

**OPINION 6**  
SEXISM IN POLITICS:  
THE UNFINISHED BATTLE

**WORLD 8**  
ISRAELI FORCES APPEAR TO  
WITHDRAW FROM JENIN

**MONEY 10**  
RUPEE RISES TWO PAISE TO SETTLE  
AT 83.95 AGAINST US DOLLAR

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## WHEN GOLDEN HOUR IS LOST IN A STUCK AMBULANCE

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

My father was in the ambulance, as he had just suffered a severe asthma attack. We were rushing to a hospital in South Delhi, hoping every second that we would make it in time. But as we got onto the main road, we realised we were trapped. The heavy rains in the morning had caused massive water-logging, and the traffic was completely stuck. The ambulance couldn't move an inch.

"Though, we eventually reached the hospital, the delay could have been fatal," said Ramesh Verma, echoing the helplessness of a family member stuck in a dire situation due to water-logging induced traffic snarls in the national capital.

This case is just one among many in the similar situation, highlighting systemic issues with emergency response and infrastructure, particularly during the monsoon season when water-logging is the common feature at various stretches. Despite the ongoing problems plaguing the city for years as climate change induced erratic weather plays truant, authorities continue to shift responsibility, leaving the situation unresolved year after year.

There have been cases of people dying in rain-related incidents as the capital has been witnessing heavy rainfall every other day, bringing it to a standstill with streets flooded, traffic in chaos and some commuters stranded on roads. Even upscale areas of Lutyens' Delhi, arterial lanes and key tunnels like the one at Pragati Maidan were closed due to flooding.

Clearly, this reflects a broader issue where emergency services are frequently hindered by inadequate infrastructure. Incidentally, while writing this, Sawati

Das Gupta, a commuter, called up in distress. "I am stuck up at a severe traffic snarl at Bharat Mandapam near Supreme Court due to water-logging, which is also blocking two ambulances.

"The vehicles with sirens blaring are honking consistently, but there's no space to move. I just can't imagine the distress of patients and their families inside the vehicle, trapped in gridlocked traffic. It's heart-wrenching. The pressure and fear of not knowing if they'll make it in time only add to their agony. The situation is further compounded by the fact that outside the vehicle, people seem unaware of the urgency," she said. Dasgupta asserted that such a situation is unacceptable and no one should have to endure this kind of helplessness.

"We need better emergency management and infrastructure to prevent such incidents," she strongly emphasised.

Drivers from Centralised Accident and Trauma Services (CATS), the State Government's medical emergency services too expressed their frustration, noting that their best strategy is to avoid known water-logged areas and stay updated via contacts and newspapers. Much also depends on the driving skill of the occupant behind the steering wheel, they agreed.

Jeetu (name changed), a CATS driver, emphasised the importance of the 'Golden Hour'—the critical first hour following an accident for improving survival chances.

The 'Golden Hour' principle, supported by WHO, stresses the importance of timely medical intervention to increase survival rates. Currently, traffic congestion often delays ambulances, with journeys that should take 15-20 minutes extending over an hour.

The CATS vehicles are categorised into



patient transport ambulances, basic life-support ambulances, and advanced life-support ambulances.

He also shared that CATS is in the process of updating its fleet, with plans to add over 400 new vehicles equipped with advanced facilities. The Government has also taken the services of a private firm which is playing the vehicles as 'Rakshak' Suraj (name changed), another driver with the CAT, lamented that while the population has increased, infrastructure improvements have lagged, putting critical patients at greater risk.

Requesting anonymity, a senior official from the CATS department maintained that the old fleets are on the way out. A tender has been passed in this regard and we are looking forward to adding the new vehicles equipped with improved and sophisticated facilities including at least three Oxygen cylinders. Soon there would be more than 400 vehicles.

The official admitted that roads are constructed without properly assessing actual needs, and issues like inadequate sewage management and insufficient desilting contribute to the chaos. Ultimately, it is the people and patients who suffer as a result.

Jeetu chipped in saying that most critical are especially those injured in road accidents, while on the way to hospitals. "I have been lucky that no patient has died in my ambulance due to heavy traffic on the road resulting in the ambulances getting stuck in traffic jams." Apart from patients of road mishaps, heart patients also needed to be rushed to hospitals in time.

However, on the brighter side, he said that people have been sensitised enough to give way to Ambulances.

According to the CAT drivers, if an ambulance gets a free lane it can cover the distance of 25 km within 15 to 20

minutes but due to traffic it generally takes more than an hour. If the water-logging issue is sorted, delay time in a patient reaching a hospital can be cut.

Delhi has several areas prone to waterlogging, including perennial hotspots like Minto Bridge, Pul Prahladpur Underpass, Jahangirpuri Metro Station Road, under Zakhira Flyover, Loni Road Roundabout, Karala Kanjhawala, and parts of the Ring Road, such as the area opposite WHO.

Other locations that frequently experience waterlogging include ITO, RK Puram, Janpath, Parliament Street, Karol Bagh, Nauroji Nagar, Pant Marg, and various spots in South Delhi, such as Mayur Vihar, Vasant Kunj, Greater Kailash, New Friends Colony, Saket, and Malviya Nagar.

Dr Jagdish Kaur from WILGA, an NGO working for the empowerment of women expressed displeasure at the situation, saying, "I can't recall a day when I haven't seen an ambulance struggling through our chaotic traffic, which is often anything but efficient.

"We often forget that the person in the ambulance could be someone we know or even ourselves. Imagine being in that emergency vehicle while someone in a car ignores the siren's urgent wail. That siren is actually a critical signal—a 'song of life or death'."

Each of us plays a role in ensuring that this siren leads to life, not death. Just as the ambulance driver, doctors, and nurses are responsible for responding to emergencies, we must also take responsibility for our actions on the road.

Also, the authorities instead of playing blame-games must do their part. They should responsibly ensure that the roads are free of water-logging and traffic jams," Dr Kaur summed up.

## Sensex nosedives, vapourises investors' INR five lakh crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Investors' wealth plummeted by ₹5.49 lakh crore on Friday as markets faced a massive correction tracking a weak trend in global peers and fresh foreign fund outflows.

Falling for the third day running, the 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 1,017.23 points or 1.24 per cent to settle at ₹81,183.93. During the day, it plunged 1,219.23 points or 1.48 per cent to ₹80,981.93. The BSE benchmark had hit its all-time high of ₹82,725.28 on Monday.

Following the weak trend in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms slumped by ₹5,49,925.16 crore to ₹4,60,18,976.09 crore (USD 5.48 trillion).

"Markets witnessed intense profit-booking after the recent upsurge and key benchmark indices crumbled on fears a subdued US economic data could push Fed chairman to

postpone rate cut decision. Investors trimmed their bullish bets ahead of the US jobs report, as any uptick in the numbers could prompt the Fed to maintain the status quo on interest rates," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities

Ltd, said. Among the 30 Sensex firms, State Bank of India tanked over 4 per cent. ICICI Bank, NTPC, HCL Technologies, Reliance Industries, Tata Motors, ITC, Axis Bank and Adani Ports were the major laggards. Asian Paints, Bajaj Finance, JSW Steel and Hindustan Unilever were the gainers. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled lower.

European markets were trading in the red. The US markets ended mostly in the negative territory on Thursday.

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## BJP J and K manifesto: 370 is a thing of past says HM

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Exuding confidence that the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) will form the next government on its own, Union Home Minister Amit Shah Friday unveiled the party's Sankalp Patra (manifesto) asserting its resolve to build a peaceful, secure, developed, and prosperous Jammu and Kashmir.

Ahead of releasing the party's "Sankalp Patra", Shah said, "Article 370 is part of history and will never come back. The people of the country and



Home Minister Amit Shah releases the party's election manifesto ahead of the Jammu and Kashmir elections PTI

the state respect the abrogation of Article 370." Referring to the list of 25 promises made by the party in its manifesto, Shah said 'wiping out terrorism and separatism in the state' figure high on our agenda, followed by prioritising and enhancing women's financial security and self-reliance.

The Home Minister also promised to bring a white paper to fix the responsibility of those involved in the emergence of terrorism in the region.

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## INDIA CLAIMS SIXTH GOLD



Praveen Kumar shattered the Asian record jump of 2.08 m to win the T64 finals at Paris Paralympics 2024

## Phogat, Punia join Congress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Wrestlers Vinesh Phogat and Bajrang Punia joined the Congress on Friday ahead of the Haryana Assembly polls. Phogat on Friday resigned from the Indian Railways, citing personal reasons. Both of them met Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge at his 10, Rajaji Marg, residence.

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## SC asks HP collegium to reconsider its recommendations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday asked the collegium of the Himachal Pradesh High Court to reconsider the names of two senior-most district and sessions judges for elevation as judges of the High Court. The top court observed that the High Court chief justice could not individually reconsider a recommendation and it could only be done by a High Court collegium, acting collectively. A bench of Justice Hrishikesh Roy and Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra delivered its verdict on a plea filed by the two senior-most district and sessions judges, alleging that their merit and seniority were not considered by the High Court collegium in the selection of names for High Court judgeship. "There was no collective consultation and deliberation by the members of the High Court collegium," the bench said while pronouncing its judgment. "In light of the above, the high court collegium should now reconsider the names of Chirag Bhanu Singh and Arvind Malhotra for elevation as judges of the high court, following the Supreme Court collegium decision dated January 4, 2024..." it said.

While pronouncing its verdict, the top court bench said, "The decision of the chief justice of the High Court on the suitability of the two petitioners, as conveyed in his letter dated March 6, 2024, appears to be an individual decision. The same stands vitiated, both procedurally and substantially." It said the writ petition filed by the petitioners was maintainable as it questioned the lack of effective consultation.

Continued on Page 2

# RG Kar rape, murder: Vital evidence lost due to demolition of POC, says CBI

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Health Department of Bengal had prior knowledge of the demolition of a portion of the seminar hall of the RG Kar Medical College Hospital undertaken barely a couple of days after the body of a brutally raped and murdered lady doctor of the Chest Medicine Department was found in a semi-nude condition in the small hours of August 9. The Central Bureau of Administration investigating the case had earlier told the Court that the demolition of a portion of the doctors' rest room and the attached washroom adjacent to the seminar hall might have led to the destruction of vital evidences in the case.

A letter written by Sandip Ghosh now arrested former principal of the RGKMCH -- to the Executive Engineer (civil and electrical) of the Public Works Department shows that he had ordered the demolition of the stated areas of the hospital following a meeting with the State Health Secretary and Director Medical Education. Curiously, when the Health Secretary was asked by the media on the day of the partial demolition of the alleged doctors' rest room he said that "an inquiry is under progress and things can be ascertained only after that." The letter which read, "I would like to inform you that there is a deficiency of on-duty doctors' rooms and separate attached toilets in various departments of RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, Kolkata. You are hereby requested to do the needful immediately as per the demand of resident doctors of the hospital. The issue has already been discussed and resolved in the meeting with the Principal Secretary, Department of Health & Family Welfare Government of West Bengal and Director of Medical Education, Department of Health & Family Welfare Government of West Bengal today in the board room of the hospital. Please do the needful immediately." The subject of the letter highlighted "Repair/renovation/reconstruction of on-duty doctors' rooms along with separate attached toilets in all departments of RG Kar

Medical College and Hospital, Kolkata on urgent basis," apparently emphasizing the urgency of the matter. The emergence of the letter written by the former Principal Ghosh tends to stand clearly in contrast with



Medical College and Hospital, Kolkata on urgent basis," apparently emphasizing the urgency of the matter. The emergence of the letter written by the former Principal Ghosh tends to stand clearly in contrast with

the statement of the Health Secretary, said senior doctor Subir Ganguly adding, the letter suggests that the Health Department was clearly in the know of the demolition process being carried out at the place of occurrence." On Thursday Health Department sources conceded that there indeed had been a meeting featuring the top Department officials but the discretion to renovate certain areas of the Hospital to construct a doctors' restroom was completely left on the Principal. Referring to the incident former CBI Joint Director Upen Biswas cracked the Bihar Animal Husbandry scam case in the nineties --- Hospital authorities but also the police to explain their conduct... who led the team that it is not only for the if the investigators take up this point seriously then many heads are likely to roll... as the police should have cordoned off the area and had disallowed any kind of addition or alteration

in the structure." Dr Subarno Ganguli one of the senior doctors who had raised the question of the propriety of the postmortem being conducted inside the same hospital where the incident took place wondered, "who the people are that the authorities are trying to save." Advocate Tarun Jyoti of the Calcutta High Court said that "in a system where it takes months often years for the PWD to act... how could the demolition work ensue in such a lightning speed within a few hours of the body of the victim being discovered," adding the principal's letter itself buttresses the claim of the junior doctors of the hospital that there were more people involved in the crime." Bengal had been up in flames

against the rape and murder of the lady doctor with the citizenry demanding the arrest of all the accused possibly involved in the felony. Notwithstanding the arrest of Sanjoy Rai a civic volunteer attached to the Kolkata Police was arrested for perpetrating the crime experts have expressed doubt on whether a lean and lanky person "like him could have executed the crime alone particularly in consideration of the injuries that had been suffered by the victim doctor. The junior doctors who had gone on a cease work after too have alleged that the police administration and the hospital authorities were trying to shield some influential people that could have been involved in the crime.

## SC accepts CEC recommendations to tackle dwindling green cover in Delhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



The Supreme Court on Friday accepted a set of recommendations made by the Central Empowered Committee (CEC) including creating a customised module which would contain data on details of projects requiring cutting of trees, the number of trees to be felled or translocated, and compensatory plantation to tackle dwindling green cover in the national capital. The apex court was hearing a matter regarding enhancing the green cover in Delhi and creating a mechanism for it. In its report filed in the top court, the CEC has recommended creation of a customised management information system (MIS) module on which data shall be uploaded by the project proponents on a regular basis for ensuring proper and timely compliance of the orders passed by the court on issues related to the Delhi Ridge. The Ridge is an extension of the Aravalli hill range in Delhi and is a rocky, hilly and forested area. It has been divided into four zones - south, south-central, central and north - for administrative reasons. These four zones make up a total area of around 7,784 hectares.

project proponents be given a grace period of six months to comply with the conditions imposed by this court while granting permissions for tree felling for their projects and till such time their new proposals may be kept pending," the CEC report said. It said if the project proponents fail to comply with the conditions even after the allotted grace period, then the apex court may take suitable punitive action against them. The bench said the CEC has pointed out 15 cases where permissions have been granted by the court for felling of trees subject to compliance with various conditions. However, the conditions have not been complied with, it said. While accepting the recommendations of the CEC, the bench permitted the panel to send notices to all applicants or project proponents, who were earlier granted permission for felling of trees, calling upon them to upload compliance data on the MIS within three months. The bench warned if the court is satisfied that project proponents have failed to upload data on compliance within three months, contempt action shall be initiated against them.

## Delhi Court extends Amanatullah's ED custody by three days

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



A city court on Friday extended AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan's ED custody by three days in a money laundering case, saying he may be required to be confronted with co-accused and witnesses. Special judge Vishal Gogne passed the order on an application moved by the central probe agency, which had sought Khan's custody for 10 more days. The judge said that an investigation cannot be frozen to the desecration of the accused who may have joined the investigation on one occasion. He said the examination of the case diaries by the court suggested the possibility that the statements or materials collected from about 48 witnesses or other persons connected with the investigation and who are not part of the first prosecution complaint (ED's equivalent to a charge sheet) may be required to be confronted with the accused.

He said that moreover, the investigative agency may require extended time to unravel the multi-layered and masked financial transactions which may have been designed to launder a substantial amount of money (Rs 36 crores) into properties fronted by the agents of Khan. "However, the prayer for the grant of further custody for 10 days is excessive. Three days of further custodial investigation is presently found sufficient by the court," the judge said and directed the ED to produce Khan before it on September 9. The judge said that the accused shall be medically examined after every 24 hours. "Further, the interrogation of the accused shall be conducted under CCTV coverage, with audio or video recording facility. The audio or video recording of the same is directed to be preserved for production in the court if required," the judge said.

