



OPINION 6 BJP'S RECRUITMENT DRIVE TO SOLIDIFY POWER

WORLD 9 4 INDIANS KILLED IN TEXAS ROAD MISHAP

MONEY 10 SENSEX, NIFTY TUMBLE ON GLOBAL DOWNTURN

LUCKNOW, THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 5, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3

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WORLD CHAMPION SACHIN WINS SILVER IN MEN'S SHOT PUT 11 SPORTS

Kejriwal bail plea hearing in SC today



FILE PHOTO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Thursday Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's pleas seeking bail and challenging his arrest by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the alleged excise policy scam. According to the cause list, a bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan is likely to hear the matter. The top court had on August 23 allowed the CBI to file its counter affidavit in the matter

and gave two days to Kejriwal to file a rejoinder. Kejriwal has filed two separate petitions challenging the denial of bail and his arrest by the CBI in the case. He has challenged the August 5 order of the Delhi High Court upholding his arrest. He was arrested by the CBI on June 26. On August 14, the top court refused to grant interim bail to Kejriwal in the case and sought a response from the probe agency on his plea challenging his arrest. The Delhi High Court had on August 5 upheld the arrest of the Chief Minister as legal, and said there was no malafide intention in CBI's action which was able to demonstrate how the AAP supremo could influence witnesses who could muster the courage to depose only after his arrest. The HC had asked him to move the trial court for regular bail in the CBI case. It had noted that the loop of evidence against the chief minister closed after the collection of relevant evidence following his arrest by the CBI and it cannot be said that it was without any justifiable reason or illegal. Continued on Page 8

Phogat, Punia likely to contest Haryana polls on Congress ticket

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Wrestlers Vinesh Phogat and Bajrang Punia are all set to join the Congress, amid speculation that they are likely to contest the upcoming Haryana Assembly elections scheduled for October 5. Phogat, is expected to mount challenge for the Julana seat held by the Jannayak Janta Party's Amarjeet Dhandra while Punia is likely to contest from Badli seat. Both Phogat and Punia met Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday. They also met Congress general secretary (organisation) KC Venugopal. Phogat and Punia joining the Congress at this time is significant because it is both nominating election candidates and is engaged in seat-sharing talks with the Aam Aadmi Party. Punia is a Tokyo Games bronze medalist, while Phogat became the first woman wrestler to reach the Olympics final, the stage where she was disqualified after being found overweight by about 100 gm in her 50-kg category weigh-in. She subsequently announced her retirement from the sport. The Congress' X handle shared the picture of Phogat and Punia with Rahul. The party as well as the duo have remained tight-lipped



Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi with wrestlers Vinesh Phogat and Bajrang Punia in New Delhi. PTI

about the speculations. However, a clearer picture could emerge in a day or two. Sources said that Phogat wanted to fight from the Julana seat, but the Congress had initially wanted her to contest from another seat near Gurugram. Sources said deliberations are on to finalise the seats for the two wrestlers with Julana and Badli seats under consideration for Phogat and Punia respectively. The Congress put out a photograph of Gandhi with Phogat and Punia on its official X handle. Asked whether Phogat and Punia could contest on a Congress ticket, AICC

general secretary in-charge of Haryana Deepak Babaria said there is a possibility and it would become clear by Thursday or Friday. Punia is a Tokyo Games bronze medalist, while Phogat became the first woman wrestler to reach the Olympics final, the stage where she was disqualified after being found over weight by about 100 gm in her 50-kg category weigh-in. She subsequently announced her retirement from the sport. The Congress' Central Election Committee (CEC) cleared the names of candidates for 66 seats out of 90 till Tuesday. Continued on Page 8



BJP releases first list of 67 candidates

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Looking to get the first-mover advantage in the Haryana Assembly polls, the BJP on Wednesday released its first list of 67 candidates for the 90 Assembly seats for the upcoming Assembly elections, with Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini to contest the Ladwa seat while former Haryana BJP president Om Prakash Dhankar has been fielded from Badli and veteran party leader and former home minister Anil Vij from Ambala Cantonment. The party has dropped nine sitting MLAs. Saini, who was an MP from Kurukshetra until he replaced Manohar Lal Khattar as the Haryana Chief Minister in March this year, currently represents the Karnal Assembly seat, which he won in a bypoll in June. Vij will be the BJP's candidate from the Ambala Cantonment constituency, a seat he has won three successive times since 2009. Continued on Page 8

BJP trounces AAP in MCD ward elections



The Pioneer photo

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Wednesday won the crucial Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) zonal ward elections by defeating the AAP in a close contest with the former bagging the posts of chairman, deputy chairman of the zonal-level ward committees, and one member each for standing committee in seven of 12 zones. The AAP managed to win five zones in the elections which took place amid heavy security arrangements. The Standing Committee of the MCD is considered the most powerful body in the civic body. BJP bagged Narela, Civil Lines, Keshav Puram, Shahdara North, Najafgarh, Shahdara South, and Central Zones, while AAP won Karol

Bagh, West, South, City SP and Rohini zones. Voting in Karol Bagh and City SP did not take place as BJP did not field a candidate, while in Keshav Puram, BJP's was the sole candidate in fray. The elections were conducted smoothly under a heavy security. With the win in the much awaited elections which is taking place after a delay of 18 months due to clashes between AAP and BJP. The BJP will be seen dominating the highest decision making body of the civic agency and MCD's financial backbone - the standing committee. With the elections, the committee has nine councilors from the BJP and eight from AAP. The standing committee is important for giving approval to proposals involving expenditures of ₹5 crore and above. Continued on Page 8



FILE PHOTO

SC snub for Uttarakhand Chief Minister

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Heads of Governments cannot be expected to be "old days' kings" and we are not in a "feudal era", the Supreme Court said on Wednesday, questioning Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami for appointing an IFS officer as the director of the Rajaji Tiger Reserve, disregarding the opinions of the State's Forest Minister and others. However, the State Government told a bench headed by Justice B R Gavai that the order posting the Indian Forest Service (IFS) officer as the director of the tiger reserve was withdrawn on September 3. The bench, also comprising Justices P K Mishra and K V Viswanathan, was hearing a matter concerning the appointment of IFS officer Rahul, a former director of the Corbett Tiger Reserve, as the director of the Rajaji Tiger Reserve. The court observed that there was a specific noting right from the first officer, which was endorsed by the deputy secretary, the principal secretary and also by the state's forest minister that Rahul should not be posted as the director of the Rajaji Tiger Reserve. "There is something like a public trust doctrine in this country. The heads of the executive cannot be expected to be old days' kings that whatever they have said, they will do," the bench observed, adding, "We are not in a feudal era." "Why should the chief minister have special affection for him (the officer)?" the bench asked, adding, "Just because he is the chief minister, can he do anything?" It also observed that a departmental proceeding was pending against the officer concerned. Pointing out that the noting had said the officer should not be posted at the Rajaji Tiger Reserve, the court said the chief minister "just ignores it". Continued on Page 8

Military top brass deliberates on joint command, control centres

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India's top military commanders on Wednesday held extensive deliberations in Lucknow on the Government's ambitious plans to create 'Integrated Theatre Commands' and assessed overall national security challenges including the ones along the frontiers with China and Pakistan. Chaired by the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Anil Chauhan, with chiefs of the Army, Navy and the Air Force and other top military officers in attendance, the deliberations primarily focused on setting up of joint command and control centres and logistics nodes, on the inaugural day of the two-day maiden joint commanders conference, being held in Lucknow, officials said. In his opening address, General Chauhan stressed the need for operational preparedness to meet emerging challenges, underscoring the need of modernisation to stay combat-ready and relevant and achieve strategic autonomy. The theme of the maiden joint commanders' conference is 'Sashakt and Surakshit Bharat: Transforming Armed Forces'. The deliberations on ensuring synergy among the armed forces on various aspects including financial planning, joint logistics infrastructure are taking place amid the Government's ambitious plans to roll out theatre commands. Under the theaterisation model, the



The Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan attends First Joint Commanders' Conference, in Lucknow. PIB

Government seeks to integrate the capabilities of the Army, the Air Force and the Navy and optimally utilise their resources for wars and operations. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will address the apex-level military leadership at the conference on Thursday. "The conference is focused on shaping the future of India's military to adapt to the changing operational milieu," the Defence Ministry said. Reviewing the current security situation and the defence preparedness of the armed forces, General Chauhan emphasised the importance of integration and future planning for enhancing integration across various domains. Continued on Page 8

Rain chokes Delhi-NCR, traffic hit

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Heavy rain lashed parts of Delhi-NCR, including Gurugram and Noida, on Wednesday afternoon leading to severe waterlogging on streets, roads and traffic congestion in several places in the Capital city. Huge traffic snarls were seen in parts of Delhi, including in South, Central, North, New Delhi and parts of Noida and Gurugram. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a yellow alert for the city. A yellow alert denotes 'bad weather and the possibility of the weather conditions worsening and disrupting daily life. Heavy waterlogging in various parts of Delhi left arterial junctions choked amid the traffic police issuing advisory to the commuters who were caught in prolonged traffic jams. In the past 24 hours till 8 am on Wednesday, city's primary weather station Safdarjung received 0.8 mm of rainfall, Lodi road 1.4 mm of rainfall, Narela 16 mm of rainfall, Palam 0.3 mm of rainfall, Ridge 0.8 mm of rainfall, Pitampura one mm of rainfall, Pusa 0.5 mm of rainfall and Mayur Vihar's Salwan public school 0.5 mm of rainfall.



Traffic jam at ITO in New Delhi on Wednesday after rain

Ranjan Dittmi/Pioneer

Mundka, Dhaua Kuan, Moti Bagh, Mehrauli-Badarpur road, Lajpat Nagar, Karol Bagh, Punjabi Bagh, Khanpur, ITO, Jahangirpuri, Safdarjung, Kshmere Gate ISBT and Okhla Estate were among other areas flooded after the rain causing slowdown of traffic movement with vehicles wading through knees deep water. In a series of posts, the Delhi Traffic Police advised commuters to avoid certain routes including a traffic advisory due to severe waterlogging at Mundka,

which significantly impacted traffic flow on Rohtak Road. "Traffic is affected on Rohtak Road in the carriageway from Nangloi towards Tikri Border and vice versa due to potholes and water logging. Kindly avoid Mundka and take alternate route accordingly," it said. Earlier, traffic was also affected on the GTK Road due to water logging as well as on Ring Road in the carriageway from Safdarjung Hospital towards Dhaua Kuan due to heavy water logging near Satya Niketan Bus Stand. Irked by the complete collapse

of civic infrastructure amid the rainy season, a commuters said, "Today, we are very frustrated with the traffic jam, and we have been stuck in a jam for over an hour while traveling from Noida to Delhi. This jam is approximately 1.5 to 2 kilometres long. Due to the jam, our fuel is burning, and pollution is increasing, but the government is not paying attention to this issue." Another one added that it took her approximately two hours to travel through a 14 kilometre stretch. Continued on Page 8

India ideal investment destination, says Modi in Singapore

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday arrived here for his fifth official visit to Singapore aimed at boosting bilateral friendship, deepening 'strategic partnership' and attracting investment from the Southeast Asian country. During his visit at the invitation of his Singaporean counterpart Lawrence Wong, the prime minister will connect with three generations of Singapore's leadership, officials in New Delhi said. The Prime Minister was warmly hosted by his Singapore counterpart at the iconic Sri Temasek bungalow for dinner. "Welcome PM @narendramodi to Singapore! Delighted to have the chance to catch up over a meal at the Istana, before the official meetings tomorrow," Wong posted on X along with his

photograph with Modi. Fortifying India-Singapore bonds of friendship. PM @narendramodi warmly hosted by PM @LawrenceWongST at the iconic Sri Temasek in Singapore. An evening cherishing the deep and long-standing India-Singapore ties awaits," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a post on X. Modi flew to Singapore after wrapping his visit to Brunei, the first bilateral visit there by an Indian prime minister. "Landed in Singapore. Looking forward to the various meetings aimed at boosting the India-Singapore friendship. India's reforms and the talent of our Yuva Shakti makes our nation an ideal investment destination. We also look forward to closer cultural ties," Modi posted on X soon after his arrival here. "PM @narendramodi lands in the



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a meeting with Prime Minister of Singapore Lawrence Wong, in Singapore, on Wednesday. PTI

Lion city, Singapore today. Warmly received by Minister of Home Affairs and Law K Shanmugam of Singapore. An

action-packed agenda lies ahead," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a post on X. Modi, who last visited Singapore

in 2018, was accorded a warm welcome by the Indian community members when he arrived at the hotel. He interacted with the community members and witnessed a traditional dance performance. He also tried his hand at dhol. "Thank you Singapore! The welcome was truly vibrant," he said in another post. Modi will hold bilateral talks with Wong on Thursday and witness the exchange of several memorandums of understanding. The Prime Minister will receive an official welcome at the Parliament House on Thursday and call on President Tharman Shanmugaratnam. This visit comes days after Wong took over and Modi began his third term as prime minister. "I look forward to my discussions to deepen our Strategic Partnership with Singapore, particularly in new and emerging areas of advanced manufacturing, digitalization, and sustainable development," Modi said ahead of his departure from New Delhi. "The leaders will review the progress of India-Singapore Strategic Partnership and exchange views on regional and global issues of mutual interest," a Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) statement said ahead of his departure for Brunei and Singapore. Modi is accompanied by Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and other government officials. He would call on Senior Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong. Lee will host a lunch for Modi. Modi will also meet with Singaporean business leaders and interact with those in the country's semiconductor ecosystem.

Classical music performances captivate Yogi, Rajnath

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

On Wednesday, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath attended a cultural evening at the Surya Sports Complex in Lucknow, part of the Armed Forces Ceremony.

The special guests were captivated by the performances of world-renowned classical music artistes.

The event, held in honour of the nation's brave soldiers, featured a series of mesmerising performances. World-famous musician and tabla virtuoso Bikram Ghosh led the program me with his rhythmic artistry, enchanting the audience.

Alongside him, other artistes brought smiles to the faces of the chief minister and the defence minister with their melodic renditions.

The evening was a delightful blend of classical and Western music, including a remarkable jugalbandi of Mridang and Tabla.

The performances were applauded by both the audience and dignitaries, including CM Yogi Adityanath and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath presenting a memento to an artiste at Surya Sports Complex in Lucknow

The event concluded with a standing ovation, followed by the presentation of souvenirs to the artistes. Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak and other distinguished guests also attended the event.

Earlier in the day, Defence

Minister Rajnath Singh arrived in the city to a warm welcome. He was received at the airport by Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak, BJP state president Bhupendra Singh, Lucknow metropolitan president Anand Dwivedi, MLC Mukesh Sharma, Mayor Sushma Kharkwal, MLA Dr

Neeraj Bora, OP Shrivastava, Yogesh Shukla and many other members of the BJP party. The defence minister met Rajya Sabha member Dr Dinesh Sharma and a large number of workers who had come to his residence and enquired about their well-being.

We aim to catch the wolves in next two days, says minister

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh's Forest Minister Arun Saxena said here on Wednesday that they were aiming to catch the two remaining wolves in Bahraich in the next two days.

Saxena visited Bahraich to take stock of the Operation Bhedhiya run by the UP Forest department.

Saxena, who has been touring the man-animal conflict areas of the state, told "The Pioneer" that wolf attacks were taking place only in Bahraich and such reports from other places were misleading.

"However, we have given instructions to the officials to check out the pug marks and find out which animals were attacking in the other districts of the state," he said.

The minister further stated that their current strategy was to catch the animal and make the public aware of keeping themselves safe and secure and to prevent themselves from the attack of the wolves.

"We are using a good mix of people and technology. We are using thermal drones along with Bagh Mitra to spot the wolves and are working for success at the earliest," he said.

The minister said that his strict instructions to the officials were to catch the wolves in whatever possible way.

"It is Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's instructions that the wolves should be caught and the general public saved from their attacks," he said.

The minister said that with 16 extra teams reaching Bahraich, a total of 26 teams were working to capture the wolves.

"A total of 150 of forest employees are involved in Operation Bhedhiya. Besides, we have established coordination with the police, Revenue department, zila panchayats, the Panchayati Raj department and volunteers.

A team from the WWF is assisting us and a special team has come from Dehradun to study the behavior of the wolves. We have advised the villagers to

patrol with lathis, to not put their children at risk and sleep inside their houses with their doors closed. For those houses which do not have doors, the district magistrate has been asked to make arrangements for doors. We have also made arrangements for lights in the villages to deter the wolf. We are also carrying out night patrolling involving the youth for four hours each," the minister pointed out.

He said that he was also appealing to the media to spread awareness amongst the villagers to keep themselves safe and secure.

Meanwhile, the villagers in Mahsi tehsil of Bahraich that has seen the maximum attacks, live in fear, waiting for the animals to be caught.

Rajkumar Pal, a farmer from the Sissaya village in Mahsi tehsil, said that they were very scared after the attacks by wolves.

"The wolves have killed nine children and injured over 45 people. In the night villagers move out with mashals (torches), spears and lathis so that the wolves, if they are moving close by, do not enter the villages," he said.

The villager admitted that people residing in the village were poor and some of them had no place to reside.

"There are many houses which have no doors. Also, sometimes people sleep outside to take care of their cattle. The attacks have been taking place in houses where there are no doors and boundaries. An eleven-year-old boy was lifted by wolves from one such house in our tehsil and later doors were installed in the house," he added.

Pal said that he also remained awake in the night along with the rest of the villagers.

He said that there had always been a peaceful coexistence with the wolves till recently after the winters when the attacks began. "We used to spot a lot of wolves earlier. It may be possible that they are finding it difficult to feed on the goats...

Nine teams deployed

Bahraich: A team of nine shooters has been deployed in Bahraich forest to shoot a man-eating wolf at Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's order, an officer on Wednesday said. Six of the shooters are from the Forest department and three from police, Bahraich's Divisional Forest Officer Ajit Pratap Singh said.

"The Forest department has divided the entire operation into three major sections. Apart from three 'special teams' of three sections, one team has been kept in reserve. Each special section has been given three shooters," he said. The officer said the team's main task is to identify the man-eating wolf and transfer it to a zoo or shoot it.

"It will not be let free in the forest. Whether to catch and confine or shoot will be decided according to the circumstances as soon as the wolf is sighted. Tranquillising and catching the wolf on the spot will be our priority, but if the need arises, no laxity will be shown in shooting the wolf," he said.

An expert has said the series of attacks on the residents of Mahsi tehsil might be due to wolves 'seeking revenge' for possible habitat loss or killing of their cubs.

Wolf attacks on humans, including children, have been taking place in Bahraich since March but they saw a spike from July 17 onwards during the rainy season.

Till September 2, eight people, including seven children, have died in these attacks while about 36, including women, children and elderly, have been injured.

Gyan Prakash Singh, a retired officer of the Indian Forest Service (IFS) and a former forest officer at Katarniaghat Wildlife Division of Bahraich district, said wolves, unlike other predatory animals, have a tendency to seek revenge.

"On the basis of my experience, I can say that wolves have a tendency to take revenge. In the past, humans must have caused some kind of harm to their cubs due to which these attacks are happening as revenge," Singh, who is serving as an adviser to the Wildlife Trust of India after retirement, said. **PTI**

Man kills his son to implicate neighbour

Lucknow (PNS): A man killed his elder brother by stabbing him in the chest and slitting his throat in full public view in Hardoi, sending shockwaves across the district.

On the basis of the complaint filed by the father of the deceased, the police have registered a case and have started an investigation.

Shyam Kumar Gupta, a resident of Indra Nagar locality in Kotwali area of Hardoi city, is the father of two sons, Ravi and Vimlesh. Vimlesh, the younger son, had taken a loan and bought land to build a house on which construction had started.

Ever since the construction of the house began, the elder son Ravi was helping Vimlesh out in his work, according to the father.

After Vimlesh took loan, he had got into the habit of drinking and often used to abuse his elder brother Ravi. On Wednesday, while giving orders to Ravi, he had directed him to look after the work but he refused. This enraged Vimlesh and he brought a knife and in an inebriated state, abused Ravi for declining to follow his direction. Later, in a fit of rage, he attacked Ravi and thrust the sharp knife into his chest and

later stabbed him multiple times. He also slit Ravi's throat. After committing the crime, he fled the spot. Ravi was taken to the hospital where the doctor pronounced him dead.

In another incident reported from Shahjahanpur district, a man killed his 5-year-old son to implicate his neighbour in the child's kidnapping and murder. The man threw his son in the river to take revenge for the insult his wife faced due to the allegations on his neighbour. The local police claimed to have solved the case within 24 hours. Sanjeev, a resident of Shahjahanpur, filed a com-

plaint against eight people, including his neighbour Vivek, alleging that they had abducted his child.

Reports said that Gaurav (son of Sanjeev) and Ayush (son of Vivek) had a quarrel a few days back after which the former's mother went to the latter's place to complain against Ayush. However, The complaint of Gaurav's mother was not taken seriously and she was beaten at Vivek's residence by his wife. Infuriated and outraged over this incident, Sanjeev planned his son's murder to implicate his neighbours in the case.

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

I am Army Number 1602 6448 Alpha Nayak Jitendra Singh Son Rajendra Kumar Singh Village Dandapur Post Sarai Rawat Tehsil Haidergarh District Barabanki in my Army Record My Mother's Name is recorded as Tapai Sawari which is wrong which has been changed to Tapeshwari which will be given here Same name in future go from

AUCTION NOTICE

दिनांक 17-09-2024 अपराह्न 2:00 बजे जिला सहकारी बैंक लि., मुख्यालय-30डी, ओ ब्लॉक, आलू मण्डी, किरवई नगर, कानपुर में अनुपयोगी/निष्प्रयोज्य घोषित सामग्रियों की नीलामी जहाँ है-जैसे ही स्थिति में होगी, सिक्योरिटी रु० 10,000/- नगद, फर्म के जी.एस.टी. पंजीकरण, बैंक कार्ड के साथ जमा करना अनिवार्य होगा। आई.पी. सिंह एण्ड सन्स.

NOTICE

दिनांक 18-09-2024 प्रातः 11:00 बजे ए. एम. सी. सेक्टर एण्ड कालेज, (ऑफिसर्स मेष), सरदार पटेल मार्ग, लखनऊ में ऑफिसर्स मेष फर्नड के निष्प्रयोज्य घोषित सामग्रियों की नीलामी, सिक्योरिटी रु० 5,000/- का बैंक ड्राफ्ट "PMC OFFICERS MESS" के नाम, फर्म के जी.एस.टी. पंजीकरण, बैंक कार्ड, आधार के साथ प्रातः 10 बजे - 11 बजे तक जमा होगी। आई. पी. सिंह एण्ड सन्स.

AUCTION NOTICE

दिनांक 24-09-2024 पूर्वाह्न 11:30 बजे उ००० मूनि सुधार निगम, टी.सी./19वीं, भूमि मन्व विधुति खण्ड, गोमती नगर, लखनऊ के प्रांगण में पुरानी एवं निष्प्रयोज्य सामग्रियों, कम्प्यूटर एवं सहायक उपकरणों इत्यादि की नीलामी जहाँ है- जैसे ही स्थिति में होगी, नीलामी में प्रतिभाग करने हेतु फर्मों द्वारा जमावती घनराशि के रूप में रु०20,000/- का बैंक ड्राफ्ट प्रबन्ध निदेशक, उ००० मूनि सुधार निगम के नाम हो, फर्म के ई-वेस्ट रिसाइकलर/डिसेम्बलर सर्टिफिकेट, जी.एस.टी. पंजीकरण, बैंक कार्ड व आधार के साथ जमा करना अनिवार्य होगा। आई.पी. सिंह एण्ड सन्स.

NOTICE

I, 253910-A Ex-Warrant Officer RADEYSHYAM TRIPATHI (Existing Name as per Service Documents) son of LATE SHRI NATTHU LAL TRIPATHI, resident of 294, Friends Colony Harjinder Nager, Kanpur-208007 (Uttar Pradesh), have changed my Name from RADEYSHYAM TRIPATHI to RADHEY SHYAM TRIPATHI vide Affidavit No. GW 276136 dated 28-8-2024 at Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh).

