**PTI ■ ISLAMABAD**

Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan on Monday rejected the anticipated constitutional changes, claiming that it was an effort to keep him in prison by controlling the judiciary.

The 71-year-old former cricketer-turned-politician made the remarks during an informal conversation with journalists at the Adiala Jail, where he has been lodged since August last year. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder said that amendments would destroy the future of the country.

He further said that the money of those behind the amendment is lying outside and the people sitting in the government do not want to see an independent judiciary. "The interests of the elite and the interests of the country are contradictory," he said.

Khan also claimed that 4,000 Pakistani companies were registered in Dubai in six months and the country is being run by taking loans, which was the main cause of difficulties being faced in controlling inflation. He criticised Chief Justice Qazi Faiz Isa, claiming that the go-



vernment wants to destroy the judiciary to bring Isa back. "They think we will remain silent against it. If this happens, we will strongly protest against it," he warned.

He also criticised amendments to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) laws, claiming they were used to forgive billions in corruption. He argued that the government's actions threaten the rule of law and increase political instability through threats to judges and the elimination of political opposition. Announcing a peaceful protest in Lahore on September 21, he called on the public to defend their rights and the judiciary. On Sunday, Khan launched a scathing attack on his opponents, including the chief justice, the establishment and his rival politicians. The former premier posted that the government was reportedly going to introduce a constitutional amendment to rewrite the rules about the judiciary.

Khan lashed out at the government for trying to tweak the laws to allegedly control the judiciary.

# Court orders release of arrested lawmakers of Imran's party

**PTI ■ ISLAMABAD**

An anti-terrorism court in Pakistan on Monday ordered the immediate release of all the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) lawmakers arrested from the Parliament House following the party's power show on September 8 in Islamabad.

Anti-Terrorism Court Judge Abul Hasanat Zulqarnain heard the bail pleas and granted post-arrest bail to the PTI MNAs who were taken into custody by the Islamabad police with their cases registered at the Sangiani police station, Geo News reported. The bails were granted against surety bonds worth

Rs30,000 each, it said. During the hearing, prosecutor Raja Naveed told the court that Sunni Ittehad Council lawmaker Muhammad Ahmed Chattha is also named in the case. He requested the court against approving bails as the minimum sentence for provisions imposed in the case is three years, the channel said. "Has anything been recovered from Sher Afzal Marwat, Ahmed Chattha and other MNAs?" the judge questioned the prosecutor. He responded to the question in the negative. Meanwhile, the court also approved the pre-arrest bail petition filed by PTI leader Ali Bukhari in the case pertaining

to his violation of the No Objection Certificate (NOC) and assault on police personnel during the party's rally. Following the hearing, the court issued a notice and adjourned the hearing of the case till October 1.

The police arrested several leaders of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party, including its chairman and around a dozen lawmakers, after the authorities accused his supporters of pelting stones at police personnel and violating the permission for the rally by over-stepping the allotted time limit by several hours.

PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan and lawmaker Sher Afzal

Marwat were also arrested from the Parliament House for allegedly violating the newly enacted public gathering law during the party's power show. Marwat had resisted the arrest and asked the police to show an arrest warrant.

While Gohar was later released, Marwat was kept in custody for violating regulations devised under a new law — Peaceful Assembly and Public Order Bill, 2024, and also accused of clashing with police personnel on the rally day.

At least 10 PTI lawmakers, who were arrested from the premises of Parliament House, were brought to the lower house on September 12 after their pro-

duction orders were issued by National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq. During the rally, the PTI supporters demanded the release of their leader and warned to get him out of jail through street protests.

The 71-year-old former-cricketer-turned-politician faces a slew of legal cases and has been in prison for more than a year after being sentenced in a graft case. 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.

# China seeks 'resolute crackdown' on Tibetan separatists

**PTI ■ BEIJING**

China's top security official visited Tibet last week and instructed the local authorities to step up a crackdown against separatists in the backdrop of the US stepping up its support for the region by passing a new law pressing Beijing to hold talks with the Dalai Lama.

Chen Wenqing, the head of the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission — the ruling Communist Party's top security body, visited the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and some of the 10 Tibetan autonomous prefectures across Yunnan, Sichuan, Gansu and Qinghai last week and reviewed security. He called

for a resolute crackdown against separatists. He also asked the local officials to maintain stability and guard against independence activities, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported on Monday. His visit took place as China is tightening security in Tibet ahead of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic to be celebrated on October 1. China's top judges and prosecutors have also made their rounds of Tibet.

Zhang Jun, President of the Supreme People's Court, visited Tibetan courts last week and said it was necessary to hand down tough punishment to keep up the pressure on "violent terrorism, ethnic sep-

aratism and other serious criminal crimes", the Post reported. Ying Yong, head of the Supreme People's Procuratorate, also inspected public prosecutors' offices in Tibet earlier this month.

He stressed the need for prosecutors to "harshly crack down on all kinds of separatist infiltration, sabotage activities and crimes endangering national security in accordance with the law". In July, the US passed the Resolve Tibet Act, which enhances its support for Tibet and promotes dialogue between China and the Dalai Lama toward a peaceful resolution of the dispute over the status and governance of the remote Himalayan region.

Signing the legislation passed

by the US Senate and the Congress in July, President Joe Biden said it showed the bipartisan commitment in America to advancing the human rights of Tibetans and supporting efforts to preserve their distinct linguistic, cultural, and religious heritage.

He also called on Beijing to resume direct dialogue, without preconditions, with the Dalai Lama, or his representatives, to "seek a settlement that resolves differences and leads to a negotiated agreement on Tibet".

China opposed the Resolve Tibet Act, terming it as a destabilising Act. The Act enhances US support for Tibet — empowering State Department officials to active-

ly and directly counter disinformation about Tibet from the Chinese government. It also rejects Beijing's claims that Tibet has been part of China since "ancient times", pushing for negotiations without preconditions between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama or his representatives or the democratically elected leaders of the Tibetan community. Last month, China lodged "serious protest" with the US after a top Biden administration official met the Dalai Lama and reaffirmed Washington's commitment for advancing the human rights of Tibetans and supporting efforts to preserve their distinct historical, linguistic, cultural, and religious heritage.

# 20 to 50 people killed in PNG violence, says UN

**Melbourne (AP):** Violence among illegal miners in Papua New Guinea has left between 20 and 50 people dead, a United Nations official said on Monday. The fighting started days ago and is continuing in the Porgera Valley, near the site of a landslide in May estimated to have killed more than 2,000 people, according to the South Pacific island nation's government. The UN's humanitarian adviser for Papua New Guinea, Mate Bagossy, said the death toll of at least 20 as of Sunday was based on information from community members and local authorities in Guya province in the nation's mountainous inland. "We have confirmed that at least 20 people have been killed, but as per the last news that I have, it's likely up to 50 people," Bagossy told The Associated Press. "The fighting is continuing. Today some security forces have started moving in... so it remains to be seen what effect this will have," Bagossy said, referring to the army and police. Bagossy did not have information on the

numbers wounded. National Police Commissioner David Manning said an emergency had been declared on Saturday after the violence escalated, with police mobilising to protect residents and infrastructure. "The deteriorating situation has been caused by illegal miners and illegal settlers who are victimising traditional landowners and using violence to terrorise local communities," Manning said in a statement. The nearby New Porgera gold mine has halted most of its operations because of the violence until at least Thursday. "Over the past 24 hours a significant escalation in tribal fighting has impacted many of our local employees. Homes have been destroyed, family and friends injured or killed, and people have been unable to sleep while living in fear," New Porgera General Manager James McTiernan said in a statement on Sunday. "I am incredibly saddened by these devastating events and sincerely hope that the govern-

ment will soon restore peace to the valley," McTiernan added. Tribal warfare is a growing security problem across Papua New Guinea and is rife in Guya where a massive landslide on May 24 is estimated to have buried hundreds of villagers. The United Nations conservatively estimated 670 villagers had died, while the Papua New Guinea government said more than 2,000 people had been buried. An unknown number of refugees from tribal violence in neighbouring areas are thought to be among the casualties, adding to the complications in calculating a credible death toll.

