



OPINION 6 RESIGNATION SHAKES TRINAMOOL CONGRESS

WORLD 9 NORTH KOREA HAS FIRED BALLISTIC MISSILE TOWARD SEA: SOUTH

MONEY 10 RETAIL INFLATION RISES TO 3.65 PER CENT, REMAINS WITHIN RBI TARGET

Published From DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

Late City Vol.160 Issue 247 *Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

LUCKNOW, FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 13, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

Established 1864

www.dailypioneer.com



INDIA'S IMPRESSIVE 3-1 WIN OVER KOREA IN ACT HOCKEY 12 SPORTS

Delhi deluged as incessant rains bring Delhi-NCR to a grinding halt

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Incessant rain on Thursday brought the national Capital and adjoining areas including Noida, Ghaziabad and Gurugram to a screeching halt with severe water logging, potholes and breakdown of buses witnessed in several parts of the city amid the India Meteorological Department issuing an orange alert for the city. An orange alert denotes heavy rainfall and also potential disruptions to rail, road and air transport. This is the second consecutive day when the commuters and daily office goers were stuck in traffic jams and waterlogging in the Capital city. Besides torrential downpours since late night, the breakdown of buses on

major roads led to traffic jams during the morning and evening peak hours. The ongoing metro construction works have also worsened the situation including disruptions in the Khanpur area. Traffic around Lutyens' Delhi was affected due to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the second Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation in Pragati Maidan. Some of the Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) had to issue caution to the locals to be alert while moving out from the colonies. With the traffic situation becoming a regular menace, the Sainik Farms Welfare Association in south Delhi took to its social media groups to issue alerts and updates particularly the disruption due to metro work and rains in the area that has



Khanpur metro work led to traffic jam on Panchsheel to the Sheikh Sarai road amid monsoons in New Delhi on Thursday

Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer

disrupted the resident's daily lives. According to the MET department, in the past 24 hours till 8 am on Thursday,

city's primary weather station Safdarjung received 16 mm of rainfall, Ay Nagar 15.7 mm of rainfall, Pitampura 13 mm of rainfall, Lodi road

16 mm of rainfall, Narela 1.5 mm of rainfall, Palam nine mm of rainfall, Ridge 11 mm of rainfall, Pitampura 13 mm of rainfall and Mayur Vihar's

Salvan Public School 13 mm of rainfall. Parts of Delhi-NCR, including India Gate, Janpath Road, R K Puram,

Kalindikunj, Gazipur, Indrapuram, Laxmi Nagar, Dwarka, Connaught Place, Noida, Safdarjung, Uttam Nagar, East of Kailash and Rohini witnessed light to moderate showers. Moti Nagar flyover, which was inaugurated in March this year by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, was waterlogged along with potholes in several places. Public Works Department (PWD) pumps were also not working, irking commuters who were caught in major jams. Munka, Dhaura Kuan, Moti Bagh, Mehrauli-Badarpur road, Lajpat Nagar, Karol Bagh, Punjabi Bagh, Khanpur, ITO, Jahangirpuri, Safdarjung, Kashmere Gate ISBT and Okhla Estate among other areas were flooded after the showers causing slow traffic movement with

vehicles wading through knee deep water. Taking to social media platforms, Delhi police said that traffic was affected on Old Pankha Road in the carriageway from T point Uttam Nagar East Metro Station towards Pankha Road due to a large pothole on the Road. "Traffic is affected on GTK Road on both the carriageway from Mukarba Chowk towards Azadpur chowk and vice versa due to water logging near GTK Depot," Delhi Traffic Police wrote in a post on X. In another post, they said that traffic is affected on MB Road in the carriageway from Khanpur T Point towards Mehrauli and vice versa due to potholes and waterlogging. Similarly, potholes and waterlogging caused traffic jams on Rohtak Road. **Continued on Page 8**

Inappropriate to call UP Police trigger-happy, says DGP Kumar

Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh Director General of Police (DGP) Prashant Kumar on Thursday dismissed the allegations about the state police being "trigger-happy", asserting it adheres to strict guidelines and has not faced any criticism from constitutional bodies. Kumar's remarks come in response to the recent encounter of Mangesh Yadav, an accused in the Rs 1.5-crore jewellery heist case of Sultanpur district. The encounter has sparked controversy with former chief minister Akhilesh Yadav accusing the BJP of staging fake encounters to target individuals on the basis of caste and religion. The Samajwadi Party president had on Tuesday slammed the Uttar Pradesh government, saying statistics of encounters during the BJP rule are also statistics of the "injustice of illegal killings" and "injustice done against the PDA". **Details on Page 3**

SC verdict on Kejriwal bail plea today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI The Supreme Court will deliver its verdict today on the plea filed by Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal seeking bail and quashing of arrest by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the Delhi Excise Policy case. As per the cause list of September 13 uploaded on the apex court website, a bench headed by Justice Surya Kant is slated to pronounce the verdict. The bench, also comprising Justice Ujjal Bhuyan, had on September 5 reserved its verdict on the pleas. Kejriwal has filed two separate petitions challenging the denial of bail and against his arrest by the CBI in the corruption case filed by the central agency. Kejriwal was arrested by the CBI on June 26. Manish Sisodia, K Kavitha, Vijay Nair and several other accused in the excise policy scam case have been given bail by the courts. AAP Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha said they are "hopeful" and are waiting for the Supreme Court's decision on Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's bail. "We are very hopeful. We are waiting for tomorrow," Chadha told reporters.

PM at CJI's residence; BJP plays defensive



Prime Minister Narendra Modi attends 'Ganapati Poojan' at the residence of Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, in New Delhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the residence of Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud on Wednesday to attend 'Ganapati Puja' celebration has sparked a controversy with senior Supreme Court judges and some opposition leaders expressing concern over the event, the BJP and its ally hit out at the opposition parties on Thursday, calling their reactions "reckless" and said casting "baseless aspersions" on the highest court sets a dangerous precedent. The BJP reminded the Congress of the time when in 2009, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh invited then CJI, KG Balakrishnan, to attend an Iftar party.

The video of Narendra Modi attending the Puja celebration alongside the CJI and his wife Kalpana Das has gone viral. In a video, Chandrachud and his wife Kalpana Das were seen welcoming Modi at their house. In a post on X, PM Modi shared his experience stating, "May Bhagwan Shri Ganesh bless us all with happiness, prosperity, and wonderful health." Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters here, Lok Sabha MP and national spokesperson Sambit Patra hit back at the opposition and asked if the then Chief Justice of India (CJI) did not attend the Iftar party hosted by then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. "They do not have any objection to the prime minister meeting the chief justice of India but Ganpati Puja," he said and accused the Opposition leaders of indulging in politics. "I am surprised that if the prime minister meets the chief justice of India, you raise an objection. But when he (Rahul Gandhi) meets (US lawmaker) Ilhan Omar, who is with Pok, in America, you have no objection," Patra added. Sharing pictures of Singh in a candid laugh with Balakrishnan, BJP leader Shehzaad Poonawalla, in an X post, wrote, "Judiciary is safe." "PM Modi attends Ganesh Puja at current CJI House - oh God Judiciary compromised," Poonawalla mocked the Congress in his post. "Ganpati Utsav is being celebrated and people visit each other's house... I don't have information whether the Prime Minister has visited

anyone's house," Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut said. Ganpati Utsav is being celebrated at several locations in Delhi and Maharashtra Sadan, he said. "However, the Prime Minister visited the CJI's residence. They performed 'aarti' together. We think that people will have doubts if guardians of the Constitution meet political leaders," Raut added. In a post on X, senior lawyer Indra Jaising said the Chief Justice of India has compromised the separation of powers between the executive and the judiciary. "Lost all confidence in the independence of the CJI. The SCBA (Supreme Court Bar Association) must condemn this publicly displayed compromise of Independence of the CJI from the executive," she said in her post. Shiv Sena Rajya Sabha MP Milind Deora also flayed the critics and said it's unfortunate to see "reckless commentary" on Prime Minister Modi's visit to the CJI's residence for Ganapati Aarti. "When verdicts favour them, the opposition praises the Supreme Court's credibility, but when things don't go their way, they conveniently claim the judiciary is compromised," he charged in a post on X. Casting such baseless aspersions on the highest court sets a dangerous precedent, he added. "This reckless attempt to undermine the credibility of the CJI by the opposition is not only irresponsible but also damaging to the institution's integrity. India's politics is taking an ugly turn," Deora said. **Continued on Page 8**



External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar visits the replica of the East Gate of the Sanchi Stupa outside the Humboldt Forum, in Berlin

Militarisation of frontier a big issue with China, says EAM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With tension persisting at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh for the last four years, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said roughly 75 per cent of the "disengagement problems" with China are sorted out but the bigger issue has been the increasing militarisation of the frontier. His remarks came in the backdrop of China trying to alter the LAC in May 2020 in Ladakh leading to a violent clash between the two armies in Galwan valley on June 15. Twenty Indian army personnel including the commanding officer were killed in the fight and more than 40 Chinese soldiers also died. Elaborating upon the current situation regarding the lingering border row, Jaishankar also said the Galwan Valley clashes affected the "entirety" of India-China ties, asserting that one cannot have violence at the border and then say the rest of the relationship is insulated from it. He made these assertions during an interactive session at a think-tank in Geneva. The external affairs minister said negotiations between the two sides to find a

solution to the problem are underway. "Now those negotiations are going on. We made some progress. I would say roughly you can say about 75 per cent of the disengagement problems are sorted out," he said at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy. "We still have some things to do," Jaishankar said, responding to a question. But there is a bigger issue that both of us have brought forces close up and in that sense, there is a militarisation of the border, he said. The external affairs minister indicated that the relationship can improve if there is a resolution to the row. "We hope that if there is a solution to the disengagement and there is a return to peace and tranquility, then we can look at other possibilities," Jaishankar said. The Indian and Chinese troops are locked in a standoff in certain friction points in eastern Ladakh even as the two sides completed disengagement from several areas following extensive diplomatic and military talks. India has been maintaining that its ties with China cannot be normal unless there is peace in the border areas. **Continued on Page 8**

Indian-origin Israeli soldier killed near West Bank

PTI ■ JERUSALEM

A 24-year-old Indian-origin Israeli soldier from the Bnei Menashe community was killed in a vehicle-ramming attack close to the West Bank's Beit El settlement, community members said on Thursday. Staff Sergeant Geri Gideon Hanghal was a resident of Nof HaGalil and a soldier in the Kfir Brigade's Nahshon Battalion, the Israeli Army said.

Community members told PTI that they were "in shock at the news of the loss of a young life" on Wednesday near Asaf Junction. Footage from the scene of the attack showed a truck with a Palestinian licence plate veering off a busy highway and barrel full speed into an Israel Defence Forces (IDF) guard post adjacent to a bus stop before coming to a halt. The suspect was named by Israeli security sources as 58-year-old Hail Dhaifallah, from the central West Bank town of Rafat. Sergeant Hanghal's funeral will be held on Thursday, they said. Hanghal immigrated to Israel from the northeastern part of India in 2020. Some 300 Bnei Menashe youngsters are said to be doing Army duty during the current war, most of them serving in combat units. The Bnei Menashe, hailing from India's north-eastern states of Manipur and Mizoram, are believed to have descended from the Israelite tribe of Menasheh, one of the "lost tribes" of ancient times. **Continued on Page 8**

Veteran CPI(M) leader Sitaram Yechury breathes his last at AIIMS

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The CPI (M) finds itself orphaned by the unexpected demise of 72-year-old Sitaram Yechury, the general secretary of the party. It is not going to be an easy task for the comrades to find a suitable replacement for Yechury, considered to be suave and quite accommodative in the Left parties. Even his rivals held him in esteem for his soft manners easy accessibility and approachability. The first time he was seen in an embarrassing situation was during the Press meeting convened by the CPI(M) immediately after the 2016 Assembly Election in Kerala. Yechury, with an anguished look, announced that Pinarayi Vijayan would be the Chief Minister of the State. Though it was widely

believed that V S Achuthanandan would be appointed as chief minister, the bigwigs in the party including the proprietor of a publishing house in Chennai had other ideas and they ensured the coronation of Vijayan. Yechury, who was highly critical of Vijayan's crony capitalist friends, wanted the mantle to be given to VS while others chose Vijayan. As a disciplined comrade, Yechury had no other option and he never forgot his crestfallen face during the presser. Though highly critical of the NDA Government at the Center, Yechury was open in private conversations about the good things done by the Vajpayee government (1998-2004). When India conducted a nuclear explosion at Pokhran in May 1998 there was an uproar in the USA,



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Pakistan and China. The US even blacklisted India from dual technology deals and Indian scientists were denied permission to attend any international conferences on science and technology. Yechury, who was then a politburo member visited Chennai to address a Press meeting. "Pakistan assembled and exploded a nuclear bomb in such a short time only because of India. There was no need for India to conduct an

experiment at this juncture," said Yechury. He was adamant in his stance that India was responsible for Pakistan going nuclear soon after India did it. After the Press meeting, this writer got the opportunity for a tete-a-tete with Yechury when he was asked how a country (Pakistan) could assemble a nuclear bomb within 10 days. A smiling Yechury quipped: "Yea, these are all to score some brownie points. You just report what I told in the press meet." During his younger days, Yechury was the superstar of the CPI(M). He was at ease while dealing with political leaders including rivals which had earned him the reputation that "Sitaram is always at a different level". Even RSS leaders, the only pronounced enemies of the

CPI(M) held Sitaram Yechury in high regard. Yechury, hailing from Telangana remained a popular politician in Tamil Nadu. Yechury's major achievement is the research paper "Oil Pool Deficit or Cesspool of Deceit" published in 1997 in which he questioned the propriety of the government hiking petroleum prices regularly citing the oil pool deficit account. With his demise, what the CPI(M) has lost is the best bridge between the party and the intellectuals as well as the common man. Yechury surpassed all his predecessors in his dealings with the public through his man next door image. He was tasked with selling an outdated ideology to the new generation which was impossible in this era. **(Related story on Page 5)**

Youth killed for 'family honour'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Tension prevailed in Pasin Dhakwa village in Sushant Golf City police station area after a youth was beaten to death over a row over a girl on Wednesday night.

The slain youth was accused of eloping with the girl and was jailed for it. He had come out of jail on bail four days ago. The girl had been recovered four days after she was reported missing.

A heavy police force is camping in the village and the cops are keeping a close watch on every minute detail. The situation is said to be tense but under control.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Keshav Kumar said the police force was deployed in the village around 8 pm immediately after the news of the youth's murder reached them. He said the situation was under control.

As per reports, Amit Kumar of Pasin Dhakwa, a Pasi community dominated village in Sushant Golf City police area, was attacked with an axe and sticks around 7-8 pm on Wednesday and he was fatally injured. Amit was attacked, allegedly by the family members of a girl whom he loved and for whose love he had served a jail term following a brawl over the issue.

On the fateful day he had gone to meet the girl. The girl's brothers are suspected to have murdered him.

After the incident, all four brothers of the girl absconded. The police have taken the girl into custody and she is being

Retired S-I's son shot at in fight for supremacy

Lucknow (PNS): In a daring incident, the son of a retired police sub-inspector was shot at in a fight for supremacy in Gomti Nagar on Wednesday night, exposing the tall claims of police over night patrolling.

The injured youth is said to have a criminal past and is a history-sheeter in Lucknow.

Identified as Dhananjay Singh, the youth sustained gunshot injuries in his leg and is admitted in the SPM (Civil) Hospital.

His arch rival, Avinash Singh alias Sinku, has been named as the main assailant and the police have launched a search for him. Dhananjay was shot at when he was sitting in a car outside his house in Gomti Nagar late Wednesday night. The bullet hit his right leg. Dhananjay's friend was also present with him at the time of the attack. The victim's father is a retired sub-inspector.

According to the police, retired sub-inspector Ram Sahodar lives with his family in Vipul Khand of Gomti Nagar. On Wednesday night, his son Dhananjay was sitting in the car outside the house with his friend Rahul when five unknown youths suddenly attacked him. The assailants opened fire at

Dhananjay, injuring him. When Rahul raised an alarm, the assailants ran to beat him too, but seeing a crowd of people gathering there, they escaped.

Dhananjay has a history-sheet in his name at Gomti Nagar police station and he is also in property dealing.

Police have registered a case. Rahul's wife Juhi Singh alias Preeti Singh, who was also present at the time of the incident, informed the police about the attack. She later filed a complaint.

It surfaced that Rahul had gone to meet Dhananjay at the latter's house and both were talking while sitting in Rahul's luxury car. Suddenly, 4-5 people came with sticks and country-made pistols and fired three shots at Rahul and Dhananjay. While Dhananjay Singh was hit by a bullet, Rahul had a narrow escape. However, when Rahul tried to run away, the assailants caught him and attacked him with the butt of the gun, injuring him also. The injured youth's family alleged that 2-3 days ago, one Avinash Singh alias Sinku had threatened to kill Rahul and Dhananjay.

questioned for extracting from her the sequence of the incident.

Amit Kumar (21) used to work as a labourer. He was having an affair with the girl from the

same village and the same community. Police investigation revealed that the girl had called Amit to meet her outside the village at around 6:30 pm on Wednesday evening. When

Amit reached there, her brothers Shatruhan, Man Bharan, Ravi and Ramashankar also reached there, all armed with an axe and sticks.

Amit's grandfather Chhotelal alleged that in the presence of the girl, her four brothers attacked Amit, causing a deep cut in his neck with an axe. When he was injured, they beat him brutally with sticks. When he fell down bleeding, the assailants took him for dead and fled the scene.

After getting information from the villagers, the victim's family members rushed to the spot and took the injured Amit to a nearby private hospital, where the doctors pronounced him dead.

As the news of Amit's death reached the village, the locals split into rival camps, ready to attack each other. On getting information, a police force from Sushant Golf City police station rushed to the village and prevented a clash. The police also sent the body for post-mortem.

Amit's grandfather alleged that the girl had conspired with her brothers to get Amit killed. The police have registered a murder case against the girl and her brothers on Chhotelal's complaint and are looking for the absconding brothers.

The girl reportedly told the police that she killed Amit and not her brothers. The police suspect she has owned up the murder to save her brothers. The girl told the police that Amit used to harass her so she called him and killed him by hitting him with an axe.

50-year-old woman attacked by wild animal in Bahraich Forest dept asserts not a wolf attack

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A 50-year-old woman was attacked, allegedly by a wolf, at Kureanpurwa in Bahraich district on Wednesday night. Forest officials however maintained that it was not a wolf attack.

The woman was sleeping outside when she was attacked by the animal and she bore injury marks on her neck. She was taken to hospital where she was given necessary treatment and is now out of danger.

Divisional Forest Officer (Bahraich) Ajeet Singh said that it could be an attack by any other animal but not a wolf. The DFO said that he personally visited the area after receiving the information about the attack but found no pug marks of the wolf. "The land was wet because of the rains but we still could not find

any pug mark of the wolf. Parallel to the attacks of the wolves there have been attacks by the jackals, causing injuries to the villagers. Experts also pointed out that the injury was not caused by a wolf but by some other animal," he said. The DFO said that the presence of pug marks were the only conclusive evidence of attack by wolf but they were not found in this case.

He said one wolf was left to be captured and all efforts were being made to catch it by the Forest department.

The DFO said that the wolf was sighted at Sissaya village on Thursday but it became difficult to capture it as it was raining. "It ran through the sugarcane fields which were filled with water. Because of the rains we had to stop flying the drones and we followed its pug marks till they were visible. These are the problems

which we face while tracking the animal but we are making all efforts," he said, adding that search operations would continue till the wolf was caught. Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests Sanjay Pathak said that both awareness drive and search operations were on and would remain intense till the last wolf was caught.

With nine killed and more than 40 injured, the Forest department has launched Operation Bhediya in Bahraich district and has been successful in capturing five wolves.

Pathak said that the teams were monitoring the crucial areas. "We are using camera traps, thermal drones and traditional methods of tracking. The public is also being made aware. We will again review the situation after four to five days," he added.

Experts debunk myths around wolves

Bahraich: Wolves are "shy" pack animals showing empathy towards their kind, say wildlife experts while stressing the need for conserving the species on the brink of extinction amid a spate of attacks in Bahraich and the Uttar Pradesh government ordering to shoot the animals, if necessary. In Bahraich's Mahsi tehsil, 10 people, including nine children, have been killed in these attacks since March and around three dozen people have been left injured in human-wildlife conflicts in the area with the government declaring it as a "wildlife disaster".

Sanjay Pathak, an Indian Forest Service officer leading Operation Bhediya in Bahraich and former Field Director of Dudhwa National Park, addressed common misconceptions about wolves and their behaviour. He criticised the negative portrayal of wolves, saying, "Humans view wolves with great prejudice. For instance, the main accused in the Kolkata rape case is referred to as a 'hungry wolf'. However, wolves are generally shy and social creatures."

He points out that wolves are monogamous, mating exclusively with the same partner and respecting older pack members. Pathak further stresses the significance of

wolves' communication through pheromones which are chemical messengers released into the air by animals. "Wolves have a more acute sense of smell and perception compared to other animals and humans," he says, as most modern dogs have ancestry from wolves.

Wolves also hold cultural significance in parts of India, for instance in Bihar people worship wolf dens and it is a tradition for newweds to visit and offer prayers near these dens, he said.

A senior scientist and wolf expert from the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) in Dehradun, Dr. Shaheer Khan says wolves are "group-living social animals." He detailed the two types of wolves found in India: "Canis lupus chanco" in the mountainous regions and "Canis lupus palipes" in the Terai regions like Bahraich. "These animals live in packs led by an alpha pair that raises offspring and cares for older wolves who can no longer hunt," Khan said, adding that the alpha pair hunts for the pack, feeding the elders first before eating with the young ones. "Once the pups mature, they leave the pack to form new pairs in different territories. Siblings do not mate with each other," Khan said highlighting the pack's structure.

PTI

III T associate professor ends life

Lucknow (PNS): A woman associate professor of the Indian Institute of Information Technology, Lucknow at Ahmama, ended her life at her house in Indira Nagar under Ghazipur police station on Wednesday night. As per reports, the associate professor, identified as Ayushi Sharma, was found hanging from the ceiling in her

house in Sector A of Indira Nagar. Her paralysed father, Vinod Sharma, was in a room at the ground floor.

According to a police spokesman, a neighbour of the deceased went to her house for some work but did not find anyone in the room. The neighbour then went upstairs and found Ayushi hanging from the ceiling

ing with a dupatta tied around her neck. Ayushi Sharma was unmarried.

In Saadatganj, a 21-year-old woman identified as Komal Yadav hanged herself to death on Monday. Her mother Ranjana Yadav, informed the police about the incident on Thursday. Police sent the body for autopsy and started an investigation.