NOTICE

Original allotment letter issued by LDA for my property no L 3ed /130 lda colony kanpur road Lucknow has been lost some where. Any use of the same shall be illegal. Ajit Kumar Dubey, L 3ed/130 LDA colony kanpur road Lucknow.

NOTICE

I Have Changed My Name From Reyaj Ahmad Minhaj Ahmad to Reyaj Ahmad. In Future I shall be Known as Reyaj Ahmad. Reyaj Ahmad s/o Late Minhaj Ahmad, 110/1, J.K. Colony, Jajmau, Kanpur-208010

NOTICE

I have changed my name from ANIL KUMAR to ANIL NADDA S/O ONKAR SHARMA for future purpose. Add- 776 BARRA SOUTH HARDEV NAGAR KANPUR NAGAR.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Rajendra Kumar Srivastava To Rajendra Kumar Srivastava S/o Basudev Prasad R/o 199/8, Shastri Nagar Kanpur Nagar

NOTICE

My original Transfer Certificate (T.C.) Class 12 Year 2016 has actually been lost. Misuse will be unauthorised. Anaya Mishra S/o Shri Roop Narain Mishra, 286, W-2, Juhu Kalam, Barra byepass, Kanpur Nagar

Neuro patient's wife molested in ambulance by driver, aide

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A private ambulance driver and his aide molested the wife of a neuro patient on a ventilator whom they were ferrying to his native home, and threw him from the ambulance after removing the oxygen mask that led to his death.

The victim woman had hired the ambulance from Ghazipur police station area. Her husband was admitted at a hospital in the locality. She had to take her husband to their home in Siddharthnagar district. Her brother was also with them to help them and he was held

hostage in the driver's cabin. The woman had admitted her husband to a private hospital in Sector C at Arawali Marg in Indiranagar, Lucknow for treatment on 28/8/2024. But due to lack of money, they were not able to meet the expenses and hospital bills so she asked the doctor to discharge her husband. She was given the mobile phone number of an ambulance driver. The victim said they left for their home from the hospital on 29/8/2024 at 6:30 pm with her husband and her younger brother in the ambulance. On the way, the ambulance driver told her that he had to fill petrol

at the petrol filling station. After that the driver told her that she was a woman and insisted that she sit in the front so that the police would not stop the ambulance in the night.

"After being asked many times, I sat in the front seat and my brother sat behind with my husband (the patient). After some time the driver and his companions started molesting me and started touching my body improperly. I objected to their act many times but they did not listen to me," she alleged.

She further said her voice was not going out of the ambu-

lance as the glass panes were closed. "My sick husband sensed my trouble and the harassment and he and my brother started shouting from behind. But both of them kept molesting me and kept trying to get over me but I kept fighting with them and kept shouting but they did not stop the vehicle. At around 11:30 pm, the ambulance was parked on the main road of the Chhawani police station, near Pragati Nursery, and the oxygen cylinder and mask on my husband were removed by the miscreants. They then threw my husband out of the ambulance. They forced my broth-

er to sit in the front cabin and locked it," she alleged. The victim said they kept molesting her and looted Rs 10,000 from her purse, her anklets, mangalsutra, Aadhaar card and hospital reports and ran away.

"My brother dialed 112 from his mobile and then dialed 108. Both of these vehicles reached the spot together. After that the 112 police recorded our statement and said that we should get the patient (victim's husband) admitted and then I came to the Chhawani police station in the morning and got the FIR registered," she said.

The victim said that after that the 108 ambulance admitted her husband to the district hospital in Basti district. "Due to his serious condition, he was referred from there to the medical college hospital in Gorakhpur. But as soon as he reached Gorakhpur, he died at around 9 pm on 30/8/2024.

ADCP (North) Jitendra Dubey in a video statement said the woman had filed a complaint and a case had been registered under relevant sections of the BNS. He said the police teams formed to crack the case were after the miscreants and they would be soon behind the bars.

Khatauni registration fraud comes to light in Mohanlalganj, 7 held

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The police have registered an FIR for the fraud committed while making real time Khatauni in the tehsil.

Real time khatauni is a digital service in Uttar Pradesh that provides online access to land ownership and record information in real time while khatauni is the unique number allotted to the owners or the people cultivating on the land.

During the investigation, fraud committed in uploading the khatauni of four villages have been detected.

On the direction of administration, the police have intensified the investigation and have questioned more than two dozen people, including tehsil employees and property dealers who came under suspicion. Meanwhile, an adverse report against the revenue inspector who lodged an FIR in the case has been sent to the district administration for action.

Not only the khataunis of Dhaurahra, Gauriya Kalaand villages but also of Sadarpur Karora village in Mohanlalganj tehsil were fraudulently entered. However, in the complaint given to the police, Revenue Inspector Harendra Singh has mentioned the fraud in the khatauni of Dhaurahra village only.

On the complaint, the police have registered a case against

contractual worker Heramb and beneficiary Ram Adhar and are investigating it. During the investigation, irregularities were also found in the khatauni of Sikandarpur Amoliya village, the fourth village in the series.

After this exposure, the district magistrate of Lucknow has given instructions to verify the new khatauni of all the villages of the tehsil. The DM has also instructed all the kanungos to use the digital key themselves and take the help of lekhpalas as per the need.

On the other hand, after the disclosure of the fraud in the real time khatauni, the police looking for the mastermind have found an audio recording. After going through the audio recording, the police have so far interrogated about 25 people, including tehsil workers, property dealers and beneficiaries of the fraud who have come under suspicion. The investigating police team has obtained all the records related to the fraud from the tehsil officials. During the police interrogation, some people have mentioned transactions worth thousands of rupees.

SHO Alok Rao said that an FIR had been registered on the complaint of the revenue inspector and the people under suspicion were being questioned. Initial investigation revealed

that fake entries were made in the khatauni using the digital key of the revenue inspector and the victims got to know about it only after six months of their complaint. Later the kanungo himself lodged an FIR, blaming the contractual worker for the fraud.

On the other hand, the lawyers have demanded a judicial inquiry into the matter. Tehsildar Shashank Nath Upadhyay said that a report had been sent to the district administration regarding the negligence of the revenue inspector in the matter and action had been recommended.

It is being said that there is a big deal between a caucus behind the fake entries in the khatauni of Dhaurahra and Gauriya Kala. In Dhaurahra, after registering the name of beneficiary Ram Adhar in the khatauni in a fraudulent manner, some land was given in the name of property dealers. When the property dealers started leveling the land, only then the fraud came to light. The khatauni fraud in Gauriya Kala is also being exposed in the police investigation. In Sadarpur Karora, another brother was made a partner in the land of a brother in a fraudulent manner. In this case too, the fake entry has been cancelled. SDM Brijesh Kumar Verma

said that there was only some error in the khatauni of Sikandarpur Amoliya and it had been corrected.

In July 2021, in Samesi village of Mohanlalganj tehsil, it was revealed that 17 bighas of land belonging to more than half a dozen farmers were fraudulently registered in the name of others on the khatauni. The then registrar kanungo Ashok Pandey had lodged an FIR in the matter. But even after three years, the truth of that case has not come out. Due to this the people are raising questions on the action of the administration and the police.

Meanwhile, the Mohanlalganj police arrested seven fraudsters in this connection on Wednesday. Those arrested were identified as Heramb Shukla of Mohanlalganj (contractual worker in Mohanlalganj tehsil, Ram Suchit alias Rajan Yadav of Gosaiganj (property dealer), Ram Adhar Gosaiganj (agriculturist), Mohammed Tableeq of Gosaiganj (businessman), Mohammed Gufuran of Gosaiganj, (private sector employee), Khurshid Ahmed of Gosaiganj (AC mechanic) and Mohammed Haseeb of Gosaiganj (taxi driver). Police gave details about the criminal history of Ram Suchit alias Rajan Ghatav who is named in three cases of forgery.

Ideal Carpets Limited
 Regd office: Raj Nagar , GT Rd. Gopiganj, Bhadohi Sant Ravidas, Nagar. UP- 221401 India
 E-mail address. Idealcarpets@gmail.com Tel No 05414-232250.
 CIN- L17226UP1991PLC131444.

Notice of AGM

Notice is hereby given that the 33rd Annual General Meeting ("AGM") of the members of Ideal Carpets Limited will be held on Monday 30th September 2024 at 12 noon, to transact the business set out in the notice of the AGM.

The said notice along with the Proxy form, Attendance slip and Annual report inter-alia containing Board's report, Auditor's report, Audited Financial Statements has been dispatched to all the members at their registered address on 5th September, 2023. And the same is also available on the website of the company at: <http://idealcarpet.co/and> the notice of the AGM is also available on the Website. Of Central Depository Service Limited, CDSL at www.cdslindia.com.

E-voting:

The company has entered into an arrangement with Central Depository Service (India) Limited, ("CDSL") for facilitating remote e-voting services. The details pursuant to the provision of the Companies Act, 2013 and rules are given hereunder

- Date of completion of sending of notices: 5th September 2024.
- Date and time of commencement of E-Voting through electronic means: Thursday, 28th September 2024, At 09:00 AM.
- Date and time of end of E-Voting through electronic means: Sunday, 29th September 2024 at 5:00 PM.
- Voting through electronic means shall not be allowed beyond 5:00 PM on Sunday, 29th September 2024.
- Cut-off Date for determining the eligibility to vote by electronic means is 23rd September 2024.
- Members may participate in the Annual General Meeting even after exercising his/her right to vote through remote E-Voting, but shall not be allowed to vote again in the meeting.
- Person whose name is recorded in the register of members or in the register of beneficial owner maintained by the depository as on the cut-off date only shall be entitled to avail the facility to remote voting as well as E-Voting in the general meeting.
- Members may note that (i) The remote e-voting module shall be disabled by CDSL after aforesaid date and time for voting. (ii) Member. Participating in the 33rd AGM and who had not cast their vote by remote e-voting shall be entitled to cast their vote through e-voting system during 33rd AGM.
- Any person who acquires share of the company and become member of the company after dispatch of notice and holding shares as on the cut-off date i.e. 23rd September 2024. May obtain the login ID and password by sending requests at Helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com or Issuer/RTA
- The notice of 33rd AGM is available on the Company's website. <http://idealcarpet.co/> and on www.evotingindia.com.

For electronic voting instructions, shareholders may go through the instruction in the notice of 33rd AGM and in case of any queries/grievances connected with the electronic voting, shareholders may refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and E Voting user manual for shareholders available at the Help section of www.evotingindia.com or call us on toll free number 022-23058542/43.

In compliance of applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013, the Company encourages the Members to provide update their e-mail address to enable the sending of notices /documents / Annual reports electronically. The request for updating of records for members holding shares in the physical mode should be sent to the company or RTA and to the depository participant in case of members holding shares in dematerialized mode.

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Section 91 of the Companies Act, 2013, read with Rule 10 of the Companies Management and Administration Rules, 2014 that the Register of Member and the Share Transfer Book of the Company shall remain closed from Monday, 23rd September 2024 to Monday 30th September 2024, both days inclusive, for the purpose of AGM for the financial year 23-24.

By order of the Board of Directors
M/S Ideal Carpets Limited
 Sd/-
SHRIRAM MOURYA
 (Managing Director)
 DIN-01100295

Place : Badohi
 Date: 06.09.2024

Strong will & 'bulldozer' resolve needed to operate one: Yogi



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath handing over appointment letter to a newly-selected candidate at Lok Bhawan in Lucknow on Wednesday

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday retorted sharply to Akhilesh Yadav's warning that he will after 2027 order all "bulldozers" to Gorakhpur — the home district of the chief minister — saying not everyone has the heart and character to handle a bulldozer. "It requires a strong heart and mind along with the strength of a bulldozer to operate one. Those who yield to rioters cannot run a bulldozer as their hands wouldn't measure up," the chief minister said at a function in which he distributed appointment letters to 1,334 junior engineers, computer operators, and foremen here. Yogi Adityanath made this remark responding to Akhilesh Yadav's comment on Tuesday in which the Samajwadi Party chief said "as soon as the Samajwadi government is formed in 2027, the bulldozers of the entire state will head towards Gorakhpur". CM Yogi Adityanath said, "Today these people have come back in a new form to mislead the public. Not everyone's hands can fit on a bulldozer. It requires both heart and mind. Only someone

who has a bulldozer-like capability and determination can operate it. Those who grovel before the rioters will not be able to stand in front of a bulldozer. Emphasising that Rozgar Melas and the transparent recruitment process of the Uttar Pradesh Subordinate Services Selection Commission ensured equal opportunities for all, the chief minister said candidates from every district were represented among those appointed, with no distinctions made on the basis of caste or region. "Talent and reservation rules were strictly followed in the selection process, instilling confidence in the integrity of the system," he added. The chief minister pointed out that the youth were previously denied appointment letters because the 'Chacha and Bhatija' were more concerned with outdoing each other in grabbing the bigger share of extortion, rather than having clear and honest intentions. He drew a parallel between the havoc caused by these leaders and the chaos currently being inflicted by "man-eating wolves" in various districts, likening it to the state of affairs before 2017. It is worth mentioning that

under Chief Minister Yogi's leadership, the past seven and a half years have seen a transformation in the appointment process. Conducted with transparency and fairness, this process has made over 6.5 lakh government appointments, a feat that was unimaginable seven years ago. This commitment to merit has allowed Uttar Pradesh to harness the energy and talent of its youth, propelling the state from a perceived hindrance to rapid advancement and the growth engine of India's development. "Seven and a half years ago, this state had the seventh-largest economy in the country; today, it ranks second-largest. If our personnel work with equal dedication and apply the same level of transparency, integrity, and honesty to the appointment process, Uttar Pradesh can become the number one economy in the next three to four years," Yogi remarked. "Achieving this status means every hand will find work, every face will wear a smile, every daughter will be safe, every businessman will be respected, the farmers who feed us will be content, and prosperity will abound," he added. Chief Minister Yogi urged the newly appointed

candidates to uphold the same transparency in their work that the state government has demonstrated in its appointment process. He emphasised the importance of avoiding delays in public-related tasks, highlighting the need to achieve the goal of ease of living. "When the current administration took office, Uttar Pradesh ranked 14th in ease of business; today, it stands as an achiever state. Through various reforms, the state has made significant progress, transforming it from a place where no one wanted to invest into a destination that has received investment proposals worth Rs 40 lakh crore. These investments are expected to create jobs for 1.5 crore youth, revive traditional enterprises previously shuttered due to riots, and expand employment opportunities." Chief Minister Yogi stated further. On this occasion, Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya, cabinet ministers Swatantra Dev Singh and Om Prakash Rajbhar, ministers of state Brajesh Singh, Baldev Singh Aulakh, Ramkesh Nishad, Vijayalakshmi Gautam and Rakesh Rathore Guru, Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh and other officers were present.

CM slams opposition for covering before mafia, criminals and rioters

PNS ■ PHULPUR/PRAYAGRAJ

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Wednesday, issued a stern warning to mafias, criminals and rioters while launching a scathing attack on the opposition parties for covering before such elements for petty political ends. Speaking at the district-level mega employment and loan distribution fair held at Kendriya Vidyalaya, IFFCO campus in Phulpur, Prayagraj, Chief Minister Yogi added that the opposition parties do not have the guts to run a bulldozer and will have a heart attack even at the sight of it. He distributed appointment letters to over 5,000 youths, and loans exceeding ₹510 crore to 7,138 beneficiaries on the occasion. Additionally, 15,448 youths received tablets and smartphones as part of the programme. The chief minister also inaugurated and laid the foundation stones of 407 development projects worth ₹634 crore in Phulpur. The keys of homes allotted under the Pradhan



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during the inauguration of job fair at IFFCO campus in Phulpur, Prayagraj, on Wednesday PTI

Mantri Awaz Yojana were handed over to beneficiaries by CM Yogi.

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Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath presents house keys to a beneficiary under 'Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awas Yojana' during an event at IFFCO, Phulpur, in Prayagraj on Wednesday. PTI

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Akhilesh Yadav hits out at Yogi



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav, on Wednesday, sought to corner Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath by citing a Supreme Court observation and asking whether the state government will now seek forgiveness for razing houses using bulldozers. On Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's retort that it takes "heart and mind" and "bulldozer-like resolve" to run a bulldozer, Akhilesh added that a bulldozer does not have a brain, "but has a steering". "Who knows when the people of Uttar Pradesh will change someone's steering or when the people of Delhi will change someone's steering," the SP chief said in a lighter note. Akhilesh Yadav had on Tuesday said that the direction of the bulldozers would be turned towards Gorakhpur, the home district of the chief minister, after 2027, if the SP forms its government in the state. Currently engaged in an exchange of barbs with the chief minister over the use of bulldozers, the Lok Sabha MP said the Supreme Court had observed that the "bulldozer action" was not constitutional. Addressing reporters, Akhilesh Yadav remarked that the way the court has operat-

'Bulldozer culture not in line with judicial system, must be stopped'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

After the attack by Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati and verbal spat between Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav, now Congress leader Ajay Rai on Wednesday said the "bulldozer culture" in Uttar Pradesh was not in line with the judicial system and must be stopped. On Tuesday, Mayawati had claimed that the state should be run with the rule of law and not by "bulldozer". She said that one could take example of how during her regime, law and order was completely under control by strictly following the rule of law. Meanwhile, the Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee president Ajay Rai's remark came in the wake of a barbative exchange between Akhilesh Yadav and Yogi Adityanath over the use of bulldozer — a machine which has become emblematic of the



iron fist rule of the UP chief minister. The exchange between the two leaders was sparked after the Supreme Court on Monday lambasted the use of bulldozers to demolish the homes of criminals. Ra hailed the apex court observation and called for a strict implementation of the rule of law. "We welcome the order given by the Supreme Court and any decision should be made as per the judiciary so that the people can get justice. There is no place for bulldozers in the judiciary," Rai asserted. Earlier in the day, Yogi Adityanath retorted sharply to Akhilesh

Yadav's threat that he will, after 2027, order all "bulldozers" to Gorakhpur — the home district of the chief minister — saying not everyone has the heart to handle a bulldozer. "Not everyone's hands can fit on a bulldozer. It requires both 'dil and dimaag'," Yogi Adityanath said. Yadav, in a statement on Tuesday, had said, "As soon as the Samajwadi government is formed in 2027, the bulldozers of the entire state will head towards Gorakhpur." A bench of Justices BR Gavi and KV Viswanathan on Monday, during a hearing, had remarked, "How can anybody's house be demolished only because he is an accused? Even if he is a convict, still it can't be done without following the procedure as prescribed by law." BSP president Mayawati on Tuesday welcomed the observation of the apex court, which said it will lay down the guidelines in the matter to be implemented across the country.

ed the bulldozer, the bulldozer cannot operate now. He said the people used to scare others with bulldozers, used to demolish people's houses in various places, and asked if the map of the chief minister's residence was approved by the competent authority? "Tell us when it was passed, show the papers. You deliberately ran the bulldozer on those with whom you wanted to take revenge, to humiliate them... Yesterday the Supreme Court said that a bulldozer cannot be used. So, will the government apologise for the bulldozer operation that was going on till now or not?" he

asked. He further said as far as heart and mind are concerned, "I just want to say that there is no brain in a bulldozer, it is run by the steering. The people of Uttar Pradesh can change the steering of someone's bulldozer..." He said if Yogi Adityanath and his bulldozers were so successful, then he should form a separate party and contest elections with the 'bulldozer' election symbol. "Your illusions and pride will be shattered. Anyway, in your current situation, even if you are in BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party), you are as good as 'no'; you will have to form a separate party, if not today then

tomorrow," he said. "As far as the bulldozer is concerned, think what kind of bulldozer has been run by the court that now the bulldozer cannot run. Those who used to scare people with bulldozers, used to demolish people's houses at various places. This means that you deliberately ran the bulldozer to humiliate those you wanted to take revenge against and because of arrogance of power. Now, the result is that from the High Court to the Supreme Court, it can be said that the bulldozer is not constitutional but unconstitutional," Yadav said.

Newly-appointed candidates thank Yogi for fair, transparent recruitment process

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a heartfelt display of gratitude, candidates who received their appointment letters at the Lok Bhawan auditorium on Wednesday collectively thanked Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for "playing a pivotal role in their success". The newly-appointed individuals attributed their achievements to the chief minister's efforts in ensuring a transparent and fair recruitment process. Reflecting on the changes since 2017, the candidates highlighted the stark contrast between the pre-2017 era, characterised by nepotism, corruption and discrimination, and the current system under CM Yogi's leadership, which they described as transparent and merit-based. Rukhsana Bano from Kanpur, recently appointed as a Civil Engineer in the Housing and

Development Council, expressed her deep gratitude to CM Yogi. She praised the government for conducting a recruitment process free from discrimination, emphasising that her selection was based solely on merit, not religion or caste. "This government has rewarded our hard work and honesty. If you are qualified and capable, securing a government job is not difficult," she remarked. Vishnu Dutt Tripathi, who secured the position of junior engineer (civil) in the Rural Engineering Department, shared similar sentiments. He highlighted the government's success in providing opportunities to individuals from rural areas, like himself, through a transparent selection process. "Coming from a rural background, I have achieved a government job due to the fairness of this government's appoint-

ment process. I sincerely thank the chief minister for this opportunity," Tripathi said. Anuj Kumar Gupta, hailing from Bihar and newly-appointed as a junior engineer in the Minor Irrigation Department, praised the government's dedication to the youth. He pointed to the day's event as direct evidence of this commitment. "Through a fair and transparent process, the youth are receiving appointment letters. I vow to work with honesty and impartiality in my role, and I hope this government continues to be in power so that more opportunities could be provided to the youth," he said. Harikant from Ayodhya district, now a junior engineer in the Agriculture Department, reflected on the challenges faced under the previous administration. He noted that

many deserving candidates, like himself, were previously denied opportunities due to nepotism. "The Yogi government has recognised the hard work of thousands of young people and awarded appointments based on merit. For that, I am profoundly grateful," Harikant shared. Mridul Sharma, a resident of Bijnor, shared his joy after being appointed as a junior engineer (civil) in the Rural Engineering Department. "After completing my diploma in civil engineering, I aspired to secure a government job. The commission conducted the examination in a completely fair and transparent manner, and I am grateful to the government and the chief minister for this opportunity. I look forward to contributing to the development of Uttar Pradesh in my new role," Sharma stated.

Man held for raping minor

PTI ■ SONBHADRA

A man has been arrested for allegedly raping an eight-year-old girl in a village under the Dudhi police station area here, police said on Wednesday. "One eight-year-old was raped by her neighbour on Monday. We have arrested one Ram Khelawan (48), who is the accused in the case on Tuesday night," said Circle Officer (CO) Pradeep Singh Chandel. "The accused lured the minor girl, who was playing outside her house to a secluded place and raped her. He also threatened the girl and asked her not to tell anyone about the incident," added Chandel quoting the police complaint regarding the incident.

Babita Chauhan new UP SCW chairperson

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government, on Tuesday, announced the appointment of the office-bearers of its State Commission for Women, with Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav's sister-in-law Aparna Yadav getting a place in the panel. Governor Anandiben Patel exercised her powers to nominate Babita Chauhan as chairperson of UP Rajya Mahila Aayog, and Aparna Yadav and Charu Chaudhary as vice-chairpersons of the commission for a

Three killed as trucks collide

PTI ■ LAKHIMPUR KHERI

Three people were killed while a fourth was wounded in a head-on collision between two trucks here on the Dhaurahra-Dhakhera road, police on Wednesday said. Both drivers, Sakti, 35, and Salman, 45, and a 55-year-old passenger Mishri Lal died in the incident, they said. Helper Dharmendra was rushed to a hospital, where his condition was stated to be stable, police said. Exact cause of the accident was yet to be ascertained. Police said the collision was so intense that the driver cabins of both trucks were completely crushed.

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Membership basis of organisation's strength: Jaiveer

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Uttar Pradesh Tourism and Culture Minister and Minister In-charge of Varanasi Jaiveer Singh said that membership is the basis of the strength of the organisation and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has launched a membership campaign in UP with the target of making more than two crore members. Addressing a press conference at Circuit House here on Wednesday, he said that the BJP will connect the masses for the expansion of the party's organisation.