# Nepal's PM to raise issue of melting snow, mountain eco-system

**Kathmandu (PTI):** Nepal's Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli said on Monday that he would draw the world's attention to the issues of melting snow and rising sea levels at the United Nations General Assembly's 79th session. Addressing the House of Representatives about his forthcoming visit to the US to attend the UN General Assembly, Oli said he would present Nepal's clear view on the protection of the human race and the Earth as well as the eco-system of the Himalayas and the oceans at the 'Summit of the Future'. Oli on September 20 is embarking on a visit to the US, his first foreign trip after assuming the post of prime minister. The 'Summit of the Future' will be convened at the world body's headquarters on September 22 and 23. The summit will produce an inter-governmentally negotiated, action-oriented pact for the future with chapters on sustainable development; international peace and security; science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation; youth and future generations; and transforming global governance. "I will not let the country's prestige and dignity down during the visit," the prime minister said. The prime minister said he would inform the UN about the Himalayan nation's policy not to interfere in other countries' affairs and not to let others interfere in its internal affairs as per the UN Charter. "During the UN General Assembly, I will clearly put my views on Nepal's constitution, democratic values, identity as a sovereign independent nation, justifiable national interest, and commitment," Oli said.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Public in general is hereby informed through this notice that I Kamal Khanna S/o Om Prakash Khanna, R/O H No 44, Road No. 43, Punjabi Bagh, West Delhi, Delhi-110026 that I have disowned my Brother-in-Law (Mr. Arun Kathuria), Nephew (Mr. Tarun Kathuria) and Nephew's Wife (Mrs. Palak Kathuria) all R/O B-3 Kirti Nagar, New Delhi-110015 and all my legal heirs and successors including children's of my nephew from my movable and immovable Assets/properties as I do not have cordial relations with them. In case any person deals with them in any way, he/she shall be doing so at his/her own risks and I shall not be bound in any manner whatsoever.

Kamal Khanna  
H No 44, Road No. 43, Punjabi Bagh, West Delhi, Delhi-110026

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Public in general is hereby informed through this notice that I Seema Kathuria W/o Sh. Arun Kathuria, D/O Om Prakash Khanna, R/O B-3, Kirti Nagar, West Delhi, Delhi-110015, that I have disowned my Husband (Mr. Arun Kathuria), Son (Mr. Tarun Kathuria) and Daughter-in-law (Mrs. Palak Kathuria) all R/O B-3 Kirti Nagar, New Delhi-110015 and all my legal heirs and successors on my laws side including my grandchildren other than my parental and other Kamal Khanna from my movable and immovable Assets / properties as I do not have cordial relations with them. In case any person deals with them in any way, he/she shall be doing so at his/her own risks and I shall not be bound in any manner whatsoever.

Seema Kathuria  
B3, Kirti Nagar, New Delhi-110015

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Information is given to general public at large that our client Mr. Hemant Goyal S/o Mr. Ashok Goyal is the owner of Flat No. 18-12A/7, Tower-1B, at 12A Floor, situated at Residential Group Housing Complex, 'Nilaya Greens', out of Kharsa No. 1015, 1023/1, 1023/2, 1023/3 min., at Village Mota, Raj Nagar Extension, NH-58, Pargana - Jajalabad, Tehsil and Distt. Ghaziabad, U.P. by virtue of Sale Deed dated 22.03.2023 (Doc. No. 27859) registered in SR-IV, Ghaziabad. Agreement for Sale (with terms & conditions) dated 29.09.2020 is available with our client and our client intend to mortgage the above mentioned property against the financial assistance from Shubham Housing Development Finance Co. Ltd. mortgage of the said property is/are hereby requested to intimate in writing to the undersigned within 07 days at below address.

NCR LAW ASSOCIATES & CONSULTANTS A-98, Sector-3, New Vijay Nagar, Ghaziabad, (U.P.)-201009.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

My client Sh. Ram Gopal S/o Late Sh. Sheesh Ram the owner of a Residential Plot, area measuring 145 sq. yards, i.e. 121/22 sq. mtrs. out of Kharsa No. 455, situated in the Okhla/Abad of Village at Sadapur, Pargana And Tehsil Dabri, District Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. through Registered Gift Deed Dated 04.09.2024 executed by Smt. Jagwati, W/o Late Sh. Sheesh Ram in favour of Sh. Ram Gopal S/o Late Sh. Sheesh Ram vide Reg. No. 10043 of SR-I/INDIA U.P. the above-mentioned property is going to be mortgaged with Fed Bank Finance Services Limited. If any person / bank / financial institution having any claim / right, lien, any objection whatsoever in regard to the above property, should notified to the undersigned/Adv. Vishal Mehlan, F-713, Kankardooma Court, Delhi-110092 along with documentary evidence under address through registered within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice failing which any claim, lien or objection shall be deemed to have been waived. Adv. Vishal Mehlan, F-713, Kankardooma Court, Delhi-110092, Mobile No. 9811215181.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

General Public is informed that Mr. RESHAM LAL & Smt. JAGPAL KAUR R/O B-6, G-2 CHANDER NAGAR GHAZIABAD UP had disowned our only son Dr. RAJNEESH KLER from all our self acquired movable assets & immovable properties due to certain misunderstanding by issuing Public Notice in News Papers during the month of May 2022. Now everybody is informed that we wish to own our only son back and we intend to give him all share in our assets and properties and want to make all required changes legally during the time we are alive.

**E-AUCTION FOR DEVELOPMENT, UPGRADEATION, OPERATION & MANAGEMENT AT KAMAKHYA STATION**

E-Auction invited for Development, Upgradeation, Operation & Management of AC Dormitories and AC Retiring Rooms at Kamakhya Station. Auction Catalogue No.: RR-DOR-KYQ-1-24. Rate Unit: Annual Licensing Fee. Days: 1826; Auction Start Date & Time : 11:00 hrs. on 26-09-2024.

Seq.No.	Lot No./Category	Stations
AA/1	PnU-LMG-KYQ-WRL-55-24-1 (Pray No. and Use - Lounges/Waiting/Retiring/Cloak Rooms)	At Kamakhya

Auction closing date & time : At 11:30 hours on 26-09-2024. Initial Cooling off period is 30 minutes. Successive lots closing interval 10 minutes. Note : Prospective bidder are requested to visit e-Auction leasing module on IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in for more details.

Dr. DCM, Lumding

**NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY**

Serving Customers With A Smile

**INDAG** INDAG RUBBER LIMITED  
(CIN: L74899DL1978PLC009038)

Regd. Office: Khemka House, 11, Community Centre Saket, New Delhi-110017.  
Phone: 011-26963172/73, 26863310, 26961211, 41664818, Fax No.: 011-268656350  
E-mail: info@indagrubber.com; Website: www.indagrubber.com

**NOTICE**  
(For the Attention of Equity Shareholders of the Company)

Compulsory Transfer of Equity Shares of the Company to the DEMAT Account of the Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF) Authority.

