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BY ₹1.53 LAKH CRORE

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

Late City Vol. 17 Issue 240
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

RANCHI, MONDAY SEPTEMBER 2, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3

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गरीब महिलाओं को
₹2000 चूल्हा
चौका खर्च देने का
2024 तक आप में से
किसी को
मिला क्या?

Celebs march for justice

KOLKATA HORROR



Ramakrishna Mission alumni wearing black dresses blow conches during a protest rally demanding justice for the victim of R G Kar Medical College and Hospital incident, in Kolkata, on Sunday

SAUGYA SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA
Don't underestimate the power of the common man. That was the message from a renowned Bengali television actress as she participated in a massive procession of cine personalities and other celebrities, demanding justice for the RG Kar Medical College doctor who was raped and murdered on duty more than three weeks ago. Indeed, the City of Joy once again transformed into the City of Rallies — a title Kolkata earned in the 1970s. The long marches, now not only growing in length but also in breadth, saw the apolitical "demand for justice" spreading like wildfire, drawing in people from all walks of life, from celebrities to students, veterans to shopkeepers. This movement continued even as reports of more rapes and molestations surfaced from various parts of the State, including hospitals. Over five thousand cine personalities,

accompanied by women and men from all walks of life, braved the hot and sultry weather to march more than three kilometres from College Square to Esplanade. They demanded justice "not only for Abhaya — the name by which the victim doctor is now known — but for the entire society that has fallen victim to this broken system. Expressing the "grit and determination" of the Swastika, a noted award-winning Bengali actress said, "Those who are trying to shield the guilty and preserve the system that is rotting all the medical colleges and the educational institutions thought things would die down automatically after people lose interest with time have just started realising that this time the public is not going to give up... because this is not a political movement... this is the movement of the people who have descended on street... enough is enough... we want justice not only for the victim but for the whole society... the whole women folk."

Director and actress Aparna Sen, who had hit the street regularly during the Singur and Nandigram movements too participated in the march. "How long the woman will continue to be treated as a commodity... why always the powers that be try to brush the crime against women under the carpet all the time... this cannot go on... we need not only justice but also an answer," she said. Ten kilometres from South a rally of three thousand alumni of Ramakrishna Mission group of schools marched carrying the portraits of Ramakrishna Paramahansa Mother Sharada Devi and Swami Vivekananda demanding justice from Gol Park to Nandan Cine complex.



JD(U) leader KC Tyagi resigns as party's national spokesperson

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Janata Dal (United) leader and former Member of Parliament (MP) KC Tyagi whose stand on various issues often highlighted his party's differences with ally BJP, resigned from the party's national spokesperson on Sunday, saying there is "little to defend the party from". In his letter to Nitish Kumar, he cited "personal reasons" for his resignation. However, sources suggested that the resignation was due to the leadership's displeasure with his recent statements on various issues. What also worked against Tyagi was a recent joint statement he issued with Opposition leaders on the Israel-Hamas war. Rajiv Ranjan Prasad will be replacing Tyagi as the new national spokesperson of the party, which is in power in Bihar under the leadership of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. This is the second time in two years he resigned or was dropped as national spokesperson of the party. He was previously dropped from the position in March 2023, although this decision was reversed within two months following Kumar's intervention.

Mammootty breaks silence over MeToo in Mollywood

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOCHI



As the Malayalam film industry continues to reel under the sexual harassment allegations, famous actor Mammootty on Sunday denied the presence of any 'power group' in the film industry and called upon everyone working in the field to be vigilant so that nothing untoward happens there. The veteran actor, in a Facebook post, praised the State Government's initiative to constitute the Justice Hema Committee and requested it to implement the recommendations of the panel by enacting necessary legislation if there were any legal hurdles. Breaking his silence on the report and the subsequent allegations that rocked the cinema world, Mammootty said he wholeheartedly welcomes and supports the recommendations and solutions in the committee's report and urged all associations in the film industry to join hands in implementing them. He said the police was vigorously investigating the complaints of sexual harassment and abuse raised by several women, so let the agency carry on with its probe honestly. The actor also said as the full report of the committee is before the court, it can decide the punishment. Mammootty, in his post, said his response was delayed as he was waiting for the organisation representing actors and its leadership to first respond to the committee report. He said cinema was the "epitome" of society and the good and the bad present among the general public

are there in the films too. He also said as society pays close attention to the film industry, anything that happens there becomes a major topic of discussion. "Therefore, those working in the film industry need to be careful and vigilant so that nothing untoward happens in this sector," the actor said, adding that "cinema must survive." His response comes a day after his colleague in the film industry, actor Mohanlal, broke his silence over the shocking revelations in the committee's report. Mohanlal too denied the existence of a power group in the industry, and had said cinema was a part of society and what happens everywhere else is happening in the film world also. He too had welcomed the panel's report and said wrongdoers should be punished if there was evidence against them.



49 minority teachers forced to resign in Bangladesh since Sheikh Hasina ouster

PTI ■ DHAKA

At least 49 teachers belonging to minority communities were forced to resign in Bangladesh after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led Government on August 5, according to a minority organisation in the violence-hit nation. The Bangladesh Chhatra Oikya Parishad, the student wing of Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad, said this at a Press conference on Saturday, The Daily Star newspaper reported. The organisation's coordinator, Sajib Sarkar, said in the students' violence that ensued for days following the ouster and fleeing of 76-year-old Prime Minister Hasina, minority teachers across the country faced physical assault, and at least 49 of them were forced to resign. However, 19 of them were reinstated later, the report quoted him as saying. Sarkar added that religious and ethnic minorities have also faced attacks, looting, assault on women, vandalism of homes, arson attacks on temples and businesses, and killings during this period. Bangladesh saw several

BJP denies AAP's charge of abducting its Councillor

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP on Sunday accused the BJP of "kidnapping" its Bawana Councillor Ram Chander, with the BJP vehemently denying the allegation even as the "abducted" member returned to his residence. These kidnapping charges came just some days before the crucial zonal ward committee elections of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), slated to be held on Wednesday. Upon his return, Chander, councillor from Ward no. 28, claimed that he was threatened on the pretext of being framed in ED-CBI cases by the opposition outfit. He along with four other AAP Councillors joined the BJP last Sunday albeit returning to AAP a few days later after he claimed seeing Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in his dream. Later, in a video message, he said that he was taken by some people to BJP headquarters. "There they threatened me saying I would be framed by ED and CBI. My son Akash called the police helpline while our senior party leaders called the police commissioner. When they (BJP) got to know about it, they sent me back home," Chander said in the video

Rain ravages Andhra, 17K people evacuated



Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu with others during a visit to a flood-hit area in Vijayawada

PTI ■ AMARAVATI (ANDHRA PRADESH)
Unprecedented rainfall in the past two days paralysed life at several places in Andhra Pradesh, especially in Vijayawada and vicinity while 17,000 rain-affected people were evacuated across the State. Budameru, a rivulet on the outskirts of Vijayawada suffered a breach and overflowed at several points on Sunday, leading to flooding at many city localities such as Ajit Singh Nagar, Swathi Theatre area, Police Nagar area and west and central constituencies. According to footage from vernacular news channels, several cars and vehicles were submerged in these areas and others also in Vijayawada due to the flooding. At Rajarajeswari Peta in the city, people were seen wading through chest-deep water on a flooded street. Addressing a Press conference at the Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (APSDMA) in Tadepalli, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu said

massive amounts of rainfall rocked the State. "Due to the heavy rain, Vijayawada and Guntur cities have been completely marooned. Vijayawada-Guntur national highway at Kaza and Vijayawada-Hyderabad national highway at Jaggaiahpetta were totally marooned," said Naidu. According to the CM, Jaggaiahpetta received 26 cm rainfall in 24 hours while 14 mandals registered over 20 cm rainfall. He said 94 more places in 14 districts received rainfall between 7 and 12 cm and added that nine rain-related deaths and one missing case were reported. Focusing on Budameru's woes, Naidu observed that rain water from the upper reaches in Khammam, Nalgonda and other places was rushing into the rivulet, resulting in the flooding of several places in Vijayawada. Noting that up to 2 lakh cusecs of rainwater entered Budameru this way, he said the state is unable to estimate as to how much more water is expected to flow in.

GANESHA CHATURTHI



Artistes give final touches to an idol of Lord Ganesha ahead of Ganesha Chaturthi festival at a roadside stall in New Delhi on Sunday

IAS coaching centre fined ₹5L for misleading ad

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has imposed a penalty of ₹5 lakh on Shankar IAS Academy for issuing misleading advertisements related to the UPSC Civil Service Exam 2022. The CCPA probe found out that Shankar IAS Academy advertised various types of courses but the information with respect to the course opted by the advertised successful candidates in above mentioned UPSC Civil Service exams results was deliberately concealed in the advertisement. This has the effect of consumers falsely believing that all the successful candidates so claimed by the institute had opted for the paid courses advertised by the institute on its website.

In other words, this practice consequently attract consumers into buying paid courses advertised by the coaching institutes. During investigation, it was also found that in 18 instances where candidates bought Preliminary course from Shankar IAS Academy, the commencement date of the course on the receipt is mentioned as 09.10.2022 but the prelims of UPSC CSE, 2022 exam had already been conducted on 05.06.2022 and result declared on 22.06.2022 which could only mean that these candidates bought Preliminary course for next UPSC CSE prelims exam i.e., 2023. Shankar IAS claimed these candidates in their total selections list of UPSC CSE 2022. The CCPA is headed by Chief Commissioner, Nidhi Khare, and Commissioner, Anupam

Mishra said the decision was taken to protect and promote the rights of consumers, ensuring that no false or misleading advertisement is made of any goods or services which contravenes the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. CCPA Chief Commissioner Nidhi Khare said that according to reports, more than 10 lakh candidates apply for UPSC civil services examination every year. "Shankar IAS Academy's advertisement was targeted towards a class of consumers — UPSC aspirants. That's why such advertisements shall contain truthful and honest representation of facts by disclosing important information in such a manner that they are clear, prominent and extremely hard to miss for consumers," she mentioned.

Centre working on 6-point plan for agriculture and farmers: Chouhan

PNS : BOKARO

Union Minister for Agriculture, Farmers' Welfare, and Rural Development, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, departed from Bokaro to Deoghar via helicopter. During a brief interception at the Bokaro airport, he was asked by the press about the BJP's commitment to providing "work for every hand and water for every field." In response, Minister Chouhan stated that the government is actively working on a 6-point plan for agriculture.

He elaborated that this plan includes increasing agricultural production, reducing the cost of production, compensating for crop losses,



ensuring fair prices for farmers' produce, promoting crop diversification, and advancing the mission of natural farming. He assured that these efforts would significantly benefit the farmers.

As he prepared to depart for Deoghar, All Bokaro BJP workers extended warm regards. Among those present were Bokaro MLA Biranchi Narayan, BJP District President Jaydev Rai, Rohit Lal Singh, Shashi Bhushan Ojha Mukul, BJP District General Secretary Sanjay Tyagi, Dilip Srivastava, Kamlesh Rai, Gaur Rajwar, Shankar Rajak, Mathur Mandal, Vinay Kishore, Manoj Singh, Vikas Kumar, State Minister of BJP Mahila Morcha Archana Singh etc.

Prof Naem Khan retires from BS College

PNS: LOHARDAGA

Prof. Naem Khan, senior professor cum chairman of regional languages department of BS College, Lohardaga, retired on Saturday after serving for 40 years. A grand farewell ceremony was organized by the administration and students. The students brought Professor Naim Khan to the main stage of the Multipurpose Building while dancing with Jharkhandi customs and Dhol-Mandar. After the welcome song and dance, all the teachers honored him by giving him a flower bouquet, memento and bodysuit. Senior Professor of the college, Dr. Neeta Sahay, while reading the memorial letter for Prof. Naem Khan, praised his devoted service in various positions. On the occasion, Principal Dr. Shiv Kumar Prasad Gupta said that the 40 years of service of Prof. Khan is unforgettable. Whatever post he held, he performed his duties with full honesty and devotion. Dr. Shashi Gupta, Chairman of the Chemistry Department of the college, said that a personality like Prof. Naem Khan is very rare. He had a spiritual relationship with everyone in the college.



Elephants enter villages, damage crops

PNS : DALTONGANJ

A herd of 8 elephants having 2 calves has unleashed decay and destruction of the standing paddy crops under the Barysanr range of the tiger reserve Palamu.

Deputy director south division of the PTR Kumar Ashish said there are reports of a large scale of destruction of the paddy cultivation under this range.

Incharge range officer Barysanr Tarun Kumar Singh said the herd of the elephants is no any outsider but of the tiger reserve Palamu itself.

The herd of the elephants is descending soon after the sunset and is plundering

paddy cultivation till late night.

Kumar Ashish said "It's a matter of consolation that the herd of the elephants has not been in direct confrontation with humans."

There is no report of any human casualty by the elephants. Likewise the elephants are just glued to the paddy cultivation, it has so far not damaged or destroyed any hut or house.

On being asked if the ongoing strike of the forest guards has affected the elephant management to which Ashish said "The strike of the FGs has definitely affected the PTR. Forest guards are off the reserve."

He said "We are making do with the trackers. But

absence of the FGs matters most."

Ashish added "We have asked the trackers to take mitigative measures in the event of the destruction of the paddy cultivation as farmers suffer economic ruination."

"A farmer can bear many things but when his standing cultivation is lost he feels saddened to the level of losing his son" said a paddy grower of the Barysanr range of the tiger reserve Palamu.

Assessment of the damaged and destroyed paddy cultivation by the PTR team is set to be delayed in the wake of the strike of the FGs.

It's the FGs who used to first visit and scan the extent

of the damages and destruction of cultivation or house etc and thereafter the role of the CO used to begin to ascertain the khatyani land rights, its 'rakba of destruction and damages etc'.

All these exercises are for the initiation of the crop compensation to be paid by the PTR.

There are 110 FGs in the PTR and around 300 trackers but trackers without the FGs are less effective.

Ashish declined to make any comment as to when the strike of the FGs will be over.

He said "It's not my cup of tea. I am concerned about the safety of wild life, humans and the habitat for wild life and humans too." End

Yoga instructor Sanghamitra Singh meets Baba Ramdev

PNS : RANCHI

Renowned yoga instructor Sanghamitra Singh is revolutionizing the world of yoga with her innovative approach, Yoga Fusion. Combining her in-depth knowledge of traditional yoga practices with modern techniques, Singh has created a holistic and transformative experience for practitioners who are seeking mental-physical coordination.

Taking a significant step in the field of fitness and yoga, eminent fitness trainer and yoga instructor Sanghamitra Singh met renowned yoga guru Baba Ramdev. This meeting took place at Patanjali Yogpeeth in Haridwar, in which physical and mental health was discussed in depth. In this important discussion, the measures necessary for a better and healthy lifestyle were also discussed. Sanghamitra Singh, winner of Mastermind Award - 2024, has been honored with many awards in Dubai, told about her Nirogi Jeevan Shaili



Abhiyan that it is a joint effort, which will move forward under the guidance of Baba Ramdev.

Under this campaign, people will be trained to focus on excellent physical and mental health even amidst their busy lifestyle. It is worth noting that earlier this year, Sanghamitra Singh

had also trained Border Security Force (BSF) jawans and students of Vinoba Bhave University in yoga. Her Yoga Mitra Fitness Club had designed a fusion program of yoga and Zumba, which trained BSF jawans for better physical and mental health.

Through relentless determination and a commitment to continuous learning, she honed her skills as a fitness enthusiast, eventually earning certifications in personal training, nutrition counseling, and mindfulness coaching.

Today, Sanghamitra Singh stands as a beacon of inspiration for countless individuals who seek to reclaim their health, confidence, and zest for life. As a fitness coach, Sanghamitra Singh empowers her followers to unlock their full potential, guiding them on a journey of self-discovery, resilience, and personal transformation. Her unique blend of expertise, empathy, and infectious enthusiasm has earned her widespread acclaim and a devoted following of fitness enthusiasts worldwide.

Jamshedpur social worker continues extensive public welfare efforts

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

Shiv Shankar Singh, a dedicated social worker, is carrying out a wide range of public welfare activities in the Jamshedpur East Assembly and the city, aimed at improving the lives of residents. His commitment to service is evident in the numerous initiatives his organization is currently managing, each designed to address specific community needs.

Among these initiatives is the daily free Moksha-Vahan service, which provides dignified and free transportation for deceased individuals, ensuring families can conduct

last rites without financial strain. This compassionate service has been a significant support for many in the community.

In addition to this, Singh's organization hosts an annual blood donation camp. This event is crucial for maintaining an adequate blood supply in local blood banks and hospitals. Furthermore, the organization arranges for blood donations every day, ensuring that those in urgent need of blood receive timely help.

Cleanliness and sanitation are also high on Singh's agenda. He has organized the free distribution of bleaching

powder and oversees the cleaning of garbage heaps using JCB machines. These efforts have greatly improved the hygiene and cleanliness of public areas, contributing to better public health.

Health services are another cornerstone of Singh's community efforts. The organization regularly sets up free medical camps that offer check-ups, treatments, and necessary medications to those who cannot afford medical care. These camps provide essential healthcare services to underprivileged residents.

Understanding the challenges many face in accessing

government benefits, Singh's organization also provides assistance in the office for various government schemes. This includes help with obtaining voter ID cards, ration cards, old age pensions, widow pensions, and disability pensions. These services ensure that eligible individuals can easily access the benefits they are entitled to.

In a bid to promote environmental awareness, Singh has initiated a plantation campaign. This effort encourages community members to plant trees, thereby enhancing the local environment and contributing to a greener city.



Singh's dedication to the community extends to supporting local sports. His organization distributes free jerseys and footballs to young players, encouraging physical fitness and fostering a sense of community among the youth.

Man held for killing wife in Lohardaga

PNS : LOHARDAGA

On the basis of secret information received by Superintendent of Police Haris Bin Zaman, the accused who brutally murdered his wife was arrested and sent to jail. While giving information to the media personnel, Headquarters DSP Sameer Kumar Tirkey said that Bhandra Police Station Case No. 50/2024 Dated 20.08.2024 Section 103 (1) FIR of BMS Accused Benami Malar, age about 42 years, father Nehru Malar who was originally Village Navni under Gumla district, Ghaghra district Gumla. Present resident is Malar Basti Pahad Toli of Bhandra police station area.

A team was formed under the leadership of Bhandra police station in-charge Arvind Singh, raided the possible locations and was duly



arrested and sent to judicial custody. DSP Sameer Kumar Tirkey said that on the night of August 19, he was absconding due to fear of arrest after killing his wife Rakhi Devi by killing her with a spade. As soon as information was received at Chandwa Tori railway station that he was planning to flee to a far-flung city by train, a raid team

was immediately formed by SP Haris Bin Zaman. Thereafter, a plan was made to arrest the said accused and the raiding team, with the help of Latehar district police, searched the accused around Tori station. Thereafter, the said accused was seen coming out of an open place to shave his beard at a footpath salon shop in the market, who tried

to run away after seeing the police, but was caught by the police force. During interrogation, the said person revealed his name as Benami Malar, age 42 years, father, Nehru Malar, village Pavani police station Ghaghra under Gumla district, present address Malar Basti Pahar Toli under Bhandra police station area of Lohardaga district.