According to him, in the programme organised in Delhi on September 2, the BJP's membership campaign was started in which national party president JP Nadda made Prime Minister Narendra Modi the first member by making a missed call through mobile 8800002024 and provided membership card. In the same direction, in the programme organised in Lucknow on September 3, state party president Bhupendra Chaudhary provided membership cards to Chief Minister Yogi



UP Minister Jaiveer Singh hearing complaints of people at PM's parliamentary office in Varanasi on Wednesday.

Adityanath and Deputy Chief Ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Brajesh Pathak. Singh said the common man has a spontaneous respect for the BJP and the people want to join the party but when we do not reach them, they get disappointed. He said that every party worker, whether he is a national office-bearer, a booth worker or a public representative, will go door to door and make people aware of the development work done by the BJP in the last 10 years and will make every person a pri-

mary member of the party to realise the resolution of the PM for a developed India and to make the country a world leader. He said that the plan of this campaign is comprehensive and effective. While running the membership campaign on the basis of pre-plan and complete plan, we all have to work for all-inclusive and universal membership. He said that teams have been formed at the regional, district, mandal and booth level for the membership campaign. He said a special

membership campaign will be run from September 11 to 17 in which all party office-bearers and public representatives will participate and membership will be done at the booth level. A special campaign will be run for teachers' membership on Teachers' Day on September 5 and on Vishwakarma Jayanti on September 17. Membership will be done as Atal Parv on the last Sunday of the month, he added.

Singh said in the membership campaign being started by the party, the target has been set for each MP to make 20,000 members, MLA 10,000, mayor 20,000, Nagar Palika chief 5,000, Nagar Panchayat chief 2,000, corporator 1,000, Nagar Palika member 500, Nagar Panchayat member 200, Corporation Commission Board Chairman 1,000, Zila Panchayat Chairperson 15,000, Yuva Morcha 15 lakh, Mahila Morcha, Backward Front, Scheduled Caste Front 10 lakh each while Minority Front and Scheduled Tribe Front 20 lakh each. He said we have to work on a large scale to make

influential people of the society, people of specific groups and people from all sections of the society members of the party and membership camps will be organised at public places. The press conference was conducted by regional media in-charge Navratna Rathi. On the occasion, BJP district president and MLC Hansraj Vishwakarma, city president Vidyasagar Rai, MLC Dharmendra Rai, regional co-media in charge Santosh Solapurkar, Jagdish Tripathi etc were also present.

Earlier, the minister held a public hearing at the Prime Minister's parliamentary office in Jawahar Nagar and after becoming aware of the problems of the people, resolved them. MLA Saurabh Srivastava was also present with the minister. During the public hearing, Singh talked to the officials concerned in many cases and directed for early resolution of the problem. While instructing the officers present on the spot, he said the resolution of public problems should be ensured immediately on priority and there should not be any kind of laxity.

Six get appointment letters



MLC Hansraj Vishwakarma on Wednesday giving appointment letters in Varanasi to the candidates selected through the UPSSSC.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Six candidates of Varanasi selected through the Uttar Pradesh Subordinate Services Selection Commission (UPSSSC) got appointment letters at a function held at the Commissioner's auditorium here on Wednesday. It was a part of the main function held at Lok Bhavan in Lucknow in which Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath provided appointment letters to a total of 1,335 candidates selected through the UPSSSC. MLC Hansraj

Vishwakarma, Annapurna Singh, city Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Vidyasagar Rai and representatives of MLAs of Sewapuri and Ajgara assembly constituencies distributed appointment letters to the newly selected candidates. The faces of the candidates lit up with joy as soon as they got the appointment letters in their hands. Six candidates included two each from Rural Engineering and Agriculture departments and one each from Urban Development and departments.

After receiving the appointment letters, the candidates said the selection process was done with complete transparency and honesty and for this they thanked the state government. In charge District Magistrate/Additional District Magistrate (City) Alok Kumar Verma, Executive Engineer (Nodal Officer) of Irrigation and Water Resources department Rajesh Yadav and Project Director of Rural Development department and officials of related departments were present in the programme.

Varanasi top religious & tourist destination in Purvanchal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Yogi government has successfully transformed Kashi's image on the global stage, creating a ripple effect that has benefitted both Varanasi and its neighboring districts. Tourists visiting Varanasi are now exploring the spiritual, religious and natural attractions of nearby regions, drawn by the area's newfound appeal.

In 2023 Varanasi emerged as the top religious and tourist destination in Purvanchal, with Vindhaychal in Mirzapur and the Ashtabhujia Temple also in Mirzapur, securing the second and third spots, respectively. Sitamarhi in Sant Ravidas Nagar (Bhadohi) ranked fourth, while

Sonbhadra, known for its natural beauty, claimed the fifth position. The state government has spearheaded numerous tourism development projects in these areas, while also enhancing connectivity between Varanasi and its surrounding districts. These efforts have yielded positive results, allowing tourists to explore more destinations in less time. The development work has significantly boosted tourist interest in the region, making it a thriving hub for spiritual and cultural tourism. Deputy Director of the Tourism department Rajendra Kumar Rawat highlighted that the development work in Varanasi, along with improvements in basic infrastructure, better connectivity,

accessibility and enhanced security, has led to a significant increase in tourist numbers. The enhanced infrastructure in Varanasi, combined with the development of tourism and religious sites in the neighbouring districts, has sparked greater interest among tourists. Travel within a 100 to 200-kilometre radius of Varanasi has become much easier, allowing visitors to explore the religious sites, waterfalls and natural beauty of Sant Ravidas Nagar (Bhadohi), Mirzapur and Sonbhadra. In 2023, the total number of tourists visiting Varanasi were 8,54,73,633 while in its five nearby destinations, 72,97,800 visited Vindhaychal, 42,35,770 Ashtabhujia, 25,41,080 Sitamarhi and 22,26,310 Sonbhadra.

Kashi entrepreneurs to showcase handicrafts at int'l trade show

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Kashi, renowned for its rich spirituality, religion, tradition and culture, is globally recognised for its exquisite traditional handicrafts. These timeless crafts, alongside modern creations, are set to captivate audiences at the UP International Trade Show in Greater Noida.

From September 25 to 29, buyers worldwide will witness the artistry of Banarasi traditional artisans and the innovation of modern products at the trade show. This event will open international markets for these handicrafts and other products. So far 29 entrepreneurs from Varanasi,

including participants from One District One Product (ODOP), exporters, and MSMEs, have registered to showcase their offerings globally, and more registrations are expected.

The state government is actively expanding the reach of Kashi's traditional artisans to both local and global markets. Through the ODOP initiative, GI-tagged products and other entrepreneurs will gain an international platform. Varanasi's unique offerings are poised to debut significantly at the UP International Trade Show in Greater Noida.

According to the District Industry Centre, 15 ODOP

handicraft businesses, six MSMEs specialising in wooden toys, Gulabi Meenakari, and the silk industry, along with eight Banarasi silk sarees and carpets exporters, will participate. In total 29 entrepreneurs have registered with the Industry department. A special stall will be dedicated to women entrepreneurs at the event.

Director of Kamalya Textile and Panaya Brand, Virender Agarwal, said that Banarasi sarees as part of the ODOP and GI products, will be showcased at the International Trade Show, allowing the world to experience Banarasi rich heritage. Sarees once worn by the royal

families of Kashi, Udaipur, Jaipur and others are being revived specifically for this event. He praised the Yogi government's initiative to provide an international platform for Banarasi products. Bhavna Verma, a young entrepreneur and Director of Shreeji Mentha, echoed this sentiment, highlighting how this initiative offers global exposure to entrepreneurs like herself.

Javed from the Traditional Art Centre mentioned that, inspired by the success of last year's UP International Trade Show, he is participating this year and believes such events should be held regularly.

Madrasa sealed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The madrasa where fake currency was being printed was sealed by the police on Wednesday afternoon and children living in the hostel were sent home. These children are from six states. A board was put up on the gate stating that this construction is unauthorised. The IB team reached the madrasa on August 28 to investigate the fake currency case. Many objectionable books and photographs were recovered. DCP Nagar Deepak Bhukar said during the search, post mortem receipts were also recovered from the maulvi's room. A controversial book has been recovered from the madrasa. A detailed investigation is being conducted in this regard, he added.

DCP Bhukar said that on Wednesday 106 children living here were sent home. Eight teachers who taught them also went back home. The madrasa was sealed because the construction was unauthorised and running without recognition. PDA V-C Arvind Chauhan said that the construction of the madrasa is illegal and its map is not approved. A notice has been given to the madrasa manager in this regard. Further action will be taken after receiving the reply to the notice and if not satisfied with the reply, demolition action can also be taken.

Emphasis on eliminating malnutrition among children, women

Varanasi (PNS): District Magistrate In-charge/Additional District Magistrate (City) Alok Verma inaugurated the National Nutrition Month by flagging off the nutrition promotion vehicle from the Circuit House premises here on Tuesday. The ADM (City) said that the objective of the Nutrition Month being celebrated by the Centre is to reduce the level of malnutrition among children below

six years of age, pregnant women and lactating mothers apart from eliminating malnutrition among children and women through community activities, ensuring health and nutrition for all and increasing people's participation in it. District Programme Officer (DPO) Dinesh Kumar Singh said that under the National Nutrition Month, two nutrition vehicles will go around all the gram panchayats in the urban

areas of the district, especially settlements, densely populated and rural areas and give messages related to nutrition, health and education. On Tuesday awareness messages were given to the people in Pindra and Harhua block areas. He said that four important aspects will be emphasised during the Nutrition Month which include strengthening efforts to eliminate anaemia and malnutrition; improving the nutrition of

pregnant women, lactating mothers and adolescent girls by focusing on pre- and post-natal care, diet and breastfeeding; paying attention on the issues like hygiene and cleanliness, prevention of anaemia and maternal and child health; and achieving the goal of 'Healthy India', organising outreach programmes, health camps etc with special focus on pregnant and lactating women, children below six years of age and adolescent girls.

PMG distributes awards

Varanasi (PNS): Postmaster General (PMG) of Varanasi Region Col Vinod Kumar felicitated the best performers by distributing awards on the occasion of seventh foundation day of IPPB here on Tuesday. The IPPB on the occasion organised a series of events to mark six years of transformational financial inclusion across India. During his address, Col Vinod said we are incredibly proud of the significant

progress that IPPB has made in bridging the financial services gap by reaching out to crores of citizens including the remotest corners of the country since its inception in 2018. "There are 9.40 lakh IPPB accounts in the Varanasi region, through this payment gateway customers can transact as per their needs. Most importantly, IPPB accounts are a good medium to receive Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) amount in a very secure manner, with its

OTP-based payment process IPPB has emerged as a major player in the field of digital transactions", he said. The PMG awarded the best performers with respect to the activities of IPPB. He appreciated the new milestones set by team IPPB and also emphasised on spreading awareness among the masses so that the benefits reach the last mile and those deprived of banking facilities are brought under financial inclusion.

Man kills wife on suspicion of illicit relations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Suspecting illicit relations, a man killed his wife by slitting her throat with a sharp-edged weapon in Katra Shamsheer Khan locality of Etawah on Tuesday afternoon. After committing the crime, he stood in the gallery of his in-laws' house and waited for the police. The assailant confessed to have killed his wife suspecting her illicit relations. Gulfam of Ujhaidi under Sadar Kotwali police station area, had dispute with his wife Farheen (22). She

was living with her mother Fahmida in a rented house in Katra Shamsheer Khan, Nai Basti, for the past six months. On Tuesday afternoon, Gulfam reached there to bring his wife with him. At that time, Farheen and her niece Joya (8) were present in the house. When Farheen refused to go with him, Gulfam locked the main gate from inside and then made multiple attacks with sharp-edged weapon. On hearing the screams, residents rushed to the spot and saw Gulfam standing with the

blood-stained weapon in the gallery of the house. He also confessed to have killed his wife suspecting her illicit relations. Farheen's brother Mohd Waris said as Gulfam used to often beat his sister after consuming liquor so she had shifted to her parents house. SSP Sanjay Kumar Verma said the assailant had alleged illicit relations of his wife and had been arrested. In another incident an elderly vegetable vendor was killed after falling into a pit along with his handcart near Navin Mandi under Sadar Kotwali police

area of Unnao on Wednesday morning. The incident took place when he was returning home after buying vegetables. Police sent him to a hospital where he was declared dead by the doctors. After informing the kin, police sent the body for autopsy. Harish Chandra (60) of Indira Nagar, Sadar Kotwali, was a vegetable vendor. Early on Wednesday morning, he had gone to buy vegetables from Navin Mandi in Dahi police area. When he was returning to home with vegetable on the handcart, he was

knocked down by some speeding unidentified vehicle at some distance from Navin Mandi. As a result Harish Chandra fell into a pit with the handcart and sustained serious injury. Police sent him to the hospital where he was declared dead by the doctors. Inspector said action was being initiated after a probe in the matter.

FIRE IN SHOP: A country-made foreign liquor shop in Maharajpur police area caught fire due to electric short circuit on Wednesday morning.

Five injured in road accident

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Five persons were seriously injured when an auto collided head on with a car near Tenapur village under Ghatampur police area on Wednesday afternoon. On getting information about the incident from the passers-by, Patara outpost police rushed to the spot and sent the injured to the Patara community health centre (CHC).

After first aid, doctors referred them to LLR (Hallet) Hospital in Kanpur where they were

undergoing treatment. After the incident, car rider escaped by leaving his vehicle on the spot.

According to a report received here, Roshan Verma (35) of Khadepur, Naubasta said he used to support his family by driving an electric auto. On Wednesday afternoon after collecting passengers from Ghatampur, when he was going towards Kanpur, the speeding car collided head on with his auto near Tenapur village turn, Ghatampur. In the incident he along with Sonam,

wife of Randheer of Sajeti, Anwar and his wife Momna of Jahangirabad and Sughar Singh of Barnav, were seriously injured. Car rider escaped by leaving the vehicle on the spot after the incident. From the Patara community health centre the three seriously injured passengers were referred to LLR (Hallet) Hospital. Ghatampur inspector Pradip Kumar Singh said the car had been impounded. On the basis of complaint, further action will be initiated in the matter, he added.

Congressmen stage protest

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Congressmen staged a protest against the junior doctors who had allegedly beaten up attendants from Banda at Swaroop Rani Nehru (SRN) Hospital here. On Wednesday a large number of Congressmen and advocates gathered at the district magistrate's office under the leadership of district president Suresh Yadav and protested against the doctors and raised slogans. They demanded that the accused be arrested. Congressmen have met the police officers in this matter and demanded taking action against them. The junior doctors had allegedly beaten up a family from Baberu area of Banda and the video went viral. The Congressmen are continuously demanding action on this matter. State General Secretary Mukund Tiwari and Vivekanand Pathak said that doctors continuously beat up patients and their relatives in SRN Hospital. The government and the hospital administration have failed to

curb it. The party's district City Committee spokesperson Haseeb Ahmed said attacking attendants in the hospital is highly condemnable. He said that the Health department and the state government should take strict steps to prevent such incidents. Congressmen have sent a letter addressed to the Governor demanding the arrest of the accused and strict action. District president Suresh Yadav, State General Secretary Mukund Tiwari, Vivekanand Pathak, Sanjay Tiwari, Haseeb Ahmed, Chhotelal Patel, Rais Ahmed, Manoj Pasi, Sunil Yadav, Parvez Asfaq Siddiqui, Dheeraj Vishkarma, Ehtesham Ahmed, Kartikya Pandey, Piyush Yadav, Radheshyam Yadav, Sita Yadav, Dayaram Bind, Ashish Maurya, Vikas Kol, Siddharth Pasi, Rajneesh Vishram Das, Mudassir, Amit Pandey and others were present.

KILLED: A 40-year-old man was killed when a motorcycle collided with a car in Manda. The car rider is injured and is undergoing treatment in the hospital.

Priest ends life

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A priest living in the hostel of Falahari Baba Ashram in Yamunanagar committed suicide by hanging himself late on Tuesday night. The reason for the suicide is not clear. The police is investigating the case. Nitesh Kumar Pandey alias Ankit (24), a resident of Chitrakoot used to work as a priest in the hostel of Falahari Ashram after completing his studies as an acharya from Sachcha Baba Ashram Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya. His younger brother Avnish Pandey (17) also lives with him. Avnish said he had gone to school at 7 am on Tuesday as usual. Ankit was in the room. When Avnish returned home from school around 6.30 pm, he saw the door of his room locked from inside. When he looked through the ventilator, he found the body of the priest hanging from the noose. Naini inspector Vaibhav Singh said no reason for the suicide has been revealed. The father of the deceased, Badri Prasad, had also committed suicide a few years ago.

Track construction gaining pace

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The track construction work between Nayaganj and Kanpur Central Station is gaining pace. Welding and laying of tracks commenced in the 'downline' section of this approximately 1,250-metre stretch on Tuesday. UPMRC Managing Director (MD) Sushil Kumar and senior officials visited various underground stations, including Kanpur Central, to review the progress in all departments. For the track construction, rails were lowered underground through cutouts at the under construction Kanpur Central Metro Station and the Flash Butt Weld (FBW) plant was also moved underground for welding. The welding and laying of tracks in the approximately 1,250-metre 'downline' tunnel from Kanpur Central station to Nayaganj station is expected to be completed in the coming days. Following this, the work will shift to casting the track slab after which derailment guards will be fabricated



and the third rail installed. Track construction on the 'up-line' between Nayaganj and Kanpur Central station is advancing swiftly. Since commencing in July approximately 1,000 metres of track slab casting out of the planned 1,250 metres has been completed. At this rate the route up to Kanpur Central is expected to be ready for metro trains on the 'up-line' within the next 1 to 2 weeks. Managing Director Sushil Kumar, Director (Works and Infrastructure) CP Singh and Director (Rolling Stock) Naveen

metro train was brought to Nayaganj station to assess various interfaces such as track and power supply. Currently, at Kanpur Central—following Nayaganj—civil construction and work related to various departments are progressing swiftly. Floor construction and system installations are ongoing simultaneously, with significant progress in building technical rooms and installing tunnel ventilation and environmental control systems. Through effective coordination and cooperation among departments, tasks related to track, traction and signalling are being executed on schedule at all underground stations. Additionally, Kanpur Metro recently completed the erection of U-girders in the Baradevi-Naubasta elevated section and tunnelling from Swadeshi Cotton Mill to Kanpur Central is also advancing quickly. We are confident that this momentum will continue and that the balance sections of Corridor-1 will be completed as planned."

Rebi wins gold

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Local Railway athlete Rebi Pal has brought laurels to Varanasi winning gold medal in 3,000 metres steeplechase event clocking 10:20.28 in recently held 63rd National Open Athletics Championship (from August 30 to September 2) in Bengaluru (Karnataka). Participating in the championship on behalf of Railways, Rebi Pal also got fifth place in 5,000 metres race. Rebi Pal is currently getting training from coach Sanjeev Kumar Srivastava of Indian Sports Programme (Girls Extension Branch) in Banaras Hindu University (BHU). After Rebi Pal got the medal, trainer Sanjeev Kumar Srivastava, senior coach Dinesh Jaiswal, Gulab Chand Srivastava, Principal Gautam met Rebi's mother and congratulated her. They also wished Rebi a bright future and praised her. She was also greeted by CRPF Public Relations Officer (PRO) Praveen Singh along with Vibha Singh.

Centre, Tripura Government, two insurgent groups sign peace pact

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Government is committed to all-round development of the Northeastern region, especially tribals, while preserving their culture, language and identity, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Wednesday.

He made this assertion here while addressing an event where a peace agreement was signed between the Central and Tripura Governments and two insurgent groups of the State aiming to end violence and bring peace in the north-eastern State.

Shah also said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not only bridged the gap between the Northeast and Delhi by connecting them through roads, railways and flights, but has also bridged the gap between hearts. He said a new milestone is set today in Tripura's ongoing journey towards peace and progress with the signing of the agreement.

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha and senior officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the State Government were also present during the signing of the Memorandum of Settlement with the representatives of National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) and All Tripura



Tiger Force (ATTF). The NLFT and the ATTF have agreed to end a 35-year-long conflict and return to the mainstream, renouncing violence and committing to building a prosperous and developed Tripura, reposing their trust in the Modi Government, Shah said. "The Modi Government is committed for the overall development of the Northeast, especially the tribal groups, through development while preserving their culture, language and identity," he said. Shah said the Government has given highest priority to peace and development in the north-eastern region. "All peace agreements signed in the Northeast has been implemented by the Government," he

said. The home minister said the Central Government has been working tirelessly to fulfil Modi's vision of a developed Northeast, free from extremism, violence and conflict. He said under Prime Minister Modi's leadership, the Government has signed 12 important agreements to bring peace and prosperity in the Northeast, of which, three relate to Tripura. Around 10,000 people have given up arms and joined the mainstream due to these agreements, the Home Minister said. Shah said over 328 insurgents will give up arms and join the mainstream and Rs 250 crore has been approved for development of area of operation of the two insurgent groups, par-

ticularly pockets dominated by the tribals. "The signing of this agreement is a major milestone in fulfilling the resolve taken by the Modi Government to develop the entire Northeast by combining the 'Ashtalakshmi' concept and 'Purvodaya'," he said. He said wherever a peace agreement is signed, the Modi Government is working to develop those areas and remove the reasons for taking up arms. "In the Modi Government, agreement is not just a piece of paper but a feeling of the heart and we have demonstrated this on the ground," Shah said adding, the NLFT and ATTF agreement will be implemented in letter and spirit, fulfilling all the expectations.

Centre seeks report from States, UTs on safety steps taken for doctors, healthcare workers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Health Secretary Apurva Chandra on Wednesday issued a directive to all States and Union Territories (UTs) demanding an action-taken report by September 10 on the implementation of safety and security measures for doctors and healthcare workers.

The move comes in the wake of a recent Supreme Court order calling for urgent actions to ensure the safety of medical professionals nationwide.

In a letter written to chief secretaries and directors general of police of all States and UTs, the Secretary outlined several key measures to be prioritised by States and UTs, including the identification of high-risk establishments, security audits, CCTV surveillance, background checks, and bereavement protocols, among others. States and UTs have been urged to identify hospitals with high patient footfall and categorise them as high-priority establishments for security enhancements. The Health Secretary recommended regular security audits, conducted in consultation with local health and police authorities, to assess and improve existing security measures in hospitals.

Special attention should be given to areas within hospitals that are prone to security breaches, such as emergency rooms, triage areas, intensive care units (ICUs), and labour rooms, according to Chandra. "Proper training and establishment of bereavement protocols for all doctors and healthcare workers to handle



intense and emotional grief situations," the top official said. Chandra noted that several states have already initiated actions in line with the suggestions provided in a previous communication dated August 23. He also acknowledged that some states have gone beyond the ministry of health and family welfare's (MOHFW) recommendations, implementing additional measures to enhance security in healthcare settings. The conference, held on August 28, deliberated on the provision of a safe working environment in all medical institutions in the wake of recent violent incidents, including the horrific rape and murder of a trainee doctor in Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital.

The heinous act had triggered nationwide protests among resident doctors across the country seeking a safe environment for the medical professionals in the hospitals. Dr Rohan Krishnan and Dr Manish Jhangra, President and co-Founder respectively of Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA) have sought implementation of the Central Protection Act for the Health professional. The Bill was introduced in Parliament in 2022 to prevent violence against healthcare professionals and clinical establishments. The Bill's provisions include defining acts of violence against doctors, mandatory reporting of acts of violence, and a grievance redressal mechanism among others.



Indian Army to host drone event in Leh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to harness drone technology for operations in high altitude areas including Siachen glacier and Line of Actual Control (LAC) facing China, the Army HIM-DRONE-ATHON 2 will take place at Wari La, near Leh on September 17-18, officials said here on Wednesday. This will be followed by HIMTECH-2024 on September 20-21, an event conceptualised to discuss, demonstrate and discover new avenues for development, incorporation and cross-pollination of technology, ideas and innovations with focus on harnessing military technologies for high altitude areas.

Major General C S Mann, Additional Director General of the Army Design Bureau highlighted that the Indian Army is deployed from icy heights of the Siachen Glacier to the rugged Himalayas where its soldiers face unparalleled adversities daily. For drone operations, rarified atmosphere results in reduced lift and degraded engine performance which are further accentuated by extreme cold temperatures and high wind speeds.