Khan was produced before the court on the expiry of his four-day Enforcement Directorate custody granted earlier. He was taken into custody under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) on September 2 after the agency searched his residence in the Okhla area of the national capital. The ED told the court that some questions were put to Khan during the searches but he remained "evasive" and hence, was arrested.

## Technical report of anti-rape bill missing: Bengal Governor

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

There was more trouble for arrested former RG Kar Medical College Principal Sandip Ghosh with the Enforcement Directorate on Friday raiding ten locations in and around Kolkata and picking up one of his close associates Prasun Chatterjee, sources said. Among the addresses raided by the central agency was a palatial bungalow-cum-farm house belonging to Ghosh at

Canning in South 24 Parganas. The ED was earlier directed by the Calcutta High Court to investigate financial frauds in the RGKMCH which many a doctor link to the rape and murder of a lady doctor early this month. Meanwhile Bengal Governor C.V. Ananda Bose on Friday rebuked the Bengal Government for sending the Aparajita anti rape Bill for his assent but not tagging along with the technical report related to it.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday interacted with teachers who have been conferred the National Teachers Awards. While the awardees shared their teaching experience with PM and innovative techniques adopted by them to make learning more interesting, the PM discussed the impact of NEP and spoke about the significance of attaining education in one's mother tongue. PM also suggested teachers to teach local folklore to students in different languages to help them get introduced to different languages.

## Fair probe into RG Kar horror not possible unless Mamata resigns: BJP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Friday upped the ante against West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and demanded that she immediately step down, saying a fair probe into the Kolkata medic rape-murder case was not possible so long as she remained at the helm. The BJP's latest salvo came after the medic's family members, who joined the protesting doctors at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital on Wednesday, accused the Kolkata Police of attempting to suppress the case by hastily cremating the body. Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters in Delhi, party national spokesperson

and Lok Sabha MP Sambit Patra said the victim's father raised many questions of "paramount importance". "The victim's father has said that when the body was kept at (their) home, DC North (of the Kolkata Police) came to him and tried to give him money. Why? What was the administration trying to throw under the carpet by paying bribe money to the parents of the victim?" he asked. Patra further said, "So long as the chief minister of West Bengal and Kolkata Police Commissioner Vineet Goyal continue to hold their posts, a fair investigation into the case is not possible... Hence, the BJP asks both of them - step down from your posts for a fair trial and justice to the victim."

## Phogat, Punia join...

Railways after she met Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday. Party sources said the notice talked about violating service rules by meeting political leaders. Venugopal asked if it was a crime to meet the leader of the opposition and urged the Railway authorities to relieve Phogat and not "play politics". On whether Phogat and Punia would contest the assembly polls, he said the party's Central Election Committee would make a decision on that. After joining the party, Phogat said the BJP was supporting Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh while the Congress supported the protesting wrestlers when they "were being dragged on the roads" in Delhi.

Punia and Phogat were part of the protest over sexual harassment allegations against former BJP MP and then Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh in 2023. "I thank the people of the country and the media, you supported me throughout my wrestling journey. I thank the Congress party. Tough times tell you about who is with you. When we were dragged on the roads, all parties except the BJP stood with us," she said at the press conference. "I am starting a new innings. I want sportspersons don't have to face what we had to go through," Phogat said. "We will not be scared and won't back off. Our court case

is going on, we will win that also," she said. Venugopal said it was a "big day" for the Congress and a proud moment "for all of us" to welcome Phogat and Punia into the party fold. The entire country stood with them when they protested, he said, citing the support extended by Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadhwa and other Congress leaders. "They (Phogat and Punia) not only stood for themselves but fought for farmers and stood with them," Venugopal said. "Some people are criticising their joining the Congress. So many athletes and Olympians are in different parties, is that also a conspiracy?" Venugopal asked. Both Phogat and Punia or at

least one of them are set to contest the assembly polls on a Congress ticket, the sources said. Both Phogat and Punia met former Congress president Rahul Gandhi here on Wednesday. The Congress had put out a photograph of the Lok Sabha opposition leader with Phogat and Punia on its official X handle. Punia won bronze in the Olympic Games in Tokyo while Phogat became the first Indian woman wrestler to reach the Olympics final, the stage where she was disqualified in Paris after being found overweight by about 100 grams in her 50-kilogram category weight. She subsequently announced her retirement from the sport.

## SC asks HP collegium to reconsider its...

From Page 1

...the procedure adopted in the matter of reconsideration of the two petitioners is found to be inconsistent with the law laid down in the Second Judges (supra) and the Third Judges case (supra). There was no collective consultation and deliberations by the members of the High Court Collegium. The decision of the Chief Justice of the High Court, on the suitability of the two petitioners as conveyed in his letter dated 6th March 2024, appears to be an individual decision. The same therefore stand vitiated both procedurally and substantially," the bench said in its order. It said there was no collective consultation by the high court collegium on the elevation of district and sessions judges to the superior court and the decision on the suitability of the two senior-most judges appeared to be an "individual decision" of the chief justice. The apex court also stressed on the need to protect certain sensitive information in matters involving appointment of judges and said disclosing such information would compromise not only the privacy of an individual but also the integrity of the process. It also dealt with the issue of whether the elevation to

judgeship of a high court has to be considered collectively by the high court collegium or the chief justice can reconsider the same acting individually. "The process of judicial appointments to a superior court is not the prerogative of a single individual. Instead, it is a collaborative and participatory process involving all collegium members," it said. "The underlying principle is that the process of appointment of judges must reflect the collective wisdom that draws from diverse perspectives. Such a process ensures that principles of transparency and accountability are maintained," the bench said. Referring to previous judgements of the apex court, the bench said it has been emphasised that collaborative deliberations bring in transparency in the process, as decisions are deliberated, debated, and recorded. It said this contributes to public trust in judiciary, as it demonstrates that appointments are being made after thorough consideration. "Before parting, it needs to be stated that there is also a need to protect certain sensitive information in matters involving appointment of judges. While transparency is necessary to ensure fairness and accountability, it must be

carefully balanced with the need to maintain confidentiality," the bench said. The order further said in this case, the Court is not concerned with the aspects of 'suitability' of the petitioners for elevation as judges of the High Court or even the 'content of consultation'. Our scrutiny is limited to whether the reconsideration of the proposal for the elevation of the two petitioners, was jointly made by the Collegium members of the High Court, following the Supreme Court Resolution dated 4th January 2024. On May 13, the apex court sought a response from the registrar general of the Himachal Pradesh High Court on the plea. The petition was filed by the two judicial officers, alleging non-consideration of their names for judgeship by the high court collegium. The plea had said the apex court collegium's decision to send their names for reconsideration by the high court collegium was followed by a communication from the Union law minister to the high court chief justice, urging him to reconsider the names of the petitioner judicial officers. It had alleged that the high court collegium did not consider these and proceeded to deliberate upon the names of other judicial officers.

## BJP J&K manifesto...

Rohingya and Bangladeshi settlements from Jammu and Kashmir is another priority in BJP's plan. The manifesto release function, organised in a private hotel, was attended by Union Minister G Kishan Reddy, MoS PMO Dr Jitendra Singh, National General Secretary Tarun Chugh, J&K BJP Chief Ravinder Raina, Member Parliament from Jammu, Jugal Kishore Sharma, former Deputy CMs Kavinder Gupta, Prof Nirmal Singh and DS Rana. Speaking at the manifesto release, Amit Shah said, "Since Independence, the issue of Jammu and Kashmir

has remained important for our party, and we've always tried to keep this region with India." From Pandit Prem Nath Dogra's struggle to Nyama Prasad Mookerjee's sacrifice, this struggle was taken forward first by Jana Sangh and then by the BJP because we believe that Jammu and Kashmir has always been a part of India and will remain so," he added. The Union home minister claimed Jammu and Kashmir faced destabilization by various state and non-state actors until 2014. "All other governments did politics of appeasement to deal with

the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. However, whenever the history of India and Jammu and Kashmir is written, the period between 2014 and 2024 will be written in golden words," Shah added. Targeting the alliance partners fighting against the BJP, Shah said, "I have seen the NC's (National Conference) agenda. I have also seen Congress silently supporting NC's agenda. But, I want to say to the country that Article 370 is history, it will never return, and we won't let it happen. Article 370 was the thing that gave weapons and stones in the hands of the

youth." Reaching out to the largest section of the women electorate the BJP manifesto has promised ₹18,000 per year to the eldest woman in every family under 'Maa Samman Yojana' if voted to power in J&K. We will give two free cyclists under the Ujjwala scheme, per year. BJP, in its manifesto, has also promised a 20% reservation for Agniveers in government jobs, tablets or laptops to students in remote areas, while college students will benefit from a ₹3,000 yearly travel allowance under the Pragati Shiksha Yojana. Addressing the concerns of the business community, the BJP has promised to set up a

Special Economic Zone (SEZ) for IT at Jammu City, an amusement park in Srinagar, and the development of Gulmarg and Pahalgam as modern tourist destinations will be the key elements of economic growth and infrastructure development in the Union territory. To attract tourists in Jammu, the party aims to develop the Tawi Riverfront in Jammu, modelled after Ahmedabad's Sabarmati Riverfront, and to promote water sports and tourism around Dal Lake in Srinagar. For small traders and MSMEs, the BJP has pledged to resolve existing issues

around land access, utility services, and lease deeds. These measures are expected to boost local businesses and support economic growth. The manifesto promises relief from outstanding electricity and water bills, free electricity under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, and drinking water through the 'Har Ghar Jal' scheme. In addition, the BJP pledges to triple pensions for the elderly, widows, and the disabled, from ₹1,000 to ₹3,000, ensuring a life of dignity for vulnerable groups. The BJP also aims to expand the Ayushman Bharat Sehat Scheme, increasing coverage

by an additional ₹2 lakhs, and promises to add 1,000 new medical seats to government colleges, reflecting its commitment to affordable healthcare. The BJP has outlined various measures to support farmers, including increasing the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi payout by ₹4,000, bringing the total annual benefit to ₹10,000. Electricity tariffs for agricultural activities will be reduced by up to 50%, and the manifesto includes plans to build 10,000 Kms of new rural roads under the 'Har Tunnel Tez Pahal' Yojana, improving connectivity in the region.

# In massive setback to AAP, sitting MLA Rajendra Pal Gautam joins Congress

**RAJESH KUMAR/SAUMYA SHUKLA** ■ NEW DELHI

Amid alliance talks for the upcoming Haryana Assembly polls, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) suffered a massive setback in Delhi as its sitting MLA and former minister Rajendra Pal Gautam joined the Congress on Friday, in the presence of the party's general secretary KC Venugopal, party's Delhi chief Virender Yadav and party leader Pawan Khara. Gautam is the third senior leader to leave AAP after Raaj Kumar Anand and Kartar Singh Tolla ahead of the assembly polls due early next year. Gautam joined the Congress two years after his presence at a "mass religious conversion" event in October 2022 triggered a political row. Gautam's exit came at a time when the

AAP and the Congress were negotiating for seat sharing in 90 assembly seats in Haryana. Minutes after announcing his resignation from the AAP and all posts held by him in the party, Gautam joined the Congress. He has also resigned as AAP MLA from the reserved Seemapuri Assembly constituency. The former AAP leader also praised Congress' Rahul Gandhi and his Bharat Jodo Yatra. "At such a time, Rahul Gandhi gave a slogan during Bharat Jodo Yatra - Main nafrat ke baazaar mein mohabbat ki dukaan kholne aaya hoon. That slogan touched my heart. He said that Constitution has to be saved and taking forward social justice in the country, every section should get their representation as per their population... My struggle has always been that everyone should

get their representation and honour," Gautam said. In October 2022, Gautam resigned as a cabinet minister in the Delhi government after facing criticism for attending a mass conversion event where around 10,000 people converted to Buddhism. The BJP had accused him of "insulting Hindu Gods and Goddesses" and demanded his removal by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. Gautam had apologised and shared his resignation letter on social media. AAP or Kejriwal did not come out in his defence, which attracted criticism. Fearing that the issue could have an impact on AAP's prospects in poll-bound Gujarat where the BJP has ratcheted up the issue, the party had said, "Delhi CM and AAP National Convener Arvind Kejriwal is extremely displeased with minister



Ranjan Dimri

Rajendra Pal Gautam." Earlier in the day, he made the announcement in Hindi on social media platform X. "In order to accelerate the struggle for social justice and participation and involvement of Bahujan Samaj in all fields, I am resigning from all the

posts and membership of Aam Aadmi Party. Jai Bhem!" he said in the post. Unfortunately, we can see a rise in religious and caste frenzy in the last 10 years. Riots are breaking out and Dalits, backwards and minorities are being oppressed," he said.

The former minister thanked Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for giving him an opportunity to become an MLA twice. In his three-page resignation letter posted on X, he addressed to AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal, Gautam also criticised the party over appearing "very weak and helpless" before the BJP in raising issues like caste census, raising reservation limit above 50 percent, ensuring population based participation of 'Bahujan Samaj', and defending secularism. "I have to say it with a heavy heart that it's impossible to imagine about works of social justice and social equality within AAP," he said in his resignation letter. Gautam said, as a soldier of Babasaheb Ambedkar, he was feeling for sometime that he won't be able to achieve the

first and last goal of his life which is social justice, while being in AAP. The AAP gives no special representation to the SC, ST, OBC and minority. Gautam, who belongs to the Dalit community, said, "Party (AAP) supports upper caste MLAs or ministers when they face any allegations but it immediately abandons Muslim or Dalit even if the allegations are false. The party in a way internally blacklists the Muslim and Dalit and changes its behaviour which is painful," he charged in his letter to Kejriwal. Addressing a press conference, Venugopal said, "It's a proud moment for us as Rajendra Pal Gautam joins the Congress party". "The Bharat Jodo Yatra and Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra have given a new narrative to the country, and

now the country is also accepting it with full might. Attracted by the Congress programs under the leadership of Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi, he has decided to join the Congress," Venugopal said of Gautam. Gautam joined the the Aam Aadmi Party in November 2014 and went on to become minister in the Kejriwal government holding various portfolios, including social welfare. Gautam resigned as social welfare minister in October 2022 after he kicked off a political storm over his alleged remarks against Hindu deities. He is a former Minister for Water, Tourism, Culture, Arts and Languages and Gurudwara Elections in the Government of Delhi, and represents Seemapuri Assembly constituency in the Delhi Legislative Assembly.

## By including Gautam, Congress confirmed it is sanctuary for opponents of Sanatan Dharm: BJP

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva on Friday called former Delhi Social Welfare Minister and AAP MLA Rajendra Pal Gautam, who resigned from his party and joined the Congress, a badly know anti Sanatan Dharm activist and said that by including him, Congress has confirmed that it is a sanctuary for opponents of Sanatan Dharm. "By including Rajendra Pal Gautam in the party from the All India Congress platform, Congress has confirmed that it is a sanctuary for opponents of Sanatan Dharm," he asserted. The Seemapuri MLA resigned from AAP, saying he wanted to intensify the struggle for social justice.

"Only Congress leadership and Rahul Gandhi could have included Rajendra Pal Gautam, a badly know anti Sanatan Dharm activist and close associate of Arvind Kejriwal in their party. We have nothing to say if they are happy doing so," Sachdeva claimed. Gautam resigned as social welfare minister in October 2022 after he kicked off a political storm over his alleged remarks against Hindu gods and goddesses. "He has been a very ordinary-level MLA in Delhi, and in the 2020 elections, he was able to retain his seat only due to Kejriwal government's free electricity and water schemes. Over time, due to his outspoken opposition to Sanatan Dharm, he became a political liability for the AAP, leaving Congress as his only political option," he added.

He remarked that normally, no party would have accepted the AAP MLA, but it appears that despite becoming a liability, Arvind Kejriwal wanted to safeguard his political future. "For this reason, he asked his friends in Congress to include Gautam," he alleged. Further, the Delhi BJP chief added that at Kejriwal's behest, Congress has given the honor of including Rajendra Pal Gautam, an opponent of Sanatan Dharm, from the national Congress platform rather than just the Delhi Congress platform. "By including Sanatan Dharm opponent Rajendra Pal Gautam through the All India Congress platform, Rahul Gandhi has affirmed that Congress is a sanctuary for those who oppose Sanatan Dharm," he said.