NOTICE

I bring to you kind notice that my name is Shreyash S/o 15814097P NK, Rajesh Kumar S/o Kallu aged about 40 years presently residing at Maraunda Majhwara Tehsil & Distt. Unnao (U.P.) I have change my name Shreyas to Shreyash as the above address vide affidavit dt.12. Sept. 2024

NOTICE

I bring to you kind notice that my name is Shrejal Yadav D/o 15814097P NK, Rajesh Kumar S/o Kallu aged about 40 years presently residing at Maraunda Majhwara Tehsil & Distt. Unnao (U.P.) I have change my name Shreyajal Yadav to Shrejal Yadav as the above address vide affidavit dt. 12. Sept. 2024

सूचना

मैंने अपना नाम अरशिया इकबाल (ARSHEYA IQUBAL) से बदलकर अरशिया रशीद (ARSHIYA RASHEED) रख लिया है। भविष्य में मुझे इसी नाम से जाना व पहचाना जाए। अरशिया रशीद पत्नी अब्दुल रशीद, निवासी-484 / 34, कदम रसूल वार्ड, निराला नगर, लखनऊ-226020, उ.प्र.

NOTICE

I, Awdesh Kumar S/o Late Bhagwande R/o Vill. Sad Khers Jhulemar Post F-84 Tehsil Bangarmanu, Unnao, original Succession Certificate Ord. dt. 19.11.2019 Issued from Civil Judge (S.D.) case no. 91/2016 in favour of Om Prakash V/s Bhagwande Am. Rs. 524243.98 of share 1/4 Certificate No. 27/2021 was lost. I have not misuse the said Succession Certificate FIR/LAR No. 20240000690498 Dt. 27.08.2024

NOTICE

It is informed to general public that in my Secondary School examination (Roll No. 5200079, Year 2004) Marksheet cum Certificate, father's name Nareesh Bajpai has been mistakenly recorded incompletely whereas my father's full name is Nareesh Chandra Bajpai. In future I should be known as Abhinav Bajpai S/o Nareesh Chandra Bajpai. Abhinav Bajpai S/o Nareesh Chandra Bajpai, 12B/360, Y-Block, Kidwai Nagar, Kanpur.

Man killed in road accident

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A man was killed in a road mishap when a speeding ACar hit him in Aliganj. The deceased was identified as Shah Nawaj of Sitapur. His brother-in-law Kamruddin of Faizullaganj, Madiaon filed a complaint in this connection. He said Shah Nawaj had come to the city for some work and he was hit by a car when he was returning home.

ATTACKED

Angry over filing a police complaint against their aide, a youth along with his three aides attacked the complainant and threatened to kill him in Sadatganj on Wednesday night.

The victim, Sayed Iftikar Husain aka Meesam of Rustam Nagar along with his employee Shazeb was going to his shop. He alleged that after parking his car as he headed for the shop around 11 pm, Sayed Shah Nawaj aka Shanu Langda along with his three aides attacked him for filing a complaint against Naushad which led to his arrest.

ARRESTED

A realtor was arrested on Thursday by a police team of Vibhuti Khand police station area for sexually exploiting a woman after promising to marry her. The accused was identified as Ajmat Ullah of Vijayant Khand. He hails from Amethi district. On 26.7.2024, the victim lodged a report against Ajmat Ullah, accusing him of molesting and assaulting her at the Vibhuti Khand police station.

Sale of 'sub-standard' namkeens: HC seeks govt's response

Prayagraj (PTI): The Allahabad High Court has directed the principal secretary, food and civil supplies department of Uttar Pradesh, to file an affidavit on the steps taken to check the sale of "sub-standard" 'namkeens' (savoury snacks) for the consumption of human beings.

The high court also directed its registry to implead the central government as respondent in the case, saying it is not just a problem of a district but of the entire country. A two-judge bench comprising Justice VK Birla and Justice Arun Kumar Singh was hearing a suo moto plea on the issue.

The bench in its order dated September 5 observed that rejected 'namkeens', auctioned in the name of cattle feed, "are being purchased and after repacking the same, are being sold by mixing with some other namkeens in the open market for human consumption, which has serious consequences for the health of common citizen." "As the issue has wider implication concerning the serious health issue, this court is expanding the scope of the present PIL not only for any particular district but to the entire country, as the complaints and public health both existing beyond the boundaries of any particular place are involved," the court said.

"Therefore, it would be appropriate that the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India be impleaded as a party," it added. The high court directed to implead the Union of India through the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution as respondent in the petition, and fixed September 20, 2024 as the next date of hearing in the case. During the course of hearing, the UP government's counsel filed the compliance affidavits of food safety officer, Kanpur, food safety officer, Bareilly, and commissioner, food safety and drug administration, UP.

Thyroid cancer cases increasing in city

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Thyroid cancer cases increasing in Lucknow. Giving this information Dr Chanchal Rana, additional professor at the pathology Department of King George's Medical University, said thyroid cancer was emerging as a significant health concern in India, ranking fourth in incidence globally, but alarmingly, it held the second spot in terms of mortality rates. Thyroid cancer cases are also rising in Lucknow, she added.

"This troubling statistic points to a growing need for awareness, early detection, and effective treatment strategies. Thyroid cancer is more prevalent among females, who account for a larger proportion of the cases. The high incidence of thyroid cancer could be attributed to the widespread prevalence of goitre in many parts of the country," Dr Rana said.

Goitre, an enlargement of the thyroid gland, often results from iodine deficiency. In some cases, this condition may progress to thyroid cancer, particularly in regions where goitre is endemic.

This correlation suggests that inadequate iodine intake and thyroid dysfunction could be contributing factors to the rising number of thyroid cancer cases. Many a time people neglect it thinking it to be a simple goitre and start taking medicines of Ayurveda and it keeps on increasing and thus the cancer is missed. This is something which can only be treated through surgery, she added.

Dr Rana said that because of fine radiological techniques available more cases were being detected which also accounted for the increase in the number of cases. Notably, she said that a significant proportion of Indian patients had advanced-stage disease or aggressive forms of thyroid cancer, such as anaplastic thyroid carcinoma. "This is in stark contrast to the western world, where early detection and intervention have improved outcomes. The higher stage at diagnosis and prevalence of poor prognosis types of thyroid cancer in India may be linked to limited access to healthcare facilities, lack of awareness, and delayed diagnosis. Whenever a person has

swelling in the neck they should approach a pathologist to know whether the swelling is cancerous or non-cancerous," she added.

Dr Rana said that she was currently conducting a study on the role of molecular mutations and the immune landscape in thyroid cancer. "Our research has identified several common mutations associated with thyroid cancer in India, including BRAF, TERT, P53, and RAS. These mutations play a crucial role in the development and progression of the disease," she said.

Interestingly, thyroid cancers harbouring more than one of these mutations tend to have a poorer prognosis and outcome. She said that with the advent of immunotherapy, there was new hope for patients with advanced thyroid cancer. "Immunotherapy, which harnesses the body's immune system to fight cancer cells, has shown promising results in other cancers and is now being explored as a potential treatment for thyroid cancer," she said. Dr Rana said that she and her research team were actively

analysing various immune markers that could help surgeons and oncologists tailor treatment plans to individual patients.

"Our goal is to identify markers that can predict a patient's response to immunotherapy, which will allow for more personalised and effective treatment strategies," Dr. Rana explained. "By understanding the molecular and immune landscape of thyroid cancer in Indian patients, we hope to improve prognosis and survival rates." Dr Rana is currently a part of the Asian thyroid working group and is actively involved in international collaboration with many renowned researchers across the world," she added.

The ongoing research in India is crucial for developing targeted therapies that address the specific genetic and molecular profiles of thyroid cancer patients in the country. With increased awareness, better diagnostic tools, and advancements in treatment options, there is hope for improved outcomes for those affected by this challenging disease.

Four booked for bid to extort ₹1 cr from coaching centre

Prayagraj (PTI): Four people have been booked for allegedly attempting to extort Rs 1 crore from a coaching centre here, police said on Thursday.

According to a complaint filed by the owner of the coaching centre in the Tagore Town area, Vivek Kumar, the incident occurred on September 4. A group of people entered the centre and began harassing the staff. The accused initially demanded Rs 50 lakh, police said.

On Tuesday, the accused returned and threatened to set the coaching centre on fire. They further increased the amount to Rs 1 crore, police said. The police have lodged an FIR against four of the identified accused, Rahul Singh Parihar, Badal Singh, Praveen Shukla, and Saurav Tiwari under relevant sections of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

Assistant Commissioner of Police Rajiv Kumar said that an investigation into the matter is underway. They are working to identify and apprehend the accused.

Rare surgery performed at Lohia Institute

Lucknow (PNS): The doctors of the Surgery Department of Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences performed an unprecedented surgery.

A 36-year-old woman, Kiran Yadav, a resident of Hardoi, was suffering from pain in the left side of her abdomen for a long time and despite seeking treatment at many places she did not get any relief.

"She ultimately consulted Professor Vikas Singh in the Surgery Department of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences. After examining the patient it was found that the patient had her gall bladder on the left side of the stomach in which stones were formed. Normally, the gallbladder is located below the liver on the right side of the stomach. In the patient, all organs normally found on the left were found on the right side and all the organs found on the right were found on the left side. This was confirmed by getting a CT scan done. This condition, known as 'Situs Inversus Totalis', occurs in one out of 10,000 people globally. "This changed position of

organs complicates the traditional established surgical methods," said a senior doctor. Considering the age of the patient, Dr Vikas Singh performed the surgery through the navel using traditional telescope instruments. "It was decided to operate through only one incision, as a result of which no scars remain on the patient's stomach," said the doctor. Professor Singh displayed special skills in operating through a single hole using traditional telescope instruments. After the operation, which lasted about an hour, the patient was completely healthy.

"Till now in the world of medical science, only 3-4 cases of gall bladder operations have been done through a single incision by telescope method in situs inversus totalis condition which have been reported. This in itself gives a special place to this surgery," said the senior doctor. This operation was done by Dr Henderson Pankaj, Dr Samaya Bajpai, Dr Priyanshi Swaroop and Dr Payal Chaudhary under the leadership of Dr Vikas Singh.

Heritage corridor work under Smart City to be finished by December

Lucknow (PNS): The development of Heritage corridor, under Smart City projects, which extends from the Kaiserbagh rotary to Chotta Imbarba will be completed by December this year.

A senior official said the project aimed to develop the route in one pattern and design so that it could be highlighted as a heritage part of the state capital.

The Rs 25-crore project is being implemented by the Lucknow Development Authority.

He said that the corridor will extend from Kaiserbagh rotary to Amir-ud-daula Library, Raja Rampal Park, Bhatkhande University, Parivartan Chowk, Globe Park, Tikona Park, Bada Imbarba and Chhota Imbarba. "The corridor has several components under which work is being carried out and approximately 70-80 per cent of the work has been completed," he added.

The Globe Park, which forms a part of the corridor, will be redesigned and lighting and fountains will be restored with a walkway through the park. Similarly, facade lighting will highlight Bada Imbarba and restoration work of Naubat Khana, that lies opposite to the Bada Imbarba, will also be carried out. He added that a 'tonga gali' has been created in which tongas from the old city area can be parked.

PTI

IN THE COURT OF MS. VIJETA SINGH RAWAT LD DJ-01, NEW DELHI DISTRICT, PATIALA HOUSE COURTS, NEW DELHI PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT
(Order 5, Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908)
CS-1117/2017 NDOH-22/10/2024
STATE BANK OF INDIA ...Plaintiff
versus
CANARA BANK & Ors ...Defendant
To Sh. Abhinash Kumar, S/o Sh. Girja Shankar Singh, R/o H.No. 122, Chhibila, Thana Nagar Kotwali Tehsil Sadar, Distt. Pratap Garh, 230403 (UP)
Whereas plaintiff has filed the above noted suit for recovery against you. You are hereby notified to appear in this court in person or by a pleader on the 22nd day of October, 2024 at 10.00 AM, to answer the same, failing which the suit will be disposed of ex-parte.
Given under my hand and the seal of the court, this 14 day of August, 2024.
Distri Judge-01
New Delhi

IN THE COURT OF MS. VIJETA SINGH RAWAT LD DJ-01, NEW DELHI DISTRICT, PATIALA HOUSE COURTS, NEW DELHI PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT
(Order 5, Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908)
CS-1117/2017 NDOH-22/10/2024
STATE BANK OF INDIA ...Plaintiff
versus
CANARA BANK & Ors ...Defendant
To Sh. Rajesh Kumar, S/o Sh. Jai Prakash Singh, R/o H.No. 116, Bhupiyamau A, Tehsil-Sadar, Distt, Pratap Garh, 230131 (UP)
Whereas plaintiff has filed the above noted suit for recovery against you. You are hereby notified to appear in this court in person or by a pleader on the 22nd day of October, 2024 at 10.00 AM, to answer the same, failing which the suit will be disposed of ex-parte.
Given under my hand and the seal of the court, this 14 day of August, 2024.
Distri Judge-01
New Delhi

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY
PARADIP-754142, ODISHA (INDIA)
(An autonomous body under Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, Govt. of India)
No. AD/RSC-23-10-2024/1930 Dated, the 10th Sept, 2024
Advertisement
Applications are invited from Indian Nationals for engagement 01 no. of Asst. Teacher Cum NCC Officer on contractual basis in Paradip Port Authority.
For further details visit our website: -https://paradipport.gov.in/Carrer.aspx.
Sd/-
Sr. Assistant Secretary,
Paradip Port Authority
PPA/PR/36/2024-25 Dt. 12/09/2024

HDFC BANK
We understand your world
HDFC Bank Ltd, 2nd Floor, Experio Building, Vibhuti Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh-226010.
POSSESSION NOTICE APPENDIX IV [RULE 8(1)]
Whereas, the undersigned being the authorized officer of the HDFC Bank Ltd. under the Secularization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued demand notice dated 05.06.2024 calling upon the borrower(s) 1. Ms Royal Touch Through Its Proprietor Mr. Aman Pal (Borrower) 2. Mr. Aman Pal S/o Ramanand Pal (Co-Borrower) 3. Mr. Ramanand Pal S/o Mehi Pal (Co-Borrower & Mortgagee) 4. Mr. Manoj Pal S/o Ramanand Pal (Co-Borrower) to pay the amount mentioned in the notice Rs. 13,89,209.00/- (Rupees Thirteen Lakhs Eighty Nine Thousand Two Hundred and Nine Only/-) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
The borrower(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13 (4) of the said Act on the read with rule 8 & 9 of the said Rules, on this 09. SEP. 2024
The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.
The borrower is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to charge of HDFC Bank Ltd. for an amount of notice Rs. 13,89,209.00/- (Rupees Thirteen Lakhs Eighty Nine Thousand Two Hundred and Nine Only/-) and interest thereon together with expenses and charges etc. less amount paid, if any.
DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY
Residential- Part Of House No. 251 Situated At House No.659/2/51 At Present House No. 659A/2/51, Mauza-allapur, Pargana & Tehsil Sadar, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, Area 106 Sq. Mtrs. (property Owned By Mr. Ramanand Pal) Bounded As Under- East : Matiyara Road, West : House Of Baba Ji, North : House Of Seetaram, South : Part Of House.
Date :- 09.09.2024, Place :- PRAYAGRAJ
Authorized Officer,
HDFC Bank Ltd.

CM announces phase-wise expansion of Atal schools



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurating the second academic session of Atal Residential Schools at Mohanlalganj in Lucknow on Thursday

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Thursday, inaugurated the 2024-25 academic session of all 18 Atal Residential Schools in the state at a ceremony held at the Atal Residential School in Mohanlalganj. During the event, Chief Minister Yogi announced a phase-wise plan to expand the schools, aiming to increase their number to 2,000. According to him, in the second phase, 57 similar schools will be established as composite schools across various districts, while the third phase will extend this initiative to all 350 tehsils of Uttar Pradesh. In the fourth phase, such schools will be set up in 825 development blocks, and by the fifth phase, they will reach the nyaya panchayat level. Ultimately, 2,000 such schools will be run across the state, providing quality education to children. In addition, Chief Minister Yogi announced that the 57 new schools would cater to students from classes 1 to 12 and include Bal Vatikas. During the ceremony, Chief Minister Yogi distributed school bags and textbooks to students entering classes 6 and 9. He also awarded prizes and certificates to the top three students from class 6 in the 2023-24 academic session. The chief minister also gave awards to Vigyan Ratna and students leading in sports and other activities. The students impressed Chief Minister Yogi with their welcome performances, including dance routines. In his address, Chief Minister Yogi stated: "Respected Atalji often said that no force in the world could prevent a society that successfully combats illiteracy and deprivation from becoming secure and prosperous. He considered illiteracy and scarcity to be society's greatest enemies." Yogi added: "Scarcity arises from poverty, idleness, anarchy, corruption and division. Where there is corruption and anarchy, there will also be disorder, lawlessness, an unsafe environment

and a lack of respect for anyone. Moreover, when society lacks proper leadership, illiteracy spreads rapidly and a significant portion of the population falls victim to it. This leads to widespread poverty, hunger and deprivation. With his vast life experience, revered Atalji expressed these insights through his words and poetry. When he had the opportunity to lead the government, he implemented a comprehensive action plan to tackle these deep-rooted issues at their core." Chief Minister Yogi emphasised that a civilised and capable society or nation can only be envisioned by educating its people. He said, "Atal Residential Schools should set a benchmark for quality education. Every child, irrespective of caste, appearance, region, or language, should have equal access to the country's resources without discrimination. To ensure this right, Atal Residential Schools have been established as a model for inclusive education." Chief Minister Yogi shared his experience while interacting with students in a classroom, reiterating that talent is not bound by caste, opinion or religion, it can emerge from anywhere. He added that the government's responsibility is to provide the right opportunities and platforms for talent to flourish. Criticising those who engage in divisive politics, Chief Minister Yogi questioned, "How could individuals who incite caste-based conflicts and fuel social discord in the name of social justice understand the sting of poverty?" He asked whether those who have never experienced poverty and who have long exploited others and spread anarchy can truly grasp the struggles of registered workers affiliated with the BOC Board or the plight of children who lost their parents or guardians during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to him, these individuals neither have the time nor the inclination to understand such suffering, as they are solely focused on their political agendas. Their only goal, he stated, is to divide people for political

gain. They do not want the underprivileged to escape poverty, deprivation, or illiteracy because if this were to happen, their divisive politics would collapse. They intend to push society toward division by any means necessary. Chief Minister Yogi noted that previous governments had resources but failed to provide education for the underprivileged. He emphasised that the establishment of Atal Residential Schools aims to challenge the very foundations of those who seek to create chaos, anarchy and mafia influence in the realm of education. Outlining the upcoming action plan, Chief Minister Yogi said, "Funds have been allocated to the Basic Education Council for establishing schools in 57 districts in the next session. These schools aim to provide education without discrimination to every underprivileged child in the state. The schools will be known as CM Composite Schools, and in the third phase, the initiative will be expanded to all tehsils. With 350 tehsils in the state, one school will be built in each. In the fourth phase, similar schools will be established in 825 development blocks, ensuring no poor child is deprived of quality education." He added, "In the fifth phase, the plan will extend to the nyaya panchayat level, resulting in 2,000 schools across the state dedicated to delivering excellent education. The 57 new schools will cater to students from classes 1 to 12, with Bal Vatika built. Giving admission to children from pre-primary to 3 to 5 years early education is a hopeful and optimistic step towards preparing the new generation for future schooling." These schools will also offer sports facilities and regular health check-ups, as Chief Minister Yogi emphasised that only healthy children can contribute to building a healthy society. Chief Minister Yogi urged teachers to focus on students' holistic development, emphasising the need for their physical, mental and intellectual growth. He stressed that each child's talent should be nurtured and show-

cased to society without discrimination. He highlighted that no child should face bias and that students should be instilled with the understanding that their primary goal is prioritising their country above all else. "A sense of complete dedication to the nation should be fostered within them. If they work with this mindset, it will contribute to the success of these institutions and inspire others to join in this effort," he asserted. Chief Minister Yogi expressed his happiness in sharing that after witnessing the model of Atal Residential Schools, many have offered support to help build these schools. In his address, Chief Minister Yogi directed the management of Atal Residential Schools to conduct the written exams for students in classes 6 and 9 by June 15 next year, ensuring admissions are completed by July 15, with the academic session beginning on August 1. He also instructed that meetings with parents should be held twice yearly to keep them informed and engaged. He emphasised that parents should be involved in their children's future and promote their success within the community so others can benefit as well. Chief Minister Yogi stressed that admissions should be based on merit, not recommendations, as this will yield positive outcomes. Additionally, he called for the organisation of sports and cultural competitions at least once a year in the Atal Residential Schools, with students excelling at both the school and state levels being recognised and honoured during the annual festival. On this occasion, Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak, Labour and Employment Minister Anil Rajbhar, Minister of State Manohar Lal (Mannu Kori), Lucknow Mayor Sushma Kharkwal, MLC Ramchandra Pradhan, Engineer Avnish Kumar Singh, Lal Ji Prasad Nirmal, MLA Jaya Devi, Amresh Kumar, OP Srivastava, Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh, Principal Secretary (Labour and Employment) Anil Kumar were present.

Yogi shares success mantra with students, answers questions

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath visited the Atal Residential School in Sithauli Kala, Mohanlalganj, Lucknow, to inaugurate the second academic session. During his visit, he spent time with the students, admiring their innovative models and engaging with them in the classroom. Taking on the role of a teacher, Chief Minister Yogi shared success mantras with students and answered their questions. He also took part in a group photoshoot with the students and took a selfie with them, making the occasion even more memorable for the children. Yogi Adityanath began his visit by viewing an exhibition of innovative models created by the students. The exhibition showcased devices such as a smart dustbin, a smart blind stick, an automatic street light, an obstacle-avoiding robot, and various art and craft pieces. Chief Minister Yogi praised and encouraged the students, who explained the features of their models to him. A girl even drew a picture of Chief Minister Yogi, which he signed. Following the exhibition, the chief minister participated in a group photoshoot with the students. He then proceeded to the classroom, where he engaged with the children about their school experience and studies, distributing chocolates to them. He enquired about the quality of education the children received before and how it has improved since their enrollment in the Atal Residential School. The students shared that they now benefit from learning in a smart classroom. Chief Minister Yogi also interacted with the students and answered their queries. When one student asked, "We recent-



ly participated in the Independence Day parade in Lucknow and received an award. Can we also be part of the parade in Delhi?" Chief Minister Yogi responded with a smile, "Yes, you will definitely be sent." In another exchange, a student asked, "When you were in school, did you also get scolded for making mistakes?" Chief Minister Yogi, adopting the role of a teacher, offered advice: "If a mistake is made unintentionally, it is not a fault but an opportunity for improvement. However, repeating the same mistake continuously indicates a habit. Mistakes are natural when you are working, but persistent errors are not acceptable. Work hard and stay focused, and you will see positive results." After the question and answer session, Chief Minister Yogi took a group selfie with all the students. During his visit, a girl expressed gratitude to Chief Minister Yogi for the excellent arrangements at Atal Residential Schools and asked if he had similar educational opportunities as a child.