These conditions are unique for Indian Army and demand systems that can adequately perform in these conditions. Since such altitude battlefields are not prevalent anywhere else, tailor-made, indigenous solutions are the way forward.

If the indigenous industry succeeds here, it also opens vistas for them to international arena and establish India as a credible drone manufacturing hub. HIM-DRONE-ATHON-2 will focus on drone solutions for Indian Army for high altitude areas. The event is planned to be conducted under actual terrain and environmental conditions at altitude of 4,000-5,000 meters. The event is open to all indigenous drone manufacturers and invites their participation for demonstration of surveillance drones, Loitering munitions, Logistics Drones, Swarm Drones and drones with specific capabilities / role / payloads ie; Electronic Warfare, Synthetic Aperture Radar, Communication Intelligence and Electronics.

Had stainless steel been used in Shivaji statue it would not have collapsed: Gadkari

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/PUNE

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has said if stainless steel had been used for construction of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's statue at Rajkot fort in Maharashtra's Sindhudurg district, it would not have collapsed. Gadkari also pitched for use of rust-resistant products in coastal areas.

The collapse of the statue of the iconic Founder of the Maratha State on August 26 triggered a political row ahead of assembly elections in Maharashtra. The road transport and Highways Minister said here at an event he has been pressing for the last three years that stainless steel should be used in the construction of bridges built close to sea. Recalling his days as PWD Minister of Maharashtra, he said he was constructing 55 flyovers in Mumbai and one person fooled him. "He put some powder coating on iron rods and said those were rust-proof. But there was rusting. I believe that stainless steel should be used within 30 km of sea. "If stainless steel had been used for the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji, it would have never collapsed," Gadkari said at an event here.

Police in Maharashtra's Sindhudurg district has issued a look out circular (LOC) against contractor Jaydeep Apte in connection with the collapse of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's statue at Rajkot fort. An LOC is issued to airports and all other exit points to stop Apte from fleeing the country. Apte, a Thane-based sculptor, had executed the contract to make the statue. Following its collapse on August 26, less than nine months after Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated it on the coastal fort, Malvan police registered a case against Apte and structural consultant Chetan Patil for negligence and other offences. Patil was arrested from Kolhapur, where a search was on for Apte, a police offi-



cial said, adding that Malvan police has now issued an LOC for him. Meanwhile, the Congress on Wednesday alleged in Pune that a meagre amount of Rs 1.5 crore was spent on the construction of the Shivaji Maharaj statue that had collapsed in coastal Sindhudurg even though a sum of "Rs 236 crore" was taken for this work from the State coffers. Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole also hit back at Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and other leaders of the Mahayuti who have accused the Opposition of politicising the statue incident. Speaking to reporters in Pune ahead of the party's constituency review meeting for assembly elections, AICC in-charge for Maharashtra, Ramesh Chennithala, alleged spike in crimes against women and children, and murders, which is testimony to the worsening law and order situation under the Mahayuti Government. "Every day, cases of murders, and sexual assaults on women and children are being reported. In Pune, two murders were reported. It shows that the law and order situation has crumbled completely," Chennithala told reporters. He alleged the State Government was insensitive towards people and engrossed in perpetrating "scams and means to collect money". Patole claimed approximately Rs 236 crore was taken from the State

Government's coffers in the name of the construction of Shivaji Maharaj's statue at Rajkot fort in Sindhudurg district. "But as per our information, the statue construction work was completed with Rs 1 crore to Rs 1.5 crore," the Congress leader alleged. The statue collapsed on August 26, more than eight months after it was unveiled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, triggering a political firestorm. Responding to Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's charge that the opposition was politicising the statue incident, Patole said venting anger against the "insult" of Shivaji Maharaj and the Badlapur incident cannot be termed as politicising the matter. Two four-year-old girls were allegedly sexually abused by a male sweeper at a school in Badlapur in Thane district. The opposition had alleged that the police delayed the registration of FIR in the case. "These issues are beyond the realm of politics," Patole said, alleging the Government was not taking the opposition into confidence and instead the ruling parties are organising counter protests. Chennithala said the MPCC will hold deliberations with the party workers and functionaries from Pune, Solapur, Kolhapur and Satara districts for the upcoming assembly elections. He added that the party had held review meetings for 122 constituencies so far.

NMC reintroduces controversial topics in medical curriculum

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Omitted in 2022 following a Madras High Court directive, the National Medical Commission (NMC) has reintroduced controversial topics such as 'sodomy and lesbianism' as unnatural sexual offences in the forensic medicine and toxicology curriculum for undergraduate medical students. It has also brought back topics such as the hymen and its type, and its medico-legal importance besides defining virginity and defloration, legitimacy and its medico-legal importance. The updated curriculum also covers legal competencies related to new laws, such as the Bharatiya Nagarika Suraksha Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA), alongside existing laws like the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO). It includes discussions on various sexual perversions, such as fetishism, voyeurism, and necrophilia, however, distinctions between consensual sex between queer individuals have been removed, a source said. Notably, the revised curriculum omits the previous seven-hour training on disability. The NMC's Competency-Based Medical Education Curriculum (CBME) Guidelines for 2024 emphasize a curriculum that integrates subject areas while aligning with global educational trends. The goal is to create an "Indian

Medical Graduate" (IMG) who is equipped with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for effective primary care and global relevance, it said. At the end of teaching-learning in forensic medicine and toxicology, the student should be able to understand the medico-legal framework of medical practice, codes of conduct, medical ethics, professional misconduct and medical negligence, conducting medico-legal examination and documentation of various medico-legal cases and understand latest Acts and laws related to medical professional including related court judgements, the NMC said in its document. "It was time to have a relook at all aspects of the various components in the existing regulations and guidelines, and adapt them to the changing demography, socio-economic context, perceptions, values, advancements in medical education and expectations of stakeholders," the NMC said in its Competency-Based Medical Education Curriculum (CBME) Guidelines, 2024. "To achieve this, the following national and institutional goals for the learner of the Indian Medical Graduate training program are hereby prescribed. "The first contact physician needs to be skilful to perform duties of primary care physician and have requisite skills for promotive, preventative, rehabilitative, palliative care and referral services," the document said.



Indian, South African Navies sign rescue agreement

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a significant milestone to develop bilateral naval cooperation, the Indian Navy and the South African Navy have signed an Implementing Agreement that ensures the safety of the South African Navy's submarine crew in times of distress or accident, navy said here on Wednesday. Giving details, officials said the agreement was signed by Navy chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi and Vice Admiral Monde Lobese, Chief of the South African Navy. The Implementing Agreement underscores a shared commitment to maritime safety and mutual support. Under this agreement, the Indian Navy will provide assistance by deploying its Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) when required, further strengthening the collaborative ties between the two navies. This partnership reinforces the longstanding maritime relationship between India and South Africa.

Rising temperatures disrupting age-long weather patterns in Kashmir valley over last century: Study

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Researchers analysing weather data spanning over the past century in all the ten districts of the Kashmir valley in the northwestern Himalayas, have flagged the region is experiencing increased temperatures, particularly in winter, pre-monsoon, and post-monsoon seasons. This warming trend is disrupting traditional weather patterns, thus the region's ecosystem. Similarly, less precipitation is being reported during winter months while in contrast, spring and summer months are seeing increased rainfall. "In Kashmir, accelerated glacier melting is a result of higher temperatures, which also impacts ecosystems and access to freshwater resources. Water scarcity, decreased agricultural water supply, and disruptions in the hydropower industry can



all result from this. "The risk of flooding and landslides might increase with higher precipitation and more severe rainstorm events. Flash floods and debris, caused by a combination of high rainfall and steep topography, can pose serious threats to communities, infrastructure, and ecosystems," said the study "Unveiling Precipitation and Temperature Patterns in Kashmir Valley, India". The authors have called

for understanding these climatic trends which are crucial for managing water resources and preparing for the impacts of climate change in the fragile Himalayan region to address the potential impacts on biodiversity, ecological services, and local livelihoods. Published in Springer and ResearchGate, the research covered monthly, seasonal, and annual trends from 1901 to 2018 across the districts of

Srinagar, Kulgam, Shupian, Ganderbal, Budgam, Bandipore, Anantnag, Pulwama, Baramulla, and Kupwara. As per the authors Sana Rafi and Raghupathi Balasani respectively from Delhi-based Jamia Millia Islamia and JNTU, Hyderabad, significant warming was noted in winter, pre-monsoon, and post-monsoon seasons, although Kupwara and a few other districts were some exceptions. Annual precipitation is increasing significantly in all districts. February and March show rising trends in most areas, with significant increases observed in April through June. By July, all districts except Anantnag experienced significant increases in precipitation, said the study. Monthly weather patterns are also changing. February, March, and April show signif-

icant increases in precipitation in various districts and in most months except for a few districts in certain months like August and December. Temperature trends are also rising, with some variations between districts, the study said, noting that it can accelerate glacier melting, impacting water resources and ecosystems while increasing and changing precipitation patterns can lead to water scarcity, reduced agricultural water supply, and disruptions in hydropower. "This study is therefore an attempt to detect trends and variability in precipitation and temperature for the period 1901-2018 in Kashmir Valley. For studies on climate change and the management of water resources, especially in the vulnerable Himalayan region, it is essential to comprehend these trends and variability," said the authors.

Kharge accuses PM Modi of failing to protect Manipur people hit by violence

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of "miserably failing" to protect the people of Manipur and said the turmoil in the State is another stark addition to the long list of his "betrayals" of the people of India. Kharge alleged that it has been 16 months since Manipur has been engulfed in violence, but the BJP's 'double engine' Government has done nothing to mitigate it. No measure has been taken which instils confidence among the people of all the communities to ensure peace and normalcy, he claimed. "Why has the Manipur CM (N Biren Singh) made to brazen it out and has not been sacked by you? Is he not culpable in virtually paralysing the State



machinery, and making obnoxious statements, now recorded in public domain? A resignation drama was enacted to shamelessly dodge that bullet," he said. "Modi ji, why have you been so remorseless? Why have you not bothered to set foot in the State? It is because of your ego that people of all communities are suffering. Your Government's rank incompetency and shamelessness has not been able to start even a fundamental peace process!" Kharge said in his social media post.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

A boost to 'Act East'

Prime Minister Modi's visit to Singapore, marks a crucial step in fortifying India's 'Act East' policy

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Singapore marks a significant milestone in India's 'Act East' policy, reinforcing the strategic importance of the Southeast Asian region in India's foreign relations. Modi's Singapore visit enhanced bilateral cooperation in key areas, reflecting India's broader goals in the Indo-Pacific. Singapore occupies a pivotal position in India's 'Act East' policy, serving as a gateway to Southeast Asia and a key partner in advancing India's Indo-Pacific strategy. As the coordinator of ASEAN-India relations from 2021 to 2024, Singapore plays an instrumental role in shaping the regional dynamics between India and ASEAN, a bloc crucial for maintaining peace, stability, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific. Prime Minister Modi's visit underscores the deepening of ties between the two nations, particularly in areas such as trade, digitalisation, and sustainable development. With a trade volume reaching \$36.6 billion in 2023, Singapore is India's largest trade partner in Asia.



PM Modi's agenda during the visit included discussions with Singapore's senior leadership, including President Tharman Shanmugaratnam and Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, aimed at exploring new avenues for collaboration in advanced manufacturing, logistics, and commercial real estate.

The visit is expected to yield significant economic benefits, particularly in attracting foreign direct investment from Singaporean companies into India's emerging sectors. The focus on advanced manufacturing and digitalisation aligns with India's

broader goal of transforming into a global manufacturing hub. Additionally, the emphasis on sustainable development highlights India's commitment to addressing global challenges such as climate change, a priority for both nations. Strategically, Singapore's role as a crucial partner in the Indo-Pacific region cannot be overstated. India's '5 S' approach—Sammaan (respect), Samvad (dialogue), Sahyog (cooperation), Shanti (peace), and Samridhi (prosperity)—forms the foundation of its Indo-Pacific engagement, with Singapore and Brunei being key players. The visit reinforces India's commitment to maintaining a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific, where ASEAN plays a central role. Indeed, Prime Minister Modi's visit to Singapore is more than a bilateral engagement; it is a reaffirmation of India's commitment to strengthening ties with Southeast Asia as part of its 'Act East' policy. The discussions held during this visit are likely to pave the way for deeper economic and strategic cooperation, not just with Singapore, but across the Indo-Pacific region. As India continues to assert its role as a key player in the region, Singapore remains an indispensable partner in this endeavor, embodying the principles of dialogue, cooperation, and shared prosperity.

PICTALK



An aerial view of the illuminated Chennai Street Circuit during the Formula 4 Street Car Race, in Chennai

BJP's recruitment drive to solidify power



KALYANI SHANKAR

As the BJP aims to recruit 100 million new members, it continues to strengthen its dominance, despite facing criticism and internal challenges

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party is working to expand on a two-track basis. The first is by recruiting influential leaders from other parties, particularly Congress. Although this may involve a small number of leaders, their influence is significant.

Second, the party is focusing on enrolling a large number of new members. Former Jharkhand Mukti Morcha Chief Minister Champai Soren joined the BJP after current CM Hemant Soren, allegedly involved in a scam, was released last week and resumed his post. This move adds to the trend of influential chief ministers joining the BJP, highlighting the party's strategic success. The BJP embraces well-known leaders from other parties as they bring their influence and workers along. — Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, imported from Congress, is a classic example. Sarma has become the go-to man in the northeast. According to the National Election Watch-ADR, the main reasons for defections and party switching are the absence of value-based politics, greed for money and power, rewarding political positions, and lack of efficient, honest, and credible leaders. BJP has plans to recruit 100 million new members on a parallel track.

At last week's meeting, the BJP leadership decided that the drive would be in two phases: September 2 to 25 and October 1 to 15. Over the last decade, the BJP has seen significant growth. In the 1980s, upper-middle-class, urban, and Hindus primarily supported the BJP. It has since built a broader political base, showing its increasing influence. The BJP has overtaken Congress and is already the world's largest party, with 180 million members. The Grand Old Party, Congress, has 130 million members. Between 2014 and 2019, around 180 million people joined the BJP nationwide.

Eighty thousand leaders and workers from various parties have joined the BJP, which aims to recruit about 100,000 leaders at national and district levels.



Through this drive, the BJP collects data about its members, including their caste, gender, age, residence, and other details. In the last decade, many influential Congress leaders, including former chief ministers and ministers, shifted to the BJP, revealing their frustration, greed and lust for power. The BJP has rewarded some of them with good positions. Notable leaders among them include Himanta Biswa Sarma, Gulam Nabi Azad, Captain Amarendra Singh, Kapil Sibal, Jitin Prasad, R.P.N. Singh, Milind Deora, and Jyotiraditya Scindia. Former Maharashtra chief minister Ashok Chavan, Ritesh Pandey, Sangita Azad, and others have recently joined the BJP.

They come from various political parties such as Congress, Bahujan Samaj Party, All India Trinamool Congress, and YSRCP. The BJP has benefited the most from members switching sides, while the Congress has suffered the most since 2014. Even after winning, the Opposition parties are concerned that the BJP will try to persuade their legislators to switch—many defectors at crucial moments, such as during government majority voting.

Why do they defect? If there is



EIGHTY THOUSAND LEADERS AND WORKERS FROM VARIOUS PARTIES HAVE JOINED THE BJP, WHICH AIMS TO RECRUIT ABOUT 100,000 LEADERS AT NATIONAL AND DISTRICT LEVELS

a reason for the defectors to leave their respective parties, the BJP also embraces them without hesitating. These leaders fear becoming politically irrelevant when their party loses power. By aligning with the dominant BJP, they hope to gain control and secure a political future for their children. The BJP's successful strategy of attracting leaders from other parties is evident in the ADR analysis. It shows that 22% of re-contesting candidates who switched parties joined the BJP, followed by 10% joining the Congress and 6% joining the BSP. Over the past decade, the BJP has attracted several leaders from other parties, contributing to the rise of leaders like Himanta Biswa Sarma in the northeastern region. Why does the BJP welcome these defectors? There are three key reasons: First, it weakens the party from which the defection occurs. Second, it allows the BJP to absorb known leaders from established parties, strengthening its ranks.

Third, given the BJP's lack of second-rung leaders, it is easier to absorb the defectors. It is not as if dissenters have not left the BJP. Some, like Kalyan Singh, Shankar Singh Vaghela, and Yediyurappa (all chief ministers), launched their par-

ties but returned to the BJP when they failed. The BJP's deeply ideological glue holds it together.

The BJP's long-time loyal members are unhappy when newcomers get good positions while they have been faithful to the party. This has happened in the past. During Vajpayee's leadership, the party could only accommodate some, and others left. While the party has been expanding, its leadership is still dominated by the Upper caste.

The BJP has strengths but receives criticism for its limited ideology, aggressive attitude, complacency, and arrogance. The BJP's upcoming membership drive will test its strength in the post-2024 poll period. Though it emerged as the single largest party, it got only 240 seats in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, 32 short of the majority. Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants to achieve a "Congress-Free India," but it may be challenging.

You cannot eliminate a 140-year-old party in a day, as the Congress showed revival instincts. The BJP must refrain from repeating the mistakes of the Congress to stay in power.

(The writer is a popular columnist; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ACTOR VIJAY ENTERS POLITICS

Madam — Environment prevailing, political narratives set, leadership space available and the ability to convert the mass created in the film world determine the success of a film star who turns into a political leader. Though many film stars have entered into politics only few have succeeded. While M G Ramachandran (MGR) and N T Rama Rao (NTR) can be said to have had superlative successes both the stars have had in the 1970/80s are in no way comparable to any. For both MGR and NTR carefully built their image as a mass leader over two decades before plunging into politics.

While Jayalalitha was successful she had the advantage MGR's backing and her cleverly capitalizing on MGR's image. One more leader who came very close to success was Vijaykanth who set an anti corruption narrative and it took nearly a decade for him to become the LOP after which he died due to poor health. Superstar Rajnikanth backtracked after announcing his entry in politics citing health reasons. Seeman also from Kollywood though has his own vote bank he is yet to prove himself as a successful leader. Pawan Kalyan from Tollywood has tasted some success thanks to the alliance with BJP and TDP in AP. We will have to wait to see Vijay who has been successful as a hero in Kollywood and has a youth following, entering into TN politics when the towering leaders like Jayalalitha and Karunanidhi are absent the political narrative he sets and his ability to convert the mass following into his vote bank. Despite all these strengths the political party possess in the state, to fight the elections on its own without an alliance and form the government on its own is difficult and hence we will have to see the partners with whom he forges alliance in the 2026 TN assembly elections which he has announced to fight.

Gopalaswamy J | Chennai

SC ADDRESSES FARMERS' CONCERNS. Madam— The recent Supreme Court

Improve ties with neighbours



The editorial on SOSA details the need for India to be in this forum. Equally important for India is to improve its ties with its neighbours. As of now India is an island

decision to form a panel to address the farmers' concerns at the Shambhu border marks a critical step in resolving the ongoing crisis. It is essential that this panel operates with the utmost transparency and fairness, ensuring that the voices of the farmers are genuinely heard and their grievances adequately addressed. Farmers, the backbone of the nation, have been protesting for their rights and livelihood. Their demands are not just about immediate relief but also about securing the future of agriculture in the country. The formation of this panel must not be seen as a mere formality. Concrete actions must follow, with clear timelines and accountability. Moreover, this issue transcends regional boundaries and affects the entire nation.

The agricultural sector's stability is crucial for food security and economic growth. A balanced and empathetic approach is necessary, where the government and the judiciary work in unison to safeguard the interests of both the farmers and the nation.

Priya Gupta | Kushinagar

in the ocean of hostile neighbouring countries. Such a situation is a lurking danger to nullify all the enviable achievements the country is boasting of. On priority India needs to ensure friendly relations with all its neighbours. Another fact to be kept in mind is that all the countries forming groups against China are too cautious in their steps as every country has its stake in China in terms of investment or imports.

India's dependability on China is more. 70% of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients imported from China are inevitable to maintain the position of India as a global Pharma hub. Even Solar cells need to come from China. Therefore the so called arrangements and agreements against China are to push more weapons in the name of security. India needs to be careful not to fall in the trap of weapon mafia.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

INDIA'S NAVAL PROWESS

Madam — With the successful induction of its second indigenous nuclear ballistic missile submarine, the I.N.S. Arighat, India has once again showcased her naval prowess to the world. However, unlike I.N.S. Arighat, the recently commissioned submarine is more advanced and operational focused. In the realm of maritime security India with 172 warheads still has to cover a long distance as Russia and US with 1700 each, China (500) are way ahead of us in terms of operational warheads. Indian Ocean is being considered as a breeding ground for developing arms race as China, U.S, Russia and even Pakistan are flexing their muscles, should India reconsider its age old age No First Use (NFC) doctrine? India must decide whether to modernising its nuclear deterrent capabilities or remain committed to its traditional policy of minimum deterrence.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

A green tribute to mothers and the environment

Inspired by PM Modi's "Ek Ped Ma Ke Naam" initiative, the Chhattisgarh Government has launched the ambitious "People for Peepal" plantation drive in Nava Raipur

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the "Ek Ped Ma Ke Naam" (a tree in the name of the mother) initiative, a deep thought process went behind it. One, to cherish the memory of our mothers; and two, to environmental conservation.

The Chhattisgarh government took it as a unique opportunity to give Nava Raipur a new identity. The Nava Raipur Atal Nagar Development Authority launched the "People for Peepal" plantation drive to transform the city into the first "Peepal Tree" city in India. We also saw it as an opportunity to address the pressing issue of climate change by establishing Nava Raipur as a "Peepal Tree" City in the coming years. This drive reflects a strong commitment to environmental sustainability and aims to set a new benchmark for urban green spaces. We envision a city where extensive tree planting and green infrastructure contribute significantly to improving the urban environment and combatting climate



change. Echoing the Prime Minister's commitment to Mother Earth, the Chhattisgarh government is together with Modi's vision of nurturing our planet the way our mothers take care of us. The campaign, kick-started by Narendra Modi this World Environment Day on June 5, will help in reversing land degradation, recharge groundwater, prevent desertification and bring in drought resilience. The "People for Peepal" campaign aims to plant over 20,000 Peepal trees apart from 80,000 trees of other varieties throughout the city. Peepal or Ficus Religiosa, a large and fast-growing deciduous tree unique to

India that is a revered symbol of eternal life, wisdom and spirituality, has been chosen for its significant ecological benefits and cultural importance. The massive plantation will ensure that Peepal trees become a prominent and recognizable feature across Nava Raipur. In addition to Peepal trees, which are one of the most oxygen-producing trees, the drive will include planting other key species such as Neem, Banyan, and Jamun. These trees are integral to the city's green infrastructure, enhancing biodiversity and providing additional environmental benefits. To boost community involvement, the campaign includes a "virtu-

al adoption programme". This initiative allows individuals and organizations to adopt trees virtually, fostering widespread engagement and support for the drive. This approach encourages collective responsibility towards environmental conservation and helps ensure the campaign's success. The ultimate goal of this extensive plantation drive is to position Nava Raipur as a model city for environmental preservation and to earn recognition as the first "Peepal Tree" City of India.

By expanding green spaces and promoting biodiversity, the city aims to inspire other urban areas and set a global example for sustainable urban development. Through this initiative, Nava Raipur seeks not only to address climate change but also to enhance the quality of life for its residents, establishing itself as a leading example of environmental stewardship and green urban planning.

