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NO PANACEA FOR COMMONERS AT AIIMS, DELHI

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

2018: A four-month-old infant whose parents brought her to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi, for urgent surgery for a hole in her heart was given a slot for the corrective surgery operation in 2023, resulting in a five-year wait.

Fast forward to June, 2024: A six-year-old from Begusarai, Bihar, has been left waiting for a heart operation at the premier health institute for the past six years due to "dates changed thrice." Despite the best efforts of his father, Ankit Kumar, who had been running from pillar to post gathering funds and blood, it was a long wait for treatment. However, it was only after the issue was highlighted in the media and the NHRC took suo motu cognisance that the hospital formed a panel to investigate the delays.

These are likely some of the longest waiting periods for patients at AIIMS Delhi and have been reported as such. Welcome to India's most prestigious medical institution, established as the country's foremost centre of medical excellence. The bustling scene outside the hospital, with relatives of the patients lying by the roadside waiting for their turn outside the emergency wards, is a telling example of the stark disparity in healthcare access in the country.



While this flagship hospital draws thousands daily, it also highlights a critical shortage of specialist doctors and medical facilities both at the hospital and in rural areas, where the majority of India's 1.4 billion people struggle with the challenge of reaching distant healthcare facilities.

On Thursday, *The Pioneer* visited AIIMS Delhi and spoke with the relatives of ailing patients, most of whom were suffering from serious

conditions like blood cancer, some of them admitted in the emergency departments while a few were waiting for their turn. The hospital is visited by around 20,000 patients daily from across various states, particularly populous ones like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Odisha, and even far-off States of North-East.

Take the case of 45-year-old Jagan Ram from Kanpur. He has been running from pillar to post to

arrange blood for his ailing relative, Radha Gupta (24), who is suffering from blood cancer. "We came here yesterday. Radha has been in an emergency, and her blood counts have gone down. The doctors said they have arranged one unit of blood, and since she will need blood transfusions whenever it is low, we are now arranging donors."

Jagan Ram who lost his 18-year-old son to blood cancer a few

years ago has a better understanding of the condition. "The doctors back home in Kanpur did not disclose the disease my son was suffering from. But now I have learned a lot about this health condition and what may come, I will ensure that this girl (Radha) does not meet the same fate."

People come here seeking advanced medical care, specialised treatment, and expert

consultations that might not be available in their local hospitals. The reputation of AIIMS for its high-quality healthcare services, cutting-edge research, and a wide range of specialties contribute to its status as a go-to destination for many seeking comprehensive medical care.

But for Mammu, a 20-year-old youth from Jaganpura Kauch, Jalori in Uttar Pradesh, it has been a restless day as he silently writes in pain on a stretcher in the open with the weather behaving nastily. His attendant said he's having thick blood problem.

"The doctor concerned is not here. So we have been asked to wait outside," said 40-year-old Jagat Singh, attending to the patient. The medical report showed that Mammu's hemoglobin level has shot up to 25, contrary to the normal 14-15 hb. He might be suffering from a disorder that causes the body to produce too many red blood cells. Yet another relative of a patient with co-morbidity such as TB and diabetes outside the emergency ward said he is trying for a 'recommendation' so that his ward could get a bed. This hospital has its own reputation, with doctors dedicated to their profession. This is what makes patients flock to this hospital, he said matter-of-factly.

Outside the hospital, one can see the adjacent streets are crowded with patients and their families from distant places, all seeking remedies for their or their loved ones' health issues. "We've been living on the footpath for the past

two weeks and have been coming to the hospital for the last five years for my son's treatment," rued Ramwati from Rajasthan's Alwar district.

Her son suffers from chronic asthma, a condition marked by inflammation that restricts airflow from the lungs. As securing a hospital bed is a significant challenge, they are doing everything they can to ensure the little boy receives the necessary treatment. In fact, this is the travail of almost every other patient and their relatives on the roadside.

Conceding that the six new AIIMS like hospitals at underserved States in Bhubaneswar, Ranchi, Patna, Raipur, Bhopal, Jodhpur and Rishikesh have failed to ease the pressure on AIIMS Delhi, a senior official in the Union Health Ministry blamed faculty shortages, resource crunch, and infrastructural deficiencies. Besides these six States, more AIIMS like institutes are coming up in other States too.

Public health specialists believe that this state of affairs is largely due to flawed health policies adopted by successive Governments. Anant Bhan, a researcher in global health, said merely naming an institute 'AIIMS' does not guarantee it will be held in the same esteem as the one in Delhi. "AIIMS Delhi has earned a reputation for quality and affordability, but the new centres face challenges that need to be overcome," he stressed.



SC reserves order on Arvind Kejriwal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday reserved order on Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's separate pleas seeking bail and challenging arrest by Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the excise policy "scam". After concluding arguments from both sides, a bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan said, "Thank you for the assistance. Judgment reserved."

Additional Solicitor General SV Raju represented the CBI and Senior Advocate Abhishek Singhvi appeared for the AAP chief. The apex court was hearing two separate petitions challenging his arrest by the CBI and the denial of bail in the corruption case filed by the agency.

The AAP convener has challenged the August 5 order of the Delhi High Court dismissing his plea against his arrest by the agency. He has also filed a Special Leave Petition against the High Court's refusal to consider his bail plea. The CBI had arrested Kejriwal on June 26. Questioning the maintainability of Kejriwal's pleas seeking bail and challenging his arrest, the CBI told the Supreme Court that he should have first approached the trial court for bail in the corruption case linked to the alleged excise policy scam. "He has approached Delhi High Court directly without going to sessions court. Under Section 439 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), both have concurrent jurisdiction. My preliminary objection is he must first go to trial court," ASJ Raju said.

"He has approached the Delhi High Court directly without going to sessions court. My preliminary objection is he must first go to trial court," Raju argued. The CBI did not issue a notice to Kejriwal under section Section 41A of the CrPC as he was already in judicial custody, he said. Raju said if the Supreme Court which grants bail to Kejriwal, it will demoralise the Delhi High Court, which had upheld his arrest. "Don't say that. Whatever order we pass, we will ensure nothing like that happens," the bench assured Raju.

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REBEL TROUBLE FOR THE BJP IN HARYANA

RAJESH KUMAR/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the BJP released its first list of 67 candidates for the October 5 Haryana Assembly elections, discontent among party leaders, including Ministers in the Nayab Saini Cabinet, flared up. Several leaders expressed their dissatisfaction, with several resigning from their posts on Thursday.

Among them were Haryana Energy Minister Ranjit Singh Chautala, Minister of State Bishamber Singh Balmiki, Ratia MLA Laxman Napa, former Ministers Karan Dev Kamboj, Kavita Jain, MP Savitri Jindal, MLA Lakshman Napa who had raised the banner of revolt. The rebel trouble for BJP started shortly after it came out with the first list of candidates as it left many sulking.

Interestingly, the BJP has named former prison official Sunil Sangwan — who recommended parole for Dera Sacha Sauda chief and rape convict Ram Rahim six times — on its list of candidates for next month's Haryana Assembly election.

Sangwan will contest the Dadri seat which former BJP leader Somveer Sangwan won as an Independent in 2019 that was after the party favoured wrestler Babita Phogat over him. Energy and Jail Minister Ranjit Singh Chautala (79), son of former Deputy Prime Minister Devi Lal said he took a



decision after a meeting with his supporters and will now enter the fray as an Independent. Ranjit Chautala called a meeting of his supporters after the party ignored his candidature from Rania segment in Sirsa district. "I had good relations with them (BJP). They gave me the Lok Sabha ticket (from Hisar, which he fought unsuccessfully). But don't know on whose advice they have acted. I will say anyone who has given them this advice has caused damage to the party," Chautala said.

"I am Chaudhary Devi Lal's son. I have some stature... I have decided to contest as an Independent," he said, while adding he has resigned as a Minister and quit the BJP. Chautala was hoping to contest from Rania seat but the BJP fielded Shishpal Kamboj instead.

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Rajnath Singh calls for evolving joint military vision at commanders' meet

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW/NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday stressed upon the significance of evolving joint military vision and preparing for the type of challenges the country may face in future wars, while emphasising on synergised, swift and proportionate response to provocations.

He also called upon the Commanders to identify and include the right mix of traditional and modern warfare equipment in the Armed Forces arsenal. He stressed on capability development in space and electronic warfare, describing them as integral to tackle modern-day challenges.

"Referring to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Hamas conflicts and the current situation in Bangladesh, the Defence Minister exhorted the Commanders to analyse these episodes, predict the problems that the country may face in the future, and stay prepared to deal



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh meets senior defence officials during 2nd day of the Joint Commanders' Conference 2024, in Lucknow on Thursday. PTI

with the "unexpected". "The Defence Minister made these assertions while addressing the maiden Joint Commanders' Conference in Lucknow on the second and final day of the apex-level military leadership meeting. "He commended the Armed Forces for their invaluable con-

tribution in safeguarding national interests and advancing the vision of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat', and appreciated the efforts being undertaken for furthering jointness and integration among the three Services. "In line with the theme of the conference, 'Sashakt aur

Surakshit Bharat: Transforming the Armed Forces', the Defence Minister stated that India is a peace loving nation and the Armed Forces need to be prepared for war in order to preserve peace.

"He emphasised on the need of a broader and deeper analysis by the top military leadership in view of the situation along the Northern border and the happenings in neighbouring countries, which are posing a challenge to peace and stability in the region.

"Despite global volatility, India is enjoying a rare peace dividend and it is developing peacefully. However, due to the increasing number of challenges, we need to remain alert. It is important that we keep our peace intact during Amrit Kaal. We need to focus on our present, keep an eye on the activities happening around us at present, and focus on being future-oriented. For this, we should have a strong and robust national security component."

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Dhaka issues warning of discomfort with Delhi

PTI ■ DHAKA

Muhammad Yunus, the head of Bangladesh's interim Government, has said former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina making political remarks from India is an "unfriendly gesture", asserting that she must remain silent to prevent the discomfort to both countries until Dhaka requests her extradition.

"If India wants to keep her until the time Bangladesh (Government) wants her back, the condition would be that she has to keep quiet," he said. In an interview with PTI at his official residence in Dhaka, Yunus, who was appointed the country's Chief Adviser after Hasina's ouster, stressed that while Bangladesh values strong ties with India, New Delhi must move "beyond the narrative that portrays every other political party except Awami League as Islamist and



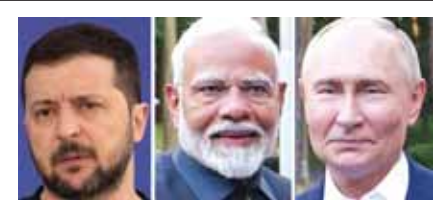
that the country will turn into Afghanistan without Sheikh Hasina." "No one is comfortable with her stance there in India because we want her back to try her. She is there in India and at times she is talking, which is problematic. Had she been quiet, we would have forgotten it; people would have also forgotten it as she would have been in her own world. But sitting in India, she is speaking and giving

instructions. No one likes it," he said. "It is not good for us or for India. There is discomfort regarding it," he told PTI. Yunus was apparently referring to Hasina's statement on August 13 in which she demanded "justice", saying those involved in recent "terror acts", killings and vandalism must be investigated, identified and punished. This has been the only statement made by

Hasina after she fled. It was posted on her US-based son Sajeeb Wazed Joy's X handle. Following unprecedented anti-Government protests that peaked on August 5, Hasina resigned as Prime Minister and fled to India. Her presence in India for nearly four weeks has fuelled speculation in Bangladesh. When asked whether Bangladesh has communicated its stance to India, Yunus said it has been conveyed verbally and quite firmly that she should keep quiet. "Everyone understands it. We have said quite firmly that she should keep quiet. This is an unfriendly gesture towards us; she has been given shelter there and she is campaigning from there. It is not that she has gone there on a normal course. She has fled following a people's uprising and public anger," he said. Yunus stated that the interim

Government is committed to ensuring justice for the people of Bangladesh against the atrocities, and justice requires that she be brought back to the country. "Yes, she has to be brought back or else the people of Bangladesh won't be at peace. The kind of atrocities she has committed, she has to be tried in front of everyone here," he emphasised. Discussing the future of the India-Bangladesh relationship, Yunus expressed a desire for good ties with India but insisted that New Delhi must abandon the narrative that only Hasina's leadership ensures the country's stability. "The way forward is for India to come out of the narrative. The narrative is that everybody is Islamist, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) is Islamist, and everyone else is Islamist and will make this country into

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Putin seeks Modi's intervention in Ukraine

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/MOSCOW

Days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged Russia and Ukraine to talk to each other to end the ongoing conflict and said India is ready to play an "active role," President Vladimir Putin on Thursday named India among the three countries he is constantly in touch over the issue. He also said these countries are sincerely making efforts to resolve it. Modi made these assertions during his talks with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy during his historic visit there on August 23. He conveyed to Zelenskyy that both Ukraine and Russia should sit together without wasting time to end the ongoing war and that India was ready to play an "active role" to restore peace in the region.

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3 booked for driving man to suicide

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Police have filed an FIR for abetment to suicide against three individuals, including two policemen, following the suicide by an e-rickshaw driver who was allegedly humiliated by the accused.

The victim, Amit Kumar from Babu Kheda, was an e-rickshaw driver. He faced severe humiliation and abuse from the accused, who included two policemen and a contractual worker from Apex Trauma Centre-II. The incident occurred when Amit refused to fetch cigarettes for them.

The denial led to an altercation where the contractor and policemen verbally abused and physically assaulted him for not complying with their demands. The incident took place when Amit was waiting for passengers at the gate of the trauma centre. Following the abuse, Amit's family alleged that he took his own life as a result of the humiliation and beating he endured. DCP (East) Shashank Singh assigned the investigation to the ACP (Cantt). After reviewing the case, an FIR was filed on Wednesday against two constables and a contractual worker for allegedly inciting the suicide. The investigation is ongoing.

According to a written complaint filed by the deceased's father Raj Kumar, Amit was driving his e-rickshaw around 1:30 pm on Sunday when he was stopped by a contractual worker from SGPGI and two policemen in plain clothes. They demanded cigarettes, and when Amit refused, they abused and beat him. The assault continued as they called others to join in. After escaping their grasp, Amit returned home. Later, around 3 pm, the same contractual worker, Vinod, along with two constables and about

ten others, came to Amit's house and continued to abuse him. Overwhelmed by fear and humiliation, Amit locked himself in his room and subsequently hanged himself. A case has been registered against constables Manoj and Sunil, and contractual worker Vinod, based on the complaint filed by Amit's younger brother, Shubham.

MAN ATTACKS NEIGHBOUR OVER SPITTING PAAN

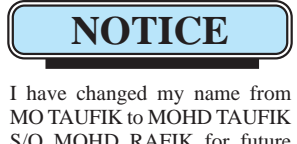
A man attacked his neighbour with a brick in the PGPI police station area after a dispute over spitting etiquette, on Thursday. The victim, a woman named Shanti Yadav, sustained serious head injuries in the attack. According to reports, Shanti Yadav, who lives with her husband and daughters at Raksha Khand Eldeco-II on Rae Bareilly Road in Lucknow, had been in ongoing disputes with her neighbours, Sandhya and Sandeep. The conflicts were fuelled by an old rivalry, with frequent arguments escalating into violent incidents.

On August 29, Shanti had filed a complaint with the police regarding these ongoing issues, but no action was reportedly taken. On Wednesday, Sandeep spat paan on Shanti's door. When she protested, an argument ensued. During the confrontation, Sandeep and Sandhya began abusing Shanti. In the heat of the argument, Sandeep attacked Shanti with a brick, hitting her on the head and causing severe injuries. The assailant fled the scene after the attack, threatening Shanti and her family. According to Shanti, the attacker also threatened her four daughters, leaving the family scared. The police arrived at the scene, took Shanti to SGPGI's Apex Trauma Centre for treatment, and then sent her home. Based on Shanti's complaint, a case has been registered and the investigation is ongoing. The police are searching for the accused and working to ensure the safety of the victim and her family.



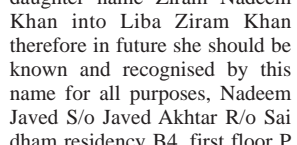
NOTICE

I have changed my name from SAMEER AHMAD to JAMEEL AHAMAD S/O SHABBEER AAHMAD for future purpose. Add- VILLAGE NANMAI POST SHAHJADPUR KAUSHAMBI.



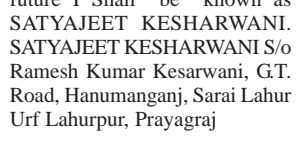
NOTICE

I have changed my name from MO TAUFIK to MOHD TAUFIK S/O MOHD RAFIK for future purpose. Add- WARD NO. 4 NETA NAGAR AJHUWA KAUSHAMBI.



NOTICE

The general public is informed that I Nadeem Javed have changed my daughter name Ziram Nadeem Khan into Liba Ziram Khan therefore in future she should be known and recognised by this name for all purposes, Nadeem Javed S/o Javed Akhtar R/o Sai dham residency B4, first floor P D Tandon Road, Civil Lines Prayagraj



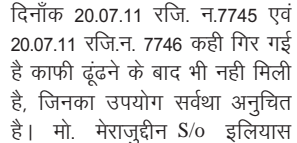
NOTICE

I have changed my name from SATYAJEET KESARWANI to SATYAJEET KESHARWANI. In future I shall be known as SATYAJEET KESHARWANI. SATYAJEET KESHARWANI/S/O Ramesh Kumar Kesarwani, G.T. Road, Hanumanganj, Sarai Lahur Urf Lahurpur, Prayagraj



NOTICE

I have changed my name from Safiya Jameel to Safia Jameel for all future purposes. D/o Jameel Ahmad R/0405/376A-5, Asharfaabaad, Jajamau kanpur



सूचना

मेरी सम्पति प्लाट स्थित आराजी नं.1556, खा एम आई, कटरी पीपर खेड़ा हड्डा उन्नाव के चैन डीड दिनांक 20.07.11 रजि. नं.7745 एवं 20.07.11 रजि.नं. 7746 कही गिर गई है काफी दूंदने के बाद भी नहीं मिली है, जिनका उपयोग सर्वथा अनुचित है। मो. मेराजुद्दीन S/o इलियास 116/930, रोशन नगर रावपुर कानपुर नगर

One held for bakery businessman murder

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Police claimed to have arrested an accused in connection with the murder of a bakery businessman whose body was found in the Gomti river a week ago. The victim, whose body was found floating in the river on August 31, was identified as Shahabuddin Mansoori (35) from Huzurpur Katka Marautha in Bahraich. The murder stemmed from a dispute over a business partnership. The primary suspect, Abu Usman, had worked in Shahabuddin's factory and had been pressuring him to make him a partner—an offer Shahabuddin never agreed to. In a violent altercation, Abu Usman allegedly slit Shahabuddin's throat and smashed his face to conceal his identity. The conflict reportedly escalated over a debt of Rs 40,000. Abu Usman had lent this money to Shahabuddin to help run the factory. When Shahabuddin refused to make Abu Usman a partner, the situation turned deadly. The police have registered a case and are actively searching for Abu Usman, who is currently on the run.

According to reports, Shahabuddin ran a factory near Ramliya Maidan in Khadra and was staying at a rented place in Madehganj. Around midnight on August 31, Abu Usman took Shahabuddin out of the house under the pretext of discussing something urgent. It is suspected that Abu Usman, possibly with one or two accomplices, killed Shahabuddin and disposed of his body near Pakka Pult. Shahabuddin's brother Sultan Sheikh Mansoori accused Abu Usman of the murder. An employee of Shahabuddin, Israr Ahmed, who was present when Abu Usman and Shahabuddin left the house, reported receiving a distress call from Shahabuddin's number. During the call, loud noises and what sounded like a struggle were heard, and Shahabuddin was heard saying "these people will kill me" before the call abruptly ended. The post-mortem examination revealed severe head injuries, indicating Shahabuddin was struck with a heavy object. There were

STF nabs 3 for duping SGPGI assistant prof

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Special Task Force (STF) of Uttar Pradesh has arrested three members of a gang involved in defrauding an associate professor at SGPGI of over Rs 2 crore in Lucknow, police said. The suspects have been identified as Haripriya Pradhan from Odisha, Jitendra Kumar Yadav from Prayagraj, and Hitesh aka Gyanchandra from Ghazipur. According to a spokesperson, the STF had been receiving reports about organised gangs operating through social media, impersonating senior police officers from agencies such as the police, ED, and CBI to intimidate and defraud individuals.

"In response, various teams within UP STF were instructed to take necessary actions. A team led by Deputy Superintendent of Police Deepak Kumar Singh began gathering information and activating the intelligence system," the spokesperson said.

The suspects were apprehended near Ekana stadium. During interrogation, the suspects revealed that their gang would contact people, posing as police or CBI officers, and threaten them under various pretexts. They collected personal information from their victims, used it to open accounts, and then transferred the stolen money through these accounts. This money was subsequently used in online trading. Instead of using their own accounts, the gang lured individuals to open accounts in their names, retaining the ATM cards, passbooks, chequebooks, and registered mobile numbers to facilitate transactions and avoid detection. The STF is now working to trace the bank accounts and digital wallets mentioned by the accused and to apprehend additional gang members. Forensic analysis of the electronic devices recovered from the suspects will also be conducted.

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also injuries to his neck. Preliminary investigations show that Abu Usman had been demanding a partnership and more money, leading to the dispute. The police recovered Shahabuddin's bike, slippers, and cap near the crime scene. Following a tip-off, they located Abu Usman at the Gomti riverfront, where they recovered his blood-stained shirt and the knife used in the murder. The investigation is ongoing as the search for Abu Usman continues.

Female advocate found murdered in Kasganj

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a sensational killing in Kasganj, the body of a female advocate was found in a canal. The victim has been identified as Mohini Tomar. She was missing from the gate of the Kotwali Sadar area of the district court since Tuesday afternoon and her body was recovered in the Sahawar area of the district on Wednesday night. The face of the victim was brutally mutilated in an attempt to conceal her identity. It is suspected that the body was thrown into the canal after the murder.

Senior police officials reached the spot after receiving information. The police recovered the body from the canal and sent it for post-mortem. A panel of doctors will conduct the autopsy which will be recorded on video. The murder of the female advocate caused a sensation in the area. A fellow advocate alleged that she was kidnapped and murdered from the district court's gate.

Mohini Singh Tomar, wife of BS Tomar of Madhavpuri Nadarai Gate in Kasganj, was a criminal advocate in the district court. On Tuesday morning, she went to the court from home on a scooter as usual. At 11:30 am, she called her husband and asked him to bring the car. After this, she went to the district magistrate's court with her husband. At 2 pm, BS Tomar dropped Mohini at the gate of the civil court and left. When Mohini did not reach home till evening, her husband tried to contact her on mobile phone but it was switched off. He reached the Civil Court searching for her and found her scooter parked there. At 6 pm, information about the disappearance of Mohini was registered in the police station. On Wednesday, the District Bar

Association announced a strike. At 9 pm, the police received information that the body of a woman was found in the canal of village Rempur in Sahawar police station area. Superintendent of Police Aparna Rajat Kaushik went to the spot with a police force. The advocate's husband identified Mohini's body. Meanwhile in Sitapur, a 12-year-old boy was allegedly kidnapped and killed by four people, including a juvenile, all of whom were nabbed, police said on Thursday.