## Congress alliance talks with AAP for upcoming Assembly polls in Haryana likely to fall through

**RAJESH KUMAR/SAUMYA SHUKLA** ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress alliance talks with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) for the upcoming assembly polls in Haryana are likely to fall through. Sources have also indicated that AAP will release its first list of candidates for the upcoming polls on Sunday. The AAP is planning to contest 50 seats in the state. The AAP claimed just before a meeting of the Congress' central election committee. "The alliance talks are on the verge of collapse in Haryana and the AAP is planning to contest 50 of the 90 assembly seats in the state on its own," sources claimed. Earlier, the party insiders had said that the AAP was demanding 10 assembly seats in Haryana whereas the Congress was offering five to seven seats. Sources said no consensus was in sight over seat sharing.



Ranjan Dimri

Although the AAP has made multiple attempts to make inroads in Haryana, its performance has remained dismal with the party failing to open its account in any of the Assembly elections or the Lok Sabha polls since its poll debut in the state in 2014. The AAP first made its electoral foray in the state barely one-and-a-half years after its inception in November 2012. Significantly, the AAP's supreme and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal hails from Siwani village in Haryana's Bhiwani district. The AAP's best performance in

Haryana came in the recent general elections when it contested from the Kurukshetra constituency in alliance with the Congress, even though it lost the seat to the ruling BJP in a close fight. Confident after its strong performance in the general elections, where it matched the BJP with five seats each, the Congress believes it has a good chance in state elections and they are unwilling to concede too many seats to AAP. It is learnt that former chief minister and Leader of Opposition Bhupinder Singh Hooda is not

in favour of the alliance with the AAP. He has reportedly expressed his view with senior party leadership too. AAP contested only one seat and faced defeat, whereas Congress contested nine seats and secured five victories, thereby preventing a second consecutive clean sweep by the BJP. The AAP and the Congress, partners in the Indian Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), contested the recent Lok Sabha polls in Haryana, Gujarat and Delhi together. The state has a 90-member assembly, where Congress won 31 seats and AAP failed to secure any in the previous state election. Notably, earlier it is stated that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was keen to ally with the AAP after their alliance in the general elections prevented another clean sweep by the BJP in the state. Sources in the AAP claimed that several "disgrun-

ted" leaders of the BJP and the Congress were ready to join the party in Haryana where the assembly elections will be held on October 5. The AAP is believed to have considerable influence in urban areas, particularly those bordering Delhi and Punjab, where Congress's weak seats are located. The ruling BJP in Haryana as well as the Congress are facing strong opposition from their own leaders over ticket distribution. Several BJP leaders, including sitting MLAs, have announced that they would quit the party after being denied ticket for the polls. The Haryana Assembly election will take place on October 5. Candidates must file their nominations by September 12. The election date was moved from October 1 to October 5 by the Election Commission to respect the voting traditions of the Bishnoi community, which is an important group in three districts of the state.

## AAP protests Amanatullah arrest

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

AAP held a protest near the BJP headquarters on DDU Marg on Friday against the arrest of party MLA Amanatullah Khan and other workers. The protesters, assembled near the old AAP office on DDU Marg, were prevented from marching towards the BJP headquarters by police. Barricades were also erected to stop the protesters. Taking part in the protest, Khan's wife Mariam alleged that her husband was framed in a "false" case. Senior AAP leader and former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia called the arrest BJP's



Ranjan Dimri

"Saam, Daam, Dand, Bhed" tactics and condemned it. He vowed that AAP will never bow to political pressure. AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh alleged that there is no truth in the arrest of Khan. "Arrest after arrest, no truth in

any case. ED-CBI are the illegal weapon of power, there is no proof against Amanatullah Khan he will come out soon," Singh stated. AAP MLAs, including Dilip Pandey and Kuldeep Kumar, also joined the protest.

## Minor Government school student sexually assaulted in classroom

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

An 11-year-old student of a government school was allegedly sexually assaulted in her classroom in Sultanpuri area of outer Delhi on Friday. According to DCP Outer Jimmy Chiram, on Friday an information was received at 12:12 pm regarding Sexual harassment by school teacher. The accused has been identified as 45 year old Satish. "He was conducting self defence classes free of cost through an

NGO. He is not a regular teacher of the school," Chiram said. A senior police officer said the family members and their neighbours gathered outside the police station and demanded action against the teacher. "As per statement of the victim, who is 11 year old female student of seventh class of government Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya H Block Sultan Puri an FIR has been registered at Sultan Puri police station," he added.

## LG approves extension of services of 229 contractual instructors for one year

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lt Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has approved extension of services of 229 contractual Craft Instructors (CCI) for another year with effect from August one, 2024 to July 31, 2025 in the Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) of Delhi. These employees are engaged on a contract basis in various ITIs of Delhi, Raj Niwas said on Friday. Giving details, officials said Saxena has given the nod for this extension of one year on the request of the Department

of Training and Technical Education (TTE) for the academic session 2024-25. These Craft Instructors will perform their duties in the Government Industrial Training Institutes of Delhi. The early re-engagement of these 229 CCIs becomes vital for the timely management of classes of senior and junior trainees in all the 19 Government ITIs of Delhi. Earlier, the LG while approving an extension of services of these CCIs in September 2023, had directed the Department of TTE to notify the vacant posts. The recruitment process

for filling up of 258 posts including Craft Instructors, is under process by DSSSB. Saxena has been emphasizing permanently filling up vacant posts in several Departments of GNCTD, following due process, through DSSSB / UPSC, in a time-bound manner, rather than filling them up on a contractual basis. Recruitment for more than 3000 posts of Junior Assistants (Grade-IV) and MTS is already underway in DSSSB for filling up Administrative / General Duty vacant posts in ITIs, Schools, Hospitals, and other departments of GNCTD.

## Class XII student from Amity International School conferred with Arya Navachar Samman

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

Suhani Chauhan, a student of Class XII, Amity International School Pushp Vihar New Delhi, has been conferred with "Arya Navachar Samman", for her path-breaking innovation, "Suraksha Kavach", during "Rashtriya Arya Buddhijivi Sammelan" held in the national Capital. Suhani designed "Suraksha Kavach", a safety shield made of aluminium sheet with a handle, which protects from the intense heat of Yagya Kund. This Kavach is already patented. Chief Guest Lok Sabha MP Bansuri Swaraj congratulated



Suhani and lauded her unique innovation and said that it is important to innovate in every field and a young child thinking about the society is a big step towards nation-building. She advised everyone to imbibe the teachings of Swami Dayanand Saraswati, which are in sync with Prime Minister's vision of Viksit Bharat@2047.

## SC asks Delhi Government if there is any restraint order on Kejriwal performing duties from jail

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Delhi government if there is any restraint order on Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal performing his duties from jail. The apex court asked about it after it was informed that files pertaining to remission of sentences of eligible convicts were getting delayed for want of his signature. Remission is the cancellation or reduction of a part of the sentence of a prisoner. Under section 432 of the CrPC, state governments may remit the whole or part of the punishment to which a convict has been sentenced based on factors such as the prisoner's conduct, rehabilitation, health

and time served in prison. The observation by a bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih came while hearing a plea filed by a convict alleging delay in remission of his sentence. Is there any restraint order on chief minister performing his duties from jail? We want to examine this because this will affect hundreds of cases. "So many files would be there as various orders are passed by the court concerning the chief minister. Whether there is any restraint on the chief minister signing such important files?" the bench said. Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati said she will take instructions on the issue and get back to the court.



The top court had in an earlier order directed the Delhi government to take a decision on the question of remission of the sentences of convicts within two months. The deadline was, however, extended by a month in July. Kejriwal was arrested by the

Enforcement Directorate (ED) on March 21 and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on June 26 in connection with the alleged excise policy scam. On July 12, the top court granted him interim bail in the money laundering case.

According to legal experts, there is no bar either in the Constitution or in law on a jailed chief minister from continuing in office but running the government from a prison is "practically impossible". The views of the legal experts are in line with the Delhi High Court's observations of March 28 when it had dismissed a PIL seeking removal of Kejriwal from the post of the chief minister following his arrest. They, however, opined that it would be impossible to run the day-to-day administration such as making cabinet decisions, signing official papers and transfer orders as these tasks cannot be completed in the secluded and

protected area of a jail. An application by a convict for grant of remission is submitted to the jail superintendent, who forwards the same to the presiding judge of the convicting or confirming court along with the history ticket, copy of the judgments, descriptive roll, and reports from the district magistrate and superintendent of police about the convict's conduct. Inspector General of Prisons, after his consideration, submits the proposal of remission to the state government with his recommendations. The state government then examines the proposal in accordance with its remission policy and the file is signed by the chief minister, if the same is accepted.

## Ganesh Chaturthi expected to generate ₹25,000 crore in business

**STAFF REPORTER** ■ NEW DELHI

The festive season in India has begun with Ganesh Chaturthi driving an economic surge, expected to generate over Rs 25,000 crore in business, according to the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT), with Indian traders opting for locally-made products and snubbing Chinese goods. Chandni Chowk BJP MP and CAIT Secretary General Emeritus Praveen Khandelwal said, "Ganesh Chaturthi drives significant economic activity particularly in regions like

Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Goa establishing the significance and contribution of Sanatan Economy in the country." According to CAIT National President B.C. Bhartia, a survey conducted among local traders in key states revealed that over 20 lakh Ganesh pandals have been set up across the country for the festival. "Maharashtra alone has seen the setup of over seven lakh pandals, followed by five lakh in Karnataka, and two lakh each in Andhra Pradesh,



Ranjan Dimri

Telangana, and Madhya Pradesh," Bhartia said. "Even at a conservative estimate of Rs 50,000 per pandal—covering expenses for setup, decorations, sound systems, idols, and flowers—the business generated from pandals alone surpasses Rs 10,000 crore," he added. Khandelwal further elaborated on the extensive business ecosystem associated with Ganesh Chaturthi. "Beyond the pandals, a wide range of local businesses thrive during the festival. The sale of Ganesha idols contributes over Rs 500 crore, while flowers,

garlands, fruits, coconuts, incense, and other ritual items generate another Rs 500 crore in revenue," he explained. "Demand for sweets, particularly Modaks, and increased catering for large family gatherings, brings in an additional Rs 5,000 crore." The festival also boosts tourism and transportation, attracting devotees from various regions. This influx of visitors results in increased demand for hotels, travel companies, and transportation services, contributing over Rs 2,000 crore to the economy. Retailers selling festival-related merchandise such

as clothing, accessories, home decor, and gift items see a business surge of around Rs 3,000 crore. "Waste management and environmental services benefit as well, driven by the growing awareness of eco-friendly practices. Services like idol immersion in artificial tanks and recycling of decorative materials are in high demand. Additionally, event management companies, responsible for organizing public events, processions, and cultural performances, are expected to generate around Rs 5,000 crore," the confederation said.



# Punjab farmers end protest after CM Mann's assurance on agriculture policy

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

Farmers protesting against the alleged delay in implementation of Punjab's new agriculture policy ended their strike on Friday, a day after Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann assured them that a draft of the policy would be shared with them by September 30.



Joginder Singh Ugrahan said they had urged the state government to make the agriculture policy public. "They (the government) said it was being finalised... They said by September 30, they would finalise it and hand over a copy," he said.

decided to end the protest in Chandigarh at 2 pm", Ugrahan said. On Thursday, when asked about the farmers' future course of action following the meeting with Mann, the farmer leader said they would take a call after a meeting.

The draft of the policy is ready but it will be finalised only after due deliberations with the farmers, the chief minister had said. The draft will be shared with the farmers by September 30 and their suggestions sought, he had added.

# SC dismisses Bombay HC order for drinking water at Mumbai cricket grounds

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a plea challenging the Bombay High Court's order which had disposed of a petition seeking directions to provide drinking water and other facilities to cricket players during practice or unofficial matches on public grounds in Mumbai.



Playing in these conditions, these grounds in Mumbai have given greatest cricketers," the apex court observed. The bench also asked the petitioner whether he was predominantly a cricketer or a lawyer.

court had said there was no reason given by the petitioner why the players cannot seek redressal of their grievance on their own. "In these circumstances, the appropriate course of action would be to call upon respondent nos. 1 and 2 (Mumbai Cricket Association and BCCI) to consider the PIL as suggestions made and if it is feasible for them to do so, proceed to implement the same.

# Army being roped in to plug Budameru breaches in Vijayawada, says Andhra CM

PTI ■ AMARAVATI

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has said that Army teams are being roped in to plug the Budameru rivulet breaches to control the flood situation in Vijayawada. Addressing a press conference at the NTR district collectorate in Vijayawada on Thursday, Naidu, who was accompanied by Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, said Chouhan had been apprised about the catastrophe.



# Nadda inaugurates Regional Institute of Ophthalmology at Patna

PTI ■ PATNA

Union Health minister J P Nadda inaugurated the Regional Institute of Ophthalmology on the campus of Indira Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences (IGIMS) and also the institute's extended building here on Friday.

foundation stone of several health projects, including health sub-centre (HSC), additional primary health centre (APHC), health and wellness centre (HWC), community health centre, worth Rs 850 crore at the IGIMS. Later in the day, the Union Health Minister will also inaugurate a government-operated super-specialty block at Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College and Hospital in Bhagalpur and another at Anurag Narayan Magadh Medical College and Hospital in Gaya.

# India, Japan discuss cooperation in railways, IT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw discussed further enhancing cooperation with Japan in the field of railways, innovation in the digital landscape and focusing on futuristic technological advancements during his visit to Tokyo.



Vaishnaw also met Taro Kono, the minister for digital transformation of Japan, to discuss strengthening India-Japan digital ties. "Explored avenues for collaboration and innovation in the digital landscape, focusing on futuristic technological advancements," he said.

# Two CRPF personnel killed in lightning strike at training centre in Chhattisgarh

PTI ■ DANTEWADA

Two personnel of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) were killed in a lightning strike at an anti-Naxalite training centre of the paramilitary force in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district on Friday, police said.

The duo were shifted to Dantewada hospital in an ambulance, and after examination, doctors declared them dead, the official said. Kumar hailed from Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh, while Alam was from Sahibganj in Jharkhand, he said, adding that their families were informed about the tragedy.

# Houses in Bageshwar villages develop cracks, residents blame soapstone mining

PTI ■ PITHORAGARH (U'KHAND)

Cracks similar to those in Joshimath have appeared on the walls and ceilings of houses in more than two dozen villages of Bageshwar district in Uttarakhand's Kumaon region, sending residents in a state of alarm.

village on September 3 along with a geologist and revenue officials. Around 1,000 people had to leave their homes in Joshimath, recently renamed Jyotirmath, in early 2023 when large cracks appeared on the walls and floors due to land subsidence.



conducting mining rehabilitation as landslides were endangering their habitation. "More surveys of such villages are on the anvil," she said. Officials of the departments concerned visited the Kalika temple in Kapkot block after receiving complaints but found no violation of mining rules.

# Great teaching echoes Gita's wisdom, empowers students to think, question: UGC chairman

PTI ■ KURUKSHETRA

University Grants Commission (UGC) Chairman Mamidala Jagadesh Kumar on Friday said like Lord Krishna's guidance to Arjuna in the Gita, great teaching involves giving students the freedom to think, question, and make their own decisions.

essence of great teaching. "At the start of Mahabharata, Lord Krishna says to Arjuna, I have told you everything you needed to know about but now you decide what you want to do," Kumar said, citing the holy scripture.

Indian education system. It is one of the biggest education systems. But, we have still to improve and reform the system so that over 50 per cent of the companies are headed by Indians, he noted. "On this occasion, the Vice-Chancellor of Kurukshetra University and chairman of the Goyal Award Organizing Committee Som Nath Sachdeva, during his address, said scientists make people's lives better in a meaningful and measurable way with their brilliant scientific research.

land if the institute plans to set up a science research centre in Haryana. "Professor S P Singh, co-chairman of the Goyal Award Organizing Committee, said the Goyal Awards have been recognising substantial research by scientists since 1992.