(The writer is the Minister of Finance of Government of Chhattisgarh; views are personal)



O P CHOUDHARY



FIRST COLUMN

BEYOND SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

We must reconcile modern progress with sustainability by shifting to spiritually



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

The competitive world in which we are living believes in the theory of "Survival of the Fittest," meaning that the strongest one is the one who survives. However, humanity in the 21st century has perceived this in a rather different manner because, in the actual sense, the strongest people are those who are most ethical and helpful, not those who gain strength by hurting others and exploiting nature. Today, educated people all over the world are well aware of the fact that the environment across the globe has deteriorated menacingly to its lowest ebb, and if this deterioration continues further for some more time at this rate, then the very existence of the human race will be in grave danger. But today, when economic progress takes precedence even over politics, many governments are under great pressure to increase production substantially and to take major strides towards high economic evolution and growth by undertaking developmental activities on a large scale for a quick turnaround. Therefore, every government increasingly engages itself in fulfilling the goals of modernisation through rapid industrialisation and technological advancement to create more jobs and thriving economies. But the real dilemma is that if the governments accelerate developmental activities and industrialisation, then the quality of the environment will be badly affected. If they do not take visible steps towards economic growth, then they cannot compete with other nations and may face criticism from their people and ultimately have to step down. So, the challenge faced by all countries is: "How to improve or sustain the quality of the environment while ensuring a high level of economic activity and growth?"



The solution that is generally suggested is that there should be sustainable development. But is this practically feasible without affecting the social domain? There is bound to be more and more strain on the environment and the depleting of mineral and natural resources. It is, therefore, urgent and important that we realize at the earliest that it will simply be impossible for the earth to sustain us if the strain on it increases. So, for our survival in a clean and healthy environment, it is of the utmost necessity to reduce our consumption and wastage by changing our lifestyle.

With massive industrialization and economic growth, the gains of some sectors of the society inevitably create pressures on the social fabric of an erratic developing society creating a great imbalance in the consumption levels of a small number of rich and an ever-increasing downtrodden. Hence to overcome all these issues, the need of the hour is to have a simple lifestyle, which is not possible through the virtues of the capitalistic or the socialist system of economy but only through the spiritual orientation of our economic thought because survivors aren't always the strongest; sometimes they're the smartest, but more often simply the luckiest.

Hence it is better to change ourselves before time devastates us. Indeed, we can cultivate a society that prioritizes the health of the planet over short-term gains. Schools, colleges, and universities should integrate environmental education into their curriculums, teaching students not only about the challenges we face but also about the solutions that can lead us to a more sustainable future. In conclusion, the path to true survival does not lie in the outdated notion of 'survival of the fittest,' understood as domination and exploitation. Instead, it lies in our ability to live in harmony with nature and each other, fostering a world where progress is measured not by the wealth we accumulate but by the health of our environment and the well-being of all living beings. If we fail to recognize this and continue on our current path, we risk not only our future but the very survival of the planet itself.

(Writer is a spiritual educator and a columnist; views are personal)

Reviving the legacy of quality in teacher education



J S RAJPUT

This year's Teacher's Day celebrations carry a special resonance as they align with the enduring concerns of Dr S Radhakrishnan, who passionately advocated for quality in education

Teacher's Day celebrations this year are indeed special in the context of quality, which was the major concern expressed on several occasions by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, whose contributions are recalled with gratitude on this day every year. Necessary academic and professional preparations have been made and the Integrated Teacher Education Programme - ITEP - has already been launched in 64 institutions. This initiative is based on the recommendations of the National Education Policy -NEP-2020 - that after 2030 all of the pre-service teacher preparation programmes would be only of four-year duration and all others shall be scrapped. It would be prudent to recall an earlier experiment in quality teacher preparation which was initiated in 1965 by the then newly established organization, the National Council of Educational Research and Training - NCERT - in its four Regional Colleges (now Institutes) of Education, located in Ajmer, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, and Mysore.

It was acknowledged at the level of experts and accepted by national decision-makers that the one-year teacher preparation programmes were inadequate in preparing quality teachers and must be replaced by the four-year integrated programmes after senior secondary. The products of these four-year integrated courses established a distinct reputation for themselves in the education sector, and also in other professions as well, which they preferred to join. It is indeed heartening to note that the NEP-2020 made the recommendation on ITEP based upon the solid evidence offered by the NCERT institutions. One is convinced that the growth, development and progress of any nation would be a direct consequence of the quality of education it achieves.

This quality is invariably a product of the level of excellence achieved by the Teacher Education Institutes -TEIs - of the nation. It is the work culture of the TEIs that mandates - without ever saying so formally - the work culture of the schools. The level of competence, commitment and performance witnessed in the TEIs by the student-teachers flows directly to schools and creates practically a comparable environment for school children. It is possible to achieve comprehensive personality evolution over four years and this is well-established in India, courtesy of the NCERT.

One must hasten to add that the proposed ITEP version of the earlier four-year programmes of the NCERT must be handled with great caution and care. Any inadequacy of academic, professional physical and financial resources could inflict irreversible damage to the great initiative. The future of the planet Earth and humanity depends on how education deals with man-nature mutuality. India decided in 2020 that 'The rich heritage of ancient and eternal Indian knowledge and thought' would be a guiding light for the NEP-2020.

It has, thus, accepted that education in India must be 'rooted in a culture committed to new knowledge.' In every alert and active culture, the tradition of knowledge quest has to remain dynamic in word and deed. It is because of this inherent strength, that Indian culture and its tradition of knowledge quest with its



ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS NEED TO POSE AN INTERNAL QUERY: ARE WE FUNCTIONING AT A LEVEL OF SELF-CONFIDENCE, CONVICTION, DETERMINATION AND PASSION THAT COULD BRING CREDIBILITY TO EACH ONE OF US AND OUR INSTITUTION?

unique objectives and vision are now receiving global attention in the world. Yes, the knowledgeable and concerned persons of the world must come together and realize that the wanton destruction of natural resources without caring for their replenishment has forced scientists to calculate how long the planet Earth could survive.

They must inspire everyone to wake up and realize the dreadful magnitude of the devastation being inflicted on nature must stop, and much more, present big plans before people, but there it all ends. There is a solution that Indians are aware of from "ancient times": 'Aparigraha'. It was put up before the world in very simple terms in his indomitable style by Mahatma Gandhi: Nature has a sufficient resource to meet the needs of everyone but not the greed of anyone."

This is the only alternative. "To me, hope lies in the Teacher! The Teacher can do it if they resolve to do it and the 'Teachers of the world' unite! A new chapter has to be written in every discipline and an emphasis on multidisciplinary concerns of the human knowledge quest, the process of transfer and acquisition of knowledge.

Towards this, teachers shall have to realize, accept and internalize that they are makers of the future of human existence on planet Earth! It is their responsibility to shape every learner coming to them as an unaware and uninitiated person into a personality! That would shape the future generations, would prepare citizens committed to their nation, and their people but fully conscious of their role as international cit-

izens as well. The legendary philosopher, revered statesman and worthy teacher Dr. S. Radhakrishnan was one of the finest intellectual brains of the 20th century. He was a matchless interpreter of Eastern and Western thought, philosophy and the 'concept of a man'. We recall his greatness, and his multifarious contributions, but allow his philosophy and guiding principles for teachers to remain confined to a few shelves of some reputed libraries.

He pleads particularly to institutions of higher learning: "The ideal of the university is the promotion of liberty of mind and or freedom of thought. It has little to do with the protection of privilege or a call to conformity. It contests privilege which is something other than that excellence which follows on intellectual eminence or spiritual greatness. It contests conformity, for each individual has a right to develop his own convictions." Once this is accepted at each appropriate level by all those dealing with higher education, it becomes clear that the seeds for creating such an environment in institutions of higher learning have to be sown in schools!

Schools in the present context just cannot become the nourishing and nurturing grounds for the flowering of new ideas unless school teachers are well-equipped and well-endowed with the determination that every child, every learner is to be encouraged to express himself in whichever way he chooses to; may be in music, sports, mathematics, painting, imagination, creativity, and the like! In India right from the Ministry of Education to primary schools is just forgotten after

every discussion and deliberation! One is referring to the most distinct role of teacher education institutions; TEIs. Quality, ideas, innovations, and imagination are nurtured in schools and universities but how to do so is learnt, internalized and tested in TEIs. To universalize this comprehension, one must be ready with a reality test! We are proud of India of ancient times because of the universality of its culture and acceptance of the essential unity of mankind despite all the apparent diversities.

Academic institutions need to pose an internal query: are we functioning at a level of self-confidence, conviction, determination and passion that could bring credibility to each one of us and our institution? As academics 'have we accepted and succumbed to being teachers less original, to ambitions less exalted and to tame compliance with old forms! We were warned over seven-eight decades ago by Dr Radhakrishnan on this count: "There was a dread of venturing outside the safe limits of guaranteed ideas. The country seems to suffer from exhaustion." The future belongs to those equipped with learning that encourages ideas, imagination, curiosity and creativity. The fittest and finest tribute to Dr. Radhakrishnan and in fact to the great Indian tradition of teaching, learning and knowledge quest would be to respect teachers, and treat them as the creators of the future of not only the individual learner but of the society, community and the nation.

(Professor Rajput works in education, social cohesion and religious amity, views are personal)

The true power and purpose of teaching in a changing world

On this Teacher's Day, let us reflect on the challenges and triumphs of this noble profession

Born into a family of accomplished women, I've often faced a question that has puzzled me for years: "Why did you choose to be a teacher?" This question, posed by family, friends, and even strangers, stems from two assumptions. First, that teaching is a lesser profession, inferior to careers like medicine or bureaucracy, which my sisters have pursued. Second, and more disheartening, is the belief held by some that only those who fail in other "proper" professions resort to teaching. The underlying notion is that teaching is easy and requires no special skills—a perception I find not just ironic but profoundly misguided. The irony lies in the fact that we all remember teachers



SWATI PAL

who profoundly impacted our lives. We recall the teachers whose classes we eagerly attended, whose kindness and encouragement shaped who we are today. Conversely, we also remember those whose classes were dull, who seemed to take pleasure in demeaning students, or who treated teaching as nothing more than a paycheck. The truth is, teaching is easy only for those who see it as mere-

ly a job—a means to an end, rather than a calling. For those who aspire to be remembered as 'good' teachers, the profession is far from easy. It requires dedication, empathy, and a genuine desire to make a difference in students' lives.

Unfortunately, there has been a shift in attitudes towards teaching, influenced by a growing corporate mentality and consumer culture. Many teachers today seem more concerned with holidays, salary increments, and perks than with the students they are supposed to nurture. While it's not wrong to seek these benefits, when they become the sole focus, teaching is reduced to a transactional relationship. This attitude contributes to the neg-

ative perception of teachers in society, where they are often seen as nothing more than paid servants in an "easy" profession.

Yet, the disillusionment among teachers is not entirely self-inflicted. The idealism that once characterized the profession has been eroded by systemic issues that go beyond individual attitudes. Over the three-plus decades I've spent in education, I've witnessed changes that have not always benefited teachers or students. One of the most significant changes has been the shift from an annual examination system to a semester system at the undergraduate level. While the intention of aligning with global patterns is understandable, the semester system has

reduced teaching to a race to complete syllabi, leaving little room for individualized attention or meaningful engagement with students.

This shift is particularly ironic in an era when "quality education" is a buzzword. The question we must ask is whether the semester system truly enhances quality or merely ensures that all the boxes are ticked on time. Teachers who feel they cannot do justice to the curriculum or their students are bound to feel frustrated. Even the most resilient educators may eventually succumb to the pressures of the system, abandoning the high ideals that initially drew them to the profession. The space that the annual system once provided for exploring innovative

teaching methods has been replaced by a relentless focus on deadlines, leading to a sense of exhaustion and apathy among teachers.

The accreditation system, though well-intentioned, has also added to the burden. While it has encouraged institutions to improve infrastructure, training, and community outreach, the process itself is cumbersome. Hours are spent documenting activities and ensuring they conform to prescribed criteria for a good grade. This bureaucratic approach to education often detracts from the unique qualities of individual institutions, fostering a spirit of competition that can be more self-defeating than motivating. Another challenge is the rapid

succession of educational reforms—CBCS, LOCF, NEP, and others. While each reform is introduced with the intention of improving education, the pace of change has led to confusion, inadequate curriculum revision, and a lack of clarity about the objectives of these reforms among both teachers and students.

The result is a situation where "a little learning," as Alexander Pope warned, becomes a "dangerous thing." Instead of fostering deep understanding, these rapid changes have led to superficial learning and a sense of disillusionment among educators. Despite these challenges, I remain steadfast in my belief that teaching is one of the

most powerful professions in the world. A teacher has the potential to drive away the clouds of ignorance to teach empathy and integrity, and to guide students toward a brighter future. Rabindranath Tagore, captured this sentiment beautifully in his poem "Where the Mind is Without Fear," envisioning a world led by reason, truth, and freedom. On this Teacher's Day, I urge my fellow educators to remember the profound role we play in shaping the future. Despite the odds, we must strive to create a better world by becoming more humane and resilient, even if we are the last ones standing.

(The writer is Professor and Principal, Janki Devi Memorial College, DU; views are personal)

RG Kar: Bengal switches off lights for justice

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Reminiscent of the "Reclaim the Night" gatherings on August 14 when people, more so the women from all walks of life and layers of the society collected on the boulevards of Kolkata and elsewhere and remained "awake and vigilant" through the night to protest against the brutal rape and murder of the junior lady doctor of RG Kar Medical College Hospital the citizenry of Bengal once again responded overwhelmingly to the call of the doctors' community by switching off the lights of their respective

houses from 9 pm to 10 pm on Wednesday and taking out candle marches. In fact in many areas like Patuli, Anandapur, New Town, Manikalla, Shyambazar the programme including the candle light marches started a well-nigh one hour before schedule. This, even as the neighbourhoods were rented with the cry of "we want justice." In New Town several thousand professionals of the Information Technology sector joined in an evening march with their mobile lights on demanding justice for Abhaya, the victim doctor who was found raped and murdered



inside the seminar hall of the Hospital in the morning of August 9. The members of the State Junior Doctors' Forum had earlier called for a "switch-off-your-lights" programme. "We thank the people for giving us such overwhelming support for all these days in our fight for

justice and appeal to them to switch off their lights at homes for an hour from 9 pm to 10 pm and light up candles as a symbol of our journey to Justice with light," said Dr Mahato one of the leaders of the Junior Doctors' Forum. The same Forum of doctors had on Tuesday led a long procession to the Lal Bazar Police headquarters and handed over along with a replica of an "Erect Spine," a list of demands to the Kolkata Police Commissioner Vineet Goyal. Incidentally the list contained a demand for his resignation as he had failed to perform his public duty by ensuring an

impartial investigation into the case which was subsequently transferred to the Central Bureau of Investigation by the Calcutta High Court. The Commissioner however said that he was satisfied with his performance but said that he was ready to step down if his higher authorities would ask him to do so. Cut to Wednesday. People including the members of the civil society, professionals, lawyers, workers tea vendors, taxi drivers and even the shanty men joined the Wednesday's call not only switching off their lights but also taking out small candle light rallies in groups of hundreds.

Rahul promises restoration of Statehood in poll rallies in Jammu and Kashmir

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Hitting the campaign trail for the upcoming Assembly polls, star campaigner of the Congress party and leader of the opposition, Rahul Gandhi Wednesday tried to strike an emotional chord with the people of Jammu and Kashmir while promising to restore 'statehood' immediately after the formation of the government. Launching a scathing attack on the Prime Minister, Rahul said Modi has lost his



confidence after the recently held Lok Sabha elections and the time is not far when his government will be removed. "We have finished Modi psychologically. I sit in front of him in Parliament and I know his confidence is gone... Now a little time has

left, we will remove Modi and BJP from government," the leader of the opposition said. Setting the poll pitch during his back-to-back election campaign meetings at Sangaldan in the Ramban district and Dooru Assembly constituency in Anantnag, Rahul announced, "I am here to tell you that BJP and RSS might tell you anything, we are going to give back statehood to the people of J&K. We wanted statehood to be restored before elections but BJP didn't want this, they wanted elections first."

Kejriwal bail plea hearing...

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It said Kejriwal is not an ordinary citizen but a distinguished recipient of the Magsaysay Award and the convener of the Aam Aadmi Party. The high court had dismissed Kejriwal's plea challenging his arrest, saying it was only after sufficient evidence was collected and sanction was obtained in April 2024 that the agency proceeded with further probe against him. It was noted that the links to the crime extended even to Punjab but material witnesses were not coming forward due to the influence exercised by Kejriwal by virtue of his position. It was only after he got arrested that the witnesses came forward to record their statements, the high court had said.

The chief minister, who was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on March 21, was granted bail by the trial court in the money laundering case on June 20. However, the trial court's order was stayed by the high court. On July 12, the top court granted him interim bail in the money laundering case. The excise policy was scrapped in 2022 after the Delhi lieutenant governor ordered a CBI probe into alleged irregularities and corruption involving its formulation and execution. According to the CBI and the ED, irregularities were committed while modifying the excise policy and undue favours extended to licence holders.

Dissenting voices in TMC over Kolkata tragedy

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Post RG Kar Medical College rape and murder voices of dissent continued to rumble within the ruling Trinamool Congress with senior Rajya Sabha MP Sukhendushekar Roy on Wednesday posting an appeal to the people to wrest back the right to live with dignity enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution. Roy who had earlier shared a photograph depicting the fall of Bastille Fort — that marked the beginning of the French Revolution and fall of Emperor Louis XVI — and followed it up with another post showing an uprooted middle stump soon after the arrest of former RG Kar principal

Sandip Ghosh said that he indeed meant what he said. "A time has come when the people should seize their right to live and live with dignity given in our Constitution," Roy a veteran TMC leader said. "If this incident in RG Kar Medical College would not shiver you with dread then nothing will ... I am not a robot ... I too am a human being who has feelings, emotions and who has a duty to speak up when need be ... this is one such occasion to stand up and make your voice heard... In addition to reclaiming the nights a time has come when all should make the big effort to reclaim the Right to Live with Dignity given to us by the Constitution."

Injured bird rescued in Pune

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A badly injured heron, which was rescued from Junnar in Pune district of Western Maharashtra, has got a fresh lease of life, following the timely intervention by the Maharashtra (MGF) Forest Department and Wildlife SOS. The long-legged, long-necked, freshwater and coastal bird was rescued from Junnar more than a fortnight ago. The bird was treated by the Wildlife SOS veterinary team at the Manikdoh Leopard Rescue Centre (MLRC) at Junnar. The bird was under care for 15 days at the multi-specialty hospital in MLRC and after a remarkable recovery, the heron was released back into the wild. After its admission to the multi-specialty hospital in

MLRC, the injured heron was sedated. After that the bird underwent a thorough medical examination which included heartbeat detection and fracture assessment through palpation. During the examination, an x-ray revealed a fracture in the bird's right wing, prompting the veterinary doctors to initiate the treatment process. The avian was kept in isolation in a warm and safe enclosure where it was nursed and provided multivitamins by the veterinary team, a treatment that allowed the fracture to heal undisturbed. Amit Bhise, Assistant Conservator of Forests, Junnar Division said: "After we found the bird injured, we brought it to the multi-specialty hospital for treatment. The heron's encouraging recovery was a

positive sign, and we were thrilled to oversee the bird's eventual release back into the wild." "We provided a nutritious diet of fish to support and strengthen the heron's recovery. A follow-up X-ray showed remarkable improvement of the bone structure. After 15 days of thoughtful attention and care, the bird's wing had recovered," Dr Avinash Visalkar, Veterinary Officer, Wildlife SOS said. Kartick Satyanarayan, Co-founder and CEO, Wildlife SOS: "When keeping an animal in care, we try to mimic their natural surroundings so that they feel comfortable. Ensuring a safe environment, along with nursing, treatment and nutrition, is also important in the recovery process."

Gangster arrested in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police's Crime Branch arrested a 46 year old dreaded gang member of a notorious gang involved in a double murder case of two members of a rival gang. According to the police on Wednesday, the accused who has been identified as Kaptan alias Tanu, a resident of Delhi's Narela, is found to be previously involved in more 15 cases including murder, attempt to murder, armed robbery, Arms Act cases among others in Delhi. He had been sentenced to Life Imprisonment in one murder case of Narela police station and seven years in another case of armed robbery. "The accused has close proximity with dreaded and

jailed gangsters. He was also declared "Proclaimed Absconder" in a case and a reward of Rs 50,000 had been declared on the accused by worthy CP/Delhi in 2018," a senior police official said. Upon receiving inputs about his whereabouts, a police team was sent to Bihar and a trap was laid and the above-mentioned accused was apprehended from Village Bishunpur, Jalalpur police station, District Saran, Bihar. "The accused tried to escape from the spot and ran towards the fields but the team showed alertness and presence of mind and the accused was successfully chased and overpowered. The accused was subsequently arrested and brought to Delhi," he said.

Phogat...

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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. Both Phogat and Punia have backed the farmers' protest. When farmers launched an agitation against the Central government's three farm laws in 2020, Phogat showed solidarity with the protesters. In one of her tweets at the time, she said that farmers just want respect for their hard work. The Olympian wrestler had also participated in the protests. Phogat recently joined farmers at the Shambhu border as their protest for a legal guarantee of the MSP marked its 200th day on August 31.

BJP...

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Some of the other key figures that have been given an opportunity to represent the BJP in the Haryana Assembly election include, former BJP MP Sunita Duggal from Ratia, former BJP Lok Sabha MP Kuldeep Bishnoi's son Bhavya Bishnoi from Adampur and Aarti Singh, daughter of Union Minister of Planning, Statistics and Programme Implementation Rao Inderjit Singh, from Ateli. The other candidates include Ambala Mayor and former Union Minister Vinod Sharma's wife Shakti Rani Sharma, who will be contesting from the Kalka assembly constituency. Shakti Rani Sharma is the mother of Manu Sharma, a convict in the

BJP...

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Jessica Lal murder case. Shruti Choudhry who left the Congress and joined the BJP with her mother - Rajya Sabha MP Kiran Choudhry - in June has been given a ticket from Tosham. Also, Rao Narbir Singh, who met Union Home Minister Amit Shah over his future in the party recently and had reportedly threatened to rebel if not approached by the party high-command, has been fielded from Badshahpur. The names of Capt Abhimanyu, Bhavya Bishnoi, the son of Kuldeep Bishnoi, and former MP Sunita Duggal are also on the list. The assembly polls are scheduled to be held on October 5, and the counting of votes will take place on October 8. Devender Singh Babli, Sanjay Kablana and Shruti Choudhry, who joined the BJP recently, will contest from the Tohana, Beri and Tosham seats, respectively. However, former

captain of the Indian national hockey team, Sandeep Singh, has been dropped from Pehowa seat. Instead of Singh, Sardar Kamaljeet Singh Ajrana would contest on the BJP ticket from the constituency. Additionally, Kabbadi player Deepak Hooda has been given a ticket from Meham. Haryana Assembly Speaker Gian Chand Gupta has been fielded from Panchkula, former Speaker Kanwar Pal Gurjar from Jagadhri, Captain Abhimanyu from Narnaund, former Lok Sabha member Sunita Duggal from Ratia. The BJP high-command dropped nine sitting MLAs from the first list while the seats of two MLAs were also changed. Palwal MLA Deepak Mangla, Faridabad MLA Narendra Gupta, Gurugram MLA Sudhir Singhla, Bhawani Khera MLA Vishambhar Malik, Cabinet Minister Ranjit Chautala from Rania, Sitaram

Yadav from Ateli, former minister Sandeep Singh from Pehwa, Sanjay Singh from Sohna and Laxman Napa from Ratia have missed the bus. MP Naveen Jindal's mother, Savitri Jindal, who was widely expected to get a ticket from Hisar, has not made the cut and the party has decided to stick with the incumbent, Kamal Gupta, who is also a state minister. While Aseem Goel has been fielded from Ambala City, Santosh Sarwan from Mulana (SC), Balwant Singh from Sadhaura (SC), Kanwar Pal Gurjar from Jagadhri, Ghanshyam Dass Arora from Yamunanagar, Shyam Singh Rana from Radaur, Subhash Kalsana from Shahbad (SC), Subhash Sudha from Thanesar, Sardar Kamaljeet Singh Ajrana from Pehowa, Kulwant Bazigar from Guhla (SC), Kamlesh Dhandra from Kalayat, Leela Ram Gurjar

from Kaithal, Bhagwan Dass Kabirpanthi from Nilokheri (SC), Ram Kumar Kashyap from Indr, Jagmohan Anand from Karnal, Harvinder kalia from Gharanda, Mahipal Dhandra from Panipat rural, Pramod Kumar Vij from Panipat City, Krishna Lal Panwar from Irana (SC), Manmohan Bhadana from Samalkha, Mukesh Sharma from Gurgaon, Gaurav Gautam from Palwal, Tel Chand Sharma from Pritihla, Mool Chand Sharma from Ballabgarh, Vipul Goel from Faridabad and Rajesh Nagar from Tigaon seat. The names of the candidates were discussed and finalised in a BJP meeting that was chaired by the party's national president, JP Nadda on August 29. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and other members of the BJP's Central Election Committee were also present.