Notice is published in pursuance of section 124(6) of the Companies Act, 2013 read with the Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (Accounting, Audit and Refund) Rules, 2016 ("the said Rules") notified by Ministry of Corporate Affairs as amended from time to time and Regulation 39 (4) of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015.

The Rules, inter alia, require the Company to transfer all the shares in respect of which Dividend has not been claimed by the Shareholders during the last 7 consecutive years starting from the Interim Dividend of the financial year 2017-2018, to the demat account of the Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF) Authority set up by the Central Government within 30 days from the due date of transfer i.e., December 17, 2024, in the manner as prescribed in the said Rules.

Accordingly, the Company has sent individual communications to the concerned shareholders whose shares are liable to be transferred to the demat account of the IEPF Authority in compliance of the said Rules, at their latest available address advising them to claim their dividends expeditiously. The Company has uploaded the complete details of such shareholders and their folio number or DPID-Client ID on its website i.e., www.indagrubber.com. This Notice shall be deemed to be the adequate notice in respect of issue of new Share Certificate(s) by the Company on behalf of those Shareholders who hold Shares in physical form, for the purpose of transfer of their Shares to the DEMAT Account of the IEPF Authority in the manner as prescribed in the said Rules.

Concerned shareholders may note that, any further dividend, and other corporate benefits, on such shares shall be credited to the IEPF Account of the IEPF Authority. Upon credit of such shares to the said Demat account, no claim shall lie against the company in respect of the unclaimed dividend amount and such shares transferred to IEPF Account. However, shareholders may claim back the shares credited along with the unclaimed dividend amount from the IEPF Authority after following the procedure given under the IEPF Rules. The procedure for claiming the same is available at www.mca.gov.in and www.iepf.gov.in.

For any further information/clarification on this matter, the concerned shareholder may write to the Company at Indag Rubber Limited, Khemka House, 11, Community Centre, Saket, New Delhi-110017, Tel.: 011-26963172-73. Email- info@indagrubber.com or contact the Company's Registrar and Share Transfer Agent - Skyline Financial Services Pvt. Limited at D-153/A, 1st Floor, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-I, New Delhi-110020 Tel.: 011-26812682-83. email-admin@skylinert.com.

By order of the Board  
For Indag Rubber Limited  
Sd/-  
Company Secretary

Date: September 16, 2024  
Place: New Delhi

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

General public is hereby informed that my client Sh. Raju Singh S/o Mr. Sukumar Singh and Mrs. Lakshmi Devi W/o Mr. Sukumar Singh and Mr. Sukumar Singh S/o Mr. Sukumar Singh S/o Mr. Raju Singh is the owner of the Property No. C-1466, Area measuring 200 Sq. Mtr., on Plot No. 32, out of Kharsa No. 1214, Situated at Vijay Estate, G. and D. Block, Vindol Park, in the area of Village Mirzapur, Pargana, U.P. by virtue of Authorisation Slip Dated 18.07.2024 regd. at Doc. No. 2224/6195231. The aforesaid property is to be financed & mortgaged with my client i.e., Mrs. Tata Capital Housing Finance Ltd. Initially documents were mortgaged the property number G-106 and whereas, as per General Power of Attorney, Agreed to Sell & Will Dtd. 02.09.2019 has been changed property number G-106 to C106 and now, Authorisation Slip dated 18.07.2024, in the name of my client i.e., Mrs. Tata Capital Housing Finance Ltd. 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# Piyush Goyal launches BHASKAR

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Monday launched the Bharat Startup Knowledge Access Registry (BHASKAR) initiative, which will serve as a central hub where startups, investors, service providers, and government bodies can collaborate and exchange ideas.

"Let's make this a one-stop shop for all data dissemination for engagement and interaction, one-stop shop for the entire ecosystem through simple and easy-to-use links, and easy to navigate," he said.

It will be a single point of contact for startups looking for various requirements like mentors and finance, he added. Through this platform, all the key stakeholders within the entrepreneurial ecosystem, including startups, investors, mentors, service providers, and government bodies can interact with each other to promote the sector's growth. The primary goal of BHASKAR is to build the world's largest digital registry for stakeholders within the



startup ecosystem. To achieve this, the platform will offer features like networking and collaboration, providing centralised access to resources, creating personalised identification, enhancing discoverability and supporting India's global brand. BHASKAR will bridge the gap between startups, investors, mentors, and other stakeholders, allowing seamless interaction across sectors.

Through this initiative, every stakeholder will be assigned a unique BHASKAR ID, ensuring personalised interactions and tailored experiences across the platform. Using powerful search features, users can easily locate relevant resources, collaborators and opportunities to ensure faster decision-making and action. The government would invite all stakeholders to become part of this transformative initiative as it

is poised to redefine India's startup landscape and create a more connected, efficient, and collaborative environment for entrepreneurs. India, home to over 1,46,000 government-recognised startups, has rapidly become one of the world's most dynamic startup hubs, and this initiative seeks to leverage this potential by providing an all-encompassing, one-stop digital platform that

addresses the challenges faced by entrepreneurs and investors. By serving as a centralised registry, BHASKAR will enable seamless access to a wide array of resources, tools, and knowledge to help fuel the entrepreneurial journey from ideation to execution.

Secretary in the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) Amardeep Singh Bhatia said the aim is to take the startups to 50 lakh in the coming years.

"This platform will bring everyone together (including investors and mentors)," Bhatia said, urging startups to come forward and help build this. DPIIT Joint Secretary Sanjiv said the initiative will further strengthen the country's startup ecosystem. By January 16 next year, all the districts of India will have at least one startup, he added. Sanjiv also said the department has urged over 100 corporates and unicorns to set up incubation centres for manufacturing sector startups. The department has shared a handbook with the companies on corporate incubation and acceleration.

# Sensex hits new high

PTI ■ MUMBAI



Equity benchmark index Sensex rebounded nearly 100 points to hit a lifetime closing high on Monday, while the broader Nifty ended just shy of its record peak, propelled by bargain hunting in energy, utility and banking stocks amid sustained foreign fund inflows.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 97.84 points or 0.12 per cent to settle at a new record peak of 82,988.78. During the day, it jumped 293.4 points or 0.35 per cent to hit a fresh lifetime intraday high of 83,184.34.

The NSE Nifty rose 27.25 points or 0.11 per cent to settle at 25,383.75, over 5 points lower than its previous record. During the day, the benchmark gained 89.2 points or 0.35 per cent to hit a new intra-day high of 25,445.70.

"The domestic market traded in a narrow range with a positive bias as the participants are keenly awaiting the Fed's decision this week. The weakness in the US job market and benign inflation are pointing at a slew of rate cuts on the table. The inflow of foreign money and an expectation of

policy announcements," Vikram Kasat, Head - Advisory, PL Capital - Prabhudas Lilladher, said.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.28 per cent while the midcap index ended marginally up by 0.01 per cent.

Among the indices, utilities jumped 1.97 per cent, power (1.93 per cent), metal (0.56 per cent), capital goods (0.56 per cent), consumer durables (0.49 per cent) and industrials (0.33 per cent). IT, telecommunication, tech, services and FMCG were the laggards.

In Asian markets, Hong Kong ended with gains. Markets in Japan, mainland China and South Korea were closed for holidays. European markets were trading mostly higher.

The US markets ended in positive territory on Friday. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 2,364.82 crore on Friday, according to exchange data. Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) also bought equities worth Rs 2,532.18 crore. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.35 per cent to USD 71.90 a barrel.

# SEBI withdraws its press release on unprofessional work culture

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi on Monday withdrew its press release issued in September 4, which addressed claims of unprofessional work culture, stating that these concerns are "misplaced" and reaffirmed that employee-related issues will be managed internally.