Chief Minister Yogi responded, "This initiative is the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and it has been created for your benefit. It is public money, and when used correctly, it results in valuable resources like this school. If it misused, it would not serve its purpose." He added that 16 Atal Residential Schools have already been established, with two more in progress, and that plans are underway to build additional schools in 57 other districts. "This will benefit thousands of children. Remember, following the right path leads to success, while the wrong path leads to confusion," he said. Chief Minister Yogi also mentioned that aside from providing infrastructure, the Uttar Pradesh government has set up a corpus fund for the daily operations of these schools, financed by the cess money collected from registered workers. "You should consider writing a letter to Prime Minister Modi to express your thanks," he suggested. Class 6 student Chhavi Gautam asked Chief Minister Yogi when and how he thought

of establishing Atal Residential Schools. Yogi explained, "Prime Minister Modi had pointed out that the cess collected by your benefit. It is public money, and when used correctly, it results in valuable resources like this school. If it misused, it would not serve its purpose." He added that 16 Atal Residential Schools have already been established, with two more in progress, and that plans are underway to build additional schools in 57 other districts. "This will benefit thousands of children. Remember, following the right path leads to success, while the wrong path leads to confusion," he said. Chief Minister Yogi also mentioned that aside from providing infrastructure, the Uttar Pradesh government has set up a corpus fund for the daily operations of these schools, financed by the cess money collected from registered workers. "You should consider writing a letter to Prime Minister Modi to express your thanks," he suggested. Class 6 student Chhavi Gautam asked Chief Minister Yogi when and how he thought

Akhilesh alleges land scam in Ayodhya by BJP, govt officials

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav, on Thursday, accused the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party of being involved in a land scam worth billions of rupees in Ayodhya. Yadav claimed that the BJP and government officials were involved in the scam and demanded an immediate and thorough investigation into it. Addressing a press conference here, Akhilesh Yadav alleged that the ongoing land-related theft in the holy city was part of a broader pattern of corruption, facilitated by those in power. In July, Akhilesh Yadav had accused the state government of selling land to outsiders in



Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav during a press conference at party headquarters in Lucknow on Thursday. PTI

are engaged in loot and where there is theft, there will be no development. I thank our party leaders for exposing the dark reality of the loot in Ayodhya," the SP chief said. "If they can commit such theft in a sacred place like Ayodhya, imagine how much more is happening in other districts of Uttar Pradesh," he added. Akhilesh Yadav said the farmers in Ayodhya who wanted to donate the land for a good cause were denied compensation when the circle rate was raised. He also alleged the involvement of BJP and government officials in illegal activities. "When poor and naive individuals had their land taken and handed over to others, the circle rate in

Ayodhya was raised. Is this not a loss of revenue?" he asked. "I am pleased that we have received copies of the land registry involving the BJP officials. The defence land, which was meant for artillery practice, was also sold off by the BJP members. They even changed the railway alignment, which previously did not affect the land of the poor or their businesses," Akhilesh Yadav alleged. Hitting out at the BJP, Akhilesh Yadav said, "Is this their definition of zero tolerance for corruption? The slogan they promoted seems to mean enriching their own people. While the common people were unaware of the future value of their land, officials and BJP members knew all along."

DGP asserts impartiality in Sultanpur jewellery shop loot probe, claims evidence-based action

Lucknow (PNS): The UP Director General of Police, Prashant Kumar, on Thursday, said that police action in the Sultanpur jewellery shop robbery case has been completely impartial, based on evidence, dispelling rumours surrounding the case. Addressing a press conference, the DGP said: "The police acted only after comprehensively examining evidences in the case, ensuring that all actions were conducted in a fair and transparent manner. The UP Police is making diligent efforts to enforce CM Yogi Adityanath's zero-tolerance policy towards crime." ADG Law and Order Amitabh Yash and ADG Zone Lucknow SB Shirodkar also attended the press conference. The DGP remarked, "The UP Police is unwavering in its commitment to ensure public safety and creating a secure environment for industrial groups. This commitment should make the public and stakeholders feel secure and protected. During this operation, the force mourned the loss of brave officers, and many sustained injuries. The police have also released CCTV footage, photos, and statements from Mangesh Yadav's mother and sister." DGP Prashant Kumar said that on August 28 at 12:45 PM, Bharat Jewelers in the Kotwali Nagar area of Sultanpur was robbed in broad daylight. He added that the prompt police action in response to the robbery was entirely just. The police team has gathered to present the

Bullion traders celebrate police action

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

As Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath reaffirms his unwavering commitment to zero tolerance towards crime incident after incident, bullion traders have expressed satisfaction with the police action in Sultanpur robbery case. They have unanimously praised the elevated stature of police officers in UP under CM Yogi's leadership. Commenting on the encounter with the criminal, the traders asserted that dacoits only respond to fear, adding that such incidents will persist without it. The police effectively resolved the significant robbery in Sultanpur under CM Yogi Adityanath's leadership. The full recovery of the stolen items is a great source of relief and satisfaction for the traders. Ratnesh Kumar Agarwal, president of Uttar Pradesh Retail Sarafa Association, said that CM Yogi Adityanath's zero tolerance pol-

icy ensured that law and order was maintained across the state. "Jewellers appreciate the chief minister's dedication and express gratitude for his continued support. The recent successful resolution of a robbery, including the capture of the five criminals and the full recovery of the stolen items, is a clear demonstration of the effectiveness of this policy. Importantly, this was achieved without any consideration of caste or religion, instilling optimism that this approach will extend to resolving long-pending cases. Our team extends its respect to Chief Minister Yogi, the DGP, and all other officials involved," he remarked. Anurag Rastogi, North India head of India Bullion and Jewelers Association stated: "The police have done an outstanding job in resolving the Sultanpur robbery case, successfully apprehending all the culprits. This marks the first instance where both the administration and the police have managed to

recover the entire haul of stolen goods. On behalf of bullion traders across the state, I extend my gratitude to the Sultanpur police team and commend their proactive efforts under CM Yogi's leadership." He added: "Traders are particularly pleased with the criminal's encounter, as dacoits respond only to the language of fear; without it, such incidents are unlikely to cease." Manish Kumar Verma, president of Lucknow Mahanagar Sarafa Association, pointed out: "I recall that Vipin Singh committed a robbery in Chowk at night, and the stolen goods were partially recovered. Had the full recovery been made or the criminal received stringent punishment, he might have been deterred from such criminal acts. The swift recovery of the goods, in this case, underlines the effectiveness of the police force and reinforces traders' confidence in the rule of law in Uttar Pradesh."

Maya tries to regain lost ground through 'booklet' Blames Akhilesh for failure of SP-BSP alliance

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati alleged that the 2019 alliance with the Samajwadi Party failed because Akhilesh Yadav stopped receiving her phone calls following the alliance's dismal result in the general elections. She made this remark in a booklet of the party that was distributed amongst the cadre. Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav hit back on Thursday, saying no one had any clue that the alliance was coming apart and that he had dialed the BSP chief to know why the tie-up ended. In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the Bharatiya Janata Party and its allies won 64 out of 80 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh while the BSP-SP combine could manage just 15 seats. The Congress won only one seat. However, in 2024, the SP joined hands with the Congress and the combine won 43 Lok Sabha seats in UP. The BJP won 33 seats while the BSP drew a blank. The BSP's initiative to connect with the party cadre by distributing the 59-page booklet is seen as an effort to regain its lost political ground in UP after a series of electoral setbacks. In the booklet, Mayawati says, "The SP-BSP pact in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls was aimed at checking the BJP from coming to power at the Centre." "However, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav was so dejected with the results of the elections in which



BSP won 10 seats and the SP five that he stopped taking calls from BSP chief and other senior leaders. Thus a decision was made to sever ties with the SP without compromising one's self-respect," the booklet states. The claim, however, was met with an instant rebuttal from Yadav. At a press conference in Lucknow on Thursday, the Samajwadi Party chief said, "When the alliance was called off, I was addressing a rally in Azamgarh and both SP and BSP cadres were present there. None had a clue that the alliance was coming apart." "I had myself dialed (BSP chief) to ask why the alliance was coming unstuck. I needed a response to prepare myself for media queries after the rally," he said. Akhilesh Yadav added that at times some things are said to divert people's attention. The booklet was initially distributed among the BSP cadre at the party's national executive meet-

ing in Lucknow on August 27 in which Mayawati was unanimously re-elected party chief for the sixth consecutive term. In the booklet, Mayawati also referred to the infamous 'guest house' incident of June 2, 1995, when she escaped an assault on her life and blamed the then SP leadership for the attack and vandalism. In 1995 Akhilesh Yadav's father Mulayam Singh Yadav was Samajwadi Party's top leader. "After surviving the murder attempt, the BSP went on to form its first government with the help of anti-Samajwadi Parties. The BSP continued to maintain distance from the SP after that. But when Akhilesh Yadav approached with an alliance offer, the two parties entered into a pre-poll pact," Mayawati said in the booklet. BSP's state chief Vishwanath Pal said the idea behind distributing the booklet among the cadre was to make them and the supporters understand the party's line and policy. In the 59-page booklet, Mayawati has also targeted Rahul Gandhi by calling his stay at a shoe repair shop as politics. She told her Dalit community about this entire incident and why should only people of a particular caste do the work of shoe making and repairing on the basis of their birth. She has also said big things for Brahmins in this booklet and tried to connect them through her social engineering. Through this booklet, Mayawati has said

that there is no uplift of Brahmins in any way in SP, Congress and BJP. BSP has once again taken the help of the booklet to bet strongly on Brahmins as per its political strategy. Through this booklet, Mayawati has also polished her strict image very well. People have also been made to realise through the booklet that Mayawati will uplift the society by following the path shown by Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar. Mayawati has been addressed as 'Iron Lady' in this booklet. And there is mention of the uplift of bahujan samaj from getting the master key of power under the leadership of the 'Iron Lady'. Apart from this, she has also mentioned Emperor Ashoka in her booklet. Describing Emperor Ashoka as a leader for 'Bahujan Hitay Bahujan Sukhay', she has said that the welfare era of that era of India will be created once again. In fact, BSP supremo Mayawati is in the fray in the main elections of Maharashtra, Jammu and Kashmir as well as Haryana and by-elections in Uttar Pradesh. Mayawati is considering these elections as a big opportunity to regain her lost support base. This is the reason why Mayawati has planned to take forward the schemes of her government through the 'Plan Booklet'. Former BSP national coordinator Ramsarshi Chaudhary says that through this booklet, his party has started the process of knocking at every door with strength.

MLC asks teachers to give information about culture of Banaras to children

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated the academic session 2024-2025 of class VI and class IX of Atal Residential Schools of Uttar Pradesh on Thursday.



Zila Panchayat chairperson Poonam Maurya giving kit to a student at Atal Residential School in Varanasi on Thursday.

The programme was started at the local level jointly by the AYUSH minister, Zila Panchayat chief and DM by lighting a lamp and offering flowers on the photo of Goddess Saraswati.

While addressing the programme, MLC Dharmendra Singh said all great men who lived in India were from ordinary families and whatever family or area one has come from to study here, study honestly and move forward.

pride for the school and the district", he said, asking the teachers of the school to give information to the children about the culture of Banaras. He also recited the verses of Ramcharitmanas. He said that 35 per cent of the population of the country is youth and they are the future.

school, education is being imparted to the poor, exploited, deprived and destitute children. By studying in this school, a child may be qualified to important posts including IAS and PCS officers, doctor and engineers as world class facilities are being provided here.

Rain paralyses life in Varanasi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Rain paralysed normal life for several hours on Thursday afternoon leaving many areas waterlogged in the city areas. Besides, rain in many other regions and states also caused a rising trend in the Ganga river for the sixth time during this rainy season.



Water level of Ganga rising again in Varanasi on Thursday

Shivpurva and many other areas. Power supply in some parts of the city was also disrupted badly. Meanwhile, as per the report of Middle Ganga

Division-III of Central Water Commission (CWC), the water level of Ganga started rising after several days of receding trend. Though the Ganga is still

flowing at a high level, it continued to pose flood threat in several low-lying areas increasing the worries of the residents of several localities on both sides of Varuna river and some newly-developed colonies near Samne Ghat in the southern part of the city.

JCI Knp Industrial signs MoU with KNN

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

JCI Kanpur Industrial signed MoU with the Kanpur Nagar Nigam (KNN) for the construction of community building 'baratshala' under the name of 'Mangal Bhavan' here at a function organised on Wednesday night.



Special guest Municipal Commissioner Sudhir Kumar said participation of people was necessary to implement some better and big work in the city. Mayor Pramila Pandey

unveiled the 3D model of the Mangal Bhavan to be set up on 2,500 square metre area adjacent to BNSD Shiksha Niketan in Ward 15, Benajhabar. The construction work will start from January next year and be over by November.

development carried out in Kanpur north city, talks ARE on with the municipal commissioner to plan for the development of south city area also. She praised the efforts of JCI's pre-elected president for 2025 Pranita Agarwal for the con-

Bonebridge implantation done successfully in IMS-BHU

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

An active bonebridge implantation was done successfully on a deaf patient at the ENT department in Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (IMS-BHU). The patient hails from Chandauli district and was suffering from bilateral congenital microtia and canal atresia and could not hear sound.

Emphasis on raising awareness about environmental issues

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Sir Padampat Singhania Education Centre (SPSEC), one of Kanpur's premier educational institutions, is committed to nurturing future leaders with a strong sense of social and environmental responsibility.



The SPSEC launched a campaign aimed at fostering environmental responsibility within the Kanpur community.

creative street plays, we aim to inspire not only our students but the entire community of Kanpur to take conscious steps toward environmental preservation.

Table with multiple columns containing property details, including Name of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s), Demand Notice with NPA date, and Property address. The table lists numerous entries for various borrowers and their respective properties.

As part of these initiatives, the students of SPSEC are staging 'nukkad natak' (street plays) at key locations across the city to raise awareness about pressing environmental issues, including saving electricity, conserving water, preserving natural resources and advocating for a plastic-free lifestyle.

Plantation drive conducted

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

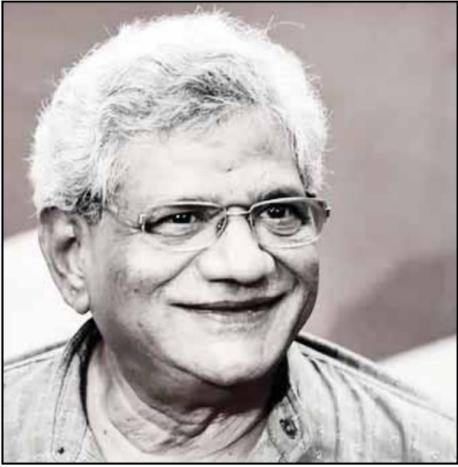
The Department of Anthropology, University of Allahabad (AU), under the aegis of IQAC, UoA observed the National Forest Martyrs Day on Wednesday by conducting mass plantation drive at Narayanpur gram sabha of Sorao tehsil here.

Professor, Department of Biological Sciences of SHUATS. This MoU will benefit faculty and students alike for promoting research and development in sustainable, regenerative agriculture, environmental preservation through interdisciplinary research and collaboration at SHUATS and benefit farmers and other stakeholders in entire agricultural value chain in Uttar Pradesh.



MoU SIGNED: The Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences (SHUATS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Ibdah Lab, Newe YaaR Research Center under Agricultural Research organization, Israel located in Ramat Yishai. It was signed between Dr Mwafiq Ibdah, P I at Newe's YaaR Research Centre, Israel and Prof SD Mecarty, Director Research, and Dr KP Rao, Assistant

President Murmu, PM Modi condole Sitaram Yechury's demise



treatment and care extended to Comrade Yechury. Details of public viewing and homage will be informed," the CPI(M) said. In a statement, the CPI(M) said Yechury's body will be kept at the party headquarters here between 11 am and 3 pm on Saturday for public viewing and paying homage. Subsequently, the body will be taken to AIIMS, where it will be donated for medical research, according to his wishes.

Yechury was admitted to AIIMS on August 19 for treatment of a pneumonia-like chest infection. He was critical and on oxygen support. Doctors said he had a fungal infection in his lungs. Yechury is survived by his wife Seema Chishty, an editor with news portal The Wire. He has three children -- two sons and a daughter. One of his sons Ashish Yechury passed away due to Covid-19 in 2021. His daughter Akhila Yechury teaches at the University of Edinburgh and University of St Andrews.

Son Danish working in UK. Yechury was earlier married to Indrani Mazumdar. The leader, who started from the student's union of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) as a member of the Students' Federation of India (SFI) and went on to become a member of the Central Committee of the CPI(M) in 1984, got elected to the Politburo in 1992. He served as a Rajya Sabha MP for 12 years, from 2005 to 2017. He became the fifth General Secretary of the CPI(M) at the 21st party congress in Visakhapatnam on April 19, 2015, and took over from Prakash Karat. He also played a significant role in the joint opposition's INDIA bloc.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday expressed condolence on the demise of CPI(M) General Secretary Sitaram Yechury. The President said Yechury, a committed ideologue, won friends cutting across the party lines. "Saddened to learn about the demise of CPI(M) General Secretary Shri Sitaram Yechury. First as a student leader and then in national politics and as a parliamentarian, he had a distinct and influential voice. Though a committed ideologue, he won friends cutting across the party lines. My heartfelt condolences to his family and colleagues," said Murmu. Modi said Yechury was a leading light of the Left known for his ability to connect across the

political spectrum. "Saddened by the passing away of Shri Sitaram Yechury ji. He was a leading light of the Left and was known for his ability to connect across the political spectrum," Modi said in a post on X. "He also made a mark as an effective parliamentarian. My thoughts are with his family and admirers in this sad hour. Om Shanti," the Prime Minister said.

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi said that Yechury was a protector of the idea of India with a deep understanding of the country. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge condoleed Yechury's demise and said he was an excellent parliamentarian and an outstanding intellectual who served the people of India with pragmatism blended with idealism. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said that

Yechury death is a loss to national politics. "Sad to know that Sitaram Yechury has passed away. I knew the veteran parliamentarian that he was and his demise will be a loss for national politics. I express my condolences to his family, friends and colleagues," she posted on X.

Yechury's family has donated his body to AIIMS for teaching and research purposes, the hospital said in a statement. "It is with profound grief that we announce the passing away of CPI(M) General Secretary, our beloved Comrade Sitaram Yechury, at 3.03 pm today, 12th September, at the AIIMS, New Delhi. He was suffering from a respiratory tract infection which developed complications," CPI(M) said in a post on X.

"We thank the doctors, nursing staff and the Director of the Institute for the excellent

VP Dhankhar condemns Rahul Gandhi's US remarks as unpatriotic, accuses of treason



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Thursday said there was nothing more condemnable and intolerable than one in constitutional position becoming part of enemies of the Nation, in an apparent attack on Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi over his remarks made in the United States. Dhankhar's assertion came a day after the BJP hit out at Rahul Gandhi over his meeting with US lawmaker Ilhan Omar and others during his visit to the country, alleging that the Congress leader is indulging in "dangerous and mischievous" activities by reaching out to people abroad who are known for their anti-India stand.

Addressing participants of the third batch of Rajya Sabha Internship Programme here, Dhankhar, also the chairperson of the upper house, said he was pained and disturbed that some people in position have no idea of national interest. The vice president did not name anyone in his address. He said, "If we are true Indians, we will never side with the enemies of the nation." The BJP has attacked Rahul Gandhi over his remarks on reservation

and religious minorities in India and China. "I am pained and disturbed that some people in position have just no idea of Bharat. They have no idea of our Constitution, they have no idea of our national interest... I am sure your heart must be bleeding at what you see," the vice president said.

He said people have given supreme sacrifice in getting freedom. "Mothers have lost their sons, wives have lost their husbands. We can't ridicule our nationalism," he said. Dhankhar said every Indian outside the country has to be an ambassador of the nation. "How painful that one who holds a constitutional position is doing just the reverse of it. Nothing can be more condemnable, despicable and intolerable than that you become part of enemies of the nation," he said.

Dhankhar was of the view that such people do not understand the value of freedom as also that the country has civilisational depth of 5,000 years. The vice president asserted that the Constitution is sacred and was structured over three years of painstaking work by the founding fathers of the document.

He said the members of the Constituent Assembly met without disruption, disturbance, sloganeering and any posters being raised. "And now, some people want to divide our nation. This is ignorance in extremity," he said.

In a press conference at the National Press Club in Washington on Tuesday, Rahul Gandhi criticized the Narendra Modi government over its handling of the conflict with China, telling reporters that it is a disaster that 4,000 square kilometres of Indian territory is occupied by troops from the neighbouring country.

But the leader of the opposition in Lok Sabha indicated that the Congress is in broad agreement with the BJP-led government on other major foreign policy issues, including relations with the US, no talks with Pakistan unless terrorism ends and concerns over extremist elements in Bangladesh.

Answering a question about China, Gandhi said, "Well, if you call having Chinese troops in 4,000 square kilometres of our territory handling something well, then maybe. We've got Chinese troops occupying land the size of Delhi in Ladakh. I think that's a disaster. Media doesn't like to write about it."

Meanwhile, the BJP on Thursday upped the ante against Rahul Gandhi, saying the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha has committed "treason" with his remarks in the US.

"Rahul Gandhi has committed 'rashtrodroh' (treason) in the US. The entire country is hurt by the kind of image of India he has projected in the US," BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra said at party headquarters here while replying to media queries.



Rajnath Singh urges global unity amidst wars

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday said India's aim is to walk hand in hand together at a time some countries are at war with each other. He also asked friendly nations to elevate their partnership and collaboration to new heights in view of the evolving global challenges. "Today, there is a race in the world to get ahead of each other, wars are going on between countries at different places. In this changing situation, India's goal is that we hold each other's hands and walk together," he said while speaking at 'Tarang Shakti' -- the largest multilateral air exercise in India hosted by the Indian Air Force (IAF) at the air base here.

"Seeing the way the world is changing and new challenges are emerging, we need to take our partnership and collaboration to new heights," the defence minister said. His remarks come in the backdrop of calls for India's potential role in pushing peace talks between Russia and Ukraine as New Delhi has good relations with both the nations.

The minister said India is collaborating with friendly nations on a range of advanced and high-tech projects. While exercises like Tarang Shakti have significant tactical value, they also serve as a platform to foster greater mutual cooperation, coordination, and trust among participating countries, he noted.

"Such initiatives build confidence among our partners, reinforcing our collective commitment to stand united when needed. Through Tarang Shakti, we have further solidified our defence relationships with partner nations," he said. Rajnath Singh urged the foreign dignitaries present on the occasion to thoroughly explore and study India's aerospace sector.