# Cricketer Ravindra Jadeja has joined BJP, says MLA wife Rivaba

PTI ■ JAMNAGAR

Cricketer Ravindra Jadeja joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) during its ongoing membership drive, his wife and party MLA Rivaba Jadeja has said. In a post on X on Thursday, Rivaba shared photos of Jadeja's membership card along with hers, with a hashtag, "Sadasyata Abhiyan 2024".



this year. "The BJP has become a large banyan tree over the years and eventually became the world's largest party through its membership drive. Before asking others to join the party, it's better to start with our family. This will convince others to follow suit. Hence, I first enrolled my husband as the BJP's primary member to kickstart the membership drive in Jamnagar," Rivaba said.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## India the peacemaker

With Putin now suggesting that India could mediate in peace talks, India's role on the global stage continues to grow

The Russia-Ukraine war, which erupted in February 2022, has resulted in devastating human and economic losses, with no clear end in sight. What began as a territorial conflict over Ukraine's desire to align itself more closely with Western institutions like NATO and the European Union has turned into a prolonged military engagement with Russia, leading to mass displacement, thousands of casualties, and significant global economic disruptions. In recent months, efforts to find a peaceful resolution have gained renewed attention. One potential pathway for peace emerged when Russian President Vladimir Putin suggested that countries like India, China, and Brazil could act as mediators in peace talks. This proposal points to a potential role for these major Global South nations in shaping the future of negotiations. Russian President Vladimir Putin's recent remarks on peace efforts are significant, especially in light of earlier failed negotiations. In the initial weeks of the war, a preliminary agreement was reached between



Russian and Ukrainian negotiators during talks in Istanbul.

Now, Putin suggests that this could serve as a basis for future discussions, with mediation from nations like India, China, and Brazil, which have historically maintained neutral or balanced positions in the conflict. These nations, particularly India, could bring fresh perspectives to the table. India's long-standing policy of non-alignment and its diplomatic clout as a leader among Global South countries make it a credible mediator in a highly polarised international arena. India has consistently advocated for peace in the ongoing conflict, calling for both Russia and Ukraine to engage in dialogue.

Prime Minister Modi's diplomatic stance has been underscored by his visit to Ukraine last month. During this historic visit, PM Modi met with Zelenskyy, who proposed that India could host the second Ukraine peace summit. This proposal, Zelenskyy said, was due to India's position as a major democracy and its efforts to remain neutral in the conflict. India's position as a potential mediator offers several advantages. First, India's diplomatic relations with both Russia and Ukraine have been strong over the years. Second, India's neutrality in the conflict positions it as an acceptable mediator to both sides, which have faced varying degrees of global isolation and support. For Russia, India remains a crucial partner, and for Ukraine, India's growing global influence makes it a key player in any future peace talks. Third, India's active participation in global multilateral forums, including the G20 and BRICS, gives it a platform to influence discussions on peace efforts at a broader level. While the potential for peace talks with India, China, and Brazil as mediators is promising, challenges remain. The conflict has seen entrenched positions from both sides, with Ukraine's territorial integrity at the center of any resolution. The success of such mediation will ultimately depend on the willingness of both Russia and Ukraine to make compromises and find common ground for peace.

PICTALK



Giant panda cub Katyusha, the first panda bear born in Russia plays with her mother at a zoo in Moscow. AP/PTI

## The death of window shopping: How e-commerce stole the joy

Spontaneity has given way to algorithms, and the sensory delights of browsing have been replaced by sterile scrolling

Once upon a time, I was a passionate window-shopper. I could spend hours gawking in a mall or a market, viewing and trying out things I didn't need, but often ended up purchasing. Not any longer. During my latest visit to a mall this week after several months, I realised how my appetite for browsing and buying had nearly died. Our family now happily gets everything delivered to our doorstep: from Apple to Android phones. Shopping had long been a cherished ritual, offering an experience that transcended mere transactions. It tapped into emotions and senses, creating memories, fostering relationships, and offering solace in unexpected ways. Yet, the rise of e-commerce has drastically altered this landscape, leading to the erosion of the joys of traditional shopping. The sensory overload of colours, smells, and sounds has been replaced by the sterile, one-dimensional world of online shopping. We now scroll through product images on a screen, devoid of any real human interaction. Shopping was



once an opportunity to step out of our daily routines, to wander through aisles with no particular destination in mind, and to let our imaginations run wild as we browsed items we didn't know we needed until we saw them. This spontaneity is all but lost in the algorithm-driven world of e-commerce, where every click is tracked and every recommendation is based on past behaviour, leaving little room for surprise or serendipity. Moreover, shopping in physical stores offered a tactile connection to the products we bought. We could feel the fabric of a garment, test the weight of a book in our hands, or smell the aroma of freshly baked bread before making a decision. These sensory experiences are deeply rooted in our memo-

ries and play a significant role in our attachment to the items we purchase. Online shopping, in contrast, offers a purely visual experience, reducing our interaction with products to mere images on a screen. The absence of this tangible connection often leads to a lack of emotional attachment to the items we buy, turning shopping into a mechanical process rather than an enjoyable pastime. In the past, shopping was as much about the experience as it was about the purchase. The thrill of discovery, the joy of window shopping, and the satisfaction of finding that perfect item after hours of searching were all part of the journey. However, it would be unfair to dismiss the advantages of e-commerce entirely. The convenience of shopping from the comfort of our homes and the ability to compare prices across multiple retailers are undeniable benefits. For those with busy schedules or physical limitations, online shopping has been a game-changer, providing opportunities that would have been unimaginable a few decades ago. Yet, as we embrace these con-

veniences, we must also consider what we are losing in the process. The act of shopping is not just a means to an end but a valuable experience in itself. It is a chance to connect with our communities, indulge our senses, and find joy in the unexpected. As we move towards a digital future, it is worth considering how we can preserve these intangible aspects of shopping that bring richness and depth to our lives. In the end, the choice is not about rejecting technology or clinging to the past, but about finding a balance that allows us to enjoy the best of both worlds. We can find ways to reintroduce the joy of discovery, the pleasure of the tactile, and the warmth of human connection into our shopping experiences, even as we click our way through the digital aisles. In my case, I attribute my loss of interest to a feeling of satiety, a recognition that I have more than I need and it's time for me to stop indulging in senseless accumulation of material things. Period. (The author is a columnist and writing coach based in Dubai. Views are personal)



ASHA IYER KUMAR

# Sexism in politics: The unfinished battle

The recent disparaging remarks by Donald Trump against Kamala Harris have once again spotlighted the rampant sexism entrenched in politics



ARCHANA DATTA

The Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump's recent disparaging comments against her Democratic rival, Vice President Harris about her 'appearance', re-established the fact that 'sexism is very much alive in American politics'. His party, however, had denied that 'it had anything to do with race or gender'. Harris, on the other hand, urged Trump to commit to debating her, 'if he got something to say'. Such sexist vilification, many believe, is on the expected lines in a country that had no women, and only one person of colour as president, which is now, for the first time, having a woman of colour running for the presidency on a major party ticket. Harris' entry into the presidential battle has unleashed a wave of misogyny, and personal attacks on her marriage and stepchildren. She is also accused of leaning into 'being Black for political expediency'. Republican vice-presidential nominee Cyrus Vance's remarks that the Democratic Party is dominated by 'childless cat ladies', with no 'direct stake' in America's future, is also a dig at Harris' life choices.

While, early this year, Nikki Haley, the first woman governor of South Carolina, when encountered the race for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination, she was dismissed as a 'token' candidate, and her achievements hardly got any attention. In 2016, Hillary Clinton had to undergo similar ordeals with apprehensions about her health and integrity, and even for her political ambitions. In 2008, Sarah Palin wasn't spared, she was constantly jeered at for her looks, personal life and intelligence, while her policy positions and records were overlooked. While only a relatively small share of the US adults (18%) consider that it is important that a woman be elected as president in their lifetime, most (64%) say this is not too or not at all important or that the president's gender doesn't matter. Overall, 62% of Americans believe that the media focuses too much on the physical appearance of women contesting for high elected offices, and there is not enough attentiveness to their views on key policy matters (Pew



Research Centre). Along the party lines, 25 per cent of Republicans are of the view that 'men generally make better leaders than women, only 4 percent said that women are better suited to lead'. While, Democrats, were found to be 'more likely to say women were better leaders than men' (August, 22, PerryUndem survey). Many of the politicians may be progressive in their policy beliefs, but, when it comes to equity, their socialisation around gender stereotypes and expectations is quite stubborn', commented Kelly Dittmar, professor of political science, at Rutgers University. In the USA, women hold only 27.9 per cent of seats in Congress, while, there is currently no Black woman in the Senate. A 2016 IPU study on the experiences of fifty-five women members of national parliaments from 39 countries across the continents of Africa, Europe, Asia-Pacific, the Americas and Arab countries, confirmed that 'sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians are very real and rampant'. While, psychological violence, the most widely spread, and, now, more on social media, affected 81.8 per cent of the respondents surveyed. A majority (61.5 per cent) believed that

“ HARRIS' ENTRY INTO THE PRESIDENTIAL BATTLE HAS UNLEASHED A WAVE OF MISOGYNY, AND PERSONAL ATTACKS ON HER MARRIAGE AND STEPCHILDREN. SHE IS ALSO ACCUSED OF LEANING INTO 'BEING BLACK FOR POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY' ”

such behaviour and/or violence was intended primarily to dissuade them from continuing in politics. While 'young and feminist women parliamentarians are particularly targeted', said an Asian parliamentarian. A parliamentarian from sub-Saharan Africa underscored that 'men need to be educated about the benefits of women's presence in parliament'. While, many opined that an increase in the number of women in parliament and solidarity among them, can help change such a political culture. While, in India, women parliamentarians, a minuscule minority, just 13.63% of the elected strength of the Lower House, much less than the 33% that the Women's Reservation Act, 2023, proposes to put into effect, face sexist comments from all corners, their colleagues, rivals or voters, and their achievements reduced to their gender only, rued a women's rights activist. An erstwhile woman Union minister lamented that 'when a woman is attacked, she gets attacked for her character, but never for her policymaking'. Women politicians, cutting across party lines, seem to agree on the issue of character assassination, and consider that it 'reflects the larger psyche of the society'. Many also complain that 'women politi-

cians aren't taken seriously... and male members have been often preferred for speaking on serious issues, while, women are only expected to raise soft issues'. Outright misogynist remarks are quite the norm in political discourse. Recently, a senior woman Rajya Sabha MP expressed discomfort with her identity being tied to her husband's name by the Chair. Globally, only 26.9 per cent of parliamentarians in single or lower houses are now women (IPU). Many countries have resorted to women's quotas and reserved shares. But, that's not enough. What is needed is a nuanced approach to addressing the issues of sexism and double standards existing within the political parties and parliament. Political parties must have an internal assessment mechanism to look into the gaps in all areas of internal practices and operations. A parliament must also ensure inclusivity in its work processes and outputs, with the help of a strong regulatory framework. Gender parity and pluralism are essential in electoral politics for the greater good. (The author is former Director General, Doordarshan, All India Radio; views expressed are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### FALL FROM GRACE

Madam — Malayalam film Industry has been in a crisis since the release of Hema Committee report which has recorded sexual exploitation by senior artistes/technicians over the women artistes/technicians. The women artiste/technicians in their enthusiasm/eagerness/greed approach the other side for a favor, over looking the others who score over them on merits in the industry and offer /submit to them with what would please them for grabbing the chance. If the person who is the so called perpetrator of the crime which is sexual exploitation in this case is wrong the lady who has approached him for favor of a chance and offering/accepting to entertain him is considered an abettor of the crime. It is a quid pro quo though apart from crime also unethical on the part of the grantor of the chance. Such quid pro quos exist not only in film industry and every other industry and in fact it is a universal phenomenon in today's world. While this affects the only individuals concerned and to a limited extent the industry or the corporate concerned, the political leaders /parties accepting bribes in any form say organized /un organized methods including through the electoral bonds route is also a quid pro even as per SC ruling and more harmful as it harms the nation as a whole.

Gopalaswamy J | Chennai

### TEACHERS' CONTRIBUTION TO THE SOCIETY

Madam — The interruption of the Covid had been epochal and served to direct our focus on education, across the globe. It would be a great pity should we fail to subsequently comprehend the vital role of teachers, *pe se*. A greater tragedy if we still look to stitch up patchwork approach in education that is rendered more complex as the stakeholder base is vast. So are its key elements of content, quality and efficiency of transmission. In each of these there

## Eco-friendly Ganesha



With environmental concerns gaining too much ground, many of the well-wishers of Lord Ganesha in the city have

started to conduct environmentally friendly Ganesh Utsav celebrations this year. So it is our earnest desire to avoid pollution. Paint from Ganesh Idols could form a deadly cocktail with oil spill on the sea may cause environmental problems after Ganapati immersion on Anant Chaturdashi day. The oil paint contains carcinogenic heavy metals such as lead, mercury and chromium which have an adverse effect on marine life as well. Despite caution, people prefer POP idols instead of clay. It is time to have a broader outlook on this subject. This responsibility rests with each and every one of us. The civic body should have proper planning and the pick and choose method to make sure the festivity achieves a religious objective rather than making it a politicised one with maximum pollution level.

Jayanthy Ramaswamy | Mumbai

### FOR THE LOVE OF FOOTBALL

Madam — Rarely do our politicians talk sense. It was heartwarming therefore, to hear the CM of UP, Yogi Adityanath, announce that a number of football stadia as well as a large number of football grounds will be prepared to give a boost to the "beautiful game". This is far better than sponsoring temples that cater only to a particular religious constituency. To quote Nelson Mandela, "Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire, it has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope, where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than governments in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination." Yogi's done well, in bending it like Beckham.

Avinash Godbole | Dewas

emerges a rare opportunity for a seminal rethink or even reinvented with greater imagination and resolve. While planners and social scientists devise the content of education in a time horizon, its quality is entirely determined by the calibre, training and upgrade of the teachers and their leadership, creativity and innovation. We seldom realise how teachers have helped and guided our value systems and attitudes. They would seed visions of the limitless achievements ahead as gurus, train us to meet failures to then rise even higher. This profession, from time immemorial, though respected stays hardly recognised and adequately compensated. They need to be now firmly placed on higher pedestals, sustained by training and incentives and given greater autonomy. It is they who shape the future in real sense of the word. Our education system and polity need to do much more. Our gurus must be zealously cherished.

R Narayanan | Navi Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN

### FINDING PEACE AMIDST THE CHAOS

Embrace divine shelter to overcome life's struggles



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

It may sound very insulting, but this is what most of us, if not almost all of us routinely do. Because it is so natural to do. We have a deep desire for something considered most dear. Or, we may not want to lose something considered crucial for our existence. So what do we do? We keep on thinking about it. Yes, we also do whatever we can to ensure it or should. What happens in most cases? We fall short because we are small, and helpless in the ultimate sense.

God keeps control of Himself regarding the fruits of our actions. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 2.47) We have only been given the right to desire and do. (2.47) But we either don't give up trying by ourselves or with the help of others, if we choose to do that. Now worry sets in because we have set our hearts on it. And we hurt ourselves both in terms of mental health and physical health because they are so intertwined. Are we doomed? No, we are not, if we choose to do what we are expected to do, which is to approach God. That is why our scriptures, especially the Bhagavad-Geeta, persuade us to do that. I will cite some verses in this connection. The verse #18.62 goes like this, "In all respects take shelter of God only. By His mercy, you will achieve supreme peace." What does this mean? We will not suffer from mental problems, by which a quarter and more in the world are suffering. (9.22) Isn't what we want? You get started on this path and start becoming deserving. God will respond suitably. But our natures won't allow us to do what God wants us to do to qualify for His 'kripa' (grace).