The boy's body was thrown into Sharda canal of neighbouring Lakhimpur district, police said. The search for the body is underway, according to a senior officer. The boy, Shivansh, had gone missing on Tuesday from the Sirkida village in Sakran area, the officer said. After the family members were informed about the death they created a ruckus at the local police station and blocked the Sakran-Sitapur road, accusing the Sakran police of negligence. Shubham Mishra, an uncle of the victim, said they had filed a complaint about his nephew's disappearance on Tuesday and expressed suspicion on two individuals, one from the same village. He said they also informed police about a car used in the crime.

"However, the Sakran police paid no attention and only informed the family about the murder on Thursday. When we visited the police station on Wednesday, we were rebuked by the police officers and the station house officer of Sakran. If the Sakran police had acted promptly, our child could have been saved," Mishra claimed. Sitapur's Additional Superintendent of Police Prakash Kumar said Mishra

had reported on Tuesday that his nephew, son of late Vikas Mishra, had gone missing. The ASP said after investigation Rinku Mishra, 22, Sirkida village, Ankur Trivedi, 25, Puneet Shukla, 20, of Laharpur Kotwali area and a 17-year-old juvenile of Gularia village, Lakhimpur Khori district, were taken into custody. "During interrogation, the suspects admitted to kidnapping Shivansh for ransom. After failing to receive the money, they murdered him and disposed of the body in Sharda canal," he added. The car used in the kidnapping has been recovered and the search for the body is on with the help of divers and local police, Kumar added.

MAN HELD FOR RAPING MINOR IN BUDAUN

Police on Thursday arrested a man for allegedly raping a minor girl in a car in Zarifnagar police station area of Budaun district in UP. The accused who knew the girl reached her school on Wednesday and asked the principal that her parents have called her. The accused took the class sixth student in his car, stopped it at a secluded spot and raped her. The accused threatened the girl of dire consequences and dropped her home. The girl, however, told her parents about the incident on Thursday. Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) K K Saroj said, "On the basis of the complaint filed by the family members, we had lodged a case under section of rape of BNS (Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita) and relevant sections of POCSO (Protection of Children From Sexual Offences) Act. The accused Vivek (22) was arrested today." The accused ran a medical store in a shop owned by the victim's father, the police said.

Wolves keep forest officials on toes

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

After two days of relative calm, the wolves once again kept the Forest department on high alert as officials worked to track their movements on Thursday. Despite the efforts of 26 active teams, with ten additional teams on standby, locating the wolves proved challenging. District Forest Officer (DFO), Bahraich, Ajit Singh, reported that a wolf was sighted on Thursday morning at Pachdeoria in Mahsi tehsil, Bahraich district. Singh personally inspected the pug marks. However, he acknowledged that rising temperatures were diminishing the effectiveness of thermal drones used for tracking. "As temperatures rise, thermal drones struggle to pinpoint the exact locations of the wolves because they begin to identify multiple spots," Singh explained. A forest staff member elaborated on the issue, noting that thermal drones detect the body heat of wolves to locate them. "When the land's temperature increases, the drones have difficulty distinguishing the wolves' heat signatures. They work better in cooler conditions, such as during cloudy weather or in the evening," he said. The DFO also mentioned that three shooters from the Forest department had arrived in Bahraich for the potential elimination of the wolves. This measure follows orders

issued by the department due to the wolves posing a threat to human safety. Mudit Gupta, a carnivore expert from the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), provided insights into the situation. He suggested that the recent incidents in Bahraich might be caused by a specific group of wolves targeting children. "Small wolf populations have existed in the Terai region of Uttar Pradesh and typically inhabit semi-open spaces. Factors such as a reduction in their prey base or flooding of their natural habitats could drive them into human areas. Wolves live in packs, feed on smaller mammals and birds, and prefer semi-forested areas," Gupta explained. Gupta commended the Forest department for its efforts but emphasised the need for community education. "Local residents should be sensitised about safety measures to take in such situations. Communities living close to wildlife should be aware of their behaviours and implement safety precautions," he said. He suggested that community sensitisation programmes be organised to educate residents about living near wildlife. "Homes near forests should be secured with proper doors and netted windows. Additionally, allowing smaller mammals like rats and rabbits to thrive can help prevent wolves and other carnivores from encroaching into human habitats," Gupta advised.

Tourism minister welcomes Vietnamese delegation

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Tourism department has organised a familiarisation trip for representatives from countries with substantial Buddhist populations. The first delegation to arrive under this initiative is from Vietnam. Tourism and Culture Minister Jaiveer Singh extended a warm welcome to the Vietnamese delegation at a programme held in Lucknow. The event was also attended by 20 bloggers and influencers from various states, who engaged with the minister to discuss strategies for promoting UP's Buddhist tourism sites. Singh emphasised UP's pivotal role as a pilgrimage destination for Buddhists worldwide. He highlighted the state's commitment to developing tourist facilities at key Buddhist sites to ensure a meaningful experience for visitors. The minister outlined several prominent locations related to Lord Gautam Buddha such as Kapilavastu, Sarnath, Shravasti, Sankisa, and Kushinagar. Singh noted that UP holds a central place in the story of Buddhism and Lord Buddha. He revealed that the Vietnamese delegation would visit key sites including Shravasti, Kushinagar, Sarnath, and Kapilavastu. This 21-member delegation comprises Vietnam's tour operators, tourist guides, and other tourism industry professionals.

Rajnath nod to add'l TA company for Gomti river pollution control

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved the deployment of an additional company of the Territorial Army (TA) to aid in pollution control efforts along the Gomti river in Lucknow. This initiative is part of the ongoing 'Namami Gange' Project, an endeavour led by the Ministry of Jal Shakti under the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG). The project aims to rejuvenate the Ganga and its tributaries through a collaborative and scientific approach, achieving notable results since its inception. The National Mission for Clean Ganga, recognising the importance of effective ecological management, initiated the formation of TA Ecology Conservation Battalions in 2016. The first such battalion, the Composite Ecology Task Force 137 (CETF), was established in May 2019. BJP Metropolitan president Anand Dwivedi announced that the newly deployed company would commence operations on or before January 1, 2025. He emphasised that this initiative would focus on rejuvenating the Gomti river,

'More to Lko than nawabs'

Lucknow (PNS): There is more to the history of Lucknow than just nawabs, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said at the release of a book, written by a senior journalist in the city, on Thursday. "I believe this is only a one-sided identity of the city and not the comprehensive identity. Lucknow's past is also about Maharaja Bijli Pasi, Veerangana Udda Devi and Raja Tikait Rai, but the historians have not given them their due importance," he said. "In 1880, there was a famine in Awadh in which Tikait Rai played an important role. He was the prime minister of Nawab Asafuddaulah and it was his plan to construct Bada Imbarara and Rumi Darawaza to protect people from a famine but credit was given to Asafuddaulah," he added.

conserving local biodiversity, reviving water bodies, and providing employment opportunities for the ex-servicemen community. The deployment aims to further the goals of self-reliance and accelerate the cleaning of the Ganga and Gomti rivers.

CITYBRIEFS

RDSO TAKES PART IN EXHIBITION

The Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO) took part in the 5th Materials Engineering and Technology (MET) and 15th Heat Treatment Symposium (HTS) Exhibition, held at the Mumbai Exhibition Centre from September 4-6. Organised by ASM International India Chapter, the event was inaugurated virtually by Union Minister Jitendra Singh. The exhibition highlighted advancements in material engineering, equipment, and technology across various sectors such as defence, transport, alternate energy, medical, and heat treatment. RDSO showcased notable exhibits including control arms, wheel discs, Schaku couplers, and the new

semi-permanent coupler for Vande Bharat coaches. The display featured detailed infographics and innovations like the Vande Metro, LHB Parcel Van with end openings, Vista Dome, and Amrit Bharat coaches. Additional member, Railway Board, SK Pankaj visited the RDSO stall and praised the informative presentation. The event attracted over 300 stalls and 600 representatives from more than 15 countries, including key Indian ministries.

TEACHERS' DAY Teachers' Day was celebrated at SR Group of Institutions in BKT. The event saw the participation of teachers and staff from the SR family. MLC Pawan Singh Chauhan, who is the founding member of the SR

Group, honoured the teachers. Vice-chairman Piyyush Singh Chauhan and vice chairperson Sushmita Singh Chauhan were also present. "When Dr S Radhakrishnan became the President of India, some of his former students approached him to celebrate his birthday. In

response, he said, it would be his privilege if September 5 was observed as Teachers' Day instead," Piyyush Singh Chauhan pointed out. He emphasised the significant role that teachers and education play in shaping the direction of the youth's energy.



दयानंद गर्ल्स कालेज, सिविल लाइन्स, कानपुर

महाविद्यालय में वृत्तीय श्रेणी कर्मचारी-प्रयोगशाळा सहायक (रसायन विज्ञान) का एक पद रिक्त है। उक्त रिक्त पद हेतु न्यूनतम शैक्षिक अर्हता, वेतनमान, आयुसीमा एवं आरक्षण आदि उत्तर प्रदेश शासन द्वारा समय-समय पर निर्गमित शासनादेशों एवं विद्यविद्यालय परिचयपत्रिका में दिये गये प्रावधानों के तहत लागू होंगे। इच्छुक एवं उर्ध्व अन्यथा सचिव-प्रबन्ध समिति के कार्यालय- 15/98, सिविल लाइन्स, कानपुर से दिनांक 26.09.2024 तक निर्धारित आवेदन पत्र प्राप्त व जमा कर सकते हैं। उक्त रिक्त पद के प्रति चयन/ नियुक्ति के संकेत में सभी आवेदित अन्वर्थी विधिवत गणित चयन समिति के कार्यालय 15/98, सिविल लाइन्स, कानपुर में अपने सभी नूतन शैक्षिक अभिलेखों/प्रमाण पत्रों सहित साक्षात्कार हेतु उपस्थित हों। साक्षात्कार हेतु किसी भी प्रकार का यात्रा भत्ता देय न होगा।

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मेरी सम्पति प्लाट स्थित आराजी नं.1556, खा एम आई, कटरी पीपर खेड़ा हड्डा उन्नाव के चैन डीड दिनांक 20.07.11 रजि. नं.7745 एवं 20.07.11 रजि.नं. 7746 कही गिर गई है काफी दूंदने के बाद भी नहीं मिली है, जिनका उपयोग सर्वथा अनुचित है। मो. मेराजुद्दीन S/o इलियास 116/930, रोशन नगर रावपुर कानपुर नगर

Teachers should not be a part of trade unions: CM Gives away state awards to 54 teachers

PNS ■ GORAKHPUR

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Thursday emphasised that educators should not align themselves with trade unions, as it undermines the dignity of their profession. Distributing the state awards to outstanding teachers of basic and secondary education on Teachers' Day during a ceremony held at the Yogiraj Baba Gambhirnath Auditorium here on Thursday, the chief minister remarked, "A teacher should not be part of a trade union; doing so diminishes the respect inherent in the role. When you associate with unions, you compromise your dignity."



Chief Minister Yogi highlighted India's deep-rooted tradition of respecting teachers, noting that Indian scriptures reflect this reverence through the mantra, 'Guru Brahma, Guru Vishnu'. He also referenced Saint Kabir Das, who placed the guru above even god with the verse, 'Guru Govind dou khadé'. This respect stems from believing that knowledge cannot be attained without devotion, he said, adding that knowledge was gained by those who had faith and without knowledge, one cannot achieve anything in life. Praising the exceptional service, innovation, and experience of the teachers honoured with the State Teacher Award, Chief Minister Yogi shared that he has instructed the Education department to use the services of these award-winning teachers for the courses and books of SCERT (State Council of Educational Research and Training) and to recognise and honour the expertise of these award-winning educators. "Their experiences will be

invaluable in presenting complex topics in an easy-to-understand manner for children," he said. He also suggested that these teachers be included as representatives in the Education Service Selection Commission, as their involvement in educational innovation will benefit students. This recognition of their expertise is a testament to the value and importance of their work. Chief Minister Yogi said, "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the National Education Policy has charted a new course for the nation. In line with this vision, we must follow traditional curricula and foster a culture of innovation. Innovation can take place in every field." Citing examples of a young girl from Jhansi growing strawberries on her rooftop during the pandemic and a Barabanki farmer cultivating dragon fruit, the Yogi highlighted how individual efforts can transform an entire region. He urged teachers, as the architects of the nation's future, to prioritise innovation, starting at the school level.

Teachers can create clean, beautiful, and green school environments by involving students and parents, he added. Chief Minister Yogi announced the establishment of PM SHRI Vidyalayas and CM Composite Vidyalayas, a monumental step towards enhancing the education sector across the state. These institutions, along with the Atal Residential Schools, which have already been opened in all 18 divisional headquarters, are set to provide free education for the children of laborers and those orphaned by the pandemic. Furthermore, daycare schools will soon be opened in the remaining 57 districts, furthering the reach of these educational initiatives. At the State Teacher Award distribution ceremony, Minister of State for Basic Education (Independent Charge) Sandeep Singh honoured the memory of Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and extended his heartfelt wishes to all teachers on the occasion of Teacher's Day.

Yogi: Any threat to Sanatan dharma endangers humanity as a whole

PNS ■ LUCKNOW/AYODHYA

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Thursday, reiterated that Sanatan dharma is the singular true religion, emphasising that any threat to it poses a danger to humanity as a whole. He further noted that if Sanatan dharma remains on a path of safety and prosperity, it will pave the way for the betterment of global humanity. Addressing the Bharatmata Ashok Singhal Veda Award-2024 ceremony hosted by the Singhal Foundation in Ayodhya, the chief minister praised Ashok Singhal's contributions to Sanatan dharma as a preacher of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. He said: "The revered Ashok Singhal ji had taken an engineering degree from Kashi (Banaras) Hindu University, but his life was dedicated to Sanatan dharma. The Shri Ram

Janmabhoomi movement and Ashok Singhal were complementary to each other." Yogi added, "The impact of his contributions to the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi movement was evident on January 22, 2024, when the most significant event of this century took place. On that day, Lord Shri Ram Lalla was enthroned in the magnificent temple by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's own hands. When dedication is genuine, the results follow." Yogi emphasised that Ram Lalla's consecration in Ayodhya marks the end of slavery in India. He remarked further: "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has presented a vision of a developed India. It is each person's responsibility to prioritise their civic duties over their rights for the betterment of the country and Sanatan dharma." Furthermore, Chief Minister Yogi praised Singhal's unparal-

leled efforts for the uplift of the untouchables, noting that the Veda Vidyalaya and Ekal Vidyalaya he established were integral to the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi movement. He emphasised that the Vedas represent the fundamental origin of all global religions, and Ashok Singhal had truly embodied this significance in his life. Chief Minister Yogi also mentioned that Sundar Yadav, a cow protector, was murdered by cow smugglers in Azamgarh, and the subsequent movement led by Ashok Singhal resulted in the arrest of Yadav's killers. He stated that India's prestige is deeply rooted in Sanskrit and its cultural heritage, which represent the soul of both India and potentially the world. He remarked that today, the world looks to India with hope for peace, security, and harmony. In times of global incidents, international attention turns to

India's leadership, he added. Chief Minister Yogi asserted that discussions about peace, harmony, happiness, and prosperity will inevitably direct the world's focus toward India's gurukuls, positioning India as a leader in these ideals. Meanwhile, the Life Time Achievement Award was presented to Veda Murti, Senior Brahmarshi Vishnu Patal Subramaniam and Acharya Gopal Chandra Mishra of the Vedic Unnayan Sansthan in Kashi, Uttar Pradesh. They received a prize of seven lakh rupees each, along with a medal and certificate. Adarsh Vedadhypak Vice-Chancellor R Chandramouli Shruti of Tamil Nadu was awarded five lakhs rupees, a medal, and a certificate. Uttam Veda Vidarthi Narayan Lal Sharma from Rajasthan was honoured with three lakhs rupees, a medal, and a certificate.

Maya advises govt to give up 'bulldozer politics'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Amidst the ongoing war of words between Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav over the use of bulldozer against criminals, Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati on Thursday advised the Uttar Pradesh government to give up "bulldozer politics" and formulate a strategy to deal with wild animals. In a series of posts on social media platform 'X', Mayawati said, "In some districts of UP, wild animals are attacking children, elderly, youth etc. The government should take necessary steps to stop it. Labourers and poor people are not able to arrange fodder for their animals and also work in fear of wild animal attacks. Proper arrangements should be made for them." She said, "Along with this, the government should also formulate a strategy to deal with wild



animals. At this time, instead of doing bulldozer politics, the government and the SP should leave this matter to the court, where there is full hope of getting justice." Referring to the incident of a private ambulance driver trying to rape a patient's wife in Basti district, Mayawati said, "In Basti district, a private ambulance driver, while taking a patient, tried to molest and rape his wife. This is extremely shameful. The victim's husband has died. The government should take strict action against the driver."

Kanpur exhibition to showcase works of artisans from across UP

Lucknow (PNS): The Yogi Adityanath government, committed to empowering artisans through initiatives like the One District, One Product (ODOP) scheme and the Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Yojana, once again offers them a platform to promote their crafts at the state level. The micro, small and medium enterprise development office in Kanpur will host a state-level exhibition under the Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Yojana from September 10 to 12, 2024. This exhibition aims to allow artisans from various districts to showcase their products and skills, offering them a valuable platform to connect with new customers and expand business opportunities. Artisans from 25 districts of UP, representing 18 major trades, will participate in the event. MSME Minister Rakesh Sachan said, "The artisans who have com-

pleted Stage-3 verification under the Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Yojana and hold a PM Vishwakarma Beneficiary Identity Card can register for the exhibition by September 7, 2024." He added, "Registrations can be submitted on plain paper or via email at dcdi-kanpur@dcmsme.gov.in. Applicants must provide their names, PM Vishwakarma trade, address, mobile number, email ID, product details (for display), PM Vishwakarma ID registration number, PM Vishwakarma Prashikshan Completion Certificate number, and category." A committee will select exhibitors, and travel and accommodation expenses for those selected will be covered as per the Government of India rules. The event will take place at the MSME-Development Office, 107 Industrial Asthan, Kalpi Road, Fazalganj, Kanpur.

Ramanathaswamy temple will help realise vision of Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat: CM

PNS ■ AYODHYA

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Thursday, hailed the construction of the Ramanathaswamy temple here as a significant contribution to strengthening the vision of Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat. The chief minister commenced his Ayodhya visit on Thursday by participating in the Maha Kumbhabishekam and 'prana pratishtha' ceremony of the Ramanathaswamy temple. After offering prayers at the newly-consecrated Shivalinga of Lord Mahadev, Yogi performed the circumambulation ritual at this South Indian-style temple. He expressed joy over the establishment of the temple, emphasising the deep historical connection between Ayodhya dham and Tamil Nadu, a relationship that has endured for thousands of years. He said, "Thousands of years ago, when Maryada Purushottam Shri Ram set out to search for Mother Sita in Sri Lanka, he worshipped Lord Shiva after building the bridge in Rameshwaram, Tamil Nadu." According to Chief Minister Yogi, this serves as a reminder of India's unity, where spiritual consciousness continues to rise. He remarked that these efforts are aligned with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat vision, further reinforcing the idea of national oneness. He also highlighted that India has always been unified from North to South and East to West, with the country's scriptures and holy sites serving as enduring proofs. "Governments may have changed over time, but the nation's saints have always upheld the strength and continuity of the spiritual traditions of India," he remarked. Referring to the Kashi Tamil



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath leaves after offering prayers at Hanuman Garhi temple in Ayodhya on Thursday PTI

Sangamam, two editions of which have been successfully held in Varanasi, Yogi noted that following Kashi, Ayodhya dham had now also forged a connection with Tamil Nadu, thanks to Ayyaji's efforts. He emphasised that while organisations like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Vishwa Hindu Parishad work tirelessly to unify the nation, some individuals attempt to divide the country for short-sighted political gains. In this context, the temple's establishment marks a significant step towards realising the vision of Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat, he said. Chief Minister Yogi highlighted that Ayyaji's efforts for national unity mirror the work done by a Tamil Nadu monk centuries ago, who played a pivotal role in uniting Sanatan dharma under one thread. Yogi emphasised that Ayodhya dham was poised to become a beacon of inspiration and a spiritual centre for the followers of Sanatan dharma worldwide. "It

will become one of the most spiritual and beautiful cities globally with renewed energy," he said, adding that the city's transformation will serve as a new guiding light. RSS Sar Karyavahak Suresh Bhaiyaji Joshi, Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Shahi, spiritual saint Ayya ji, Ayodhya Mayor Girish Pati Tripathi, zila panchayat chairperson Roli Singh, MLA Ved Prakash Gupta, Mahant Kamal Nayan Das, Swami Ram Sharan Das, Mahant Awadhesh Das, Jagat Guru Dineshacharya and saints from Tamil Nadu, local public representatives and other dignitaries were present in the programme. Yogi and Bhaiyaji Joshi were also presented with angavastram and memento during the programme. Earlier, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who arrived in Ayodhya on a one-day visit on Thursday, offered prayers to Lord Hanuman and worshipped Ram Lalla at the Ram Janmabhoomi temple. Despite his busy schedule, the chief min-

ister also visited the Shri Ram Gausala Samiti on Karsevakpuram Parikrama Marg, where he personally fed and cared for the cows, demonstrating his commitment to cow protection. He also planted trees on the Karsevakpuram campus, promoting environmental conservation. He also visited Ram Katha Park before heading to the newly established Sri Ramanathaswamy temple in Ramevapuram. The chief minister also took part in the 'Bharatmata Ashok Ji Singhal Veda Award-2024' distribution function held at Karsevakpuram. Earlier, Chief Minister Yogi had visited Ayodhya on August 6 and offered prayers to Lord Ram and Lord Hanuman and reviewed the ongoing development projects in the city. During that visit, he also inspected various development and construction works underway for Ayodhya's progress.

Criminal wanted in robbery gunned down

Lucknow (PNS): A wanted criminal and prime accused in the daylight robbery at a jewellery shop in Sultanpur district was killed in an encounter with the Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force in the early hours of Thursday, officials said. Mangesh Yadav, who carried a reward of Rs 1 lakh, sustained serious injuries during the encounter and was admitted to the community health centre in Bhdaiya where he succumbed to his injuries. The police recovered a 32-bore pistol, cartridges, 315-bore pistol, a motorcycle and looted jewellery from the spot. Mangesh, a native of Jaunpur, had several criminal cases registered against him. The encounter, with the members of the gang which committed daylight robbery at Bharat Jewellers in Sultanpur town on August 28, took place in the Misirpur Puraina area of Kotwali Dehat, Sultanpur at around 3:25 am. The operation was led by STF Deputy Superintendent of the Police DK Shahi and Deputy Superintendent of Police Vimal Singh. On August 28, five armed men had looted valuables worth over Rs 2 crore at gunpoint from a jewellery shop in broad daylight in Majorganj area in Sultanpur. The CCTV footage of the incident has surfaced online. According to eyewitnesses, the incident took place at around 12 noon when five men, who came on two motorcycles, entered the showroom of jeweller Bharatji Soni. Three of them wore helmets and two had their faces covered with scarves. The police and UP STF were investigating the case. Mangesh Yadav was also involved in this robbery. Earlier, the police had arrested three other criminals after an encounter. On Thursday, the police received information about the location of three criminals from an informer. The police surrounded the area, leading to the shootout. During the exchange of fire, the police shot the three criminals in the legs. All three were arrested and admitted to the hospital. According to the police, five criminals were involved in the robbery. Three of them have been arrested, one has been killed by the STF, and another is still being searched for. Earlier, ADG Lucknow Zone announced a reward of ₹1 lakh each on 11 dacoits involved in the jewellery robbery case.