The withdrawal came days after a protest by a large number of Sebi employees outside the regulator's headquarters on September 5, a day after the press release. They had demanded the withdrawal of the statement and the resignation of Sebi chief Madhabi Puri Buch. In a statement on Monday, Sebi acknowledged the critical role its employees have played over the past thirty-six years in shaping the Indian securities market into one of the most dynamic and well-regulated markets globally.

Sebi said it addresses employee-related matters through appropriate internal mechanisms. "Following constructive discussions with representatives of all grades of officers, Sebi and its employees have reaffirmed that such issues are strictly internal and will be managed in accordance with the organization's high standards of governance and within a



time-bound framework," the regulator said.

Accordingly, the press release issued on September 4 has been withdrawn.

The decision to retract the press release came after employees strongly condemned the unauthorized dissemination of internal communications. Sebi employees have reiterated their commitment to resolving concerns amicably through established internal channels, ensuring that such matters remain internal and managed within a time-bound framework.

"Employees have strongly condemned the unauthorized release of internal communication and have confirmed that all concerns shall be addressed amicably through established internal channels," the statement noted. For Puri, protests and internal issues have come at a time when she is probably facing the most challenging times in her stint. The career

banker-turned-regulator is battling speculations on whether a conflict of interest made her go slow on the probe against Adani Group and a raft of other allegations around it. In what is unprecedented for any financial regulator, around 500 employees wrote to the Finance Ministry on August 6, against the top management, for what they called a "toxic" work environment, which includes instances of public humiliation and shouting down.

After the publishing of a media report about the letter, Sebi responded with a press release, which stated such claims are "misplaced", which seemed to have irked the employees. The regulator stated that some "external elements" had instigated its employees into believing that they shouldn't be held to high standards of performance and accountability, though, it did not provide specific details.

# DGGI proposes global cooperation to curb GST evasion in OIDAR

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

GST investigation arm DGGI has suggested reciprocal arrangements with foreign governments for information sharing and enforcement measures as well as blocking of websites to prevent tax evasion in OIDAR services like e-gaming, online education and advertisement.

The move has been necessitated as it has come to DGGI's notice that there are entities, including online casinos that are based out of tax havens and also those which operate through offshore VPNs and cloud-based platforms. These entities are non-cooperative and appear to intentionally avoid tax compliance, and hence an information exchange with global law enforcement agencies would help crack down on any evasion.

Online Information and Database Access or Retrieval (OIDAR) services are those which are delivered over the internet or electronic network and whose supply is essentially impossible without Information Technology. It includes a wide array of services viz cloud services, digital content, online gaming, online advertising etc. When such services are provided by an offshore entity to a non-taxable recipient, the supplier becomes liable for obtaining registration and discharging GST on the same.



Currently, as many as 574 offshore entities providing OIDAR Services have registered themselves with the GST department, and annual revenue from this sector has increased from Rs 80 crore for the FY 2017-18 to Rs 2,675 crore for 2023-24 fiscal.

The Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) in its annual report noted that since the OIDAR service providers are located abroad it becomes a challenge in GST enforcement and hence the sector remains relatively untapped and holds tremendous revenue potential. On dealing with such offshore suppliers, it has also dawned that several such suppliers are ignorant of the law, and upon conveying the legal position clearly, such suppliers agree to comply with the GST mandate, it said.

These include the likes of Udem Inc (USA), Canva Pty (Australia), OVH group (France), Blackboard (Netherlands) etc who registered themselves following efforts of DGGI and discharged significant tax

liability. "However, there are other entities that are non-cooperative and appear to intentionally avoid tax compliance. These include various online casinos based out of tax-havens like Malta, Cypress, Curacao, BVI etc. There are also other entities that are difficult to reach out to on account of them operating through VPN or cloud-based platforms," the DGGI said.

The GST intelligence wing said that unique challenges in tax enforcement in this sector necessitate out-of-the-box interventions to plug revenue leakage. The DGGI suggested steps like registering with the KODEX platform to receive the data/information in respect of offshore suppliers, as well as coordination with the Reserve Bank of India to obtain relevant data pertaining to forex transactions for purpose code falling under Group 8 (i.e. Computer and Information Services) of RBI's Purpose Codes for Reporting Forex Transactions to deal with evasion in the sector.

# HCLTech top India company on TIME World's Best Companies list



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian IT firm HCLTech has been named the no.1 India-headquartered company in TIME magazine's World's Best Companies 2024 list. The Noida-headquartered firm has also secured a place in the global top 10 list within the Professional Services category. "This accolade underscores HCLTech's commitment to excellence and innovation. It reinforces our leadership in the industry and our status as a top employer."

"Aligned with our purpose of 'Supercharging Progress' and 'Find Your Spark' employee value proposition, we are dedicated to maximizing employee potential, advancing community and social responsibility initiatives and achieving sustainability goals," said Rahul Singh,

Chief Operating Officer of Corporate Functions, HCLTech.

The World's Best Companies 2024 ranking identifies top-performing companies across the globe on the parameters of employee satisfaction, revenue growth, and sustainability. HCLTech posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 4,257 crore in the June quarter of FY25, up 20.45 per cent from the year-ago period. Revenue for the June-ended quarter came in at Rs 28,057 crore, 6.6 per cent higher year-on-year.

It gave a revenue growth guidance of 3-5 per cent for FY25 on GenAI diversification and strong operational execution. As of June 2024, HCLTech has a global headcount of 219,000, across 60 countries.

# Mercedes expands electric vehicle lineup in India, launches EQS 580 4MATIC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Luxury car maker Mercedes-Benz India on Monday expanded its Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV) range in the country with the launch of the locally produced EQS 580 4MATIC.

India is the first country outside the US to start the local production of the seven-seater electric SUV. EQS SUV 580 4MATIC is the second model, after the EQS sedan, to be locally produced at company's Pune-based manufacturing plant.

"This will be our sixth EV in India, and the second car to be locally produced in India. We are also proud that India becomes the first market out of the US to locally manufacture the EQS," Mercedes-Benz India Managing Director and CEO Santosh Iyer told PTI in an interaction.

The move to manufacture the product locally outlines the company's commitment to electrification and increasing product portfolio offering choices to customers, he added. "EQS SUV's localisation underpins our deep commitment to grow the



Indian luxury electric car market and reinforce our commitment to a greener and sustainable future," Iyer said. The move also supports the government's vision of Make-in-India, he said. Iyer said local production has led to a significant advantage in terms of pricing the electric SUV. The introductory price of EQS SUV 580 4MATIC starts at Rs 1.41 crore which should also make a lot of customers shift to EVs much faster in terms of transition, he said. When asked about the demand for green vehicles, Iyer said the sales of EVs were

growing in the country with even high-end products finding acceptance. "The EQA sedan which was introduced in India around 18 months back, we have sold more than 500 cars. It's a car costing more than Rs 1.6 crore. Our total penetration of EVs is 5 per cent today, it's growing. For sure, customer acceptance is there," he stated. Iyer noted that the company remains committed to offer top-end luxury EV products offering higher range in the market. He noted that there may be more opportunities in the entry EV segment but the focus of the company firmly

remains on bringing luxury products in the market.

"To bring products at lower price points, that is not our current strategy," Iyer said. The company aims to offer products with higher driving range, a factor that leads to bigger battery and escalation in price, he added. The EQS SUV 580 4MATIC is India's longest range electric SUV with ARAI certified range of 809 kms.