The major political parties in the fray include the BJP, Congress, AAP, the JJP-ASP alliance, and the BSP-INLD alliance. In the last elections in 2019, BJP won 40 seats in Haryana Assembly polls, Congress logged victory on 31 seats, while JJP got 10 seats. BJP formed a coalition government with the JJP but earlier this year, they broke the alliance. The current term of the Haryana Assembly ends on November 3, 2024. The BJP's list comes hours after Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) released its first list of 19 party candidates in alliance with Azad Samaj Party. Former deputy chief minister Dushyant Chautala will contest from Uchana Kalan, from where he is a sitting MLA. While 15 candidates on the list were from the JJP, four were from the Chandra Shekhar Azad-led ASP.

SC snub for Uttarakhand Chief Minister

From Page 1

"If you disagree right from the desk officer, the deputy secretary, the principal secretary, the minister, then the least that is expected is that there is some application of mind as to why he is disagreeing with the proposal," it said. Senior advocate ANS Nadkarni, appearing in the court on behalf of the state, said the officer was not facing any FIR lodged either by the state police or the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) or the Enforcement Directorate (ED). The lawyer said the disciplinary proceeding against the officer was related to the Corbett Tiger

Reserve where several officers were served show-cause notices. "He is a good officer. In fact, somebody else is targeting him," Nadkarni said, adding, "You cannot sacrifice a good officer against whom there is nothing." "If there is nothing, then why are you holding departmental proceedings against him?" the court asked the lawyer, adding that unless there is some prima facie material, departmental proceedings are not initiated against anyone. "The chief minister has gone against the advice of everyone," it observed. Nadkarni said neither police nor probe agencies like the CBI and the ED nor the Central Empowered

Committee (CEC) has blamed the officer. "Only thing which is against him is the disciplinary proceeding where chargesheet is issued to everybody (other officers)," he said. The bench said, "Unless he is exonerated in the departmental proceeding, you cannot give him a certificate of a good officer." During the hearing, the bench also referred to a newspaper report, which said Uttarakhand's forest minister and chief secretary had objected to the appointment of the officer as the director of the Rajaji Tiger Reserve. "You gave an impression that the newspaper reporting is not correct. When we saw

the noting, there is no error in the newspaper reporting. Whatever is reported in the newspaper is factually correct," the bench observed. "The newspaper report says the chief secretary and the minister for forest both objected and in spite of that objection, the chief minister overruled. So nothing wrong in that reporting," it said. The bench noted that Nadkarni has placed on record a copy of the September 3 order issued by the state government by which the order posting Rahul as the field director of the Rajaji Tiger Reserve was withdrawn. "In that view of the matter, no orders are necessary. The proceedings are closed," the apex court said.

Military top brass deliberates on joint command...

From Page 1

The Chief of Defence Staff said integration of the three services is crucial for adapting to the contours of future warfare and conduct of "effect-based operations", the Ministry said in a statement. General Chauhan complimented the three services for initiating numerous measures along the roadmap for integration. He stressed that it was a step by step process, beginning with cross-service co-operation leading to a 'joint culture' and finally achieving integration of forces for conduct of joint operations." The deliberations also focused on establishment of command and control centres with the requisite infrastructure to facilitate decision making. As per the theaterisation plan, each of the theatre commands will have units of the

Army, the Navy and the Air Force and all of them will work as a single entity looking after security challenges in a specified geographical territory. The top military brass also reviewed the security situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China, especially in eastern Ladakh sector where troops of India and China have been locked in an over four-year standoff, it was learnt. Separately, General Chauhan is scheduled to chair an apex level tri-service financial conference on Thursday in Delhi. The conference is aimed at enhancing cohesion and synergy on financial issues of the armed forces and will see the participation of senior officials from the Defence Ministry, Controller General Defence Accounts, integrated financial advisers of the three services and Indian Coast Guard.

Rain chokes Delhi-NCR, traffic hit

From Page 1

A commuter travelling from Haryana to Delhi said that while returning there was no traffic as such but as soon as rainfall started, huge jams were witnessed. "There was bad traffic jam in the city specially near the Kashmir Gate ISBT due to heavy waterlogging. This is an everyday affair now. To see the city's infrastructure collapse even if light rainfall happens," he said. According to IMD's 10-day forecast for Delhi, the capital will continue to witness cloudy skies and the possibility of rains and thunderstorms till September 14. The weather agency has not issued any colour alert for the rest of the week yet.

BJP trounces AAP in MCD ward elections

From Page 1

After Wednesday's election, the equation in the MCD standing committee now stands at 9 members from the BJP, 8 from the AAP and one seat remaining vacant. The election for the vacant seat remains pending. If the BJP manages to win this seat as well, it could wield significant influence over financial and administrative decisions, challenging the authority of the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). Such a shift could potentially spark a new power struggle within Delhi's political landscape. At the same time, if the AAP manages to secure the seat, a 9-9 stalemate would ensue,

requiring the drawing of lots to elect the committee's chairman. The Committee's role is pivotal as it is responsible for the initial scrutiny and approval of proposals. Only those proposals that pass through the Standing Committee can be presented to the MCD House for further consideration. This gives the Standing Committee considerable power, often surpassing that of the MCD Mayor. The Chairperson of the Standing Committee, elected from among its members, holds extensive powers and often has more functional influence than the Mayor, despite the latter being the official head of the MCD.

The all-important Standing Committee is made up of 18 members, 12 elected from each of the 12 zones and six directly elected by the House. No project costing more than Rs 5 crore can proceed without the standing committee's approval making the significance of the body important. Pawan Shehrawat and Sugandha, the councillors who recently switched sides from the AAP to BJP, won the post of chairman for the ward committees from Narela and Central Zones respectively. The Civil Lines Zone saw a keen contest between the AAP and BJP with the saffron party winning all three posts by a margin of one vote each.

Further, Anil Kumar Tyagi defeated Ajeet Singh Yadav by polling 10 votes, while Rekha triumphed over her rival Gagan Chaudhary in a similar fashion. Former North Delhi mayor and BJP leader of opposition in MCD Raja Iqbal Singh defeated Promila Gupta of AAP by polling 10 votes as against nine by her. In the Karol Bagh Zone, AAP councillor Rakesh Joshi was elected unopposed as chairman of the ward committee, while Jyoti Gautam and Ankush Narang bagged the posts of deputy chairman and member of the standing committee in absence of any BJP candidate. AAP candidates Mohd Sadiq, Kiran Bala, and Punardeep

Singh Sawhney were elected unopposed as chairman, deputy chairman of the ward committee, and member of the standing committee from City SP Zone in the absence of any candidates from the BJP. BJP candidates were elected unopposed from the Keshav Puram Zone. In South Zone, cross voting led to a tie between the BJP and AAP. Through lottery, AAP won the zonal chairman post. The party's candidates also won the posts of chairman and standing committee member. In Rohini, AAP's Preetam Anil Rana won the president's post by defeating her BJP rival. Dharam Rakshak and Daulat bagged the posts of deputy

chairman and standing committee member after the BJP candidates withdrew nominations for the two posts. In the West Zone, the BJP candidates withdrew their nominations for the three posts. The Shahdara North zone saw BJP candidates emerging victorious after defeating their Congress rivals. The voting for the ward committee polls in the zone went on for the longest time. The Congress, which has nine councillors, had fielded candidates from the Shahdara North zone. The AAP candidates withdrew their nomination for the post of chairman and deputy chairman, while Congress

candidate withdrew her nomination from the standing committee member. Former East Delhi mayor Neema Bhagat was elected as a standing committee member from Shahdara South Zone. The elections were carried out smoothly under a heavy security deployment. Celebrating the win, Northwest BJP MP Yogendra Chandolia said, "If these elections had happened after the mayor elections, then too, the same results would have come. They (AAP) thought we wouldn't get a majority in the standing committee and wanted to have all control. They tried their best to do so from 2022 till today."

The result comes a day after Delhi lieutenant governor V K Saxena ordered the MCD commissioner to notify the appointment of deputy commissioners as presiding officers for the polls. The voting was held in two clusters of all MCD zones, held simultaneously with councillors of five zones casting their votes together, while the remaining zones will go to polls separately. The long pending elections were held for the first time since the unification of the trifurcated MCD in 2022. Due to a political deadlock between the ruling AAP and the opposition BJP, the polls could not take place and the matter became sub judice.

Probe blames UK govt, industry for Grenfell Towers tragedy

Prime Minister Keir Starmer apologises for 2017 blaze in which 72 lives were lost

AP ■ LONDON

A damning report on a deadly London high-rise fire said Wednesday that decades of failures by government, regulators and industry turned Grenfell Tower into a "death trap" where 72 people lost their lives.

The years-long public inquiry into the 2017 blaze concluded that there was no "single cause" of the tragedy, but said a combination of dishonest companies, weak or incompetent regulators and complacent government led the building to be covered in combustible cladding that turned a small apartment fire into the deadliest blaze on British soil since World War II.

The inquiry's head, retired judge Martin Moore-Bick, said the victims' deaths were all avoidable, and "those who lived in the tower were badly failed over a number of years" by multiple people and organisations.

"All contributed to it in one way or another, in most cases through incompetence but in some cases through dishonesty and greed," he said.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer apologised on behalf of British state, saying the tragedy "should never have happened" and promising the victims justice.

While the report may give survivors some of the answers they have long sought, they face a wait to see whether anyone responsible will be prosecuted. Police will examine the inquiry's

conclusions before deciding on charges.

Natasha Elcock, of Grenfell United, a group representing survivors and bereaved families, urged authorities to "deliver justice and bring charges against those who are culpable for the deaths of our loved ones".

"Today's report speaks to the lack of competence, understanding and fundamental failure to perform the most basic duties of care," said Elcock, a survivor of the fire who lost her uncle in the tragedy. "We paid the price for systematic dishonesty, institutional indifference and neglect."

The fire broke out in the early hours of June 14, 2017, in a fourth-floor apartment and spread up the 25-story building like a lit fuse, fuelled by flammable cladding panels on the tower's exterior walls. The tragedy horrified the nation and raised questions about lax safety regulations and other failings by officials and businesses that contributed to so many deaths.

"How was it possible in 21st century London for a reinforced concrete building, itself structurally impervious to fire, to be turned into a death trap?" asked the report.

It concluded: "There is no simple answer to that question."

Grenfell Tower, built from concrete in the 1970s, had been covered during a refurbishment in the years before the fire with aluminum and polyethylene cladding - a layer of foam insulation topped by two sheets of aluminum



sandwiched around a layer of polyethylene, a combustible plastic polymer that melts and drips on exposure to heat.

The report was highly critical of companies that made the building's cladding. It said they engaged in "systematic dishonesty", manipulating safety tests and misrepresenting the results to claim the material was safe.

It said insulation manufacturer Celotex was unscrupulous, and another insulation firm, Kingspan, "cynically exploited the industry's lack of detailed knowledge". It said cladding panel maker Arconic "concealed from the market the true extent of the danger".

The combustible cladding was used on

the building because it was cheap and because of "incompetence of the organisations and individuals involved in the refurbishment" - including architects, engineers and contractors - all of whom thought safety was someone else's responsibility, the report said.

The inquiry concluded the failures multiplied because bodies in charge of enforcing Britain's building standards were weak, the local authority was uninterested and the "complacent" Conservative-led UK government ignored safety warnings because of a commitment to deregulation.

The inquiry has held more than 300 public hearings and examined around 1,600 witness statements. An initial report published in 2019, looking at what happened the night of the fire, criticised the fire department for telling residents to stay in their apartments and await rescue. The advice was changed almost two hours after the fire broke out, too late for many on the upper floors to escape.

London Fire Brigade came in for further criticism for a "chronic lack of effective management and leadership". The report said firefighters were not adequately trained to deal with a high-rise fire and were issued with old communications equipment that didn't work properly.

The Grenfell tragedy prompted soul-searching about inequality in Britain. Grenfell was a public housing building set in one of London's richest

neighbourhoods - a stones' throw from the pricey boutiques and elegant houses of Notting Hill - and many victims were working-class people with immigrant roots. The victims came from 23 countries and included taxi drivers and architects, a poet, an acclaimed young artist, retirees and 18 children.

The report said the inquiry had "seen no evidence that any of the decisions that resulted in the creation of a dangerous building or the calamitous spread of fire were affected by racial or social prejudice".

In the wake of the fire, the UK government banned metal composite cladding panels for all new buildings and ordered similar combustible cladding to be removed from hundreds of tower blocks across the country. But it's an expensive job and the work hasn't been carried out on some apartment buildings because of wrangling over who should pay.

The report made multiple recommendations, including tougher fire safety rules, a national fire and rescue college and a single independent regulator for the construction industry to replace the current mishmash of bodies.

The ruined tower, which stood for months after the fire like a black tombstone on the west London skyline, still stands, now covered in white sheeting. A green heart and the words "Grenfell forever in our hearts" are emblazoned at the top.

4 Indian nationals burnt alive in multiple-vehicle Texas road mishap

PTI ■ HOUSTON/HYDERABAD

Four Indian nationals, including a woman, lost their lives and several others were injured in a tragic multi-vehicle road accident in the US state of Texas during the Labour Day weekend.

According to the Collin County Sheriff's Office, the accident involving five vehicles occurred on the northbound US 75 just past White Street at Anna near Dallas.

Consul General of India in Houston D C Manjunath confirmed the identities and shared that the Consulate General of India (CGI) is in touch with the families and community organisations, providing full support during this tragic moment.

According to witnesses and preliminary reports, traffic was at a standstill on the highway and an SUV was among those vehicles that were halted when the accident took place on Friday afternoon.

A truck travelling at a high speed failed to slow down and struck the rear of the SUV. The force of the collision was such that the SUV caught fire and the four occupants were trapped inside which resulted in their deaths.

It took days to officially identify the victims as the bodies were charred beyond recognition. Several others sustained non-life-threatening injuries though the exact number remains unclear.

The victims were identified as Aryan Raghunath Orampatti from Kukatpally suburb of Hyderabad, his friend Farooq Sheikh, Lokesh Palacharla, another Telugu student, and Darshini Vasudev from Tamil Nadu.

Orampatti and Sheikh were returning after visiting a cousin in Dallas while Palacharla was heading to Bentonville to reunite with his wife. Darshini Vasudev, a postgraduate from the University of Texas, was on her way to visit her uncle in Arkansas.

The identification of the victims was delayed due to the long weekend and the need for

DNA fingerprinting, using bone remnants to confirm their identities.

"Darshini's uncle Ramanujam lives in Bentonville, Arkansas. She was going to visit him. Darshini had just completed her Master's and had started her job in Frisco, Dallas," Manjunath said.

"The other two, Umar Farooq Sheikh and Aryan Raghunath Orampatti, were recent graduates from the University of Texas at Dallas, with Sheikh completing his MS in Business Analytics in Spring 2023, and Orampatti pursuing his MS in Finance, set to graduate in Spring 2024. Lokesh, who was driving the vehicle, was also a working professional," Manjunath added.

Meanwhile, a friend of Aryan's father in Hyderabad said Wednesday that four people, including Aryan and his friend Farooq, had joined in the vehicle using a carpooling app.

After getting to know about the accident from a relative staying in the US on Saturday, Aryan's parents already left for the US, he told PTI.

Aryan after completing his engineering degree had left for the US to pursue MS and his parents had attended his convocation in May, he said, adding that Aryan wanted to work in the US for two years and then return to India.

Farooq's father Mastan Vali, who stays in Hyderabad told PTI that he was informed on Saturday that an over speeding truck hit the vehicle in which his son and three other Indians including Aryan were travelling, from the rear side.

"Some friends of Farooq had informed my daughter, who lives in the US about the accident. She informed me about it on Saturday. My daughter is following up with authorities there," Mastan Vali said, adding they were planning to bring Farooq's mortal remains to Hyderabad.

Farooq had left for the US in August 2021 from here and after completing his MS there he was now working, his father said.

Ukraine's Foreign Minister Kuleba resigns

7 killed as Russia continues to pound new areas

AP ■ KYIV

Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, one of Ukraine's most recognisable faces on the international stage, submitted his resignation Wednesday ahead of an expected major government reshuffle. Russian strikes, meanwhile, killed seven people in a western Ukraine city, a day after one of the deadliest missile attacks since the war began.

Kuleba, 43, didn't give a reason for stepping down. His resignation will be discussed by lawmakers at their next session, parliamentary speaker Ruslan Stefanchuk said on his Facebook page. Four other Cabinet ministers tendered their resignations late Tuesday, making the Cabinet reshuffle likely the biggest since Russia's

February 2022 invasion. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy indicated last week that a reshuffle was imminent, with the war poised to enter a critical stage and as its 1,000-day mark looms in November.

Zelenskyy needs to keep up Ukraine's morale amid the grinding war of attrition with its bigger neighbour and steel the country's resolve for what will be another hard winter. Russia has been smashing Ukraine's power grid, knocking out some 70% of generation capacity and rupturing heat and water supplies. And Wednesday's deadly attack on Lviv - a city near the border with NATO member Poland and far from the front lines - underscored how all of Ukraine is at the mercy of Moscow's

long-range capabilities. The Ukrainian army's risky incursion almost a month ago into Russia's Kursk border region raised Ukrainian spirits and countered months of grim news from the front line in eastern Ukraine. The incursion's ultimate goals are unclear, though Zelenskyy says Ukraine wants to create a buffer zone there that would prevent cross-border Russian attacks.

Russian President Vladimir Putin remains bent on pushing his army deeper into eastern Ukraine, meanwhile. Russia's onslaught in Donetsk, where Ukraine is short of troops and air defences, and long-range missile strikes that repeatedly hit civilian areas of Ukraine signal that Putin will remain uncompromising and unrelenting in his efforts to crush

Ukrainian resistance. The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington think tank, said late Tuesday that Putin believes Russia "can slowly and indefinitely subsume Ukraine through grinding advances and that Russia can achieve its goals through a war of attrition against Ukrainian forces and by outlasting Western support" for Kyiv. Zelenskyy is also keeping in mind the US presidential election in November, which could bring a shift in key US military support for his country. During the war Kuleba has been second only to Zelenskyy in carrying Ukraine's message and needs to an international audience, whether through social media posts or meetings with foreign dignitaries. In July, Kuleba became the highest-ranking Ukrainian

official to visit China since Russia's invasion. He has been foreign minister since March 2020. Kuleba's successor is not yet known but is expected to be announced on Thursday. Several Ukrainian media outlets, citing unnamed sources, said Kuleba's deputy, Andrii Sybiha, would become the country's chief diplomat.

The new foreign minister will likely accompany Zelenskyy to the UN General Assembly in New York next week, which is an opportunity to lobby global leaders for their support. More than half the current Cabinet will undergo changes, said Davyd Arakhamia, a leader of Zelenskyy's party in the Ukrainian parliament. Ministers will be resigning on Wednesday and new appointments will be made Thursday, he said.

Migrants' boat capsizes off Italy; about 20 missing

AP ■ ROME

About 20 migrants are believed to be missing after their boat capsized in the Mediterranean this week, the UN refugee agency said Wednesday.

Seven Syrians were rescued and taken to the southern Italian island of Lampedusa, the Italian coast guard said. Chiara Cardolett, the UNHCR representative to Italy, said on X that the seven survivors were "in critical conditions and many have lost their relatives." Survivors said they had left Libya on September 1 and the accident occurred after one day of sailing, Italian news agency ANSA reported.

Egyptian President makes first visit to Turkiye, as relations thaw

AP ■ ANKARA

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi on Wednesday is making his first official visit to Turkiye since assuming power, after the two regional powers ended years of tensions. El-Sissi and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan are set to discuss bilateral relations, the conflict in Gaza and escalating tensions in the Middle East, among other topics. They are also expected to oversee the signing of more than a dozen cooperation agreements to strengthen the relationship between their nations, including in energy, defense and tourism.

In February, Erdogan made his first visit to Egypt in more than a decade after the two countries agreed to mend ties and reappointed ambassadors. Erdogan declared that the two countries wanted to boost bilateral trade to \$15 billion from the current \$10 billion.

Relations between Egypt and

Turkiye, a long-time backer of the Muslim Brotherhood group, soured after the Egyptian military ousted Islamist President Mohammed Morsi amid mass protests against his divisive one year of rule. Morsi was from the Muslim Brotherhood group, which has been outlawed as a terrorist organisation in Egypt. In recent years, Ankara has stopped its criticism of el-Sissi's government, aiming to repair strained relations with Egypt and other Arab nations while seeking investments during an economic downturn. In November 2022, Erdogan and el-Sissi were photographed shaking hands at the World Cup in Qatar.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry then travelled to Turkiye in 2023 to show solidarity with the country after a deadly earthquake struck parts of southern Turkiye and Syria. It is el-Sissi's first visit to Turkiye since he was elected president in 2014, a year after

he led the military's overthrow of Morsi. El-Sissi will be accompanied by a large delegation of officials and businessmen, Egyptian media reported. Egypt, together with Qatar and the United States, a key Israel ally, has been working for months to try and broker a cease-fire and the return of the remaining 100 hostages held by Hamas. The negotiations have been dragged out since Israel introduced new demands, including lasting Israeli control over the Philadelphia corridor between Gaza and Egypt and a second corridor running across the Palestinian enclave.

Egypt has accused the Israeli prime minister of obstructing the negotiations. It is opposed to any Israeli presence along the Gaza side of its border and says it would threaten the decades-old peace treaty between the two countries, a cornerstone of regional stability. Hamas has tried unsuccessfully to have Turkiye added as a guarantor in the cease-fire talks.



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (left) and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi review an honour guard during a welcome ceremony prior to their meeting at the Presidential palace in Ankara, on Wednesday. AP/PTI

Shooting at Georgia High School as students flee to stadium

AP ■ WINDER

A shooting at a Georgia high school Wednesday caused an unknown number of injuries and a suspect was arrested in a chaotic scene in which officers swarmed the campus and students rushed for shelter in the football stadium. One suspect was in custody, the Barrow County Sheriff's Office said in a statement. Shortly before 10:30 am, "officers from multiple law enforcement agencies and Fire/EMS personnel were dispatched to the high school in reference to a reported active shooting," the sheriff's office statement said.

"Casualties have been reported, however details on the number or their conditions is not available at this time," the statement added.

Helicopter video from WSB-TV showed dozens of law enforcement and emergency vehicles surrounding Apalachee High School in Barrow County, about 50 miles (80 kilometres) northeast of Atlanta.

"I have directed all available state resources to respond to the incident at Apalachee High School and urge all Georgians to join my family in praying for the safety of those in our classrooms, both in Barrow County

and across the state," Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp said in a statement.

"We will continue to work with local, state, and federal partners as we gather information and further respond to this situation," Kemp added.

In a statement, the FBI's Atlanta office said: "FBI Atlanta is aware of the current situation at Apalachee High School in Barrow County. Our agents are on scene coordinating with and supporting local law enforcement."

The White House said President Joe Biden has been briefed by his Homeland Security Advisor, Liz Sherwood-Randall, about the shooting and the administration will coordinate with federal, state and local officials as it receives more information. Calls and messages to the Barrow County Sheriff's Office and the school were not immediately returned.

Apalachee High School has about 1,900 students, according to records from Georgia education officials. It became Barrow County's second largest public high school when it opened in 2000, according to the Barrow County School System. It's named after the Apalachee River on the southern edge of Barrow County.

Sweden's foreign minister quits politics

AP ■ COPENHAGEN

Sweden's Foreign Minister Tobias Billström, who steered the Scandinavian country along a sometimes bumpy road to NATO membership and stood tall on supporting Ukraine, stunned the political establishment Wednesday by saying he was leaving the Swedish government next week.