Table with 2 columns: Sl. No. and Name and Address of Borrower/Guarantor & Description of Mortgage Property and O/S Amount as per Demand Notice/Demand & Possession Notice Date. It contains 7 rows of financial data.

MP flags off train for Mata Vaishno Devi Dham Katra

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Railways has again given a gift to the passengers in Sangam city. Direct train from Prayagraj to Mata Vaishno Devi Dham Katra has started. On Wednesday MP Praveen Patel flagged off the train for Mata Vaishno Devi Dham Katra from platform No 6 of Subedarganj railway station. Earlier train number 14033/14034 used to operate between Delhi and Katra. This train has been extended from Prayagraj. Now its new number will be 20433/20434 only after the new timetable of Railways comes into effect in January 2025.

Facility to reserve seats in advance will be available from Subedarganj. Mayor Ganesh Kesarnwani, MLA Sidharth Nath Singh etc were present. Ticket booking for Mata Vaishno Devi Dham Katra from Sangam city started from Tuesday. All the seats were full in a single day. Now till October 26, passengers are not



getting confirmed tickets in any coach from sleeper to first class. RAC tickets are available from October 27. This train features one AC first, two AC second class, six AC third class, seven sleeper coaches, four unreserved class coaches, one SLR and SLRD coach each. It will operate from Subedarganj 7 days a week.

Public Relations Officer of North Central Railway (PRO/NCR) Amit Malviya said that this train will depart from Subedarganj every day at 10.35 am and reach Katra the next day at 9.15 am. On return, it will depart from Katra at 3.20 pm and reach Subedarganj the next day at 12.45 pm.

Minister inspects hospital, police station

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Uttar Pradesh Minister of Tourism and Culture and in charge of the district Jaiveer Singh conducted a surprise inspection of Kasturba Gandhi Residential Girls School Shivpur, Pt Deendayal Upadhyaya (DDU) District Hospital and Cantt police station and gave necessary instructions to the officers present on the spot while reviewing the works and arrangements. He first reached the Shivpur-located school and tested the general knowledge of girls asking names of the President, Prime Minister, CM etc. He also inquired from the girls about the time of waking up in the morning and the day's routine, breakfast, lunch, dinner time etc. After this, he inspected the computer room operated for online coaching of higher education for girls. He instructed all the teachers present to give quality education to girls.

During the inspection of Pt Deendayal Upadhyay District Hospital, the minister went to the medicine store room and checked the availability register of medicines from the storekeeper/pharmacist. Apart from this, he took information about the demand and supply of medicines. He instructed the CMS to maintain the stock register of medicines and put up stock charts of medicines outside the medicine room. During the inspection, the



UP Minister Jaiveer Singh inspecting Cantt police station in Varanasi on Thursday.

minister has taken the CMS to task for finding medicines with MRP print and on the instruction of Singh, District Magistrate S Rajalingam asked a senior officer to investigate all the shortcomings of the hospital. Singh also talked to some of the attendants and inquired about the arrangements and availability of medicines. Some attendants said the medicines are available in the hospital, while others complained that the doctors prescribe medicines from outside. On this the minister instructed the CMS to improve the hospital system. Apart from this, he went to the OPD room, paediatrics, dermatology and other departments and talked to the doctors and instructed them to provide better services to the patients.

Later, Singh reached Cantt police station and inquired from the police officers/employees posted at the women help desk, IGRS, cyber crime cell, CCTNS office and FIR rooms and gave necessary instructions. The minister asked the women police personnel posted at the women help desk how many women and children have been rescued in the last three/six months and how many cases came and how many were resolved. In reply, the cops informed that no case is pending right now. After this, the minister went to the cyber crime cell and inquired about the complaints received in two months. It was told that a total of 25 cases came, out of which 10 were resolved and

cases were registered in 15. On this, Singh said that the personnel deployed in the cyber crime cell should do better work and ensure disposal of complaints within the stipulated time limit. He also went to the IGRS cell and checked the complaint register and gave instructions for timely disposal.

Later, at a review meeting of development and law and order, the Minister-in-charge of the district gave various guidelines to the concerned officers. He said that under Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin, full attention should be paid to the quality of under construction toilets and the use of old toilets should also be ensured. He said that the toilets under construction whose first installment has been released must be inspected on the spot. He directed the DM to ensure that the presence of public representatives in the foundation stone laying and inauguration of schemes. The Minister also directed the DM to run a campaign under the leadership of SDMs to remove illegal encroachments from all the ponds and to take certificates from Lekhpals and Kanungos that there are no illegal encroachments on ponds in their respective areas. He said that the houses must be provided to the needy under Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awas Yojana and participation of public representatives in the survey to be conducted must be ensured.

He said that public representatives and officers must inspect from time to time to ensure the quality of mid-day meals in primary schools and also ensure that they eat the food themselves. According to Singh, the DM should review the Communicable Disease Campaign and ensure effective supervision by conducting on-site inspection of fogging, cleaning, spraying etc in rural and urban areas. He also directed the DM to hold a meeting with Nagar Nigam and PWD officers and ensure the expected quality of all roads, patch work, strengthening etc. under construction in the district. In the meeting, Additional Commissioner of Police S Chinnappa presented the law and order situation through PPT and the Minister praised the entire Varanasi Police Commissionerate including the CP for ensuring the safe completion of the police system. Uttar Pradesh Minister of State (Independent Charge) Ravindra Jaiswal, Mayor Ashok Tiwari, Cantt MLAs Saurabh Srivastava and Dr Sunil Patel, MLCs Hansraj Vishwakarma and Dharmendra Singh, CP Mohit Agarwal, District Magistrate S Rajalingam, Varanasi Development Authority (VDA) Vice Chairman Pulkit Garg, Municipal Commissioner Akshat Verma, Chief Development Officer Himanshu Nagpal and officials of various departments were present in the review meeting.

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E-Tender Enq. No. 76111/P-1/EEMP-12803 dated 04-09-24
Dy. Chief Engineer / Headquarter (Procurement Cell-1) GGSSTP, Roopnagar invites E-Tender ID No. 2024_POWER_126627_1 for Procurement of Anion Exchange Resin and Cation Exchange Resin. For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 04-09-24 5:00 PM onwards.
Note:- Corrigendum & Addendum, if any will be published online at <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in>

RTP-106/24

76155/12/3400/2023/37317 Dated CHD :- 9/4/2024

Significance of Teachers' Day highlighted

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

On the occasion of Teachers' Day, the Rotary Club of New Kanpur hosted a programme in association with Interact club of BNSD Balika Vidyalaya Inter College, Meston Road, on Thursday. The event was dedicated to honouring the invaluable contribution of educators who have played a pivotal role in advancing education within the community. The programme commenced with a warm welcome address by the Rotary Club of New Kanpur President Sangeeta Gupta who highlighted the significance of Teachers' Day and the importance of recognising the dedication and hard work of teachers. The gathering included prominent members of the Rotary Club, school administrators, students and parents, all coming together to celebrate the achievements of the teaching staff.

The highlight of the event was the ceremony where 11 exceptional teachers, including Dr GS Nigam, former dean, Faculty of Arts, CSJM University, Prof NM Nigam, retd principal, Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Rati Gupta, HOD English, The Chintels School, Kalyanpur, Manju Shukla, Principal, BNSD BV Inter College, Neetu Sharma, Principal, Gyan Bharti Balika Vidyalaya, Sushel Mishra, Principal, Jasprati Saraswati Vidyamandir, Aparna Pandey, senior teacher, BNSD Balika Vidyalaya Inter College; Roli Dwivedi, senior teacher BNS-DSNBV, Sujata Mishra, BNS-DSNBV, Anshika Tewari, BNSD Balika Vidyalaya and Jyoti Mishra, BNSDSNBV were honoured for their remarkable contribution to the enhancement of education.

FELICITATED: On Teachers' Day on Thursday, 'Just for Environment' felicitated teachers who even after retirement from service are still serving the society selflessly by educating the coming generations. While felicitating the teachers, Anita Agrawal, president of the organization lauded the efforts being made by them and expressed confidence that such teachers will definitely inspire many others.

MoUs for enhancing research quality

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Varanasi (PNS): The Banaras Hindu University (BHU) and the Indian Institute of Technology-BHU (IIT-BHU) have taken a significant step forward in enhancing research quality and fostering collaborative research efforts. On Thursday the two institutions signed three Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) to facilitate the sharing of laboratory and library facilities as well as to further joint research projects. BHU Vice-Chancellor Prof Sudhir Kumar Jain described the signing of MoUs between the two esteemed institutions as a significant opportunity for mutual growth. He emphasised that global recognition underscores the need for academic institutions to collaborate for excellence. He stated that working in isolation hinders progress and thus, educational institutions should join forces to explore shared developmental opportunities. In his talk on research and innovation, Prof Jain highlighted the universities' responsibilities and the purpose of education. He noted that while research for credentials is important for professional advancement, it is crucial to consider the impact and societal change driven by the research. The V-C also emphasised that universities must cultivate a positive work culture and governance while meeting aspirations.



Prof Jain stressed that education should instill a sense of purpose and motivation, with institutions providing the tools and capabilities to achieve these goals. He shared key tips for engineering students to succeed long-term: maintaining a positive mindset, practicing sincerity, engaging in teamwork, managing time effectively, and developing life skills. Reiterating the importance of collaborating with other institutions, Director of IIT-BHU Prof Amit Patra asserted that joint efforts can yield significantly better results than working alone. He noted that the MoUs signed on the occasion lay the foundation for impactful cooperation between the two institutions, which share a common heritage. Prof Patra urged the BHU and IIT-BHU communities to seize this opportunity and collaborate for both their benefit and the welfare of the country. The MoUs were signed by BHU Registrar Prof Arun Kumar Singh, and IIT-BHU Registrar Rajan Srivastava, at Swatantra Bhawan, as Prof Jain and Prof Patra exchanged the agreements.

Minister, MP participate in cleanliness campaign

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Uttar Pradesh Minister of Tourism and Culture and in charge of Varanasi district Jaiveer Singh and Raja Sabha MP Neeraj Shekhar participated in a cleanliness campaign in Dashashwamedh Ward here on Thursday and planted saplings. Both of them joined the 75-day 'pravas' (stay) programme of former UP Minister and Varanasi City South MLA Dr Neelkanth Tiwari being organised prior to the birthday of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and it was the 63rd day of the drive.

They along with the MLA and his supporters visited Dashashwamedh Ward under BJP's Kashi Vishwanath Mandal of City South assembly constituency. During the campaign, garbage collected at many places was disposed of and the Nagar Nigam employees present on the spot were warned that garbage should not be seen in any corner of the area. At the same time, they appealed to the local residents for cooperation in maintaining cleanliness and directed the Nagar Nigam officers to resolve the problems of sewer, drain etc wherever they exist. After the cleanliness, they made public



UP Minister Jaiveer Singh and Raja Sabha MP Neeraj Shekhar participating in the cleanliness campaign in Varanasi on Thursday.

relations with the local citizens and took guidance from the seniors. After the visit programme, 11 trees were planted in Chittaranjan Park by them under the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign. The MLA said that during his 'pravas' programme, more than 1,000 plants have been planted so far. After this a chaupal was organised at a tea stall and people's problems were heard. Both Jaiveer Singh and Neeraj Shekhar unanimously praised this 'pravas' programme of Dr Tiwari. The minister said that by organising such a unique programme, awareness towards cleanliness and plantation increases rapidly and

the problems of the public are also resolved. Neeraj Shekhar said that such events strengthen the link of dialogue between the government and the public. The way Dr Tiwari has taken a pledge to stay in different wards and work to realise the vision of the PM, it will make this programme special in itself. During this, people were also given party membership through missed calls. The officials of Nagar Nigam, Jalika, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s Mandal president Nalin Nayan Mishra, Upsabhupati of Nagar Nigam Narsingh Das, Pawan Shukla, Vinay Yadav, Ramesh Tiwari, Shivdutt and many others were also present.

RAJIV GANDHI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LAW, PUNJAB
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Adv.No. RGNU/43/2024 dt. 03.09.2024

ENTRANCE TEST FOR ADMISSION TO Ph.D. PROGRAMME 2025
Applications are invited in prescribed form for admission to 20 seats of Ph.D. in Law [14 Gen.] (3 SC/2 ST) and (1 SAP) Category and One seat each for Ph.D. in English / History / Economics and Sociology through an Entrance Test to be held on 27.10.2024 (Sunday) from 10.00AM to 1.00 PM at RGNU, Campus.
Interested candidates may visit RGNU website www.rgnu.ac.in regarding the details of eligibility, syllabi of the entrance test, reservation of seats, application form, etc.
Completed application form must be accompanied with proof of payment through Online SBI Collect i.e. (Fee Rs. 3540/- for Gen. Rs. 2360/- for SC/ST/SAP Categories) including GST. The last date to receive complete applications is 21.10.2024 through Speed/Registered Post addressed to Registrar, RGNU, Punjab, Patiala.
Note: University may increase or decrease the number of seats.

Registrar

SIDHUWAL BHADSON ROAD, PATIALA-147006 TEL.: 0175-2391600, 601, 602, 603 FAX: 0175-2391601 E-Mail: info@rgnu.ac.in, WEBSITE: www.rgnu.ac.in
NA/12/25207/2023/37336 Dated CHD :- 9/5/2024

कार्यालय, नगर पालिक निगम, कोरबा (छत्तीसगढ़)
ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट निविदा सूचना

क. / 176/निर्माण/2024 दिनांक 03.09.2024

एकीकृत पञ्जीवन प्रणाली अंतर्गत सक्षम श्रेणी में पञ्जीकृत टेकेदारों से निम्नलिखित निर्माण कार्य हेतु (Online) आनलाईन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है:-

क्र.	कार्य का विवरण	अनुमानित लागत (रु. लाख में)	निविदा डालने की अंतिम तिथि
1	वार्ड क्र. 29 खरमौर प्रवेशद्वार से ट्रांसफार्मर तक सी.सी. रोड एवं नाली एवं धो-बाल का निर्माण कार्य शेष कार्य (14वें विच मट्ट) प्रथम निविदा	105.12	25.09.2024 (T.No. 158260)

उपरोक्त कार्य की निविदा की जानकारी ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट वेब पोर्टल <http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> से डाउनलोड की जा सकती है, साथ ही निगम के वेब साइट www.korbamunicipal.in एवं www.korbaurbanecg.gov.in पर भी देखी जा सकती है।

।। स्वच्छ भारत निर्माण में योगदान दें।

कार्यालय अभियंता
नगर पालिक निगम
कोरबा (छत्तीसगढ़)

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Bank of Baroda

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DEMAND NOTICE Branch : Lalitpur Main, Lalitpur

Here by this is to inform that under named borrower has not repaid principal and interest thereon of the loan. Therefore the loan become NPA on below Dated . A notice under section 13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 was issued at last known address, which was returned undelivered. Therefore we again inform to under named borrower/ Guarantor by this public notice to repay the loan amount due including interest and other expenses as mentioned in this notice within 60 days from the date of publication of this notice otherwise bank will take action u/s section 13(4) of the SARFAESI Act 2002.

The borrower's attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of 13 of the act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets, that after publication of public auction/inviting quotation/tender/private treaty your right to redeem the secured assets will not be available.

Name and Address of Borrower / Guarantor and Security agreement with brief description of securities/N.P.A. Date & Outstanding Amount as per Demand Notice

Borrower : Shri Murari Vaid S/o Shri Hargovind Vaid and Smt. Sunita Vaid W/o Shri Murari Vaid, (1) R/o : 55/1, Tiwari Petrol Pump Ke Samne, Rawatayana-6, Tehsil & Distt. Lalitpur, Guari, (Both R/o. Mahendra Kumar Savita S/o Shri Het Ram Savita, R/o : House No. 89/1, Ajudpura, Lalitpur, Tehsil & Distt. Lalitpur (2) Shri Abhinandan Kumar S/o Late Babu Lal, R/o : House No. 101, Lakshimpura, Tehsil & Distt. Lalitpur (3) Smt. Kusum Devi W/o Shri Hargovind Vaid, R/o : House No. 55, Rawatayana-6, Tehsil & Distt. Lalitpur. Outstanding Amount as per Demand Notice : Rs. 9,34,424.37 + Intt. + Others Charges

Property : Land & Building Situated at Land No. 6529 M, Mohalla Rawatayana Ward No. 11, (Old House No. 55/1A & New House No. 153) Tehsil & Distt. Lalitpur in the name of Smt. Kusum Devi W/o Shri Hargovind Vaid, Area : 195.16 Sq. Mtr. **Bounded** (As per Sale Deed 2951 Dt. 25-03-2011) -**North** : 15 Ft. Rasta, **South** : House of Son Singh Harnam Singh, **East** : Jain Sahab Ka Plot and House of Maharaj Singh, **West** : Land of Seller. **N.P.A. Date : 10-06-2024 • Demand Notice Date : 22-08-2024**

Date : 06-09-2024 **Place : Lalitpur** **Authorised Officer**

Exhibition organised

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

An exhibition on 'Maha Akumbh of Excellence Innovation and Creativity Fair' was organised at Gurukul Montessori School of Phaphamau on Teachers' Day here on Thursday. The students made many models. In this exhibition an attempt was made to show a glimpse of an ideal village of India. Educational fair was inaugurated by UP Board Secretary Bhagwati Singh and former DIG Kripashankar Singh, founder of Gurukul Montessori School. UP Board Secretary Bhagwati Singh has congratulated the teachers on Teachers' Day.

Director Viendra Singh and Principal Amita Mishra expressed gratitude to everyone. Meanwhile Teachers' Day was celebrated by the students of Ford School and College situated at Qazipur Naini on Thursday. The students honoured the chief guest, school's manager and Director Development of SHUATS, Prof Ritu Prakash Dubey, Principal Rajni Singh, Assistant Development Officer Dr Anjali Saxena and their teachers by presenting them bouquets.

BODY FOUND: The body of a 34-year-old woman was found hanging inside a room in Bada Chaka area here. Reports said that Shikha Tiwari (34) was found hanging from a noose inside the room in Bada Chaka under Naini police station of Prayagraj late on Wednesday night. After the incident, the family members broke open the door, brought the body down from the noose and tried to take her to a hospital, but by then Shikha had died.

DM: Children should be taught culture from childhood

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

District Magistrate Priyanka Niranjana has said that to make the children ideal first of all parents have to become ideal. She advocated for a cultured society while addressing a seminar on the topic 'Civic duties are the basis of nation's progress' at KB PG college on Thursday. She said as the children are the future of the nation they should be taught culture from childhood.

The keynote speaker Dr Raj Bihari said the ideology of Hindutva is the best concept to bring brotherhood in the world. He said it is the need of the hour that we promote our Indian ideology which will not help only our nation to become a superpower but will also be successful in bringing peace in the world. The seminar was conducted by Neeraj Dwivedi and the welcome speech was delivered by Principal Dr Ashok Kumar Singh. Prominent among those present were Jawahar Singh, Sharad Upadhyay, Rajesh Singh, Umesh Singh, Raj Patil Ojha, Chandra Mohan and Keshav Nath Tiwari.

Park inaugurated

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Mayor Pramila Pandey inaugurated Udaan Children's Park on Khatri Marg near Vijay Villa, Swaroop Nagar, on Wednesday evening. Municipal Commissioner Sudhir Kumar was also present on the occasion. The park has been developed by the JCI Kanpur Industrial with an investment of ₹10 lakh. Speaking on the occasion, Mayor Pramila Pandey said this park of Nagar Nigam was in very poor condition and now with the efforts of JCI Kanpur Industrial, its has glorious past has been restored. She said more such children's parks will be developed in the city in the near future. President Sidharth Gupta, Rahul Agarwal, Amit Garg, Vikas Jajharia along with officers of Kanpur Nagar

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Nigam (KNN) and local residents were present on the occasion. **SUICIDE:** A youth allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself from a tree in Deokali village under Rania police station area of Kanpur Dehat. He was found hanging on Thursday morning. Police sent the body for an autopsy after probe. Dilip Kumar (25) of Deokali was a labourer. On Wednesday night he hanged himself from a neem tree on the outskirts of the village. Mother Kusuma fell unconscious while brothers Sandeep, Naitik, Kuldeep, Golu and Adarsh and sisters Madhuri, Ruby and Arpita were upset. S-I Rania Mohit Verma rushed to the spot and quizzed the kin. Forensic team collected the evidence and thereafter the body was sent for an autopsy.

After Mollywood, MeToo surfaces in Kerala politics

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The Me Too fusillade that has literally send actors and movie makers in Kerala for cover has tightened its hold over politics. A woman senior Congress leader Simi Rosebell John who alleged that she did not get prominence in the party because of her refusal to yield to the demands of Leader of Opposition V D Satheesan finds herself expelled from the primary membership of the party. But Simi disclosed the names of a group of women leaders including Padmaja Venugopal who left the party or suffer silently by continuing in the GOP as victims of Me Too phenomenon in the State's Congress party. This is the first such disclosure that shook the Congress party in Kerala though senior leaders like K C Venugopal and Haiby Eden have been named by the solar scam accused Sarita Nair

as persons who have tormented her. In the case of Venugopal, she has reportedly used harsh words while Eden has been portrayed as a chocolate hero by the lady. Similarly, Shobhana George, a two-time MLA of the Congress party was eased out by the leadership and she had no other way but to embrace the CPI(M). The CPI(M) stands out as the party with maximum number of Casanovas and this has been stated by none other than late V B Cherian, who had served as the all India secretary of the party's trade union wing CITU. P K Sasi, the former MLA from Shornur whom the media describes as a modern day Romeo in the party is "famous" for his escapades. Many party insiders have demanded the ouster of Sasi from the post of Kerala State Tourism Development Corporation as his name figures regularly in cases of sexual abuse. This

could be the result of the Nair v Eezhava fight in the party," said a source close to P K Sasi. K M Shajahan, who had served as secretary to former chief minister V S Achuthanandan, told The Pioneer that film actor Mukesh, who is an accused in sexual abuse case filed by actresses is a notorious character. "His first wife Sarita, herself a lead artist in South India, has said in a TV interview how Mukesh had kicked her regularly when she was pregnant with his child. "Sarita was weeping uncontrollably while recounting her experiences as Mukesh's wife and she was chased out of her house by Mukesh. I feel pity for the CPI(M) leaders who could not find an effective candidate to fight the assembly election," said Shajahan. The disclosure by Simi Rosebell is sure to dampen the prospectus of Satheesan's chance of becoming the next

chief minister of the State that goes to the polls in 2026. There are strong contenders like Ramesh Chennithala, Sasi Tharoor, K Muraliedharan, Venugopal and K Sudhakaran. The 2001-2006 UDF Government led by A K Antony and Oommen Chandi suffered a major setback as the then Industries Minister and Muslim League leader P K Kunhalikutty came under attack for allegedly molesting a woman hailing from Kozhikode. Even BJP leaders in the State are not free from allegations of misdemeanour against young and middle-aged women. Politics and cinema make strange bedfellows but in matters of man's age old instinct, they are the same one. Former Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao had mentioned this aspect in his novel The Insider (1998), based on real life incidents faced by Rao in his political career.