He also told that he had murdered his wife on the night of 19th August by killing her with a hoe kept in his house. DSP Sameer Kumar Tirkey said that the accused also confessed before the police that due to fear of being caught by the police, Tori had come to the railway station in preparation to go to another city by train. He also admitted to throwing the spade in the bush located next to the courtyard after the incident,

which was duly seized by the Bhandra police station after the incident from the bush near the house of the accused. DSP said that on August 20, it was duly picked up by the team of FSL Ranchi and sent to the police station for investigation and sent to Forensic Science Laboratory, Ranchi. DSP Sameer Kumar Tirkey said that the items seized from the accused included an Irel company's keypad with mobile SIM, Rs 100 in cash from the pocket, a blanket which was taken in a plastic bag and the spade used in the incident which was earlier recovered from the spot. Seized. DSP said that no previous criminal history of the murdered husband has been found. The raiding team included Bhandra police station in-charge Arvind Singh, Sub Inspector Pappu Kumar and other policemen of

Rotary Club of Bokaro hosts cultural program "Ek Shaam Kanha Ke Naam"



PNS : BOKARO

The Rotary Club of Bokaro Steel City organized a cultural program titled "Ek Shaam Kanha Ke Naam" at its premises in Janvrih 4. The event saw enthusiastic participation from numerous club members. Following the regular meeting, Club President Rotarian Mahesh Kumar Gupta and Club Secretary Rotarian Hardeep Singh entrusted the program's proceedings to the Ladies Committee, led by its President, Rotarian Alka Gupta.

The evening commenced with devotional songs celebrating the birth of Laddu Gopal, followed by offerings of

various delicacies, including makhana and mishri, to Shri Banke Bihari Ji.

Under the leadership of Rotarian Alka Gupta, members including Rotarian Pushpa Kejriwal, Rotarian Sandhya Raj, Binny Kakkara, Rotarian Khonen Liu, Kunjala Narayan, Rotarian Mansi Sahana, Rotarian Jasvinder Kaur, Sunita Jain, Rotarian Aarti Rastogi, Rotarian Rakhi Banerjee, Rotarian Poonam Trehan, and Ayesha Agarwal, presented captivating dances and skits. Notably, Rotarian Sandhya Raj's portrayal of Lord Krishna was highly appreciated, while Rotarian Alka Gupta's performance as Narad Muni garnered resounding applause.

Speaking on the significance of such events, President Rotarian Mahesh Kumar Gupta emphasized that these performances allow us to imbibe the virtues of our deities, fostering positive energy in our conduct and inspiring the audience to adopt a better lifestyle and noble values.

The event also featured other cultural performances, with large participation from club members. This program, under the capable leadership of President Rotarian Mahesh Kumar Gupta, exemplified the club's inclusive spirit and commitment to providing opportunities for all, contributing to the event's undeniable success.

DC-DEO Bokaro encourages voter registration for election

R SHARMA : BOKARO

The District Election Officer cum DC Bokaro Vijaya Jadhav has urged all eligible voters to register for the Election Quiz 2024, organized by the Election Commission. The registration process is currently open and will continue until September 26, 2024. The DEO emphasized the importance of participating in this quiz, which will help increase voter awareness and engagement.

An online preliminary exam will be held on September 29, 2024, for all registered participants. This exam can be taken from the comfort of home between 9:00 AM and 9:30 AM. The winners of this round will proceed to an offline quiz competition, scheduled to take place in Ranchi on October 5, 2024.

The quiz offers exciting cash prizes. The top scorer in the state will win ₹50,000, while the second and third place winners will receive ₹30,000 and ₹20,000, respectively. Additionally, the highest-scoring participant from each district will be awarded



₹10,000. The quiz will focus on topics related to Jharkhand and elections.

Only voters who are 18 years or older can register for the quiz. Interested participants will need to provide their voter ID number during the registration process. For more details and to register, visit the official website.

Notably Vijaya Jadhav, the DEO and Deputy Commissioner, has made a special appeal to young voters, encouraging them to register and participate in large numbers. She also urged them to inspire others to take part in this unique opportunity to test their knowledge and win attractive prizes.

New art space showcases over 80 renowned Indian artists



PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

A new permanent art space, Ivana Art, has opened its doors at the Ramada Hotel, promising to be a significant cultural addition to the city. This unique gallery space will feature a rotating exhibition of works by more than 80 renowned Indian artists, offering residents and visitors alike the opportunity to

temporary, modern, and traditional styles. Visitors can expect to see everything from abstract paintings and intricate sculptures to vibrant photographs and mixed-media installations.

Jenny Shah, founder of Ivana Art highlighted Ivana Art's dedication to supporting local and tribal artists, contributing to the preservation and promotion of indigenous art forms. The initiative seeks to weave these unique expressions into the cultural tapestry of India.

At the opening ceremony, Ramada Hotel's management expressed their enthusiasm for this new venture. "We are thrilled to offer a space where art can flourish and be appreciated by the community. Ivana Art is not just a gallery; it's a dynamic cultural hub that will host workshops, artist talks, and community events, making art accessible to all," said an official.

The first exhibition at Ivana Art features a curated selection of paintings, sculptures, and digital art, reflecting the varied and dynamic nature of Indian art today. The gallery's programming promises to keep the exhibits fresh and engaging, with plans to rotate collections regularly and introduce new artists to the space.

Ivana Art at the Ramada Hotel is open to the public and welcomes art lovers of all ages. With this new cultural landmark, Jamshedpur is set to become a more vibrant and inclusive city for the arts.

Marandi for priority to tribal women and ex-army personnel in liquor policy

PNS : RANCHI

BJP state president Babul Marandi has written a letter to Chief Minister Hemant Soren urging him to give priority to tribal women and retired army personnel in the new liquor policy which the state government is going to introduce shortly. Babul through his letter has raised that in giving licenses for Indian and foreign liquor, priority should be given to poor tribal women and retired army personnel. Marandi said that he has come to know that the Jharkhand government is planning to implement a new liquor policy in the state through the excise department.

Earlier also, liquor policy has been implemented twice by the state government, but unfortunately those policies did not benefit the state. On the contrary, those policies led to exploitation of the public and loss of revenue. Due to selling liquor at rates higher than the prescribed price (MRP), illegal recovery was made from the public and the resulting revenue went into the pockets of liquor mafias and brokers.

There are thousands of poor, Dalit, and tribal women in the social structure of Jharkhand who raise their families by selling Hadiya (country made alcohol) on the roadside. Chief Minister Hemant Soren being tribal



Babul Marandi -1: State BJP President Babul Marandi addresses a gathering during a programme in Dumka on Sunday. Pix by Vinay Murmu

also come from the same society, so he is aware of the situation of tribal women. In such a situation, just as the Central Government gives priority to Dalits, tribals, women, disabled and retired soldiers from the army in issuing licenses for petrol pumps and gas agencies, similarly the state government should also give priority to poor tribal women and retired soldiers from the army in issuing licenses for Indian and foreign liquor shops.

Since the determination of liquor policy is a subject of Panchayati Raj Department has been sought and no discussion has been held on the new liquor policy yet. This is not the time to give suggestions, but to work keeping in

opinion from these departments and formulate such a policy which is in the interest of rural tribal women and helps them to earn a respectable livelihood. Your cooperation will be very important in the development and social upliftment of the state.

However, the state excise minister Bajinath Ram has raised question on Babul Marandi suggestion and replying that why does Babul Marandi want women to sell liquor? At present, only suggestions have been sought and no discussion has been held on the new liquor policy yet. This is not the time to give suggestions, but to work keeping in

mind the interests of all sections.

In fact, Babul Marandi had said in his letter to the CM that the Jharkhand government is planning to implement a new liquor policy. He also said that even before this, liquor policy has been implemented twice in the state. But these policies have not benefited much in the interest of the state. The state government should obtain opinion from the concerned departments and gram sabhas before making a new liquor policy. He especially talked about taking care of the interests of rural tribal women and suggested that they should be helped to live a respectable life.

Seminar on environmental challenges



PNS : RANCHI

Indraprastha College for Women hosted an international seminar in New Delhi on Tuesday, August 27th, titled "Envisaging Bharat as the Voice of the Global South: Revisiting COP 28." The seminar was graced by Padma Shri recipient Shri Ashok Bhagat as the Chief Guest. Shri Bhagat, a pioneer in environmental protection since 1983, shared his vision-

ary approach to sustainable development, emphasizing the power of small, community-driven models to address environmental challenges. His insights underscored the importance of India's leadership in shaping global environmental policies.

The seminar also included contributions from prominent environmentalists, including Padma Shri awardees Ms. Chami Murmu, Shri Prem Chand Sharma, Shri Basanti Devi (a stalwart of the Chipko Movement), Shri Laxman Singh, and Dr. Netrapal Yadav. Their insights enriched the discourse on India's pivotal role in the global environmental narrative, particularly as the nation prepares for COP 28.

Rainfall deficit decreases to 9% in State, now in normal range



PNS : RANCHI

From June 1 to August 29, Jharkhand has received a cumulative rainfall of 714.8 mm as against the normal amount of 786.5 mm.

As per the data shared by the Meteorological Centre, Ranchi, the rainfall deficit across the State has reduced to 9 percent and as of now, the rainfall recorded in Jharkhand this monsoon is in the normal range of +19% to -19%. However, it is still below

the exact normal required.

The State capital has witnessed 860.6 mm of rainfall while the required amount is considered to be 804.4 mm. Rainfall in Ranchi has been observed in the normal range at 7 percent.

The maximum rainfall has been recorded in Simdega at 10 percent. Rainfall realised here is 1117.3 mm as against the required amount of 1013.7 mm. However, maximum deficit has been observed in Pakur at 51 per-

cent with only 435.4 mm of rainfall realised as against the required amount of 884.8 mm. This is followed by Lohardaga at with 501.3 mm of rainfall received against the normal amount of 769.6 mm with a deficit of 35 percent.

For the coming few days, the Meteorological Centre, Ranchi has issued a forecast of light to moderate showers across the State from August 30 to September 2. This could also be accompanied with thunderstorm and lightning activity. "Till about September 4, monsoon will be slightly weak in the State. This is because the monsoon trough will be passing below Jharkhand. However, it is expected to revive across Jharkhand. A slight increase in the temperature is also predicted. There are also chances of thunderstorm and lightning in some places," said Director MET Centre, Ranchi Abhishek Anand. The department has also issued a safety advice for the residents of the State asking them to stay away from trees and electric poles during any thunderstorm and lightning activity to avoid any mishaps.

Jeevan hosts creative competitions to promote mental health awareness

PNS:JAMSHEDPUR

In observance of World Suicide Prevention Day, which falls on September 10th, the 'Jeevan' Suicide Prevention Centre organized a series of inter-school and inter-college competitions today at the RMS High School auditorium in Khutadih. The event saw enthusiastic participation from over 200 students representing 17 schools and 4 colleges, competing in three categories: Nukkad Natak, Debate, and T-shirt Painting.

The Nukkad Natak competition, with the theme "Changing the Narrative on Suicide - Start the Conversation," aimed to encourage young people to talk openly about mental health issues and work towards removing the stigma associated with them. The event featured 15 teams and was judged by Geeta Dubey, Nizam, and Gautam Gope, who praised the performances for their powerful messages and impactful delivery.

The T-shirt Painting competition focused on the theme "Importance of Mental Health." Fifty-one students showcased their creativity and artistic skills by painting

meaningful slogans and designs that highlighted the significance of mental health awareness. The judges for this competition, Jasmin Adeshra, Harpreet Marwah, and Mokshita, were impressed by the originality and thoughtfulness displayed by the participants.

The Debate competition, conducted in both Hindi and English, provided a platform for 48 students to express their views on the topic "The Effectiveness of Essential Mental Health Education in Educational Institutions." The participants debated passionately both for and against the motion, showcasing their eloquence and understanding of the topic. Judges Shamita Ahuja, Vandana Jain, and Anuradha Banerjee evaluated the students' arguments, commending their insightful perspectives and strong articulation.

Teachers and parents accompanying the students appreciated the seamless organization and smooth conduct of all three events by Jeevan volunteers. "It was inspiring to see such a large number of students engage so deeply with the topic of mental health," one teacher remarked.

ECI Chief is laughter channel character: Bhattacharya

PNS : RANCHI

Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), on Sunday, reacted to the change in the dates of assembly elections in Haryana. The party said that ECI Chief is character of laughter channel.

Addressing a press meet JMM Spokesperson Supriyo Bhattacharya said that he had already suspected this. He said that Haryana BJP State president Mohanlal Badoli had also written a letter to the commission to change the date.

While the elections were to be held on October 1 in Haryana earlier, now the voting will be held on October 5. Election Commission announced that the counting of votes will be done on October 8.

On this, Bhattacharya targeted the commission and said that ECI Chief will give a level playing ground. He said that the dates of elections in Haryana were fixed at the behest of BJP, which now had to be changed.

The JMM Spokesperson said that the determination of the dates of elections in Haryana and then changing it raises questions on the impartiality and seriousness of the Election Commission. He said that the Election Commission works as per the dictation of BJP. He said that the same attitude of the commission is seen during all three elections be it Lok Sabha elections, Rajya Sabha elections or assembly elections. He said that the BJP election co-incharge of Jharkhand said that the code of conduct will be implemented after September.

Bhattacharya alleged that the BJP wants to influence and corrupt the elections with its wrong intentions. He said that this is a serious problem. "I was afraid that this would happen because the Election Commission has been exposed to every nook and corner. The Election Commissioner did not even visit this state before the Lok Sabha elections. Lok Sabha elections were conducted in four phases in extreme heat. After this, an apology was made. The ADR report is that there are more counted votes than poll votes. An inquiry was ordered. But silence was maintained on this as well," he added.

Justice SB Sinha Memorial Lecture at NUSRL

PNS : RANCHI

The National University of Study and Research in Law (NUSRL), Ranchi, hosted a special lecture in memory of Justice SB Sinha. The event focused on the landmark case "Kesavananda Bharati vs. State of Kerala." The chief guest for the occasion was Hon'ble Justice Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai of the Supreme Court. The program commenced with a tribute by Justice Rongon Mukhopadhyay of the Jharkhand High Court, followed by a formal start with the lighting of the lamp. Vice Chancellor Dr. Ashok R. Patil welcomed all the guests and highlighted the importance of remembering Justice SB Sinha's contributions.

In his keynote address, Justice Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai detailed Justice SB Sinha's judicial contributions. He emphasized that Justice Sinha played a significant role in the development of law, with his decisions holding a prominent place in law journals from 2000 to 2009. Justice Gavai praised Justice Sinha for his hard-working and dedicated nature, noting his practice of working with multiple stenographers to draft numerous important judgments and remaining active even after retirement.

Justice Gavai discussed the "Kesavananda Bharati vs. State of Kerala" case,



highlighting its crucial role in the development of the Constitution and the protection of fundamental rights. He underscored the importance of maintaining the Constitution's basic structure and the impossibility of altering it. Additionally, he referenced key judicial decisions such as the Indra Gandhi case, which emphasized the importance of free and fair elections, and the Menaka Gandhi case, which established the constitutional right to travel abroad. He stressed the significance of fundamental rights as the soul of the Constitution, vital for leading a dignified life and contributing to social and economic development. Justice Gavai also highlighted the responsibilities of future generations, including the need for clean air, water, and a better environment, and the importance of social and economic development. During the lecture, Justice Gavai shared his personal experiences with Justice SB

Sinha, describing him as a role model who consistently supported junior judges and inspired continuous learning. The event concluded with Assistant Registrar Dr. Jesu Ketan Patnaik delivering the vote of thanks. He expressed gratitude to all distinguished attendees, particularly Justice Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai, and praised the event as a significant and honorable occasion.

This lecture was a meaningful effort to remember Justice SB Sinha's judicial contributions and personality. It shed light on the Indian Constitution, fundamental rights, and the vital role of the judiciary. The program provided an important opportunity for students, legal professionals, and the general public to understand the rich tradition and significance of the Indian judicial system. It was a successful attempt to honor Justice SB Sinha's legacy and inspire the new generation with his contributions.



Former Deputy Speaker Lok Sabha Kariya Munda meets Governor Santosh Gangwar at Raj Bhawan in Ranchi on Sunday. PNS

'Loyalty towards party to be main basis for ticket distribution'



PNS : RANCHI

The possibility of victory in the election, loyalty towards the organization and discharge of responsibilities will be the main basis for ticket distribution. Girish Chodankar, the chairman of the screening committee constituted for the assembly elections, expressed the above views in a press conference on Sunday.

Choranagar said that during the two-day stay, in the initial phase, the presidents, candidates, senior leaders of all the districts were met. We are trying to understand what is in the minds of the leaders and workers, brainstorming is going on on how to move forward in the elections. Our effort will be that in the next round, we meet the workers and leaders of two-three districts by making a focused arrangement and the situation of the district-wise assembly should be reviewed so that the views of as many people as possible can come to the fore. We are confident

that the government will come to power again according to the situation here. Hundreds of applications have come from each assembly constituency, this clearly shows the strength of the organization, he added.

The chairman of the screening committee said that the Congress has been in favour of social equations and has kept it as the basis of its policies since independence. "Selection of candidates is difficult because it is clearly visible that strong leaders and workers from every area have applied. People are realizing that if the state has to be taken forward on the path of development, then the Congress and Mahagathbandhan government will have to be brought back," he added.

Screening committee members Poonam Paswan, Prakash Joshi, media in-charge Rakesh Sinha, Sonal Shanti, Jaishankar Pathak, Kamal Thakur, Shamsheer Alam, Rishikesh Singh were also present in the press conference.

Book launch in Mumbai

Dr. Rajaram Mahto and others from Jharkhand attended the book launch and convocation ceremony in Mumbai. From Jharkhand, Dr. Rajaram Mahto, member of the Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, National Library, journalist and social worker Dr. Tarakeshwar Mahto and other distinguished guests attended the ceremony. The book related to Employer Employee Balance, Expectations Test written by Prof. Anil Kumar was launched in the ceremony. On this occasion, Dr. Rajaram Mahto said that writers have always given a new direction to our country through their writings. We are all inspired by Prof. Anil Kumar. Literature has always enriched our thinking. Apart from this, students from many cities including Mumbai, Delhi, Jammu, Haryana, Kolkata, Madras, Ranchi, Patna, Maharashtra participated in the convocation program organized by Arizona Global University. Hundreds of students were awarded degrees during the convocation for various subjects including science and humanities, management, law, agriculture, medicine and health sciences.