"This first hand experience will provide insight into the rapid advancements and promising capabilities of India's defence manufacturing industry. It is an excellent opportunity to discuss how we can advance our collaboration in defence manufacturing," he said. The minister said India is enthusiastic about working together and aims for partnership to extend beyond political and technical realms.

"We want our cooperation to be not limited to just political or technical synergy but to transform into a heart-to-heart synergy," he said. The defence minister said today, India stands not only as the fastest growing economy globally but also is home to one of the world's most formidable armed forces.



NSA Doval meets Vladimir Putin amid Ukraine conflict talks

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval on Thursday met Russian President Vladimir Putin amid renewed efforts to find a solution to the Ukraine conflict. The meeting took place on the margins of a conclave of national security advisors of the BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) nations in St Petersburg. In the talks, Putin hoped that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will travel to Russia's Kazan next month to attend the annual BRICS summit. The Russian President also proposed a bilateral meeting with Modi on October 22 on the sidelines of the BRICS summit to analyse bilateral engagement and to discuss "future-oriented" actions.

"We are waiting for our good friend Modi and best regards to him," the Russian media quoted Putin as saying in the meeting with Doval.

On Wednesday, the NSA held wide-ranging talks with his Russian counterpart Sergei Shoigu and discussed important issues of "mutual interests". It is understood that Modi's talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kyiv on August 23 figured in the talks between the two NSAs. "Both sides reviewed progress in bilateral cooperation and discussed important issues of mutual interest," the Indian embassy in Russia said on the talks between Doval and Shoigu.

Doval's visit to Russia comes two-and-a-half weeks after Modi paid a high-profile trip to Ukrainian capital Kyiv. In his talks with Zelenskyy, Modi said 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.

The prime minister said India was on the side of peace since the beginning of the conflict and he would even like to contribute personally for a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

SC displeased with Punjab, Haryana HC inaction on judicial officer's reinstatement

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has expressed displeasure over the Punjab and Haryana High Court's decision of not reinstating a judicial officer, sacked for an alleged affair with a lady judicial officer, despite the top court setting aside his termination letter in 2022. The issue has been moving between the high court and the apex court since 2009.

A bench of Justice Vikram Nath and Justice P B Varale, in its recent order, noted that the apex court on April 20, 2022, set aside the high court's October 25, 2018, order dismissing the male judicial officer's plea against his termination letter in 2022.

It had directed the full court of the high court to reconsider its decision of sacking the judicial officer.

The Supreme Court had also noted that on October 26, 2018, the same division bench of the high court allowed the petition of the lady judicial officer and set aside the termination order, after disbelieving the allegations of an illicit relationship.

"Once the termination order is set aside (by SC in 2022) and the judgement of the high court dismissing the writ petition challenging the said termination order has also been



set aside, the natural consequence is that the employee should be taken back in service and thereafter proceeded with as per the directions," the top court bench said recently.

The apex court bench said that once the termination order is set aside then the employee is deemed to be in service. "We find no justification in the inaction of the high court and also the state in not taking back the appellant (judicial officer) into service after the order dated April 20, 2022.

"No decision was taken either by the high court or by the state of taking back the appellant into service and no decision was made regarding the back wages from the date the termination order had been passed till the date of reinstatement which should be the

date of the judgement of this court," the bench said.

It added the judicial officer would thus be entitled to full salary for the period from the date of judgment dated April 20, 2022, till a fresh termination order was passed on April 2, 2024, to be calculated with all benefits admissible treating the appellant to be in continuous service.

The bench directed that insofar as the period from December 18, 2009, that is after the termination order of December 17, 2009, was passed till April 19, 2022, the date prior to the judgement and order of this court, "we are of the view that ends of justice would be served by directing that the appellant would be entitled to 50 per cent of the back wages treating him to be in service continuously".

It added such back wages to be calculated with all benefits admissible under law to the appellant as if he was in service. The bench granted liberty to the judicial officer to challenge before the high court, the resolution of the full court of the high court dated August 3, 2023, and the termination order dated April 2, 2024.

The judicial officer joined Punjab Civil Services (Judicial Branch) in 2006. At the time of joining the service in December 2006, the appellant was already married.

BJP slams Congress for Police lathi-charge, violence in Himachal, Karnataka



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Thursday slammed the Congress for police lathi-charge in Himachal Pradesh on protesters demanding demolition of an alleged illegal portion of a mosque in Shimla, asking the party to stop appeasement politics.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters here, Lok Sabha MP and party national spokesperson Sambit Patra also fayed the Congress over violence in Mandya district of Karnataka, alleging that stones were pelted and slippers were thrown at Lord Ganesha's idol at the behest of the party.

The Congress rules both Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka. Protesters demanding the demolition of an alleged illegal portion of a mosque in Shimla's Sanjauli area clashed with security personnel on Wednesday, breaking barricades and pelting stones as the police used water

cannon and charged batons to disperse them. About 10 people including police and women were injured. Violent clashes broke out between two groups during Ganesha idol procession in Nagamangala town of Mandya in Karnataka. The police have arrested 46 people in connection with the incident, authorities said on Thursday.

Accusing the Congress of pursuing appeasement politics in the two states under its rule, Patra said, "Rahul Gandhi's 'mohabbat ki dukan' is not only getting lathi charged and tear gas fired on Hindus in Himachal Pradesh, it is also engaged in getting stones pelted and slippers thrown at Lord Ganesha's idols in Karnataka."

"Love for an illegal mosque and lathi-charge on Hindus will obviously happen when Rahul Gandhi meets (US law-maker) Ilhan Omar," he added. The BJP leader condemned the incident of police lathi-charge and demanded that the mosque in Shimla should be done away with if it is illegal. "It's surprising that the local municipal court has served several notices seeking documents but the mosque administration is yet to do so," he said. "Lathi-charge Hindus and recharge of the mosque will not be allowed."

IMD warns of extremely heavy rain in Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Thursday a depression that originated over central India is expected to bring heavy to extremely heavy rain in Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh and their adjacent region over the next two to three days.

According to the latest IMD update issued at 1 pm, the system was located around 50 kilometres south-southeast of Agra and 50 kilometres north-northeast of Gwalior. It is expected to continue moving towards the north-northeast direction and gradually weaken on Friday. The IMD said Uttarakhand is likely to experience light to moderate rainfall from September 12 to 14, with heavy to extremely heavy rainfall in isolated areas.

Haryana is expected to see light to moderate rain, with heavy rainfall at times between September 12 and 15. East and west Uttar Pradesh may experience heavy to extremely heavy rainfall during this period.

In Madhya Pradesh, heavy rainfall is expected on September 12, followed by moderate to heavy rain over the next few days.

Niti Aayog suggests Public Health Emergency Management Act for future pandemics

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With Covid-19 pandemic exposing significant gaps in global health preparedness, a report by Niti Aayog expert group has underscored the need for responding in the first 100 days of an outbreak and suggested enacting separate legislation to handle public health crises if any in future.

The report, "Future Pandemic Preparedness and Emergency Response - A Framework for Action," proposes the creation of a Public Health Emergency Management Act (PHEMA), which would facilitate a holistic approach to health management, covering prevention, control, and disaster response. The report which provides a blueprint for the country to prepare for any future public health emergency or pandem-



ic and have a rapid response system comes amid WHO warning to tackle the unknown deadly "Disease X", which could be 20 times deadlier than COVID-19.

Led by Dr. Renu Swarup, with members including Dr. Soumya Swaminathan and Dr. Sujeet Singh, the expert group's proposals aim to better equip India and the global community for future pandemics and

health emergencies.

"It will allow a holistic approach to health management, covering prevention, control, and disaster response," the report added. "The Act would also provide for the creation of skilled public health cadres at national and state levels," said the report which also outlines recommendations for establishing a dedicated Pandemic Preparedness and

Emergency Response (PPER) fund and creating institutionalised and empowered governance mechanisms.

"The report highlights the need for a well-structured scorecard mechanism to regularly monitor progress on key preparedness targets, especially in light of WHO warnings about potential new zoonotic outbreaks. As countries and international organizations work to enhance their readiness for novel pathogens, the WHO has identified approximately 30 viral and bacterial families with potential epidemic or pandemic risk.

These targets necessitate focused research, development of advanced diagnostic techniques, and effective countermeasures. The report's recommendations align with global efforts to bolster pandemic preparedness and response capabilities.

Entod Pharmaceuticals to challenge suspension of PresVu

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Mumbai-based Entod Pharmaceuticals said on Thursday that it has decided to move the court to challenge the national drug regulator's suspension of permission to manufacture and market its pilocarpine hydrochloride ophthalmic solution formulation, branded as PresVu.

The company denied the regulatory authority's allegation that it has engaged in unauthorised promotion of the product through media. Nikhil K Masurkar, CEO of the pharma firm, in a press statement said that this action is against a pharma company in the MSME sector, which is purely research and innovation driven and attempts to bring new therapeutic options to the Indian market.



"As a result, we have decided to challenge this suspension in the court of law to get justice," said Masurkar.

"Our fight will not only allow innovative medicines to be available in India but also encourage other pharmaceutical entrepreneurs and companies in the MSME sector to continue the research drive in India without facing similar obstacles," he said.

The company also said that it has not made any unethical or false presentation of facts to the media or public when it comes to PresVu eye drops. All facts disclosed to the media were strictly on the basis of the recent approval by the Drugs Controller General (India) for

treatment of presbyopia in adults and the results of the phase 3 clinical trial conducted by us in India.

"Announcing the new product launch to the media is a routine industry practice followed by all pharma companies in India and in the recent past, many such announcements have been made. In our case, media reports went viral and public imagination led to an unusual escalation for which Entod Pharmaceuticals is not responsible," he said.

The approval by DCGI was based on a valid controlled clinical trial in 234 patients which was successful in showing efficacy and safety of these eye drops in patients of presbyopia, who used these drops without eye glasses and could read additional lines on Snellen's chart which is a yardstick of near vision improvement.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Ayushman bhav!

The Union Cabinet extends Ayushman Bharat to senior citizens Above 70; a move that would benefit six crore people

In a significant move the Union Cabinet has approved the extension of the Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme to all citizens above 70 years of age, regardless of their income or social standing. The Cabinet's decision fulfils a key promise made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the 2024 Lok Sabha election campaign. This move is expected to transform healthcare for senior citizens, providing much-needed relief to millions who have been struggling with rising medical costs and insufficient insurance coverage. Since its launch over five years ago, Ayushman Bharat has provided healthcare access to millions across India, covering hospitalisations and treatments for families that otherwise couldn't afford medical care. However, data has shown that nearly every fourth person admitted to hospitals under this scheme has been a senior citizen, highlighting their disproportionate need for medical support. Out of over one crore admissions, 24% were of citizens aged 60 and above, demonstrating how essential this safety net is for the elderly.



The latest decision to extend coverage to all citizens over 70 is particularly significant as this age group is often neglected by private insurers. Most health insurance companies either refuse to offer policies to those above 70 or charge prohibitively high premiums. Even when insurance is available, pre-existing conditions are often excluded for the first two to three years, leaving many senior citizens without immediate access to treatment for serious ailments like heart disease, kidney issues, and diabetes. With the new policy, six crore people over 70 years of age are expected to benefit, receiving health insurance coverage up to Rs 5 lakh per year. This applies on a family basis, ensuring that elderly individuals, even those abandoned by families or facing financial hardships, can now access free or affordable medical care. The extension of Ayushman Bharat to all citizens above 70 comes at a critical time. Procedures like dialysis, heart surgeries, and cancer treatments are not only expensive but also frequent among senior citizens. The new policy provides a safety net for seniors who have, until now, been forced to bear these expenses themselves or rely on insufficient public health programs. Rs 5 lakh coverage under Ayushman Bharat will lift much of this financial burden, enabling families to access quality healthcare without worrying about their savings. Apart from the direct medical benefits, this policy could have far-reaching social implications. India's senior citizens, especially those in rural or economically disadvantaged areas, often face neglect and abandonment when they become ill. This policy not only promises improved healthcare outcomes but also offers dignity and security to millions of older Indians at a time when they need it most. As this initiative rolls out, its impact on families, communities, and the healthcare system at large will likely be profound, marking a significant leap toward inclusive and accessible healthcare for all.

to Rs 5 lakh per year. This applies on a family basis, ensuring that elderly individuals, even those abandoned by families or facing financial hardships, can now access free or affordable medical care. The extension of Ayushman Bharat to all citizens above 70 comes at a critical time. Procedures like dialysis, heart surgeries, and cancer treatments are not only expensive but also frequent among senior citizens. The new policy provides a safety net for seniors who have, until now, been forced to bear these expenses themselves or rely on insufficient public health programs. Rs 5 lakh coverage under Ayushman Bharat will lift much of this financial burden, enabling families to access quality healthcare without worrying about their savings. Apart from the direct medical benefits, this policy could have far-reaching social implications. India's senior citizens, especially those in rural or economically disadvantaged areas, often face neglect and abandonment when they become ill. This policy not only promises improved healthcare outcomes but also offers dignity and security to millions of older Indians at a time when they need it most. As this initiative rolls out, its impact on families, communities, and the healthcare system at large will likely be profound, marking a significant leap toward inclusive and accessible healthcare for all.

PICTALK



Visitors at the Taj Mahal during rain, in Agra.

Resignation shakes Trinamool Congress



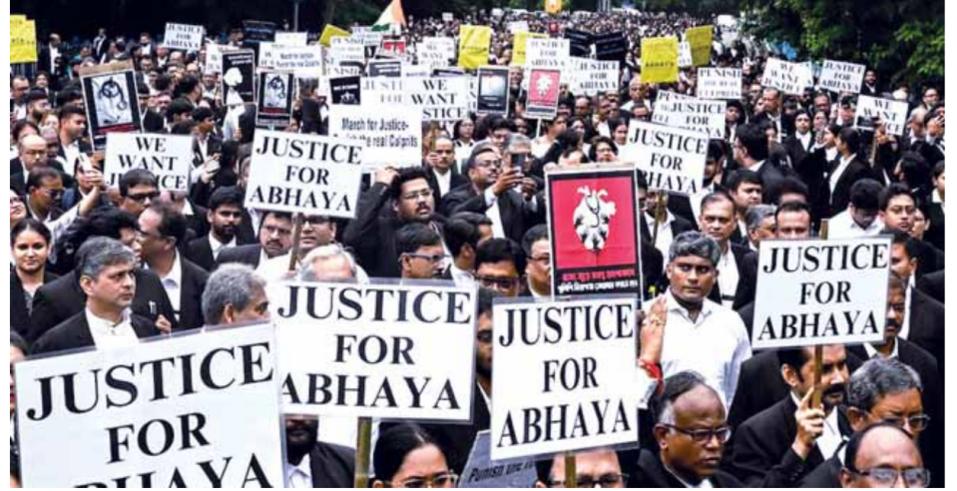
SIDHARTH MISHRA

Jawahar Sircar's resignation from Rajya Saha highlights growing discontent in Bengal over the State's response to crimes against women

Trinamool Congress Member of Rajya Sabha and former Chairman of Prasar Bharati Jawahar Sircar has resigned both from parliament and the party. Sircar tendered resignation to protest the 'mishandling' of the trainee-doctor rape-cum-murder case at RG Kar Medical in Kolkata. The resignation is significant as Sircar is part of 'Kolkata Bhadrak' which has so far remained steadfast in its support of West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee. The move also indicates that the West Bengal assembly passing a 'very stringent anti-rape law' bill has not cut much ice with the people, who so far have resisted condoning the errors committed by the Mamata government in the matter.

The West Bengal bill, which has now been referred by the Governor to the President, has also not found much echo outside the state. The Aparajita Woman and Child (West Bengal Criminal Laws Amendment) Bill, 2024, passed by the West Bengal Assembly is not the first of its kind. In the past five years, Andhra Pradesh (Disha) and Maharashtra (Shakti) passed similar bills with a death penalty clause against the rapists but they are still to bring any change in the matter. All these bills were preceded by Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 through which Capital Punishment for rape made its entry into the Indian Penal Code.

This followed the public outrage after the brutal gang rape and murder of a woman on a moving bus in Delhi on December 16, 2012, which shook the collective conscience of the nation. Parliament passed the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 to allow the death penalty in rape cases where the accompanying brutality leads to death or leaves the victim in a persistent vegetative state. Whatever name you may give Aparajita, Disha or Shakti, these bills are meaningless as long as cases about rape remain pending in the courts for years together. In 2022, com-



combined with those brought in the previous years, courts had around 2 lakh cases for trial. However, trials could be completed in only a little over 18,000 cases, which was less than the number of incidents as well as police charge sheets filed that year. Finally, the conviction rate of 27.4% in rape cases means seven out of every 10 accused persons were acquitted. So just making the laws doesn't help. Speaking at a function some months back, Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud had quoted BR Ambedkar saying, "However bad a Constitution may be, it may turn out to be good if those responsible for its functioning happen to be a good lot." Maker of the Constitution in the concluding speech before the Constituent Assembly had said, "However good a Constitution may be, it is sure to turn out bad because those who are called to work it, happen to be a bad lot. However bad a Constitution may be, it may turn out to be good if those who are called to work it, happen to be a good lot. The Constitution can provide only the organs of the State such as the Legislature, the



THE WEST BENGAL BILL, WHICH HAS NOW BEEN REFERRED BY THE GOVERNOR TO THE PRESIDENT, HAS ALSO NOT FOUND MUCH ECHO OUTSIDE THE STATE

Executive and the Judiciary. The factors on which the working of those organs of the State depends are the people and the political parties they will set up as their instruments to carry out their wishes and their politics." If the rapes are not stopping in this country or if the anti-rape laws are not proving to be effective in punishing the rapists, it's a failure of culture more than the law. Our society is not very forthcoming in the accommodating the woes of a rape victim, and in most cases, the survivor and the family are subjected to terrible humiliation. Those tasked with implementing the Constitution have to possess the spirit of public service rather than political expediency. There is a recent case study carried out by the Uttar Pradesh Police in Ghaziabad district which reiterates the aforementioned premise. There is an existing government policy for establishing Pink Police Outposts under every police station. The rules have been there but not much work has been done beyond the customary launching of the programme with much fanfare. However, Ghaziabad Police last year

decided to implement the programme in mission mode, and 20 Pink Booths exclusively manned by female police personnel were established in September 2023. A year later the results were for all to see. The mere presence of a force for women's safety had its impact. According to the data released by Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems of Uttar Pradesh Police, crime against women which included dowry deaths, dowry-related cases, molestation, rape and kidnapping came down by approximately 24 per cent. The biggest fall of over 36 per cent was in dowry deaths thus at least securing women inside their homes. If such an initiative by Ghaziabad Police can achieve such results one is sure at the state government level such steps can be taken more effectively. One is not sure how effectively have these pink police outposts been functioning in West Bengal, where the government has just brought a more stringent anti-rape law. (Sidharth Mishra is the author & president Centre for Reforms, Development and Justice; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

Madam — The news on Niti Aayog's response to future public health crisis (12-9-24) recommending a legislation is strange. Legislations cannot solve these problems. The status of healthcare, access to nutrition and hunger relief puts India at a shabby bottom line in the global index. Without improving these factors planning to face a likely pandemic can only be an act of humour. Healthcare is made a commodity as understood from levying GST on availing medicines, medical devices and even on life and health insurance policies. Productivity of the nation depends on the productivity of its people. A sane idea would be to improve the health condition of the people by offering the best healthcare to all in the public healthcare institutions. If done so it would take care of major issues connected with pandemics. We have many legislations not implemented with enough seriousness. Therefore Niti Aayog should get down to understand the ground realities and plan accordingly.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

CHIP MAKING IN INDIA

Madam—Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that resilience of supply chains is critical for the economy. During his speech at the SEMICON 2024 conference the PM made a pitch to boost investments in domestic manufacturing of semiconductors. A Year ago the Union Cabinet had approved a production linked incentive (PLI) scheme for semiconductor and display board, production in the country. Heavy surge in sales of electronic devices during the pandemic and the indefinite closure of giant chip companies during the lockdown had in fact given rise to a crisis of scarcity of semi conductors in the global market. These chips are in fact the 'life' of millions of products in our daily life, ranging from automobiles to fridges and washing machines to computers and smartphones and so on. Insufficiency of these chips had slowed down the produc-

Differently abled deserve a better deal



18th place finish, with 29 medals, is a testament to this shift, showcasing their growing impact in sports and society. The Paralympics not only highlights athletic achievements but also emphasizes the right to participate in sports as a fundamental human right. Athletes like Avani Lekhara, Sumit Antil, and 17-year-old Sheetal Devi have become global icons, demonstrating that perseverance can lead to greatness. Their success is supported by initiatives like Khelo India and the Sports Authority of India, ensuring that they receive the same recognition as their Olympic peers, such as Neeraj Chopra and Manu Bhaker. This triumph inspires both the 2.66 crore differently abled individuals in India and able-bodied people, showing that true strength comes from within. Learning from these athletes can benefit all sports and help reshape perceptions worldwide.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

REWRITING HISTORY AND SCIENCE

Madam — Should we trust the BJP or the facts proven by history and science? Some pseudo-nationalist leaders in India have cultivated a loyal following that supports their every claim, no matter how questionable. For instance, Madhya Pradesh's Higher Education Minister Indir Singh Parmar recently claimed that Indian ancestors, not Christopher Columbus, discovered America. He also asserted that students have been taught "wrong history," alleging that the Indian hero Vasulun reached America in the 8th century and built temples in Santiago. Such statements reflect a broader attempt to reshape both history and science. Previously, leaders have made bizarre assertions, here's even a claim that Rishi Kanad tested an atomic bomb millions of years ago. Despite the absurdity of these claims, experts remain silent, as dissent is neither allowed nor encouraged in this new system.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

M Pradyu | Kanpur

The erosion of local cultures and the rise of digital colonisation

We are increasingly relying on digital platforms which have a huge impact on local cultures and thought processes. This raises critical concerns about the future of our cultural identity



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

There was a time when people from a village knew each other. A minute change in a person's behaviour shall bring to the attention of others. Children were safe in that society. Every town or every place in our country has a uniqueness in its culture, traditions, language, food habits, products produced, and even a story to tell. Colonisation, both external and internal, characterised by the exercise of control by one group over another, has profoundly impacted rewriting history. The motivations behind it have been many, encompassing economic profit, territorial expansion, religious conversion, and geopolitical power, among other considerations. In earlier times, it was foreigners who intruded into the local community; now, the movement of native people from one place to another has changed the demographic profile of a region. For many individuals, the consequences of colonialism have been devastating, resulting in the deliberate destruction of cultural customs, the exploitation of individuals, and the forced



displacement of populations. The cultural erasure caused by colonisation is one of its most enduring impacts. Colonizers often portrayed their own cultures as superior, leading to the suppression of indigenous languages, religions, and customs. In that process, we even lost the local economies that were thriving in our society. Even the different dialects spoken by people of a state or region have been lost because of outside interaction. This has even been reflected in the literary works created during the time. Unfortunately, with colonisation, we made our society a homogeneous one. This can be observed when we travel across the country. The uniform way we built our infrastructure in our cities has made every city look the same. Until the late 90s, every place

in our country was known by some unique geography, a specific market, or even the presence of a person. Nevertheless, colonialism has also led to the exchange of knowledge, culture, food habits, concepts, and technology between the native and colonised populations. In the 21st century, the internet has brought about a new type of colonisation that has begun infiltrating our society. This new form of colonisation is known as digital colonisation. The term "digital colonisation" refers to the dominance of numerous multinational technology businesses, the majority of which are based in the United States and a few wealthy nations, over the digital infrastructure and data of the entire world. For all of our day-to-day requirements, we began to rely more on digital platforms, reducing the amount of personal interaction. This new digital culture has infiltrated even the remotest parts of our country. These digital titans prioritise everything in our lives, including what we should buy, who we should be friends

with, where to study, which course to study, and even where to give birth. This can potentially destroy local traditions and languages, as most language formats used today are designed to suit digital platforms. People started believing blindly whatever is available on digital platforms. The addiction is so severe that the auto and taxi drivers of Delhi-NCR, who had excellent navigation skills earlier using the brain, have shifted to Google Maps. Global IT giants promote a universal digital culture for various reasons, many of which are tied to their business models and growth strategies. Although this digital culture promotes global connectivity, information accessibility and collaboration, it also has the potential to obscure regional diversity and traditional lifestyles. The concentration of power in the hands of a few tech companies, cultural erasure, and privacy are all concerns raised by the dominance of these corporations. (The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

DIPLOMATIC BOOST TO SEMICONDUCTORS

India and Singapore are building a resilient semiconductor supply chain



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Domestic politics may be a key issue for the ruling NDA alliance, however, it has not taken away Prime Minister Narendra Modi's focus on constantly working on fine-tuning India's foreign policy. PM Modi recently was in Brunei a first for any Indian Prime Minister on a bilateral state visit, to a country located strategically in the South China Sea. Brunei's visit was topped by the PM's visit to Singapore, an important technology ally for India in the region. India and Singapore will be entering into the 60th year of diplomatic relationship next year and both countries have decided to upgrade their existing bilateral partnership to a Comprehensive strategic partnership, which will in turn expand the areas of cooperation.