PM Modi to launch water conservation scheme in Surat



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to launch the "Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari" initiative in Gujarat's Surat on Friday, a step aimed at strengthening community involvement in water conservation. The initiative aligns with the ongoing "Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain" campaign, reinforcing Modi's vision of collaborative water management to ensure long-term water security, according to an official statement. "The initiative seeks to mobilise citizens, local bodies, industries and stakeholders in Gujarat to implement rainwa-

ter-harvesting structures. These efforts are expected to serve as a model for other States, promoting sustainable water-management practices and enhancing water security across the country. "The programme underscores Modi's call for a "whole-of-society" approach, urging for collective action towards turning every drop of rain into a valuable resource. The structures built under this initiative will play a pivotal role in rain-water harvesting, showcasing Gujarat's success in community-driven water conservation and encouraging Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) involvement. "Gujarat's model of water conservation, rooted in commu-

nity participation, has been a pioneering example in India. The launch of the "Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari" initiative is being seen as a landmark moment, designed to inspire other States to replicate these efforts, the statement said. "The Prime Minister has often highlighted water conservation as a national mission, reflecting his long-standing advocacy for sustainable water management. With the involvement of State nodal officers from across the country in this launch, the event signifies the national importance of creating a sustainable, water-secure future for generations to come. "The initiative builds on the success of the "Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain" campaign, which began in 2019. Despite disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the campaign has grown into an annual nationwide effort. Its current edition, launched in March, emphasises women's leadership in water management under the theme "Nari Shakti se Jal Shakti", the statement said.



Phishing fraud mimics MoD website to harvest officials credentials, NIC issues advisory

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Indian cyber-security agencies have detected a phishing fraud that "mimics" the official website of the Ministry of Defence to "harvest" the log-in credentials of officials to "steal" sensitive Government documents. An advisory issued this week by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) has identified two phishing links - mod.gov.in.aboutcase.ni/publications.html and mod.gov.in.army.aboutcase.ni/publications.html. "The communication says both the URLs seek NIC-provided log-in credentials of Government officials through a fake e-mail that comes attached with a "fake" document titled "Hackers Targeted Defence Personnel in Mass Cyber Attack". "Once individual credentials like log-in IDs and passwords are punched, the links re-direct the users to a "login-error.html" page. "Both the phishing URLs have mirrored the original MoD website (www.Mod.Gov.In) to lure end users into believing they are legitimate MoD websites," the communication says. "The two links are "mimicking" the Department of Defence and the phishing campaign is primarily aimed at harvesting the NIC credentials of Government officials to steal sensitive documents pertaining to the Indian Government, the communication says. The NIC serves as the backbone of Internet-based Government communication. "A phishing attack is defined as the fraudulent practice of impersonating reputed and official names and identities through e-mails, text messages or phone calls to trick the victims into sharing sensitive personal information like banking and credit card details and login or identity information.

Home Secretary: Global police cooperation key to tackling crime

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Criminals and fugitives should not receive safe havens by exploiting differences in international jurisdictions and they should be brought to justice, Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan said here on Thursday. In his inaugural address at the 10th Interpol Liaison Officers (ILOs) Conference organised by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Mohan said the safe havens for crime, proceeds of crime and terrorism anywhere in the world pose a "serious threat to every country". "An increasingly interconnected world needs internationally-connected policing. Criminals and fugitives from law should not receive safe havens by exploiting differ-



ences in international jurisdictions and they should be brought to justice," he said. "The conference on "Strengthening International Law Enforcement Partnerships" ahead of the upcoming UN International Day of Police Cooperation saw the participation of senior officers from all law-enforcement agencies of the Centre, states and Union territories and international police liaison officers from sev-

eral countries. "Law-enforcement personnel from across India and the member countries of Interpol, Europol and GlobE Network joined the session virtually. The Home Secretary highlighted the importance of international police cooperation in tackling the rapidly-evolving landscape of technology-enabled crimes, which transcends borders. "The international dispersal of crime and criminals has enhanced the need for investigation abroad. Prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of crime is increasingly reliant on digital evidence and foreign-located evidence," he said. "Mohan said the spectre of transnational crimes and organised crimes require real-time international police cooperation.

India's move to build toilets has saved up to 70,000 infant lives annually: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India's initiative focused on building toilets has potentially saved up to 70,000 infant lives annually, a recent study published in the British journal 'Nature' has revealed, in a testament to the impact of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's pet project, the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM). Lauding the observations, the report was shared by the Prime Minister on Thursday stating that access to proper toilets plays a crucial role in reducing infant and child mortality. The Mission is a country-wide campaign initiated by the Central Government on October 2, 2014, to eliminate open defecation and improve solid waste management. In a social media X, the Prime Minister posted saying that improved sanitation has



become a "game-changer" for public health in India. "Happy to see research highlighting the impact of efforts like the Swachh Bharat Mission. Access to proper toilets plays a crucial role in reducing infant and child mortality," Modi said. "Clean, safe sanitation has become a game-changer for public health. And, I am glad India has taken the lead in this," he added. The report "Toilet construction under the Swachh Bharat Mission and infant mortality in

India," said toilet construction increased dramatically across India following the implementation of the SBM in 2014 adding that the post-mission period in India exhibited accelerated reductions in infant and child mortality compared to the pre-SBM years. Researchers had analysed infant and under-5 mortality data from 35 states in 640 districts and came to the conclusion that "based on regression estimates, the provision of toilets at scale may have contributed to avert-

ing approximately 60,000 to 70,000 infant deaths annually." It added that the implementation of transformative sanitation programmes can deliver population health benefits in low and middle-income countries. This significant impact underscores the crucial role of improved sanitation in reducing infant and child mortality rates, highlighting the success of the program. The research delves into data spanning two decades, uncovering a significant link between improved sanitation and reduced child mortality. By examining changes in toilet access across the states, the study demonstrates how each 10-percentage-point increase in district-level sanitation correlates with marked declines in both infant and under-5 death rates, highlighting the mission's crucial role in advancing public health and saving lives.

Parliamentary Panel apprised of Waqf properties belonging to Ministries of Road Transport

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Parliamentary panel examining the Waqf (Amendment) Bill was on Thursday apprised of the Waqf properties in the National Capital Region and those on the land parcels belonging to the Ministries of Road Transport and Railways. Urban Affairs and Road Transport Secretary Anurag Jain and Anil Kumar Khandelwal, Member Infrastructure, Railway Board, along with the officials from the respective Ministries made presentations to the Joint Committee on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill. "The officials of the Urban Affairs Ministry briefed the panel on the land acquisition process undertaken by the then British Government in 1911 to build the city of Delhi. "Parliamentary sources said there were heated moments during the meeting when the

officials of the Urban Affairs Ministry were unable to respond to questions from members on the land acquisition process undertaken by the British administration. "There were also attempts to suppress certain information," claimed an Opposition member of the Committee chaired by BJP member Jagadambika Pal. Parliamentary sources said DMK member A Raja pointed out that a Waqf Act was passed in 1913 and there was no mention of it in the presentation by the Urban Affairs Ministry about it. "According to the presentation by the Ministry, the Waqf Board made claims between 1970 and 1977 on 138 properties that were acquired for building New Delhi by the British Government. "A total of 341 sq km of land was acquired to build the National Capital region and due compensation was paid to the affected persons, a claim that was contested by the members.

India takes part in heads of Asia Coast Guards meet

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Coast Guard (ICG) participated in the 20th Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meeting (HACGAM) from September three to four at Incheon, South Korea. During the meeting, various issues of significance, such as maritime law enforcement, safety and security of life at sea, marine environment protection, illicit trafficking of drugs, weapons and humans and future cooperation were discussed, Defence Ministry said here on Thursday. On the sidelines of the HACGAM, the 12th annual bilateral meeting between ICG and the Korea Coast Guard was also held on Wednesday under the provisions of the MoU signed between the two agencies in March 2006. "The meeting focused on augmenting operational-level interaction and capacity building in the areas of maritime search and rescue, pollution



response and law enforcement. "The HACGAM primarily focuses on fostering cooperation between the Coast Guards of the member Asian states to ensure and promote safe, secure and clean seas in the region. It is an independent forum with 23-member Coast Guard Agencies and also two associate members in the form of Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). "It comprises four Working Groups to enable a focused and goal-oriented approach towards coordinated response & synergy towards common maritime issues.



India, Saudi Arabia hold 6th defence cooperation meet

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to further strengthen their bilateral defence ties, India and Saudi Arabia conducted the sixth edition of Joint Committee on Defence Cooperation (JCDC) meeting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on Wednesday, defence ministry said here on Thursday. Giving details, officials said the two countries discussed new avenues to further strengthen the long standing and multifaceted defence cooperation. Detailed deliberations were held to expand the scope of engagement and cooperation in areas such as military, training, defence industry and

research and development (R&D). "India and Saudi Arabia enjoy cordial and friendly relations founded on the centuries old economic and socio-cultural ties. The MoU on Defence Cooperation provides a framework for defence collaboration between the two countries. Joint Defence Cooperation Committee is an institutional mechanism under the MoU to promote the objectives of defence cooperation. "The Indian delegation, led by Joint Secretary Amitabh Prasad, included officials from the Ministry of Defence. The meeting was co-chaired by Major General Salman Bin Awadh Al-Harbi from the Saudi Arabia delegation.

Meghalaya bans two-finger test to confirm rape

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Meghalaya Government has informed the Supreme Court that it has prohibited the 'two-finger test' which was conducted to determine whether a survivor of rape or sexual assault was habituated to sexual intercourse. The State Government told the apex court that a circular dated June 27, 2024, was issued by the Health and Family Welfare Department of Meghalaya prohibiting the test and disciplinary action will be taken for non-compliance. A bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and Sanjay Karol, which referred to a top court's order passed on May 7, noted that the apex court had strongly deprecated the practice of conducting a 'two-finger test'. "Amit Kumar, the Advocate General appearing for Meghalaya, has tendered a circular dated June 27, 2024, issued by the Government of Meghalaya, Health and Family Welfare Department. This circular has been issued prohibiting the two-finger test and also disciplinary action for its non-compliance," the bench said in its September 3 order. The bench passed the order while dismissing a petition filed by a convict who had challenged the Meghalaya High Court's verdict delivered on March 23 last year. The high court had affirmed his conviction for the offences punishable under the provision of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act. The bench noted that the convict was sentenced to 10 years for the offence. In a judgement delivered in October 2022, the apex court deprecated the "regressive" and "invasive" practice of the "two-finger test" on rape survivors and said it has no scientific basis and instead re-victimises



women who may have been sexually assaulted, and was an affront to their dignity. In its order passed on September 3, the top court referred to the circular issued by the Meghalaya Government. "The Supreme Court of India and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare have prohibited the practice of conducting the two-finger test (TFT) on survivors of sexual assault. This practice is scientifically baseless, traumatising, and violates the survivor's dignity and rights," the circular said. "All Government doctors and medical practitioners in the State of Meghalaya are hereby directed not to conduct the two-finger test on survivors of sexual assault. Adherence to this directive is mandatory for all Government medical personnel," it said. The circular further said any doctor found conducting the test will be held guilty of misconduct and strict disciplinary action will be initiated in accordance with the Meghalaya Discipline and Appeal Rules, 2019. It said the survivors of sexual assault must receive compassionate, respectful and sensitive care, including psychological support and counselling services. "We hope and trust that the circular referred to above issued by the State of Meghalaya is implemented and abided in its letter and spirit. We hope that in future we may not have to once again condemn the State of Meghalaya for such a serious lapse," the bench said.

Frequent mobile phone use linked to increased risk of cardiovascular diseases: Study

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Do you spend hours glued to your smartphone, whether for social media or work? It's better if you reassess your habits. For, a new study published in Canadian Journal of Cardiology has suggested that frequent mobile phone use is linked to an increased risk of cardiovascular diseases (CVD), particularly among current smokers and individuals with diabetes. The study is particularly relevant for India, where, as of January 2024, there were 1.12 billion mobile connections, encompassing 78 per cent of the country's population. Study author Dr Yanjun Zhang from Nanfang Hospital,

Southern Medical University, China, warned that, "Given the pervasive nature of mobile phone use, understanding its health impacts is crucial. Radio-frequency electromagnetic fields (RF-EMF) from these devices can disrupt the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis, cause inflammation, and induce oxidative stress. This can affect heart health and blood vessels. However, the precise connection between mobile phone use and CVD remains uncertain." His colleague and co-investigator Dr. Ziliang Ye echoed similar views. "We found that regular users face a significantly higher risk of developing these conditions compared to those who use their phones less frequently."



The research, which analysed data from 444,027 individuals in the UK Biobank with reported mobile phone use from 2006 to 2010, defined regular use as making at least one call per week. Over a median follow-up period of 12.3 years, the study assessed incidences of stroke, coronary heart disease, atrial fibrillation, and heart failure, while also exploring the

role of sleep patterns, psychological distress, and neuroticism. Co-investigator Xianhui Qin, MD, emphasised that poor sleep patterns and mental health issues could exacerbate the risk of cardiovascular diseases through disrupted circadian rhythms, endocrine and metabolic disturbances, and increased inflammation. "Chronic RF-EMF exposure from mobile phones, combined with smoking and diabetes, may further amplify this risk," Dr Vivek Shama, Associate consultant cardiologist, Fortis Greater Noida who though not connected with the study, agreed. "Yes, we do agree that mobile phone usage can adversely

affect heart health. Excessive use of mobile phones, particularly during long conversations, exposes the body to high-frequency magnetic field waves. These waves can interfere with the heart's function, leading to symptoms such as palpitations, dizziness, headaches, and even heart arrhythmias in some cases. We've particularly observed this in individuals who frequently use devices like EarPods. Although companies claim that these devices are safe, excessive usage can still result in complications for both the heart and brain," he said. Additionally, sleeping with your phone nearby can lead to headaches, migraines, and potentially other health issues.

It is essential to minimize screen time, especially before bed, Sama warned and cautioned that excessive phone use, especially among the younger generation, can lead to insomnia, anxiety, and stress. "This is largely due to the constant engagement with virtual platforms, which can result in unhealthy comparisons with others, leading to mental health issues. Prolonged screen time also reduces physical activity, contributing to obesity, particularly in children who are often given phones as distractions," he said. "Phones should be kept away while sleeping, and screen time should be minimized, particularly first thing in the morning," he suggested.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

India shines at Paralympics

India puts up best-ever show at Paralympics; PM Modi lauds athletes' perseverance and talent

India's performance at the 2024 Paralympics will be etched in the annals of sporting history, as the country witnessed its best-ever showing at the Games. With a record-breaking tally of medals, the athletes' determination, grit, and sheer willpower resonated deeply with millions. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, visibly elated, interacted with the Paralympic contingent, hailing their indomitable spirit as an inspiration to the nation. India sent its largest-ever contingent of 84 athletes to the 2024 Paralympics, competing across various disciplines like archery, athletics, and shooting. Among the many standout performances, Indian archer Sheetal Devi captured the world's attention, competing without hands and displaying an extraordinary level of precision and resilience. Her triumphs, alongside other athletes, served as a testament to the extraordinary abilities of differently-abled individuals who continue to defy the odds and break barriers. PM Modi, in his conversation with the athletes, expressed his deep admiration, stating,



"Your hard work and dedication have brought glory to the nation... You have shown that challenges, no matter how daunting, can be overcome with perseverance." The success of Indian Paralympians is not merely a result of their training, but a culmination of years of battling personal and societal obstacles. These athletes have defied their disabilities, proving that with determination, no hurdle is insurmountable. Each medal won at the Paralympics tells a story of immense struggle, dedication, and the refusal to accept limitations. Take, for instance, the journey of Bhavina Patel, a para table tennis player who became a beacon of hope after her exceptional performances on the global stage. Diagnosed with polio at a young age, Bhavina's journey from rehabilitation to becoming a Paralympian exemplifies the strength of human willpower. Such athletes embody the essence of perseverance, redefining success not by their victories alone but by their unwavering resolve to overcome challenges. As India celebrates its best-ever Paralympics performance, the spotlight on para-athletes has intensified, garnering widespread support from all sections of society. What makes these athletes stand apart is their ability to transform adversity into strength. Despite the physical and emotional challenges, they face, they continue to push boundaries, proving that talent knows no bounds. For every medal India wins at the Paralympics, there are countless hours of practice, numerous setbacks, and a tireless pursuit of excellence. As India celebrates the achievements of its Paralympic athletes, their stories remind us that greatness is often born out of struggle. Their success is a beacon of hope for millions, showcasing that with determination, talent, and an unbreakable spirit, anything is possible. India's Paralympians have made the nation proud, and their stories will inspire generations to come. As they continue to rise and break records, their message is clear: Perseverance, dedication, and talent can overcome even the greatest of challenges.

International Departure
अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय विमान

PICTALK



Nuns offer prayers during observance of the death anniversary of Mother Teresa, in Kolkata

Childhood trauma and its lasting impact on adult relationships

Recognising the impact of childhood trauma on adult relationships is crucial. By seeking therapy individuals can heal emotional wounds and foster healthier relations

Childhood trauma, a deeply distressing experience that occurs before the age of 18, can have a profound and lasting impact on an individual's life. One of the most significant areas where this influence is felt is in adult relationships. Understanding the connection between childhood trauma and adult relationships can help individuals recognize the patterns that may be affecting their lives and seek appropriate support. When a child experiences trauma, it can disrupt their development and create a sense of insecurity and fear. This can lead to difficulties in forming and maintaining healthy relationships in adulthood. Individuals who have experienced childhood trauma may struggle with trust, communication, and emotional intimacy. They may also be more prone to attracting or engaging in toxic relationships. One of the most common ways that childhood trauma can manifest in adult relationships is through difficulties with trust. Individuals who have been betrayed or abused as children may find it chal-



lenging to trust others, even in seemingly harmless situations. This can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness, as well as difficulties forming deep connections with others. Communication can also be a challenge for individuals who have experienced childhood trauma. They may struggle to express their emotions or be overly sensitive to criticism. This can lead to misunderstandings and conflict in relationships. Additionally, individuals who have been traumatized may be more likely to engage in unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as substance abuse or avoidance, which can further hinder their ability to communicate effective-

ly. Emotional intimacy is another area where childhood trauma can have a significant impact. Individuals who have been traumatized may find it difficult to open up to others and share their feelings. They may fear rejection or abandonment, and may instead withdraw from relationships. This can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness, as well as difficulties forming deep and meaningful connections with others. Another way that childhood trauma can manifest in adult relationships is through the attraction to or engagement in toxic relationships. Individuals who have been traumatized may be more likely to attract or engage in relationships that replicate the abusive or neglectful dynamics of their childhood. This can be a way of unconsciously reliving past trauma and seeking to resolve it. It is important to note that not everyone who experiences childhood trauma will develop these patterns in their adult relationships. However, understanding the connection between childhood trauma and adult rela-

tionships can help individuals recognize the patterns that may be affecting their lives and seek appropriate support. If you are struggling with the impact of childhood trauma on your adult relationships, it is important to seek help. Therapy can be a valuable tool for understanding and addressing the underlying issues affecting your relationships. A therapist can help you develop healthy coping mechanisms, improve communication skills, and build stronger, more fulfilling relationships. Additionally, support groups can provide a safe and supportive space to connect with others who have experienced similar challenges. By understanding the connection between childhood trauma and adult relationships, individuals can take steps to heal from past wounds and build healthier, more fulfilling relationships. (The author is Dubai-based award-winning Poet, Novelist, Writing Retreat Curator and Founder of The WriteScene.com. Views expressed are personal)



DEEBA SALIM IRFAN

IC-814: Lessons beyond the binary



BHOPINDER SINGH

The web series 'IC-184: The Kandahar Hijack' has reignited debate over the moral and strategic dilemmas faced during hostage crises

Web series IC-184: The Kandahar Hijack, has triggered debate on the complexities and 'greys' that accompany such incidents. Beyond obvious things like the lack of coordination, responsiveness or even allowing the flight to take off from Amritsar – one important query is if India did wrong in negotiating with terrorists. Given the handiwork of these released terrorists in the subsequent terror attacks, the question acquires even gravity. However, beyond the simplistic and binary 'yes' or 'no' position that is often postulated in the argument, lies the necessity of nuance in attempting to answer the same. It is universally agreed that negotiations with terrorists are a bad idea, however, sometimes, the consequences of not negotiating can have far more debilitating and costly consequences. Sifting the wheat from the chaff of the supposed 'no-negotiation' stance of some countries (as often bandied) is important. It is frequently argued that countries like Israel or the United States of America do not negotiate with terrorists. It is further claimed that because of such an unbending posture, the Israelis and Americans avoided being taken as hostages. But such beliefs are untrue, misplaced, and belie the wheels-within-wheels of the American or Israeli reality, beyond the publicly stated position of 'no-negotiation'.