Even if we somehow curb our natures, our egos come in the way. For



us human beings, our egos are everything; we cannot imagine taking unconditional shelter from anyone including God of course. So we remain in the shelter of worry. Exalted personalities have surrendered to God and reaped all kinds of benefits from Him. Sanjaya of the Mahabharata fame illuminates, "Where there is the yogeshwar Shri Krishna and where there is a devotee of God (as Arjuna was), there will be opulence (saubhagya), victory (success), wealth and definite principles (dharma)." (18.78) God is unlimited and He can give what we cannot even imagine. Swami Vivekananda went to America in 1843. Not only did Swami give an iconic speech on Hinduism at the World's Religious in Chicago on September 11, 1843, but introduced Hinduism and Indian spirituality to the Western world.

We just have to get started and achieve what these exalted personalities achieved after several lives. It is not so difficult, but requires determination. What is so difficult to pray? All we have to ensure that whatever we pray for is according to dharma. God will respond in a way He decides about what we deserve. Then, doing 'naman' (namaskar) to a Deity of God in a temple shouldn't be so difficult. God, being what He is, cannot be a debtor ever. He will give something, again what He feels is good for us. What is wrong with chanting God's names? This activity appears so innocuous but people of all religions for ages have been chanting Ohm and God's names. It must be useful, otherwise it would have been discontinued a long time back. What is so difficult to thank God if something good happens? We know how thanking helps us to make friends even with strangers. Then, how it must benefit if we thank God. 'Dhyan' (meditation) is catching attention worldwide. Why? Because it is extremely useful. Remembering God is another spiritual activity, for which God rewards handsomely. I can go on. Believe that these spiritual acts are highly beneficial, and can be done by one and all. Spiritual acts help in this regard and change us for the better. Then, why take shelter from worry, anxiety, depression, sadness, etc.? Take shelter from the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, controller and owner of the Creation and say goodbye to negative emotions.

*(The writer is a spiritual teacher, views expressed are personal)*

# Bangladesh: Terrorism redivivus?



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

## Some developments since the installation of the interim Government provides cause for concern



Several developments in Bangladesh since the ouster of Sheikh Hasina raise the question: Is that country set to become a fundamentalist Islamist state and a cradle and exporter of Islamist terrorism? As of now, none of what the students who led the Anti-Discrimination Students' Movement (ADSM) have said indicates that they support fundamentalist Islam or terrorism. It is, however, not clear what they stand for. A report in the *Dhaka Tribune* (datelined August 16, 2024) quoted Nahid Islam, one of the coordinators of the ADSM and an advisor in the interim government, as saying, "The spirit of the movement was to create a new Bangladesh, one where no fascist or autocrat can return." The same reported quoted him as saying that structural reforms were needed to achieve this aim, and that would require time.

One does not know what structural reforms they have in mind and the policies they intend to pursue. *The Tribune* report in question quotes Tahmid Chowdhury, another student leader, as saying that they were still working out their programme, which would be rooted in secularism and free speech. Reuters reported on August 16, 2024, that the students were contemplating forming their own party to carry their movement forward and bring a closure on the history of the last three decades when Bangladesh was governed either by the Awami League or the Bangladesh Nationalist Party. Not much has been heard about the matter since then.

The question is whether the overwhelming majority of them share their leader's views. One needs to ask this as fundamentalist Islamist and terrorist organisations have been increasingly spreading their tentacles inside Bangladesh's colleges and universities. Consider the case of North South University (NSU), one of that country's best-known private universities. Professor Gias Uddin Ahsan, Dean of the School of Health and Life Sciences, and acting Pro-Vice Chancellor, was arrested on July 16, 2016, along with two of his associates, for renting out his flat, and not informing the police about the fact of its being rented out and details of the tenants-which he was required to do. The flat was subsequently used by the



THE QUESTION IS WHETHER THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THEM SHARE THEIR LEADER'S VIEWS. ONE NEEDS TO ASK THIS AS FUNDAMENTALIST ISLAMIST AND TERRORIST ORGANISATIONS HAVE BEEN INCREASINGLY SPREADING THEIR TENTACLES INSIDE BANGLADESH'S COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

perpetrators of the terror attack at Holey Artisan Bakery restaurant in Dhaka on July 1, 2016. The University has suspended Professor Ahsan after his arrest. Earlier, it had dismissed four teachers for their links with the terrorist outfit, Hizbut Tahrir.

Nibras Islam, one of the six identified as those attacking the Holey Artisan Bakery and killed by the police in the encounter that followed, was one of its students. Abir Rahman, one of those who attacked a police post guarding Bangladesh's largest eid prayer congregation at Sholakia in Kishoreganj on July 7, 2016, and was killed, was a student of NSU. The attack, which was repelled, led to three deaths. Quazi Mohammad Rezwanul Ahsan Nafis, who, in 2012, was convicted on the charge of attempting to blow up the New York Federal Reserve Bank, and of coming to the United States for waging jihad, had also been a student of NSU. Besides, all the young men-Sadman Yasir Mamun, Faisal Bin Nayeem Dwip, Ehsan Reza Rumman, Maksudul Hasan Anik, Nayeem Irad and Nafiz Intiaz-arrested for killing the blogger and Ganajagan Mancha activist, Ahmed Rajib Haider, in 2013, were its students.

There has been large-scale irregular inundation of educational institutions by fundamentalist elements. A report by Ekramul Huq Bulbul and Masud Milad in the *Bengali daily Pratham* Alo of August 12, 2004, states, "The allegation has been levelled of the jama'atification of the Chittagong University by violating all rules. Most applicants were not appointed as teachers despite getting four first classes in their educational life. Yet there has been the unprecedented occurrence of appointment of the supporters of Jamaat-e-Islami, a partner in the present four-party coalition government headed by Begum Khaleda

Zia of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) despite their being without a single first class." The report further stated that investigations by Pratham also revealed that of the 122 teachers appointed during this period, 57 had been appointed by ignoring the recommendations of the Departmental Planning Committee and the number of posts advertised.

Whether all this has caused a significant section of students to be influenced by militant fundamentalist Islam need to be seen, given the continued operations of terrorist organisations. A number of Bangladeshis had fought the Soviet forces occupying Afghanistan. The Soviet Union's defeat at the hands of the Mujahideen and withdrawal from the country in February, 1989, had boosted their morale as also that of militant Islamists the world over. Osama bin-Laden, who had been involved in the jihad and who harboured the vision of establishing sharia rule worldwide, helped the establishment of the Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami Bangladesh (HUJIB) in 1992. The formation of Jama'at-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB), followed.

Pressure from the United States and other Western countries following the large-scale violence unleashed by these organisations, compelled the Khaleda Zia government to act against them. More resolute action followed the ascent to power of the second Awami League-led government, with Sheikh Hasina as prime minister, in 2009. Nine Islamist terrorist groups were banned during her prime minister-ship. These included the JMB, Shahadat-e al-Hikma, Hizb ut-Tahrir, HuJI-B, Ansarullah Bangla Team and the last-named's subsequent reincarnation, Ansar al-Islam. The list also included Jamaat

Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya formed in 2018. Another seven Islamic extremist groups were blacklisted during her regime. These were Ulama Anjuman E Al Bayyinat, Neo-JMB, Dawlatul Islam Bangladesh, Hezbut Tawheed, At-Tamkin, Tamiruddin-Bangladesh and Towhidi Trust.

Particularly active among these was the Ansar al-Islam, which played a major role in the murder of the bloggers, which began with the killing of Ahmed Rajib Haider in Dhaka on February 15, 2013 and continued until 2015. The Neo-JMB, however, is believed to have been behind the attack on the Holey Artisan Bakery which killed 23 persons, including three Bangladeshis, seven Japanese, nine Italians and one Indian.

The tough measures that followed, had kept Islamist terrorism more and less under control. Following Sheikh Hasina's ouster, the Hizb-ut-Tahrir (Hijb-ut) has been staging processions in different parts of Bangladesh and putting up posters articulating its ideology. On August 9, 2024, it held a rally in Dhaka demanding the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate in Bangladesh. Also, the statues of two police officers who died fighting the terrorists at the Holey Artisan Bakery, have been destroyed and a Hijb-ut Tahrir poster has been found at the site. On its part, the interim government has released Jashimuddin Rahmani, the chief of the Ansarullah Bangla Team, now Ansar al-Islam. Neither all this nor the very cordial meeting with Muhammad Yunus has had with leaders of the Jama'at and Hefazat-e-Islam, of course, indicates that the interim government supports Islamist militancy. Nevertheless, skating on thin ice is better avoided.

*(The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views are personal)*

# The United Nations' struggle for relevance in a changing global order

The United Nations faces unprecedented challenges that threaten its relevance in the modern world writes NAND KISHOR and AMAL CHANDRA

The United Nations (UN), a symbol of global cooperation since its founding in 1945, now finds itself at a pivotal moment. Established to promote international peace, security, and development, the organization faces growing pressure to reform in response to the ever-changing global landscape. However, despite widespread recognition of the need for restructuring, numerous obstacles hinder the reform process. Political, institutional, financial, legal, and socio-cultural barriers make consensus among member states difficult to achieve, thus stalling efforts to enhance the UN's relevance and effectiveness. Three critical areas demand attention—representation, effectiveness, and operational efficiency. Without

addressing these, meaningful reform remains elusive. One of the most significant barriers to UN reform is the veto power held by the five permanent members (P5) of the Security Council: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. This power enables any of these nations to block resolutions, including those aimed at restructuring the UN. The P5's vested interest in maintaining their influential status has led to repeated failures to expand the Security Council to include new permanent members, such as India, which is the world's largest democracy. India's exclusion from permanent membership, despite its growing global influence, highlights a major flaw in the

UN's current structure. Similarly, other responsible powers, such as Japan and Germany, have long called for permanent seats on the Council. The reluctance of the P5 to share their privileged status stifles efforts to make the UN more representative of today's geopolitical realities. Another complicating factor is the principle of state sovereignty enshrined in the UN Charter. Many member states, particularly smaller or less powerful nations, are wary of reforms that they perceive as infringing on their sovereignty. These states fear that in a restructured UN, their voices might be drowned out by larger, more powerful countries. This divergence in priorities complicates efforts to build the broad consensus

necessary for substantial reform. While some states advocate for a more democratic and inclusive Security Council, others focus on regional issues or specific conflicts, making agreement difficult. The UN's effectiveness in addressing global challenges has been called into question, further complicating the reform debate. Public opinion and trust in the organization are crucial to its ability to implement meaningful changes. However, repeated failures to effectively address major crises, such as those in Afghanistan and Palestine, have eroded public confidence in the UN's capacity to respond to contemporary challenges. UN peacekeeping missions, a cornerstone of the organiza-



tion's efforts to maintain global peace, have also come under fire. Critics argue that these missions have often failed to prevent conflicts or protect civilians adequately. To enhance the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, reforms must focus on improving the mandates, training, and resources available to peacekeepers. Additionally, addressing allegations of misconduct, including sexual

abuse and exploitation by peacekeepers, is essential to restoring the organization's credibility and ensuring accountability. These limitations highlight the urgent need for innovation and reform within the UN. Building and maintaining public trust is essential to securing the political and financial support necessary for any restructuring efforts. Efforts to improve the UN's operational efficiency, such as those initiated by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan, have demonstrated the institutional challenges of reform. While some administrative changes have been implemented, resistance from within the organization and differing priorities among member states have limited the

scope of these reforms. The UN's extensive bureaucracy presents a major obstacle to meaningful change. Established procedures and norms are deeply ingrained, making it difficult to implement significant reforms. Bureaucratic inertia often leads to resistance from within the organization, as staff and officials may be reluctant to change familiar processes and structures. Moreover, the UN's broad mandate, which covers peace and security, development, and human rights, adds complexity to any reform effort. This wide scope can lead to overlapping functions and responsibilities among different UN bodies, resulting in inefficiencies. Reforming the UN also involves navigating a com-

plex web of international law. Any proposed changes must comply with existing legal frameworks and secure broad international support. This legal complexity adds another layer of difficulty, as reforms must be not only politically acceptable but also legally sound. While the need for reform is widely acknowledged, the path to achieving it remains fraught with challenges. Political dynamics, institutional inertia, financial limitations, and legal hurdles all contribute to the slow pace of change.

*(Dr Kishor is the HoD of Politics and International Studies, at Pondicherry University and Chandra is an author, political analyst and columnist. Views expressed are personal)*

Israeli forces appear to withdraw from Jenin

AP ■ JENIN REFUGEE CAMP Israeli forces appeared to have withdrawn from three refugee camps in the occupied West Bank by Friday morning...

milicians in Jenin, Tulkarem and the Al-Faraa refugee camps in an attempt to curb recent attacks against Israeli civilians...

Hamas war began, evacuating the wounded have been slowed on their way to nearby hospitals...

During the operation, Israeli forces sent military bulldozers into the camp, ripping up roads in search of buried explosives...

In the morning outside a United Nations health centre in Khan Younis to receive the vaccine, which was being administered by local health care crews...

The final phase was to focus on the north, finishing September 9. The operation was undertaken as an urgent measure to prevent a large-scale polio outbreak...

Telegram CEO addresses French charges

Paris (AP): Telegram founder and CEO Pavel Durov promised to step up efforts to fight criminality on the messaging app...

post said. "Building technology is hard enough as it is. No innovator will ever build new tools if they know they can be personally held responsible for potential abuse of those tools..."

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PUBLIC NOTICE NOTICE is hereby given to public at large that my client Mr. Rohit Mathur who is purchasing the Plot No.4, 50 Sq. Yds out of area measuring 100 Sq. Yds. in Kharsa no. 3/1192.19...

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Table with columns: Sr. No., CUSTOMER NAME, LOAN A/C NO., AMOUNT OUTSTANDING (IN RS.), DATE OF RECEIPT NOTICE, GROSS WEIGHT, NET WEIGHT. Lists various borrowers and their loan details.

CORRIGENDUM

CORRIGENDUM TO PUBLICATION OF APPENDIX IV-A DATED 23.08.2024 ISSUED UNDER RULE 8(6) AND RULE 9(1) OF SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 (The Act).

This Corrigendum is issued in relation to the publication of Appendix IV-A dated 23.08.2024 in THE PIONEER - DELHI COVERS GHAZIABAD - ENGLISH and RASHTRIYA SAHARA - DELHI COVERS GHAZIABAD - HINDI, both dated 29th August, 2024...

Authorized officer Samman Capital Limited (Formerly known as Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited)

MODI RUBBER LIMITED CIN: L25199UP1971PLC003392 Registered Office: Modinagar - 201204; Dist. Ghaziabad, (U.P.)

NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that the 51st Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the members of Modi Rubber Limited ("Company") will be held on Monday, the 30th September, 2024 at 11:30 a.m. (IST) through Video Conferencing ("VC")/Other Audio Visual Means ("OAVM") facility provided by Mas Services Limited to transact the business set out in the Notice convening the AGM.

To, Defendants: 1. Akhil Singh S/o Ajay Singh R/o E-18036, Sixteenth Avenue Gaur City 2, Sec-16C, Greater Noida West, Noida-201301, U.P.

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NOTICE OF 51st ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF AYUSHMAN INFRA TECH LTD

NOTICE is hereby given that the 51st Annual General Meeting of the Shareholders of AYUSHMAN INFRA TECH Ltd will be held on Monday, 30th day of September, 2024 at 12:00 PM at registered office of the Company situated at DSC-319, DLF South Court, Saket, New Delhi-110017...





# Rupee rises two paise to settle at 83.95 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

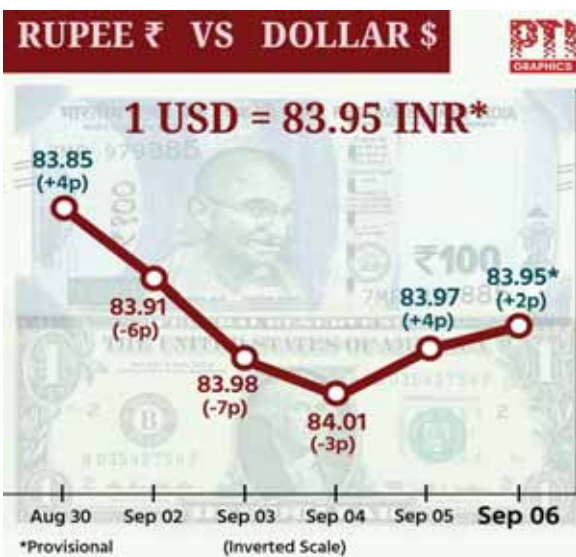
The rupee gained 2 paise to close at 83.95 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday amid a weak greenback in overseas markets.