One of the key focus, during PM Modi's visit to Singapore was expanding the digital cooperation between the countries. The joint statement released read "Both Prime Ministers welcomed the signing of the MoU on cooperation in the field of Digital Technologies and affirmed common interests in data, AI and cybersecurity. Building on this, both Prime Ministers agreed to deepen collaboration in the digital space, including in facilitating trusted cross-border data flows, cybersecurity, and the interoperability of digital systems." A crucial element of the partnership was a demonstration under the trade trust framework. Singapore is home to many large Technology companies, many of whom have regional headquarters in the island state, with the business geography, spread all across Asia primarily India.



Advance technology manufacturing and semiconductors formed another crucial element of the PM's visit. The statement read "Both Prime Ministers agreed to explore cooperation in the area of critical and emerging technologies. Both Prime Ministers agreed that advanced manufacturing, particularly in developing resilient semiconductor supply chains, can be a new pillar of bilateral cooperation.

Both Prime Ministers welcomed the signing of the MoU on the India-Singapore Semiconductor Ecosystem Partnership. Immediately after the PM visited Singapore the US government also announced a new partnership with India to explore supply chain opportunities in India. Funded under the International Technology Security and Innovation (ITSI) Fund, created by the CHIPS Act of 2022 (CHIPS Act) of the US, it allows the department to spend some money on developing a trusted supply chain ecosystem with partners and allies. A US State Department press release read, "The initial phase includes a comprehensive assessment of India's existing semiconductor ecosystem and regulatory framework, as well as workforce and infrastructure needs. The state anticipates that key Indian stakeholders, such as state governments, educational institutions, research centres, and private companies, will participate in this analysis steered by the India Semiconductor Mission. The insights gained from the assessment will serve as the basis for potential future joint initiatives to strengthen and grow this critical sector. The United States and India are key partners in ensuring the global semiconductor supply chain keeps pace with the global digital transformation currently underway. Manufacturing of essential products ranging from vehicles to medical devices relies on the strength and resilience of the semiconductor supply chain."

This week India also hosted SEMICON a global conference that attracts investments in the Indian semiconductor ecosystem. India is trying to attract investments for a crucial component of most modern equipment and machinery called chips. The recent visits by the PM to Singapore and the Memorandum of Understanding with the US may provide the much-needed kickstart for India's semiconductor ecosystem.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views expressed are personal)

India's Paralympic journey of resilience and triumph



RAJDEEP PATHAK

Through sheer determination and perseverance, para athletes have steadily overcome the odds, earning global recognition and bringing glory to the nation



The Paris Paralympics unfolded as a captivating display of athletic excellence, particularly for the Indian contingent. It was a spectacle, with each athlete embodying a harmonious blend of strength, determination, and skill – almost like poetry in motion. As an avid follower, I found myself engrossed in nearly every performance, regardless of the challenging (IST) time difference that saw events commence under the glowing silhouette of the Eiffel Tower. On the rare occasions when I could not watch live, social media provided timely updates, fuelling my enthusiasm and admiration for these remarkable athletes.

Their tenacity and commitment to realizing their dreams on the global stage were evident as they competed and excelled across multiple disciplines, leaving an indelible mark on the world of sports. India delivered its best-ever performance at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games, achieving a historic 29-medal haul that included seven gold, nine silver, and 13 bronze medals. This outstanding achievement surpassed the 19-medal tally from Tokyo 2020, where India had won five golds, and marked a significant milestone as the country crossed the 50-medal mark in its Paralympic history. A record 84 para-athletes represented India across 12 disciplines, including the debut participation in para-cycling, para-rowing, and blind judo. Among the shining stars, Avani Lekhara became the first Indian woman to win two golds at the Paralympic Games, defending her title in the women's 10m air rifle standing SH1 shooting event with a world-record score. Meanwhile, India saw its first-ever one-two finish in athletics, with Dharambir and Parnav Soorma clinching gold and silver in the men's club throw F51 event. Dharambir also set a new Asian record of 34.92m. In athletics, several Indian para-athletes etched their names in the record books.

Praveen Kumar set an Asian record en route to winning the high jump T64 title, securing India's sixth gold medal – their highest total at the Paralympics. Javelin thrower Sumit Antil made history as the first Indian man to defend his Paralympic title, winning gold in the men's javelin throw F64 with a stunning throw of 70.59m, breaking his record from Tokyo 2020 not once but



INDIA BEGAN ITS PARALYMPIC JOURNEY IN 1968, OVERCOMING NUMEROUS CHALLENGES SUCH AS LIMITED RESOURCES, INADEQUATE FACILITIES, AND LOW PUBLIC AWARENESS. DESPITE THESE HURDLES, INDIAN PARATHLETES GRADUALLY ROSE TO PROMINENCE ON THE GLOBAL STAGE

three times. Mariyappan Thangavelu, with a bronze in the high jump T42 class, became the first Indian to win medals at three consecutive Paralympic Games, having previously won gold at Rio 2016 and silver at Tokyo 2020. Preethi Pal secured India's first-ever medal in a track event at the Paralympics with a bronze in the women's 100m T35 race and won another bronze in the 200m, becoming India's most successful athlete at the Games with two medals. The track events also saw Deepthi Jeevanji become the first intellectually impaired Indian athlete to win a Paralympic medal with a bronze in the women's 400m T20 class. India's achievements extended beyond the track and field to other disciplines. In archery, armless archer Sheetal Devi briefly set a world record in the ranking round and later teamed up with Rakesh Kumar to achieve a world record score in the compound mixed team qualification event. It was a perfect example of poetry in motion.

At just 17, Sheetal made history as India's youngest Paralympic medalist by winning a bronze in the mixed team event. Moreover, India's dominance in archery was further confirmed when Harvinder Singh became the country's first-ever Paralympic archery champion. The outstanding performances by Indian para-athletes at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games underscored India's emergence as a formidable contender on the global stage. Originating in 1948 with a sports event for World War II veterans with spinal injuries, organized by Sir Ludwig Guttmann in Stoke Mandeville, England, the Paralympics evolved into an international event in 1960 in Rome with 400 athletes from 23 countries. Since then, the Games have grown significantly, challenging stereotypes and promoting inclusivity, while celebrating the exceptional talents and resilience of athletes

with disabilities. India began its Paralympic journey in 1968, overcoming numerous challenges such as limited resources, inadequate facilities, and low public awareness. Despite these hurdles, Indian para-athletes gradually rose to prominence on the global stage. A pivotal moment came in 2004 when Devendra Jhajharia won India's first Paralympic gold, setting a world record in the F46 javelin throw. This achievement heralded a new era for Indian para-sports, culminating in 35 medals across 12 Paralympic Games. The Paralympics exemplify India's commitment to inclusiveness, reflecting a broader national strategy to promote equity in sports. Government initiatives such as the "Target Olympic Podium Scheme" (TOPS), "Khelo India," and increased funding for para-sports provide athletes with special abilities access to advanced training facilities, coaching, and financial support. To foster a more inclusive sports ecosystem, India regularly hosts events like the National Para Games and Para Athletics Championships, enhancing visibility and opportunities for para-athletes. What is needed is corporate sponsorships and media coverage which are crucial in transforming societal perceptions of disability, empowering athletes and promoting social inclusion and awareness. Globally, several countries have successfully promoted inclusiveness through sports.

The United Kingdom, for example, has been a pioneer in fostering an inclusive sports culture. Looking back at the success of Team GB at the London 2012 Paralympics, where they ranked third with 120 medals, which stemmed from years of investment in para-sports proves this point.

The UK government, along with organizations like the British Paralympic Association, provided substantial funding, advanced training facilities, and comprehensive

support for athletes. The extensive broadcasting and marketing of the London 2012 Paralympics also helped transform public perceptions of disability, inspiring a new generation of para-athletes. Similarly, Australia has excelled in promoting inclusivity in sports through the Australian Paralympic Committee, which focuses on talent identification, athlete development, and grassroots inclusivity.

Further, Japan's efforts during the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics highlighted its commitment to accessibility, with significant investments in inclusive infrastructure, such as accessible public transport, venues, and accommodations, demonstrating a strong commitment to para-sports.

Moreover, the Paralympic Committee's 'ImPOSSIBLE' program, an educational initiative by the Agitos Foundation, was introduced in schools across Japan to educate children about the Paralympic values of courage, determination, inspiration, and equality, fostering a culture of inclusivity from a young age. In India, the road to achieving inclusiveness in sports has been long and challenging, but progress is evident.

The success of para-athletes at the Paralympics 2024 has helped break down barriers and challenge stereotypes, paving the way for a more inclusive society. However, there is still much work to be done to ensure that people with special abilities have equal access to sports and the opportunity to compete at the highest level.

The future of Indian para-sports looks promising, as it is a powerful reminder that success in sports is not limited by physical ability but defined by determination, skill, and the spirit to overcome adversity. WE CAN is the catchword.

(The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views expressed are personal)

Ozone Therapy: A holistic approach to enhancing health and wellness

Ozone therapy's ability to complement and enhance conventional therapies makes this old treatment a modern-day tool

We live our healthiest when we can balance the demands life places on us with opportunities that heal our bodies. Ozone therapy is emerging as a key wellness treatment that is a transformative addition to conventional medical practices with a multitude of health benefits. The growing concern over managing lifestyle diseases finds a hopeful answer in ozone therapy with doctors appraised of the latest and most effective practices. Developed over 100 years ago in Germany, this complementary medical treatment is proving to be a highly effective integrative treatment that is pocket-friendly and safe for several clinical conditions. Ozone therapy, with judicious doses of ozone administered by a



MILHI SHAH

doctor, brings powerful antioxidant capabilities to restore tissues and body fluids. **Harnessing Ozone's Power:** Ozone therapy involves the administration of ozone gas (O3), a reactive form of oxygen, into the body to stimulate healing and improve overall health. Ozone therapy enhances traditional medical treatments, offering a synergistic approach to health and wellness, where

pain and the side effects of conventional treatment are alleviated by it. It has shown promise in managing chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and autoimmune disorders. For instance, in diabetes management, ozone therapy can improve oxygen utilisation and glucose metabolism, helping stabilise blood sugar levels. In cardiovascular ailments, ozone therapy can enhance blood circulation and reduce oxidative stress, improving heart health.

Pain Alleviation Ozone therapy's analgesic and anti-inflammatory properties make it effective in pain management. Conditions like arthritis, fibromyalgia, and musculoskeletal injuries often cause chronic pain that is dif-

icult to manage with traditional methods. Ozone therapy can alleviate pain by reducing inflammation and promoting tissue repair.

For example, in arthritis, ozone therapy helps decrease joint inflammation and improves mobility. Compared to conventional pain management techniques, ozone therapy offers a less invasive option, with fewer side effects.

Detoxifying with Ozone Ozone therapy supplies the body with potent oxygenation, increasing the life-giving gas' availability for cells, and improving their functioning and energy production. The resulting detoxification eliminates toxins, harmful free radicals and waste from the minutest units of our bodies. The result: Rejuvenated,



healthy and energetic selves. **Stress Reduction** Ozone therapy can aid in stress reduction by increasing oxygen delivery to tissues, promoting relaxation and a sense of calm. This is particularly beneficial in our fast-paced world where stress is a common issue. **Athletic Performance:** Ozone therapy's unique restorative abilities are also extremely relevant to meeting the high performance and health needs of athletes. The increased oxy-

genation provided by ozone therapy improves endurance, enhances recovery, and boosts overall performance.

Skin Rejuvenation: The skin, the body's largest organ, is happiest when we have healthy cells and tissues. Ozone therapy, in promoting healthy cells, leads to several skin benefits. It is effective in treating skin conditions such as acne, eczema, and fungal infections due to ozone's antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties.

Ozone therapy promotes skin healing by increasing oxygen supply to the affected areas. Additionally, it has anti-ageing benefits. By improving blood flow and stimulating collagen production, ozone therapy can enhance skin elasticity and reduce wrinkles, resulting in a

more youthful and vibrant appearance.

Multiple Ozone Therapy Applications: Ozone therapy can be administered in various ways, including rectal insufflation, intravenous ozone mixed with saline, and major autohemotherapy. These methods help activate cellular circulation, enhancing overall health. With over 20 different applications, ozone therapy offers versatile treatment options for a wide range of disorders, promoting healing and well-being through improved oxygen utilization and cellular function.

The Science of Ozone Therapy: The scientific reason ozone therapy works is its ability to stimulate the mitochondria, the energy powerhouse of the tiniest units of our

bodies - cells. By providing a fresh supply of oxygen, ozone therapy boosts cellular health, bodily functions and energy production. Ozone therapy also helps neutralise free radicals, reducing oxidative stress and preventing cellular damage. Ozone therapy is safe when administered correctly and has been supported by numerous studies demonstrating its efficacy and safety. Ozone therapy's ability to complement and enhance conventional therapies, combined with its wide range of applications, makes the centuries-old treatment a modern-day tool in the quest for holistic health and wellness.

(The writer is trustee of Biseri Charitable Trust and president Ozone Forum of India; views are personal)

Mamata offers to quit as talks with docs fizzle out

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Mamata Banerjee on Thursday offered to resign as the Bengal Chief Minister asking for people's exoneration for failing to resolve the logjam arising out of the statewide junior doctors' "cease work" that entered its 34th day on Thursday. The junior doctors had been agitating in demand of justice for the post graduate lady doctor of RG Kar Medical College and Hospital who was last month brutally raped and murdered inside the seminar hall of the Chest Medicine Department. Banerjee's offer to quit came after two-and-a-half-hour high drama over whether the Government would allow the meeting with a 32-0member delegation of the doctors to be live-streamed.

"It seems that there are some people who are not interested in a solution to the problem... they want my Chair... then so be it... I am ready to resign as I don't have a yen for the Chair... if my quitting solves brings relief to the people then so be it... let the doctors join work and serve the poor people," Banerjee said leading to a prompt interpretation from critics who read her statement as "a last effort to emotionally blackmail the masses." While the doctors who had bus-rode to State secretariat Nabanna to meet the Chief Minister following a Government invite to end the impasse pressed for a live-streaming of the event the Government (read the Chief Minister) would reject the demand outright. This, even top officials including Chief

Secretary Manoj Pant, Home Secretary Nandini Chakravorty and DGP Rajeev Kumar shuttled with messages between the Chief Minister and the doctors waiting outside the Nabanna Sabha Ghar. Banerjee told the camera with folding hands, "I beg your forgiveness as I could not bring the doctors to the talking table... I apologise to the people of Bengal who expected an end to the RG Kar impasse today. They (junior doctors) came to Nabanna but did not sit for the meeting. Though there was no meeting I still request them to go back to work... We have been waiting for two-and-a-half hours as we did two previous days but there was no response... my doctor brothers and sisters brought 34 member delegation against



The Government stipulation of 15... we agreed... but they were demanding live-streaming of the proceedings which is not possible in formal meetings... they are giving example of Supreme Court

proceedings being telecast but what the Supreme Court can do we cannot... besides this matter is subjudice and if during the meeting any derogatory statement is made against the judiciary as is

being done in the social media then who will take that responsibility... but they would not take our suggestion and would not enter the meeting hall despite coming to Nabanna... where as I was waiting with my team of officials. Alleging that about 27 people had died due to the doctors' cease work and about 1,500 cardiac operations had been postponed, the Chief Minister said she was not taking any action despite Supreme Court clearance. "The Court has given a deadline to them to join work... but the doctors have defied that even," Banerjee said in what the junior doctors called a "bid to instigate the judiciary against the medical staff" adding, "I have ESMA with me but will not use against the doctors... as I

want good conscience to prevail and I want them to return to work so that common people do not suffer." Government had been under a popular pressure --- unprecedented in the 13 years of Trinamool Congress rule --- that tended to mount by the day with thousands of people, mostly women coming out on the streets, taking control of the nights on more than one occasion besides standing by the agitating doctors who were presently staging a sit-in demonstration in front of the Swasthya Bhavan. From roadside vendors, to home makers, to students, to people from other professions were coming in hordes to supply food and other incidentals even in the dead of nights to the agitating doctors. The junior doctors on their

behalf said that they wanted the proceedings to be live streamed because there was a need to bring transparency. "The way the evidence was destroyed by the police, the way the health syndicate is still being allowed to continue... the way the Kolkata Commissioner of Police and a DCP and the Health Secretary and Directors of Health Services and Education were being continued on their posts despite allegations that evidence tampering took place under their nose... an atmosphere of distrust has emerged... we wanted live streaming of the meeting to end that distrust but the Chief Minister would not listen to us," doctors said hoping "the gates of Nabanna would open before us once again though it was shut on our face today."

Air taxis to soon become reality: PM Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday announced that air taxis will soon become a reality as the government prepares the country for advanced air mobility. The Prime Minister was addressing the Second Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation in the national capital, where he also suggested the idea of having an international Buddhist circuit. The prime minister said the government is preparing the country for advanced air mobility and the day is not far when travel by air taxi will be a reality, amid rising travel demand, initiatives are also being taken to promote advanced air mobility. Under the regional air connectivity scheme UDAN, which has made air travel more accessible for lower middle-class individuals, 14 million people have flown with many of them seeing the inside of an aircraft for the first time, he said. The scheme has allowed the lower middle class to travel by air, he said and added that the aim is to make "air travel safe,



affordable and accessible to all". Modi said efforts should be made to ensure that the skies remain open for all and that people's dream of flying is fulfilled. Recently, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation issued the rules for establishing vertiports --- from where these vertical take off & landing (VTOL) capable aircraft --- will operate, paving the way for "advance air mobility" (AAM) in India. Private carrier IndiGo's parent company InterGlobe Enterprises is planning to launch an all-electric air taxi service in India in 2026 through which passengers can zip between

Connaught Place in Delhi to Gurugram in Haryana in as little as seven minutes for around Rs 2,000-3,000. The electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft can carry the pilot in addition to four passengers. They are similar to helicopters, however, less noisy and a safer alternative. The prime minister also proclaimed the Delhi Declaration at the conclusion of the two-day conference. India is a strong pillar of the aviation ecosystem and one of the top civil aviation markets. India will become one of the countries with the most air connectivity, and efforts are also

on to make it a global aviation hub, the prime minister said. If the entire Asia is connected with the Buddhist circuit, it will be a win-win model for countries and people, Modi said and also suggested having a comprehensive approach with respect to air routes taken by professionals in the Asia Pacific region, which is also a business hub. Apart from investments in infrastructure, he said there is a need for skilled manpower, and upgraded technology for the development of the aviation sector. The sector creates highly skilled jobs, Modi said and stressed the women-led development of the aviation segment. In India, 15 per cent of the pilots are women, while the global average is 5 per cent, he noted. The two-day conference, which started on Wednesday, brings together transport and aviation ministers, regulatory bodies, and industry experts from across the Asia Pacific region. Around 300 representatives from 29 countries attended the conference. Union Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu also present.

With Rahul in focus, BJP, Congress to stage protests in Maharashtra today

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The ruling BJP and Opposition Congress on Thursday announced that they would protest against each other across Maharashtra on Friday on matters relating to leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi. While the BJP will be protesting against the purported anti-reservation statements made by Rahul Gandhi in the United States, the Congress will be upping against the death threats reportedly handed out to the leader of the Opposition in LS. Announcing its decision to stage protests across Maharashtra on Friday over Rahul's anti-reservation statements made in the US, the BJP said: "The Congress' real face has been exposed. It has dual yardsticks over social justice and reservations. We will not tolerate this. That's why we will be staging protests across the state on the theme of 'Congress hatao, Aarakschan Bachao'" State BJP president

Chandrashekhar Bawankule, party's national general secretary, senior minister Chandrakant Patil, Mumbai city president Ashish Shellar and various other party leaders will be leading protests at various places in the state. On the other hand, the Congress will flag the issue of death threats allegedly handed by Delhi BJP leader Tarvinder Singh Marwah "Tarvinder Singh Marwah has issued a death threat to Rahul Gandhi. This is a highly serious matter. Marwah's statement reflects the true face of the BJP. The BJP has an allergy to the name 'Gandhi,' which is why, from Modi to all other leaders, they consistently defame Rahul Gandhi. Now, the BJP has crossed all limits. Based on a single statement by Rahul Gandhi, they have threatened to kill him like former Prime Minister Indiraji Gandhi," Maharashtra Pradesh Congress chief Nana Patole said, as he asked the BJP leadership to take stern action against Marwah

Mpox patient under treatment recovering well: LNJP hospital

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Lok Nayak Jai Prakash (LNJP) hospital's Medical Director Suresh Kumar on Thursday shared that the mpox patient undergoing treatment at the hospital is recovering well. Elaborating on mpox, Kumar said, "Mpox is a DNA virus and its rashes typically appear on the palms, soles and skin as maculopapular lesions, which are larger and more pronounced. These can also develop into ulcerated rashes and large skin lesions." He shared that the patient with mpox at LNJP is recovering well and there is no need to panic. The Union Home Ministry had on Monday confirmed the mpox case, saying, "The individual, a young male, who recently travelled from a country experiencing ongoing mpox transmission, is currently isolated at a designated tertiary care isolation facility. The patient remains clinically stable and is without any systemic illness or comorbidities."