Man stabs friend

A few days ago, two youths who came out of jail were stabbed. This incident happened on Sunday afternoon near Hehal zone of Pandra OP area. Two youths named Birni and Pallu, residents of Madhukam, attacked each other with a knife. As soon as the information about the incident was received, the police team led by Kotwali DSP Prakash Soye arrested both the accused within half an hour of the incident.

It is being told about the incident that both the youths have a criminal history. Both of them together committed a theft. There was a dispute between the two over the distribution of the stolen goods. In this, both the youths attacked each other with a knife. It is being told that both the youths also do business of brown sugar and are addicts. Both the youths have come out of jail only a few months ago.

Youth in large number joined JMM

PNS : RANCHI

In Valmiki Nagar Harmu Road, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)'s Rajya Sabha MP Dr. Mahua Maji Madam made the youth of Valmiki Nagar take membership of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha on Sunday.

The youth are joining the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha family by considering Jharkhand Mukti Morcha's Central President cum Rajya Sabha MP Dishom Guru Shibu Soren ji and Jharkhand Chief Minister cum Executive President Hon'ble Hemant Soren ji as their ideals.

Addressing this membership program, Maji ji said that following the ideals of Veer Shibu Soren ji and Hemant Soren ji, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha family has to be taken forward and along with that, we have to stand with all the people in every happiness and sorrow, we have to always stand for the common people and raise their voice and I will always stand with you people at all times.

Nand Kishore Singh Chandel, Somu Banerjee, Aman Thakur, Saqir contributed in making this program successful.

Under the leadership of Pravesh Kumar, Praveen Kumar,



Sandhya Devi and Geeta Devi were also present in this program.

Hemant Valmiki, Suraj Valmiki, Priyanshu Pawar, Shubham Kumar, Aman Kumar, Amit Kumar, Aniket Kumar, Abhishek Kumar, Babulal Jedia, Omkar Kumar, Antu Kumar, Rahul Jedia, Harsh Kumar, Manish Kumar, Yashpal Kumar, Monu Kumar, Nitin Chavariya, Rahul Jedia, Rajveer Ram, Rahul Pawar, Raju Ram, Ravi Kumar, Rohit Ram, Sachin Ram, Sagar Ram, Shiva Ram, Sunny, Raju Jedia, Anshu Kumar, Badal Kumar, Sagar Kumar and a large number of people took membership in the membership acceptance program.

Only 6.7 per cent court infrastructure at district level female-friendly, says CJJ

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud on Sunday said the fact that only 6.7 per cent court infrastructure at the district level is female-friendly needs to be changed. Speaking at the National Conference of the District Judiciary, Chandrachud said it should be ensured that courts provide safe and accommodating environment for all members of society. "We must without any question, change the fact that only 6.7 per cent of our court infrastructure at the district level is female-friendly. Is this acceptable today in a nation where at the basic level of recruitment in some States over 60 or 70 per cent of the recruits are women? Our focus areas are on increasing accessibility measures which can be under-



stood by carrying out infrastructural audits. "Opening in-court medical facilities, creches and technological projects like e-seva Kendras and video conferencing devices. These endeavours aim to increase access to justice. "Axiomatically, we must also

ensure that our courts provide a safe and accommodating environment for all members of our society, particularly for groups such as women and other vulnerable groups such as persons with disability, members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and people across the socio-

economic landscape," the CJJ said. Chandrachud said with the increasing number of women coming into the judiciary, the biases which we may unwittingly have towards our colleagues at the bar and the bench must be confronted. He also disclosed that at the recently concluded the first-ever National Lok Adalat, almost 1,000 cases were disposed of amicably within five working days. The two-day function was organised by the Supreme Court. President Droupadi Murmu delivered the valedictory address and also unveiled the flag and insignia of the Supreme Court, a statement issued by the apex Court said on Friday. Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal and Justice Surya Kant also addressed the gathering.

BJP's Minority Morcha to put counterviews in support of reforms in Waqf Boards



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Amid strident criticism of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill by some major Muslim bodies, the BJP's 'Minority Morcha' will rally counterviews in support of reforms in Waqf boards and seek suggestions on the law to present it to the parliamentary committee examining the Bill. Sources said a team of seven BJP members, including State Waqf Board chairpersons, will elicit views of the minority community across the country and assuage their concerns on a host of issues. "We will convey to the committee every point of view. If there is any concern on any aspect of the Bill, we will express it as well. But the

need for reforms in Waqf boards is felt by the community everywhere," a BJP leader claimed. They Minority Morcha will share the report with the BJP leadership and the parliamentary panel headed by veteran party MP Jagdambika Pal. The committee members include Shadab Shams, Sanwar Patel and Mohsin Lokhandwala, who head the boards in Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, and Haryana Waqf Board administrator Zakir Hussain among others. The issue was also flagged in a last week meeting of the Minority Morcha at the BJP headquarters here. The party leadership, sources said, told the Morcha head Jamal Siddiqui to reach out to Muslims across the country to make a case for reforms in the Waqf Act so that Waqf boards functioning could be made more accountable and transparent. The Morcha was also asked to seek suggestions and assurance the community's concerns. Major Muslim bodies like Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind and All India Muslim Personal Law Board have been galvanising opinion against the proposed Bill, alleging that it is against their religious practices and violates the Constitution. BJP leaders said the government had started working on the bill during its second term and has spoken to a number of stakeholders.



MHA forms Central team to assess damage caused by floods in Gujarat

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs has constituted an inter-ministerial team to assess the damage caused by rainfall and floods in Gujarat. The team will shortly visit the flood-affected districts of Gujarat, which was hit by heavy to extremely heavy rainfall between August 25 and 30 caused by a deep depression formed over Rajasthan and Gujarat, according to an official statement. At least 25 people have died in rain-related incidents across the State on August 26 and 27.

The statement said the MHA has constituted an inter-ministerial central team (IMCT) led by the executive director, the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), to assess the damage caused by rainfall and floods in Gujarat, the statement said. Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan were also affected by heavy to very heavy rainfall. Multiple spells of heavy rains, cloudbursts and landslides have caused extensive damage in Himachal Pradesh this year. The MHA is in touch with senior officers of these states, and will depute IMCT there as well, if the severe damages are reported by them, the statement said. During this monsoon, some other states have been affected by heavy rainfall, floods, cloudbursts and landslides. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Central Government is fully committed to providing all possible help to affected states, the statement said. As per the decision taken by the Union Home Minister Amit Shah, in August 2019, the MHA, this year, constituted IMCTs which have visited flood and landslides-affected States of Assam, Kerala, Mizoram, and Tripura in advance for on-spot assessment of the damage without waiting for their memorandum. The IMCT for Nagaland has also been constituted, which will visit the affected areas of the state shortly.



Air Marshal Tejinder Singh takes over as new DCAS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Air Marshal Tejinder Singh took over as Deputy Chief of the Air Staff (DCAS) of the Indian Air Force, at Air Headquarters (Vayu Bhawan), here on Sunday. After assumption of his new appointment, the Air Marshal paid homage to the brave hearts who gave the supreme sacrifice, by laying wreath at the National War Memorial, New Delhi. An alumnus of the National Defence Academy (NDA), Air Marshal Tejinder was commissioned in the fighter stream of the IAF on 13 June 1987. He is a Category 'A' Qualified Flying Instructor with over 4,500 hours of flying, an alumnus of Defence Service Staff College and National Defence College. He has commanded a Fighter Squadron, a Radar Station, a premier Fighter Base and was Air Officer Commanding, Jammu and Kashmir. His varied staff appointments include Operational Staff at a Command HQ, Air Commodore (Personnel Officers-1) at Air HQ, Deputy Assistant Chief of Integrated Defence Staff, Financial (Planning) at HQ IDS, Air Commodore (Aerospace Safety), Assistant Chief of Air Staff Operations (Offensive) and ACAS Ops (Strategy) at Air HQ. Prior to his present appointment, he was the Senior Air Staff Officer, Headquarter Eastern Air Command of IAF at Shillong, Meghalaya. In recognition of his meritorious services, he was awarded the Vayu Sena Medal in 2007 and Ati Vishist Seva Medal in 2022. In another appointment, Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit assumed the appointment of Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Central Air Command on Sunday.

Expect good Wayanad relief package from Centre, says CM

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Kerala Government has sought a Rs 2,000 crore relief package from the Centre for the unprecedented devastation that occurred in Wayanad recently and is hopeful of getting "good assistance", Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said here. He also dismissed as "not pragmatic" the recommendations made by the Madhav Gadgil and Kasturirangan committees on ecologically sensitive areas of the Western Ghats, saying the panels did not consider the societal expectations and ground realities in his state. Speaking to PTI this weekend during an interview on the Wayanad landslides, the chief minister said the State Government has decided to construct new townships for the families of the victims and the survivors of the unprecedented devastation "within a year" and these dwellings would be "climate-resilient and sustainable". Vijayan said the State sought a disaster relief package of about Rs 2,000 crore from the Centre when he recently met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi. The PM was "very positive" on the issue and the state was hopeful of getting "good assistance" from the Union Government, he added. The Chief Minister said the funds were expected to be



released after a central team submitted a report to the Union Government. Vijayan added that categorising the Wayanad landslides as a "national or severe calamity" would enable all parliamentarians to donate Rs 1 crore each to the Kerala relief fund, otherwise only the local MPs will be able to do so. "If this disaster is included in that (national or severe calamity) category, we will get good assistance. It will create a good atmosphere for reconstruction," he told the news agency. The 79-year-old veteran Marxist politician said the July 30 disaster that wiped off large tracts of three villages -- Punchirimmattam, Chooralmala and Mundakkai -- apart from some areas of Attamala in Wayanad has "shaken the lives of our people, leaving those affected with unimaginable trauma and concerns about their future". "The recent landslide in Chooralmala village has caused unprecedented devastation. I would like to assure that our

Government's primary objective is to provide a comprehensive rehabilitation package to the survivors. "We are committed to providing the best possible rehabilitation package to the survivors, in line with the Kerala model of development with its people-centric approach," he said. Vijayan recently said during an all-party meeting that the Wayanad survivors would be housed in one or two townships which will have single-storey houses of about 1,000 square feet in size with the option to expand to two storeys in the future. "Our priority is to ensure that families who lost their homes in the landslides have a safe and secure place to reside. The construction of the townships is expected to be completed within a year," he told PTI. On the recommendations made by the Madhav Gadgil and Kasturirangan committees on handling the fragile and ecologically sensitive areas along the Western Ghats,

Vijayan said these reports were "not fully accepted by the entities that commissioned them." This highlights the fact, he said, that "much of the recommendations in these reports were not pragmatic and did not consider societal aspirations and ground realities". "At least some parts of the reports did not consider humans dwelling in ecologically fragile zones for centuries as part of the ecosystem," the chief minister added. He also underlined that "small and marginal" farmers cannot be equated with rich realtors, planters or miners occupying similar terrains. "There was no such differentiation in these reports, which is why many States were forced to completely disregard them," Vijayan said. He added that it was also "not desirable" for his Government to take a position in a "hasty manner" without "adequately" studying the draft Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) notification issued by the Centre recently. The notification issued on July 31 seeks to declare over 56,800 square kilometres of the Western Ghats across six States, including 13 villages in Kerala's landslide-hit Wayanad, as an Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA). It invited suggestions and objections within 60 days. "We have to wait to hear from the local self-Governments and eventually take an informed decision on it.

Govt mulling to extend security for gig workers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Labour and Employment move comes close

Months after the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) issued a notice to the Centre regarding allegations of "anti-labour practices" at an Amazon India warehouse in Manesar, Haryana, Union Labour and Employment Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya has announced that the Government is exploring ways to extend social security coverage for those serving in the sector. Gig workers, who take on short-term or project-based jobs often for multiple clients rather than being employed by a single company, will be registered on the eShram Portal to facilitate the implementation of these social security measures, said the Minister at a review meeting here. Dr Mandaviya emphasised the development of a comprehensive strategy to ensure these workers receive the social security benefits they are entitled to. The Minister also highlighted that companies employing gig and platform workers will be encouraged to lead this registration effort. An online window will be provided for aggregators to streamline the registration process. He underscored the significance of the Code on Social Security, which marks the first formal recognition of gig and platform workers in India. This step aims to acknowledge and formalise their roles within the economy.



on the heels of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) suo moto cognizance taken in June when it launched an investigation into human rights violations of the gig workers at an Amazon warehouse in Haryana, where even basic amenities like restrooms were reportedly missing. The NHRC also demanded answers from the Central Labour Ministry. Labour associations have accused five warehouses in and around Manesar of violating regulations under the Factories Act, 1948. These cases highlight the broader issue of gig workers' exploitation by the companies that employ them. According to NITI Aayog, the number of gig workers could expand to 23.5 million by 2029-30 from the 7.7 million they are at now. The lack of robust legislation addressing new forms of labor, particularly gig and platform work, affects workers, especially women, who often struggle to maintain a living wage and stay in the workforce.

India sets ambitious goal of hosting 10 cr foreign tourists by 2047: Tourism Ministry

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India currently hosts around 110 million foreign tourists annually, the ambitious goal is to increase this number to 100 million during the 'Amrit Kaal' period, said Mugdha Sinha, Director General of the Tourism Ministry here. In this regard she enlisted various measures being implemented to attract more international visitors and boost the inbound tourism sector. Amrit Kaal is the Prime Minister's vision 2047 for 'New India'. Majorly, the focus is on how the tourism industry, private and the Government sector can collaborate effectively. Efforts are also being made to



encourage repeat visits by foreign tourists, said the new DG of the Tourism Ministry while talking to reporters here at the conclusion of the three-day BLTM 2024 event. On the occasion, Uttarakhanda's Tourism Minister Satpal Maharaj stated that tourism in India is expanding rapidly. "The world is opening its doors to Indian travelers and that increased

tourism will generate more employment opportunities for locals." He emphasised the connection between local crafts and travel-tourism. Sanjeev Agarwal, founder and CEO of Fairfest Media Limited, the organizers of the expo, pointed out that to further strengthen the tourism sector, the country's railway network needs to be improved. He pointed out that India has a vast railway network that requires enhancement. According to estimates, India's MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) tourism market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 6 per cent between 2024 and 2029, reflecting the increasing significance of MICE in the

tourism industry. The Indian Exhibition Industry Association noted that the value of this industry was USD709 million in 2019 and is projected to reach USD1,283 billion by 2025, growing at a CAGR of 10.25 per cent. On the occasion, Jyoti Mayal, President of the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI), emphasised the pivotal role of India's travel and tourism industry in the Nation's economy. "The industry contributes 10 per cent to the GDP and generates approximately USD 78 billion annually. By 2029, it is expected to create 53 million jobs and attract 30.5 million travelers, highlighting its substantial growth potential.

Bishnoi community welcomes EC's decision to defer Haryana polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI/CHANDIGARH

The Bishnoi community has thanked the Election Commission for deferring the Haryana Assembly poll date to October 5 from October 1 in view of the centuries-old festival of the community. The ruling BJP has also welcomed the Election Commission's decision. The EC on Saturday deferred the Haryana Assembly poll date, saying the decision was taken keeping in mind the Bishnoi community's festival. Som Prakash Bishnoi, Akhil Bhartiya Bishnoi Mahasabha's Vice President, said the entire community thanks the Election Commission for its decision to defer the poll date.



Lakhs of members of the Bishnoi community take part in the festival and it takes 15-20 days to organise it, he said. "Earlier, we were worried what if people (Bishnoi community) cannot vote as they would be travelling or if they are not able to take part in the event too. Now, with the new poll date, our problem has been solved and we thank the EC for this," he said. Before the revision of the date, the Haryana polls were to be held along with the third and last phase of the Jammu and

Kashmir elections. The decision to postpone the Haryana elections has been taken to honour both the voting rights and traditions of the Bishnoi community which has upheld a 300-400-year-old practice in remembrance of their Guru Jambheshwar, the EC said on Saturday. It said it had received a representation from the National President of the All India Bishnoi Mahasabha, Bikaner, Rajasthan for rescheduling the Haryana Assembly polls. Generations of families from Punjab, Rajasthan and Haryana visit their native village Mukam in Rajasthan on 'amavas' in the month of 'Asoj' for the annual festival in Bikaner in memory of Guru Jambheshwar, according to the EC.

Ex-ISRO scientist's wind technology poised to support India's targets for Carbon Net Zero by 2070

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

A team led by a former ISRO scientist Rakesh Aggarwal has developed cost-effective green efficient GARV (Guided Airflow Rotational Vortex) technology in wind sector, offering a promising solution to support India's ambitious targets for Carbon Net Zero by 2070. Validated by BITS, Goa, this groundbreaking technology based on 'drag cum lift wind turbine' concept is patented in several major jurisdictions, including India, the US, Australia, Russia, New Zealand,

and European countries. Talking about its key features, Aggarwal explained the technology utilises a unique design that creates a rotational vortex effect, which significantly increases the amount of wind energy captured by the turbine blades. This results in a higher conversion rate of wind energy into electrical power when compared to the conventional turbines. "It achieves this by optimising airflow and reducing the wear and tear on turbine components, leading to lower maintenance costs and a longer lifespan," said the senior scientist, an expert in electric and con-

trol designs. Aggarwal noted that it took him 3-4 years to develop the technology, which he feels can be a game changer in the green sector as it can adapt to various wind speeds. "These GARV turbines are capable of operating efficiently across a wide range of wind speeds, from low to very high. This adaptability ensures consistent energy generation even in areas with fluctuating wind conditions." Similar to other innovations in green technology, GARV wind turbines developed under the umbrella of TDR Foundation, a non-prof-



it organisation can be fabricated and installed locally, reducing transportation costs and supporting local manufacturing industries. "A unique feature of this wind turbine technology is its adaptability—it can be fabricated and installed directly at the site and can handle a range of capacities from a few kilowatts to several megawatts. The system optimises drag force into torque, enabling it to generate electricity from very low wind speeds to speeds exceeding 200 km/h," said Aggarwal. He said the turbines can generate electricity from wind speeds of a

few kilometres per hour to above 200 kilometres per hour and has the capacity to meet the energy needs of India and other countries with cheap green energy making fossil fuels irrelevant. Its innovative approach and cost advantages make it a potential game-changer in the wind energy sector, offering economically viable alternative to conventional energy sources, said Aggarwal, reflecting on his childhood dream of developing an indigenous concept, which also aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Make in India' and 'Go local Go Vocal'.

Violence against health warrior on Aug 9 barbarity expressed in extremity: Dhankhar

PTI ■ DEHRADUN

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Sunday termed the violence committed against a "health warrior" at Kolkata's RG Kar Hospital on August 9 as "barbarity expressed in extremity".



Addressing students and faculty members at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Rishikesh, the vice president said such barbaric incidents put the entire civilisation to shame and shreds what Bharat stands for. Lamenting the use of the term 'symptomatic malaise' by some stray voices, Dhankhar said such statements "aggravate our excruciating pain and add salt to our injured conscience".