However, negative domestic markets, rise in crude oil prices, and outflow of foreign capital capped sharp gains, forex traders said.

At the interbank currency market, the local unit opened at 83.97 and witnessed an intra-day high of 83.91 against the American currency.

The unit, which traded in the range of 83.91-83.97, finally settled at 83.95 (provisional), registering a gain of 2 paise. It had closed at 83.97 on Tuesday.

“Indian rupee recovered today on weak US dollar. However, weak domestic markets



capped sharp gains,” Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, said.

“We expect rupee to trade with a slight negative bias on

weak global equities and concerns over global economic growth,” he said, adding that the USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 83.70 to Rs 84.20.

Traders may take cues from non-farm payrolls report and speeches by the US Federal Reserve’s rate-setting panel members, he added.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback’s strength against a basket of six currencies, was down 0.14 per cent to 100.96 points. Brent crude, the international benchmark, gained 0.58 per cent to USD 73.11 per barrel in futures trade.

In the domestic equity markets, Sensex tanked 1,017.23 points to settle at 81,183.93, while Nifty slumped 292.95 points to 24,852.15.

# Revisiting Sri Lanka’s debt sustainability assessment can derail IMF programme: Finance Ministry

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Any attempt to revisit Sri Lanka’s debt sustainability assessment (DSA) can derail the ongoing IMF programme bailout, the finance ministry said on Friday.

“Any country can of course stand its ground and refuse to move forward based on the IMF’s DSA if it disagrees with the outcomes of the model and the IMF’s assessment,” the Ministry of Finance said in a statement titled “Clarifications on Debt Restructuring and the Debt Sustainability Analysis”.

It added that a standoff in such a scenario would only delay an agreement on a financing programme for several months if not years.

The statement highlighted that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) cannot proceed with a financing



programme if a country’s debt is deemed unsustainable.

The statement comes as Marxist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) front National People’s Power (NPP) in its manifesto for the September 21 presidential election said last week that it would work for an alternative debt sustainability analysis and the Washington-based global lender’s condition of revenue-based fiscal consolidation.

The finance ministry statement asserted that Sri Lanka’s agreement with creditors for sovereign debt restructuring needed IMF endorsement “to confirm as the independent actor that the negotiated terms indeed provide the required debt relief to comply with the debt targets”.

The ministry’s warning on DSA aligns with incumbent president Ranil

Wickremesinghe’s narrative that the current bail-out programme requirements must persist for Sri Lanka to achieve complete recovery.

The opposition parties have heavily criticised Wickremesinghe’s steer of the island nation declared its bankruptcy in April 2022, announcing its first-ever sovereign default.

Wickremesinghe was able to revive the negative growth of six successive quarters with the help of international partners of recovery. However, his reforms at the behest of the IMF, which sent the cost of utilities high, have made him unpopular.

Anura Kumara Dissanayake, the NPP candidate, believes he leads in the unofficial polls to win the election over Wickremesinghe and the main opposition challenger Sajith Premadasa.

# Allow natural growth of India’s E-vehicle sector to avoid becoming EV colony for China: GTRI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government should allow the domestic electric vehicle sector to grow naturally without relying on incentives as it would avoid India becoming an ‘EV colony’ for China, think tank GTRI said on Friday.

India faces unique challenges not faced by other countries in adopting EVs (electric vehicles) at large scale, it added.

These challenges include 80 per cent of electricity generated from fossil fuels like coal, frequent power cuts, and dependency on imports for making EVs in the country like batteries and critical minerals, the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said.

“Considering these challenges, instead of rushing into the fray with heavy incentives or falling into dependence on Chinese imports, India has the opportunity to let its EV sector evolve naturally. By allowing market forces to steer the sector’s growth, India can avoid becoming an ‘EV colony’ for China and



carve out its own path in the global EV landscape,” it added.

It also said the global EV market is undergoing a seismic shift, driven by the US, EU, and Canada imposing high tariffs and restrictions on imports of EVs and parts from China.

These regions make up about half of China’s global EV exports and in a strategic pivot, China is moving its production to ASEAN countries and setting its sights on India.

“These production units would still depend heavily on imports from China, with 70-80 per cent of parts, including batteries, coming from there. Thailand, the first to allow local production by Chinese firms, is already facing

challenges with rising imports and complaints of lower sales from established manufacturers,” GTRI founder Ajay Srivastava said.

He added that there is also a risk that China might dump excess EVs in India as access to developed markets becomes tougher.

The GTRI suggested that India should focus on capturing leadership in the next phase of EVs, using a new generation of batteries. Increasing investment in research and development (R&D) for advanced battery technologies, battery recycling infrastructure, and supporting clean energy sources to power EV charging stations are some of the steps which would help boost the sector’s growth, it added.

# Prozeal Green Energy, Golyan Power sign JV pact for solar projects in Nepal

PTI ■ New Delhi

Ahmedabad-based Prozeal Green Energy and Nepalese firm Golyan Power have inked a joint venture agreement for setting up solar power projects in the Himalayan nation.

The agreement was signed on Tuesday at Golyan Power headquarters in Kathmandu, marking a significant milestone in both companies’ commitment to advancing renewable energy solutions, a statement said.

The agreement was signed by Shobit Rai, Director of Prozeal Green Energy, and Akshay Golyan, Director of Golyan Power.

The partnership underscores a shared vision to contribute meaningfully to a cleaner and greener future for Nepal.

The joint venture -- Prozeal Green Energy Nepal -- aims to establish over 500 MW of solar energy projects across multiple locations in Nepal over the next 18 months.

Prozeal Green Energy will hold a 60 per cent stake in the JV and Golyan Group will own the remaining 40 per cent.

Rai said this joint venture



represents “a powerful alliance between Nepal and India, uniting our expertise to lead the global decarbonisation movement. Together, we’re setting new benchmarks for clean energy and sustainability in Nepal”.

Golyan Power director Akshay Golyan said, “Nepal is growing rapidly in the renewable energy sector and I am confident that this partnership will open up new avenues for both entities. We have come together through our shared vision and the massive possibilities ahead.”

The joint venture will develop both solar rooftop and ground-mounted photovoltaic (PV) solar plants.

The energy produced from these projects will be sold to the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) and various commercial and industrial consumers.

# Spicejet plans to raise over ₹3,200 crore via debt, equity

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Cash-strapped domestic Carrier Spicejet plans to raise Rs 3,200 crore through QIP, warrants and capital infusion by the promoter, the airline said in a presentation on Friday.

The funds will be utilised in taking back the grounded fleet in operations, liability settlement, new fleet induction and other general purposes, Spicejet in the presentations.

“Spicejet plan to raise Rs 2,500 crore through QIP and Rs 736 crore through Previous Warrants and promoter infusion, the airline said in an investor presentation,” it said in a corporate presentation to investors ahead of its proposed capital infusion.

The proposed funds raised are subject to shareholders’ approval.

Ajay Singh-promoted SpiceJet had earlier in January this year, could raise only Rs 1,060 crore through preferential issues against its Rs 2,250 crore funding plan announced in December last



year.

The airline attributed factors like reduction in fleet, and subsequent grounding, higher cost of working capital, escalating fixed costs, fixed rentals at airports, and outstanding statutory dues as the factors for its current problem.

According to the presentation, its operational fleet reduced to 28 planes in 2024 against 74 aircraft in 2019, while 36 aircraft remained on the ground due to the funding issue.

However, according to the live aircraft fleet tracking website, Planespotter.Net, it had only 20 aircraft in operations as of September 5 and 38 on the ground.

It may also be noted that several of these aircraft are out of operation due to SpiceJet’s lessors and other vendors taking the airline to court for non-payment.

# Bengaluru sees 19 per cent hike in home sales: Report

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Bengaluru’s residential market continues to display steady growth as registered transactions maintain upward momentum both sequentially and annually, a report by Square Yards, an integrated platform for real estate and mortgages, said on Friday.

According to the data, 28,356 transactions were recorded in the city during the second quarter of 2024, marking a 19 per cent increase over the previous quarter.

“Despite challenges such as flooding and water shortage, home buyer demand remains notably resilient, underpinned by a strengthening IT sector and the blend of full-time and hybrid working models,” said Sopan Gupta, Principal Partner, Square Yards.

According to him, east and southern suburbs retain their appeal, northern suburbs are rapidly emerging as key areas of interest for both apartments and plots.

“Branded developers, particularly those delivering quality projects, are witnessing successful launches with swift offtake,” he added.

# VA Tech WABAG bags ₹2,700 crore sea water desalination plant order from Saudi Water Authority

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Water treatment player VA Tech WABAG has secured an order from Saudi Water Authority worth USD 317 million (Rs 2,700 crore) for setting up a Mega Sea Water

Desalination plant in Saudi Arabia, the company said on Friday.

The Engineering, Procurement, Construction and Commissioning (EPCC) contract including design and supply of the 300 million litres per day



mega desalination plant which would be developed on a greenfield site in the west coast of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi Water Authority, formally known as the Saline Water Conversion Corporation, is responsible for regulating and monitoring water sector business and services to enhance water sustainability and achieve the objectives of Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030.

The project is expected to be completed in 30 months and the plant would operate Dual Media Filters followed by a two-pass Reverse Osmosis process and remineralisation to produce clean potable water.

The plant would be built with the state-of-the-art desalination technologies, designed for superior energy efficiency and would produce stellar quality of water complying with the environmental regulations of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

**NOTICE**

I, VIDYARTH GAUTAM KUMAR S/O JAWAHAR PRASAD R/O SMQ-75, AIR FORCE STATION HINDAN GHAZIABAD UP-201004 HAVE CHANGED MY DAUGHTER'S NAME FROM SIMRON TO SIMRAN VIDE AFFIDAVIT DATED 16/07/2024 GHAZIABAD, UP.

**NOTICE**

I, Apoorva Chauhan, son of Ajay Prakash Singh, resident of Flat No. 1003, Tower-14, Nirala Estate PH-1, GH04, Techzone-4, Greater Noida West, Gautam Buddha Nagar-201306, have changed the name of my son. My son Advik Singh Chauhan should be known as Raghav Singh Chauhan hereafter.



# Gold rises ₹100; silver bounces ₹1,200

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Silver prices surged Rs 1,200 to Rs 85,800 per kilogram, while gold rose Rs 100 to Rs 74,200 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

In the previous session, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had ended at Rs 74,100 per 10 gram.

The silver metal had ended higher at Rs 84,600 per kilogram in the previous session on Thursday.

Additionally, gold of 99.9 and 99.5 per cent purity rose Rs 100 each to Rs 74,200 and Rs 73,850 per 10 grams, respectively.

Traders attributed the rise in gold prices due to increased demand by jewellers and stockists as well as a jump in the precious metal rates in the overseas markets.

Globally, Comex gold rose 0.22 per cent higher at USD 2,548.80 per ounce.

“Gold extended gains on Friday, as the US dollar and Treasury yields fell following another set of data showing a sluggish US labour market,” Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of HDFC Securities, said.

Silver also quoted marginally higher at 0.26 per cent to USD 29.18 per ounce in the international markets.

“US jobs data released in

recent sessions have shown mixed readings, though it confirmed that the labour market is cooling enough to consider an interest rate cut in September meeting by the US Federal Reserve,” Maneesh Sharma, AVP -- Commodities & Currencies, Anand Rathi Shares and Stock Brokers, said.

Following a strong monthly increase in July, gold posted another healthy gain in August to finish 3.6 per cent higher at USD 2,513 per ounce internationally, according to a report by World Gold Council (WGC).

The custom duty cut on gold in India, which took place in late July, has been a shot in the arm for gold demand in the country.

The reduction was followed by strong buying interest from jewellery retailers as well as consumers.

Meanwhile, global physically-backed gold ETFs extended their inflow streak to four months while western funds once again contributed to the share of flows, the report said.

According to Manav Modi, Senior Analyst, Commodity Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, after lower jobs data this week, focus now turns to all-important US non-farm payroll and unemployment rate data to be released later on Friday.

# INBRIEF

**SESSION ON TRADE VISION ORGANISED AT GNDRU**

**NEW DELHI:** The Dinero Finance Club of University Business School, Guru Nanak Dev University hosted a Industry Interactive Session Trade Vision: Decoding the Dynamics Of Stock Market under the guidance and scientific vision of Prof (Dr.) Jaspal Singh Sandhu, Vice Chancellor.

**VIT UNIVERSITY DONATES ₹1,57,50,000 FOR FLOOD VICTIMS**

**AMARAVATI:** To support the Andhra Pradesh government in the wake of recent floods, Dr.G.Viswantham, Chancellor, Sri Sankar Viswantha, Vice-President, VIT University presented a cheque of Rs1,57,50,000 (One crore fifty seven lakhs fifty thousand) to the Chief Minister’s Relief Fund.

**ATES, ANOTHER STEP BY NFR TO ENHANCE SAFETY**

**MALIGAON:** Northeast Frontier Railway has installed a prototype Automatic Train Examination System (ATES) for the first time at its rolling in & rolling out examination point at New Jalpaiguri. ATES is an Artificial Intelligence based technology that involves capturing, processing and analysing visual data such as images and videos of rolling stocks.

**NBCC RECEIVES AWARD IN VARIOUS CATEGORIES**

**NEW DELHI:** NBCC (India) Limited a Navratna CPSE under the aegis of Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, was presented with Shield by the Town Official Language Implementation Committee, Delhi (Undertaking-2) in their half yearly meeting and prize distribution ceremony organised at Silver Oak Auditorium, India Habitat Center, Lodhi Road, New Delhi on September 4, 2024 for exhibition in Rajbhasha Utsav; publication of in-house Hindi magazine “Nirman Bharti” and securing first position in Quiz Competition.

**GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY CELEBRATES TEACHER’S DAY**

**AMRITSAR:** Guru Nanak Dev University celebrated Teacher’s Day with enthusiasm and reverence, honoring the dedication and commitment of its educators. The various departments includes Punjab School of Economics, Department of History organised special events and activities to express gratitude towards the teaching staff.

**SRM INSTITUTE HOSTS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**KATTANKULATHUR:** SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST) recently hosted the International Conference on Precision Bio-Medicine and Sustainable Smart City Development (ICPBSSC) in collaboration with National Chung Cheng University (CCU), Taiwan held over three days.

**REC HONOURED AS NODAL AGENCY OF THE YEAR**

**NEW DELHI:** REC Limited, a Maharatna CPSE under the Ministry of Power and a leading NBFC, has been conferred with the prestigious “Nodal Agency of the Year” award at the Bharat Electricity - Powering India Awards 2024.

**NORTHERN RAILWAY OPEN-E-TENDER NOTICE**

The Sr. Divisional Engineer-II, Northern Railway, Delhi Division invites E-Tender for the following work.

1	NIT-54	Name of work:- Balance work of limited height subway at level crossing no- 19 on DSA-SMQL-SRE section and at level crossing no- 20 on GZB-SRE section under Sr. DEN-II. Approx cost of work:- As per NIT or IREPS. Earnest Money to be deposited :- As per NIT or IREPS.
2	Date & Time of opening of tender.	01.10.2024 15:00 Hrs.
3	Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen	www.ireps.gov.in

• The tenderer/s must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement system (IREPS) site i.e. [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) for participating in the e-tender system. • For all terms and conditions please refer tender document. • No manual offers are acceptable. • Cost of tender document and Earnest Money will be acceptable through net banking or payment gateway only. No. 128-W/280/E-Tender Notice/NIT-54-24-25-W-II Dated:- 01.10.2024 2806/2024

**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

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**NORTHERN RAILWAY PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARING OF ACCUSED PERSON**

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Suraj Suman S/o Krishan Kumar, R/o H.No. 516/06, Shivlal Chowk, Govindpuri, Kalkaji, Delhi-110019** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case CC No. 2094/23 u/s 143(1) R. Act. P.S. New Delhi Railway Station which is punishable and a Warrant of arrest issued there upon has been returned unexecuted stating that the said accused **Suraj Suman** can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Suraj Suman** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said Warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Suraj Suman** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complain on or before 27.09.2024.