The ministry had stated that it was an isolated case, similar to the 30 cases reported in India from July 2022 onwards. "It is not part of the current public health emergency reported by WHO, which pertains to clade 1 of Mpox," it said. The 26-year-old patient, a resident of Haryana's Hisar, was admitted to the Delhi government-run LNJP Hospital on September 7. The case aligns with earlier risk assessments and continues to be managed according to established protocols, the home ministry had said, adding that public health measures, including contact tracing and monitoring, are actively in place to ensure the situation is contained.

Political Parties to recalibrate strategy to nullify impact of AIP on vote bank

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

With the arrival of the Chief of Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) and Parliamentarian from Baramulla, Sheikh Abdul Rashid, in Kashmir Valley on Thursday the mainstream political parties may have to recalibrate their poll strategy to nullify its impact on their traditional vote bank in the run-up to the first phase of polling on September 18. Rashid, lodged in Tihar jail since August 2019, was granted interim bail till October 2 in the terror funding case on Wednesday. Soon after stepping out of the Tihar jail in New Delhi on Wednesday Sheikh Abdul Rashid announced his party intends to contest between 35 to 40 seats in the upcoming Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections without forming coalitions with any political party. Around three dozen candidates have filed their nomination papers from different assembly constituencies in Kashmir Valley. His presence during the campaign period is set to boost the poll prospects of his party candidates. On the other hand, it may also force the other key players to calibrate their campaign strategy to counter his campaign, especially in his strong bastion of North Kashmir. Rashid's party emerged ahead of National Conference during the Lok Sabha polls on at least 14 Assembly segments. He handed over a crushing defeat to former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah by a margin of over 2 lakh votes. As was expected, soon after landing in



Srinagar, Rashid played to the galleries at every step. Moving out of the airport premises, he was deboarded from his four-wheeler and went on his knees to kiss Mother Earth. Returning home after more than five years in prison, Rashid, in his first remarks said no one needs peace more than the people of Kashmir but they want it on their conditions and not on terms set by the Centre. "We want to tell (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi that no one needs peace more than we do. But that peace will come at our conditions, not yours. Expressing gratitude to his supporters who had assembled outside the airport to welcome him, the Baramulla MP said he wants to convey to the people of Kashmir that they are not weak at all. "The people of Kashmir will win as the people of Jammu and Kashmir are on the path of truth. He later drove straight to Delina, Baramulla where he addressed a public rally. In his

trademark style, Rashid attempted to woo the jubilant crowd amid loud slogan shouting and passionate cheering. He called for an end to imprisoning Kashmiris in Tihar Jail while urging the centre to resolve the Kashmir issue once and for all. "Tihar bhejna bandh karo, Kashmir ka masla hal karo." (Stop sending us to Tihar, resolve Kashmir's issue), he said as his supporters kept cheering. Later addressing a press conference Sheikh Abdul Rashid claimed his party would extend full support to the INDIA alliance if it brought a resolution about restoration of Article 370 in the Parliament. "Let me clarify this. If the INDIA alliance gives me written assurance that it will introduce a resolution in the Parliament about restoration of Article 370, I along with my party leaders will extend full support to it." Seeking people's support Rashid appealed to the people to give him at least 40 seats in the upcoming elections in J&K. Targeting the National Conference Vice President Omar Abdullah, Er Rashid said that the NC has released a detailed manifesto promising this and that. "Why couldn't the party do the same when they were in power," he asked. He also attacked PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti continuously. Rashid said that it was the then PDP patron Mufti Muhammad Sayeed who said that voting for PDP was a must to stop BJP's entry into J&K. "Then what happened? The same PDP provided a launching pad to BJP who bulldozed our dreams," Er Rashid said.

Two men held for attack on young Army officers near Mhow in MP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ INDORE

Police on Thursday said they have arrested two of the six persons who allegedly assaulted two army officers and raped their female friend near Mhow in Madhya Pradesh. Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi slammed the BJP over the incident. The incident took place near Mhow-Mandleshwar road, 30

km from Mhow in Indore district in the wee hours Wednesday. The six men assaulted the two young army officers and raped one of their two female friends, police said. The army officers, aged 23 and 24, undergoing the Young Officers course at the Infantry School in Mhow cantonment town, had gone out for a picnic along with their two female friends. A search is underway for the other four persons allegedly involved in the attack and rape, police said.

The group of six reached the picnic spot around two a m and started assaulting one of the officers and his female friend, who were sitting in the car, police said. Upon hearing the commotion, the other officer and his woman friend, who were on a hilltop, reached the spot. After police reached the spot, the army officers and their female friends were brought to Mhow civil hospital, where a medical examination confirmed that one of the women was raped, an official

said. A case has been registered under sections 70 (gang rape), 310-2 (dacoity), 308-2 (extortion) and 115-2 (voluntarily causing hurt) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and under sections of the Arms Act based on the complaint filed by the officer. One of those arrested reportedly has a case of lost registered against him in 2016. Wednesday's incident took place in Jam Gate area of the hilly region surrounded by forests, Superintendent of Police (Rural) Hitika Vasal said

CPI(M) in quandary over next party chief election

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Race for the top job in CPI(M) has begun days ahead of the demise of Sitaram Yechury, the general secretary of the party. M A Baby, the polit bureau member from Kerala is the front runner for the post as he has set his eyes on the post of general secretary. Baby, who had won the assembly election once from Kerala and became the education minister in the government led by E K Nayanar was addressed as the Second Mundassery as he

had tried to replicate the reforms initiated by the first education minister of the State Prof Joseph Mundassery (1957-1959). "While Joseph Mundassery revolutionized the education sector in Kerala, Baby could not make any impact other than making things worse," said A Jayasankar, Kerala's veteran political critic. Baby is known more as Prakkulam Che Guevera (Prakkulam being the village where he was born and Guevera, his God). P Sujathan, a close observer of the CPI(M) politics, is of

the view that it would be a tough job for the CPI(M) to find out an alternative to Yechury. "Sitaram Yechury is known for his articulation, communication skills and was a master strategist. The truth is that there is no one in the party who could take up the position held by him," said Sujathan. The names being heard are that of Brinda Karat and Prakash Karat. "The latter may continue till the next party congress scheduled for April-May 2025 and then make way for a new person. We do not know how the

Marxists will view the possibility of Brinda Karat becoming the party boss," said Sujathan. The death of Yechury comes at a time when the CPI(M) is facing severe crisis in Kerala, the one and only State which is ruled by the party. There is a strong move in the party ousting Pinarayi Vijayan from the Chief Minister's post and it is widely believed that Baby is the main force behind this mission. Hence the chances of Vijayan and his cohorts supporting Baby for the job look bleak.

PM at CJJ's residence; BJP...

From Page 1 Meanwhile, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) MP Manoj Jha said Prime Minister Modi attending the Ganapati Puja ceremony at the CJJ's residence sends out a message that makes one "uncomfortable", adding independence of institutions "should be visible". "Independence of every

institution should not be just theoretical, it should be visible. Ganapati Puja is a very personal issue, you're going there with a camera. The message being sent out makes one uncomfortable," Jha said. He wondered why Prime Minister Modi and the CJJ released the photographs of the event.

Militarisation of frontier a big issue...

From Page 1 Describing India-China relations as "complex", Jaishankar said the ties were kind of normalised in the late 1980s and the basis for it was that there would be peace at the border. "The basis obviously for a good relationship, I would say even for a normal relationship, was that there would be peace and tranquility in the border. After things started to take a better turn in 1988, we had a

series of agreements which stabilised the border," he said. "What happened in 2020 was in violation of multiple agreements for some reasons which are still entirely not clear to us; we can speculate on it." "The Chinese actually moved a very large number of troops to the Line of Actual Control at the border and naturally in response, we moved our troops up. It was very difficult for us because we were in the middle of a Covid lockdown

at that time," he said. Jaishankar described the development as very dangerous. "Now we could see straight away that this was a very dangerous development because the presence of a large number of troops in these extreme heights and extreme cold in near proximity could lead to a mishap. And that's exactly what happened in June 2022," he said, referring to Galwan Valley clashes.

Delhi deluged as incessant...

From Page 1 On Najafgarh Road in the carriage way from Nawada towards Uttam Nagar due to ongoing work being carried out by Bombay Suburban Electric Supply (BSES) vehicular movement is affected, police said. A commuter, Rohit Tomar, an advocate said, "There was heavy jam near IHBAS hospital at Dilshad Garden. It took me half an hour more to reach Karkardooma Court for an important case

hearing." Traffic congestion was also reported on the road near Britannia flyover and Punjabi Bagh in west Delhi and in northwest Delhi's Mangolpuri flyover. Another commuter Gaurav Kumar mentioned that the traffic was affected near Haiderpur and Rohini East metro station. The ongoing road construction work on the Delhi-Gurugram Expressway led to the

blockade of both service lanes, causing slow traffic, particularly near the Sirhaul border during peak hours for the fourth consecutive days in the morning and evening. Office-goers experienced traffic jams, but the traffic police eventually managed the congestion with the help of route diversions. Several airlines also issued an advisory on their official Twitter handle alerting travellers to check the status of flight operations.

Blinken to discuss Ukraine request for greater arms use with other leaders

AP ■ WARSAW

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken is wrapping up a three-nation, Ukraine-focused European tour in Poland after hearing repeated appeals from Ukrainian officials to use Western-supplied weaponry for long-range strikes inside Russia.

Blinken traveled to Warsaw on Thursday after spending a day in Kyiv with British Foreign Secretary David Lammy during which they pledged to bring the Ukrainian requests to their leaders. President Joe Biden and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer are to meet in the United States on Friday amid signs both Washington and London are growing more receptive to allowing the Ukrainians to use their arms to hit targets farther inside Russia than previously okayed. NATO member Poland, which shares a border with Ukraine, has been supportive of the Ukrainians and Blinken is likely to hear further requests for easing weapons-use restrictions from Polish President Andrzej Duda, Prime Minister Donald Tusk and Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski.

On Wednesday, Blinken and Lammy announced that the United States and Britain had



Polish President Andrzej Duda, right, welcomes U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, left, for a meeting in Warsaw, Poland, Thursday. AP/PTI

pledged nearly \$1.5 billion in additional aid to Ukraine during their visit to Kyiv. Blinken announced more than \$700 million in humanitarian aid, while Lammy confirmed that his country would provide another \$782 million in assistance and loan guarantees. Much of the effort was aimed at bolstering the energy grid

that Russia has repeatedly pounded ahead of an expected difficult winter. Ukraine's wish list is long and non-military assistance is certainly on it, but Ukrainian officials made clear their most important ask is for easing restrictions on where Western weapons can be used. Air-raid sirens sounded repeatedly during

the visit, causing delays in their schedule and forcing them to cancel a wreath-laying ceremony. Blinken said he would bring the discussion with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy about the missiles "back to Washington to brief the president" and that Biden and Starmer will "no doubt"

talk about the issue when they meet in Washington. "Speaking for the United States, we have adjusted and adapted as needs have changed, as the battlefield has changed. And I have no doubt that we'll continue to do that as this evolves," Blinken told a news conference. His language was very similar to that which he used in May, shortly before the U.S. green lit Ukrainian use of U.S. weapons just inside Russian territory. The diplomatic visit unfolded as Russia's bigger and better-equipped army bears down on Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region and conducts aerial attacks on cities across the country using missiles, glide bombs and drones that claim many civilian casualties. But relations between Ukraine and its Western partners have been increasingly strained by Kyiv's repeated appeals for the West's authorization to use long-range weapons from the United States and other allies to strike targets deeper inside Russia. That issue took on added urgency after Russia's latest reported acquisition of ballistic missiles from Iran, but Western leaders have so far balked at Ukraine's request, fearing that, if granted, it could escalate the war.

Court seeks govt clarification on Imran Khan's military trial

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

A Pakistani high court on Thursday asked the government to clarify the uncertainty surrounding the possible military trial of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan.

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) was hearing a petition filed to prevent Khan's possible military custody and trial over his involvement in the May 9, 2023 violence in which supporters of his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party allegedly attacked military installations following his arrest.

The court raised concerns over the potential trial of a civilian in a military court, emphasising that the issue is a matter of serious concern for both the petitioner and the judiciary. During the hearing, Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb asked Assistant Attorney General Azmat Bashir Tarar to seek directions from the Attorney General's office over the issue and provide a clear response to the court. "You are saying there is no case now, but could there be one later?" the judge asked, highlighting the uncertainty surrounding the matter. The court adjourned the hearing until September

Pak province to hold talks with Taliban

Peshawar (PTI): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Amin Gandapur on Thursday said that he will send a delegation to Afghanistan for direct talks with the Taliban to address his government's concerns over terrorism, nearly a week after he sought permission from the Centre to engage in peace negotiations. Gandapur's remarks came amid a series of military operations by the Pakistan Army targeting the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. The Pakistani government has repeatedly accused the TTP of operating from sanctuaries in Afghanistan, a claim denied by the Afghan Taliban. Addressing a gathering of lawyers in Peshawar, Gandapur said that he would send a delegation of tribal leaders to Afghanistan for talks. He did not give any details. "As chief executive of the provincial government, I will engage in direct negotiations with Afghanistan to resolve the issue through negotiations," he said. Pakistan's There has been an uptick in the incidents of terrorism in Pakistan since the Taliban took over the government in Kabul in 2021, dashing hopes in Islamabad that a friendly government in Afghanistan would help to tackle militancy.

16, giving the federal government time to submit its response. PTI in a WhatsApp message also confirmed that the IHC ordered the government to file a reply on "possible military trial of Imran Khan by Sep 16". If the government denies any plans for a military trial, the petition will be rendered moot. However, if such a trial is under consideration, the court will proceed to

hear and decide the case. The 71-year-old PTI party founder has been in jail since August last year after being convicted in some of the nearly 200 cases slapped on him since his ouster in April 2022. Various government officials have been indicating about holding the military trial of Khan, but any such decision will depend on the final judgment of the Supreme Court.

Starmer plans 'major surgery' to reform country's health service

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Thursday announced plans for "major surgery" that is needed to reform the National Health Service (NHS) after a damning new review warned that the country's state-funding health service is in "serious trouble". Starmer pledged the "biggest reimagining of our NHS since its birth" in a speech after former surgeon Lord Ara Darzi's probe concluded the service is in a "critical condition" amidst surging waiting lists and a deterioration in the nation's underlying health, identifying serious and widespread problems for people accessing services.

Based on Darzi's diagnosis of the challenges facing the NHS, Starmer outlined greater digitisation, reducing care burden on the hospitals and a greater focus on prevention rather than cure as the fundamental areas of reform.

"What we need is the courage to deliver long-term reform - major surgery not sticking plaster solutions," Starmer said in his major speech at the healthcare charity King's Fund in London.

"The NHS is at a fork in the road, and we have a choice about how it should meet these



rising demands. Raise taxes on working people to meet the ever-higher costs of aging population, or reform to secure its future," he said. "We have to fix the plumbing before turning on the taps. Hear me when I say this: No more money without reform," he added. The rapid review into the taxpayer-funded service, which employs a large number of Indian doctors and nurses, had been commissioned by the newly elected Labour government soon after the July 4 general election. It sets out the problems in the NHS and themes for the government to incorporate into a 10-year plan for reforming the health service. "This government is working at pace to build a 10-year plan; something so different from anything that has come before. Instead of the top-

down approach of the past, this plan is going to have the fingerprints of NHS staff and patients all over it," said Starmer. "And as we build it together, I want to frame this plan around three big shifts - first, moving from an analogue to a digital NHS. A tomorrow service not just a today service. Second, we've got to shift more care from hospitals to communities... and third, we've got to be much bolder in moving from sickness to prevention. Only fundamental reform and a plan for the long term can turn around the NHS and build a healthy society. It won't be easy or quick. But I know we can do it," he said. Darzi is an independent House of Lords peer and practising surgeon with 30 years of experience in the NHS. He examined over 600 pieces of analysis from across the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), NHS England and external organisations during his investigation. He notes a deterioration in the nation's health over the past 15 years, with a substantial increase in the number of people living with multiple long-term conditions. At the same time, NHS waiting lists have swelled and waiting times have surged.

UK waives settlement fees, unveils new visas for bereaved partners

London (PTI): Eligible foreign nationals dealing with the death of a partner and facing financial hardship will soon be able to apply to have the application fee for settlement in the UK waived, under new rules laid out in Parliament this week.

Currently, people who wish to apply for settlement in the UK following the death of their British citizen partner are required to pay a GBP 2,885 fee, irrespective of a change in financial circumstances following a loss. Indian-origin migration and citizenship minister Seema Malhotra told Parliament on Tuesday that this fee will now be waived from October 9 as part of a "fairer and more compassionate approach" to those wishing to stay in the UK and facing acute financial vulnerability during times of grief. "Losing a loved one is a deep and unimaginable pain, all too often compounded by the immense financial strain faced by those left behind," said Malhotra. "Widows, widowers, and their dependent children who had become integral parts of our communities can now apply for a fee waiver if facing destitu-

tion, in order to settle and keep the life they have built. This marks a fairer and more compassionate approach to those unable to afford the settlement fees, but who have often worked, paid their taxes and contributed to life here in the UK, including the partners of our military veterans," she said. Those who qualify include partners on a family visa who meet the criteria for destitution, if their partner had either been a British citizen, had indefinite leave to remain in the UK, or was from the European Union (EU), Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein and had pre-settled status. Bereaved partners of members of the Armed Forces, Gurkhas or Hong Kong military unit veterans - discharged before July 1997, may also benefit from such a fee waiver. In her written statement in the House of Commons, Malhotra also announced the introduction of a new diplomatic visitor visa process as part of the UK border being transformed to include digital pre-travel checks. Under this, the current Diplomatic Visa Waivers (DVWs) will be phased out in favour of a "Diplomatic Visa Arrangement".

US to sell anti-submarine sonobuoys to India

Washington (PTI): The US has decided to sell High Altitude Anti-Submarine Warfare (HAASW) sonobuoys worth USD 52.8 million to India, a move that would enhance New Delhi's capacity to conduct anti-submarine warfare operations. Sonobuoys are air-launched, expendable, electro-mechanical sensors designed to relay underwater sounds to remote processors. These are effective and affordable antisubmarine warfare (ASW) that are capable of being used by airborne ASW warfighters. "The proposed sale will improve India's capability to meet current and future threats by enhancing its capacity to conduct anti-submarine warfare operations from its MH-60R helicopters. India will have no difficulty absorbing this equipment into its armed forces," the Defence Security Cooperation Agency said in a notification to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee this week. As per the Arms Export Control Act, Congress has 30 calendar days to review the sale.

N Korea has fired ballistic missile toward sea: South

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korea fired multiple short-range ballistic missiles toward the sea on Thursday, South Korea's military said, days after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un vowed to put his nuclear force fully ready for battle with its rivals. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said it detected the missiles launched from North Korea's capital flying 360 kilometers (about 220 miles) before landing in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida instructed officials to ensure the safety of ships and aircraft, but there were no immediate reports of damage. The reported fight distances suggest the missiles were designed to attack South Korea. The South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff condemned the launches as a provocation that poses a serious threat to peace on the Korean Peninsula. The launches were North Korea's first public weapons firing activities in more than two months. On July 1, North Korea claimed to have tested a new tactical weapon capable of delivering a "super-large" 4.5 ton-class warhead.

Last month, Kim had still held off from missile tests or other provocative military demonstrations as the United States and South Korea conducted large-scale summertime military exercises. North Korea has previously reacted with other major U.S.-South Korean military training with its own weapons tests. But prior to the U.S.-South Korean exercises, Kim staged a big ceremony in Pyongyang to mark the delivery of 250 nuclear-capable missile launchers to frontline military units and called for a ceaseless expansion of his country's nuclear program. The Aug. 4 event added to concerns about Kim's push to deploy battlefield nuclear weapons along the tense border with South Korea.

Billionaire takes pvt spacewalk from SpaceX capsule

Cape Canaveral (AP): A billionaire stepped out for the first private spacewalk Thursday, teaming up with SpaceX on the daring endeavour hundreds of miles above Earth. Tech entrepreneur Jared Isaacman and his crew waited until their capsule was depressurised before popping open the hatch. Isaacman emerged first, joining a small elite group of spacewalkers who until now had included only professional astronauts from a dozen countries. "Back at home, we all have a lot of work to do. But from here, it sure looks like a perfect world," said Isaacman. The commercial spacewalk was the main focus of the five-day flight financed by Isaacman and Elon Musk's company, and the culmination of years of development geared toward settling Mars and other planets. All four on board donned SpaceX's new spacewalking suits to protect themselves from the harsh vacuum. They launched on Tuesday from Florida, rocketing farther from Earth than anyone since NASA's moonwalkers. The orbit was reduced by half - to 460 miles (740 kilometres) - for the spacewalk. This first spacewalking test, expected to last close to two hours, involved more stretching than walking.

Spanish PM meets exiled Venezuelan opp leader

AP ■ MADRID

Venezuela's opposition presidential candidate Edmundo González met with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez on Thursday, four days after fleeing to the European country in a negotiated deal with Nicolás Maduro's government. González's flight to exile - after weeks of seeking refuge in the embassies of the Netherlands and Spain in Caracas - had dealt a major blow to millions who placed their hopes in his opposition campaign. His supporters in Venezuela and beyond, along with the United States gov-

ernment, consider him the legitimate winner of the July 28 presidential election. Sánchez, who was on a trip to China when González arrived, posted a video of their meeting Thursday on the social media platform X. The two are seen strolling together in the Moncloa Palace gardens in Madrid. Spain has welcomed González as a sign of its "humanitarian commitment and solidarity with Venezuelans," Sánchez said in his post. On Wednesday, the Spanish Parliament approved a proposal from the conservative Popular Party urging Sánchez's left-wing coalition

government to recognise the opposition leader as the elected president of Venezuela. The motion is non-binding. Spain's government supports the European Union position of demanding that Maduro make public the raw polling results before the bloc recognises a winner. The European Parliament will debate the outcome of the Venezuelan elections on Tuesday in Strasbourg, France. González's arrival has further strained relations between Madrid and Caracas. On Wednesday, Jorge Rodríguez, president of Venezuela's National Assembly, asked

for "the immediate rupture of all diplomatic relations, of all commercial relations." "Let all the representatives of the Spanish government delegation leave, and let us bring our own," Rodríguez said in the Assembly and also called for "the immediate closure of all commercial activities of Spanish companies." González, who was Venezuela's former ambassador in Argentina during the presidency of late Hugo Chávez, landed Sunday at a military airport near Madrid. He travelled aboard a Spanish military plane. Following the election, González and the

Venezuelan opposition's de facto leader, María Corina Machado, went into hiding as security forces rounded up more than 2,000 people - many of them young Venezuelans - who spontaneously took to the streets to protest Maduro's alleged theft of the election. With his flight into exile, González joined the swelling ranks of opposition stalwarts who once fought Maduro before seeking asylum abroad in the face of a brutal crackdown. In Spain, he joins at least four former presidential hopefuls who were imprisoned or faced arrest for defying Maduro's rule.