"When humanity has been shamed, there are some stray voices, voices that cause concern. They only aggravate our excruciating pain. To put it mildly, they are adding salt to our injured conscience and what do they say 'it is a symptomatic malaise, a frequent incident'."

"When it comes from someone who is a Member of Parliament, a senior advocate, then the culpability is of an

extreme degree. There can be no alibi for such kind of demonising thoughts. I call upon such misguided souls to revisit their thoughts and publicly tender apology. This is not an occasion where you should be looking through political prism. This political prism is a dangerous one, it kills your objectivity," he added.

Recognising his accountability to the medical fraternity and the country's women by virtue of his constitutional post, Dhankhar said, "I am before you. As a matter of fact holding a constitutional position, I have to show my accountability. I have to justify the position I hold as vice president and chairman Rajya Sabha."

"... Our heart is injured, our conscience is crying and our soul is seeking accountability," he added. Referring to the work of medical professionals as 'Nishkam Seva' as pronounced by Lord Krishna without any expectation just doing their duty, the VP condemned acts of violence against the doctors in any form.

Expressing his concern for the safety of doctors at workplace, he emphasised upon the need to bring out a mechanism where "health warriors" are protected. "A doctor can help only to a limit. A doctor cannot convert himself to god. He is next to god, so when somebody dies, out of emotive feelings and uncontrolled feelings, doctors

are not given the treatment they deserve... Security of the doctors, nurses, health compounders, health warriors must be impenetrably protected," he added.

Criticising the "selective silence" of NGOs, Dhankhar said, "Certain NGOs on road for... Drop of a hat are in silence mode. We have to question them. Their silence is much worse than the culpable act of perpetrators of this heinous crime on August 9, 2024. Those who seek to play politics and earn brownie points, are not responding to the call of their conscience".

Underlining the responsibility of society to prevent such incidents and develop a mechanism where women feel safe, the vice president said, "Whoever has done it will be held accountable, but the society is also to be held accountable. The society cannot escape its responsibility. I don't want to make it a matter of the government or a matter of political parties. It is a matter of the society.."

"It has shaken the very foundation of our existence. It has questioned what India stands for and stood for thousands of years".

Crime, rising debt likely to dominate 3-day Punjab Assembly Session

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

The three-day session of the Punjab Assembly slated to begin on Monday is going to be anything but calm with the opposition parties set to seek accountability from the AAP-led government on law and order and rising state debt.

The session of the Vidhan Sabha will start with obituary references and wind up on September 4.

Congress leader and MLA Aruna Chaudhary said her party will raise the issue of deteriorating law and order in the state. "Deteriorating law and order is one of the biggest issues. Everyday incidents related to snatching, theft and extortion are taking place in the state," alleged the Dinanagar MLA. Chaudhary also accused the government of failing to fulfil its promise of giving Rs 1,000 per month to every woman.

"The AAP government deceived women in Punjab," Congress MLA Sukhwinder Singh Kotli said, "The AAP government had promised to set up 18 colleges in the state. Two and half years of the AAP regime have passed but they could not procure land



for setting up even a single college."

BJP MLA Jangi Lal Mahajan said he will raise the issue of alleged illegal sand mining going on in the state.

Kotli said the duration of the session should be increased as the three-day session is too short.

The AAP, when it was not in power, used to demand longer sessions to discuss peoples issues in the House, he said. Congress MLA Sukhpal Singh Khaira accused the AAP government of ruining the importance of the assembly by limiting it to only three days.

"The @BhagwantMann govt has ruined the importance of Vidhan Sabha the most crucial pillar of democracy by curtailing its sittings to almost negligible leaving no scope for any meaningful debate!" said Khaira in a post on X.

Assam TMC president Ripun Bora quits party

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Assam Trinamool Congress president Ripun Bora on Sunday resigned from the party, claiming that the people of the northeastern state consider it as a "regional party" of West Bengal and are not willing to accept it as their own.

In a letter to All India Trinamool Congress general secretary Abhishek Banerjee, Bora, the former Rajya Sabha member, said he had offered many suggestions to party supreme and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to make TMC acceptable in Assam, but those were "not implemented".

"Assam TMC has great potential, but several recurring issues have hindered our progress, including the perception of TMC as a regional party of West Bengal. To counter this perception, we made several suggestions," Bora said in his resignation letter. He claimed that he had suggested the need for an Assamese leader at the national level of TMC, declaring the residence of Bharat Ratna Dr Bhupen Hazarika at Tollygunge in Kolkata as a heritage site and converting the Madhupur



Satra in Cooch Behar to a cultural hub.

"Despite my repeated attempts over the past year and a half to secure an appointment with you and our chief Mamata Didi to address these concerns, I have been unsuccessful," said Bora, the former Assam minister and state Congress president. Bora said he has served as the state president of Assam TMC for over two years and during this period, he interacted extensively with people across the state.

"Unfortunately, the issues mentioned above have led many people in Assam to continue viewing TMC as a regional party of West Bengal. The people of Assam are not willing to accept a party that they perceive as being from another state.

"In light of these challenges and the lack of an adequate resolution, I feel compelled to make a difficult decision and have decided to disassociate myself from TMC," Bora said.

No financial crisis in Himachal, State Govt carrying multiple reforms: Sukhu

PTI ■ SHIMLA

There is no financial crisis in Himachal Pradesh rather, the State Government has been carrying out reforms from day one, and the positive outcome is now visible, said Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Sunday.

While talking to the media on the sidelines, Sukhu said that the state government is clearing the arrears of 27,000 pensioners above the age of 70 this year and seven per cent Dearness Allowance has been granted to all government employees.

"Additionally, the government is working for the welfare of all sections, including farmers, labourers, orchardists, women, and small shopkeepers. The state government aims to make Himachal Pradesh self-reliant by 2027 and the richest state in the country by 2032" he said. He said that there is no financial crisis in the state. The government has been carrying out reforms from day one and the positive outcome is now visible. He inaugurated the "Master's



Universe" exhibition at the historic Gaiety Theatre in Shimla, marking the 150th birth anniversary of the esteemed Russian artist, thinker, and peacemaker Nicholas Roerich. The exhibition, organized by the International Centre of the Roerichs (ICR), Moscow, in collaboration with the International Roerich Memorial Trust Naggar, District Kullu, and the Department of Language Art and Culture, Himachal Pradesh, will be open to the public until September 25.

On the occasion, the chief minister praised Nicholas Roerich for his diverse contributions as an artist, writer, and thinker. "Roerich's efforts to preserve

cultural heritage and his commitment to promoting the rich traditions of the Kullu Valley were particularly noteworthy. Spending nearly 20 years in Himachal Pradesh, he deeply immersed himself in the study of Himalayan culture and emerged as one of the earliest advocates for safeguarding the cultural legacy of the Kullu Valley" Sukhu said.

The chief minister further stated that Roerich's global influence was profound, particularly through the 'Roerich Pact', an international treaty signed on April 15, 1935, by 21 countries to safeguard cultural heritage.

He said that Roerich was a staunch advocate for peace and believed in resolving global conflicts by promoting cultural values that foster respect and understanding among younger generations.

While interacting with journalists, he said that India and Russia have centuries-old relations because our cultures and thinking are similar and Russia has always supported India during difficult times.

Wages of Assam tea workers meagre, shortcomings in welfare scheme implementation: CAG report

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Wages of tea garden workers in Assam are "meagre", with "several shortcomings and areas of concern" in implementation of labour laws and worker welfare provisions, a recent Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report has said.

It also found the state government's intervention in fixing wages as per the Minimum Wage Act (MW Act) "insufficient", noting that efforts to improve the lives of the workers have "fallen short" of making any substantial change.

The performance audit on 'Implementation of Schemes for Welfare of Tea Tribes' for the period 2015-16 to 2020-21 maintained that low income and lack of education have been major barriers to the overall development of the workers in the state.

The audit was performed in four zones - Cachar, Dibrugarh, Nagaon and Sonitpur. There are 390 tea estates in the four sampled



zones, of which 40 estates (10 per cent) were selected based on the size of the plantations and number of workers employed.

Apart from scrutiny of records, the exercise included interviews of 590 workers in the selected estates.

The report said the Tea Tribes Welfare Department (TTWD) tried to address the issues of the workers, but without basic socio-economic data, and their initiatives were implemented "haphazardly".

"The wages the workers received in the tea estates were meagre," the report said, pointing out that the Assam

government did not fix the minimum pay as per the MW Act, 1948.

It also said that workers were not a part of scheduled employments notified by the state government, as a result of which they do not get benefits of minimum wage standard and variable dearness allowance.

The secretary, Labour and Welfare Department, informed the CAG that when the state government came out with initiatives to increase pay as per the MW Act, it got challenged in the court and hence, the wages could not be increased as desired.

The report also underlined the disparity of wages among workers of Barak and Brahmaputra Valley, and said the Labour Department "could not provide any justification" for it.

It said workers in the Barak Valley have been receiving "at least 10 per cent lower" wage rates than the Brahmaputra Valley workers, with the government never intervening to address the issue.

The report said that as per the 2019 wage rates, tea workers of Assam were being paid the least wages compared to other tea-producing states like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and West Bengal. It noted that though wages to tea workers are paid partly in cash and partly in kind in Assam, the authorisation granted by the government for such an arrangement is not available on record.

"The Labour Department was also not aware about the year of commencement of payment of wages in kind and the purpose for the state," the report said.

Ex-Bihar Minister Shyam Rajak returns to JD(U)

PTI ■ PATNA

Former Bihar minister Shyam Rajak on Sunday joined Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's JD(U), less than two weeks after quitting the RJD headed by the CM's arch-rival Lalu Prasad.

Rajak, who had been expelled from the state cabinet as well as the JD(U) in 2020, got re-inducted into the party here by national working president Sanjay Kumar Jha, in presence of a number of top leaders.

Jha said the entry of Rajak, "a leader with grassroots-level support" will strengthen the party, "especially among the state's 'Mahadalits' who were recognised as a separate category by Nitish Kumar".

"Sub-categorisation of Dalits may have become a buzzword in the backdrop of the recent Supreme Court judgement, but our leader was the veritable pioneer. The presence of Rajak in our party will send across this message more forcefully," he said.

Sonam Wangchuk led 'Delhi Chalo Padyatra' starts from Leh in support of 4-point agenda

PTI ■ LEH

More than 100 volunteers led by renowned innovator and climate activist Sonam Wangchuk started a foot march from here to the national capital on Sunday to urge the Centre to resume the stalled dialogue with the leadership of Ladakh on their four-point agenda.

The 'Delhi Chalo Padyatra' was organised by the Leh Apex Body (LAB), which along with Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), are jointly spearheading an agitation over the past four years in support of statehood, extension of the Constitution's sixth schedule,

early recruitment process along with a public service commission for Ladakh and separate Lok Sabha seats for Leh and Kargil districts. The talks between Ladakh representatives and the Central government ended in March without any concrete outcome.

Amid chants of 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai and "we want sixth schedule", LAB chairman Thupstan Chhewang flagged off the march from NDS Memorial park with Wangchuk expressing hope that the Government will greet them with a good news on reaching Delhi on Gandhi Jayanti, marking the birth anniversary of father of the



nation Mahatma Gandhi, on October 2.

"It is a matter of satisfaction that people from all sections of the society, including elders, women and youngsters, have joined this march in support of our

demands...Sixth schedule of the Constitution and UT with legislature is our democratic right as we want development and management of the region in accordance with our wishes and aspirations," said Wangchuk, who earlier in

March held a 21-day long hunger strike in support of the demands. He said this is a people's movement and the Government should fulfill the demands of the Ladakhis without a second thought.

"We are sharing borders with Pakistan and China who may be boasting of their technology but I want to tell my country that Indians should be proud of the people of Ladakh who are ready to sacrifice their lives for the nation," he said.

Expressing confidence that more people will join the march enroute to Delhi via Himachal Pradesh, he said the people are enthusiastic

which is evident that even a 90-year-old Ladakh citizen, who lives in Switzerland, is ready to join them in Delhi.

"This is another phase of our struggle and the KDA is not joining this march at the initial stage but will definitely give a positive response as the march moves to Delhi," Chhewang said.

Tsering Dorjey, an elderly participant, said though his health will not allow him to cover the full distance of around 1,000 km by foot but "I will try to be part of the march as long as I can".

"By this march, we want to convey a message that we are very serious with regard to our four demands," he said.

Tripura BJP to launch membership drive on Sept 3

PTI ■ AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha will kick start the one-and-a-half month-long membership drive of BJP in the northeastern state on September 3, a senior party leader on Sunday.

The BJP Tripura unit has set a target of 12 lakh members this time, state BJP general secretary Amit Rakshit told PTI.

"We will kick start the one-and-a-half month-long membership drive of BJP in Tripura from September 3. Chief Minister Manik Saha



will inaugurate the process in the presence of party's state president, Rajib Bhattacharjee," he said.

In the membership the focus will be on online members, Rakshit said.

Couple held for killing, decapitating woman, dumping body in Pune river

PTI ■ PUNE

A couple has been arrested in connection with the death of a woman, whose headless body was found on the banks of a river in Pune city earlier this week, police said on Sunday.

The police on Saturday arrested Ashfaq Khan and his wife Hamida for allegedly killing his 48-year-old sister in a dispute over ownership of a room in a slum, an official said.



Following a probe, the woman was identified as Sakina Khan (48), the official said.

Joint Commissioner of Police Ranjankumar Sharma said, "The Pune city police recovered a woman's torso from the banks of the Mutha River. There were no clothes on the body, and the accused had dismembered it to destroy evidence before throwing it in the river." Investigations revealed that

the victim, Sakina, had a dispute with her brother over the ownership of a room in a slum in the Shivaji Nagar area, he said.

Sakina had been reported missing, and her brother Ashfaq and sister-in-law Hamida were detained in connection with her disappearance, the official said.

The duo allegedly strangled the victim, decapitated her and dismembered the body to destroy the evidence, he said. The couple has been arrested under sections 103 (murder) and 238 (causing the disappearance of evidence) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the official said.

FIR lodged against three persons for threatening BJP MLA Rajesh Chaudhary

PTI ■ MATHURA

An FIR has been lodged against three persons at the city police station here for allegedly threatening BJP MLA Rajesh Chaudhary, police said on Sunday.

The FIR was lodged against three people, including Ravindra Jatav, Azad Ansari and one unidentified person on Saturday under BNS sections 351 (4) (criminal intimidation by an anonymous communication), 352 (intentional insult with intention to provoke a breach of peace) and section 67 of the IT act, they said.

Chaudhary, who is the MLA from Mant seat of Mathura, alleged that someone called him up on August 25 night and threatened to kill him and his son.

The MLA said that someone also called him up on August 30 and threatened him using abusive and casteist slurs and said "you give a lot of statements on TV. We will see you. Our leader has ordered us to kill you". Chaudhary also said in his complaint that some people have announced a reward of Rs 10 lakh on the social media platform 'X' for the person who brings his tongue.

K-RIDE needs technical strength to execute Bengaluru Suburban Railway Project: Ashwini Vaishnaw

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Sunday said the Karnataka Rail Infrastructure Development Company Limited requires more technical strength to execute the Bengaluru Suburban Railway Project.

The Minister said he would visit Bengaluru after a few weeks and review the Bengaluru Suburban Railway Project (BSRP). "The major issue last time when I reviewed it was the requirement of the technical strength in the organisation (K-RIDE) because it's (BSRP) a very complex project. So Karnataka Rail Infrastructure Development Company (K-



RIDE) as an organisation requires more technical strength. That is what we reviewed last time," Vaishnaw told PTI.

On the deadline, Vaishnaw said the state government has 51 per cent equity in the project and hence the Centre has to work with the state government to make sure that

everything is in place. "It's not just unilateral. It is a joint venture of the state and the Centre, and the state has the control of 51 per cent," he explained.

The Minister said last time when he was in Bengaluru he had requested to the State government to increase the technical strength. Regarding the bullet train project from Mumbai to Ahmedabad, Vaishnaw said the progress was good. "Already 327 kilometres of viaduct has been completed and it is progressing practically very rapidly. The undersea tunnel work has also started. The first section should start in 2026," Vaishnaw said.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

On a sound footing

PM Modi emphasises India's 90% economic growth in the past decade, outpacing the global average of 35%

India's resilience shines through in its remarkable economic growth, a testament to its enduring strength in the face of global challenges. It was recently reiterated in a recent statement by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He highlighted the impressive growth of the Indian economy, stating that while the global economy expanded by 35% over the past decade, India's economy surged by 90%. This bold claim not only underscores India's economic resilience and rapid development but also invites a closer examination of the factors driving this growth and what it means for the future. PM Modi's claim reflects a period of substantial economic transformation in India, marked by key reforms, increased foreign investment, and a burgeoning middle class. India has implemented significant structural reforms in the past decade, including the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), and digital financial inclusion initiatives. These reforms have streamlined business processes, improved tax compliance, and enhanced the overall ease of doing business in India, making the economy more attractive to investors. India's young and growing population has been a crucial driver of its economic expansion. This demographic advantage, has fuelled domestic demand and boosted economic growth.



The digital revolution in India has transformed various sectors, including finance, retail, and services. The rise of digital payments, e-commerce, and fintech has created new economic opportunities and driven growth in the formal economy. Juxtaposed to it the global economy's 35% growth over the same period

reflects a more subdued pace, influenced by various challenges, including geopolitical tensions, trade wars, and the impact of the pandemic. The disparity between India's growth and the global average highlights the country's relative resilience and potential as an emerging economic powerhouse. However, it's important to note that global economic growth has been uneven, with advanced economies experiencing slower growth rates, while emerging markets, including India, have driven much of the expansion. Despite the optimistic growth figures, India faces several challenges that could impact its future economic trajectory. High unemployment rates, income inequality, and a struggling agricultural sector remain pressing issues. Additionally, the global economic environment is becoming increasingly uncertain, with rising protectionism and geopolitical instability posing risks to sustained growth. The Indian government will need to continue implementing reforms and addressing structural challenges to maintain its growth momentum. Ensuring inclusive growth, enhancing job creation, and investing in infrastructure and education will be critical to sustaining long-term economic development. India's impressive growth over the past decade suggests a bright future, but the path forward is not without obstacles which must be addressed in the right earnest.

PICTALK



People walk down a road during rain, in Shimla.

PTI

Paswan family power struggle may split the LJP

The recent meetings of the BJP leader with former LJP MPs Pashupati Paras and Prince Paswan, have intensified tensions within the Paswan family and the LJP

The recent meeting between former LJP MPs Pashupati Paras and Prince Paswan with Amit Shah has significantly elevated Chirag Paswan's political profile. Despite this boost, Chirag Paswan's statements during the last parliamentary session have left many observers puzzled, as he voiced positions that often contradicted those of the BJP. Issues such as the creamy layer in reservations, lateral appointments, and the Waqf Board Amendment Act 2024 saw Chirag taking stances that directly opposed the BJP's views.