By Order  
**SHRI JITENDER**  
Special Railway Magistrate  
Old Delhi Railway Station, Delhi  
2804/2024



# THE STORY BEHIND KABINI ON MY MIND

## AN AUTHOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Discover the inspirations, experiences and insights behind **VIKRAM NANJAPPA'S** compelling wildlife narratives in *Kabini on my Mind: Musings of a Naturalist*

BY **SHARMILA CHAND**

**V**ikram Nanjappa likes to be described as an interested and well-informed amateur. He draws inspiration from the band of men called the Orientalists, most of whom were amateurs. Like them, his field of inquiry is 'Man and Nature; (with an emphasis on Nature) whatever is performed by the one or produced by the other'.

Vikram's first exposure to wildlife came through the shikar tales he had heard from his friends while studying at Mayo College in Ajmer in Rajasthan, one of the country's oldest and celebrated institutions of learning. Vikram cites the writings of Billy Arjan Singh and Jim Corbett as having played a pivotal role in inclining him passionately and committedly towards wildlife.

After completing his Bachelor's in History and Political Science from St. Stephen's College in New Delhi, Vikram joined the tea plantations. It was during the thirteen years he spent in Kerala and the Duars of West Bengal that he found the opportunity to hone his twin hobbies of wildlife and photography. In 2002 he moved to Kabini and took up organizing wildlife tours full time. He is one of those rare gems who managed to turn his passion into a rewarding and fulfilling vocation.

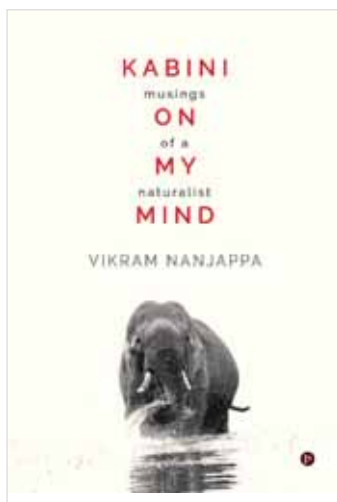
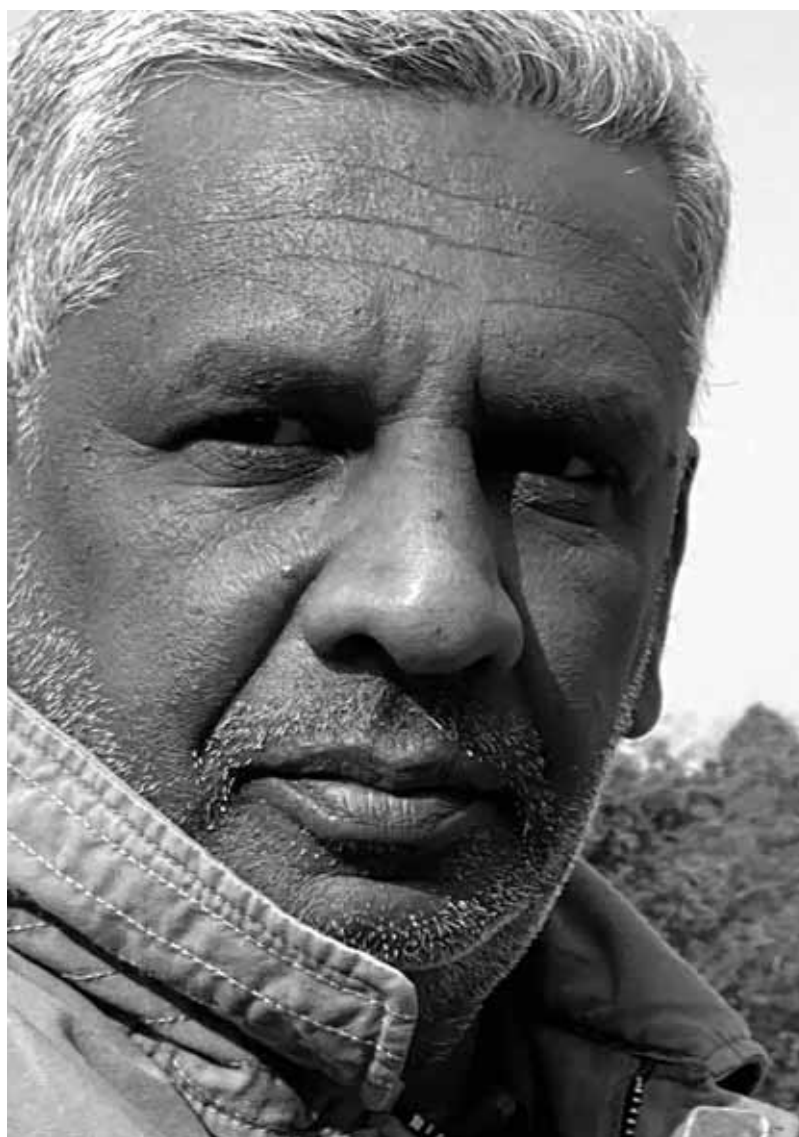
After leaving Kabini, in a manner of natural progression, Vikram ventured into the field of wildlife conservation (Non-profit Organization Management) with the Asian Nature Conservation Foundation for a few

years. He also explored the world of fashion as a freelance writer and as a photographer. His current avatar is that of a marketing professional. Vikram avers that traditional knowledge and field skills coupled with good science and common sense is the best way to understand, expose and preserve our wildlife, which is alarmingly on the decline. He strongly disapproves of what he calls the 'tabloid portrayal' of wildlife, where aberrant animal behaviour is highlighted to reinforce false myths and stereotypes. This has to be eclipsed by an attitude of respect and reverence for the animal kingdom if we are to continue enjoying sightings of our wild brethren in their natural habitats.

**In an informal chat, he talks about his book and more .....**

**Firstly, let's hear about your book....**  
In the winter of 2002-03 I found myself in Kabini managing a farmhouse that was taking its first baby steps towards becoming a wildlife resort and if you had asked me a year earlier if that was where I saw myself a year hence, I would have laughed in your face. As the 1900s turned to the 2000s I was happily living on the Bhutan border, managing a tea estate and indulging in my love of photography and wildlife.

I did not know then that the previously dreaded but now forgotten Y2K problem would culminate in me reaching Kabini in the middle of the night to discover that my quarters had an outdoor toilet without a door. Not wishing to make a fuss, I decided to tackle the problem in the morning



### ABOUT THE BOOK

**Book :** 'Kabini on my Mind: Musings of a Naturalist' by **VIKRAM NANJAPPA**  
**Publisher :** Notionpress

by catching the first available transport out. As day broke and I got my first look ... the rest, as they say, is history.

I was shortly joined by my wife Gowri, my daughter Tara and our dog (a St Bernard mix) Bernie. We later added another member to our family - Bruno, a dachshund. In Kabini I eagerly embarked on the next phase of my wildlife journey, exploring the forests and honing my skills as a Naturalist. Up until then I had been happily engrossed in tackling the human-elephant conflict prevailing in the Duars and keeping track of the resident leopards on the estate. I enjoyed my wild life in the Duars, observing elephants and, to a lesser degree, leopards.

We stayed in Kabini for nearly ten years, finally leaving in 2011 when I had become the Chief Naturalist at Evolve Back, and Kabini had become one of the premier wildlife destinations in India.

This book is a compilation of various musings, natural history notes, opinions and incidents that occurred in Kabini during my stint there. While they are arranged in no particular order, they were written as

they occurred and accurately reflect my mood, opinions and emotions as the incidents played out. A lot of water has flowed by since but I have resisted the temptation to 'update' them as I feel hindsight is not always a good thing - it can be unfair to those who actually lived through the moment.

**How did you get the idea or let's say inspiration behind the book?**

During my childhood my interest in wildlife was fueled by wildlife books written by various authors. Most of these books were written by western authors and were mostly about Africa. As I grew up, I realized that a lot of researchers from the west were writing and publishing 'popular' books about their research experiences while at the same time imparting knowledge on wildlife in a very easy to absorb manner. This unfortunately was missing in India and information on Indian wildlife was difficult to get. Sometime ago I realized that instead of complaining maybe I should write a book on my experiences as a naturalist in Kabini.

**What is the target audience for the book?**

The book is a compilation of various incidents that occurred during my stint and written in a very easy to read manner - the aim was to cater to both young adults and adults. It is also targeted at those who are not into wildlife as well as those who are. It's not really targeted at hardcore wild livers - but I am sure they will enjoy the stories.

**Any specific aim of writing on this subject?**

The idea is to get young people interested in wildlife by presenting facts in an easy to read format. The chapters are independent of each other and easy to digest, the book can be read at leisure - it's not a heavy and laborious read. With today's declining attention span this was a deliberate move on my part.

**Your favorite chapters?**

I love elephants and I think that comes out very strongly in the book. My favorite parts are the ones about elephants - the following chapters in particular:

Spirit of Kabini  
A Trunk Full of Tales  
A Tale of Two Giants  
The Amphitheatre of Life and Death

**You had mentioned the book is not tiger centric?**

I have purposely not focused too much on the tiger - I feel that too our tourism industry is too tiger centric to the detriment of other species. There is much more to Indian wildlife and therefore I have given more

attention to other lesser known and charismatic species.

**Any personal opinions / beliefs you have shared in the book?**

Yes, I have also touched upon my personal beliefs which are not quite conventional but at the same time tried not to sensationalize aberrant animal behavior reinforce false myths and stereotypes.

**Are you a Critique of current trends in wildlife guiding?**

It ends with a mild critique (Last Chapter: The Mystic Naturalist) of the current trends in wildlife guiding which I feel is getting too 'professional' 'with scripted storytelling and more. I hope that this critique will be taken in the spirit it is intended and lead to a more mindful approach to guiding.

**Is this your first book? Were you always into writing? You wanted to be an author?**

Yes, it's my first book. I have always enjoyed writing and maintaining an online blog for a long time. I also briefly freelanced as a writer, writing articles on wildlife and men's style. Also dreamt of writing a book so one dream was fulfilled.

**Why Kabini?**

I spent nearly ten years of my life in kabini. I know it very well and it's my home jungle. It's my karma Bhoomi as far as wildlife goes

**How and when did you become a naturalist?**

I became a naturalist in 2003 when I decided to quit my job as a tea planter and work in the wildlife field. As I was not 'qualified' to do research it was the only viable option for me.

**How has your journey been as a Naturalist? Pls share a couple of milestones or anecdotes to share.**

It was great. The biggest learning was when my boss Krishan Prasad or KP for short who is a great wildlifer himself advised me to ditch my camera for a pair of binoculars. Best advice I ever received- the learning that followed was stupendous. Also getting the opportunity to interact with Dr Ullas Karanth and other such greats.

My outlook and philosophy towards wildlife was formed and greatly influenced by these individuals.

**What did you enjoy the most about the book?**

Writing it. I love to write.

**What next? Which book? What subject?**

Nothing definitive but I would like to write something from a foresters perspective about the day to day challenges of managing a national park in India.

## NEW ARRIVALS

September Releases by Aleph Book Company



**The Third Eye of Indian Art: Aesthetics as Vedanta**  
By HARSHA V. DEHEJIA (INR-499, PP-240)

*The Third Eye of Indian Art* delves into how Indian art offers more than just visual pleasure by inviting deeper, contemplative experiences. Harsha V. Dehejia introduces the 'third eye,' a concept for perceiving art not only objectively but through a serene, inner perspective. This book guides readers in appreciating art's spiritual and subjective dimensions, encouraging a profound understanding of beauty and truth. Dehejia, a physician and Indic studies professor with dual doctorates, offers insights drawn from his extensive expertise in Indian aesthetics.

**A Wonderland of Words: Around the World in 101 Essays**  
By Shashi Tharoor (INR-999, PP-472)

Words possess extraordinary power. They can move, entertain and reveal the world in profound ways. In this captivating book, renowned wordsmith Shashi Tharoor invites readers into the fascinating realm of the English language. He unravels punctuation, spelling and grammar, while exploring the richness of acronyms, oxymorons, metaphors, idioms and more. Tharoor's engaging prose offers insights into English's history, regional variations and literary brilliance, making *A Wonderland of Words* a delightful read for language enthusiasts.

**Unlocking Wealth: Secrets to Getting Rich at Any Age**  
By ROHIT SARIN (INR-599, PP-224)

*Unlocking Wealth* reveals how individuals and families can grip India's economic growth to build substantial wealth. Rohit Sarin, a seasoned banker and entrepreneur, offers practical strategies for smart saving, sound investments, and risk-taking, emphasising that it's never too early or late to start. The book is both a guide for personal wealth creation and a broader vision for societal advancement, showing how increased wealth can benefit all Indians. With nearly three decades of wealth management experience, Sarin provides clear, actionable advice for creating and growing wealth at any age.

# Journey of Self-Discovery and Courage

Niharika Nigam's debut novel, *Joy of Missing Out*, explores the transformative journey of Nanki Mehta, a young woman searching for meaning and fulfillment beyond societal expectations. Through an unexpected adventure, Nanki learns to embrace uncertainty, redefine purpose and take a leap of faith towards a more authentic life, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

*Joy of Missing Out* by Niharika Nigam is a deeply engaging novel that explores the themes of self-discovery, existentialism and the quest for a meaningful life. Nigam, an entrepreneur with years of experience in the adventure sports industry, brings a unique perspective to her storytelling, blending personal insights with a broader commentary on modern life.

The novel centers around Nanki Mehta, a thirty-two-year-old brand strategist from Delhi, whose seemingly perfect life feels increasingly unfulfilling. Nanki's struggle is relatable, she grapples with societal expectations and a sense of stagnation in her career, marriage and personal life. Nigam paints a vivid portrait of a woman in crisis, yearning for something more than the mundane routines that have come to define her existence. Her portrayal of Nanki's internal conflict is rich and nuanced, making her journey of self-discovery both engaging and thought-provoking.

A turning point in the novel comes when Nanki stumbles upon a Bungy Jumping ad for Rishikesh, a place tied to her childhood memories. This ad becomes the catalyst for Nanki's journey towards transformation. Her interactions with River, a Bungy Jump Master, add a fresh dimension to her life. River's outsider perspective challenges Nanki to reconsider her own beliefs, offering new ways of thinking about purpose and fulfillment. This friendship serves as a mirror for Nanki's own soul-searching, encouraging readers to reflect on their own lives. One of the novel's most effective elements is its use of Bungy



Jumping as a metaphor for Nanki's leap of faith. What begins as a simple adventure turns into a powerful symbol of courage, trust and the willingness to embrace the unknown. This metaphor is woven throughout the narrative, providing a poignant backdrop to Nanki's internal transformation and reinforcing the novel's central themes of risk, renewal, and self-discovery.