"It has not been an easy decision but something that I have thought about and processed for some time," Billström wrote on X. Billström became foreign minister in October 2022, when Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson formed a coalition government with his own conservative Moderate Party, the smaller Christian Democrats and the Liberals.

In May 2022, Sweden and neighbouring Finland sought NATO



membership, ending decades of post-World War II neutrality and centuries of broader non-alignment with major powers as security concerns in Europe spiked following Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine. After 18 months of delays, Sweden's membership bid cleared the final hurdle in February. Hungary gave its consent. Turkiye also objected to Sweden joining the alliance, but on January 23, Turkish legislators voted in favour. Turkish President

Recep Tayyip Erdogan put forth a series of conditions including a tougher stance from Stockholm toward groups that Turkiye regards as threats to its security, such as Kurdish militants and members of a network it blames for a failed coup in 2016. Sweden became the 32nd member of the military alliance in March. The 50-year-old Billström said on X that he had taken Sweden through "a sometimes challenging NATO process."

On Facebook, Kristersson said that Billström had discharged his duties with "flying colours." Billström said on X that he would "leave politics completely. This means that I am also leaving my seat in the Riksdag," the Swedish parliament. The 349-member assembly will convene next week after the summer recess. Billström has not announced what he'll do next.

Ties with Taiwan 'rock solid', says US amid threats from China

AP ■ TAIPEI

The top US envoy to Taiwan on Wednesday said American support for the island is "rock-solid, principled, and bipartisan," and said Washington will continue to follow through on its commitments to ensure the island can defend itself against threats from China.

Raymond F. Greene's remarks Wednesday came at a time of uncertainty over China's intentions toward the island it claims as its own territory - to be taken by force if necessary - and amid conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East that threaten to draw the US in further.

Greene made clear Taiwan was a top priority, especially the security of shipping in the crucial Taiwan Strait that divides

the island and China. The US will "continue to maintain the capacity to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion against Taiwan," Greene said, referencing the Taiwan Relations Act that ensured such backing following the breaking of formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan in 1979, when Washington normalised relations with the Communist government in Beijing.

Greene said the Executive Branch has notified Congress of approximately \$38.4 billion in Foreign Military Sales to Taiwan since 2010, including over \$6.4 billion under the Biden administration, along with the equivalent of \$345 million in transfers of arms from existing US stocks. Upgraded and new F-16 jet fighters, Abrams tanks and

other equipment have arrived or are in the pipeline, while Taiwan is expanding its production of domestic arms including submarines and anti-landing and ground to air missiles.

A senior American diplomat, Greene arrived two months ago to serve as director of the American Institute in Taiwan, making him America's de-facto ambassador on the island of 23.5 million people that has long retained strong commercial, cultural and political links with the US.

Taiwan was a main issue when US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan visited China last week, aiming to keep communications open in a relationship that has become increasingly tense in recent years. Sullivan, on his first trip to China as the main adviser to

President Joe Biden on national security issues, met with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, Foreign Minister Wang Yi and a top general from the Central Military Commission.

Danny Russel, a vice president at the Asia Society Policy Institute in New York and who served on the national security council in the Obama administration, said the meeting between Sullivan and Xi was particularly important because Sullivan was seen by the Chinese leadership as "a direct extension" of the US president and that Sullivan's messaging was viewed as "coming straight from (President Joe) Biden".

Sullivan also met one of China's vice chairs of the Central Military Commission, Gen Zhang Youxia, last week - a rare meeting with a visiting US

official.

"China demands that the United States stop military collusion between the US and Taiwan, stop arming Taiwan and stop spreading false narratives about Taiwan," a Chinese Defence Ministry statement said, without elaborating on what the false narratives are.

A White House statement said the two had "recognised the progress in sustained, regular military-military communication over the past 10 months". On Taiwan, the US statement said only that Sullivan had raised the importance of cross-strait peace and stability.

China suspended communication between the two militaries after senior US lawmaker and then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan in August 2022. Talks only gradually resumed more than a year

Sensex, Nifty tumble on global downturn

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Stock markets closed lower on Wednesday with Nifty taking a breather after a 14-day winning run and Sensex dropping by 202 points due to weak global trends on worries of potential slowdown in the US market. The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 202.80 points or 0.25 per cent to settle at 82,352.64. During the day, it tumbled 721.75 points or 0.87 per cent to 81,833.69. Snapping its 14-day rally, the NSE Nifty declined 81.15 points or 0.32 per cent to 25,198.70. Intra-day, it tanked 196.05 points or 0.77 per cent to 25,083.80. Nifty has surged nearly 1,141 points or 4.59 per cent in 14 straight days.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Axis Bank, Mahindra &



Mahindra, Infosys, Larsen & Toubro, Tata Steel, Tata Consultancy Services, Bajaj

Finance and Adani Ports were the major laggards. Asian Paints, Hindustan

Unilever, UltraTech Cement, Sun Pharma and Reliance Industries were among the

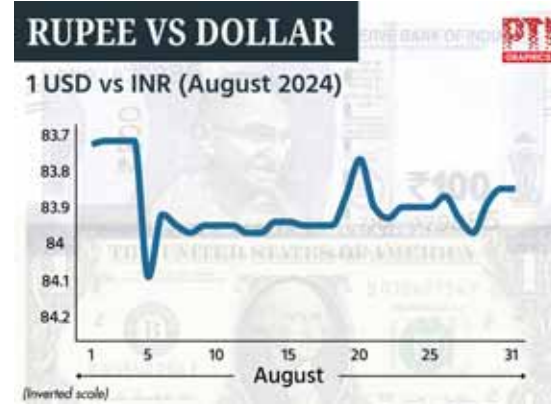
gainers. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai, and Hong Kong ended sharply lower. European markets were also trading in the red. The US markets ended significantly lower on Tuesday. The warning signals from weak US manufacturing data added concerns about a potential slowdown in the US economy, which dragged the domestic indices. Due to a lack of major domestic triggers, the indices will take direction based on global cues, said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 1,029.25 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data. Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.14 per cent to USD 73.65 a barrel.

Rupee falls four paise against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee fell 4 paise to close at 84.02 (provisional) on Wednesday amid a sharp decline in the domestic equity markets as investors stayed away from riskier assets. However, a weak dollar against major currencies overseas and a drop in crude oil prices capped further losses in the local unit, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 83.96 and traded in the range of 83.95-84.01 during the day. The unit moved in a tight range of 83.95-83.97 for most part of the session. However, it slipped at the fag-end of the trading hours to settle at 84.02 (provisional), 4 paise below its previous close of 83.98. 'Weak domestic markets and risk aversion in the global

markets pressurised the rupee. However, a decline in crude oil prices and FII inflows cushioned the downside. India's services PMI expanded to 60.9 in August vs forecast of 60.4 and a reading of 60.3 in July, Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, said. At the domestic equity markets, Sensex dropped 202.80 points to settle at 82,352.64, while Nifty slipped 81.15 points to 25,198.70. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was down 0.17 per cent to 101.65. Brent crude, the international oil benchmark, declined 0.46 per cent to 73.41 in futures trade. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets on Tuesday, as they purchased shares worth Rs 1,029.25 crore, according to exchange data.



Interest equalisation scheme for exporters extended for another month



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government has extended the interest equalisation scheme on pre and post-shipment rupee export credit for one more month till September 30 to promote the country's outbound shipments. The scheme, which provides exporters interest benefits, ended on August 31. In June, it was extended for two months. In a trade notice, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said, 'Trade and industry is hereby informed that the Interest Equalization Scheme for Pre and Post Shipment Rupee Export Credit, which had

earlier been extended up to August 31 as a fund limited scheme, has been further extended for one month i.e., up to September 30, 2024.' It said, however, this extension is applicable only for MSME manufacturing exporters. On December 8, 2023, the Union Cabinet approved an additional allocation of Rs 2,500 crore for the continuation of the scheme up to June 30. The scheme helps exporters from identified sectors and all MSME manufacturer exporters to avail of rupee export credit at competitive rates at a time when the global economy is facing headwinds. Exporters get subsidies under

the Interest Equalisation Scheme for pre- and post-shipment rupee export credit. The additional outlay of Rs 2,500 crore, over and above the current outlay of Rs 9,538 crore under the scheme, was made available to bridge the funding gap to continue the plan up to June 2024. The scheme was started on April 1, 2015, and was initially valid for five years up to March 31, 2020. It has been continued thereafter, including a one-year extension during Covid-19, and with further extensions and fund allocations. The scheme is fund-limited, and benefits to individual exporters are capped at Rs 10 crore per annum per IEC (Import Export Code). After remaining in the positive zone for three months, India's exports contracted 1.5 per cent to USD 33.98 billion in July, while the trade deficit widened to USD 23.5 billion. Exports during April-July this fiscal year surged 4.15 per cent to USD 144.12 billion, and imports grew 7.57 per cent to USD 229.7 billion.

Half of gen Z prefer solar energy: Survey

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A recent survey conducted to gauge awareness about clean energy sources revealed about 50 per cent of Gen Z respondents prefer solar solutions, followed by Millennials at 46 per cent. The report is based on a survey of 4,318 respondents among four age cohorts across five metros -- Bangalore, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai, and 8 non-metros -- Ahmedabad, Chandigarh, Gurugram, Guwahati, Jaipur, Kochi, Lucknow, Patna, conducted between February 2024 to March 2024. Gen Z refers to those who are in the age group of 18-22 years, Millennials 23-38 years, Gen X 39-54 years and baby boomers 55-76. Power Technologies MD and CEO Preeti Bajaj in a statement, said, 'Owing to this shift in needs and demand trends, the Solar spectrum of New India gave us a clear picture to understand the changing consumer perceptions, limitations and opportunities that remain unaddressed



around the sphere of solar energy adoption.' The study showcased that awareness of alternatives to traditional energy sources is on the rise among Indians. As much as 97 per cent of respondents in India do not have a solar rooftop system installed in their homes. In terms of accessibility, the survey revealed that 28 per cent of baby boomers consider solar energy solutions inaccessible, while millennials report the least difficulty, with only 21 per cent expressing concerns. Gen X and Gen Z follow closely, with 23 per cent and 25 per cent respectively, indicating inaccessibility. Most respondents agreed that the shortage of specialised skills and skilled labour is a major roadblock for a seamless transition to solar solutions.



Retirement mutual funds AMC jumps 256 per cent in 5 yrs

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Rising awareness of financial planning has fueled a 256 per cent increase in retirement mutual fund AUM in the last five years, according to a report. Factors such as rising healthcare costs, increasing nuclear families, and higher life expectancy are likely to fuel further growth in this sector, an ICRA Analytics report said. 'Assets under Management (AUM) of these funds have

grown by over 256 per cent in the last five years, reaching Rs 29,903 crore in July 2024, compared to Rs 8395 crore in July 2019,' it said. ICRA said the growing awareness has led to a surge in the number of folios, which has increased by 17.44 per cent in the last five years to 29.36 lakh in July 2024, up from 25 lakh in July 2019. The number of schemes has also increased from 21 in 2019 to 29 in 2024. A retirement mutual fund is a specialized investment vehicle designed to provide a secure

and comfortable post-retirement life. These funds invest in both equity and debt, aiming to balance wealth appreciation and preservation offering a regular income stream during retirement and typically, these funds have a lock-in period of five years or until retirement. The average compound annualised returns on these funds stood at 26.21 per cent, 12.97 per cent and 14.09 per cent for a one-year, three-year and five-year period, the analysis found.

Govt to set up special purpose vehicle to back aircraft manufacturing: Naidu

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government will set up a special purpose vehicle to push ahead with plans to start manufacturing commercial aircraft in India, Civil Aviation Minister K Rammoan Naidu said on Wednesday as he highlighted the potential of the country's fast-growing aviation sector. The Bhartiya Vayuyan Vidheyak Bill 2024, which

was passed by the Lok Sabha in August, includes provisions to regulate the design and manufacturing of aircraft, supporting the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative for self-reliance. 'The government is strongly pushing the idea of India manufacturing its own planes,' Naidu said, adding that a special purpose vehicle will be set up with industry stakeholders and others.

According to him, efforts are being to ensure that aircraft manufacturing activities can start in the next five years, he said. 'We want to be a big player for manufacturing planes and also export them,' Naidu said. India is a key market for aircraft manufacturers - Boeing and Airbus. State-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) is already into manufacturing



small civilian planes but on a smaller scale. India is one of the world's fastest growing civil aviation markets. Speaking at a conference organised by industry body PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Naidu also said there is a lot of potential in the country for MRO (maintenance, overhaul and repair) activities. Noting that the Indian

aviation sector is at the 'transformative crossroads,' the minister also said the aim is to make the country a hub for aviation, air cargo, and MRO activities. Meanwhile, the Bill seeks to remove redundancies and replace the Aircraft Act, 1934 that has been amended 21 times at a time when India is one of the fastest growing civil aviation markets in the world.

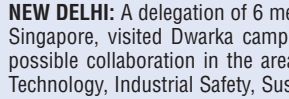
INBRIEF

GNDU NSS UNIT LEADS SUCCESSFUL PLANTATION DRIVE



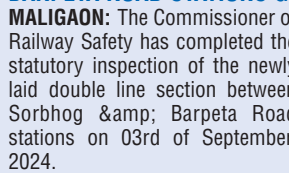
AMRITSAR: The NSS unit of Guru Nanak Dev University conducted a plantation drive today, planting over 20 saplings across the campus. The event, held under the leadership of Vice-Chancellor Dr. Jaspal Singh Sandhu.

A DELEGATION FROM TEMASEK POLYTECHNIC, SINGAPORE, VISITED DWARKA CAMPUS OF GGSIPU



NEW DELHI: A delegation of 6 members from Temasek Polytechnic, Singapore, visited Dwarka campus of GGSIPU. They explored the possible collaboration in the area of Robotics, Informatics, IT, Bio Technology, Industrial Safety, Sustainability etc.

DOUBLE LINE SECTION BETWEEN SORBHOG AND BARPETA ROAD STATIONS GETS COMMISSIONED



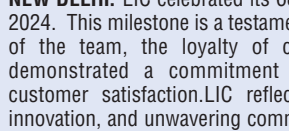
MALIGAON: The Commissioner of Railway Safety has completed the statutory inspection of the newly laid double line section between Sorbhog & Barpeta Road stations on 03rd of September, 2024.

POWERGRID PUTS UP INDIA PAVILION AT CIGRE PARIS EXHIBITION 2024



PARIS: Power Grid Corporation of India Limited showcased its prowess and rapid strides in the power sector at the India Pavilion put up by POWERGRID at the prestigious CIGRE Paris Exhibition 2024.

LIC CELEBRATES MILESTONE OF 68TH ANNIVERSARY



NEW DELHI: LIC celebrated its 68th Anniversary on 1st September, 2024. This milestone is a testament to the dedication and hard work of the team, the loyalty of customers and has consistently demonstrated a commitment to excellence, innovation, and customer satisfaction. LIC reflects on the journey of growth, innovation, and unwavering commitment to excellence.



Flipkart expects to create 1 lakh new jobs ahead of festival season

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

E-commerce major Flipkart is expecting to create 1 lakh new jobs for the upcoming festival season sale, The Big Billion Days 2024, across India, the company said on Wednesday. Ahead of The Big Billion Days (TBBD) 2024, Flipkart has launched 11 new fulfilment centres (FCs) across nine cities, bringing their total number in the country to 83, the Walmart group firm said in a statement. 'With its commitment to socio-economic development, Flipkart remains focused on enabling employment opportunities, creating over 1 lakh new jobs within its supply chain across the

country. This aims to strengthen Flipkart's operational capabilities while empowering local communities and driving economic growth during this year's festive season, the statement said. Flipkart said the new job roles will be spread across various supply chain verticals, including inventory managers, warehouse associates, logistics coordinators, kirana partners and delivery drivers. Most of the jobs created by e-commerce companies during the festival season sale are seasonal in nature. Flipkart said it will organise comprehensive skilling and training programmes that

have been planned for the new workers in the run-up to the festival season. 'The new hires will also contribute to Flipkart's supply chain diversity vision, with a focus on employing more women, people with disabilities and those from the LGBTQAI+ community, reflecting the organisation's commitment to maintaining an inclusive workplace,' the statement said. Flipkart added that it is leveraging innovative technology to ensure seamless supply chain operations, optimised inventory management, and improved product availability to meet the rising demand, particularly during the upcoming festivals.

India targets 1 billion dollar liquor exports

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With the global demand for Indian spirits growing at a healthy rate, the government is planning to promote both Indian alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages in the international markets and is eyeing USD one billion (about Rs 8,000 crore) exports in the next few years. The commerce ministry's arm APEDA (Agricultural & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority) said that India currently ranks 40th in the world for alcoholic beverage exports. As per estimates, the country has huge unrealised export potential. The authority, as part of the 'Make in India' initiative, has been targeting to increase exports of Indian spirits to major foreign destinations. 'It is potentially eyeing USD 1 billion in export revenue over the next few years,' it said in a statement on Wednesday. The country's alcoholic beverages exports stood at over Rs 2,200 crore in 2023-24. The major destinations include UAE, Singapore, Netherlands, Tanzania, Angola, Kenya and Rwanda. APEDA also said that Diageo India (United Spirits Ltd.) is set to launch 'Godawan', in



the United Kingdom. It is a single-malt whiskey made in Rajasthan. Commenting on the USD one billion target, Vinod Giri, Director General, the Brewers Association of India said that huge potential is there in the different countries for Indian products. 'While the single-malt will play a greater role in making India's reputation as a high-

quality whiskey producer, the volumes will come from beverages which are more palatable taste-wise and price-wise such as premium Indian whiskeys and premium rum,' he said. Price-wise Giri added that huge export potential is there in the US, Africa and Europe. He suggested the government to urge states to include the element of export promotion in state excise policies.

World champion Sachin Khilari wins silver in men's shot put (F46) in Paralympics

PTI ■ PARIS

World champion Sachin Sarjerao Khilari clinched a silver in men's shot put F46 event with an Asian record distance of 16.32m as the country's track-and-field athletes continued their unprecedented medal-winning run in the Paralympic Games here on Wednesday. The 34-year-old Khilari achieved his best throw of the day in his second attempt to better his own Asian record of 16.30m which he set while winning gold in the World Paralympic Athletics Championships in Japan in May. However, the effort, which was also his personal best, was not enough for the top honour as Greg Stewart of Canada defended his Tokyo Paralympics gold with a throw of 16.38m. Luka Bakovic of Croatia took the bronze with 16.27m. Khilari's silver is the 11th medal from para-athletics in the ongoing Games and took India's overall tally to 21, including three gold. Stewart had finished second to Khilari in the World Paralympic Athletics Championships in Kobe in May, and the tables were turned at Stade de France on Wednesday. F46 classification is for athletes with arm deficiency, impaired muscle power or impaired passive range of movement in arms, with athletes competing in

a standing position. "I had wanted to win the gold medal, but it did not happen. It's my best distance but I am not satisfied. I feel I could have done better. It was not my day," Khilari said after winning the silver medal. "It was a tough competition and Greg Stewart is a great player. I made small mistakes in my technique. I will work harder and I hope to beat him next time." Late on Tuesday night, Indians won silver and bronze in both men's high jump T63 and javelin throw F46 after Deepthi Jeevanji's bronze in the women's 400m T20 category. Sharad Kumar and Mariyappan Thangavelu won silver and bronze respectively in the men's high jump T63 while Ajeet Singh and Sundar Singh Gurjar took the second and third spots in the javelin throw F46 final. On Wednesday, Khilari was leading at the end of the second round but Stewart surged ahead with his third throw of 16.34m before improving further in his fifth and penultimate attempt of 16.38m. Other Indians in the fray, Mohd Yasser (14.21m) and Rohit Kumar (14.10m) finished eighth and ninth respectively. American Joshua Cinnamo, who holds the world record of 16.80m, was fourth with 15.66m. A mechanical engineering degree holder, Khilari, who had



also won a gold in last year's Asian Para Games in China, has an impaired left hand. Hailing from a farming family at Karagani village in Maharashtra's Sangli district, Khilari met with an accident during his school days. The injury resulted in gangrene of the skin on his elbow and muscle atrophy. Even after several surgeries, his arm never recovered. He also lost his mother when he was young. Despite all these setbacks, he took up javelin while he was studying to become an engineer. A shoulder injury during competition forced him to switch to shot put. Khilari was introduced to para sports in 2015 and later met well-known coach Satyanarayana who supported him in improving his game. He also worked as a visiting faculty member at various institutions, assisting students in their UPSC and Maharashtra Public Service examination preparations. The previous best show by India's track and field contingent in a single Paralympics was in Tokyo when it won one gold, five silver and two bronze medals. With 11 medals, including a gold from star javelin thrower Sumit Antil, the para athletes have bagged more than half of the country's total medals. The number of gold is, however, set to be lower than what the officials had hoped to win this time.

India achieves best-ever medal haul in Paralympics

PTI ■ PARIS

India achieved its best ever medal haul in the Paralympics as it went past last edition's number of podium finishes on the back of a superlative performance by the country's track and field athletes here on Tuesday. A late evening rush of medals swelled India's tally to 20 (3 gold, 7 silver, 10 bronze) to surpass its earlier best haul of 19 medals at the Tokyo Paralympic Games three years ago. On a red-letter day for Indian para sports, the track and field athletes showcased their might for the second consecutive day at the iconic Stade de France, bagging five medals — two silver and three bronze — as the country ended day six of the quadrennial showpiece at 17th place. India had won five gold, eight silver and six bronze medals at the Tokyo Paralympics. India's javelin throwers continued to set the bar high with Ajeet Singh and world record holder Sundar Singh Gurjar clinching the silver and bronze with throws of 65.62m and 64.96m respectively in the F46 category. F46 category is for field athletes with moderately affected movement in one or both arms or the absence of limbs. High jumpers Sharad Kumar and Tokyo Paralympics gold medalist Mariyappan Thangavelu gave it their all before settling for silver and bronze in the T63 finals, with jumps of 1.88m and 1.85m respectively. T63 is for high jumpers with available movement moderately affected in one leg or the absence of limbs above the knee.



Earlier, world champion sprinter Deepthi Jeevanji ensured another bronze for India in the women's 400m (T20) event with the 20-year-old clocking 55.82sec to secure a podium finish in her debut Games appearance. She finished behind Yuliia Shuliar (55.16sec) of Ukraine and world record holder Aysel Onder (55.23sec) of Turkey. Daughter of farm labourers from Kallede Village in Telangana's Warangal district, Jeevanji was diagnosed with intellectual impairment after being spotted at a school level athletics meet by one of her teachers. Growing up, she and her parents were subjected to taunts by natives of her village due to her disability. However, the same village has been celebrating her ever since she won a gold at last year's

Asian Para Games before breaking the world record at the Para World Championships in May this year to fetch another gold. The youngster was also assisted by national badminton coach Pullela Gopichand after she began training with her formative coach Nagpur Ramesh. The T20 category is meant for athletes who have intellectual impairment. LEKHARA'S CAMPAIGN ENDS: However, ace Indian shooter Avani Lekhara missed out on a second medal at the Games as she finished fifth in the final of the women's 50m rifle 3 positions SH1 competition in Chateauroux. The 22-year-old, paralysed waist-down at 11 years of age owing to a car accident, shot a total of 420.6 across the three stages of kneeling, prone and

standing in a world-class eight-woman field. However, she has lots to celebrate after becoming first Indian woman to win consecutive gold medals at Paralympics following a top finish in the 10m air rifle competition last week. Germany's Natascha Hiltrop won the gold with a total of 456.5, Slovakian Veronika Vadovicova claimed silver with 456.1, and China's Zhang shot 446.0 to bag the bronze. The SH1 class is designated for athletes with lower-limb impairment for competition in rifle shooting events. Here shooters are able to hold their gun without difficulty and shoot from a standing or sitting position (in a wheelchair or chair). JADHAV ENDS 5TH IN SHOT PUT: Bhagyashri Jadhav finished fifth in the

women's shot put (F34). Jadhav, making her second appearance at the Paralympics, produced a throw of 7.28m but it was not enough for a podium finish. China's Lijuan Zou won the gold with a season's best of 9.14m while Poland's Lucyna Kornobys secured the silver with an effort of 8.33m. The 39-year-old Indian, who hails from Nanded district in Maharashtra, is an inspiring story of resilience. She slipped into depression after losing the use of her legs due to an accident in 2006. But she fought back to reclaim her life as a para-athlete with help from friends and family. ARCHER POOJA'S CAMPAIGN ENDS IN QUARTERS: World Para Championship silver medalist Pooja Jatyan beat Yagmur Sengul of Turkey in straight sets to storm into the quarterfinals of recurve women's open archery competition. However, the 27-year-old could not sustain the momentum and lost to Tokyo Paralympics bronze-medallist Wu Chunyan of China in the last-eight stage. It was a particularly painful loss to Chunyan given that Pooja led 4-0 at one stage. A winner of four Paralympics medals, including a team gold in 2016 Rio Games, the 34-year-old Chinese archer was nowhere in the picture after a disastrous opening set in which she shot twice in the 7-point red ring to aggregate 23 points. But perhaps pressure got the better of Pooja, who fumbled her chance by allowing Chunyan to make a comeback in the third set, following which the match turned on its head.