In response, Pashupati Paras and Prince Paswan met with BJP leader Amit Shah. During these discussions, Chirag Paswan reportedly expressed concerns about his party's struggles to his uncle, Pashupati Paras. Political insiders suggest that this interaction was part of a broader BJP strategy, with Amit Shah subtly indicating that neither Pashupati Paras nor Prince Paswan are beyond his influence. Additionally, MPs affiliated with the LJP family have begun issuing clarifications, while RJD MLA



Mukesh Roshan has alleged that the BJP is targeting LJP R MPs. Furthermore, three MPs from Chirag Paswan's party are reportedly in communication with senior BJP leaders. The BJP is known for its strategic patience, gradually consolidating its position. This approach saw Pashupati Paras receiving assurances during the Lok Sabha elections, and the Rajya Sabha seat was subsequently occupied by Upendra Kushwaha. Pashupati Paras is now banking on the upcoming 2025 assembly elections, understanding that neither the BJP nor the JDU are likely to allocate him separate seat shares. Consequently, both Pashupati Paras and Chirag Paswan may need to share assembly seats within the NDA's seat-sharing framework, potentially alleviating BJP's concerns.

However, the emergence of the Rashtriya Lok Janshakti Party (RLP) poses a threat to the NDA, particularly as it fields candidates against NDA allies like Chirag Paswan's party. This increases the likelihood of vote splitting, whether it results in a reduction or redistribution of votes. Within the RJD, Ram Vilas Paswan's son-in-law, Anil Kumar Sadhu, has been vocally critical of Chirag Paswan. Should Pashupati Paras align with the India Alliance, internal conflicts could escalate, with figures like Sunny Paswan from Congress already preparing to oppose Chirag. Former Samastipur MP Prince Paswan could also emerge as a significant political challenger to Chirag Paswan. Despite these tensions, Pashupati Paras has publicly expressed a willingness to mend relations with his nephew, stating that familial bonds could overcome political differences. In media statements, he emphasized that "blood is blood," indicating his desire to reconcile with Chirag Paswan. Pashupati has communicated his intentions to the NDA

leadership, aiming to thaw the strained relationship. Nevertheless, Chirag Paswan has accused Pashupati Paras of previously undermining the LJP by breaking away MPs and seizing party offices established by their father, Ram Vilas Paswan, thereby betraying the family. Despite these accusations, Pashupati Paras now appears to be seeking reconciliation. This scenario may reflect the BJP's damage control efforts or a strategic policy shift aimed at balancing the factions within the LJP. The BJP aims to prevent the LJP from splitting into the Rashtriya Lok Janshakti and LJP (R) factions. During the Lok Sabha elections, Pashupati Paras was a target of BJP's strategies. The Paras faction suffered losses during the Lok Sabha elections, losing both MPs and Union Minister positions. When they sought a seat allocation for Sunil Pandey in a by-election, the BJP appropriated their candidate. LJP remains caught in a predicament of political uncertainty. (The writer is a senior journalist; views are personal)



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

The saying parliament is the temple of democracy has become a cliché phrase. Still, it is heard across the world where democracy is in vogue. In India, even the Communists, Dravidians and even Maoists use this term despite their nationalist views. The functioning of a nation's parliament symbolizes its civility. No doubt, the names of Benjamin Disraeli, who served twice as Prime Minister of Britain and William Gladstone, who had a 12-year term as Prime Minister (spread over four non-consecutive terms) are two names students of political science would never forget.

Disraeli was premier during 1868 and 1874-1880 and served as leader of the opposition. Gladstone was his contemporary and both were known for their tongue-in-the-cheek retorts. Though the verbal duels at times crossed all levels of parliamentary decorum, both the parties they headed (Conservatives and Labor Party) never had any issues with their style of exchange of words. "If Gladstone fell into the Thames, that would be a misfortune. But if anyone pulled him out, that I suppose would be a calamity," Disraeli reportedly told the Parliament once. Similarly, Gladstone was named as GOM (Grand Old Man) of British politics and Disraeli said that GOM stood for God's Only Mistake.

India, described as the world's biggest democracy has its colourful past. The likes of Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, Mahavir Tyagi and Pilloo Modi are some of the names that come to mind while thinking of the Indian parliament. The debates and discussions featuring them remain eternal classics in the annals of the country's parliamentary democracy. Those were the days when Television and live telecasting of proceedings of the House were unheard of. Not any more. The proceedings of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha are being aired live by the LSTV and RSTV.

After watching the Lok Sabha debate on the motion of thanks to the President's address to the joint session of the Houses, what

struck my mind was the scarcity of good leaders or speakers in the Opposition benches. K C Venugopal, as of date, the strongest leader in the Congress after the Gandhi clan, made a "bloomer" when he charged that the last ten years of Modi rule saw 2.5 lakh persons getting killed in train accidents across the country. Though Jagadambika Pal, a Congress turncoat occupying the chair asked him to check the facts, the Kerala Chanakya (as KC is addressed by his followers) stood his ground and reiterated that more than 2.5 lakh had perished in train mishaps during the last ten years. A senior railway official had a hearty laugh when asked about the charge made by the Congress leader. Many members of the Lok Sabha are not competent to occupy the treasury or opposition benches. Thol Thirumavalavan, of the VCK, a Dalit outfit, blamed the Center for the recent hooch tragedy in Tamil Nadu's Kallakurichi which claimed 63 innocent lives. Had Thirumavalavan spent at least 15 minutes of his time reading the Constitution of India presented to him by Rahul Gandhi, he would not have made this blunder. The

manipulation, distribution and sale of liquor is the exclusive prerogative of the State governments under the seventh schedule of the Constitution. When one comes to the House to deliver an important speech like thanking the president for the address to the joint session of both Houses, one has to do some homework. Gumma Tanuja Rani, a tribal leader representing Araku constituency in Andhra Pradesh was a major relief. She spoke from the bottom of her heart about the inadequacies in the education system for tribal students quality education. India, which has dozens of communication satellites of its own could dedicate one or two transponders for educating the tribal teachers making use of the quality teachers available in the country. The words of representatives like Tanuja Rani should not be confined in the records of the House. The ministers of science and technology and human resources development should sit with the ISRO chairman and work out an action program to launch tribal schools through our satellites. Amrinder Singh Raja Warring, a Congress MP from Punjab,

spoke about the eternal pain of farmers in his State as well as the rest of the country. This is proof of how our ministers in charge of agriculture failed to resolve the hardship faced by the farming community. Wherever one goes in India, the farmers wait over their difficulties in getting water for irrigation, bank loans and of course the lack of marketing facilities. A research scholar may be able to get a PhD for his thesis on how the politicians succeed in keeping the farmers in perpetual poverty and how they are forced to resort to extreme steps. Period. Discussing an inconsequential comment made by the Leader of the Opposition about Sanatan Dharma is a waste of time. The ruling party should understand that he has to make some statements to stay relevant. There are three kinds of people in the world, according to Shiv Khera, a management guru. Those who make things happen, those who watch things happen and those who wonder what happened. Our LOP does not belong to the first two categories! (The writer is special correspondent with The Pioneer; views are personal)

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FIRST COLUMN CULTIVATING INNER STRENGTH

It often begins with cultivating a calm, unclouded mind



RAVI VALLURI

Aeons ago a neophyte Zen student was an apprentice at a temple of knowledge. Regrettably, his mind was not robust enough and kept vacillating; so much so his mind and soul were not satisfied with "mere" breathing practices and meditation techniques imparted at the monastery. Petals of knowledge revealed. In a state of haughtiness, the Zen student arrived at another temple of knowledge where he remarked, rather dramatically that, "The human mind, Sakya Muni Buddha and other sentient beings, in reality do not exist." The pontiff of the monastery was silently listening to the outburst but uttered nothing for a while.

And then abruptly and quite unexpectedly he whacked the tutee with his prized bamboo pipe which angered the student. The Zen Master compassionately inquired of the tutee that if nothing existed, from where did his bout of anger and arrogance emerge? The mentee was momentarily nonplussed and then fell at the feet of the Zen Master, begging for forgiveness.

A hollow and empty mind

The percipient Master agreed to admit the whippersnapper but with a few stipulations. It was incumbent upon the greenhorn to remember the cardinal principle of trying to keep the mind hollow and empty. Lord Krishna's flute There is an interesting parable about Lord Krishna and his flute. It is believed that he used to visit a garden and whisper, "I love you" to all the flora and fauna. In unison, the flora and fauna reciprocated their unalloyed and unadulterated affection



towards Lord Krishna. It so transpired that one day, an animated Lord Krishna approached a bamboo tree in the garden. The Lord broke the cataclysmic news that he would have to snuff out the life of the bamboo plant. The entire garden was aghast as the news spread; several plants and trees were however secretly joyous that they were spared of the torture. The bamboo mullered upon the news for a while and then languidly responded, "Lord, you and I have no choice."

At the altar of the Master of the Universe, I am willing to sacrifice my life." Hearing this, Lord Krishna beamed. With surgical precision, he struck the bamboo plant. Soon the bamboo was fashioned into a flute for Lord Krishna himself. The flora and fauna, all the gopis and gopikas were now covetous of the bamboo, that in its new avatar it would always be inseparable, constantly in the hands of Lord Krishna.

The exultant bamboo flute was to become a triumphant possession of Lord Krishna. "What was so noteworthy about you, that you were the chosen one?" was an incessant refrain faced by the flute. "Nothing but my singular capitulation to will of the Master; willing to be an instrument of the Lord," was the refrain of the flute. The classical epic Mahabharata is populated with numerous valorous characters. But the ace archer Arjuna stands out prominently. Why is that so?

Arjuna is the Sakha, the Nara through whom Narayana revealed the divine celestial song - The Bhagavad Gita. It was Arjuna's unflinching devotion to the Lord that made the character so robust and aerobicized. He faithfully carried out all the commandments of the Lord. Only inner strength and a mature mind transfigure an individual to establish contact with the source of our inner energy. This is possible through the process of authentic surrender. Breathing techniques like Sudarshan Kriya help to make the mind hollow and empty. "A mature mind is one who understands the impossibility of knowing the ultimate, and with this understanding there is a new dimension, the dimension of the being," said the philosopher, Osho.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

Diplomacy: India's neighborhood quandary



PARUL CHANDRA

Despite its vigorous 'Neighbourhood First' policy, India has struggled to maintain stable and lasting relationships with neighboring countries



Ironical as it might seem, despite a vigorous pursuit of a 'Neighbourhood First' policy in tune with its strategic imperatives, India has floundered to build lasting and steady bilateral relations with countries in its backyard. The pendulum of India's fortunes continues to swing up and down with regime changes in the neighbourhood.

Despite intense diplomatic engagements and regular outreach at the highest political levels in its neighbourhood, India often finds itself out in the cold each time a party or leadership not so inclined towards it sweeps to power. Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and even Afghanistan are cases in point. And now, with the ignominious exit of the Awami League's Sheikh Hasina as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, India has lost the only loyal and steadfast friend it had in the neighbourhood for over a decade. Indeed, so heavily was New Delhi invested in Sheikh Hasina's prime ministership that it was even accused of interfering in the country's elections to favour her when she won a fourth consecutive term this January.

If her ouster took Sheikh Hasina by surprise, it also caught New Delhi completely unawares. India was blindsided, even though the Sheikh Hasina government was being accused of increasing authoritarianism and a ruthless decimation of the Opposition with backsliding of democracy. New Delhi saw no reason to complain with Sheikh Hasina delivering on what it wanted - connectivity, crackdown on north-east insurgents sheltering in Bangladesh, not making too much noise about the unfulfilled Teesta waters agreement and keeping India's interests in mind while building ties with China. Under Sheikh Hasina, the cordial bilateral ties were not impacted even when the Indian government brought in the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, which fast-tracks citizenship for persecuted



IN BANGLADESH WHERE THE OPPOSITION HAD BRIEFLY INITIATED AN 'INDIA OUT' CAMPAIGN, INDIA WILL FACE AN UPHILL TASK IN BUILDING TIES WITH THE NEW GOVERNMENT ONCE ELECTIONS ARE HELD

non-Muslim minorities from neighbouring countries, though it created considerable disquiet in Bangladesh.

Likewise, she chose not to make a fuss over the controversial National Register of Citizens in Assam, which was seen as targeting illegal Bangladeshi immigrants. For sure, India's ruling party's hyper-nationalism does not help the country's cause in its neighbourhood either, especially in Muslim-majority Bangladesh and the Maldives. Moreover, India's propensity to openly back a particular regime often works to its detriment. It leaves not only the government of the day open to charges of being India's lackey but equally helps the Opposition there fuel anti-India sentiments. In Bangladesh where the Opposition had briefly initiated an 'India Out' campaign, India will face an uphill task in building ties with the new government once elections are held. Likewise in the Maldives, the Opposition had launched an 'India Out' campaign, which helped propel current President Mohamed Muizzu and his party to power.

Along with its required development initiatives, India threw its entire weight behind Muizzu's predecessor, Ibu Solih and his Maldivian Democratic Party, but failed to see him win a second term. Given these experiences, it's time India extended support to its neighbours in a more discreet and calibrated manner instead of being seen as an emperor doling out largesse to subjects. India may like to be seen as a close friend, benefactor and net security provider in the

Subcontinent and the Indian Ocean Region, and it does do a lot for all this, but there is a marked shift in how it is now perceived.

For one, neither the polity nor the people of these nations want to be seen as mere appendages of a big neighbour even though their countries seem inevitably tied with India owing to their geographical location.

Second, small as they may be, there is a growing assertion of national identity and sovereignty among them. Third, they know that India isn't the only big power they can turn to for financial and other assistance.

China, with far greater financial muscle, after all, is only too happy to step in. Indeed, with China's expanding footprint in the Subcontinent and beyond, India has considerably stepped up its financial assistance for infrastructure projects and sought to forge strong economic linkages and trading ties with its neighbours, among other things. It has also sought to be the 'first responder' when they require humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Even so, those days when India was seen as the sole provider for its smaller neighbours are long gone. In Nepal, the Kalapani border dispute was drummed up as a sovereignty issue by then Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli to rally public support for his government. Oli even altered Nepal's map to show the disputed area as part of Nepal.

New Delhi could have simply prevented matters from escalating by holding a meeting at the foreign secretary level as was demanded

by Kathmandu to discuss the territorial dispute. But India looked the other way instead of addressing Nepal's concerns. Consequently, Kalapani remains a major irritant in the relationship. India did something similar with the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) report prepared jointly by a team of experts from the two countries, with one of its mandates being to review the Nepal-India Friendship Treaty of 1950 that Kathmandu wants revised in keeping with present times.

It's been ready since 2018 but has been given a quiet burial by New Delhi even though Kathmandu had been pressing that its findings be made public. In Sri Lanka too, India's fortunes change with the change of guard. The going was difficult with the Rajapaksa in power, though India now appears to have regained some lost ground after it provided the island nation with loans after its economy was badly hit during the pandemic.

However, this does not mean that India will enjoy the goodwill of all political parties there for all times to come, given that relationships in the neighbourhood appear to have acquired a transactional character. Going forward, India will do well to not put all its eggs in one basket and seek to engage more vigorously with parties across the political spectrum in its neighbourhood, while continuing to help the countries with financial and other assistance. It should come across as a benevolent friend, not be perceived as an overbearing bully.

(The writer is a senior journalist; views are personal)

Transforming the India Islamic Cultural Centre: A vision for progress and reform

With a new leadership poised to take charge, the Centre faces the challenge of dispelling stereotypes and promoting a progressive vision of Islam

While showcasing the rich heritage of Islamic literature, culture, art, and traditions, the India Islamic Cultural Centre (IICC) must also foster a culture of debate, discussion, and dialogue. This can be achieved by organizing conferences and seminars on crucial issues such as democracy, human rights, justice, peace, and global affairs.



TARIQ ASHRAF

The Centre should present a gentle and progressive face of Islam to our fellow citizens, countering media-generated stereotypes through engagement and cross-cultural interactions. This can be facilitated by hosting lectures and seminars led by renowned Islamic scholars.

In this context, I offer a few suggestions for the consideration of the new IICC leadership. While maintaining an apolitical stance, the IICC could engage in research and documentation on contemporary issues through fellowships. Additionally, it should enhance its modest library into a comprehensive resource center for reference, research, and docu-

mentation.

The IICC must also regularly publish reports and monographs on current issues affecting the community. There is an urgent need to add a small academic block to the building, providing a co-working space for authors and writers to interact.

A significant issue within the Muslim community has been the breakdown of communication with other communities. The Centre should actively engage with civil society groups and the media to cultivate healthy relationships and dispel misconceptions. Special emphasis should be placed on involving women from the community in the Centre's



activities, exposing them to an open, liberal, and progressive environment.

The Centre can also advocate for much-needed reforms in Muslim society through dialogue and discussion, involving the Muslim clergy. By doing so, the IICC can become a serious hub for advocacy,

reform, and the promotion of moderation and cultural exchange. It should broaden its scope by involving a larger section of the community, not relying solely on financially resourceful members.

The IICC is not intended to be a center for coaching and career counseling, but

rather a space for intellectual discussions, cultural and artistic events, akin to its neighboring institutions like the India International Centre (IIC) and the India Habitat Centre (IHC).

There is no better person than Mr. Salman Khurshid to lay the foundation for this transformation during his tenure. With his visionary leadership and persuasive skills, he is expected to leave a lasting impact by establishing a strong visionary and regulatory institutional framework for future generations.

There will undoubtedly be resistance from influential members who have treated the IICC as a social club for networking. However, Mr.

Khurshid, a charismatic and widely respected figure, has the capacity to lead effectively and develop the Centre into a progressive, representative, and responsible space that showcases the rich and ever-evolving Islamic culture—especially in a rapidly changing geopolitical environment, both locally and globally. We will see how things unfold for the Centre in the coming days. In conclusion, the India Islamic Cultural Centre (IICC) stands at a pivotal juncture, poised to redefine its role as a beacon of intellectual discourse, cultural exchange, and societal reform. Under the leadership of Mr. Salman Khurshid, the Centre has

the potential to transform into a progressive and inclusive institution that not only preserves the rich heritage of Islamic culture but also fosters a spirit of dialogue and engagement. As the IICC embraces this visionary path, it could become a model for moderation, diversity, and meaningful community interaction, impacting both the Muslim community and the broader society positively.