Pope lauds S'pore's skyscrapers, calls to remember migrants

Singapore (AP): Pope Francis on Thursday praised Singapore's economic strength as a testament to human ingenuity but urged the city-state to look after the weakest, too, especially foreign workers, as he opened the final leg of his tour through some of Asia's poorest countries in one of the world's richest. Singapore celebrated his arrival by unveiling a new hybrid orchid named for him, the "Dendrobium His Holiness Pope Francis." Presented during an official welcome ceremony, the orchid "exudes a serene and pure beauty" of ivory white petals with a pink tinge at the center, according to

the National Parks Board. Francis arrived in Singapore from East Timor and began his official program Thursday by meeting with President Tharman Shanmugaratnam and Prime Minister Lawrence Wong before addressing government authorities and the diplomatic corps at the National University of Singapore. There, Francis marveled at Singapore's modern skyscrapers "that seem to rise from the sea" and the government's commitment to providing public housing and quality education and health care to its people. But he urged authorities to beware of rewarding excel-

lence at all costs, a reference to Singapore's highly competitive work and educational culture. "I would like to highlight the risk entailed in focusing solely on pragmatism or placing merit above all things, namely the unintended consequence of justifying the exclusion of those on the margins from benefiting from progress," he said. In a common appeal from history's first Latin American pope, Francis called especially for dignified pay and conditions for migrant workers, who have helped build Singapore into one of the world's most advanced economic powerhouses. "These workers contribute a

great deal to society and should be guaranteed a fair wage," Francis said. Singapore has no minimum wage policy for locals or foreigners. Singapore is the last stop of Francis' 11-day tour that is the longest and farthest of his papacy after earlier stops in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and East Timor. The economic disparities were obvious upon arrival Wednesday as Francis landed in Singapore's high-tech airport aboard the lone aircraft belonging to Aero Dili, the national carrier of East Timor, where around 42% of its people live below the poverty line.



Pope Francis gestures to attendees after presiding over a holy mass at the SportsHub National Stadium in Singapore on Thursday. AP/PTI

Retail inflation rises to 3.65 per cent, remains within RBI target

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Retail inflation marginally increased to 3.65 per cent in August and remained within the Reserve Bank's target of 4 per cent, the government data showed on Thursday. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) based retail inflation was 3.6 per cent in July 2024 and 6.83 per cent in August 2023. Inflation in the food basket was 5.66 per cent in August, marginally up from 5.42 per cent in July, according to the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO). The inflation also was below 4 per cent in July. The government has tasked the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to ensure that the CPI inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side.



The combined inflation (rural and urban) fell to 3.65% in August 2024, compared to 6.83% in August 2023. However, it has increased by 110 basis points when compared to the previous month's 3.54%. This was the second time in nearly five years that overall retail inflation fell below the Reserve Bank of India's 4% inflation target. The last time was July 2024. The RBI's inflation target is

4% with a tolerance band of +/- 2 percentage points, meaning that the target is within the range of 2% to 6%. Urban inflation fell to 3.14% in August 2024, compared to 6.59% in August 2023. Rural inflation fell to 4.16% in August 2024, compared to 7.02% in August 2023. The combined Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI), which shows food inflation was 5.66% in August 2024, compared to 9.94% in August

2023. Urban food inflation fell to 4.99% in August 2024, compared to 10.42% in August 2023. Rural food inflation fell to 6.02% in August 2024, compared to 9.67% in August 2023. Tomatoes have exhibited the lowest year on year inflation (-47.91%) as well as lowest MoM change in index (-28.8%). The prices of vegetables rose the most by 10.71%, compared to the other item categories. In urban areas, the rise was 13.22% and in rural areas, it was 13.22%. Bihar witnessed the highest combined inflation among all Indian states in August 2024 at 6.62%, followed by Odisha at 5.63% and Assam at 5.03%. On the other hand, Telangana had the lowest combined inflation of 2.02% followed by Uttarakhand at 2.37% and Delhi at 2.52%.

Nifty hits lifetime high

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex hit the historic 83,000 level for the first time on Thursday and the Nifty settled at a lifetime high after a rally in blue-chip shares, surge in global markets and foreign fund inflows. A sharp fag-end rally drove the 30-share BSE Sensex to the 83,000 level for the first time. The barometer surged 1,593.03 points or 1.95 per cent to hit its lifetime intra-day peak of 83,116.19 in the last hour of trade. The index closed at a record high of 82,962.71, up by 1,439.55 points or 1.77 per cent. The NSE Nifty surged 470.45 points or 1.89 per cent to settle at a record closing high of 25,388.90. The benchmark hit its fresh all-time intra-day high of 25,433.35, a jump of 514.9 points or 2 per cent. Nifty and Sensex opened higher and traded in a range till late afternoon trade. Among the 30 Sensex firms, Bharti Airtel, NTPC, JSW



Steel, Mahindra & Mahindra, Adani Ports, Tech Mahindra, Larsen & Toubro, Tata Steel, State Bank of India and Kotak Mahindra Bank were the biggest gainers. Nestle emerged as the only laggard from the blue-chip pack. While the session remained subdued for the most part, strong buying in heavyweight stocks across sectors propelled the indices sharply upward in

the final hours, Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Hong Kong settled with significant gains while Shanghai ended marginally lower. European markets were trading higher. Wall Street ended with sharp gains on Wednesday. Latest US inflation numbers are mildly positive for markets. August CPI inflation coming at 0.2 per cent has brought down the

12-month inflation to 2.5 per cent from 2.9 per cent earlier. "This paves the way for a rate cut by the Fed in September. But since core inflation continues to remain high at 3.2 per cent the Fed is likely to be cautious and refrain from a 50 bps rate cut, finally settling for a 25 bps rate cut," said V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 1,755 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data. FIIs turning buyers in the cash market during the last three days is another indication that the market will continue to be resilient, Vijayakumar added. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 1.39 per cent to USD 71.59 a barrel. The BSE benchmark dropped 398.13 points or 0.49 per cent to settle at 81,523.16 on Wednesday. The NSE Nifty declined 122.65 points or 0.49 per cent to 24,918.45.

DGCA orders audit of flying schools

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has ordered a special audit of flying training organisations in the country amid recent accidents involving training aircraft. The audit of flying training organisations (FTOs) will be conducted in three phases from September to November 2024. It will cover 33 FTOs. "This audit aims to thoroughly assess the safety standards, operational procedures, and systemic deficiencies within flying training organisations to ensure the highest levels of safety and compliance," DGCA said in a release on



Thursday. The regulator said the move follows a series of recent training aircraft incidents that have sparked concerns regarding the compliance of FTOs with respect to the established aviation regulations and safety protocols. The last such special audit was conducted in 2022. "The audit will scrutinise each FTO's adherence to DGCA's regulatory standards, including aircraft maintenance, airworthiness, and training operations," the release said.

India, China talk aviation cooperation

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India and China on Thursday discussed ways to strengthen cooperation in the civil aviation sector, including resumption of direct flights between the two countries. Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu, Civil Aviation Secretary Vumlungmang Vualnam and other senior officials met with representatives from China on the sidelines of the Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Civil Aviation in the national capital. In a post on X, Naidu said he along with senior officials had a courtesy meeting with a Chinese delegation led by Song Zhiyong. The meeting focused on

exchange of views regarding "further strengthening civil aviation cooperation between the two countries, especially promoting early resumption of scheduled passenger flights between us," the minister said in the post. Later, Naidu told reporters that the Chinese side mentioned about resumption of direct flights but no decision has been taken. A decision will be taken after discussions with the external affairs ministry and other stakeholders. Currently, there are no direct flights between India and China. The services stopped at the time of coronavirus pandemic. IndiGo and Air India had flight services to China.

Oil prices drop, fuel costs may follow

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Price of international crude oil - the raw material for making petrol and diesel - dropped to a three-year low before marginally recovering but a revision in domestic petrol and diesel rates is likely only if lower rates are sustained, industry sources and officials said. Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures fell below USD 70 per barrel on Tuesday - the first time since December 2021 - but gained thereafter after Hurricane Francine hit crude supply in the Gulf of Mexico. Brent rose above USD 71 a barrel on Thursday while West Texas Intermediate advanced to trade near USD 68. Petrol and diesel prices - which have been on a freeze for over two years now



barring a pre-election reduction earlier this year - will be revised if the declining trend sustains, they said. Oil Secretary Pankaj Jain speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an event here, said the oil companies will be taking appropriate decisions on reducing fuel prices if international oil prices were

to settle lower on a sustained basis. Industry sources said the three state-owned fuel retailers are making good profits on petrol and diesel but want the trend to continue before deciding on a revision. "They don't want a situation where they cut prices and are faced with a situation where international prices rise," an official explained. Brokerage Emkay Global Financial Services in a note said it expects Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) to cut petrol and diesel prices before elections in Maharashtra. "We believe there are expectations of a retail price cut in auto-fuels for oil

marketing companies (OMCs) amid the upcoming state elections. While we do not rule out the same, the model code of conduct for J&K and Haryana is on for a month. There could be a cut only toward Diwali and before Maharashtra election's model code of conduct, which could be Rs 2 per litre each for petrol and diesel and possibly coupled with an equivalent increase in excise duty," it said. However, during the next month, OMCs can earn supernormal marketing margins, covering LPG under-recoveries and inventory losses to a large extent. "We estimate implied July-September gross marketing margins at Rs 9.7/8 per liter for petrol/diesel vs Rs 4.7/3.8 in Q1 (April-June) and a normative range of Rs 3.5-4 each," it said.

Health cover for age 70 and above to bring relief to million families: Industry

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government's move to provide health coverage to all persons aged 70 years and above will bring much-needed relief to millions of families and is a significant milestone in providing essential healthcare services to the elderly, industry players said on Thursday. The Union Cabinet had on Wednesday approved health coverage to all persons aged 70 years and above under the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) irrespective of their income, benefiting around six crore senior citizens. The Rs 5 lakh free

health insurance cover would benefit senior citizens of around 4.5 crore families. Reacting to the announcement, Healthcare industry body NATHEALTH President Abhay Soi said, "We believe this initiative will bring much-needed relief to millions of families and strengthen India's position as a leader in inclusive healthcare." The benefit package needs to be tailored to the population segment so that it encompasses the entire continuum of care, he said, adding that NATHEALTH is ready to support the government with the rollout. Similarly, Organisation of

Pharmaceutical Producers of India (OPPI) Director General Anil Matai described the initiative as "a significant milestone in providing essential healthcare services to the elderly." "It is undoubtedly a crucial step towards fostering a more inclusive healthcare ecosystem and OPPI welcomes the move," he added. Matai further said that while this initiative marks a major advancement in healthcare accessibility, OPPI takes this opportunity to emphasise the importance of including the 'Missing Middle,' those who are currently excluded from both government and private



health insurance schemes, as part of the AB PM-JAY. "These individuals represent a segment that must be

brought into the fold of financial protection," he asserted. Welcoming the government's move, Medical Technology Association of India (MTAI) Chairman Pavan Choudhary said the decision to extend health coverage to all senior citizens aged 70 and above - irrespective of income under AB PM-JAY is commendable. "MTAI, having consistently advocated for this inclusion, recognises this move as a landmark step toward equitable healthcare for India's ageing population," he added. Paras Health Group Chief Operating Officer Santy Sajan described the government's

step as a much-needed step towards ensuring that India's elderly population has access to essential healthcare services. "As India's senior population grows, the demand for geriatric care is increasing, and this initiative is a timely response to that need. By providing comprehensive health coverage to our senior citizens, the scheme not only alleviates the financial burden on families but also reinforces the importance of accessible healthcare for all age groups," he added. Similarly, FICCI (Health Services) President Harsh Mahajan said, "As our elderly population grows, so does the

need for specialised geriatric care, and this expansion will enable more families to access essential services without the burden of overwhelming medical expenses." However, he said, expanding the beneficiary base by such a significant margin presents real-life challenges, particularly regarding the viability of the scheme for smaller and medium-sized hospitals. "These institutions often operate on tight margins, and the added pressure of accommodating a larger patient base, especially with senior citizens requiring more intensive care, could strain their resources," Mahajan

WhatsApp Business introduces verified badge

PTI ■ MUMBAI

With more businesses embracing messaging to engage with their customers, Meta on Thursday announced a slew of new features and programmes including full availability of verified badge - a trust marker for small businesses to establish credibility and credentials with consumers. At the WhatsApp Business Summit in Mumbai, Meta also spotlighted Artificial Intelligence tools for enhancing the messaging experience. To start with, Meta will make it easy to activate AI directly from WhatsApp Business app to enable businesses to engage more efficiently with their customers - it has recently started testing this in India, and says early results are exciting. The US social media giant also announced customised messages on WhatsApp Business app, as it pledged commitment to supporting the growth of small businesses in India. Meta said the line up of features and updates will help businesses across the country



build a presence and create great in-chat experiences for customers while driving performance ahead of the upcoming festive season. It also announced WhatsApp Bharat Yatra - an outreach to various tier 2 and 3 cities in India for offering on-ground, in-person training to small businesses. Under the initiative, it will train small businesses in setting up their WhatsApp Business accounts, creating catalogs, educating them on how to set up ads that click to WhatsApp, among others. Meta India, Vice President Sandhya Devanathan noted: "The way we WhatsApp a business has only continued to grow. The manner in which Indians are WhatsApping businesses is second to none." According to the platform, the ease of WhatsApp has placed it at the centre of India's digital transformation, helping businesses with ideas and new models of growth.

Industrial output growth slows down

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's industrial production growth slowed down to 4.8 per cent in July this year mainly due to poor show by mining and manufacturing sectors, according to official data released on Thursday. The factory output, measured in terms of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) witnessed a growth of 6.2 per cent in July 2023. India's Index of Industrial Production increased by 4.8 per cent in July 2024, an official statement said. The data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) showed that the manufacturing sector's output grew 4.6 per cent in July 2024 against 5.3 per cent in the year-ago month. Mining production rose by 3.7 per cent and power output increased 7.9 per cent in July 2024. In the April-July period, the IIP grew 5.2 per cent against 5.1 per cent in the year-ago period.

Tata Power offers settlement chance at National Lok Adalat



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (Tata Power-DDL), a leading power utility supplying electricity to the populace of over seven million in North Delhi, is participating in a National Lok Adalat in association with Delhi State Legal Services Authority (DSLISA) on Saturday, to settle cases of electricity theft and disconnected connections. In case of a default, the company will be obliged to initiate criminal/ civil proceedings against the consumers under the relevant provisions of Electricity Act, 2003 and DERC Regulations. Consumers can pay their bills through various means, such as Cheque, Demand Draft (DD), Debit Card, Credit Card and various online modes, or Cash.

Registered litigants should carry their Photo ID, along with a copy of theft bill or disconnected connection," Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (Tata Power-DDL), said in a statement. "This is a good opportunity for consumers seeking amicable on-the-spot settlement of power theft cases and disconnected connections. In case of a default, the company will be obliged to initiate criminal/ civil proceedings against the consumers under the relevant provisions of Electricity Act, 2003 and DERC Regulations. Consumers can pay their bills through various means, such as Cheque, Demand Draft (DD), Debit Card, Credit Card and various online modes, or Cash.

Soyabean oil imports surge amid price drop

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's crude soyabean oil imports reached a seasonal high of 4,54,639 tonnes in August, even as local soyabean prices have dropped below the minimum support price (MSP), industry body Solvent Extractors Association (SEA) said on Thursday. According to SEA, crude soyabean oil imports in August 2023 stood at 3,57,890 tonnes. The share of non-palm oils, including soyabean oil, made up 48 per cent of the total vegetable oil imports. The surge in imports comes as local soyabean prices dropped below the MSP, raising concerns about farmers' income with the new crop's arrival expected in the coming weeks. SEA praised the government's efforts to procure soyabean at MSP in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka, but suggested increasing import duties on crude and refined edible oils by 20 to 25 per cent across the board as a more effective solution. "This



will translate into remunerative price to the farmers for his produce and the market forces will be able to pay above MSP price to the farmers and at the same time the government does not have to procure at MSP," SEA said in a statement. The industry body noted that in the last two months, soyabean ex-mandi prices were Rs 550-600 per quintal below the MSP of Rs 4,892 per quintal causing unrest among farmers. However, total vegetable oil imports declined to 15.63 lakh tonnes in August from 18.66 lakh tonnes a year ago. In the non-palm oils segment, crude sunflower oil imports fell 22.34 per cent to 2.84 lakh tonnes in August.

KS Rana named trade commissioner, Sultanate of Oman



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Dr. KS Rana who had been Vice Chancellor of various universities and Institutions as well as advisor to various ministries of the Government of India has been appointed as Trade Commissioner of the Sultanate of Oman. Addressing the India-Oman Trade Conference on Thursday attended by Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman HE Issa Saleh Abdullah Alshibani, diplomats, delegates from UNO countries, Rana said today is a historical day in the relations between India and Oman as the Sultanate of Oman recently visited to India. Rana welcomed the initiatives of Gol and further added that on behalf of all India GCC Council- Oman as Trade Commissioner he will help build and strengthen trade spanning thousands of years.



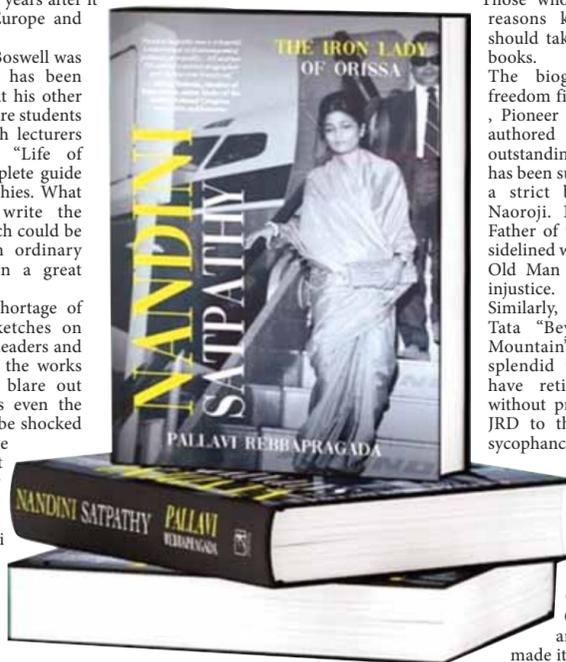
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF NANDINI SATPATHY RETOLD

NANDINI SATPATHY, former union minister and chief minister of Orissa was one who lived during the days of titans of Indian politics. Though not a leader in the true sense of the word, she too had her successes and failures. Nandini's life sketch is introduced to the readers 18 years after her demise but she had disappeared from public life much earlier. Author **PALLAVI REBBAPRAGADA** deserves kudos for bringing Nandini back amongst us.

BY KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

The art of writing a book, whether it is novel, essays, short stories, poetry or history is a job of creativity. It is the writer's hands-on experiences or tough realities he/she faced in life that come out as literary works. Lessons one learnt from the course of life, certain incidents which leave unforgettable experiences in the mind and conversations with individuals who leave an impact in the heart are the epicenters of these literary works. One who sets out to write the life-sketch of eminent persons should have first hand interaction with the subject. Those experiences alone would help the writer to come out with something new that would remain etched in the minds of readers for decades to come. Dr Samuel Johnson is rated as the most distinguished man of letters in English history. Johnson (1709-1784) was a literary critic par excellence and he was the trendsetter in this field. His style and thought process has resulted in the Samuel Johnson's school of criticism and continues to be the benchmark of this field of literature. But what is equally important is the biography of Johnson authored by James Boswell, a lawyer and writer. Scotland-born James Boswell wrote "Life of Samuel Johnson" which was published in 1791 based on the series of interviews and dialogues he had with Johnson. This biography stands out as

the "most famous single work of biographical art in the world of literature" even after 223 years after it hit book stalls across Europe and US. It cannot be stated that Boswell was a genius as not much has been heard or discussed about his other literary pursuits. Literature students were told by the English lecturers to compulsorily read "Life of Samuel Johnson", a complete guide on how to write biographies. What Boswell did was to write the biography in a style which could be comprehended by even ordinary people. This was born a great literary work. In India, there is no shortage of biographies and life-sketches on freedom fighters, social leaders and politicians. But most of the works are hagiographies and blare out qualities of the subjects even the latter themselves would be shocked to hear. Books on the Father of the Nation, first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, his daughter and late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi are proof of this kind of works. Dhananjay Keer (1913-1983) is unique among the Indian biographers and he chose his subjects meticulously. His works on Veer Savarkar and Dr Ambedkar are path



breaking books as he had personal contacts with these great sons of India. Those who lambast Savarkar for reasons known to them only should take time and read Keer's books. The biography of the great freedom fighter Dadabhai Naoroji, Pioneer of Indian Nationalism, authored by Dinyar Patel is an outstanding work as the author has been successful in maintaining a strict balance in describing Naoroji. Naoroji, was the real Father of the Nation. But he was sidelined with the honorific Grand Old Man of India! It was gross injustice. Similarly, the biography of JRD Tata "Beyond The Last Blue Mountain" by R M Lala is a splendid work. Lala could not have retired from the scene without presenting the unknown JRD to the world. There is no sycophancy or prolix throughout this book and this made it interesting. The book remains memorable as it was written by Lala, a close associate of the Grand Old Man of Indian Corporates. Of late our politicians and businessmen have made it a point to publish their biographies by hiring writers. Needless to say that these works would

not be read even by the persons who review the same. There are people whose biographies and life-sketches should be written. This is because they serve as a beacon of light for the readers. A biography of Nandini Satpathy, the former chief minister of Orissa has been published by Simon and Schuster and authored by Pallavi Rebbapragada, a journalist and public policy consultant based in New Delhi. It is a good mission as nothing much has been heard about Nandini Satpathy since 1980 as she withdrew from active politics and faded out since her rejoining the Congress. Nandini had an uneventful career at the Center as deputy minister for information and broadcasting. Those were the days when Akashvani was described as Indirawani because the babus in Mandi House preferred to pay obeisance to the Prime Minister than their profession as broadcasters. Nandini returned to Orissa in 1972 and was crowned as chief minister at the instance of Indira Gandhi. Her tenure saw hundreds getting imprisoned for questioning the declaration of internal emergency. By December 1976, towards the fag end of emergency, Nandini quit the Congress along with Jagjivan Ram, Chandra Sekhr, Mohan Dharia and Hemavati Nandan Bahuguna to form Congress For Democracy. The slogan coined by the opponents of Indira Gandhi at that period read like this: "Jagjivan Poyi, Jivan Poyi, Bahuguna Poyi, Gunavum Poyi, Nandini Poyi,

Nanavum Poyi" which was the Malayalam for "With Jagjivan's exit, the party lost its life, With Bahuguna's exit, the party lost quality and with Nandini gone, the party lost the last vestige of whatever reputation". To be candid, Nandini Satpathy's name hogged the national limelight when she left the Congress party. Had she been effective as chief minister of Orissa, the State should have made giant strides in development and progress. But Orissa remains one of the least developed regions in India. A thorough probe should be held on how the politicians managed to make Orissa remain as a poverty stricken State despite its vast natural resources and sufficient assistance from the Center. The author has used theatrics in the narration to sell Satpathy to the readers. Her claim that Nandini Satpathy was the Iron Lady of Orissa is far-fetched. The designation Iron Lady was used by international experts to describe Gold Meir, the fourth Prime Minister of the State of Israel (1969-1974). Perhaps, the over dependence on TV anchorpersons might have put the author in a minefield of wrong information. Biju Patnaik would have been an ideal topic for her to write about since not much has been written about the titan from Eastern India.