Iyer said the company remains committed to the Indian market and has announced an additional investment of Rs 200 crore earlier towards manufacturing operations, new product start-ups and digitisation of manufacturing processes. The company till date has invested over Rs 3,000 crore in India, he added. In the January-September period this year, Mercedes-Benz India has launched three new BEVs - EQA, EQS SUV 580 and Mercedes-Maybach EQS 680 SUV. With the EQS SUV 580 4MATIC, the company now offers the EQA, EQB, EQE SUV, EQS SUV, EQS sedan and Maybach EQS SUV 680 in the market.

# Rupee rises four paise to close at 83.88 against US \$

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee witnessed range-bound trade and settled for the day higher by 4 paise at 83.88 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday supported by weak American currency and significant foreign fund inflows, while firm crude oil prices capped sharp gains.

Forex traders said market participants are eagerly awaiting cues from the US Fed policy on Wednesday, with a rate cut all but certain. However, the magnitude of the cut remains uncertain. Moreover, the rupee continues to hold steady within a well-defined range on active intervention by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), they added. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.89 and witnessed an intraday high of 83.87 and a low of 83.90 against the American currency. The domestic unit finally settled for the day at 83.88 (provisional), higher by 4 paise over its previous close, amid a positive trend in domestic equities. On Friday, the local unit settled higher by 4 paise at 83.92 against the US dollar.



"We expect Indian rupee to trade with a slight positive bias on continued weakness in the US dollar ahead of the FOMC meeting this week," said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas. Choudhary further said that "there are broad expectations of a 25 bps rate cut by the Fed following a 25 bps rate cut by ECB last week. Fresh foreign inflows and a positive tone in

equity markets may further support the domestic currency. However, a recovery in crude oil prices may cap sharp upside."

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was down 0.39 per cent to 100.72 points. Brent crude, the international benchmark, gained 0.56 per cent to USD 72.01 per barrel in futures trade.

# Odisha to emerge as Tata Steel single-largest investment destination

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

Tata Steel on Monday said Odisha would emerge as the company's single-largest investment destination after the phase-II expansion of its Kalinganagar plant from 3 million tonnes per annum to 8 mtpa. The steel major has invested Rs 27,000 in phase-II of the Kalinganagar plant expansion, and the company is on the verge of commissioning its expanded capacity at the unit, it said in a release.

The ongoing expansion in Kalinganagar will play an important role in Tata Steel's ambition to achieve its target of 40 mtpa capacity in India by 2030, the company said. "The phase-II expansion of Tata Steel's Kalinganagar plant in Jajpur district of Odisha... Will also catapult the eastern state to an enviable position of becoming the single-largest investment destination for the country's oldest steel maker," the release said. Along with the Tata Steel Meramandali (formerly Bhushan Steel Ltd) plant in Dhenkanal district, the company's total investment in Odisha stands at over Rs 100,000 crore.

# INDIAN MEN CRUSH AZERBAIJAN, WOMEN BEAT KAZAKHSTAN

**PTI ■ BUDAPEST**

Backed by the two in-form stars in World Championship challenger D Gukesh and Arjun Erigaisi, the Indian men scored a 3-1 victory over Azerbaijan in the fifth round of the 45th Chess Olympiad here.

It seems like Gukesh and Arjun can do nothing wrong in this Olympiad as they overpowered Aydin Sulemanli and Rauf Mamedov respectively with their white pieces in quick time.

Praggnanandhaa played another draw on board two to only ensure an Indian victory while Vidit Gujrathi played out a draw with Shakhriyar Mamedyarov in a marathon game to complete the triumph.

After scoring the fifth victory on the trot, the Indian men maintained a clean slate on ten points and they were joined by Vietnam who continued with their impressive show and downed Poland 2.5-1.5.

The other two teams that joined the leaders' pack were China and Hungary who scored identical 2.5-1.5 victories over Spain and Ukraine respectively.

With six rounds still to come in the biggest chess event, Magnus Carlsen's Norway and Iran are the only two teams sharing the fifth spot on 9 points apiece. Norway defeated a talented Turkey team by a 3-1 margin while Iran made most of the opportunities to down Canada 3.5-0.5.

In the women's section, Grandmaster D Harika suffered a shock defeat to give Kazakhstan an early lead. Better for most of the game, Harika misplayed after many pundits believed her position to be winning against Bibisara Assaubayeva.

On the fourth board Vantika Agarwal yet again played the anchor and won a clean game with white pieces against Alua Nurman while Xeniya Balabayeva split the point with Divya Deshmukh.

With the scores tied at 2-2 it was Vaishali's turn to come up triumphs for the team and she outwitted Meruert Kamalidenova.

Team India joined Armenia and Mongolia in the lead on ten points. Armenia halted the Chinese party for now handing them a 2.5-1.5 defeat while Mongolia proved superior to United States with a similar score.

The three leaders have 10 points apiece and they are now followed by Georgia and Poland a half point behind.

Gukesh scored his fourth victory in a row at the expense of Sulemanli. The World championship challenger got a huge middle game advantage with scattered black pieces and a weak king and made no mistakes in converting that in to a full point.

Arjun is the only Indian who has played all five games thus far and the primary reason is his ability to complicate matters with either colour. Up against Mamedov, it was



CHES OLYMPIAD

Sicilian Dragon structure wherein Arjun converted to a complicated endgame and then his precise calculation helped him carve out his fifth win as many games.

For the records, Arjun is currently at 2888 ELO rating points in live ratings and just 12 short of attaining the magical 2800 mark - a summit captured by only Viswanathan Anand as an Indian.

The women section has seen some serious bouts wherein the tables were turned in quick time. In the next round now, the eves will take on Armenia.

**Results round 5 open:** India (10) beat Azerbaijan (8) 3-1 (D Gukesh beat Aydin Sulemanli; R Praggnanandhaa drew with Nijat Abasov; Arjun Erigaisi beat Rauf Mamedov; Shakhriyar Mamedyarov drew with Vidit Gujrathi); Ukraine (8) lost to Hungary (10) 1.5-2.5; Vietnam (10) beat Poland (8) 2.5-1.5; Spain (8) lost to China (10) 1.5-2.5; Turkey (7) lost to Norway (9) 1-3; Iran (9) beat Canada (7) 3.5-0.5.

**Women:** Kazakhstan (8) lost to India (10) 1.5-2.5 (Bibisara Asaubayeva beat D Harika; R Vaishali beat Meruert Kamalidenova; Xeniya Balabayeva drew with Divya Deshmukh; Vantika Agrawal beat Alua Nurman); China (8) lost to Armenia (10) 1.5-2.5; Mongolia (10) beat USA (8) 2.5-1.5; Uzbekistan (7) lost to Georgia (9) 1.5-2.5; Poland (9) beat Turkey (7) 3-1.



## Yamal scores twice as Barcelona beats Girona 4-1

**AP ■ MADRID**

With two goals in less than 10 minutes, Lamine Yamal led Barcelona to its fifth straight victory at the start of the Spanish league season.

The teenager's double, plus second-half goals from Dani Olmo and Pedri, gave Barcelona a commanding 4-1 win at Catalan rival Girona on Sunday, keeping a four-point lead at the top.

Atletico Madrid kept pace by beating last-place Valencia 3-0 with goals from Antoine Griezmann and newly signed players Julián Álvarez and Conor Gallagher, while Real Madrid had won 2-0 at Real Sociedad on Saturday with goals from Kylian Mbappé and Vinícius Júnior.

Along with Atletico and Madrid, Villarreal was the other team four points behind Barcelona after winning 2-1 at Mallorca on Saturday.

"To help the team it's important to score the goals and to do whatever is needed," Yamal said. "The first match after the international break is always complicated. Now we can start focusing on the match against Monaco (in the Champions League on Thursday)."