It is the worst-kept secret that such countries have funnelled money through proxies, 'friendly countries', or even masked the same as 'aid' to secure their citizens, whilst maintaining the official stance. The Iran-Contra affair (1981-86) during the Reagan era wherein American hostages held by the Lebanese group, Hezbollah, were exchanged for weapons for Hezbollah itself, exemplifying the deals cut beyond the public gaze. As recently as 2014, the Americans had released five Taliban prisoners from Guantanamo, to secure an American hostage. Last August, the United States is believed to have unfrozen \$6 bil-



lion of Iranian funds in South Korean banks to secure the release of five US citizens. It is now argued that the same money could have been invaluable for the cash-strapped Iranians (widely believed benefactors of Hamas) in launching the subsequent '7th Oct' attack on Israel. Israelis themselves are the masters of the backdoor negotiations, irrespective of the belligerent stand adopted for public consumption. In the Gilat Shalit (Israeli prisoner) exchange of 2011, it is believed that Israelis released 1027 prisoners who were held in jails. Even now as the bludgeoning of the Gaza Strip continues, the Israelis in parallel (and in support of the Biden administration) are still negotiating with Hamas for the release of their citizens held hostage. Often, the aggrieved government can end up losing a lot of leverage and lives when they refuse to engage with bad actors. Negotiations help immediate outcomes, buy crucial time for alternate reactions, and most importantly, help establish critical information and 'leads' about the captors that could be invoked, productively. Lastly, a well-managed ransom payoff (with 'marked' bills and telltale trails) can also lead to discovering broader networks and bases to take down the terror infrastructure, subsequent-



THE CALCULATION AND OPPORTUNITIES WOULD HAVE BEEN FAR MORE CREATIVE WITH POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS, HAD IC-814 BEEN HELD UP IN AMRITSAR, AS OPPOSED TO KANDAHAR

ly. Negotiations or engagement does not have to be tantamount to surrender or even a 'bad deal', necessarily. From the post-released activities of the three terrorists in the IC-814 case, it was a costly 'deal' – but was there an alternative? The hijacked plane was parked in the backyard of Pakistani ISI's supported Afghan base (at least then) with 158 precious lives (not including the 5 terrorists). The terrorists in this case (under the direct supervision of the ISI and Taliban) were not exactly known to be reasonable, and if anything, had given a glimpse of their intent with the brutal and fatal stabbing of passenger, Rupin Katyal. Even an Entebbe-like commando operation using Indian Special Forces was impractical and fraught with additional risks. With the clear intention of harming Indian interests without an iota of any fear of getting caught (given the location) – the risk to the lives of all passengers and crew of IC-814 was not possible, but imminent. The calculation and opportunities would have been far more creative with possible solutions, had IC-814 been held up in Amritsar, as opposed to Kandahar. Could India have forsaken the lives of its citizens? Has any other country ever forsaken lives in similar circumstances? Did the USA attempt negotiating with the Iranian

authorities when its Embassy staff was held hostage or did it steadfastly hold to the 'no-negotiation' posture? The 'no-negotiation' is more of an ideal, but a fuzzy line, practically. It is a deterring policy but has never been an ironclad law, anywhere in the world. However, countries like Israel (or even India) do convey behaviorally the guarantee of serious reprisals and redeeming their losses. For example, 'Operation Hot Pursuit', the cross-border operation against NSCN-IM insurgents in Myanmar 'normalised' the expectation for bad actors, hereinafter – this, when done systematically, surgically and purposefully conveys solid sovereign intent. So, there is no silver bullet or inviolable guardrails in tackling terror, except adapting and responding according to the situation, whilst ensuring the overall objectives are not lost to inflexibility, weakness, or indecision. IC-814 was indeed a lapse of immense proportion but the complexities of the eight-day ordeal necessitated negotiations in that specific case, as insisting any other way is easier said than done, as instructed by history anywhere in the world. (The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SOCIETAL ATTITUDE CHANGE A MUST

Madam — Nirbaya's case and Abhaya's cases caught the attention of the public and attracted stir. The Mollywood case got the importance of retired judge's involvement and submission of a report which, with four year's dust got released last week and the different associations rather than taking action on the perpetrators crime abdicated their responsibility and resigned. A woman from Hyderabad came out in to the streets and complained that she was sexually assaulted promising her roles in movies.

The exploitation of the fairer sex has been happening every where and every day. The fast track courts which PM was talking about in the SC's 75th year celebrations is not a solution to the problem and President calling it "enough is enough" is not an answer. It is not long ago when the then CJI in 2019 was accused of sexual torture and victimization by a staff member. Since then four CJI's have changed. Still there has been neither an institutional response nor a fair investigation and due process in case of a sexual-harassment allegation against a CJI.

These allegations illustrate a structural issue with the judiciary: the question of sexual harassment should not be dismissed as harming judicial independence. Similarly when there was a similar complaint against a sitting Governor, police was not allowed to investigate in the matter citing the immunity enjoyed by the constitutional head. The same logic or the thought process goes in the minds of the people who are decision makers in these cases for they try to protect the image of the household or the institution where the exploitation is reported. Law and judiciary can come in to play only when the matter is brought out but when the same is suppressed for whatever reason the women who are addressed as fair sex suffers with an unfair treatment. We need an attitudinal change to address the problem!

Gopalaswamy J | Chennai

Bengal passes Aparajita bill



As proposed news report "WB Government passes anti-rape Aparajita bill" published on 4th September, here is my response. West Bengal government must be applauded for passing Anti rape bill and seeking death penal-

ty for rape convicts. Hope Governor and President of India give their go ahead to this bill. It is also a welcome step for creating a special task force which is expected to complete the probe in 21 days. This horrific rape and murder case must become a watershed moment to turn things around for women for the better in future in our society.

But merely having a law to award death penalty to rape convicts may not suffice as unfortunately rapes incidents both in West Bengal and elsewhere in the country have not stopped even after this tragic RG Kar Hospital rape and murder case on 9th August. What is required is strict and unbiased implementation of the rule and law at the ground level. Because we have had tough laws in our country but what we lack is serious implementation which defies the whole purpose of framing a law.

Bal Govind | Noida

TEACHERS DAY CELEBRATION

Madam—As we celebrate yet another teachers day to commemorate the birth anniversary of our great teacher president Dr S Radhakrishnan and to honour the architects, the creators and producers of tomorrow's citizens a look into the world's noblest profession goes to show that it's not all well in the teaching field in the present fast paced global scenario. According to the 2018 Global Teacher Status Index India ranks eight in the top ten countries where teachers are held in the highest esteem. Though it is a matter of pride it is not all smiles for the teaching community. Exploitations, coercion and threats loom above the teaching fraternity. Thousands of teachers get very poor salaries in spite of the hard work they do. Poor working conditions, continuous work, discrimination, pressure from the higher ups and regulatory bodies have driven many teachers to leave the profession. Time has changed and this is not a society that once not long ago revered the Guru next to the father and the mother.

M Pradyu | Kannur

J&K ELECTIONS

Madam — In Jammu & Kashmir, political parties must prioritize growth and avoid revisiting the legacy of Article 370, as its abrogation is irreversible. They should instead highlight how this move will drive development, curb terrorism, and strengthen national security along the Pakistan and China borders, where POK, Aksai Chin, and Shaksam Valley remain under illegal control. Avoiding conflicts with the Central Government is crucial, given J&K's strategic location and heavy reliance on central financial aid. Campaigns focused on regional, caste, or religious divides will only harm Kashmir's political future. The era of the 1990s must not return, and a Pakistan-centric approach will be disastrous, as seen in POK's decline. Parties should honestly work for unification and the betterment of the state.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

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FIRST COLUMN

INDIA BOLSTERS 'ACT EAST' POLICY

PM Modi's Brunei visit highlights India's commitment to strengthening ties in Southeast Asia



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Prime Minister Modi is wasting no time in walking the talk as far as his foreign policy goals are concerned. This week, with a clear focus on Look East policy the Indian PM was in Brunei and Singapore. The Brunei visit was the first state visit by an Indian PM, after establishing diplomatic relations in 1984. The Indian Mission in Brunei came nearly a decade later in 1993. PM Manmohan Singh had visited Brunei Darussalam in 2013 to attend multilateral meetings of ASEAN and East Asia Summit. Highlighting the importance of the first bilateral visit to Brunei, India's High Commissioner Alok Amitabh Dimri, told news agency ANI "In our four decades of diplomatic relationship, this is the first bilateral official visit by the Prime Minister of India to Brunei Darussalam. It is a historic moment in our bilateral relationship and also for the Indian community in Brunei Darussalam that high-level bilateral engagement between Prime Minister Shri Modi and His Majesty the King is going to take place. This visit is historic in many ways that Brunei and India have been civilizational neighbours as you know that India shares deep historical roots and bonds with Southeast Asia. The Malayan tradition of this geography which is located in the Borneo Island of Southeast Asian Seas derives deep linkages be it, linguistic, anthropological, ethnic, architectural, religious motives, customs and traditions, norms from India, South India." Defence relations between the two countries have been on an upward trajectory since the establishment of formal diplomatic ties.



There have been several official-level defence exchanges and visits of navy, coast guard ships and joint exercises. India has MoU in in defence sector with Brunei till 2026. Several Indian Navy ships and coast guard ships such as INS Rana, INS Airavat, INS Shivalik & INS Kadmat, and Samudra Pahereda to name a few, have been in Brunei waters, given the maritime security concerns. The trade relations between the two countries are not what one can boast of, however, it is of strategic importance.

The recently concluded Brunei trip by the Indian PM has enhanced and deepened the partnership between the two countries. The joint statement issued after the leader's meeting stated "Both leaders held discussions for enhancing cooperation on a wide range of issues including defence, connectivity, trade and investment, energy including renewables, space, ICT, health and pharmaceuticals, education and capacity building, culture, tourism, youth and people-to-people exchanges, as well as regional and international issues of mutual interest." However, the real area of cooperation would be in maintaining international rules of law deep in the Indian Ocean. Brunei is located in the South China Sea region, where China has a significant presence and has been increasingly threatening the bordering countries with its coercive tactics. These issues were raised by the Indian PM in his meeting with his Counterpart on Darussalam. The joint statement read, "Both leaders reiterated their commitment to work closely together in mutually beneficial areas to further strengthen the ASEAN - India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Both leaders reiterated their commitment to maintaining and promoting peace, stability, maritime safety and security, as well as respecting freedom of navigation and overflight and unimpeded lawful commerce, consistent with international law, notably the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982. The leaders also urged all parties to resolve disputes through peaceful means in accordance with international law, particularly UNCLOS 1982."

The first state visit by an Indian PM to Brunei just months after taking charge for a third time is a long-term strategic move to secure India's interests for the future.

(The writer is a policy analyst, views are personal)

Unified pension scheme: Balancing the old and new



UTTAM GUPTA

Modi Government unveils unified pension scheme to bridge old and new, aiming to satisfy Central and State employees



On August 24, 2024, the Union government announced the new Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) for central government employees. In fact, what looked like a well-orchestrated action plan, on the following day the BJP-led government in Maharashtra approved the implementation of the Scheme for its employees. Madhya Pradesh government is likely to implement the UPS soon. The above announcements are in response to the earlier decisions of Opposition-ruled States, including Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh (before the November 2023 elections), Jharkhand, Himachal Pradesh (HP) and Punjab to revert to the old pension system (OPS) which it felt tilted the electoral pendulum towards those parties, particularly in HP. Fearing a repeat during the upcoming elections and Congress having already announced its intent to revert to OPS in Maharashtra, Modi seems to have gone for a preemptory move. Generally, employees of both the central and State governments who joined service after January 1, 2004, and are covered under the national pension scheme (NPS) have been uncomfortable with it. They have been demanding the restoration of the OPS which opposition-ruled states promised. Now, the Centre and BJP-ruled states have come up with the UPS hoping this will satisfy them. Will it? Under the OPS, retired employees received 50 per cent of their last drawn salary as a monthly pension. Just as the government offers its employees an adjustment in dearness allowance or DA to offset the increase in the cost of living, the monthly payouts of pensioners also increase to provide for DA. A government employee under OPS could not have got anything better. He was entitled to a decent 'pre-determined' monthly amount; the pension was fully protected against inflation and got it as long as he lived. After death, his wife gets the same amount for seven years and thereafter the family pension is around 60 per cent of this amount till she is alive. However, from the perspective of the government, the arrangement could not have been worse. Under OPS, there was an inherent tendency for pension liabilities to balloon



A GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE UNDER OPS COULD NOT HAVE GOT ANYTHING BETTER. HE WAS ENTITLED TO A DECENT 'PRE-DETERMINED' MONTHLY AMOUNT; THE PENSION WAS FULLY PROTECTED AGAINST INFLATION AND GOT IT AS LONG AS HE LIVED

due to the addition to the pensioners' club every year, higher salaries of those joining, inflation indexation, increased longevity and so on. In 1990-91, the Centre's pension bill was Rs 3,272 crore. By 2020-21, it had jumped 58 times to Rs 190,886 crore. For all states, it shot up from Rs 3,131 crore in 1990-91 to Rs 386,001 crore in 2020-21 or 125 times. Financial prudence requires that every year, the government set aside capital which together with return accruing thereon would create a growing corpus sufficient to pay for the pension liabilities on a sustainable basis thus avoiding any stress on the budget. But, that was never done. Instead, both the Centre and states have followed what in jargon is known as 'pay-as-you-go'. This has made the present generation of taxpayers bear the continuously rising burden of pensioners. To deal with these pitfalls, the then UPA dispensation introduced the NPS for government employees joining service from January 1, 2004. Unlike OPS where the employee doesn't contribute anything, NPS is a contributory pension scheme under which employees contribute 10 per cent of their salary (Basic + DA). The government also contributes 14 per cent towards the employees' NPS accounts. The money is invested in multiple investment avenues i.e. equity, government bonds etc where it grows into a sizeable corpus by the time an employee reaches retirement age. On retirement, she is allowed to withdraw 60 per cent of the corpus (this is tax-free), and buy an annuity from the remaining 40 per cent. NPS offers a self-financing and fully funded arrangement for discharging pension liabilities in which the state knows 'how much it has to contribute'. There won't be any major stress on the budget even as the employ-

ee gets a good pension depending on the contribution made, the age of joining, the type of investment, and the income accruing from that investment. The NPS is good for the fiscal health of the government. However, from the pensioner's angle, it doesn't match the OPS. Modi has brought a new UPS to bridge the gap between the two. Does it? Under UPS, which kicks in from April 1, 2025, employees who joined the service after January 1, 2004, and have worked for 25 years or more, after retirement, will be given 50 per cent of their basic average salary of the last 12 months as pension every month. However, employees who have served less than 25 years will get proportionately less or Rs. 10,000 per month minimum pension to employees who have served for a minimum of 10 years. If an employee dies on or before retirement, then the husband or wife will be given a pension, but the pension amount will be 60 per cent of the pension received by the employee immediately before her or his demise. Employees who have already retired or retiring on or before 31 March 2025, with arrears, will be eligible under UPS. The Scheme offers an adjustment in DA on assured pension, assured family pension and assured minimum pension. The DA will be calculated based on the All India Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (AICPI-IW) as in the case of service employees. How will the government fund it? It will build a pension corpus out of the employee contribution of 10 per cent (of basic pay plus DA) and the government's contribution of 18.5 per cent. The pension corpus will be divided into two portions: an individual pension fund (IPF) to which the employee's contribution of 10 per cent and matching government contribution will be credited; and a pool corpus created out of the

remaining 8.5 per cent contribution of the government. The employee can exercise an investment choice for the IPF alone. The employees looking for higher pensions will have the option to get their pension monies (from IPF alone) invested in high-risk instruments for better returns. However, they will have to forego the UPS guarantees viz. monthly pension payouts of 50 per cent of the final service year's monthly pay, with full inflation adjustment. UPS guarantees will only be for those who opt for the "default investment option" which means an employee should leave it entirely to the government to manage the IPF besides the 'pool corpus'. The former has anyway no claim. Needless to say, the 'pool corpus' will be used to make up for the shortfall in the returns generated from the investment of the IPF to ensure a 50 per cent pension. Under UPS, there is no provision for the return of capital to the heirs of the pensioner in the event of her death. This makes perfect sense as one can't have the cake and eat it too. The shift to UPS is a good move. It gives what the OPS gave even while preserving the good features of NPS like self-financing for discharging pension liabilities. It puts a little extra burden on the taxpayers being the extra 4.5 per cent of the government's contribution (18.5 per cent under UPS against 14 per cent under NPS). One wonders whether this will fully satisfy the employees. The answer is 'Yes' if they see reason. It will be 'No' if they don't. For instance, they could still argue under OPS, they were getting a 50 per cent pension without having to contribute even a Rupee whereas under UPS, an employee has to contribute 10 per cent of basic pay plus DA every month. (The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

Cloud seeding, climate change, and agriculture: A call to action

While cloud seeding holds promise for supporting agricultural livelihood, this intervention also raises questions about its sustainability

The increasing severity of climate change makes it all the more urgent to consider creative ways to lessen its effect, particularly in vulnerable sectors like agriculture. One of the current alternatives is cloud seeding, a technical intervention designed to increase precipitation. While cloud seeding has the potential to alleviate drought, it also raises important considerations about sustainability, effectiveness, and long-term influence on agriculture. It is now up to us to investigate this developing practice and decide whether or not to incorporate it into our fight against climate change. Cloud seeding, which involves introducing compounds such as silver iodide or even plain salt into the sky



RACHNA LAKHPATRI

to increase cloud condensation and thus precipitation, is becoming a more popular practice in water-scarce places. The highest ideal that cloud seeding can achieve is increasing rainfall to replenish reservoirs and rivers, as well as soil moisture, all of which feed agriculture. However, cloud seeding has shown to be a vital weapon in combatting long-term droughts, rescuing crops, and

sustaining livelihoods in agriculture-dependent countries such as the United States, China, and the United Arab Emirates. Yet, cloud seeding will provide short relief, so climate change and its far-reaching effects on agriculture require a comprehensive adaptation and resilience strategy. Climate change is more than just a temperature rise; it includes changes in precipitation patterns, increasing frequency and severity of meteorological events, and variations in growing seasons. These changes pose serious threats to global food security, necessitating an integrated approach to adaptation and resilience building. This is where the challenge of relying on cloud seeding for

a solution arises. Though it seems like a quick answer for severe water shortages, its long-term viability and environmental impact are unknown. If not properly managed, the chemicals used in cloud seeding can hurt soil fertility, water quality, and even human health. This approach is unpredictable and dependent on meteorological circumstances, therefore it is not a fixed cure. Furthermore, cloud seeding doesn't address the underlying reasons for climate change. Agriculture is one area that is deeply connected with climate systems and cannot be solved just through technological means. Other key modalities for achieving climate change resistance



include sustainable farming, which can be improved by effective irrigation systems, soil conservation, crop diversification, and the introduction of drought-resistant crop types. Furthermore, the topic of cloud seeding must address a variety of ethical concerns.

Who gets to pick where and when the clouds are seeded? What are the geopolitical consequences of influencing the weather? Seeding clouds over one location may inadvertently create adverse circumstances in another. Determining these multifar-

ious problems will necessitate a free and open worldwide conversation to ensure that this technology is used equally and by justice values. Negotiating the tumultuous currents of climate change, and cloud seeding serves as both a beacon of hope and a warning lesson. It demonstrates our ingenuity—the ability to think up something new when confronted with a challenge—while also conveying a message about our need to proceed with caution and planning. Agriculture is the lifeline of many communities around the world, particularly in developing countries, and its resilience is crucial to our shared future. While cloud seeding may serve as a temporary solution

to the impending problem of water scarcity and its impact on agriculture, it cannot replace truly effective techniques for combating the bigger challenge posed by global warming. If we want to ensure a future in which the Earth and all of its people thrive, we must make prudent investments in long-term mitigation methods centred on resilience, sustainability, and international collaboration. Let it be viewed as a severe challenge that requires immediate attention; it should raise consciousness and move us beyond symptomatic solutions to create a world that is robust and sustainable. (The author is a freelance writer and a motivator; views are personal)

DCP tried to purchase my silence: RG Kar horror victim's father

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

There was more fuel to the leaping flames of protests against the rape and murder of a lady doctor of RG Kar Medical College and Hospital with the father of the victim alleging that Kolkata Police had tried to stuff his mouth with cash to keep it shut. In what could embarrass the powers that be more than ever before the father of the victim doctor told a rally of protesting doctors how a senior IPS officer drew him aside and offered him a packet which he refused. "It was on the evening of my daughter's death ... her body was kept inside her room ... and we the old parents were sitting on the sofa ... blank ... when a Deputy

Commissioner of Police drew me aside and offered me a packet stuffed with money ... It was clearly to keep my mouth shut ... I was not prepared for such a situation ... Imagine the mental state of a father who had just lost her only daughter," said old man in his late sixties adding "I refused the offer and pointed at his 'IPS' insignia and said 'the way you earned your police service through hard labour my daughter too had earned her degree.' The father of the victim broke down and said how, "they were trying to purchase the honour of my dead daughter ... it was the last thing expected from a senior police officer." On whether he asked about the source of the money or whether he was asked by

his superior officers to do so the parent of the victim replied in the negative. The ordeal of the family did not end there. "Sometime later a couple of police personnel came back and asked us to tell before a video camera that no money had been offered to us and we had no other way but follow their instructions as there was intense pressure ... our whole house was surrounded by 300-400 policemen." The victim's body was found in a semi nude state inside the seminar hall of the RGKMCH in the early morning of August 9. The parents also said explained their agony at the hospital and the police stations saying "we were made to sit for more than three hours



before the body of our daughter was showed to us ... this even as her mother went on crying and pleading before them to show our daughter's face for once ... our suffering did not stop there ... we

made to sit inside the Tala Police Station for more than an hour in the evening before they told us that the body of our daughter had been sent to our house at Sodpur ... without informing us ... we

rushed back home where we were offered money." When asked as to why they would not protest against the postmortem getting done in the same hospital where the incident took place, the father of the victim said, "at any given point we were surrounded by hundreds of policemen ... I had made a feeble point that her postmortem should be done elsewhere but none listened to us." Subsequent reports related to the postmortem revealed that the former principal of the RGKMCH Sandip Ghosh had exercised his clout get the autopsy done inside his own college and by a team of his doctors selected by him. Curiously even as the statement of victim's parents went viral two State ministers on

Thursday told a hurriedly convened press conference how the victim's parents had earlier had gone on record saying that no money was offered to them. "I don't think that the parents of the victim are telling the right thing because we do have a video suggesting that they had themselves told in front of the camera that no money had been offered to them," said Bengal minister Dr Shashi Panja. When asked to comment on the statements made by the minister, the father of the victim said, "why should we tell out of the way that no money has been asked from us ... since this statement is not coming from any media it is clear that we were not reacting to any media reports

... so it seems that the police prepared this video to preempt future such claims that money had been offered by them." Meanwhile, Kolkata, nay entire Bengal erupted with an estimated 20 lakh people "reclaiming the night" once again on Wednesday breaking the records of a similar incident on August 14. Thousands of people, mostly women from all the social layers converged at various points of Kolkata from Shyam Bazaar to Esplanade, to Bow Bazaar, to Rashbehari, to Gariahat to Garia to Jadavpur and many more places --- singing revolutionary songs --- sources said adding similar programmes were organized in districts where thousands of people participated.

Rahul takes dig at PM Modi over his apology on Shivaji statue collapse

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday took a dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his apology on the collapse of Chhatrapati Shivaji's statue, saying that the latter must have realised that it was a mistake to give contract of state construction to a RSS functionary instead of giving it someone else on merit, and that there was corruption in the project. Singling out Modi for his much-discussed apology over the collapse of Shivaji statue, Rahul questioned as to why the Prime Minister tendered

apology. "The person who tenders an apology is the one who makes a mistake... If you haven't done anything wrong, why would you apologise?," Rahul asked Modi, seeking reason for the latter's apology. "There can be several reasons for seeking an apology. It may be that he came to know that the statute erection contract was given to a person who is associated with the RSS, when it should be awarded to a person on the basis of merit. The second reason may be that he realised there was corruption in the construction. It may also be that he failed to ensure that the statue remained intact," Rahul



said. "If anything, the Prime Minister should have apologised for Chhatrapati Shivaji but also each and every person of Maharashtra," Rahul said. It may be recalled that on August 30, Modi apologised

to Chhatrapati Shivaji whom he described as not just "a revered king or great personality but a deity". Speaking at a function after laying a foundation stone for Rs 76,000 crore Vadhvan Port in Maharashtra's Palghar district, Modi tendered his apology to the legendary Maratha king by saying: "Shivaji Maharaj is not merely a name, a revered king or a great personality but a deity". It may be recalled that after Shivaji statue's collapse on August 26, there were massive protests by the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) at Malvan and different parts of the state. The Opposition MVA had demanded the res-

ignations of chief minister Eknath Shinde and two deputy chief ministers Fadnis and Ajit Pawar. On August 28, deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar apologised publicly to "13 crore people of the people of the state" over the collapse of the Shivaji statue. However, on September 1 when they took out a morcha from Hutatma Chowk to Gateway of India in south Mumbai following the collapse of Shivaji statue, the Opposition MVA leaders had rejected the apology tendered by Prime Minister Modi saying that it was a casual apology and could not be accepted.