NANDINI SATPATHY
Pallavi Rebbapragada
Publisher: Simon & Schuster India
Ptice: INR 899/

NEW RELEASES

by Rupa Publications India and Aleph Book Company

Autocrats: Charisma, Power and Their Lives

RAJIV DOGRA

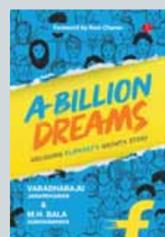
Rajiv Dogra's *Autocrats: Charisma, Power, and Their Lives* offers a penetrating exploration into the world of authoritarian leaders. The book dissects how such leaders' cults of personality take root and endure, revealing their psychological profiles, private lives and the progression of tyranny through history. It poses uncomfortable questions about the nature of autocrats and their impact on their nations. This meticulously researched work blends elegance with depth, exposing the dark forces behind authoritarian rule and the societal fears they evoke. A must-read for those seeking to understand the global phenomenon of autocratic power.



(Price: INR 795, Pages: 352)

A Billion Dreams: Decoding Flipkart's Growth Story

Varadharaju Janardhanan and M.H. Bala Subrahmanya



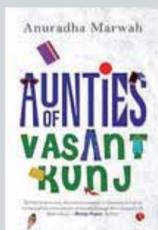
A Billion Dreams charts the extraordinary growth of Flipkart, from its humble beginnings as an online bookstore founded by Binny Bansal and Sachin Bansal to becoming a major player in India's e-commerce sector. The book reveals how Flipkart's innovative approach and culture of corporate entrepreneurship propelled it from a start-up to a decacorn. It highlights the company's impact on India's startup ecosystem, including its strategic acquisitions and role in fostering new ventures. This engaging account is perfect for those interested in entrepreneurship and the secrets behind Flipkart's success.

(Price: INR 395, Pages: 176)

Aunties of Vasant Kunj

ANURADHA MARWAH

Aunties of Vasant Kunj by Anuradha Marwah humorously follows three women- Shailaja, Mrs. Gandhi and Dini- whose lives intersect in the bustling Delhi neighborhood of Vasant Kunj. As they grapple with personal challenges like a predatory boss, a cheating spouse and an irresistible but unsuitable lover, they find themselves navigating a whirlwind of Buddhist chanting, activism, and fermented drinks. This witty and engaging novel offers a vibrant peek into middle-class Delhi, exploring how these women confront their identities and desires amidst the chaos of their everyday lives.



(Price: INR 395, Pages: 304)

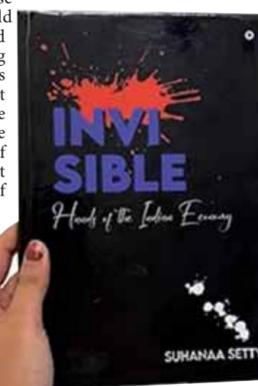
The Silent Contributors to India's Economic Growth

Suhanaa Setty reveals the vital yet unrecognised labour of women in India. Her book *Invisible - Hands of the Indian Economy* challenges traditional economic measures, spotlighting the essential contributions of unpaid work that support both families and the economy, writes **SAKSHI PRIYA**

Suhanaa Setty's debut book, *Invisible - Hands of the Indian Economy*, is a compelling and insightful examination of the often-overlooked contributions of women to India's economy. At just 16 years old, Setty offers a powerful critique of traditional economic frameworks, highlighting how the labour of countless women remains unrecognised in standard economic measures such as GDP. Her work is both a poignant exploration of personal stories and a significant challenge to conventional notions of economic value. The book focuses on the lives of 22 women from diverse backgrounds whose essential, yet unpaid, work is crucial to the functioning of both their families and the broader economy. Setty uses personal anecdotes and striking black-and-white photography to vividly illustrate these stories. Through these narratives, she contrasts the visible, often well-compensated labour found in offices and factories with the invisible, unpaid labour performed in homes and informal sectors. This approach serves as a powerful

reminder of the importance of recognising and valuing work that sustains the economy but is frequently taken for granted. A central strength of the book lies in its critique of the National Income Accounting (NIA) systems, which fail to account for the economic contributions of women's unpaid labour. Setty adeptly demonstrates how traditional economic measures overlook crucial aspects of economic activity, particularly those related to household management and caregiving. By highlighting these gaps, Setty challenges readers to rethink what constitutes economic value and to consider a more inclusive definition of productivity that encompasses all forms of labour. Setty's reflections on her mother's sacrifices add a poignant emotional depth to the narrative. She recounts how her mother left a promising career to manage the household and care for the family

- an experience that profoundly shaped Setty's understanding of the value of care work. These personal insights enrich the book and provide a lens through which the broader issue of undervalued labour is examined. The stories of the 22 women featured in the book, such as Ratna, a construction worker who is paid less than her male counterparts and Garima, a business owner balancing her



entrepreneurial ambitions with unpaid family care, are presented with empathy and respect. Setty portrays these women not as just statistics but as individuals with their own struggles, aspirations and contributions. This humanising approach makes the book more than just an academic critique, it serves as a tribute to the resilience and strength of women who significantly contribute to their communities despite facing considerable barriers. The visual elements of the book, including the evocative black-and-white photographs, enhance its impact by providing a tangible connection to the stories being told. The images capture moments of both work and reflection, helping readers appreciate the real, everyday labour performed by these women. This visual storytelling underscores the book's central message: that behind every overlooked contribution is a person whose work deserves recognition and respect. While Setty's book does not offer specific policy recommendations, it

effectively prompts readers to question entrenched societal norms and economic assumptions. By raising questions about why certain types of work are valued over others, the book encourages a broader discussion on how to more accurately reflect the value of all forms of labour in economic metrics. *Invisible - Hands of the Indian Economy* is a significant and thought-provoking addition to the discourse on gender, economics, and social justice. Setty's ability to blend emotional storytelling with a critical examination of economic systems makes this book a powerful call to action. It urges readers to acknowledge and value the invisible labour that supports both families and the broader economy. For anyone interested in gender equality, social justice and the future of economic measurement, Setty's debut is an essential read that promises to challenge and inspire.

INVISIBLE HANDS OF THE INDIAN ECONOMY
Author : Suhanaa Setty
Publisher: NotionPress
Price: INR 799

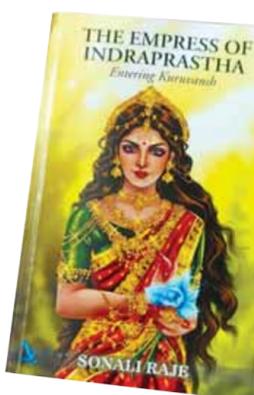
DRAUPADI'S MEMOIRS

A new perspective on mythic fiction

In *The Empress of Indraprastha*, Sonali Rajee brings a refreshing contemporary voice to one of the most complex female characters in Indian epics - Draupadi writes **SANJAY CHANDRA**

Through her first-person narrative, Rajee explores the layers of Draupadi's life, from her enigmatic marriage to the five Pandavas to her strategic foresight in a hostile world. With easy-to-follow language and modern mythic fiction style, Rajee's debut offers a fresh take on ancient tales, appealing to readers of all ages. Draupadi is one of the most polarizing characters in Indian epics—adored and maligned in equal measure. Her silent acceptance of her mother-in-law Kunti's words, which made her the shared wife of five men, remains puzzling to many. Equally difficult to comprehend are her dismissive remarks towards Karna, rejecting him as low-born

during her swayamvar, despite her intelligence. *The Empress of Indraprastha*, the first book in Sonali Rajee's five-part series, opens with preparations for Draupadi's wedding. Draupadi recalls her mother's empowering words: she has the right to refuse any suitor, even if they succeed in the challenges set for her swayamvar. Her mother's strength leaves a deep impression on Draupadi, shaping her into a strong-willed woman. The story also introduces her twin brother Dhrishtadyumna, both born from a sacred fire, and Shikhandi, her older transgender sibling, who leads the army—an indication of the gender inclusivity of their times. The swayamvar becomes a pivotal



moment when Draupadi refuses to let Karna attempt the challenge, leading to Arjuna's triumph. However, Draupadi's life takes an unexpected turn when Kunti unknowingly orders her sons to share whatever they have brought home, including Draupadi. While shocked by this command, Draupadi soon realizes the deeper need for unity among the brothers to navigate a dangerous world. Her acceptance is portrayed as both strategic and pragmatic. As the story unfolds, Draupadi's foresight comes into play. She repeatedly urges her husbands to seek partition, a move that eventually grants them a kingdom—though not as they imagined. The

Pandavas are given Khandavaprastha, a barren wasteland, but with confidence in their abilities, they set out to build a mighty empire. Sonali Rajee's *The Empress of Indraprastha* is told in the first person, offering Draupadi's own perspective on the events of her life. The 138-page book, part of a new genre of contemporary mythic-fiction, is accessible and engaging for readers of all ages. Rajee's scientific background and experience as an associate professor of chemistry add a unique depth to her storytelling, especially in revisiting a subject that has been explored by many authors before her.

PRAGGNANANDHAA, VAISHALI STAR IN INDIA'S STRONG START AT OLYMPIAD

PTI ■ BUDAPEST (HUNGARY)

Praggnanandhaa set the tone on the top board as the Indian mens team blanked Morocco 4-0, while the women romped home against Jamaica, conceding just a draw in the process, in the first round of the 45th Chess Olympiad here.

With world championship challenger D Gukesh taking a break in the opening round, Praggnanandhaa delivered the goods against Tisssir Mohamed out of a Sicilian defense game while Vidit Gujrathi, Arjun Erigaisi and P Harikrishna also pulled off comfortable wins to start off confidently on Wednesday.

In the womens section, R Vaishali and Tania Sachdev scored fine victories in the first time control itself. However, on the other two boards there was stiff resistance as Divya Deshmukh had to sweat hard for a much-needed victory while Vantika Agarwal was forced to concede a draw in the endgame against her rival. It was business as usual for the top guns despite the occasional hiccups. Top seeded United States also won 3.5-0.5 against Panama. Wesley So was the



lone American who was unable to force matters and had to be content with a draw. Armenian-American Levon Aronian came out of an early mishap to turn the tables and ensure smooth sailing for the American team into round two. As many as 99 teams in the open section started off with wins giving them all two points

each. A total of 182 teams were paired while 15 teams were still grappling to reach Budapest. Praggnanandhaa was up against a Sicilian by top Moroccan Mohamed who had only himself to blame after the opening got over. The Indian teen had a stronghold on the king side that he utilised to the fullest to take the first point home for

the team. Not very far behind was Gujrathi who was clearly in his elements. He also got an opening advantage out of a King pawn game against Jacques Elbilal as he knocked down a pawn and never looked back. Erigaisi may have had to work harder but the Indian youngster, who is currently

ranked number four in the world, was never far from winning his game. Harikrishna faced some initial resistance from Anas Mosyad in a closed Sicilian but his superior understanding of the structure gave him the vital point. The second round will see the Indian men clash with a spirited Iceland. In the womens competition,

Vaishali had no trouble in converting her position with black pieces as D Harika was rested on the top board. Tania Sachdev was in command right through and despite a little mess-up, she did not let the advantage slip through her hands playing on board four.

On the second board, there were some serious issues for Divya Deshmukh but the recently-crowned world junior girls champion proved her mettle out of an equal position. The same, however, was not the case with Vantika as she was forced in a drawn queen and pawns endgame.

The womens event features 178 teams as of now with 19 still awaited to join the extravaganza from round two onward. Indian results round 1: R Praggnanandhaa beat Tisssir Mohamed; Jacques Elbilal lost to Arjun Erigaisi; Vidit Gujrathi beat Ouakhir Mehdi Pierre; Anas Moayad lost to P Harikrishna

Women: R Vaishali beat Adani Clarke; Divya Deshmukh beat Rachel Miller; Raehanna Brown drew with Vantika Agrawal; Tania Sachdev beat Gabriella Watson.



Harmanpreet's brace hands India 3-1 win over Korea in ACT hockey

PTI ■ HULUNBUIR (CHINA)

Skipper Harmanpreet Singh scored a brace as defending champions India beat Korea 3-1 to register their fourth consecutive win at the Hero Asian Champions Trophy here on Thursday.

Paris Olympics bronze medalist India had defeated China 3-0, Japan 5-0 before thrashing last years runner-up Malaysia 8-1.

Already assured of a semifinal berth, India will play arch-rivals Pakistan on Saturday in their last league match in the six-team competition. The top four teams from the league stages will qualify for the semifinals scheduled on Monday, while the final will be played next Tuesday.

India continued their fine form and struck twice early in the first quarter to take a 2-0 lead. Aarajet Singh Hundal, who scored a brace against Malaysia, scored the first goal in the eighth minute before Harmanpreet, regarded as one of the worlds best dragflickers, converted two penalty corners in the ninth and 43rd minutes. Korea's lone goal was scored by Jihun Yang in the 30th minute from a penalty corner.

As has been the case in the tournament so far, the Indians started on an aggressive note with Aarajet handing his side the lead with a brilliant strike after being fed by Sukhjeet Singh.

A minute later, the promising Raj Kumar Pal, who struck a hat-trick against Malaysia on

Wednesday, earned a penalty corner for India and captain Harmanpreet converted the chance with a powerful dragflick.

Indias reserve goalkeeper Suraj Karkera was impressive under the bar, denying Korea on a few occasions in the second quarter.

After an impressive first quarter, the Indians seemed to have gone into a shell in the next 15 minutes as Korea dominated the proceedings with continuous forays on the rival citadel.

The Indian defence stood tall until Korea pulled a goal just at the stroke of half-time through Yang whose effort went into the net after getting a deflection from Manpreet Singh's stick from a penalty corner opportunity.

The Koreans secured back-to-back penalty corners in the 35th minute but India defended bravely. India secured their second penalty corner two minutes later but wasted the chance.

The holders managed to restore their two-goal lead in the 43rd minute when Harmanpreet scored with a powerful low flick to the left of the Korean goalkeeper Jaehan Kim.

At the start of the fourth quarter, Jarmanpreet Singh conceded a penalty corner but the Indian defence was up to the task. Thereafter, the Indians controlled the proceedings and did not let Korea create any scoring opportunity.

Virat Kohli played a big role in turning the cricket around: Ricky Ponting

PTI ■ SOUTHAMPTON

Australian great Ricky Ponting hailed former captain Virat Kohli's "big role" in revolutionizing Test cricket in India and said the countrys batters dont fear the big stage anymore, evidence of which is their success in challenging conditions overseas.

Ponting also lauded the contributions of former head coach Rahul Dravid, who stepped down from the post after guiding India to the T20 World Cup title triumph in June.

"Going back to Kohli's start of captaincy, (he) played a big role in turning the cricket around, and (Rahul) Dravid has continued the same in the recent four years. The influence of someone like that (Kohli) around a team would be great, and they've got star players," Ponting told Sky Sports.

Under Kohli's captaincy, India became the first Asian side to win a Test series



in Australia, besides recording some memorable wins elsewhere. With his aggressive captaincy, Kohli made everyone believe that the Indian team can win overseas as well, and his confidence rubbed on the side even when he was not around. During the last Test series in Australia in 2020-21, Kohli left for India after

the first match due to the birth of his daughter Vamika. But India, under the captaincy of Ajinkya Rahane, battled injuries and the absence of key players to eke out a historic 2-1 series win. "They won a game at the Gabba, which just doesnt happen. I think their batters adapt to overseas batting

conditions very well. "I dont think they're daunted by the Gabba or the Optus Oval as they may be once were. Maybe it is a selection thing, or they just dont fear the big stage anymore," observed Ponting. During Kohli's tenure, India won 40 matches and lost 17, with 11 ending

in draws out of the 68 Tests they played.

This time around, Kohli will tour Australia under longtime India colleague Rohit Sharma's captaincy. "Their fast-bowling depth is great. The leadership in the last 6-7 years has been strong."

Ponting also praised the Indian Premier League for producing players who like to play fearless cricket. "For the last 10 years being around the IPL, I've noticed that a lot of the young guys (play aggressively without fear) as the IPL is high-pressure. It is like a World Cup for them."

"Their batsmen are all very aggressive stroke-making players. They are not scared of failing," he concluded. The Aussies have failed to win the Border-Gavaskar Trophy since their last series victory in 2014-15 at home. The Indians have claimed the title on four successive instances since then, winning twice each at home and away.

Mbappé rejects mediation offer in \$60M financial dispute with PSG

AP ■ PARIS

Kylian Mbappé is not ready to compromise with Paris Saint-Germain. The France superstar rejected a mediation offer by the French soccer leagues legal commission on Wednesday in his dispute with his former club over wages and bonuses.

PSG officials and Mbappé's representatives met in Paris after Mbappé asked the commission to get involved. Mbappé, who joined Real Madrid this summer on a free transfer, says PSG owes him 55 million euros (\$60 million).

In a statement to The Associated Press, Mbappé's representatives said the player asked the commission to take note of the non-payment of three months salary and the last third of a loyalty bonus.

"The eventuality of a mediation was mentioned this morning," the statement read. "This possibility was rejected during the meeting by the players representative. A mediation would be useless to record a lack of payment that would be seen from a simple analysis of the players pay slip."

PSG, which said it was pleased with the two-hour hearing at the commission on Wednesday, said in a statement it recalled that Mbappé had formerly made "clear, repeated public and private commitments that must be respected, having been afforded unprecedented benefits by the club over seven fantastic years in Paris."

PSG has argued that it does not owe money to the World Cup winner under an agreement when Mbappé was sidelined ahead of the 2023-24 season - following his decision not to prolong his contract with the club - with the player allegedly stipulating that he would relinquish bonuses over his reintegration into the team.

"To avoid its payment obligation, the club seeks to demonstrate the existence of a secret agreement that would justify it. But the club fails to demonstrate the existence of such an agreement," Mbappé's representatives said.

PSG said that the leagues legal commission recommended "mediation between the parties," which the club said it had been seeking for months.

The French league did not respond to a request for comments from the AP. The players representatives did not say what action they will now take. In light of the current



deadlock, its likely the case will ultimately be settled by an employment court. Mbappé's relationship with PSG ended amid deep tensions during his final season at the club. PSG felt let down by Mbappé after offering him the most lucrative contract in the clubs history when he signed a new contract in 2022. But Mbappé was frustrated because he felt promises to sign key players were not kept. When he signed the new deal, he was paraded in front of fans holding up a jersey with 2025 on it. Mbappé was reportedly annoyed about this because the contract was until 2024 with the option for an extra year. Mbappé stunned PSG in June last year by informing the club he would not take the option for an extra year. With his contract effectively into its final year, it put PSG in the position of needing to sell Mbappé to avoid losing him for free when the contract expired. His PSG career could have ended in the summer of 2023 amid a tense transfer standoff. After telling the club he would not extend his contract for an extra year, Mbappé was left off a preseason tour to Japan and South Korea and forced to train with fringe players. PSG said it would rather sell him than let the player leave for free in 2024, but he rejected a 300 million euro move to Saudi team Al-Hilal. PSG left Mbappé out of the teams opening league game of that season as the standoff continued but eventually let him return to the lineup after "constructive and positive talks" between the two parties, PSG said at the time.

Chopra, Sable spearhead Indian challenge in Diamond League season finale

PTI ■ BRUSSELS

Javelin throw star Neeraj Chopra will have lofty expectations to live up to, while for steeplechaser Avinash Sable, it would be an opportunity to make up for a disappointing Olympics, when the star-studded Diamond League season finale begins here on Friday, featuring the best of world athletics.

The showpiece is spread over two days for the first time and the field features top athletes from all continents, including an unprecedented number of Olympic medal winners, who will be vying for the top honours in 32 disciplines.

Pole vault world record holder Armand DuPlantis, American sprint queen ShaCarri Richardson, and superstar hurdler Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone are among the big names who will light up the King Baudouin Stadium here. National record-holding 3000m steeplechaser Sable, after finishing 11th in the Olympic Games, will be in action on Friday in his maiden appearance in the DL season finale.

Chopra, who added a silver to his Olympic medal tally in Paris following a historic gold in the Tokyo Games, will be aiming to end his season on a high on Saturday.

It is for the first time that a DL finale features two Indians. Sable finished 14th in the overall Diamond League standings with three points from two meetings. But four athletes ranked higher than him — Lamecha Girma

(injured) of Ethiopia, Geordie Beamish of New Zealand, Ryuji Mura of Japan and Hillary Bor of the USA — pulled out, allowing him to sneak inside the top 12 cut-off. Five meetings out of the 14 in the DL series across the world this season had mens 3000m steeplechase event.

The 29-year-old Sable had finished sixth with a national record time of 8:09.91 — bettering his own earlier mark



— in the Paris leg of the Diamond League on July 7. He was 14th at the Silesia leg with a time of 8:29.96 on August 25. Chopra, on the other hand, made the DL final cut after finishing fourth in the overall standings with 14 points from his two second-place finishes in the one-day meets held in Doha and Lausanne.

Each Diamond League season finale champion is awarded a Diamond Trophy, USD 30,000

prize money and a wild card for the World Athletics Championships. The runner-up gets USD 12,000. Chopra skipped the last series meet in Zurich last week.

The 26-year-old finished two points behind Czechias Jakub Vadlech. Grenadas Anderson Peters and German star Julian Weber took the top two spots with 29 and 21 points respectively.

Chopra has been struggling with his fitness this season and is expected to meet a doctor to rectify a groin injury that has affected him all season and came in the way of his quest to hit the 90m mark.

He had won the Lausanne leg in 2022 and 2023 and finished second behind Vadlech in the winner-takes-all finale in Eugene, USA, last year.

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