Yamal's goals on Sunday were his second and third of the

season. The 17-year-old Spain international opened the scoring after stealing the ball from a defender and sending a close-range shot into the net in the 30th minute. He scored again in the 37th after picking up a loose ball inside the area.

Olmo's third goal since joining Barcelona this season came from a tight angle in the 47th, and Pedri sealed the easy victory with a goal from inside the area in the 64th.

Olmo, who had to be replaced in the second half because of a right leg injury, became the first player to score in his first three league games for Barcelona since Cesc Fàbregas in 2011. Only Zlatan Ibrahimovic, in 2009, achieved the same feat this century.

Cristhian Stuani scored Girona's lone goal in the 80th. The hosts were initially awarded a penalty kick for a handball inside the area just before halftime, with Barcelona leading 2-0, but the call was reversed by video review. Barcelona played with 10 men from the 87th after Ferran Torres was sent off for a hard foul on an opponent.

Poland striker Robert Lewandowski played his 100th match with Barcelona.

Girona, a surprise third-place finisher last season, won both league games against

Barcelona last season.

Atletico Madrid tops Valencia Newly signed Argentina forward Álvarez and England midfielder Gallagher scored their first goals for Atletico Madrid in the team's 3-0 win over last-place Valencia.

Álvarez sealed the home victory in stoppage time after Gallagher had opened the scoring in the 39th and Griezmann had doubled the lead in the 54th.

"I didn't feel like I was under pressure to score," Álvarez said. "I was ready for when the opportunity appeared."

It was the second consecutive win for Atletico, and third in five league matches. Diego Simeone's team drew its other two games.

Valencia has opened its season with four losses and a draw - 1-1 against Villarreal in the previous round.

Earlier Sunday, 10-man Athletic Bilbao won 3-2 at Las Palmas, which hasn't won in 19 straight league games going back to last season. It was the second win for Athletic this season.

Celta Vigo beat Valladolid 3-1 at home for its first win after two consecutive losses. It was the fourth straight game without a win for Valladolid after it opened with a victory at Espanyol.

## Britain fails to reach Davis Cup Finals

**AP ■ MANCHESTER**

Britain failed to qualify for the last eight of the Davis Cup Finals after losing to Canada 2-1 in its last group-stage tie, while Novak Djokovic helped Serbia secure a place in next year's qualifiers.

The British needed a 3-0 win against the Canadians in Manchester, but Dan Evans lost 6-0, 7-5 to Denis Shapovalov to end Britain's hopes in the opening match in front of a crowd of 15,700 at the AO Arena, the biggest for a Davis Cup tie on British soil, according to organizers.

Felix Auger-Aliassime then defeated Jack Draper 7-6 (8), 7-5 to seal Canada's victory and first place in Group D. England won the final doubles match. Evans hinted this may have been his last Davis Cup appearance.

"I've probably had my fair share now. It could be and probably will be (the end)," he said. "I need to have a think. If I don't feel capable of playing, I won't come back."

Canada and Argentina advanced from Group D. Finland was the other team eliminated.

Four groups have been playing in four cities to qualify for the eight-team Finals in Malaga, Spain, in November. The top two in each four-team group advance.

In Valencia, Spain defeated Australia 2-1 to win Group B with both having already qualified. France and the Czech Republic were eliminated.

In Bologna, the Netherlands won the closing doubles match to clinch its spot in the Finals



despite a 2-1 loss to Italy in Group A. The Dutch needed a single win to advance but had lost the first two matches.

The decisive win came with Wesley Koolhof and Botić van de Zandschulp defeating Simone Bolelli and Andrea

Vavassori 7-6 (6), 7-5.

Brazil would have advanced had the Netherlands lost 3-0 to group-winner Italy. Belgium had already been eliminated.

In Group C, Chile beat Slovakia in a match in Zhuhai, China between already

eliminated nations. The United States and Germany had advanced from the group.

**DJOKOVIC WINS AGAIN:** Djokovic led Serbia to a 3-1 win over Greece in a World Group 1 tie in Belgrade. The Olympic champion partnered Hamad Medjedovic to a 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 win over Aristotelis Thanos and Petros Tsitsipas. Djokovic beat Ioannis Xilas 6-0, 6-1 in the singles on Saturday.

**BERDÝCH TO CAPTAIN CZECHS:** Former world No. 4 and two-time Davis Cup champion Tomas Berdych will take over the captaincy from Jaroslav Navratil for the Czech Republic.

Navratil captained the Czechs for nearly two decades, including when it won the 2012 and 2013 titles with Berdych as a player.

## McLaren boss Zak Brown revels in best season

**AP ■ LEBANON (TENNESSEE, USA)**

After a thrilling Azerbaijan Grand Prix, it seems like nearly half the field is capable of winning races in Formula 1.

McLaren chief executive Zak Brown, whose driver Lando Norris is Max Verstappen's closest title challenger, says he's enjoying the best show he's seen in his eight years in F1.

There have been six different winners in the last eight races, representing four different teams. Verstappen, whose dominance in 2022 and 2023 broke records, still leads the standings but his last win was in June.

"I think this is the best season I can think of ever in Formula 1 since I've been here," Brown told The Associated Press from the IndyCar season finale at Nashville Superspeedway in Tennessee. Could it even be better than the 2021 fight between Verstappen and Lewis Hamilton, which was decided on the final lap of the year and helped fuel F1's Netflix boom? Brown thinks it might be.

"That was mega exciting, but it's just two guys, two good guys. Now you've got four good teams in today's race," he said.



"To have four teams that can win any weekend, and (Sergio) Perez was obviously back on form today, eight drivers going into Singapore and we're going I don't know which of these four teams might win. I don't know which of these eight drivers might win; I can't recall Formula 1 having that level of competitiveness."

There was non-stop action Sunday. McLaren's Oscar Piastri took the win in Baku, but only after a daring overtake on Ferrari's Charles Leclerc. Perez was in the mix for Red Bull until he and

Ferrari's Carlos Sainz Jr. Collided, handing third to Mercedes driver George Russell.

Further back, Norris surged through the field from 15th on the grid to finish fourth ahead of Verstappen and take another bite out of the champion's standings lead.

Teams' performances fluctuate week by week, depending on upgrades from the factories, track conditions and setup changes, like the one which Verstappen blamed for ruining his weekend in Azerbaijan.

Even a change of tires can turn an also-ran into a contender, Russell said Sunday.

"Just in this one race, we had a car that could have won if you took the pace from half of the race and a car that should have been outside the top 10 from the other half," he said, adding: "So I hope we've got the faster version" for next week's race in Singapore.

The Singapore street track hosted one of the most competitive races of an otherwise Red Bull-dominated 2023 season. On worn tires, Sainz held off Norris' McLaren and the two Mercedes of seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton and Russell, who crashed from third on the last lap.

Piastri is F1's on-form driver with the most points of anyone in the last seven races. He knows just how many moving parts are involved in success this year, and how quickly it can all change.

"We've been in with a chance everywhere, and I think today was definitely one of those days where we weren't necessarily the quickest, but we had a car that could put us in the fight," the Australian said.

"We had a pit stop that could put us in the fight. We had some teamwork that put us in the fight."

## Manchester City hearing is the chance to clear the club name

**AP ■ MANCHESTER**

The biggest challenge to Manchester City's Premier League dominance was due to start on Monday at a hearing into a slew of alleged financial breaches.

On the line is City's reputation and punishment could be as extreme as expulsion from the league.