(The author is an alumnus of Hindu College, Delhi University and has been associated with the Centre for Policy Research, IIM Lucknow, University of Delhi South Campus, and Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi; views are personal)

Israel recovers bodies of 6 hostages in Gaza

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israel on Sunday said it had recovered the bodies of six hostages in Gaza, including a young Israeli-American man who became one of the most well-known captives held by Hamas as his parents met with world leaders and pressed for his release. The military said all six had been killed shortly before the arrival of Israeli forces trying to rescue them. Their recovery sparked calls for mass protests against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whom many families of hostages and much of the wider Israeli public blame for failing to bring them back alive in a deal with Hamas to end the 10-month-old war. Negotiations over such a deal have dragged on for months. Netanyahu expressed sorrow over the deaths and said Israel would hold Hamas accountable for killing them in "cold blood." He said the killings prove that the militant group does not want a cease-fire agreement. "Whoever murders hostages doesn't want a deal," he said. Militants seized Hersh Goldberg-Polin, 23, and four of the other hostages at a music festival in southern Israel during Hamas' October 7 attack, which triggered the war. The native of Berkeley, California, lost part of his left arm to a grenade in the attack. In April, a Hamas-issued video showed him, his left hand missing and clearly speaking under duress, sparking new protests in Israel urging the government to do more to secure his

'Anyone who murders hostages doesn't want ceasefire deal'

Jerusalem: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has expressed sorrow over the deaths of six hostages, saying the killings prove that Hamas does not want a cease-fire deal. Netanyahu said Sunday that he was heartbroken to hear the news of the hostages' deaths. He accused Hamas of killing them in "cold blood" and said Israel would hold the group accountable. He also accused the group of scuttling ongoing cease-fire efforts. "Whoever murders hostages



doesn't want a deal," he said. Critics in Israel have accused Netanyahu of dragging his feet in cease-fire talks — a charge he denies.

and others' freedom. The army identified the other dead hostages as Ori Danino, 25; Eden Yerushalmi, 24; Almog Sarusi, 27; and Alexander Lobanov, 33; who were also taken from the music festival. The sixth, Carmel Gat, 40, was abducted from the nearby farming community of Beeri. It said the bodies were recovered from a tunnel in the southern Gaza city of Rafah, around a kilometer (half a mile) from where another hostage, Qaid Farhan Alkadi, 52, was rescued alive last week. "According to preliminary information, they were cruelly murdered by Hamas terrorists shortly before we reached them," Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, the Israeli military spokesperson, told reporters. Hamas has offered to

release the hostages in return for an end to the war, the withdrawal of Israeli forces and the release of a large number of Palestinian prisoners, including high-profile militants. Izzat al-Rishq, a senior Hamas official, blamed the hostages' deaths on Israel and the United States, saying they would still be alive if Israel had accepted a cease-fire proposal that Hamas said it had agreed to back in July. He did not mention the hostages by name. Netanyahu has vowed to continue the war until Hamas is destroyed and says military pressure is needed to bring home the hostages. Israel's Channel 12 reported that he got into a shouting match at a security Cabinet meeting late Thursday with his defense min-

ister, Yoav Gallant, who accused him of prioritising control of a strategic corridor along the Gaza-Egypt border — a major sticking point in the talks — over the lives of the hostages. The Cabinet reportedly voted in favour of remaining in the corridor over the objections of Gallant, who said it would prevent a hostage deal. An Israeli official confirmed the report and said three of the hostages — Goldberg-Polin, Yerushalmi and Gat — had been slated to be released in the first phase of a cease-fire proposal discussed back in July. The official was not authorized to brief media about the negotiations and spoke on condition of anonymity. "In the name of the state of Israel, I hold their families close to my heart and ask forgiveness," Gallant said Sunday after the remains were recovered. He later called for the Cabinet to reverse its decision. A forum of hostage families called for a massive protest on Sunday, demanding a "complete halt of the country" to push for the implementation of a cease-fire and hostage release. "A deal for the return of the hostages has been on the table for over two months. Were it not for the delays, sabotage, and excuses those whose deaths we learned about this morning would likely still be alive," it said in a statement. US President Joe Biden, who has met with Goldberg-Polin's parents, said he was "devastated and outraged." "It is as tragic as it is reprehensible," he said. "Make no mistake,

Hamas leaders will pay for these crimes. And we will keep working around the clock for a deal to secure the release of the remaining hostages." Vice President Kamala Harris said her prayers were with the Goldberg-Polin family and condemned Hamas. Goldberg-Polin's parents, US-born immigrants to Israel, became perhaps the most high-profile relatives of hostages on the international stage. They met with Biden, Pope Francis and others and addressed the United Nations, urging the release of all hostages. On August 21, his parents addressed a hushed hall at the Democratic National Convention — after sustained applause and chants of "bring him home." "This is a political convention. But needing our only son — and all of the cherished hostages — home is not a political issue. It is a humanitarian issue," said his father, Jon Polin. His mother, Rachel, who bowed her head during the ovation and touched her chest, said "Hersh, if you can hear us, we love you, stay strong, survive." She and her husband sought to keep their son and the others held from being reduced to numbers, describing Hersh as a musician and soccer lover and traveller with plans to attend university since his military service had ended. At events she often addressed her son directly in the hope he could hear her, urging him to live another day. Some 250 hostages were taken on October 7. Before the military's announcement of the latest discovery of bodies, Israel said it

believed 108 hostages were still held in Gaza, of which about one-third were dead. In late August, the Israeli military recovered the bodies of six hostages in southern Gaza. Eight hostages have been rescued by Israeli forces, the most recent found on Tuesday. More than 100 were freed during a weeklong cease-fire in November in exchange for the release of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel. Two previous Israeli operations to free hostages killed scores of Palestinians. Hamas says several hostages have been killed in Israeli airstrikes and failed rescue attempts. Israeli troops mistakenly killed three Israelis who escaped captivity in December. Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, when they stormed into southern Israel on October 7, attacking army bases and several farming communities. Israel's retaliatory offensive in Gaza has killed over 40,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials, who do not say how many were fighters and how many civilians. It has displaced the vast majority of Gaza's 2.3 million people, often multiple times, and plunged the besieged territory into a humanitarian catastrophe. In a separate development Sunday, Palestinian militants killed three Israeli police officers when they opened fire on their vehicle in the West Bank, according to Israeli officials. Israel has been carrying out large-scale military raids across the occupied territory in recent days.

Large-scale polio vaccinations begin in Gaza

AP ■ DEIR-AL-BALAH

Palestinian health authorities and United Nations agencies on Sunday began a large-scale campaign of vaccinations against polio in the Gaza Strip, hoping to prevent an outbreak in the territory that has been ravaged by the ongoing Israel-Hamas war. Authorities plan to vaccinate children in central Gaza until Wednesday before moving on to the more devastated northern and southern parts of the strip. The campaign began with a small number of vaccinations on Saturday and aims to reach about 640,000 children. The World Health Organisation said Thursday that Israel has agreed to limited pauses in the fighting to facilitate the campaign. There were initial reports of Israeli strikes in central Gaza early Sunday, but it was not immediately known if anyone was killed or wounded. Hospitals in Deir al-Balah and Nuseirat confirmed that the campaign had begun early Sunday. Israel said Saturday that the vaccination programme would continue through September 9 and last eight hours a day. Gaza recently reported its first polio case in 25 years — a 10-month-old boy, now paralysed in the leg. The World Health Organisation says the presence of a paralysis case indicates there could be hundreds more who have been infected but aren't showing symptoms. Most people who have polio do not experience symptoms, and those who do usually recover in a week or so. But there is no cure, and when polio causes paralysis, it is usually permanent. If the paralysis affects breathing muscles, the disease can be fatal. The vaccination campaign faces a host of challenges, from ongoing fighting to devastated roads and hospitals shut down by the war. Around 90 per cent of Gaza's population of 2.3 million people have been displaced within the besieged territory, with hundreds of thousands crammed into squalid tent camps. Health officials have expressed alarm about disease outbreaks as uncollected garbage has piled up and the bombing of critical infrastruc-

ture has sent putrid water flowing through the streets. Widespread hunger has left people even more vulnerable to illness. "We escaped death with our children, and fled from place to place for the sake of our children, and now we have these diseases," said Wafaa Obaid, who brought her three children to the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah to get the vaccinations. Ammar Ammar, a spokesperson for the UN children's agency, said it hopes both parties adhere to a temporary truce in designated areas to enable families to reach health facilities. "This is a first step," he told The Associated Press. "But there is no alternative to a cease-fire because it's not only polio that threatens children in Gaza, but also other factors, including malnutrition and the inhuman conditions they are living in." The vaccinations will be administered at roughly 160 sites across the territory, including medical centres and schools. Children under 10 will receive two drops of oral polio vaccine in two rounds, the second to be administered four weeks after the first. Israel allowed around 1.3 million doses to be brought into the territory last month, which are now being held in refrigerated storage in a warehouse in Deir al-Balah. Another shipment of 400,000 doses is set to be delivered to Gaza soon. The polio virus that triggered this latest outbreak is a mutated virus from an oral polio vaccine. The oral polio vaccine contains weakened live virus and in very rare cases, that virus is shed by those who are vaccinated and can evolve into a new form capable of starting new epidemics. The war in Gaza began when Hamas-led militants stormed into Israel on October 7, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting around 250 hostages. Around 100 remain in captivity, about a third of whom are believed to be dead. Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed over 40,000 Palestinians, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which does not say whether those killed were fighters or civilians.

'3 dead after small plane crashes in Oregon'

Portland (US) (AP): Three people were dead after a small plane crashed into a row of townhouses Saturday morning in a neighbourhood east of Portland, setting the homes ablaze, authorities told KATU-TV. Officials earlier in the day had said the plane was carrying two people and that at least one resident had been unaccounted for. Photos and videos published by KGW-TV in Portland showed one of the townhomes engulfed in flames while black smoke poured out of the adjoining houses. Gresham Fire Chief Scott Lewis said the fire had spread to at least four of the homes, displacing up to six families. He said two people were treated at the scene, but he didn't describe the type or severity of injuries. The Federal Aviation Administration identified the aircraft as a twin-engine Cessna 421C, which it says went down around 10:30 am near Troutdale Airport, about a 30-minute drive east of Portland. As the plane went down, it knocked over a pole and power lines, causing a separate brush fire in a nearby field, according to the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office. The plane was split into multiple parts as it crashed in the residential area in the city of Fairview, which is home to about 10,000 people. Lewis said the first call about the fire came from staff at the Troutdale Airport's control tower, who saw a thick plume of smoke rising in the air. But Lewis said that initial reports indicated "there was no may-day, no call for emergency" from the aircraft itself before it crashed. The National Transportation Safety Board is leading the investigation into the crash.

Harris calls Trump's appearance a 'political stunt'

AP ■ WASHINGTON

US Vice President Kamala Harris said former President Donald Trump "disrespected sacred ground" in his recent appearance at Arlington National Cemetery, where the Republican nominee took and distributed images despite a federal prohibition on campaign activity on the grounds. Harris, in a statement posted Saturday on the social media platform X, cited reports that Trump's campaign aides created an altercation with a cemetery staffer and proceeded to take photographs and film the former president, including at the graves of Afghanistan war veterans, after being warned about rules at the site. "Let me



be clear: the former president disrespected sacred ground, all for the sake of a political stunt," Harris said, calling Arlington a "solemn place where we come together to honour American heroes ...

not a place for politics." The original incident stemmed from Trump's and Republicans' continued criticism of President Joe Biden and now Harris for the chaotic US withdrawal from Afghanistan. At the invitation of some family members of service members killed during the withdrawal, Trump laid wreaths last Monday in honour of Sgt Nicole Gee, Staff Sgt Darin Hoover and Staff Sgt Ryan Knauss. They were among 13 US service members and more than 100 Afghans who died in an Aug 26, 2021, bombing at Hamid Karzai International Airport. Trump's campaign was warned about not taking photographs before an altercation at the cemetery, according to defense officials. Officials have said since that

an Arlington employee whom two Trump campaign staff members allegedly "verbally abused and pushed" aside has declined to press charges. The Trump campaign has since lashed out at Pentagon officials, with a top campaign adviser, Chris LaCivita, referring to military spokespersons as "hacks". Trump campaign officials say it had permission to bring someone to take video. Since Biden ended his reelection bid, Trump has been zeroing in on Harris and her roles in foreign policy decisions. He has specifically highlighted the vice president's statements that she was the last person in the room before Biden made the decision on Afghanistan. Biden's administration was following a withdrawal com-

mitment and timeline that the Trump administration had negotiated with the Taliban in 2020. A 2022 review by a government-appointed special investigator concluded decisions made by both Trump and Biden were the key factors leading to the rapid collapse of Afghanistan's military and the Taliban takeover. Harris on Saturday alluded to Trump's history of picking fights with veterans and repeated allegations that he has "called our fallen service members suckers' and losers" and disparaged Medal of Honour recipients. "This is a man who is unable to comprehend anything other than service to himself," Harris said. "I will always honour the service and sacrifice of all of America's fallen heroes... And I will never politicise them."

Philippine authorities detain more than 160 cybercrime suspects

AP ■ MANILA

Philippine authorities raided a suspected illegal online gaming and cyberscam complex in a central province and took into custody more than 160 people — mostly Chinese and Indonesians — who were committing internet-based crimes, officials said Sunday. The raid on Saturday by more than 100 government agents, backed by military intelligence, on a resort compound in Lapu-Lapu city was part of an ongoing crackdown after President Ferdinand Marcos Jr ordered a ban in July on widespread — and mostly Chinese-run — online gaming operations that cater mostly to clients in China, where illegal gambling is banned. Marcos said then that the massive illegal gambling opera-

tions have ignored Philippine laws with largescale violations of regulations and also committed other crimes, including financial scams, human trafficking, torture, kidnappings and murder. The raid at the Tourist Garden Resort, which has 10 buildings with swimming pools, karaoke bars and restaurants, came after the Indonesian Embassy in Manila requested the rescue of eight Indonesians who were reportedly forced to work in the online gaming hub, according to the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission. At least 162 foreign nationals "were found working in three separate scam farms within the compound," the commission said without elaborating. Such crimes include fraudulent love, gaming and investment schemes online that have

Far-right party looking for wins in two state elections

Berlin (AP):

Two state elections in eastern Germany Sunday offer the far-right Alternative for Germany the chance to become the strongest party for the first time and could produce painful results for the unpopular national government. A new party founded by a prominent leftist also hopes to make an immediate impact. About 3.3 million people are eligible to vote in Saxony and nearly 1.7 million in Thuringia. Sunday's elections are being watched nervously in Berlin: While the three parties in Chancellor Olaf Scholz's governing coalition were weak there already, they risk dropping under the 5 per cent support threshold needed to stay in the state legislatures at all.

German leaders pay tribute to knife attack victims

AP ■ BERLIN

German leaders paid tribute on Sunday to the three people killed in the August 23 knife attack by a suspected Islamic extremist, which has pushed immigration back to the top of the country's political agenda. Eight people also were wounded in the attack at a "Festival of Diversity" marking the 650th anniversary of the city of Solingen in western Germany. President Frank-Walter Steinmeier said at a memorial event in a city theatre that he was "relieved and thankful" that none of them is now in serious danger. The 26-year-old Syrian suspect, who was arrested a day after the attack, was supposed to be deported to Bulgaria last year but reportedly disappeared for a time



and avoided deportation. In recent days, Chancellor Olaf Scholz's government has announced new restrictions on knives and new measures to ease deportations. On Friday, it deported Afghan nationals to their homeland for the first time since the

Taliban returned to power in 2021, following up on a pledge made in June after a previous attack. "It is a horrifying crime that brings us together today, carried out by a man who, according to everything we know, sought and found protection here, and abused this protection so terribly," Steinmeier said at the memorial, also attended by Scholz and other top officials. "That is intolerable." Steinmeier said that "we are for good reason a country that takes in people who seek protection from political persecution and war". He added that "we want to remain that country, but ultimately we can only do so if the number of those who are not entitled to this special protection does not overburden us".

On the first day without X, Brazilians feel disconnected from world

AP ■ SAO PAULO

The blocking of social media platform X in Brazil divided users and politicians over the legitimacy of the ban, and many Brazilians had difficulty and doubts over navigating other social media in its absence. The shutdown of Elon Musk's platform started early Saturday, making it largely inaccessible on both the web and through mobile apps after the billionaire refused to name a legal representative to the company, missing a deadline imposed by Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes. The blockade marks an escalation in a monthslong feud between Musk and de Moraes over free speech, far-right accounts and misinformation. Brazil is one of the biggest

markets for X, with tens of millions of users. "I've got the feeling that I have no idea what's happening in the world right now. Bizarre," entertainment writer and heavy X user Chico Barney wrote on Threads on Saturday. Threads is a text-based app developed by Instagram that Barney was using as an alternative. "This Threads algorithm is like an all-you-can-eat restaurant where the waiter keeps serving things I would never order." Bluesky, a social media platform that was launched last year as an alternative to X and other more established sites, has seen a large influx of Brazilians in the past couple of days. The company said Friday it has seen about 200,000 new users from Brazil sign up dur-

ing that time, and the number "continues to grow by the minute". Brazilian users are also setting records for activities such as follows and likes, Bluesky said. Previous users of other platforms welcomed Brazilians to their ranks. "Hello literally everyone in Brazil," a user wrote on Threads. "We're a lot nicer than Twitter here," said another. Platform migration isn't new for Brazilians. They were huge adopters of Orkut and, when Orkut went kaput, they very gladly moved to other platforms. X is not as popular in Brazil as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube or TikTok. However, it remains an important platform on which Brazilians engage in political debates and is highly influential among politicians, journalists and other opinion makers.

It's also where they share their sense of humour. Many of the country's most famous memes originate from posts on X before spreading to other social networks. Last week, for instance, Brazilians collaboratively crafted an absurd storyline for a fictional telenovela, complete with a theme song created using artificial intelligence tools. Pop stars and their fanbases were also hit by Brazilians being left off the platform. "Wait a lot of my fan pages are Brazilian!!! Come back hold up!!!" Cardi B said Friday on X. A fan page dedicated to Timothée Chalamet, known by the handle TimotheeUpdates, said it would temporarily cease updating as all of its administrators are Brazilian.

Norwegian princess Martha marries American self-styled shaman

AP ■ HELSINKI

Social media influencers, reality stars and TV personalities were among the guests at the Norwegian king's eldest child, Princess Martha Louise, married an American self-professed shaman on Saturday in a wedding ceremony following three days of festivities. The 52-year-old Martha Louise and Durek Verrett, who claims to be a sixth-generation shaman from California, tied the knot in the picturesque small town of Geiranger, one of Norway's major tourist attractions located on a fjord with stunning views. Following festivities that started on Thursday, the actual wedding ceremony took place in a large white tent set up on a lush lawn. Guests told



Harald Ronneberg described the colorful ceremony to public broadcaster NRK. "It was gospel and love. We laughed, we clapped, and we were touched. It was absolutely beautiful." The couple has sold the wedding photo rights to British

celebrity magazine Hello! and the film rights to Netflix. The deals prompted protests from Norwegian media, which say the arrangement goes against local practices. The couple have often lashed out against the press while promoting themselves on social media. The 87-year-old King Harald, who has been in fragile health the past few years, attended his daughter's wedding together with Queen Sonja and other member of the Norwegian royal house. Crown Princess Victoria and her husband Prince Daniel represented the Swedish royal house together with her brother, Prince Carl Philip, and his wife Princess Sofia. No other European royals attended the wedding.