Nigam's own experience in the adventure sports sector gives the book an authentic feel, especially in the scenes set in Rishikesh. Her understanding of courage, risk and the human desire for freedom adds depth and realism to Nanki's journey. The novel also delves into the challenges of social



entrepreneurship, showing how Nanki uses her business acumen to support a local NGO, blending purpose with practicality. The emotional core of the story is further enriched by Nanki's relationship with her grandfather, Nanu, whose illness and eventual death force her to confront her fears and redefine her understanding of loss and resilience. This subplot adds emotional weight to the narrative, making Nanki's journey even more

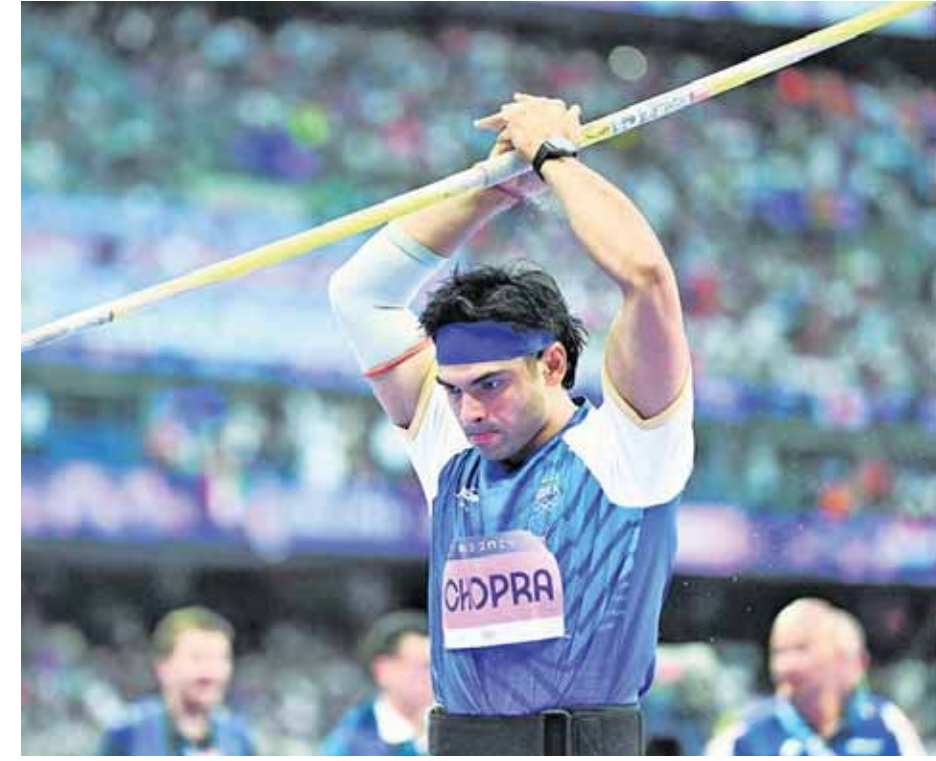
compelling. *Joy of Missing Out* is a novel that challenges readers to reflect on their own paths and the choices they make. It captures the tension between societal expectations and personal fulfillment, urging readers to take their own leaps of faith. Nigam's writing is insightful and empathetic, making this a book that resonates with anyone who has ever felt the need to step away from the familiar in search of a deeper sense of purpose.

### ABOUT THE BOOK

**Title:** Joy of Missing Out

**Author:** Niharika Nigam | **Publisher:** Nu Voice

**Price:** INR 299 | **Pages:** 288



## Neeraj Chopra qualifies for Diamond League season finale in Brussels

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's two-time Olympic medal-winning javelin throw star Neeraj Chopra has qualified for this month's season finale of the prestigious Diamond League after finishing fourth in the overall standings at the end of its 14 series meetings across the world. The season finale will be a two-day affair on September 13 and 14 in Brussels. Chopra accumulated 14 points from his two second-place finishes in the one-day meets held in Doha and Lausanne. He skipped the last series meet in Zurich on Thursday. The 26-year-old is two points adrift of Czechia's Jakub

Vadlech. Grenada's Anderson Peters and German star Julian Weber occupy the top two spots with 29 and 21 points respectively. Peters had pipped Weber in the Zurich meet. Chopra, who won gold in the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 and added a silver to his kitty in the Paris edition last month, has been struggling with his fitness this season. The Haryana-lad has talked about a groin injury troubling him since before the Olympic Games that has come in the way of his quest to hit the 90m mark. The Indian finished second in the Lausanne Diamond Leg, bested by Peters, who threw 90.61m. In Paris Olympics, Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem had

taken the gold with a monster throw of 92.97m. "First goal, go to the doctor and make my groin 100 per cent fit and also I will be technically better and try to throw far again," he had said last month about his plans for this year and the coming one. Chopra had won the Lausanne leg in 2022 and 2023 and finished second behind Vadlech in the winner-takes-all finale in Eugene, USA, last year. Each Diamond League season final champion is awarded a prestigious "Diamond Trophy", USD 30,000 prize money and a wild card for the World Athletics Championships. The DL finale will mark the end of Chopra's season.

## India's fast bowling makes them difficult to beat in Australia: Marnus Labuschagne

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Star batter Marnus Labuschagne reckons fast bowlers make India a "difficult" side to beat in Australian conditions as the hosts look to end their barren run in Border-Gavaskar Trophy which has lasted nearly a decade. India have won every bilateral Test series against Australia since losing 1-2 in an away affair in 2014-15. They have recorded identical 2-1 series wins in 2018-19 and 2020-21 Down Under to remain on top. "India's fast bowling is very good, which is really what brings them in Australian conditions and make them such a tough team to beat in Australian conditions," Labuschagne told Star Sports. The middle-order mainstay

termed the rivalry as 'tough' irrespective of where they are playing. "There is always high anticipation. To these two teams, it doesn't matter where we're playing, if it's in England, Australia, or India, it's always a tough contest," he said. Australia spinner Nathan Lyon termed Indian players as "superstars" while hoping to revive his on-field rivalry with India spinner Ravichandran Ashwin. "I've always said throughout my whole career (that) I want to compete against the best and you look through the whole Indian line-up, the whole squad, there's absolute superstars everywhere," he said. "I know Ashwin, we debuted around similar times and we've competed against each other in



a number of series. I have got nothing but respect for him. He is an absolute master in the craft of off-spin bowling and it's been an absolute privilege to play against him and learn off him," said Lyon. All-rounder Cameron Green reckoned the five-Test series

between India and Australia starting on November 22 at Perth could be a "preview" for the final of the World Test Championship next year. India lead the WTC table for 2023-25 cycle with 68.52 percentage points and 74 points, followed by Australia

with 62.50 percentage points and 90 points. The WTC final will be played at Lord's from June 11-15 next year and could feature both the current top two teams once again. India have featured in the summit clashes of the WTC on both occasions but have lost to New Zealand (2019-21) and Australia (2021-23). "Every single point is pretty crucial for the World Test Championship. Any way you can kind of (or) get an idea of (to) how to get one up on your opponent, we'll try and take," Green said. "If it is a bit of a preview for a World Test Championship final again, yeah, we've been trying to get as much information out of India and see how we can win it again," he added.

## Vikram Rathour, Rangana Herath added to New Zealand coaching staff

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

Former India batting coach Vikram Rathour and Sri Lanka spin great Rangana Herath were on Friday added to New Zealand's coaching staff ahead of Tests against Afghanistan and Sri Lanka. New Zealand will play a one-off Test against Afghanistan before heading to Sri Lanka for a two-Test series. The one-off Test against the Afghans will be held at the Greater Noida Sports Complex Ground from September 9 to 13. The Kiwis are also due to play a three-Test series against India in October-November. While Herath has been appointed for Tests against Afghanistan and Sri Lanka as New Zealand's spin bowling coach, Rathour will be with the Kiwi side only for the contest against Afghanistan.



Rathour had a successful run as India's batting coach under head coach Rahul Dravid. His tenure ended after India's T20 World Cup win in June this year. The addition of Rathour and Herath

was announced by New Zealand Cricket on their website. "Sri Lankan spin maestro Rangana Herath has been appointed as spin-bowling coach for the three upcoming

Tests in Asia, replacing former Pakistan spinner and coach Saqlain Mushtaq who was originally announced to fill the temporary role before pulling out to take up a position with the Pakistan Cricket Board," New Zealand Cricket said in a statement. Head coach Gary Stead said, "We're really excited to introduce Rangana and Vikram into our Test group." "Both men are held in high regard in the world of cricket and I know our players are really looking forward to the opportunity to learn from them." Stead hoped Herath's expertise as a left-arm spinner will help New Zealand's Ajaz Patel, Mitchell Santner and Rachin Ravindra. "For our three left-arm orthodox spinners in particular, Ajaz, Mitch and Rachin, having the chance to work with Rangana across three Tests on the sub-continent will be hugely beneficial," he said.



## Gagan Narang lauds performance of Indian athletes at Paris Paralympics

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

London Games bronze medalist shooter and India's Chef de Mission at the Paris Olympics, Gagan Narang on Friday heaped praise on the country's para athletes for their performance in the ongoing Paralympics. The Indian Paralympic contingent has already bagged a record 25 medals in this edition of the quadrennial showpiece with 5 gold, 9 silver and 11 bronze and is currently placed at the 16th position in the medal tally. When asked about his analysis of the Paris Olympic Games, the former shooter said he hasn't done it yet. "I haven't done my analysis of the Paris Olympics yet, everybody has spoken about it. But the most important thing right now is that in the

Paralympics we are performing well, we are on the 16th position today. "A fantastic effort by our Paralympians. They surpassed the Tokyo Paralympics medal tally, looking forward for more medals," Narang told PTI Videos on the sidelines of the Media Photojournalist Trust's photo exhibition event at the Press Club of India. Narang also shared his thoughts on his love for photography and expressed his admiration for the photos he saw at the exhibition. "Fantastic exhibition indeed, photographers are lifeline of journalism. They give us a perspective and no AI (Artificial Intelligence) can replace them. I wish, pray and help the association to do this function every year. Fantastic effort and great pictures," he concluded.

## Kerala seeks football collaboration with Argentina

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Football-crazy Kerala is seeking collaboration with the Argentine Football Association (AFA), with a high-level delegation headed by State Sports Minister V Abdurahiman holding a meeting with its office-bearers in Madrid, Spain. In a Facebook post, Abdurahiman, who is currently in Madrid, said on Friday that the collaboration with AFA will be a huge investment for Kerala and expressed his desire to make this a reality as soon as possible. "The possibility of considering Kerala as a venue for international friendly matches



was discussed. As part of this, the association representatives expressed interest in visiting Kerala soon. AFA also expressed interest in setting up football academies in Kerala in collaboration with the state government," he said. According to the minister, the AFA said that the Argentine fan community in Kerala has always been warmly

welcomed. Commenting on their meeting, the AFA said: "Together with the delegation from the Government of Kerala, headed by V Abdurahiman, Minister of Sports, we had the opportunity to share initiatives and projects that will surely materialize in the short term." In recent years, the association has established itself as one of

the most important and popular sports brands in this strategic market through its global expansion strategy, it said in a statement. "In this context, our institution is working on developing sports and commercial projects in different parts of the country, with the aim of continuing to expand our brand and being closer to the fans of the Argentine National Team in India," it added. The AFA also thanked the Government of Kerala for "this important visit". Meanwhile, the Abdurahiman-led delegation also visited various sports development centres in Madrid and met with officials from the Spanish Higher Sports Council.



## Australia stunned by Bahrain in World Cup qualifying as Palestinians draw with South Korea

AP ■ SEOUL

Australia fell to a shock 1-0 loss to Bahrain at home in the opening game of the third round of Asian World Cup qualifying. Meanwhile, South Korea was held to 0-0 by the Palestinians in Seoul. Despite losing all six previous games against Australia, Bahrain won thanks to an own goal from Harry Souttar with a minute remaining on the Gold Coast. Abdulla Al-Khalasi's cross from the left side of the area hit the defender and flew past goalkeeper Mat Ryan. Australia dominated the game but was reduced to 10 men when Kusini Yengi was red-carded after 77 minutes for a reckless tackle. "It's not the way that we want to start our campaign, a loss at home, but we have to go away and improve," Australia winger Craig Goodwin said. "We have to look at the positives. This is the first game, there are nine games to go."

Bahrain is second in Group C behind Japan, which thrashed China 7-0 in Saitama. First-half headers from midfielder Wataru Endo and winger Kaoru Mitoma put Japan in control by the break. Then Takumi Minamino scored twice in quick succession and Junya Ito, Daizen Maeda and Takefusa Kubo also found the target to make it a painful evening for China. Also in Group C, Saudi Arabia was held to a 1-1 draw by Indonesia in Jeddah. Ragnar Oratmangoen scored for Indonesia but Musab Al-Juwair equalized before the break for Roberto Mancini's team. Salem Al-Dawsari missed a late penalty. The 18 teams remaining in Asian qualification have been divided into three groups of six. The top two from each qualify automatically for the 2026 World Cup while the six teams that finish in third and fourth will advance to the fourth round where there are two more places on offer. South Korea last missed out on the World Cup in 1982 and got off to a poor start in Group B due to the Palestinians. South Korea missed chance after chance - captain Son Heung-min hit the post - but could not find a way through a determined defense from a visitor that has never reached this stage before. The Palestinians almost snatched what would have been a stunning victory in added time. Through on goal, Wessam Abou Ali's shot was saved by Jo Hyun-woo. "It was a difficult match, but we were able to come away with a good result because we brought all the players that we could get our hands on," Palestinian coach Makram Daboub said. "I am extremely happy to bring joy to our fans in Palestine." Iraq is above Korea in Group B after a 1-0 win over Oman in Basra while Jordan drew 1-1 with Kuwait. Iran got off to a winning start in Group A, defeating Kyrgyzstan 1-0 thanks to a first half goal from Inter Milan striker Mehdi Taremi. Uzbekistan is level on three points after a 1-0 victory over North Korea. United Arab Emirates is top of the group with a 3-1 win at Asian champion Qatar.

## Indian Hockey can aim for gold in next Olympics: Sreejesh

PTI ■ PATNA

Riding high on the success of winning a bronze medal in Paris - ending a four-decade-long dry spell - the Indian hockey team now aims to build on this momentum with hopes of clinching gold at the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028, ace goalkeeper P R Sreejesh said on Friday. The former national team captain, who announced his retirement after the Paris Olympics, told journalists in the Bihar capital that he saw the state as the future "sports hub". "I see many positive developments in Bihar, particularly at the sports complex in Raigir, which now features an astro turf and will host the women's Asian Cup Trophy tournament later this year," Sreejesh remarked. He added, "I see no reason why Bihar cannot emerge as the country's next sports hub. I have met sports department officials



here and found many initiatives, like establishment of a sports university, quite impressive". Sreejesh, who has taken up a new assignment as the coach for the junior men's hockey team, said he had set his eyes on the next Asia Cup and revealed that he was drawing inspiration from former cricket team captain Rahul Dravid. After a successful playing career, Dravid, known as "The Wall" for his steadfast batting, has made significant contributions as head coach of the Indian cricket team, helping it to new heights.

Sreejesh broke into a wide grin that like his idol, his own skills earned him the sobriquet "The Great Wall of Indian Hockey". At 36, Sreejesh reminisced about his experiences at the Paris Olympics and expressed hope that the national team would "revive the old glory of Indian hockey" by aiming for gold in Los Angeles and performing well in tournaments leading up to the 2028 Games. "We have a very talented team. Krishan Pathak, who has succeeded me, is an excellent goalkeeper," Sreejesh said, highlighting the importance of managing pressure and taking time to unwind between games. A fan of Harry Potter, Sreejesh confessed that his love for fiction has provided him with a means of escape from the intense pressures of competitive sports, helping him navigate the challenges of his demanding career.

AP ■ NEW YORK

## Errani and Vavassori win US Open mixed doubles title in Young's final match before retiring

Sara Errani and Andrea Vavassori won the U.S. Open mixed doubles title with a 7-6 (0), 7-5 victory Thursday over Taylor Townsend and Donald Young, who fell just short of a Grand Slam title in his final match before retiring. Errani, who won a career Grand Slam in women's doubles with fellow Italian Roberta Vinci, added her first career mixed doubles title to the Olympic gold medal in women's doubles she won last month with Jasmine Paolini. "It's incredible for me this

year. It's amazing," Errani said. Townsend and Young, who have been friends since they were kids, were given a wild card into the event for what was the 35-year-old Young's final tournament. The former top-ranked junior hadn't played much in recent years, having made the switch to pickleball. "Obviously wasn't the result

we wanted," Young said, "but I can't think of a better spot, place to go out in, having watched that as a kid, and playing with someone I've known our whole life. It's pretty cool for me." He and Townsend made their way through the draw, knocking off defending champions Anna Danilina and Harri Heliövarra in the quarterfinals.



But Errani and Vavassori, the No. 3 seeds, dominated the tiebreaker and then won the match by breaking Townsend's serve. Errani hadn't played a mixed doubles event for eight years before partnering with Vavassori at Wimbledon. They were knocked out in the first round, then reached the quarterfinals at the Olympics before coming to New York.