City, which has won the last four league titles, denies the charges, which include providing misleading information about its finances. It will be down to a team of lawyers to clear the club's name and finally quash accusations that have cast a cloud over its unprecedented period of success.

Manager Pep Guardiola confirmed on Friday that the long-awaited hearing into more than 100 charges of

alleged financial wrongdoing was due to start.

"I'm happy it's starting on Monday. I know there will be more rumors," he said. "Everybody is innocent until guilt is proven."

The charges City was accused by the Premier League in February last year of providing misleading information about its finances over a nine-year period between 2009-18 after it was bought by Abu Dhabi's ruling family in 2008. City was trying to establish itself as one of the leading clubs in Europe, signed some of the world's best players like Yaya Toure, Sergio Aguero and Kevin de Bruyne and won three league titles - in 2012, 2014 and 2018.

The league's financial fair play rules are designed to ensure clubs essentially spend what they earn and commercial

deals are assessed for being at legitimate market value.

The charges came after a four-year investigation and following the publication of leaked emails and documents, likely hacked, that were published starting in 2018 by German magazine Der Spiegel. The documents allegedly showed attempts to cover up the source of City's income in a bid to comply with Financial Fair Play rules operated by European soccer's governing body UEFA and the Premier League.

City was also accused of breaches relating to its alleged failure to co-operate with the investigation.

The hearing into the charges will be held by an independent commission made up of three judges appointed by a lawyer who chairs the league's judicial



panel. The hearing will be held behind closed doors, and a verdict is not expected until next year.

The punishment Potential punishment for a "serious breach" of the league's rule book is wide-ranging.

Dependent on whether City is found guilty of any of the charges, possible sanctions include a fine, points deduction or in "extreme cases, expulsion from the competition" according to the league's rules.

City's response City said it was surprised by the charges when they were made last year.

"The Club welcomes the review of this matter by an independent Commission, to impartially consider the comprehensive body of irrefutable evidence that exists in support of its position," it said in a statement. "As such we look forward to this matter being put to rest once and for all."

Guardiola has repeatedly been critical of the treatment of City.

"My first thought is we are already being condemned," he said after the charges were made. "We are lucky we live in a marvellous country where everyone is innocent until proved guilty. We didn't have this opportunity. We are already sentenced."

The rules Known as Financial

Fair Play, the regulations are aimed at preventing clubs from spending more than they earn. FFP was established in the aftermath of the 2008 global financial crisis, which deepened worries in European soccer that clubs could go out of business if the cost of player transfers and wages kept rising.

Previous cases City was fined 60 million euros (then \$82 million) spread over three years by UEFA in 2014 and forced to limit its Champions League squad to 21 instead of 25 senior players after violating FFP rules.

Ultimately City only had to forfeit 20 million euros of prize money after complying with the governing body's measures.

In 2018 German magazine Der Spiegel published the

"Football Leaks" series of articles supposedly based on City's internal documents and communications. They suggested City had broken FFP rules in financial relationships with "related-party" sponsors from Abu Dhabi.

In February 2020 City was banned from UEFA competition for two seasons for "serious breaches", including overstating sponsor revenue and failing to cooperate with investigators.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) overturned the ban in July 2020, ruling that some UEFA charges were not proven and other evidence was excluded as time-barred.

The court "strongly condemned" Man City for obstructing UEFA's investigation, though a £10 million (\$10

# SKIPPER HARMANPREET TWIN STRIKE IN 4-1 VICTORY OVER KOREA

PTI ■ HULUNBUIR (CHINA)

Skipper Harmanpreet Singh's sublime form resulted in twin strikes as defending champions India entered the final of the Hero Asian Champions Trophy with a clinical 4-1 win against South Korea in the semi-final here on Monday. India scored through Uttam Singh (13th minute), skipper Harmanpreet Singh (19th, 45th) and Jarmanpreet Singh (32nd), while Korea's lone goal came from through Yang Jihun (33rd's) penalty corner conversion.

India will take on hosts China in Tuesday's final. Earlier in the day, China defeated Pakistan 2-0 via shoot-out in the first semifinal after the two teams finished 1-1 at the end of regulation 60 minutes.

In the previous league stage encounter between the two finalists, India prevailed 3-0.

Pakistan and Korea will face off in the third place classification match which will also be played on Tuesday.

Meanwhile in the fifth-sixth place classification match, Japan beat Malaysia 4-2 in shoot-out following a 4-4 stalemate in normal time.

In the second semifinal as expected, the Indians started on the offensive and tested the Korean defence with

## INDIA IN ACT FINAL



persistent attacks from the word go. The Koreans, on the other hand, were content to sit back and defend and rely on sporadic counter attacks.

Abhishek came tantalisingly close to handing India the lead in the fourth minute but his reverse hit was brilliantly saved by Korean goalkeeper Kim Jaehan.

The Indian made promising build ups and penetrated the Korean circle on consistent basis in the first quarter.

India's attacking intent finally paid off in the 13th minute when Uttam positioned himself at the right place at the right time to tap in Arajjeet Singh Hundal's supply from the right.

A minute from the first break, Korea secured back-to-back penalty corners but failed to utilise the chances.

Four minutes into the second quarter, India secured their first penalty corner and Harmanpreet scored his sixth goal of the tournament to hand his side a 2-0 lead.

At the stroke of half-time, custodian Suraj Karkera came out of his line to save an effort from the opposition player.

India continued in the same vein after the change of ends and extended their lead two minutes into the third quarter.

A brilliant scoop from Sumit from the right finds Jarmanpreet just outside the circle on the left flank and the latter neatly collected the ball and took a step or two to get inside the circle and slap the ball into the Korean goal to extend India's lead.

But Korea pulled one back a minute later from a penalty corner through the tournament's top-scorer Yang Jihun.

The goal hardly bothered the Indians as they continued their attacking game and dominated the share of exchanges.

With a second left for the third quarter, India secured another penalty corner when Korean goalkeeper Jaehan was shown the yellow card for handling the ball out side the circle, and Harmanpreet made no mistake to extend the lead.

Eight minutes from the final hooter, India's second goalkeeper Karkera made a fine double save to deny Park Cheoleon, but the Koreans secured a penalty corner which went in vain.

Thereafter, it was controlled show from the Indians as they defended their lead with consummate ease to march into their fifth final appearance in the tournament.



## Sharma finishes T-42nd as Hojgaard pips McIlroy to Irish title

PTI ■ DUBLIN

Indian golfer Shubhankar Sharma had a choppy back nine leading to a round of 1-over 72 as he finished a disappointing T-42nd at the Amgen Irish Open at Royal County Down.

Sharma, who was in the top-15 after the first two days, ended with a total of 4-over 288.

He parred through the front nine and two more holes before finding his first birdie on the 12th.

He bogeyed 13th and the 15th but birdied 16th only to drop a shot on 17th and close with a par.

Meanwhile, Rasmus Hojgaard holed out twice and produced a stunning finish with four birdies in last five holes as he beat local favourite Rory McIlroy.

McIlroy looked on course to claim his first professional win on home soil when he led by two shots with four holes to play at a venue just an hour from where he grew up.

However, Hojgaard's superb closing 65 saw him claim his fifth DP World Tour title and move to second in the Race to Dubai Rankings and to the top of the European Ryder Cup standings.

McIlroy had taken a one-shot lead into the final round and made the ideal start with birdies on the first and second.

With playing partner Matteo

Manassero then dropping shots on the third and fourth, McIlroy briefly enjoyed a four-shot lead before making a bogey on the seventh after failing to get up and down from left of the green.

He then missed from inside ten feet for birdie on both the eighth and the ninth as Hojgaard kickstarted his challenge with an outrageous chip-in for birdie on the tenth.