Families in B'desh fight for justice against forced disappearances

PTI ■ DHAKA

In a dimly lit room in Dhaka, Baby Akhtar clutches a faded photograph of her husband, Tarikul Islam Tara, who vanished twelve years ago after allegedly being taken by Bangladesh's security agencies, a personal tragedy reflecting the broader nightmare of enforced disappearances that has haunted Bangladesh for over the last 15 years.

"I have been waiting for my husband for the last 12 years. My life and family have been ruined for no fault of mine. We want justice. We hope that the interim government will give us justice. I want my husband back," she said as tears rolled down her cheeks.

The fate of hundreds like Tara remains shrouded in uncertainty following the recent ouster of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, whose administration was accused of presiding over systematic

enforced disappearances. With Hasina's departure, the interim government has taken a significant step by forming a commission to investigate these cases. However, for the families still waiting, the commission's formation is both a beacon of hope and a reminder of the years lost in their pursuit of justice, given nearly 700 registered cases of forced disappearances in the last one and a half decades of the Awami League regime.

"Forced disappearances were the order of the day during the Sheikh Hasina regime. For the families of the missing, the commission's formation is a momentous occasion. We hope to get justice after fighting this battle for the last 15 years," Sanjida Islam Tulee, coordinator of Mayer Daak—an NGO working with the families of the disappeared—told PTI.

"This terror of enforced disappearances was used to suppress political opposition, silence

dissent, and create a climate of fear in the country. In the past 1.5 decades, families of those who had been subjected to enforced disappearance were systematically denied legal redress. Although the registered cases are around 700, the actual figures are much higher," she said.

The recent formation of a commission of inquiry by the interim government of Bangladesh, led by a retired high court judge and including legal and human rights experts, offers a glimmer of hope to beleaguered families by investigating the disappearances and tracing the missing individuals.

This development came shortly after the new government signed the United Nations Convention against Enforced Disappearances, signalling a commitment to addressing these grave human rights violations. In commemoration of the International Day of the

Victims of Enforced Disappearances in 2024, a joint statement by human rights organisations including Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network, Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances, the Capital Punishment Justice Project, International Federation for Human Rights, Mayer Daak, Odhikar and Robert F Kennedy Human Rights denounced the systematic enforced disappearances committed by Bangladesh law enforcement and security forces under the ousted Sheikh Hasina administration.

According to a statement issued by Odhikar, an NGO working for justice for the victims of enforced disappearances, data they collected shows that between January 2009 and June 2024, 709 people were subjected to enforced disappearances by Bangladeshi law enforcement agencies and security forces. "Among them, 471 were surfaced alive or

were produced in court. Meanwhile, 83 victims were found dead, with some of them allegedly caught in 'cross-fire' with security forces. To date, 155 people remain missing," it said.

Human rights defenders and families have highlighted that victims of enforced disappearances were held in secret detention centres known as "Aina ghar" or "mirror rooms," including one reportedly in Dhaka Cantonment and others across the country, operated by various security agencies.

Human rights activists pointed out that the recent release of a few victims who had been held in secret detention for years confirms the long-denied allegations of enforced disappearances committed under the ousted Hasina administration. Rights activist Michael Chakma, who was detained in secret cells for the last six years and was released only after Hasina's ouster, recalled

Police order return of looted ammunition by September 3

PTI ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh police on Sunday ordered citizens to return by September 3 all arms and ammunition looted from police stations during the recent violence which led to prime minister Sheikh Hasina's ouster, according to media reports. The violence that hit the country during the massive quota reform protests saw widespread attacks and looting of police stations across the country, The Daily Star news-

paper reported.

In a directive, the Police Headquarters said looted arms and ammunition of police must be returned by Tuesday. By Saturday, law enforcement authorities had recovered a total of 3,872 weapons of various types, looted from police stations and offices during the recent unrest, the report said. In addition, as many as 286,216 rounds of bullets, 22,201 teargas shells, and 2,139 stun grenades were also recovered, it said.

The directive follows the interim government's earlier decision to suspend the firearms licences issued to all civilians during the more than 15 years of the Hasina-led Awami League government.

On August 26, civilians holding such licenced firearms were ordered to surrender these to their respective police stations by Tuesday, after which an all-out drive will be launched on September 5 to recover any remaining firearms.

the horror he went through in extra-judicial custody. "I was beaten every day and tortured beyond imagination. I never dreamed of coming out and thought I would die there

only. For the last six years, I hardly remember when I last saw the sunlight. There were many more like me in those cells," he told reporters. Political parties such as the

Bangladesh Nationalist Party and Jamaat-e-Islami also complained about several instances of their activists and supporters being victims of forced disappearances.

Pak's ruling party PML-N opposes talks with PTI

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Amid reports of an "indirect dialogue" with the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz has strongly opposed talks with their political nemesis.

Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal on Saturday conditioned the holding of any dialogue with the PTI with an apology by party founder and former prime minister Imran Khan for allegedly staging May 9 violence last year.

The protests saw attacks on public properties including military installations following 71-year-old Khan's arrest in a corruption case, Dawn News reported.

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif also opposed the talks with the former ruling party, saying he is not in favour of any such dialogue. Previously, the ruling parties extended an olive branch to the Khan-founded party several times but to no avail as the latter said he will only hold talks with those wielding real power in the country.

The ruling party leaders' statements came amid reports that the PML-N had purportedly approached Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) Chairman Mehmood Khan Achakzai for holding talks with the PTI. Achakzai, who also heads the opposition alliance Tehreek-e-Tahaffuz-e-Ain-e-Pakistan, was nominated by jailed Khan to hold talks

with the ruling parties. Responding to the report, Asif told journalists that he was not part of the "team assigned to talk to the PKMAP chairman". When asked whether talks should be held with the former ruling party, the PML-N stalwart said: "I'm not in favour of negotiations."

Iqbal also opposed dialogue with PTI until Khan "apologises for the violence carried out on May 9".

Criticising the PTI, the minister accused the party of causing more damage than terrorists and questioned the possibility of dialogue with such individuals.

Earlier on August 3, Khan said he was open to talks but only within the "ambit provisioned by the Constitution".

The cricketer-turned-politician had clarified that he asked Achakzai to negotiate with political parties.

"Achakzai will only [hold] talks with political parties," he said.

Meanwhile, PML-N President Nawaz Sharif proposed an across-the-board dialogue involving all political parties, including the PTI as well as the state institutions, to steer Pakistan out of crises.

The proposal to take everyone on board was floated amid attempts by President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to court their former ally, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, who had announced a solo flight against the government earlier this month. "All political parties, govern-

ments, and institutions should join hands in decision-making. [They] need to sit together to steer the country out of crises," a statement issued by the PML-N after a meeting on Saturday quoted the elder Sharif as saying. However, in response to a question about negotiations with the government, PTI leader Asad Qaiser questioned the sincerity of the offer and said the government was uncertain about the dialogue and making contradictory statements.

He said the statement of PML-N chief Nawaz Sharif was followed by a statement from Defence Minister Khawaja Asif that the government would not talk to the PTI.

Asked if Sharif's statement was more important, the former National Assembly speaker said Khan had already nominated Achakzai to hold negotiations with the government and that if the ruling party is serious about the offer, it should get in touch with the PKMAP chief rather than giving suggestions. The PTI Leader of Opposition in the National Assembly, Omar Ayub, also said his party was ready to hold talks provided that the Shehbaz administration freed PTI prisoners, including Khan.

PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan also said that his party had not offered any talks to the incumbent ruling party. "The PTI neither offered any talks nor sought any favours," Barrister Gohar said while speaking to Geo News on Sunday.

Russia says it downed over 150 drones

AP ■ MOSCOW

Russian air defences intercepted and destroyed 158 Ukrainian drones overnight, including two over Moscow and nine over the surrounding region, the Defence Ministry said on Sunday.

Forty-six of the drones were over the Kursk region, where Ukraine has sent its forces in recent weeks in the largest incursion on Russian soil since World War II. A further 34 were shot over the Bryansk region, 28 over the Voronezh region, and 14 over the Belgorod region—all of which border Ukraine.

Drones were also shot down deeper into Russia, including one each in the Tver region, northwest of Moscow, and the Ivanovo region, northeast of the Russian capital. Russia's Defence Ministry said drones were intercepted over 15 regions, while one other governor said a drone was shot down over his region, too.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said that falling debris from one of the two drones shot down over the city

Wreckage of missing helicopter located, 17 bodies discovered

AP ■ MOSCOW

Rescuers have located a helicopter that went missing in Russia's far east with 22 people on board, officials said on Sunday. Russia's emergency ministry said the bodies of 17 people have been found and that rescuers were continuing to search for the remaining occupants.

All those on board are presumed to have died, Russian state news agency RIA Novosti said, citing the Emergency Ministry, adding that the helicopter had likely crashed due to poor visibility in bad weather conditions.

"The wreckage of the previously missing helicopter was discovered from the air. It is located at an altitude of 900



metres near the place where it was last contacted," the emergency ministry wrote on Telegram. The Mi-8 helicopter took off close to the Vachkazhets volcano in the Kamchatka region on Saturday but did not arrive at its destination as scheduled, Russia's Federal Air Transport Agency

earlier said in a statement. It said it believed that 19 passengers and three crew members were on board. The Mi-8 is a two-engine helicopter designed in the 1960s. It is widely used in Russia, where crashes have been frequent, as well as in neighboring countries and many other nations.

Kremlin's assault. Meanwhile, Russia's Defence Ministry said Sunday it had taken control of the towns of Pivnichne and Vyimka, in Ukraine's Donetsk region. The Associated Press could not independently verify the claim. Russian forces have been driving deeper into the partly occupied eastern region, the total capture of which is one of the Kremlin's primary ambitions. Russia's army is closing in on Pokrovsk, a critical logistics hub for the Ukrainian defense in the area.

In Ukraine overnight, eight drones were shot down out of 11 launched by Russia, according to the Ukrainian air force. One person was killed and four wounded in shelling overnight in the Sumy region, local officials said, while Kharkiv Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said five people were wounded in shelling in his region.

Six more people were wounded when Russia shelled the regional capital on Sunday, also called Kharkiv. Syniehubov said a shopping centre, a sports facility and residential buildings were damaged.

Azerbaijan holds parl election, expected to retain the presidential party's dominance

Baku (AP): Azerbaijan on Sunday is holding a snap parliamentary election that is the first for the country since it regained full control of a former breakaway territory in a lightning offensive last year. Previous elections since independence from the Soviet Union have not been regarded as fully free or fair, and the vote for the Milli Mejlis parliament is not expected to bring significant changes to the body that is dominated by the

New Azerbaijan party of President Ilham Aliyev. Under the constitution, the election would have been held in November, but Aliyev decreed it to take place two months early because the capital of Baku is under United Nations climate talks known as COP29 that same month.

Aliyev and his late father, Heydar Aliyev, have led Azerbaijan with their heavy-handed rule since 1993, suppressing dissent as the

country of almost 10 million people on the shores of the Caspian Sea basked in growing wealth from its huge oil and natural gas reserves.

New Azerbaijan holds 69 of the 125 seats in the parliament, and most of the rest belong to small pro-government parties or independents. The Musavat party, the major opposition formation, put forth 34 candidates for Sunday's election but only 25 of them were registered.

Iran needs more than \$100 bn in foreign investment: Prez

AP ■ TEHRAN

Iran's president said on Saturday his country needs some \$100 billion in foreign investment to achieve an annual target of 8% economic growth up from the current rate of 4%. The remarks by Masoud Pezeshkian, who was elected in July, came in his first live televised interview by state TV.

Pezeshkian said Iran needs up to \$250 billion to reach its goal but more than half is available from domestic resources. Experts say growth in GDP of 8% would reduce double-digit inflation and unemployment rates. Hundreds of entities and people in Iran — from the central bank and government officials to drone producers and money exchangers — are already under international sanctions, many of them accused of materially supporting Iran's Revolutionary Guard and foreign militant



groups such as Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis. Pezeshkian in his interview complained about the sanctions and said his administration plans to reduce inflation, which is running at more than 40% annually, "if we solve our problems with neighbours and the world." He did not elaborate.

Pezeshkian confirmed that his first visit abroad will be to neighboring Iraq and he would then fly to New York to attend the United Nations General Assembly meeting on Sept 22-23. He said while he was in New

York he would meet with Iranian expatriates to invite them to invest in Iran. Out of more than 8 million Iranian expatriates, some 1.5 million Iranian live in the United States.

Pezeshkian, who is viewed as a reformist, was sworn in last month and parliament approved his cabinet earlier in August, promising a softer tone both inside and outside the country. His predecessor, Ebrahim Raisi, a hard-line protege of Iran's supreme leader who led the country as it enriched uranium near weapons-grade levels, died in a helicopter crash in May, along with seven other people.

Iran's economy has struggled since 2018 after then-President Donald Trump pulled the US out of the deal to constrain Tehran's nuclear programme and imposed more sanctions. Pezeshkian said during his presidential campaign that he would try to revive the nuclear deal.

Storm creeps through Japan, bringing heavy rainfall to some spots

AP ■ TOKYO

Tropical Storm Shanshan brought torrential rain Sunday to Japan's Shizuoka area, 180 km (110 miles) southwest of Tokyo, as weather officials warned the storm would linger for several more days. Shanshan, packing winds of 65 kph (40 mph), made landfall Thursday, leaving landslides, flooded rivers, torn branches and scattered debris in its path. In southwestern Japan, people were busy cleaning up muddied homes and throwing out broken appliances.

The storm is so far connected with at least six deaths, including three people who were trapped in a mudslide. It left one person missing and 127 people injured, according to Japanese public broadcaster NHK, which compiles reports from local governments. Shanshan was traveling extremely slowly and

barely moving at all as of Sunday morning, the Japan Meteorological Agency said. It triggered rainfall in an extensive area, even in places not in its path, such as the northernmost main island of Hokkaido, according to the agency. Some homes became lopsided as roofs caved in, while vehicles passed through brown water.

Shanshan initially crept across the southwestern Japanese islands of Kyushu and Shikoku, then reached the main island of Honshu, meandering into coastal waters at one point but later moving back onto land. Landslide warnings were issued in parts of Hamamatsu and Izu cities in Shizuoka Prefecture and Yokohama in Kanagawa, a port city near Tokyo, as well as at-risk spots in Tokyo.

Tokyo in recent days saw mostly cloudy skies, speckled with moments of sudden and intense showers.

Chocolate future could hinge on success of growing cocoa

AP ■ WEST SACRAMENTO

Climate change is stressing rainforests where the highly sensitive cocoa bean grows, but chocolate lovers need not despair, say companies that are researching other ways to grow cocoa or develop cocoa substitutes.

Scientists and entrepreneurs are working on ways to make more cocoa that stretch well beyond the tropics, from Northern California to Israel. California Cultured, a plant cell culture company, is growing cocoa from cell cultures at a facility in West Sacramento, California, with plans to start selling its products next year. It puts cocoa bean cells in a vat with sugar water so they reproduce quickly and reach maturity in a week rather than the six to eight months a traditional harvest takes, said Alan Perlstein, the company's chief executive. The process also no longer requires as much water or arduous labour.

"We see just the demand of chocolate monstrously out-

stripping what is going to be available," Perlstein said. "There's really no other way that we see that the world could significantly increase the supply of cocoa or still keep it at affordable levels without extensive either environmental degradation or some significant other cost."

Cocoa trees grow about 20 degrees north and south of the equator in regions with warm weather and abundant rain, including West Africa and South America.

Climate change is expected to dry out the land under the additional heat. So scientists, entrepreneurs and chocolate lovers are coming up with ways to grow cocoa and make the crop more resilient and more resistant to pests — as well as craft chocolate-tasting cocoa alternatives to meet demand.

The market for chocolate is massive with sales in the United States surpassing USD 25 billion in 2023, according to the National Confectioners Association. Many entrepre-

neurs are betting on demand growing faster than the supply of cocoa. Companies are looking at either bolstering the supply with cell-based cocoa or offering alternatives made from products ranging from oats to carb that are roasted and flavoured to produce a chocolate taste for chips or filling.

The price of cocoa soared earlier this year because of demand and troubles with the crop in West Africa due to plant disease and changes in weather. The region produces the bulk of the world's cocoa. "All of this contributes to a potential instability in supply, so it is attractive to these lab-grown or cocoa substitute companies to think of ways to replace that ingredient that we know of as chocolatey-flavored," said Carla D. Martin, executive director of the Fine Cacao and Chocolate Institute and a lecturer in African and African American Studies at Harvard University.

The innovation is largely driven by demand for chocolate in the US and Europe, Martin said.

While three-quarters of the world's cocoa is grown in West and Central Africa, only 4 per cent is consumed there, she said.

The push to produce cocoa indoors in the US comes after other products, such as chicken meat, have already been grown in labs. It also comes as supermarket shelves fill with evolving snack options — something that developers of cocoa alternatives say shows people are ready to try what looks and tastes like a chocolate chip cookie even if the chip contains a cocoa substitute.

They said they also are hoping to tap into rising consciousness among consumers about where their food comes from and what it takes to grow it, particularly the use of child labour in the cocoa industry.

Planet A Foods in Planegg, Germany, contends the taste of mass market chocolate is derived largely from the fermentation and roasting in making it, not the cocoa bean itself. The company's founders tested out ingredients ranging

from olives to seaweed and settled on a mix of oats and sunflower seeds as the best tasting chocolate alternative, said Jessica Karch, a company spokesperson. They called it "ChoViva" and it can be subbed into baked goods, she said.

"The idea is not to replace the high quality, 80 per cent dark chocolate, but really to have a lot of different products in the mass market," Karch said.

Yet while some are seeking to create alternative cocoa sources and substitutes, others are trying to bolster the supply of cocoa where it naturally grows. Mars, which makes M&Ms and Snickers, has a research facility at University of California, Davis aimed at making cocoa plants more resilient, said Joanna Hwu, the company's senior director of cocoa plant science. The facility hosts a living collection of cocoa trees so scientists can study what makes them disease-resistant to help farmers in producing countries and ensure a stable supply of beans.

"We see it as an opportunity,

and our responsibility," Hwu said.

In Israel, efforts to expand the supply of cocoa are also under way. Celleste Bio is taking cocoa bean cells and growing them indoors to produce cocoa powder and cocoa butter, said co-founder Hanne Volpin. In a few years, the company expects to be able to produce cocoa regardless of the impact of climate change and disease — an effort that has drawn interest from Mondelez, the maker of Cadbury chocolate.

"We only have a small field, but eventually, we will have a farm of bioreactors," Volpin said.

That's similar to the effort under way at California Cultured, which plans to seek permission from the US Food and Drug Administration to call its product chocolate, because, according to Perlstein, that's what it is.