Shivaji statue collapse: Sculptor, technical consultant sent to police custody

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A day after he was arrested by the police from Kalyan in Thane district, sculptor Jaydeep Apte — who built 35-feet tall statue that crashed at Rajkot fort in coastal Konkan region on August 26 — was remanded to police custody till September 10 by a Sindhudurg court. Also remanded to police custody till September 10 was technical consultant Chetan Patil, who had worked in tandem with Apte in the erection of Shivaji statue at Malvan in Sindhudurg district

Apte is the sculptor-contractor from Thane, while Patil structural consultant from Kolhapur. Apte, who had been absconding for the past one week after the collapse of the Shivaji statue, was arrested from Kalyan on Wednesday night. Patil had been arrested from Kolhapur on August 30. After his remand ended on Thursday, he was produced before a Sindhudurg court which remanded in further police custody till September 10. Five police teams had been formed to search for Apte. A look-out notice had been issued against Apte to

ensure that he did not flee the country. f After the incident, the Sindhudurg police had registered offences under Sections 109, 110, 125, 318, and 3(5) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). It may be recalled that the iconic Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj — with the sword held high in his right hand — had collapsed at 12.30 pm on August 26 at Rajkot fort at Malvan in Sindhudurg district, within nine months after it was unveiled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 4, 2023 as part of the Navy day celebrations.

All preparations for voting in four Assembly constituencies of Gurugram complete: DEO

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

Deputy Commissioner and District Election Officer Gurugram, Nishant Kumar Yadav said that all preparations by the district administration for voting in the four assembly constituencies of Gurugram district, namely Pataudi, Badshahpur, Sohna, and Gurugram, are completed. "The district administration is fully committed to ensuring the 2024 Assembly Elections are conducted in a peaceful, impartial and harmonious environment," he said. While addressing a press conference on Thursday here in Gurugram regarding the preparations for the upcoming Assembly elections.



order does not apply to police and other public servants on duty. Those seeking exemptions can apply to the screening committee at the CP office. Additionally, all liquor shops will remain closed 48 hours before voting and on counting day, with the prohibition also applying to restaurants and bars," he said. Yadav also urged the people not to link religious events with political activities during the Assembly elections. He clarified that if anyone engages in such behaviour, it will be considered a violation of the Model Code of Conduct, and appropriate action will be taken according to the rules.

BJP leader writes to CVC demanding probe into financial irregularities in DJB

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Assembly, Vijender Gupta, has written a letter to the Chief Vigilance Commissioner demanding an investigation into the massive financial irregularities in the Delhi Jal Board (DJB). In his letter to the CVC, he held the Delhi Government responsible for the deliberate financial mismanagement in the DJB. Accusing the Delhi government, the Leader of the Opposition said that the government's intentions are dubious, and that is why, since 2018, the government has deliberately not prepared the balance sheet of the Delhi Jal Board to hide the corruption within.

SC reserves order on Arvind Kejriwal

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Countering Raju's submissions, senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for the chief minister, said the questions arising for consideration in the present bail case have already been extensively dealt with by the trial court during remand. "It's not a fair argument for CBI to raise at this stage. You cannot consider sending me back there. Arguments were looked into during remand and affirmed against me. It is not fair to raise that argument now. At this stage, there is huge delay involved since it has been heard on merits. I am giving the right of appeal. CBI should be the last one to complain," Singhvi said. Pointing out alleged legal infirmities in the case, Singhvi said no notice was served to Kejriwal by the CBI before his arrest and an ex-parte arrest order was passed by the trial court. Calling it as a mere "technicality", the ASG said the CBI did not issue a notice to Kejriwal under section

Section 41A of the Code of Criminal Procedure as he was already in judicial custody. Singhvi countered the submission and said, "Matters of liberty cannot be termed technicality. What I am referring to are procedural safeguards." Singhvi further submitted that Kejriwal is a constitutional functionary and not a flight risk. Singhvi said Kejriwal was also not named in the CBI FIR. Singhvi also said that other co-accused in the case, former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia, AAP leader Vijay Nair and BRS leader K Kavitha, have been granted bail in the case. Raju replied that the co-accused who got bail from the apex court had approached the trial court first which Kejriwal did not do. During the hearing, the bench made an oral observation that if the high court took a tentative view that Kejriwal should have approached trial court first, then it should have opined so when notice was issued in the first place.

"Ideally, the high court should have been decisive on this question. The high court should have passed that order on that very day when notice was issued," the bench said. Raju replied that high courts are heavily burdened and that the Delhi high court heard the matter on Muharram holiday. During the proceedings, Singhvi noted that this is the "only case" in which bail has been granted twice to Kejriwal under the stringent PMLA provisions, in addition to regular bail. Singhvi, said the chief minister received release orders three times in the money-laundering case despite the "stringent rigours" of Section 45 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. Singhvi was referring to the interim bail orders passed by the Supreme Court on May 10 and July 12, and the regular bail order passed by the trial court on June 20, which was stayed by the High Court.

Putin seeks Modi's intervention in Ukraine

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Modi also said he would even like to contribute personally for a peaceful resolution of the crisis. His nearly nine-hour visit to Ukraine, the first by an Indian prime minister since its independence in 1991, came six weeks after he held summit talks with President Zelenskyy. "We respect our friends and partners, who, I believe, sincerely seek to resolve all issues surrounding this conflict, primarily China, Brazil and India. I constantly keep in touch with our colleagues on this issue," Putin was quoted as saying by the Russian news agency. Separately, Russian Presidential Spokesman Dmitry Peskov told the Izvestia daily that India could help in establishing a dialogue on Ukraine. Underlining the existing "highly constructive, even friendly relations" between Modi and Putin, he said the Indian Prime Minister can "lead the line on getting first-hand information from the participants in this conflict," as he "freely communicates with Putin, with Zelenskyy, and with the Americans."

Dhaka issues warning...

From Page 1

Afghanistan. And Bangladesh is in safe hands with Sheikh Hasina at the helm only. India is captivated by this narrative. India has to come out of this narrative. Bangladesh, like any other nation, is another neighbour," he said. Referring to the recent incidents of alleged attacks on Hindu minorities in the country and India raising concerns about it, Yunus said this is just an excuse. "The issue of trying to portray the conditions of minorities in such a big way is just an excuse," he said. The minority Hindu population has faced vandalism of their businesses and properties, as well as the destruction of Hindu temples, during the student-led

violence that erupted following the ouster of Hasina. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his Independence Day address from the ramparts of the Red Fort on August 15, expressed hope that the situation in violence-hit Bangladesh would return to normal soon and stated that 1.4 billion Indians are concerned about the safety of Hindus and minorities in the neighbouring country. The 84-year-old Nobel laureate emphasised the need for India and Bangladesh to work together to improve their currently strained relationship. When asked about ways to improve the Indo-Bangla relations, Yunus said both the countries need to work together and it is on a downhill presently.

"We need to work together to improve this relationship, which is now at a low," he said. Speaking about the future of bilateral treaties with India, Yunus said there are demands for a relook at certain treaties such as transit and the Adani electricity deal. "Everybody is saying it is needed. We will see what is on paper and, second, what is actually happening on the ground. I can't answer it specifically. If there is any need to review, we will then raise questions about it," he said. The BNP has said if voted to power, it will review and re-evaluate the "questionable" Adani electricity deal signed during the Awami League regime, as it is putting "tremendous pressure" on the people of Bangladesh.

Central team in flood-hit Andhra

PTI ■ VIJAYAWADA

An inter-ministerial team from the Central government on Thursday began its visit of the flood-affected districts in Andhra Pradesh. The team headed by Sanjeev Kumar Jindal visited Vijayawada, the worst affected place, to estimate the losses and destruction, said an official press release. The Central team visited the State Emergency Operations Centre in the Andhra Pradesh State Disaster

Management Authority (APSDMA) office in Tadepalli, where officials explained about the torrential rains and floods. Later, the officials also visited Prakasam Barrage, which was recently hit by three large drifting boats, damaging a concrete beam. As the flood waters began to recede at many places here, personnel of the Vijayawada civic body are busily engaged in sanitation work and also restoring water supply, an official said on Thursday.

Rajnath Singh ...

From Page 1

We should have fail-proof deterrence," the Defence Minister said. "He called upon the Commanders to identify and include the right mix of traditional and modern warfare equipment in the

Armed Forces arsenal. He stressed on capability development in space and electronic warfare, describing them as integral to tackle modern-day challenges. "The Defence Minister also urged the military leadership to focus on increasing the use of latest technological advancements in the fields of data and artificial intelligence.

REBEL TROUBLE FOR THE BJP IN HARYANA

Continued on Page 1 former Sirsa MP Sunita Duggal had resigned as Independent MLA from Rania ahead of the Lok Sabha polls to join the BJP and fought the Hisar parliamentary seat unsuccessfully. Napa, sitting MLA from Ratia reserve constituency in Fatehabad district resigned from the party on Thursday and hinted to join the Congress in New Delhi in the presence of Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Congress state president Udaibhan and other senior leaders of the Congress party. The party ignored him and announced

candidates, former minister Karan Dev Kamboj said he has resigned as state president of Haryana BJP's OBC Morcha and from all party posts he held. Kamboj, who was also a ticket hopeful but did not get it, said he had been serving the party over the years with dedication. "Perhaps the BJP does not need loyalists anymore," he said, adding the party is rewarding leaders with tickets who joined a day before while ignoring those who served it for years. Savitri Jindal, BJP's Kurukshetra MP who is

industrialist Naveen Jindal's mother, announced that she would contest from Hisar. She was also seeking a ticket from the BJP to contest from Hisar, but the ruling party nominated its MLA and Minister Dr Kamal Gupta from the seat. Bishamber Singh Balmiki, a Minister of State Social Justice, Empowerment, Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes and Antyodaya (SEWA) (Independent charge), also called a meeting of his supporters at his residence. The BJP ignored the sitting

Bawani Khera MLA and instead nominated Kapur Valmiki from the SC reserved seat. A few sitting legislators, including minister Sanjay Singh and former minister Sandeep Singh, do not figure in the first list of BJP candidates. From Ratia, the party has fielded former Sirsa MP Sunita Duggal. In the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, Duggal was denied re-nomination from the Sirsa parliamentary constituency after former Haryana Congress chief Ashok Tanwar, who had joined BJP ahead of the LS

polls, was given the ticket. Tanwar, however, lost to Congress veteran Kumari Selja. Former Haryana minister and senior BJP leader Kavita Jain, a ticket hopeful from Sonapat, was also sulking after party fielded Nikhil Madan from the constituency. Addressing her supporters in Sonapat, she turned emotional, and said she had always worked as a dedicated soldier for her party and her candidature should have been considered.

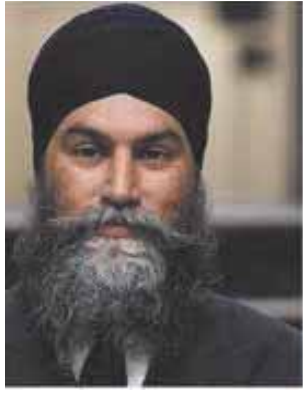
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NDP's Jagmeet Singh pulls out of deal with Trudeau govt

PTI ■ OTTAWA

Alleging that the Liberals are "too weak, too selfish and too beholden to corporate interests," NDP leader Jagmeet Singh said he is terminating the supply-and-confidence agreement his party made with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal government in Canada. The deal entered into in March 2022 was scheduled to run until June 2025 and the NDP's decision has put Trudeau's party in the minority.

In a video posted on his social media handles, the New Democratic Party (NDP) leader also claimed that Trudeau "has proven again and again he will always cave to corporate greed." "The deal is done. The Liberals are too weak, too selfish and too beholden to corporate interests to stop the Conservatives and their plans to cut. But the NDP can. Big corporations and CEOs have had their governments. It's the people's time," Singh said in a post on X on Wednesday. "Justin Trudeau has proven



again and again he will always cave to corporate greed. The Liberals have let people down. They don't deserve another chance from Canadians," the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC News) said quoting Singh as saying in the video. Singh said the Liberals will not stand up to corporate interests and he will be running in the next election to "stop Conservative cuts," it said. An NDP spokesperson told CBC News the plan to end the agreement had been in the works for the past two weeks but it informed the Liberal gov-

ernment of the decision barely minutes ahead of the video going live online. The confidence-and-supply agreement struck between the two parties in March 2022 committed the NDP to supporting the Liberal government on confidence votes in exchange for legislative commitments on NDP priorities, CBC News said, adding, that the deal, which ensured the survival of the minority Liberal government, was the first such formal agreement between two parties at the federal level. Reacting to Singh's announce-

ment, Trudeau said his government is more focused on tackling the affordability crisis and climate change. "These are the things that we're focused on. I'll let others focus on politics," Trudeau said. "I really hope the NDP stays focused on how we can deliver for Canadians, as we have over the past years, rather than focusing on politics," the CBC News quoted Trudeau as saying. Trudeau said he hoped the next election will not happen "until next fall" so that his government had time to move forward on pharmacare, dental care and school food programmes. Singh, in a media release accompanying his video announcement, said: "The NDP is ready for an election, and voting non-confidence will be on the table with each and every confidence measure." Meanwhile, the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) leader Pierre Poilievre termed the NDP leader as "Sellout Singh" and called his announcement on video as a "media stunt." In a longish post on X, Poilievre said: "Two years ago, Sellout

Singh sold out workers and signed on to a costly coalition with Justin Trudeau that hiked taxes, ballooned food costs, doubled housing costs and unleashed crime and chaos in our once safe streets." "In today's media stunt, Sellout Singh refuses to state whether the NDP will vote with non-confidence to cause a carbon tax election at the first chance," he added. Stating that "Sellout Singh has voted to quadruple the carbon tax," a plan, he said will hurt the Canadian economy, the post further said, "Sellout Singh did all of this after promising he would be an opposition voice." In an analytical piece, the Canadian media outlet said that Singh's decision "injects a lot of uncertainty into Canadian politics — and it could lead to a federal election earlier than planned." Canada's fixed-date election law dictates that a vote will happen in October 2025 — but that date is moot if a majority of MPs turn on the Liberals or if Trudeau goes to the Governor General to request an early election, it added.

Former Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier named France's new PM

PTI ■ PARIS

President Emmanuel Macron named EU former Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier as France's new prime minister on Thursday after more than 50 days of caretaker government. The appointment of the 73-year-old Barnier follows weeks of intense efforts by Macron and his aides to find a candidate who might be able to build loose groupings of backers in parliament and survive possible attempts by Macron's opponents to quickly topple the new government that Barnier will now put together and lead. A statement from Macron's office announcing Barnier's appointment said he'd been tasked "with forming a unifying government to serve the country and the French people."

"This appointment comes after an unprecedented cycle of consultations during which, in accordance with his constitutional duty, the president



Barnier replaces Gabriel Attal, who resigned on July 16 following quick-fire legislative elections that produced a divided and hung parliament, plunging France into political turmoil. But Macron kept Attal and his ministers on in a caretaker capacity, ensuring that the prime minister and the future government would meet the conditions to be as stable as possible and give themselves the chances of uniting as broadly as possible," the statement said. Barnier, a career politician proud of his humble roots in France's Alpine region of Haute-Savoie, is no stranger to complex and difficult tasks: He was the European Union's chief negotiator in the difficult talks with Britain over its Brexit departure from the bloc.

ensured that the prime minister and the future government would meet the conditions to be as stable as possible and give themselves the chances of uniting as broadly as possible," the statement said. Barnier, a career politician proud of his humble roots in France's Alpine region of Haute-Savoie, is no stranger to complex and difficult tasks: He was the European Union's chief negotiator in the difficult talks with Britain over its Brexit departure from the bloc.

handling day-to-day affairs, so political instability wouldn't overshadow the July 26-August 11 Paris Olympics, when France was in the global spotlight. In political career over more than 50 years, Barnier has served as French foreign, European affairs, environment and agriculture minister — and twice as a European commissioner — but until now had never had a tilt at any leadership post, like that of president or prime minister.

Netanyahu sticks to open-ended control of Gaza border with Egypt

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Wednesday that Israel must keep open-ended control of Gaza's border with Egypt, digging in on his stance on an issue that has threatened to derail cease-fire efforts. Netanyahu's comments came as the United States is developing a new proposal for a cease-fire and hostage release, hoping to break a long deadlock and bring an end to the nearly 11-month-old war.

The question of Israeli control of the Philadelphi corridor — a narrow strip of land along Gaza's border with Egypt, seized by troops in May — has become a central obstacle in the talks. Hamas has demanded an eventual full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza in the multi-phase truce deal. Egypt, a mediator in the talks along with the U.S. and Qatar, has also demanded a concrete timeline for Israeli troops to



leave the Philadelphi corridor. And on Wednesday, the United Arab Emirates, which established formal ties with Israel in the 2020 Abraham Accords, also criticized the Israeli stance. Speaking to foreign journalists, Netanyahu repeated his stance that Israel must maintain its hold on the border to prevent

Hamas from rearming by smuggling weapons into Gaza. He said it was a vital part of the war goal of ensuring Hamas cannot repeat its Oct. 7 attack on Israel. "Gaza must be demilitarized, and this can only happen if the Philadelphi corridor remains under firm control," he said, claiming Israeli troops had dis-

covered dozens of tunnels under the border. He said Israel would only consider withdrawing from the corridor when presented with an alternative force to police it. "Bring me anyone who will actually show us ... that they can actually prevent the recurrence" of smuggling, he said. "I don't see that happening right now. And until that happens, we're there." Families of remaining hostages have stepped up their demands that he agree to a deal after Hamas killed six hostages last week as Israeli troops appeared to be moving to rescue them. In angry public statements, hostage families have accused Netanyahu of blocking a deal and potentially sacrificing their loved ones' lives for the sake of holding the border strip. Hundreds of thousands of Israelis have taken to the streets in recent days, calling for a deal and saying time is running out to bring home the hostages alive.

Ukraine gets new foreign minister as Zelenskyy reshuffles cabinet for 'new energy'

AP ■ KYIV

Ukraine's parliament approved the appointment of a new foreign minister Thursday, two lawmakers said, as President Volodymyr Zelenskyy sought to breathe fresh life into his administration with the war against Russia poised for what could be a pivotal phase.

Andrii Sybiha, a former ambassador to Turkey, is the country's new chief diplomat. He replaced Dmytro Kuleba, who became one of Ukraine's most recognizable faces on the international stage as he petitioned and pleaded with Western countries to support Ukraine's war effort. Sybiha, 49, has been working as Kuleba's deputy since April. Zelenskyy wants to replace almost a dozen top officials in his biggest government shake-up since Russia's full-scale invasion started on Feb 24, 2022. Other changes included the heads of strategic industries, justice, natural resources and



severe strain after Russian missiles and drones knocked out around 70% of the country's generation capacity. That could mean going without heat and water. On the battlefield, Ukraine is waiting to see whether the military's gamble with its surprise thrust into Russia's Kursk border region a month ago pays dividends. Meanwhile, outgunned Ukrainian soldiers are gradually being pushed back by Russia's months-long drive deeper into eastern Ukraine, and Ukrainian civilians are at the mercy of Russia's deadly long-range aerial strikes. The casualty list from a Russian missile strike Tuesday on a military training school in the Ukrainian city of Poltava grew to 55 dead and 328 wounded, Ukraine's Interior Ministry said Thursday. A search and rescue operation was continuing. No major policy changes were expected under the new administration. Zelenskyy's five-year mandate expired in May, but he remains in power under the provisions of martial

law, and his leadership is largely unchallenged. Sybiha, the new foreign minister who also previously worked in the president's office, takes on the role as Ukraine endeavours to prevent war fatigue from eroding the West's commitment. Kyiv officials will also have to navigate the result of the US election in November, which could produce important policy shifts in Washington. Top of Ukraine's wish list at the moment are more Western air defence systems and permission from its Western partners to let it use their weapons to hit targets on Russian soil. Some Western leaders are reluctant to grant that request, because they fear an escalation that could drag them into the fighting. Top US military leaders, including Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin and Gen C Q Brown, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, will meet in Germany on Friday to discuss those issues with European allies.

Will not stop oil exploration in South China Sea: Malaysia

AP ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said Thursday that Malaysia will not bow to demands by China to stop its oil and gas exploration in the South China Sea as the activities are within the country's waters. Anwar said Malaysia would continue to explain its stance following China's accusations in a protest note in February to the Malaysian Embassy in Beijing that Kuala Lumpur had infringed on its territory. Malaysia's Foreign Ministry said Wednesday it was investigating the leak of the diplomatic protest note that was published by a Filipino media outlet on Aug. 29. "We have never intended in any way to be intentionally provocative, unnecessarily hostile. China is a great friend, but of course we have to operate in our waters and secure economic advantage, including drilling

for oil in our territory," Anwar said in a televised news conference from Russia, where he is on an official visit. The Philippine Daily Inquirer published the diplomatic note in which Beijing reportedly demanded that Malaysia immediately halt all activities in an oil-rich maritime area off Sarawak state on Borneo island. The report said China had accused Malaysia of encroaching on areas covered by its 10-dash line, Beijing's controversial map showing its claims to sovereignty in the South China Sea. The diplomatic note also expressed Beijing's displeasure over Malaysia's oil and gas exploration activities near the Luconia Shoals, which is near to Sarawak, it said. Anwar said it wasn't the first time China had sent a protest note over the South China Sea dispute but stressed it shouldn't mar a strong relationship. Anwar had called China a "true friend" during a visit to

Malaysia by Chinese President Li Qiang in June to mark 50 years of diplomatic ties. "We have said that we will not transgress other people's borders," Anwar said. "They know our position ... They have claimed that we are infringing on their territory. That is not the case. We say no, it is our territory. But if they continue with the dispute, then okay, we will have to listen, and they will have to listen." Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Taiwan all dispute Beijing's claims to almost the entire South China Sea. Unlike the Philippines which has had public clashes with China in the disputed area, Malaysia's government prefers diplomatic channels. It rarely criticizes Beijing publicly, even though Chinese coast guard ships have sailed near Malaysia's waters. This is partly to protect economic ties as China has been Malaysia's top trading partner since 2009.

China halts foreign adoptions of kids

AP ■ BEIJING

The Chinese government is no longer allowing foreign adoptions of the country's children, a spokesperson said Thursday. The only exception will be for blood relatives adopting a child or a stepchild, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Mao Ning said. She didn't explain the decision other than to say that it was in line with the spirit of relevant international conventions. Many foreigners have adopted children from China over the decades, visiting the country to pick them up and then bringing them to a new home overseas. China suspended international adoptions during the COVID-19 pandemic. The government later resumed adoptions for children who had received travel authorization before the suspension in 2020, the US State Department said in its latest annual report on adoptions. A US consulate issued 16 visas for adoptions from China in the 12 months from October 2022 through September 2023, the first in more than two years, the State Department report said. It wasn't clear if any more visas had been issued since then. In January, Denmark's only overseas adoption agency said it was winding down operations after concerns were raised about fabricated documents and procedures, and Norway's top regulatory body recommended stopping overseas adoptions for two years pending an investigation into several cases.