A birdie on the 11th edged McIlroy two in front again, but that advantage was wiped out as Hojgaard birdied the 16th and McIlroy bogeyed the 15th.

Hojgaard then dramatically holed out from a greenside bunker on the 17th and, although McIlroy drew level with a birdie on the 16th, he charged his birdie putt on the 17th past the hole and missed the return.

Hojgaard's third birdie in a row on the 18th meant McIlroy needed to make an eagle on the same hole to force a play-off and a towering approach from 191 yards gave him a chance from 15 feet, only for the eagle putt to slide just wide.

"I was nervous. I was shaking out there the last few holes. I obviously knew that Rory was going to be there because he's got the whole support on his back there. It was nerve-racking going down the last few holes knowing that he was right behind me," Hojgaard said.

## Rohit, team sweat it out in third training session in Chennai

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Rohit Sharma and Co had another extensive training session in the build up to the first Test against Bangladesh with all 16 squad members turning for practice at the Chepauk here on Monday.

After a day off, the India squad members took part in their third training session since their arrival here last week. The first Test begins on Thursday.

As it is often the case, Virat Kohli was among the first set of batters to hit the nets. In the adjacent net was southpaw Yashvi Jaiswal as both him and Kohli faced Jasprit Bumrah and home hero R Ashwin.

The next set of batters included skipper Rohit, Shubman Gill and Sarfaraz Khan, the last named player arriving here after taking part in the second round Duleep Trophy match in Anantapur. The captain focussed on playing spinners keeping Bangladesh's slow bowling attack in mind.

Ravindra Jadeja, Rishabh Pant and pacer Mohammed Siraj too



faced local bowlers and significant amount of throwdowns.

The practise pitch at the main square offered a decent amount of bounce.

India will have two more practice sessions scheduled before the series opener against Bangladesh, who are riding on the confidence of their series sweep in Pakistan.

Most players in the playing eleven select themselves. The Chennai surface usually favour the spinners and there is likelihood of India going into the game with three spinners and two pacers.

The spinners expected to feature are Ashwin, Jadeja and Kuldeep Yadav while Bumrah and Siraj will share workload in the pace department. Axar Patel, despite his impressive all-round returns across formats, may have to sit out.

On the batting front, Pant is expected to make his Test return after a gap of almost two years. Dhruv Jurel, who impressed his debut series against England, will be benched in that case.

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Indian players have been working on their mental strength for a "long time" which should help the team in overcoming hurdles, says skipper Harmanpreet Kaur ahead of the upcoming women's T20 World Cup next month.

India, who finished as runner-up in the 2020 edition of the tournament, are placed in Group A along with six-time winners and defending champions Australia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and New Zealand.

Kaur said on Monday that the Indian players have been working on the mental aspect to bring out their best in crucial moments.

"We have been working on mental strength for a long time. The last 3-4 overs are the most crucial. T20 cricket is not a small format; at the end of the day, you are playing 40 overs," Kaur told Star Sports.

"In the last 4-5 overs, the team that is mentally strong wins the match. We

## Indian players working on mental strength ahead of T20 World Cup: Harmanpreet

have been focusing on this for a while. If we can remain mentally stable in those final five overs, we can execute what's best for us."

India's performances in summit clashes have featured in discussions given the team lost in the 2020 final by 85 runs to Australia, while England had pipped them by a mere nine runs in the 2017 ODI World Cup final.

Even in the Commonwealth Games 2022, Australia eked out a nine-run win to clinch the gold medal despite a spirited show with the bat from India in the final, with Kaur's team settling for the silver.

"We are working on those aspects, and hopefully, we will overcome this hurdle in the tournament," she added.



India's campaign begins on October 4 against New Zealand followed by the clash against arch-rivals Pakistan on October 6.

India, who lost to Sri Lanka in the women's Asia Cup final earlier this year, will take on the team from the island nation on October 9 and each of their first three group stage matches will be played in Dubai.

India's final group match against Australia will be played at Sharjah on October 13.

Kaur said the team's combination of players from different states in the country gives an opportunity to learn further.

"All the players in our team come from different states. It feels good when you see so many different characters in the team. People from various states share the dressing room, and you get to learn about their cultures.

"I think you can only experience that in sports, not in any other career," Kaur added.

## Sakshi Malik, Aman Sehrawat and Geeta Phogat announce Wrestling Champions Super League

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Olympic medallists Sakshi Malik and Aman Sehrawat, along with former world championship bronze-winner Geeta Phogat, on Monday announced that they would soon launch a Wrestling Champions Super League (WCSSL) for the country's budding grapplers but the national federation has refused to sanction the initiative.

Sakshi, along with Bajrang Punia and Vinesh Phogat, had spearheaded the wrestlers' protest against ousted Wrestling Federation of India President Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, who was accused of sexual harassment.

She has, however, distanced herself from the latter two after they took the political plunge by joining Congress ahead of next month's Haryana assembly elections. She won the 58kg bronze in 2016 Rio Olympics, and announced the project with Phogat, a 55kg bronze winner in 2012 World Championships through their

social media handles. The two, while announcing that they had Paris Games bronze-winner Aman on board, did not provide any details.

Phogat told PTI that she is hopeful of support from the federation and the government.

"Sakshi and I have been planning this League for long. Soon it will take a final shape. We have not yet spoken to the WFI but it would be great if WFI and government support us. It will be the first league that will be operated only by the players," Phogat said.

"We are doing it for the players, for their benefit. That is the idea and vision, so no one should have any problem with it. It's a proud moment for us. We won't stop anyone from getting involved in it, if WFI or government comes on board, even better. We have not yet spoken to them.

"There will be international wrestlers, and coaches involved, so it should help our junior wrestlers. They will get good exposure."

The WFI said it would not give its sanction to the league.



"We won't approve it. We are reviving our pro wrestling league and hopefully we will have it soon. The wrestlers are free to do their own league, they can promote the game, but we won't be linked with that," WFI President Sanjay Singh said.



Asked if there will be prize money involved, and about the format and venue for the

event, Phogat said, "You will have to wait a bit to know all this. We will share the details very soon."

Sakshi, who retired from wrestling after Sharan Singh's close aide Sanjay Singh became WFI head, said she hopes to give back to the sport through this initiative.

"The only way to repay your trust is to dedicate our sporting talent, experience, grit & success to the service of the sport. The 2 of us have therefore come together to create the Wrestling Champions Super League (WCSSL)," she posted on X.

"The WCSSL, a world class international league, will skill & strengthen our wrestlers to dominate the sport globally by taking on the world's best in a hyper competitive, expertly supervised environment with best-in-class support systems in place."

She also said that Sehrawat, who won bronze in 57kg in Paris Olympics, also "shares our vision and is joining us on this journey."

"This league is a very commendable initiative which will help Indian wrestling greatly and therefore I want to be a part of it and support it fully," Aman was quoted as saying by Sakshi.

Daughter of noted wrestling coach Mahavir, Geeta is a cousin of Vinesh, who will be contesting from Julana constituency during the Haryana elections.

Sakshi said the aim of the league is to build a culture of sustained high performance in the sport in the country.

"While WCSSL is focused on wrestling, it is inspired also by our overwhelming urge to build a culture of sustained high performance in Indian sport & motivate every Indian to experience the joy of playing."

"Although founded by the 2 of us, the WCSSL is a national mission committed to respecting & working in close partnership with all stakeholders. Winning, after all, is a team sport. Our hearts beat only for India, for Indian wrestling & for Indian sport. Come, let's build the sporting India of our dreams mil ke, ek saath!"