Roger Federer is back at the US Open as a fan after speaking about Sinner's 'tricky' doping case

AP ■ NEW YORK

Roger Federer thinks Jannik Sinner's doping case raises questions about whether the current No. 1-ranked tennis player should have been allowed to continue competing until he was absolved of intentionally using an anabolic steroid he tested positive for twice in March. "It's not something we want to see in our sport, these types of news, regardless if he did something or not. Or any player did. It's just noise that we don't want. I understand the frustration of: Has he been treated the same as others? And I think this is where it comes down to. We all trust pretty much at the end, he didn't do anything," Federer said Tuesday in an appearance on the "Today" show to promote a book of photos of him. "But the inconsistency, potentially, that he didn't have to sit out while they were not 100 percent sure what was going on - I think that's the question here that needs to be answered." Hours later Tuesday night, Federer received a warm ovation from spectators in

Arthur Ashe Stadium when he was introduced to the crowd during the second set of the U.S. Open quarterfinal between Aryna Sabalenka and Zheng Qinwen. Federer smiled and waved as he was shown on the videoboard in the arena. It was the 20-time Grand Slam champion's first visit to the venue since he stopped competing. Federer announced his retirement in 2022; he played his last official match at Wimbledon the year before. He is the last man to win consecutive titles at the U.S. Open, collecting five in a row from 2004 to 2008. Several top players have been asked about Sinner, who is scheduled to face 2021 U.S. Open champion Daniil Medvedev in the Grand Slam tournament's quarterfinals on Wednesday. Rafael Nadal told a Spanish television show on Monday he doesn't think Sinner received preferential treatment. The International Tennis Integrity Agency said on Aug. 20 that it was determined that the banned performance-enhancer inadvertently

entered Sinner's system through a massage from his physiotherapist, and that is why the player was not suspended. Asked about the matter in New York before the U.S. Open began, Novak Djokovic said he gets why some tennis players question whether there's a double standard in the sport. "It's a tricky situation and it's the nightmare of every athlete and team, to have these allegations and these problems," Federer said, adding: "We need to trust the process as well of everyone involved." Federer said he spoke recently with Nadal, his longtime on-court rival and off-court friend, who is 38 and has played sparingly the last two seasons because of injuries, including a hip operation last year. He is sitting out the U.S. Open. There are questions about whether Nadal, who has won 22 Grand Slam trophies, will return to the tour. "He can do whatever he wants," Federer said. "He's been one of the most iconic tennis players we've ever had in our sport."

Taylor Fritz gets past Alexander Zverev to reach his first Grand Slam semifinal

AP ■ NEW YORK

As he watched one last errant forehand from his higher-ranked, more-accomplished U.S. Open opponent land wide, Taylor Fritz dropped his neon-colored racket, clenched both fists and screamed, "Come on!" Fritz gathered himself and his equipment, walked to the net for a hug with No. 4 Alexander Zverev, who twice was a Grand Slam runner-up, then stepped to the center of Arthur Ashe Stadium, spread his arms wide and yelled again, "Come on!" After years of climbing the rankings, of becoming the top American man in tennis, of coming close to making a breakthrough at one of his sport's four most important events, Fritz finally came through at home, beating Zverev 7-6 (2), 3-6, 6-4, 7-6 (3) on Tuesday at Flushing Meadows to reach a major semifinal for the first time. The 12th-seeded Fritz, a 26-

year-old from California, entered the day with an 0-4 record in Slam quarterfinals. "I've had a lot of looks at quarterfinals over the last couple of years, and today just felt different," Fritz told the crowd that supported him throughout the win, including with frowned-upon applause after some of Zverev's first-serve faults. "I really felt like it was my time to take it a step further." Now he is headed to the final four at the U.S. Open, where he will meet either No. 9 Grigor Dimitrov of Bulgaria or No. 20 Frances Tiafoe of the United States. Those two were scheduled to play each other on Tuesday night. "It's cool I'm in the semis. But I very much have the mindset of the job's not done," Fritz said. "A question I got asked pretty much every time I lost in my quarterfinals was, 'What's it going to take to go further?' And the answer I gave was always: Just keep putting myself in these situations, and I'll become

more comfortable in these situations and get better. That's definitely what happened now. The quarterfinals didn't feel like, I don't know, this big thing to me like it has been, I guess, in the past." A Fritz-Tiafoe semifinal - "That could be crazy," Fritz said - would be the first between a pair of American men at any major since 2005, when Andre Agassi defeated Robby Ginepri in New York. No American man has won a Grand Slam singles trophy since Andy Roddick triumphed at the U.S. Open in 2003. The other men's quarterfinals will be played Wednesday: No. 1 Jannik Sinner vs. No. 5 Daniil Medvedev, and No. 10 Alex de Minaur vs. No. 25 Jack Draper. In the women's bracket, No. 13 Emma Navarro of the U.S. Reached her first Grand Slam semifinal by taking the last six games in a 6-2, 7-5 victory over No. 26 Paula Badosa and next faces No. 2 Aryna



Sabalenka or No. 7 Zheng Qinwen. Fritz used his usual blend of big serving, winning 20 of 21 points when his first serves landed in during the fourth set, and big forehands, but he also was effective at the net - winning 16 of 24 points when he pushed forward - and returned well enough to

accumulate 10 break points. "There's still work to be done, but his transition game is getting better. The fact he's seeing it pay off, especially here at the U.S. Open in some big points ... He's starting to buy into it and believe it," said Fritz's coach, Michael Russell, specifically mentioning a volley that won a 24-stroke

exchange to make it 5-2 in the concluding tiebreaker. "It's good to see. That's a big step that we've been really emphasizing for him to win (at) these bigger stages. You can't just serve and be on the baseline." Even though Fritz only converted two of those break chances, it meant he

constantly put pressure on Zverev, a German who made it to the finals of the U.S. Open in 2020 and the French Open this year. "My backhand, I don't remember, since being on tour, hitting my backhand this badly. I just don't. I mean, I was missing shots which were in the middle of the court with no pace, and (they landed in the) bottom of the net. Terrible. Just absolutely terrible by me," Zverev said, shutting his eyes and shaking his head. "My forehand was OK, actually. My serve was OK. But my most reliable shot, the shot that I'm most known for, the shot that you normally wake me up at 3 a.m. And I would not miss, was absolutely not there today," added Zverev, who also lost to Fritz at Wimbledon in July, "and I have no words for it, to be honest." He described himself as "angry." Fritz's latest quarterfinal loss came at the All England Club

against Lorenzo Musetti. The other three? Two came against 24-time Slam champion Novak Djokovic; the other against 22-time Slam champion Rafael Nadal. One was at last year's U.S. Open against Djokovic, who went on to win the title. Djokovic was eliminated this time in the third round last week; Nadal sat out the tournament. Russell said those past stumbles were not a topic of conversation before this quarterfinal. "We would never talk about, Hey, you haven't been to the semifinals of a Slam before, because you're not really breeding the positivity factor to it," Fritz's coach said. "It's more about, 'You've been in this position before and come out here and use your weapons that you have, and use the new weapons that we're trying to create, and just go out there and play your game, use the crowd, love the excitement and the actual competition and battle, which he does, and just go feed off it."

PANT IN FOCUS ON RED BALL RETURN; SELECTORS EYE BACKUP OPTIONS

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Rishabh Pant's red-ball return will be closely monitored but the national selectors will also trace suitable backup options to frontline stars when Duleep Trophy, which precludes an important Test season, begins across Bengaluru and Anantapur on Thursday. Pant, who returned to white-ball formats after that horrific car crash, is yet to play in a longer-duration match. His last red-ball outing was against Bangladesh in December 2022. Now, he will turn out for Abhimanyu Easwaran-led Team B against Shubman Gill-captained Team A at the Chinnaswamy Stadium. Satisfying his outings in the shorter versions were, but this four-day tournament offers him a unique challenge - batting and "keeping for an undefined number of overs. Pant is the designated stumper in Team B, and it is evident that the Ajit Agarkar-led selection panel is intending to take a deep look into his role as the wicketkeeper-batter in a season that will culminate with the World Test Championship Final at the Lord's next June. But that is just one piece of the puzzle as other worthy

contenders are there for the wicketkeeper-batter's slot. The front-runner is Dhruv Jurel (Team A), who was impressive in his debut series against England earlier this year. Then there's Ishan Kishan, who will play for Team D which is marshalled by Shreyas Iyer at Anantapur. Kishan, though a long shot, will be eager to use Duleep Trophy as a platform to stake his claim for an India return after an unsavoury train of incidents saw him losing the BCCI central contract in the current cycle. The return of veterans Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma for the Bangladesh series will gobble up two batting slots along with Gill at No. 3. Hence, there will be a jostle between KL Rahul, Shreyas Iyer, Sarfaraz Khan, who impressed all with an excellent Test debut against England, for settling into the available middle-order space. It's imperative for Rahul, who is in Team A as a pure batter, and Shreyas to come good in Duleep Trophy as they missed a large chunk of the home matches against England - the former with an injury and the latter was dropped after the second Test at Visakhapatnam.



BOWLING BACK-UP: India have been well-served by the troika of Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj and Mohammed Shami in Tests for a while now, but it's unwise to enter a long Test season without sufficient alternates. More so because Siraj will miss the first round of Duleep

Trophy with an illness and Shami, whose last competitive outing was the 2023 50-over World Cup final, is still recuperating after a surgery. The selectors will keep a close eye on Bengal duo of Mukesh Kumar and Akash Deep, both of whom had bright initiations into traditional format, along

with Arshdeep Singh, Avesh Khan, Khaleel Ahmed, Vidwath Kaverappa, Vysakh Vijayakumar and Harshit Rana. While the pace department needs some urgent solutions, the spin has a slightly different landscape. Ravichandran Ashwin,

Ravindra Jadeja, who was released from Team B, Kuldeep Yadav and Axar Patel form a formidable Indian spin unit. While there is no pressing demand for the support cast, the selectors would like to be ready with instant supply in case of an eventuality.

In that context, spinners such as Washington Sundar, also a capable batter, R Sai Kishore, top wicket-taker in the previous Ranji season with 53 scalps, Manav Suthar and Saurabh Kumar will be hoping to be in the range of the five wisemen's radar. **DARK HORSES:** There is a litany of fringe players who would want to give a further fillip to their career after showcasing talent at various levels. Karnataka's Devdutt Padikkal had a roaring Ranji season in 2023-24, which earned him a Test debut against England at Dharamsala. Baba Indrajith of Tamil Nadu is a consistent domestic performer and he once again underlined his prowess making 767 runs in the last Ranji season, and Musheer Khan, younger brother of Sarfaraz, smoothly graduated to First-Class cricket for Mumbai after blazing the Under-19 circuit. B Sai Sudharsan of Tamil Nadu, who made white ball debut for India, too has given an early indication of his readiness for red-ball cricket with a hundred for Surrey in English county cricket. He will play for Team C under Rituraj Gaikwad.

SQUADS:

India A: Shubman Gill (C), Mayank Agarwal, Riyan Parag, Dhruv Jurel (WK), KL Rahul, Tilak Varma, Shivam Dube, Tanush Kotian, Kuldeep Yadav, Akash Deep, Prasidh Krishna, Khaleel Ahmed, Avesh Khan, Vidwath Kaverappa, Kumar Kushagra, Shaswat Rawat. **India B:** Abhimanyu Easwaran (C), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Sarfaraz Khan, Rishabh Pant (WK), Musheer Khan, Nitish Kumar Reddy (subject to fitness), Washington Sundar, Navdeep Saini, Yash Yadav, Mukesh Kumar, Rahul Chahar, R Sai Kishore, Mohit Awasthi, N Jagadeesan (WK). **India C:** Rituraj Gaikwad (C), Sai Sudharsan, Rajat Patidar, Abishek Porel (WK), Suryakumar Yadav, B Indrajith, Hritik Shokeen, Manav Suthar, Gaurav Yadav, Vyshak Vijaykumar, Anshul Khamboj, Himanshu Chauhan, Mayank Markande, Aryan Juyal (WK), Sandeep Warrier. **India D:** Shreyas Iyer (C), Atharva Taide, Yash Dube, Devdutt Padikkal, Ishan Kishan (WK), Ricky Bhui, Saransh Jain, Axar Patel, Arshdeep Singh, Aditya Thakare, Harshit Rana, Tushtar Deshpande, Akash Sengupta, KS Bharat (WK), Saurabh Kumar.

I've worked on my defence against spinners: Gill eyes improvement in Test performance



PTI ■ BENGALURU

Shubman Gill understands that his Test career has not touched the expected peaks yet, but the right-hander is banking on an improved defence against spinners to make a mark in the upcoming season that will feature 10 traditional format matches. Gill made close to 500 runs in the home series against England this year in, perhaps, his best sustained outing in Test cricket so far, and now he wants to build on that from the two-match series against Bangladesh, starting from September 19, where he will be challenged by a set of experienced visiting spinners. "I worked on my defence a little bit more against spinners. You should be able to defend a lot more when you are playing on a turning track against spinners, then you can play the scoring shots," Gill, who will lead Team A in the Duleep Trophy, said here on Wednesday. "With more T20s being played...I won't say on flat tracks but on batting-friendly tracks, I think it takes away a little bit of your defensive game. So, that was my focus in the England series," he added.

Unlike in white ball formats where Gill is a storm force, the 24-year-old is yet to blaze the Test arena, and he hoped for a turnaround sooner than later. "In Test cricket, my performance has not matched my expectations so far. But we are going to play 10 Test matches this season, and when I look back after those 10 Tests, hopefully, my expectations will be matched," he said. Gill also emphasised on his growing maturity as a person and cricketer, which he directly linked to the captaincy stints of India and in the IPL with the Gujarat Titans. "Every match or tournament that you play, you look to learn more about yourself irrespective of whether you are captain or not the captain. More so because of the captain you will get to know about other players too. It's important for the captain to have a connect with the players. You should know their strength and weaknesses. Yeah, there are some changes in me especially when you are captain or vice-captain and having those conversations," he elaborated. But does being a part of the

leadership group add an extra layer of pressure on him? "Not really extra pressure (being part of the leadership group). My role as a batsman does not really change, even if I am the captain or vice-captain. It's all about scoring runs for the team," he said. In that context, Gill termed the Duleep Trophy, beginning here and at Anantapur from Thursday, as a fine opportunity to tune himself to the demands of red ball cricket. "This (Duleep Trophy) is a big tournament as every match is important for us. We are playing against some players whom we generally play with in the Indian team. So, we will get to see a good competition," he noted. Gill, who is set to open against Team B here, also said there have been some early talks between players and management about workload allocation considering the long duration of the season. "There is definitely talk among the selectors and players about the workload. But I think everyone has played a lot of cricket to be able to understand what they need to do when they are playing the match, more so for the bowlers I would say. "I am sure the bowlers had a conversation with the selectors about how they are going to manage their workload," he said. Meanwhile, Gill confirmed that India pacer Prasidh Krishna will not be available for the first round of the Duleep Trophy. "Prasidh Krishna is not ready for this match," he said. The Karnataka pacer has been recuperating from surgery that he had in February this year and did not play in the recently concluded KSCA Maharaja Trophy T20 despite being roped in by eventual champions Mysuru Warriors.

Pakistan drop to 8th in Test rankings following loss to Bangladesh

PTI ■ DUBAI

Pakistan's first-ever series loss to Bangladesh has resulted in Shan Masood's team slipping down to the eighth position in the ICC Test rankings besides hitting a historic low of lowest rating points since 1965. Pakistan were thrashed by 10 wickets in the first Test while the hosts lost the second by six wickets with Rawalpindi hosting both the matches. "Pakistan dropped two places in the ICC Men's Test Team Rankings to go to eighth position after suffering a shock series loss at home to Bangladesh," the ICC said on its website. "The hosts were sixth in the rankings table before the series, but back-to-back losses



have seen them drop below West Indies to eighth with 76 rating points. "This is the lowest rating points Pakistan have had in the Test rankings table since 1965, barring a brief period where they did not have a place in the rankings due to an

insufficient number of matches." Bangladesh's chase in the second Test of 185 was also the third highest successful chase in Pakistan for any visiting side, but there was a little in terms of promotion for the 'Tigers'.

Bangladesh remained in ninth position and behind Pakistan despite gaining 13 rating points. However, the 2-0 series win has bolstered Bangladesh in the points table for the World Test Championship cycle 2023-25 as they are now placed fourth behind table-toppers India, Australia at second and New Zealand at third. Bangladesh, who will now focus their attention on a two-Test series against India starting in Chennai on September 19, have 45.83 percentage points and 33 points with three wins and as many defeats in six Tests. In WTC, teams get 12 points for a Test win, four for a draw and six for a tie while being ranked according to percentage of points won.



Rahul Dravid set to be appointed Rajasthan Royals head coach for IPL 2025

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rahul Dravid, who Remastered India's T20 World Cup 2024 triumph, is set to take over Rajasthan Royals' head coach role in the IPL 2025. Dravid, who is currently on a short career-break since India's victory at Barbados in June, will soon start working with the franchise on important issues such as player retention ahead of the auction later this year. "The talks have reached the final stages and he will soon step into the head coach job," a source close to the development told PTI. Kumar Sangakkara, who has been Royals' Director of Cricket since 2021, will continue in his role and is likely to be more hands-on with Barbados Royals (CPL) and Paarl Royals (SA20). Dravid has a long-standing association with Royals as their captain for two seasons in 2012 and 2013 before serving as mentor for two more years. Dravid then moved to Delhi Capitals in a similar role in 2016 and continued with the team till he assumed the role of the head of National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru. In 2021, he moved on from NCA to take up India's head coach role from Ravi Shastri. Now at Royals, Dravid will reunite with Sanju Samson, who is all set to be retained as RR captain for another season. Samson blossomed first under the 52-year-old.

Accidental chess player Vidit Gujrathi says it's worked out well for him

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A self-proclaimed accidental chess player, Indian Grandmaster Vidit Gujrathi says he thought of sports as a more "stable" career option after watching his doctor parents being called to work at odd hours, an "error of judgement" that has ultimately "worked out well" for him. The 29-year-old from Nashik will be turning up for Mumba Masters in the second season of the Global Chess League, a joint venture between Tech Mahindra and FIDE, from October 3 to 12 in London. Gujrathi was around six when he was advised to put his ambition of playing cricket on hold till he was older by a local club. He decided to pursue chess instead as he was already familiar with the sport after spending considerable time playing with his father. "I saw it as a good opportunity to learn and beat him. It was a complete accident, but a happy one," Gujrathi recalled in a press release issued by the event organisers.



Having seen his doctor parents work at odd hours due to late-night emergencies, Gujrathi said he wanted a relatively easy-going life and thought of sports as the right option. "I did not realise then that sports can be more volatile. I made a judgment error, but it worked out well," he quipped, referring to long hours he has to devote to training. In 2017, he became the fourth Indian after Viswanathan Anand, Krishnan Sasikiran, and Pentala Harikrishna, to cross the 2700 Elo rating. Gujrathi, who still holds a rating of over 2700, was among three Indians who competed in this year's Candidates

Tournament, an eight-man competition held to determine the Challenger for the World Chess Championship slated for November. He did log some impressive results but could not win the tournament. Talking about the upcoming league and his team Mumba Masters, Gujrathi said, "Definitely, our eyes are on the trophy this year. But I wish to improve my performance." Mumba Masters retained most of their squad from the first season, with Maxime Vachier-Lagrave returning as the Icon Player while Gujrathi and Alexander Grischuk came back as Superstar Men players. Koneru Humpy and Harika Dronavalli have joined once again as Superstar Women, with Raunak Sadhwani as the Prodigy for the franchise in the second season. "Last year, we got along well with each other, and the team had a great atmosphere. We will be there for around a couple of weeks, and hence, it is important to also have a good time," Gujrathi said.

Sharath, Manika headline India's TT squad for Asian Championships

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Veteran Sharath Kamal and star female player Manika Batra were on Wednesday named in the India squad for the 27th Asian Table Tennis Championships, scheduled to be held in Astana, from October 7 to 13. Sharath, the 42-year-old who recently featured in his fifth and last Olympics, is the captain of the men's team comprising Manav Thakkar, Harmeet Desai, G Sathiyan and Manush Shah. Manika will lead the women's team which also has Sreeja Akula, Ayhika Mukherjee, Diya Chital and Sutirtha Mukherjee.



"The selection process was rigorous, with the TTFI giving precedence to the world ranking, international experience, and

performance at the national level as key criteria for the final squad," said the TTFI in a statement. The Indian team has been under the guidance of foreign expert Massimo Constantini, who has been working to fine-tune the players' skills and strategies since his return to India in June. "I am hopeful they will put their best foot forward in the Astana championships," Constantini said. The squad, especially the women, had done well in the Paris Olympics, reaching the quarterfinals. The men's team had lost to the mighty China in the round of 16. It was the first time that India qualified for team events

at the Olympics. As a crucial qualification event for the World Table Tennis Championships and the Asian Games, the Asian Championships hold significant importance for the Indian team. **SQUAD** **Men's Team:** A. Sharath Kamal (captain), Manav Thakkar, Harmeet Desai, G. Sathiyan, Manush Shah; Reserve Players: SFR Snehit and Jeet Chandra. **Women's Team:** Sreeja Akula, Manika Batra (captain), Ayhika Mukherjee, Diya Chital, Sutirtha Mukherjee; Reserve Players: Yashaswini Ghorpade and Poymantee Baisya.

Karunakaran, Subramanian reach Taipei Open quarterfinals

PTI ■ TAIPEI

India's Sathish Kumar Karunakaran and Sankar Subramanian reached the men's singles quarterfinals of the Taipei Open badminton tournament but women's singles players had to deal with disappointment here on Wednesday. In men's singles, Karunakaran was made to work hard for a win but he eventually prevailed over Kantaphon Wangcharoen from Thailand 24-22, 23-21 to make the quarterfinals. Subramanian also had to toil but the Indian shuttler got the better of his Finnish opponent Joakim Oldorff, winning his round of 16 match 21-12, 19-21, 21-11. In another round of 16 men's singles



contest, Kiran George was in the lead when he won the first set against Indonesia's Yohanes Saut Marcellino but the latter fought back to win the contest 15-21, 21-8, 21-16 in his round of 16 contest. Meanwhile, Indian players had to deal with disappointment in women's singles as three of them lost in the quarterfinals to crash out of the tournament. Aakarshi Kashyap was defeated in

straight sets 19-21, 18-21 by Thailand's Pornpicha Choiekeewong while the world No 3 Tai Tzu Ying from Chinese Taipei brushed aside the challenge from Taniya Hemant 21-11, 21-10 in a mere 27 minutes. Anupama Upadhyaya began well when she won the first set against her Lauren Lam, but the American shuttler bounced back to win the next two and the contest 17-21, 21-19, 21-11. Later on Wednesday, Indian women's doubles' pair of Rituparna Panda and Swetaparna Panda will be in action against Hong Kong's Lok Lok Lui and Hiu Yan Tsang while Rakshitha Ramaraj will take on Japan's Asuka Takahashi in women's singles quarterfinals.

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