Chinese President Xi seeks to deepen military ties with African nations

PTI ■ BEIJING

President Xi Jinping on Thursday sought to strengthen military ties with African nations and proposed establishing a joint forum to enhance cooperation in nuclear technology, satellite remote sensing, and deep-space exploration. Addressing the opening ceremony of the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), Xi said China is ready to launch 30 clean energy projects in Africa, put in place meteorological early warning systems, and carry out cooperation in disaster prevention, and mitigation and relief as well as biodiversity conservation. "We will create a China-Africa forum on the peaceful use of nuclear technology, establish together 30 joint laboratories, and collaborate on satellite remote sensing and lunar and deep-space exploration. All this is designed to help with green development in Africa," he said at the event attended by over 20 African heads of state and government. However, it remains unclear whether China intends to build nuclear power

plants in Africa, similar to its cooperation with Pakistan. The collaboration on nuclear and space technologies will help modernize African countries, Xi said. He also spoke of elevating China-Africa relations to an all-weather partnership, a term typically used to describe China's close ties with Pakistan. "I propose that bilateral relations between China and all African countries having diplomatic ties with China be elevated to the level of strategic relations and that the overall characterisation of China-Africa relations be elevated to an all-weather China-Africa community with a shared future," Xi said. He said China will give Africa a billion RMD (approximately USD 142 million) of grant assistance, and provide training for 6,000 military personnel and 1,000 police and law enforcement officers from Africa. The president invited 500 young African military officers to visit China. The two sides will conduct joint exercises, training and patrol, carry out an "action for a mine-free Africa,

and jointly ensure the safety of personnel and projects, he said. Beyond these announcements aimed at expanding China's technological presence in the African continent, where it has already established a strong foothold through large-scale investments in infrastructure and mining, as well as substantial loans that have raised concerns about debt diplomacy, leaving many countries struggling to repay, Xi did not announce any major, big-ticket investments, unlike in previous Africa summits. Xi had pledged USD 60 billion in similar China-Africa summits in 2015 and 2018, followed by USD 40 billion in 2021. This year, however, considering the economic crisis faced by China, there were no big pledges, experts opine. Instead, Xi offered to implement 1,000 "small and beautiful" livelihood projects in African countries. On the military front, China has been providing training for African militaries, including hundreds of senior commanders who have been trained in People's Liberation Army (PLA) institutions.

Teenager charged with murder of 80-year-old Indian in UK

PTI ■ LONDON

A 14-year-old boy arrested following the fatal assault on 80-year-old Bhim Kohli while he was out walking his dog in a park near the eastern England city of Leicester appeared in court on Thursday charged with his murder. The boy, who cannot be named for legal reasons as he is a minor, appeared at Leicester Youth Court sitting at Leicester Magistrates' Court. He was among five children aged 12-14 years arrested following the death of Kohli in hospital on Monday night by Leicestershire Police, with the other four released earlier with no further action.

Meanwhile, Kohli's family released a statement via the police to say they were heartbroken and struggling to cope with the loss of a loving and caring person. "Bhim was a loving husband, dad and granddad. He was also a son, brother and uncle. He adored his grandkids with all his heart and loved spending time with them. He really was such a loving, caring person whose life was centred around his family," the statement reads. "He has always been a very hardworking man and even at the age of 80 he was still very active. One of his great passions was his allotment, he would go everyday to tend to his plots

and was so proud of them. He also enjoyed walking the family dog Rocky in the park many times a day," it goes on. The family shared how Kohli "loved to laugh" and was always very happy and talkative, the "joker of the family" who always loved to outsmart us with a smile. "Our family have lived in the same house in Braunstone for 40 years, so he was very well known in the community — we have been overwhelmed by the messages and support from many who knew him. Our hearts have been completely broken. We are now pulling together as a family to try and support each other through the most difficult

time imaginable and would ask for privacy while we do this," the statement concludes. A post-mortem examination carried out after his death in hospital following the attack at Franklin Park in Braunstone Town on Sunday evening confirmed the cause of death as a neck injury, while further tests were to be carried out. "The circumstances surrounding Mr Kohli's death are extremely tragic and upsetting not only for his family and friends but also the wider community." Detective Inspector Emma Matts, Senior Investigating Officer at Leicestershire Police, said earlier this week.

13-yr-old accused of school shooting was questioned about online threats by cops

AP ■ WINDER

Georgia police interviewed a 13-year-old boy more than a year ago while looking into online posts threatening a school shooting, but investigators didn't have enough evidence for an arrest. On Wednesday, that boy opened fire at his high school outside Atlanta, killing four people and wounding nine, officials said. The teen has been charged as an adult with using an assault-style rifle to kill two Apalachee High School students and two teachers in the hallway outside his algebra classroom, Georgia Bureau of Investigation

Director Chris Hosey said at a news conference. It was the latest among dozens of school shootings across the US in recent years, including especially deadly ones in Newtown, Connecticut, Parkland, Florida, and Uvalde, Texas. The classroom killings have set off fervent debates about gun control and frayed the nerves of parents whose children are growing up accustomed to active shooter drills in classrooms. But there has been little change to national gun laws. When the teen slipped out of class Wednesday, Lyela Sayarath figured her quiet fellow student who recently trans-

ferred was skipping school again. But he returned later and wanted back into the room. Some students went to open the locked door but instead backed away. "I'm guessing they saw something, but for some reason they didn't open the door," Sayarath said. The teen then turned the gun on people in a hallway. He has been charged in the deaths of students Mason Schermerhorn and Christian Angulo, both 14, and teachers Richard Aspinwall, 39, and Christina Irimie, 53, Hosey said. The teen, now 14, was to be taken to a regional youth detention facility on Thursday.

When the teen wasn't allowed back into his classroom, Sayarath said she heard a barrage of gunshots. "It was about 10 or 15 of them at once, back-to-back," she said. The math students fell to the floor and crawled around, looking for a safer corner to hide. Two school resource officers encountered the shooter within minutes of a report that shots had been fired, Hosey said. The teen immediately surrendered and was taken into custody. At least nine other people — eight students and one teacher at the school in Winder — were taken to hospitals with injuries.

Foreign inflows lift markets high

PTI ■ MUMBAI
Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty surrendered early gains to close lower for the second straight day on Thursday, tracking losses in the most valuable firm Reliance Industries, Bharati Airtel and L&T amid a sluggish trend in global markets. The 30-share BSE Sensex failed to hold on to initial gains and declined 151.48 points or 0.18 per cent to settle at 82,201.16. During the day, it dropped 222.2 points or 0.26 per cent to 82,130.44. The NSE Nifty dipped 53.60 points or 0.21 per cent to 25,145.10 despite a positive beginning of the trade. "Markets ended weak in a volatile trading session led by profit-taking in Reliance Industries. Globally, most of the equity indices were sluggish to mixed and are awaiting key US data on Friday, which would provide some hint on the Federal

Reserve chief's likely stance on the interest rate in this month's policy announcement," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

Mahindra were other big laggards. In contrast, Titan, ITC, Infosys, HCL Technologies, Tata Steel and State Bank of India were among the biggest gainers.

declined 0.95 per cent, capital goods (0.61 per cent), industrials (0.38 per cent), power (0.37 per cent) and oil & gas (0.30 per cent). Healthcare, commodities, consumer discretionary, telecommunications, consumer durables, IT and tech were the gainers. "Global stocks were largely muted on Tuesday as traders prepared for data releases that will offer insight about the health of the US economy and the Federal Reserve's interest rate path," Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities, said. Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Hong Kong settled lower, while Shanghai ended higher. European markets were trading mostly lower in mid-session deals. The US markets ended on a mixed note on Wednesday. "The benchmark indices continued to trade with minor losses due to concerns of a slowdown in the US and Chinese economy.



Among the 30 Sensex firms, Reliance Industries declined over 1 per cent. Tata Motors, Nestle, Bharti Airtel, Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro, JSW Steel and Mahindra &

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge climbed by 0.56 per cent, and the midcap index rose by 0.27 per cent. Among the indices, realty

Rupee rises four paise against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee traded in a narrow range and settled for the day higher by 4 paise at 83.97 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, on weakening of the American currency in the overseas market and an overall drop in crude oil prices. Forex traders said the domestic unit witnessed a slight negative bias on weak global equities and concerns over global economic growth. Moreover, dollar demand from importers also dented investor sentiments. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.98 and witnessed an intraday high of 83.97 against the American currency. The domestic unit finally settled for the day at 83.97 (provisional), higher by 4 paise over its previous close. On Wednesday, the rupee breached the crucial 84-mark for the second time within a



month and settled 3 paise lower at 84.01 against the American currency. "The Indian rupee which continued to drop to a record low witnessed a range-bound trading session as it stayed wedged between negative global cues and intervention from the central bank," said Maneesha Sharma, AVP - Commodities & Currencies, Anand Rathi Shares and Stock Brokers. Sharma further noted that the rupee was pressured by dollar demand from importers for meeting their immediate and futures payments. There have been several instances since last month wherein the Reserve Bank defended the

rupee near 84 levels. According to Sharma, data from RBI also showed foreign exchange reserves hit a record high of USD 681.69 billion at the end of last month revealing the central bank has been buying dollars amid expectations of rate cuts by the US Federal Reserve. With rising interest rate differentials from the US due to rate cuts to take place starting the current month, Indian rupee is expected to strengthen further in coming months. Overall we anticipate rupee to slightly strengthen in tomorrow trade to 83.90 - 83.85 sub levels amid expectations of rate cut to persist ahead of crucial non-

farm payrolls due to be released on Friday," Sharma said. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was down 0.15 per cent to 101.20 points. Brent crude, the international benchmark, gained 0.74 per cent to USD 73.24 per barrel in futures trade. Forex traders said crude oil levels of USD 73 per barrel will act as a support for the domestic unit as India, the world's third-largest oil importer, stands to benefit from cheaper oil. In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 151.48 points, or 0.18 per cent, to close at 82,201.16 points, while the Nifty was down 53.60 points, or 0.21 per cent, to 25,145.10 points. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets on Wednesday, as they purchased shares worth Rs 975.46 crore, according to exchange data.

Raymond Lifestyle shares slump on market debut

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Raymond Lifestyle Ltd got listed on the stock exchanges on Thursday following the demerger of retail and lifestyle businesses. The stock got listed at Rs 3,000 on the BSE. Later, it climbed 3.33 per cent to Rs 3,100 from its opening price. At the NSE, shares of the firm began the trade at Rs 3,020. However, the stock later hit the lower circuit level at Rs 2,850, down 5 per cent on the BSE. At the NSE also, it hit the lower circuit limit of Rs 2,869, down 5 per cent. The company's market valuation stood at Rs 17,363.23 crore during the morning deals. In a release on Tuesday, the company said it will get listed on the stock exchanges on September 5.



Following the demerger of its retail and lifestyle businesses, Raymond will have two listed entities. The company plans to add 900 new outlets over three years. The Raymond Group's lifestyle business entity is eyeing a 15 per cent CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) to attain around 7 per cent market share in the fast growing men's-wear wedding market by 2027, the release said. "The demerger aims at unlocking shareholder value

by creating a focussed lifestyle business entity. Raymond Lifestyle will sharpen strategic focus in this fast-growing sector to become among the top three global fabric suppliers by the end of this year. "The global scenario presents significant opportunities, particularly the challenges in China and Bangladesh and trade agreements with the UK, EU and Australia," Raymond Group Chairman and Managing Director Gautam Singhania said.

SAIL offers support for Critical Mineral Mission

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

SAIL, the country's largest Steel player, is willing to participate in the Critical Mineral Mission, which aims to secure the country's critical mineral supply chain by ensuring mineral availability from domestic and foreign sources, the company's Chairman Amarendu Prakash said on Thursday. The Union Budget 2024-25 had proposed launching a Critical Mineral Mission for domestic production, recycling of critical minerals, and overseas acquisition of critical mineral assets. "FM Nirmala Sitharaman announced the Critical Mineral Mission. In that mission a lot of things will be discussed, all possibilities will be discussed. So we will be watching this and seeing what opportunities are there. "As the Critical Mineral Mission expands and things get discussed, we will be watching and seeing if there are opportunities for exploring something on SAIL's part," the Chairman



told reporters on the sidelines of ISA Steel Conclave. The Critical Mineral Mission aims to secure the country's critical mineral supply chain by ensuring mineral availability from domestic and foreign sources. It also aims at strengthening the value chains by enhancing technological, regulatory, and financial ecosystems to foster innovation, skill development, and global competitiveness in mineral exploration, mining,

beneficiation, processing, and recycling. So far, SAIL has been looking at minerals which are used for steel making, the Chairman said, adding that the critical minerals segment is a separate area. "We are not into that space (critical mineral) till now but since the government has announced a Critical Mineral Mission, we will just explore. We will look at it," he said. Critical minerals, such as cobalt, copper, lithium, nickel and rare earths, play a crucial

role in the production of clean energy technologies, from wind turbines to electric cars. The government had earlier said that it plans to provide financial incentives for development of critical minerals, including lithium. There will also be an emphasis on securing loans from multilateral financial institutions for the development of the sector. The government will focus on global R&D collaboration across the critical minerals value chain. To encourage the participation of Indian public and private sector companies in the acquisition of assets abroad, the government will provide targeted subsidies for mining, and for setting up evacuation infrastructure. Besides, there are plans to ramp up the capacity of ICVL from current 2 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) to 4.5 MTPA in three to four years. Mozambique-based ICVL is a special purpose vehicle of SAIL, RINL, NMDC, CIL and NTPC for acquiring coal mines and assets overseas.

Meesho hires 8.5 lakh for festive season

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

E-commerce platform Meesho on Thursday said it has enabled 8.5 lakh seasonal jobs within its seller and logistics network ahead of the festive season, mostly in tier-3 and tier-4 regions. This marks a 70 per cent increase from the number of seasonal hiring last year, according to a company statement. "This festive season, we are particularly thrilled to have enabled 8.5 lakh seasonal jobs, especially in tier-3 and beyond cities. Empowering SMBs, local manufacturers and logistics providers to scale their business is resulting in meaningful economic opportunities that is driving financial inclusion in these regions," said Sourabh Pandey, CXO, Fulfillment and Experience, Meesho. Meesho's sellers have hired 5 lakh seasonal workers as part of their requirements.

Mercedes eyes India as top luxury market

PTI ■ PUNE

German luxury car maker Mercedes-Benz India on Thursday said India has the potential to become one of the top five markets for its Maybach brand of cars in sales volume. Launching the electric version of its first-ever all-electric Mercedes-Maybach in India, the company's managing director and CEO Santosh Iyer said the launch of the new car models Mercedes-Maybach EQS 680 SUV manifests the firm's ambition to lead in digital and electric mobility with a focus on ultra-luxury segment. The Maybach EQS 680 SUV starts at Rs 2.25 crore onwards (all India ex-showroom). "We have got into the top 10 markets in the world (in terms of sales numbers). We are the fastest growing. We would have done (sold) more



than 1,500 Maybach's across models," Iyer said. Calling the brand very strategic and important for the company, Iyer said, "We would like India to further grow in this space. We would like to come in the top five for sure it is (only) a matter of time, we see the growth

potential for Maybach in India". Stating that Mercedes-Benz is leading the charge in luxury electric mobility, he said the company's Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV) portfolio in the country is witnessing steady growth and increased sales.

Mercedes-Benz in India now offers five BEVs in its portfolio, including EQA, EQB, EQE SUV, EQS sedan and Maybach EQS 680 SUV. "With the Mercedes-Maybach EQS SUV, we redefine automotive excellence in the age of electromobility. The new launch manifests our ambition to lead in digital and electric, with a sharp focus on bolstering our top-end luxury offering. "With the Mercedes-Maybach EQS SUV, we continue to hone our BEV portfolio further in India, offering a diverse choice for our discerning customers. We strongly believe there can be no luxury without sustainability and Mercedes-Benz will continue to create the BEV ecosystem for transitioning to electromobility in the future," Iyer said.

Gold, silver prices surge

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices climbed by Rs 500 to Rs 74,100 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday due to fresh demand by jewellers amid a strong trend in the overseas markets. The precious metal had closed at Rs 73,600 per 10 grams in the previous close on Wednesday. Tracking gold, silver also rallied by Rs 1,000 to Rs 84,600 per kilogram on Thursday due to increased offtake from industrial units and coin makers, according to the All India Sarafa Association. It had finished at Rs 83,600 per kg in the previous trade. In addition, gold of 99.5 per cent purity jumped by Rs 500 to Rs 73,750 per 10 grams from Rs 73,250. Domestically, traders



attributed the rise in gold prices to a strong trend in the international markets, which influenced the market sentiment to an increased buying from local jewellers. On the overseas front, Comex gold rose 0.82 per cent higher to USD 2,546.80 per ounce. "The bullion advanced on Thursday following weaker-than-expected US job data,

which bolstered bets on steep rate cuts that provided support for non-yielding metals like gold," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. According to Manav Modi, Senior Analyst, Commodity Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Securities, Post the jobs data, market participants

have raised the odds of a Fed rate cut on September 18. The ADP employment report, a reading on the US services industry, and jobless claims data due later on Thursday are also on the radar, Modi added. Silver also trading higher at USD 29.07 per ounce in the international markets. "Beige book survey released overnight on Wednesday showed economic activity was flat or declining across most regions in the US in recent weeks dousing any recession worries in the near term," Maneesha Sharma, AVP of Commodities & Currencies at Anand Rathi Shares and Stock Brokers, said. Traders are placing their bets cautiously amid the upcoming non-farm payrolls report on Friday, which could provide more clarity on the size of interest rate cuts, Sharma added

India-EFTA trade deal moves forward

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Switzerland's federal cabinet has adopted the ambitious trade pact between India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and placed it before Parliament as part of the ratification process. The ambitious trade pact, signed in March between India and the European bloc comprising Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Liechtenstein, aims at expanding trade across a range of areas, including pharmaceuticals, manufacturing, new technologies and machinery. Under the mega trade deal, the four European countries are looking at making an investment of USD 100 billion in India over the next 15 years. Each of the signatory countries will have to ratify the pact for its roll out. On Wednesday, the Federal

Council adopted a dispatch on the free-trade agreement between the EFTA states and India, the Swiss government said in a statement. The Federal Council, which is the Swiss federal cabinet, is the highest executive authority in the country. The Swiss Parliament is expected to debate the dispatch in the upcoming winter or spring sessions, according to the statement. "The agreement strengthens the competitiveness of Swiss exports in the world's most populous country," it said, describing the firming up of the trade pact with India as a significant milestone in Swiss trade policy. "In its dispatch, the Federal Council commends and sets out the content of the agreement and places it in the overall context of Switzerland's relations with India," the Swiss government said. It also explained the



significance of the trade pact. "India is now the world's most populous country. In particular, the growing middle class means that there is significant potential for growth. However, India still levies very high import duties on most products," it said. The trade deal provides for eliminating custom duties for almost 98 per cent of the imports from India. "After 16 years of negotiations, Switzerland and the other EFTA states have succeeded in becoming the first European partners to conclude an FTA with India," the Swiss readout said. "When the agreement comes into force, 94.7 per cent of Switzerland's current exports to India will enjoy tariff relief, in some cases with transitional periods. This will strengthen the competitiveness of Swiss exports in India," it said. The agreement includes a

chapter on investment promotion and cooperation. "For the first time in a free-trade agreement, the EFTA states are committing themselves to various promotional activities with the aim of increasing investment in India and thereby creating jobs," the readout said. "India, for its part, is endeavouring to ensure a favourable investment climate," it added. The statement said the EFTA is also the first partner with which India has agreed on a comprehensive and legally-binding chapter on trade and sustainable development. "This chapter includes, among other things, a commitment not to deviate from applicable environmental and labour standards. It also establishes a specific sub-committee on trade and sustainable development," it said.

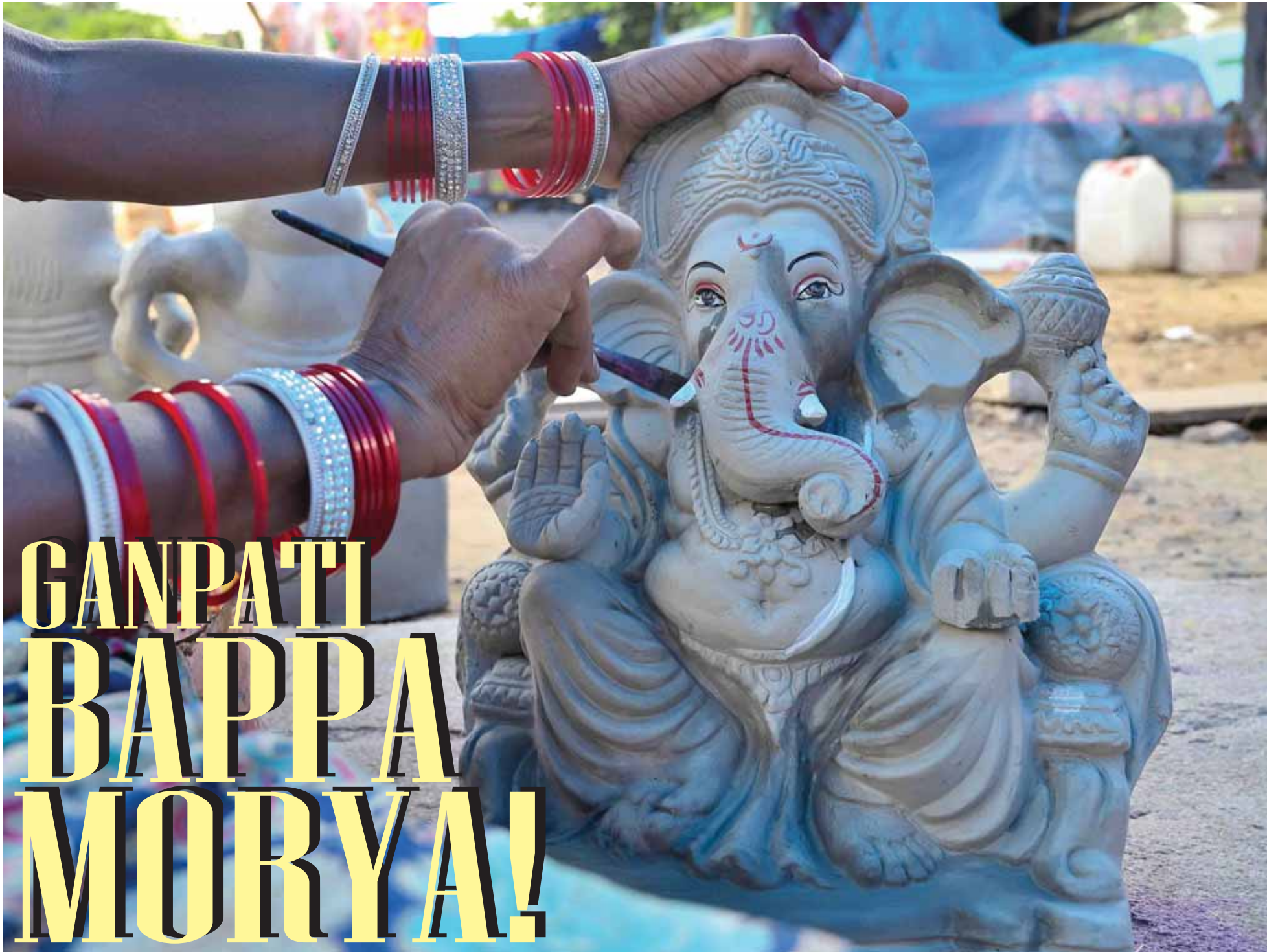


Suresh Prabhu nominated to WAF Board

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former Union Minister and Rajya Sabha member Suresh Prabhu on Thursday nominated to the World Agriculture Forum (WAF) Board. In a communication, Rudy Rabbinge, Chairman of WAF Board, said that Prabhu's expertise would be invaluable to the discussions that shape the future of the agri sector. "Given your role and respected position in the global food and agriculture arena, I believe you would be invaluable to the WAF Board.

Your insights and experience could greatly contribute to the forum's objectives," he said. The forum aims to function as a global body dedicated to advancing agricultural development on a worldwide scale. This initiative aims to bring together prominent thought leaders, innovators, policy-makers, business CEOs and heads of global institutions in the agricultural sector to address critical issues related to food and nutrition security, sustainable practices, and policy and trade agenda.



GANPATI BAPPA MORYA!

THE EXQUISITE ARTISTRY AND JOYOUS SPIRIT OF THE FESTIVAL



Experience the vibrant spirit of Ganesh Chaturthi in Pratap Bagh, Delhi, where artisans like Mohini and Rekha dedicate their craft to creating beautiful Ganesha idols. Witness the blend of artistry and devotion that transforms the streets into a festive haven, brimming with colour and celebration says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

Photos: Pankaj Kumar

Ganpati Bappa Morya! Ganpati Bappa Morya! The joyous chant fills the air, marking the arrival of Ganesh Chaturthi. This festival, dedicated to our beloved Lord Ganesha, transforms every corner into a lively celebration of devotion and creativity. Ganesh Chaturthi is a cherished Hindu festival that celebrates the birth of Lord Ganesha, the revered deity known for his wisdom and ability to remove obstacles. Observed with great enthusiasm across India, it turns streets and homes into vibrant centres of devotion.

FESTIVAL PREPARATIONS

Taking place in the Hindu month of Bhadrapada, usually in August or September, the festival's preparations begin well before the actual day. Homes are thoroughly cleaned and beautifully decorated and pandals are set up to welcome Lord Ganesha. These pandals, often adorned with colourful decorations, become the heart of the celebrations. Tomorrow, as the celebrations officially begin, the city will once again echo with the joyous chants of "Ganpati Bappa Morya!" On the day of Ganesh Chaturthi, people bring home clay idols of Lord Ganesha. These idols vary in size and style, from small, simple ones to large, elaborate figures. Each idol is carefully placed on an altar and decorated with flowers, fruits and other offerings, creating a sacred and festive atmosphere. A key part of the celebration is the daily puja or worship performed by devotees. This involves chanting prayers, offering modaks and flowers and seeking blessings from Lord Ganesha. The air is filled with the sounds of devotional songs, the scent of incense and the colours of vibrant decorations, all contributing to a sense of joy and community. As Ganesh Chaturthi draws near, Delhi's streets, especially in Pratap Bagh, come alive with joyous and vibrant energy. Street vendors and stalls overflow with intricately designed idols of Lord Ganesha, along with festive decorations and offerings. The air is filled with excitement as the community prepares for the celebration. In the heart of Pratap Bagh, preparing for Ganesh Chaturthi is not just a task but a heartfelt tradition. For months, artisans have dedicated themselves to crafting exquisite murtis (idols), each one a



labour of love and devotion.

In Pratap Bagh, the preparation for Ganesh Chaturthi is nothing short of a labour of love. For months, skilled artisans have poured their heart and soul into creating the most beautiful murtis of Lord Ganesha. Each idol is more than just a statue; it symbolises the devotion and creativity of its maker, embodying the rich cultural heritage of this cherished festival.

The process begins with moulding clay into the shape of Lord Ganesha, a task requiring both skill and patience. Artisans like Mohini and Rekha have dedicated themselves to this craft, ensuring that every detail - from the delicate folds of Ganesha's trunk to the intricate patterns on his attire - is perfect. The clay idols are left to dry, a crucial step demanding precision, especially during the monsoon season when high humidity can pose a challenge.

Once the base of the idol is ready, the real artistry begins. The idols are painted with vibrant colours and adorned with elaborate designs. Each brushstroke and embellishment

reflects the deep reverence the artisans hold for Lord Ganesha. The final touches, including beads and decorative fabrics, bring the idols to life, making them a feast for the eyes and a joy for the soul.

THE ARTISAN'S DEDICATION

The artisans of Pratap Bagh, like Mohini, Rekha, Sonu and Kamla, bring a unique blend of dedication, skill and devotion to their craft. Despite facing challenges such as rising costs of materials, intricate designs and financial uncertainties, they continue to pour their hearts into creating beautiful idols of Lord Ganesha. Their passion is truly inspiring, driven by both their love for their work and their deep devotion to the deity.

Mohini's approach to her work is remarkable. She sources plain murtis from Kolkata and transforms them with her own hands, turning them into vibrant, beautifully decorated idols. "I personally select the pearl necklaces from Chandni Chowk," she explains, and her years of experience

allow her to complete each one in just 15 minutes. The transformation from a plain clay figure to a colourful deity, embellished with pearls and intricate designs, is a tribute to her expertise and devotion. Mohini's work reflects not just artistic skill but also a deep spiritual connection, infusing each idol with a unique sense of reverence and love. The prices of her creations range from as little as ₹300 to as much as ₹30,000 with most people opting for smaller idols for their homes, while larger ones are chosen for community pandals.

Rekha, an artisan from Pratap Bagh, has been dedicated to idol-making for many years, a tradition she proudly continues. She explains that it takes them about "4 to 5 months" to prepare these beautiful idols, highlighting the dedication and effort involved in each piece. "Everything is done by hand," she emphasises. From moulding the clay to carefully painting and decorating each idol, the entire process is meticulous and labour-intensive.

Walking through the lanes of Pratap Bagh, one cannot help but feel a deep sense of admiration seeing women like Mohini and Rekha leading their stalls. Every stall is filled with the bustling energy of women hard at work, their hands moving with practiced precision as they shape and paint the idols. It is a powerful sight, reflecting not just the artistry involved but also the empowerment of these women who bring beauty and devotion to life through their craft. The dedication of these artisans stands out as a remarkable example of resilience. They face many hardships, yet their pride and joy in their work remain evident. Their craft is more than just a job; it is a calling, a deep-rooted part of their identity that connects them to the community and the divine. Their work becomes a symbol of hope and strength, capturing the very essence of Ganesh Chaturthi - the celebration of new beginnings, perseverance and devotion.

THE BUSINESS AND THE CHALLENGES

For many artisans, Ganesh Chaturthi is not just a period of celebration but also a crucial time for their business. Crafting idols is a complex and costly process and the financial pressures can be intense. One artisan remarks, "The cost of materials and the time

invested in creating each idol is significant. We hope that the sales will cover these expenses and bring some profit." Sonu adds, "We often face challenges in selling the larger and more elaborate idols. Most customers prefer smaller ones, which are more affordable." Despite these financial hurdles, the artisans of Pratap Bagh persist, driven by their passion and commitment to their craft.

A FESTIVAL OF TOGETHERNESS AND JOY

The lively streets of Delhi transform into a canvas of vivid colours, resonating with the joyful sounds of celebration. The artisan's meticulous work infuses the festival with an atmosphere of joy and festivity. This festival is a time when families unite to welcome their idols into their homes, decorating them with care and participating in daily pujas with reverence. The sense of community is palpable as neighbours, friends and even strangers come together in shared devotion to Lord Ganesha. Ganesh Chaturthi forwards a spirit of togetherness, forging bonds that extend beyond the festivities and celebrating the unity and collective joy of the community.

WISHING YOU A JOYOUS GANESH CHATURTHI !

As the vibrant celebrations of Ganesh Chaturthi come alive with every chant of "Ganpati Bappa Morya," we send you our warmest wishes for a festival filled with joy, prosperity and divine blessings. May Lord Ganesha, with his benevolent presence and loving guidance, bring happiness and success into your life. This is the perfect time to embrace the spirit of the festival by indulging in the sweet delights of modaks - Lord Ganesha's favourite treat! As you savour these delicious offerings, let them symbolise the sweetness of life and the fulfilment of your deepest desires.

May your home be filled with the sound of laughter and the spirit of togetherness and love. Celebrate with family and friends and may the blessings of Ganesh Chaturthi illuminate your path, dispelling any obstacles and guiding you towards new beginnings. Here's to a Ganesh Chaturthi that's as joyful and lively as the festivities themselves. *Ganpati Bappa Morya!* Enjoy the celebrations, the sweets and the company of loved ones.

Dharambir smashes Asian record for gold, Pranav takes silver in Paralympic

PTI ■ PARIS

Dharambir shattered the Asian record to win the gold medal while compatriot Pranav Soorma clinched the silver as Indian club throwers dominated the men's F51 event at the Paralympics here.

After four fouled attempts, the 35-year-old world champion's bronze medallist from Sonepat, Dharambir hurled the club to a distance of 34.92m in his fifth attempt to claim the top spot on the podium on Wednesday.

Soorma, who injured his spinal chord at 16 when a cement sheet fell on his head, then produced a throw of 34.59m in his first attempt but the 29-year-old from Faridabad couldn't better and

get past Dharambir as India completed a one-two. The third Indian in the fray, 2017 world championship silver medallist, trailblazing Indian para-athlete and Dharambir's menton Amit Kumar Saroha, however, finished last with a best effort of 23.96m.

Serbia's Filip Graovac bagged the bronze, courtesy a 34.18m throw in his second attempt. The F51 club throw event is for athletes who have movement affected to a high degree in the trunk, legs and hands.

All the competitors compete while seated and rely on their shoulders and arm to generate power.

From paralysis to Paralympic glory Dharambir faced a life-altering accident when a misjudged



dive into a canal left him paralyzed from the waist down. Para-sports gave him a new direction in life when he was introduced to it by fellow para-athlete Amit Kumar Saroha.

Within two years, Dharambir qualified for the 2016 Rio Paralympics, marking the beginning of a successful career.

He has since earned multiple medals for India, including a silver at the 2022 Asian Para Games.

A cricket and roller hockey enthusiast, Soorma too was just another teenager when a cement sheet fell on his head when he was 16, leaving him paralyzed after causing a severe spinal cord injury.

Support of his family and a

positive mindset helped him to turn to meditation and academics, where he excelled with 91.2 per cent in his 12th board exams.

He then pursued a postgraduate degree from the Delhi School of Economics and secured a job as an Assistant Manager at the Bank of Baroda.

Pranav rediscovered his love for sports through para-athletics and soon received success as he won a silver medal at the 2019 Beijing Grand Prix, a gold medal at the Serbia Open 2023, and both gold and silver medals at the Tunisia Grand Prix 2022.

He also produced a record-setting throw at the Asian Para Games 2023, where he won gold in the men's club throw F51 event.

India's focus will be on self improvement: Rishabh Pant



PTI ■ BENGALURU

Wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant warned against taking Bangladesh lightly in the upcoming two-Test series, and stressed on the need for India to keep improving themselves to stay ahead of the competition.

Bangladesh, who recently blanked Pakistan 2-0 at Rawalpindi, will face Rohit Sharma's side in the first Test at Chennai from September 19 before moving to Kanpur.

India will play a total of 10 Tests within the next five months as the series against Bangladesh will be followed by three Tests against New Zealand at home in October-November before moving to Australia for the five-Test Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

"Asian countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka perform well in Asian conditions because they are accustomed to the wickets," Pant told Jio Cinema.

"As the Indian cricket team, we focus solely on our own standards and how we can improve. Regardless of the opposition, we strive to play with the same intensity and give our 100 percent every single day," he said.

Pant said no series can be taken lightly with the margins between the teams decreasing in international cricket.

"Pressure will always be there because in international cricket, you can't take any series lightly. The margin between winning and losing is very small, and nowadays, the gap between international teams isn't much either," he said.

Pant said playing in the

Duleep Trophy ahead of a long season of Test cricket will give the players quality match practice while young cricketers at domestic level will benefit from the presence of international stars.

The opening round Duleep matches got underway here at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium and Anantapur on Thursday.

"It is very important for us to play domestic cricket because as a cricketer, match practice is always very important," he said.

"Especially coming back to domestic cricket, the youngsters also learn a lot of things from us - they see you playing here even after playing international cricket. There is a lot to give back to domestic cricket."

"It also gives us the opportunity to share all the learning and experiences from international cricket with our colleagues, especially with the young players and newcomers; it gives them a huge boost since we all have reached here from playing domestic cricket," Pant added.

Pant, who is playing for Team B in Duleep Trophy, said he was looking forward to getting back into domestic cricket as this is his first red-ball game after December 2022.

"It is an amazing feeling for me, also because when I met with the accident two years ago, I used to always think about when I will be able to play for India again," he said.

"In the last six months I (have) played IPL and we (have) also won the World Cup. It's a great feeling as I had always dreamt of winning the World Cup since I was a kid.

Jannik Sinner beats Daniil Medvedev to reach the semifinals

AP ■ NEW YORK

Top-ranked Jannik Sinner reached the U.S. Open semifinals for the first time by getting past 2021 champion Daniil Medvedev 6-2, 1-6, 6-1, 6-4 on Wednesday night.

Sinner, who took over as the title favorite after Week 1 exits by Novak Djokovic and Carlos Alcaraz, is the only man remaining in the field with a Grand Slam trophy.

He won his first at the Australian Open in January by beating Medvedev in the final in five sets after dropping the first two.

As reflected by the accurate-can-be score, this matchup was unusually topsy-turvy as they took turns dominating a set at a time. First, it was Sinner who



was superior. Then that role was played Medvedev. Then Sinner regained the upper

hand in the third. In the fourth, from 3-all, Sinner surged, saving a pair of break points, then breaking Medvedev to lead 5-3.

Sinner - a 23-year-old from Italy who was cleared in a doping case less than a week before the U.S. Open started after testing positive twice for trace amounts of an anabolic steroid in March - will go up against No. 25 Jack Draper of Britain on Friday for a berth in the title match.

That day's other semifinal will be No. 12 Taylor Fritz vs. No. 20 Frances Tiafoe in the first all-American men's matchup at this stage at a major in 19 years.

The women's semifinals Thursday night are Jessica Pegula vs. Karolina Muchova, and Aryna Sabalenka vs. Emma Navarro.

Pegula eliminated No. 1 Iga Swiatek 6-2, 6-4 on Wednesday. The 22-year-old

Draper reached his first Grand Slam semifinal - and became the first British man to get that far at Flushing Meadows since Andy Murray won the 2012 trophy - by overwhelming No. 10 Alex de Minaur 6-3, 7-5, 6-2.

Draper has won all 15 sets he's played so far, but things figure to get tougher against Sinner.

This is not kind of like an overnight thing for me. I've believed for a long time that I've been putting in the work and doing the right things, and I knew that my time would come," said Draper, whose upper right leg was taped by a trainer after he felt something at the end of the first set.

"I didn't know when it would be, but hopefully from here, I can do a lot of amazing things.



Buttler out of T20 series against Australia, could miss ODIs

AP ■ LONDON

England white-ball captain Jos Buttler was ruled out of the Twenty20 series against Australia because of a right calf injury on Thursday and might also miss the one-day series between the teams, too.

Buttler has been replaced in the T20 squad by Jamie Overton, while Phil Salt will take over as captain.

The three-match T20 series begins on Wednesday.

The five-match ODI series starts on Sept. 19 so Buttler has two weeks to recover.

Batter Jordan Cox has been added to the ODI squad as cover in case Buttler doesn't make it.

England T20 squad: Phil Salt (captain), Jofra Archer, Jacob Bethell, Brydon Carse, Jordan Cox, Sam Curran, Josh Hull, Will Jacks, Liam Livingstone, Saqib Mahmood, Dan Mousley, Jamie Overton, Adil Rashid, Reece Topley, John Turner.

England ODI Squad: Jos Buttler (captain), Jofra Archer, Gus Atkinson, Jacob Bethell, Harry Brook, Brydon Carse, Jordan Cox, Ben Duckett, Josh Hull, Will Jacks, Matthew Potts, Adil Rashid, Phil Salt, Jamie Smith, Reece Topley, John Turner.

Parmar to compete for bronze in judo



PTI ■ PARIS

India's Kapil Parmar lost to Iran's S Banitaba Khorram Abadi in the 60kg (J1) men's para judo semifinals of the Paralympics and will now compete for the bronze medal, here on Thursday.

The 24-year-old Parmar was beaten 0-10 in semifinals A by his Iranian opponent here at the Champs-de-mart arena.

The J1 class in para judo is for the athletes who suffer from no to very low visual activity. Athletes in this category wear red circles to indicate that they may need guided support before, during and after a contest.

Parmar, who won the silver medal at the 2022 Asian Games in the same category, had ear-

lier beaten Venezuela's Marco Dennis Blanco 10-0 in the quarterfinal.

Parmar was, however, handed a yellow card in each of the two contests on Thursday.

Meanwhile, India's Kokila suffered a defeat to Kazakhstan's Akmaral Nauatbek 0-10 in her women's 48kg J2 class quarterfinals.

Later, Kokila was beaten by Ukraine's Yulia Ivanyska 0-10 in her J2 Final of Repechage A, a contest wherein she was handed three yellow cards while her opponent got two.

Yellow cards in judo are given for minor violations such as passivity or using a technique that might hinder the opponent or cause injury.

In J2 category, the competing athletes have partial eyesight.

New Zealand arrive in India for one-off Test against Afghanistan

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

New Zealand arrived here on Thursday ahead of their one-off Test against Afghanistan, scheduled to be played in Greater Noida from September 9.

The one-off Test, the first red-ball fixture between the two nations, will be held at the Greater Noida Sports Complex Ground.

The BlackCaps have named a strong side for the Test against Afghanistan.

Veteran pacer Tim Southee will lead the team which includes the likes of former

skipper Kane Williamson, who opted out of a central contract earlier this year, Devon Conway, Glenn Phillips and Rachin Ravindra, while Tom Latham continues to be the vice-captain.

The BlackCaps have included five spin bowling options in Michael Bracewell, Mitchell Santner, Ajaz Patel and part-timers Phillips and Ravindra for the Test. They will hold their first practice session on Friday.

The Test against Afghanistan will serve as a preparation for

a two-match series against Sri Lanka, which is part of the World Test Championship.

After the tour of Sri Lanka, New Zealand will return to India as they take on Rohit Sharma and his men in a three-match Test series, also a part of the WTC calendar.

The three games will be played in Bengaluru, Pune and Mumbai in October and November.

New Zealand currently occupy the third spot in the ICC WTC points table behind last edition's finalists, India and Australia.

I was trying to play close to my body to counter swing and cut: Centurion Musheer

PTI ■ BENGALURU

After underscoring his talent with a robust hundred, Musheer Khan on Thursday said he centred his batting strategy around playing close to the body to nullify the pronounced movement of the ball in overcast conditions.

Musheer's unbeaten 105 rescued India B after India A bowlers reduced them to 94 for seven on the first day of the Duleep Trophy match at the Chinnaswamy Stadium.

India B finished the day at 202 for seven.

"I wanted to play as many balls as possible without thinking too much about runs. I wanted to bat the whole day, and I was taking it session by session. The ball was swinging and cutting when I came to bat," Musheer said in the post-day press meet.

"So, I was trying to play the ball as close to my body as possible, and was looking to avoid those risky shots. I knew runs would eventually come," he added.

But Musheer was not alone in his rescue mission as late-order batter Navdeev Saini helped him add 108 runs for the unbro-



ken eighth wicket alliance.

"When wickets were falling at the other end, I told myself to play intelligently and look for a partnership. Then Saini bhai gave me a lot of confidence saying he will play whether it is two balls or six balls in an over, and just keep faith in him.

"He was also able to match my thinking and approach while batting. But generally, I was trying to defend the first three or four balls and then take a single," he elaborated.

Another salient feature of his batting was the way he handled Kuldeep Yadav as five of his 10 fours came off the left-arm wrist spinner, including two successive biffs down the V.

Musheer said conversations with senior batters in his side like Shubman Gill and Rishabh Pant helped him prepare against Kuldeep.

PTI ■ PARIS

Dealing with the unexpected, whether in archery or life in general, is no big deal for Harvinder Singh. He has aced the anticipation game thanks to the hard lessons that came his way.

The 33-year-old from Haryana, who scripted history by becoming the first Indian archer to win a Paralympic gold, has impaired legs owing to a dengue treatment gone wrong when he was just one year old but instead of lamenting his fate, he chose to become bigger than his circumstances.

Harvinder's journey to Paralympic glory began with a bronze three years back in Tokyo, which made him the first Indian to finish on the Games podium.

One arrow at a time: Making of paralympic champion archer Harvinder Singh

On Wednesday, he showed neither fatigue nor nerves to secure five back-to-back wins in a day to bag his second successive Paralympic medal in recurve open category, bettering the previous performance by quite a margin.

All his achievements are a first in Indian archery. And when he is not shooting down medals, Harvinder is busy pursuing a Ph.D in economics.

"In the last few months, I was shooting very well in practice, more than the world record in qualification. Here, I finished

ninth (in the ranking round), and my confidence went a little bit down. Anyway, I focused on the matches because anything could happen," Harvinder was quoted as saying by 'World Archery'.

"Archery is a game of unexpected. Everything can happen. I focused on every arrow. Only the next arrow counts," said Harvinder, who reserved his best for the final, nailing three 10s in his last four arrows to knock out his 44-year-old opponent from Poland Lukasz Ciszek 6-0 (28-



24, 28-27, 29-25). His was India's second medal in archery at the ongoing Games after Sheetal Devi and Rakesh Kumar combined for the compound mixed team bronze.

Harvinder what works best for him is to stay in the moment and think too far ahead.

"I was just focusing on my next match. Only that way, I could move to the next round, and one by one, I moved to the final. And eventually won gold," he broke down the process.

Three years back in Tokyo, Harvinder who hails from

Ajitnagar in Kaithal district of Haryana, could not realise his dream of a gold.

He said his teammates had a role to play in instilling belief in him that he could aim for the top podium finish.

"In Tokyo, I won bronze, so I'm happy I could change the colour of my medal. Before the (Paris) Games, everybody told me I had a chance to reach gold, and I'm happy I was able to," said Harvinder, who comes from a farming family. Harvinder's consistency and his monk-like

demeanour ensured that he lost no more than three points in each of his matches.

The archer, who started taking interest in the sport after watching the action on TV during London Olympics, said that he felt "blessed".

"It feels fantastic. I'm just blessed to achieve this fold for India," he said after the medal ceremony.

Harvinder's mantra is to always aim for a '10' with his final arrow, something he says, helped him achieve his goal in Paris. If you have confidence, you can learn the arrow. Sometimes it can slip to nine, but you always have to finish with a 10, because it's your last arrow. In my matches and many situations, I landed my last arrow in a 10. I focused on my last arrow," he said.

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