It might wind up being called brewery chocolate, or local chocolate, but chocolate no less, he said, because it's genetically identical though not harvested from a tree.

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NOTICE

THE 15TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERS/DELEGATES OF SAHARA CREDIT COOPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED IS SCHEDULED TO BE HELD ON FRIDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER, 2024 AT 11:30 A.M. AT 3RD FLOOR, SAHARA INDIA TOWER, 7, KAPOORTHALA COMPLEX, ALIGANJ, LUCKNOW - 226024.

BUSINESS ITEMS ON AGENDA :

- To confirm the minutes of the last Annual General Meeting.
- To consider and approve the amendments in the registered bye-laws of the Society, due to the MSCS (Amendment) Act, 2023.
- To brief the members about the status of payment made through "CRCS Sahara Refund Portal" in compliance to the order of Hon'ble Supreme Court dated 29.03.2023.
- To brief the members about the election of Delegates and Directors of the Society for the next term i.e. 2025-2030.
- To consider and adopt the Audited Financial Statement of accounts for the F.Y. 2023-24.
- To consider and approve the Audit Report and Annual Report for the F.Y. 2023-24.
- To consider and approve the disposal of net profit.
- To consider and approve the creation of specific reserve and other funds and their actual utilization.
- To consider and approve the Annual Budget for the Financial Year 2025-26.
- To consider and approve the Annual Action Plan for the Financial Year 2025-26.
- To apprise members about the list of employees who are relatives of members of the Board or of the Managing Director.
- To apprise members about the formulation of code of conduct for the members of the board.
- To consider and approve the appointment/re-appointment of Statutory Auditor for the F.Y. 2024-25.
- Any other item, if any, with the permission of Chairperson.

Place : Lucknow **By order of the Board**
Date : 30th August, 2024 **For Sahara Credit Cooperative Society Limited**

Managing Director

Note :
 Please note that if there is no quorum within half an hour of the time fixed for the scheduled meeting, the meeting shall be adjourned and the adjourned meeting shall be held at 12:30 p.m. on the same day i.e. 20th September, 2024 to transact the agenda items as aforesaid and that no quorum shall be necessary for transacting the business in the adjourned meeting so held.

MCap of top firms surges by Rs 1.53 lakh crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The combined market valuation of eight of the top-10 most valued firms surged Rs 1,53,019.32 crore last week, with Bharti Airtel and IT majors Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services emerging as the biggest gainers, in line with a record rally in equities. Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,279.56 points or 1.57 per cent. Rallying for the ninth straight session on Friday, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 231.16 points or 0.28 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 82,365.77. During the day, it jumped 502.42 points or 0.61 per cent to hit a record intra-day peak of 82,637.03. The market valuation of Bharti Airtel soared Rs 47,194.86 crore to Rs 9,04,587.12 crore. Infosys added Rs 33,611.37 crore taking its valuation to Rs 8,06,880.50 crore. The valuation of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) jumped Rs 31,784.9 crore to



Rs 16,46,899.17 crore and that of ICICI Bank surged Rs 18,734.3 crore to Rs 8,66,374.41 crore. The market capitalisation (mcap) of Reliance Industries climbed Rs 13,396.42 crore to Rs 20,43,107.10 crore and that of HDFC Bank rallied Rs 5,600.24 crore to Rs 12,44,206.43 crore.

The valuation of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) went up by Rs 2,340.25 crore to Rs 6,73,390.88 crore and that of State Bank of India advanced Rs 356.98 crore to Rs 7,27,935.97 crore. However, the mcap of Hindustan Unilever slumped Rs 8,411.54 crore to Rs

6,52,739.95 crore and that of ITC declined by Rs 4,776.48 crore to Rs 6,27,587.76 crore. Reliance Industries continued to retain the title of the most valued firm followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, Infosys, State Bank, LIC, Hindustan Unilever and ITC.

Global factors, macroeconomic data, and FPI activity to shape market sentiments

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Movement in the stock market this week will largely be driven by global trends, macroeconomic data announcements and trading activity of foreign investors, analysts said. Equity benchmark indices, which are on a dream run for the past several days, will also track trading in global oil benchmark Brent crude and movement of rupee against the US dollar. "The next FOMC (Federal Open Market Committee) meeting is scheduled for mid-September, but before that, the market will be closely watching upcoming US economic data. Key indicators like manufacturing PMI, non-farm payrolls, and unemployment rate will be released this week, all of which could significantly influence market sentiment. "Institutional flows will play a critical role," said Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd. The primary driver behind the bullish momentum in the domestic market is the growing anticipation of a rate cut in the United States and buying support from domestic investors. Auto stocks would remain in the limelight amid sales data



announcement. "We expect the market to continue its northbound journey with stock-specific action. Global macro data which will be released during the week will continue to provide cues to domestic equities," Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said. Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,279.56 points or 1.57 per cent, and the Nifty soared 412.75 points

or 1.66 per cent. In nine days of rally, the BSE benchmark surged 1,941.09 points or 2.41 per cent. The Nifty zoomed 1,096.9 points or 4.54 per cent in 12 sessions. "Benchmark indices scaled new highs in a positive trading session on the back of broad-based buying support, as hopes of a rate cut by the US Fed next month after last week's Jackson Hole meeting has made investors more confident. However, caution may prevail and profit-taking could make a comeback as the

market has been on an upward march for the last 12 trading sessions," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said. On Friday, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 231.16 points or 0.28 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 82,365.77. During the day, it jumped 502.42 points or 0.61 per cent to hit a record intra-day peak of 82,637.03. In its best winning streak since its launch in 1996, the Nifty soared 83.95 points or 0.33 per cent to hit a new lifetime closing high of 25,235.90, taking its victorious run to the 12th day in a row. During the day, it surged 116.4 points or 0.46 per cent to hit a new record intra-day peak of 25,268.35. "Nifty ended higher on Friday for the twelfth consecutive session, its best winning streak since its launch in 1996. Global shares mostly rose Friday as markets continued to be moderately optimistic about the prospects of technology companies helped by the prospect of lower interest rates amid signs of moderating inflation across the developed world," said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities.



Govt to amend CPSE capital restructuring guidelines

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government is working to amend its 2016 guidelines with regard to dividend payment, bonus issues and share buyback by CPSEs, officials said. The finance ministry had in May 2016, issued a comprehensive guidelines on 'Capital Restructuring of Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) in 2016 for efficient management of government investment in CPSEs. "With the CPSEs now more strong in terms of balance sheet and having improved on their market capitalisation, it is now time for a relook of the capital restructuring guidelines," an official told PTI. The amended guidelines are expected to be issued by the finance ministry this month, another official said. As per the capital

restructuring guidelines issued, CPSEs that do not have plans to deploy their capital optimally for business purposes should have a professional look at the surplus funds available to them. As per the guidelines issued by the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) in May 2016, every CPSE is required to pay a minimum annual dividend of 30 per cent of PAT or 5 per cent of the net worth. Also, every CPSE having net worth of at least Rs 2,000 crore and cash and bank balance of over Rs 1,000 crore were required to opt for share buyback. Also, bonus shares are to be issued if the defined reserves and surplus of CPSEs is equal to or more than 10 times of its paid up equity share capital. A CPSE where market price or book value of its share

exceeds 50 times of its face value will split-off its shares appropriately. The intention behind the guidelines is that CPSEs sitting on cash piles are required to pay dividends, which will, in turn, help keep investors interested in the stock. The combined market capitalisation of CPSEs, banks and insurance companies has grown over 500 per cent in the past three years from Rs 15 lakh crore to over Rs 58 lakh crore. Also, the government's equity holding has risen four times to Rs 38 lakh crore from Rs 9.5 lakh crore in January 2021. So far in 2024-25, Rs 10,604.74 crore has been obtained through dividend from the CPSEs. In the current fiscal year, the government has budgeted to collect Rs 56,260 crore as dividend from public sector.

Commercial LPG gets hike, ATF price down

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Jet fuel, or ATF, price was on Sunday reduced by 4.6 per cent while the rate of commercial LPG used in hotels and restaurants was hiked by Rs 39 per 19-kg cylinder in the monthly revision done in line with international oil price trends. Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) price was cut by Rs 4,495.5 per kilolitre, or 4.58 per cent, to Rs 93,480.22 per kl in the national capital, according to state-owned fuel retailers. The price reduction will help ease the burden on airlines for whom fuel makes up for almost 40 per cent of the operating cost. The reduction follows two rounds of monthly price increases. Jet fuel prices were on August 1 raised by 2 per cent or Rs 1,827.34 per kl and by 1.2 per cent (Rs 1,179.37 per kl). These hikes followed a steep 6.5 per cent (Rs 6,673.87 per kl) reduction effected on June 1. The ATF rate in Mumbai was reduced to Rs 87,432.78 per kl on Sunday from Rs 91,650.34 previously. Prices differ from state to state depending on the



incidence of local taxes. Alongside, oil firms increased the price of commercial LPG by Rs 39 to Rs 1,691.50 per 19-kg cylinder. This is the second straight monthly increase. Prices were hiked by Rs 6.5 per cylinder on August 1. The two rounds of increase follow four monthly price reductions. In four price reductions, rates were cut by Rs 148 per 19-kg cylinder.

Commercial LPG now costs Rs 1,644 per 19-kg cylinder in Mumbai, Rs 1,802.50 in Kolkata and Rs 1,855 in Chennai. Rate of cooking gas used in domestic households, however, remained unchanged at Rs 803 per 14.2-kg cylinder. State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), and Hindustan

Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) revise prices of ATF and cooking gas on the first of every month based on the average price of benchmark international fuel and foreign exchange rate. Prices of petrol and diesel continue to remain frozen. Rates had been cut Rs 2 per litre in mid-March. Petrol costs Rs 94.72 a litre in Delhi while diesel is priced at Rs 87.62.

V Satish Kumar takes over as IOC chairman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

V Satish Kumar on Sunday took over as the chairman of the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), the nation's largest oil firm. Kumar, who is director (marketing) at IOC, was given additional charge of chairman following delays in finding a full-time chairman. "He will concurrently serve as chairman while continuing in his role as Director (Marketing), a position he has held since October 2021," the company said in a statement. He also held the additional charge of Director (Finance) for one year from October 2022, a period characterised by geopolitical tensions due to the Ukraine-Russia conflict. With a career spanning 35 years, Kumar has served in various regions across the country and held key positions, leading IOC's efforts to maintain its leadership in the marketing of petroleum products. He has also gained extensive experience in engaging with multinational oil companies, serving as non-executive chairman of Indian Oil Petronas Pvt Ltd, a joint venture between IOC and Petronas (Malaysia), and as non-executive chairman of Indian Oil Mauritius Ltd, a subsidiary of IOC. "In his capacity as Director (Marketing), he ensured uninterrupted supplies of petroleum products across the various geographies even during the times of natural calamities or other disruptions, exemplifying the spirit of 'Nation First' and 'On Duty Always,'" the statement said. IOC's marketing division under his leadership ensured the highest ever physical performance year upon year in the last three years. During his tenure, the company embarked upon large scale modernisation of its retail outlets with new retail visual identity and setting up of new bottling plants, terminals and large retail outlets with wayside amenities on highways. During this period, IOC emerged as a leader in sales of high octane and energy efficient fuels, green combo lubricants, composite LPG cylinders and 25 kg bitumen packs in the market for making products affordable and customer conveniences. He led the marketing division in making aggressive forays and took leadership positions in marketing alternate and clean energy solutions like e-mobility, bio-fuel blends. IOC is the only oil company to market ethanol 100, AVGas 100 LL, and methanol blend diesel. Prior to his appointment as Director (Marketing), Kumar held the position of State Head for Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

INBRIEF

- AMRIT STATIONS WORKS PROGRESSING AT RAPID PACE OVER N.F. RAILWAY**
MALIGAON: Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) is carrying out redevelopment works across 91 stations within its network under the prestigious Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS). This initiative as part of the Indian Railways' broader vision to transform the passenger experience.
- SATPAL SINGH SOKHI APPOINTED AS CO-ORDINATOR**
AMRITSAR: Satpal Singh Sokhi has been appointed as the Co-ordinator for North India by the Rashtriya OBC Mahasangh. This appointment was announced in an official letter signed by Dr. Baban Taywade, the President of the organization.
- CANCELLATION, DIVERSIONS & AMP; RESCHEDULING OF TRAINS**
MALIGAON: To increase the efficiency of train operations and reduce traffic congestions in New Bongaigaon - Rangiya - Kamakhya section, N.F. Railway has undertaken various capacity augmentation works apart from doubling of that section. In this connection, Pre Non-Interlocking works from 31st August till 1st September, 2024 and Non-Interlocking works from 2nd September till 3rd September, 2024 for commissioning of double line between Barpeta Road & Sorbhog railway stations under Rangiya division will be executed.
- HMSI HOSTS ROAD SAFETY CONVENTION IN DELHI**
NEW DELHI: In a significant move towards advocating traffic safety awareness, Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India (HMSI) today held a pivotal Road Safety Convention in Delhi. This event of HMSI's project - Mindset Development for Our Future Generation, underscores the dedication to cultivate road safety consciousness.
- RECPCDL HANDS OVER 2 SPV'S VIZ. KHAVDA IV**
GURUGRAM: RECPCDL, handed over 2 project specific SPV's viz, Khavda IV A Power Transmission Limited to M/s Adani Energy Solutions Limited and Khavda IV C Power Transmission Limited to M/s Sterlite Grid 38 Limited.

Indian realty giants sell properties worth Rs 35,000 Crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's 21 major listed real estate developers have together sold properties worth nearly Rs 35,000 crore during the latest June quarter with Godrej Properties reporting highest sale bookings. Except few, all major listed real estate developers have shown annual growth in sale bookings in the April-June quarter driven by strong consumer demand for residential properties, especially of luxury homes. According to the data compiled from regulatory filings, India's 21 major listed realty firms have reported combined sale bookings of Rs 34,927.5 crore in the first quarter of 2024-25 fiscal. Out of these combined sale bookings, bulk of pre-sales came from residential segment. In terms of sale bookings, Godrej Properties emerged as the largest listed player in the June quarter with pre-sales of Rs 8,637 crore. DLF Ltd, the country's largest realty firm in terms of market capitalisation, reported more than three-fold jump in its sale bookings at Rs 6,404 crore in the first quarter of this fiscal. Mumbai-based Macrotech Developers, which sells properties under 'Lodha' brand, clocked pre-sales of Rs



4,030 crore. Gurugram-based Signature Global, which recently got listed, achieved sale bookings of Rs 3,120 crore in June quarter, more than three times from the year-ago period. Bengaluru-based Prestige Estates Projects clocked sale bookings of Rs 3,029.5 crore in June quarter, down from the corresponding period of the previous year. Bengaluru-based firms Sobha Ltd and Brigade Enterprises sold properties worth Rs 1,874 crore and Rs 1,086 crore, respectively, during the April-June period of this fiscal. Bengaluru-based Puravankara Ltd achieved sale bookings of Rs 1,128 crore, almost flat compared to the year-ago period.

Mumbai-based Oberoi Realty, which is into luxury housing segment, sold properties worth Rs 1,067 crore last fiscal. Mumbai-based builders Mahindra Lifespace Developers Ltd and Keystone Realtors (Rustomjee) clocked sale bookings of Rs 1,019 crore and Rs 611 crore, respectively. Pune-based Kolte-Patil sold properties worth Rs 711 crore while Mumbai-based Sunteck Realty sold properties worth Rs 502 crore. Bengaluru-based Shriram Properties achieved sale bookings of Rs 376 crore. Delhi-based TARC Ltd and Ashiana Housing achieved sale bookings of Rs 310 crore and Rs 235 crore, respectively.

Ahmedabad-based Arvind Smartspaces Ltd sold properties worth Rs 201 crore, while Mumbai-based Ajmera Realty & Infrastructure Ltd reported pre-sales of Rs 306 crore. Lucknow-based Eldeco Housing & Industries Ltd sold properties worth Rs 59 crore while Mumbai-based Equinox India Developments Ltd (earlier Indiabulls Real Estate Ltd) achieved pre-sales of Rs 82 crore. Mumbai-based Suraj Estate Developers Ltd has reported a sale bookings of Rs 140 crore in the first quarter of this fiscal year. Sale bookings data of many listed players was not available. Industry experts attribute this increase in sale bookings of major listed players to strong housing demand after the COVID pandemic. Housing market is also witnessing a shift in consumer demand towards those realty companies and brands which have better track record of executing real estate projects. Real estate developers, which are not listed on stock exchanges, generally do not report their quarterly and annual sale bookings. Tata Realty & Infrastructure Ltd, Adani Realty, Piramal Realty, Hiranandani Group, Embassy Group and K Raheja Group are major players in

unlisted space. Post-COVID pandemic, Indian real estate market, especially housing segment, has bounced back sharply on pent up demand and growing desire to have home ownership. Branded and reputed players, including listed and unlisted ones, have benefited most in this revival cycle as homebuyers do not want to take risk of getting stuck in real estate projects after making payments. Thousands of buyers are still stuck in housing projects of builders like Unitech and Jaypee Infratech Ltd which defaulted in delivering projects. Homebuyers of Amrapali Group are getting possession of their flats after intervention from the Supreme Court. Suraksha Group has won a bid to acquire Jaypee Infratech Ltd (JIL) through insolvency process. The Group has infused capital and is awarding construction contracts to complete around 20,000 unfinished flats in Delhi-NCR. Thousands of buyers of many NCR-based builders such as Unitech, Ansal API, Supertech Ajanara, The 3C Group, and Today Homes are stuck and fighting legal cases in real estate regulatory authorities at state level, tribunals and courts.

EPL: Haaland hat trick gives Man city edge over Arsenal

AP ■ LONDON

At the rate Erling Haaland is scoring, keeping up with Manchester City is going to be a difficult task in the English Premier League. So while it's still only three games into the season, it felt significant when title rival Arsenal dropped points on Saturday and then saw City take full advantage thanks to another hat trick from Haaland. The Norway striker netted his second treble in two games as City beat West Ham 3-1 to maintain its perfect start and move two points ahead of Arsenal, which was held 1-1 by Brighton after Declan Rice was sent off early in the second half. "No words for him," City manager Pep Guardiola said about Haaland, who has seven goals in three games to start the season and 70 in total in the 69 league games he has played for the club. With eight Premier League hat tricks, Haaland has as many as Thierry Henry (258 games), Harry Kane (320) and Michael Owen (326) managed in their careers. This was his first away from Etihad Stadium, though, and showed his wide range of finishing skills. The opener came when he ran onto a pass from Bernardo Silva and beat goalkeeper



Alphonse Areola with a low shot. After an own goal from Ruben Dias, Haaland made it 2-1 when he received a pass inside the area and hit a thumping strike into the roof of the net in the 30th minute. The hat trick was complete in the 83rd when he went clear

through on goal and lifted the ball past Lukasz Fabianski, who replaced Areola at halftime. "I really liked the second goal, I have to be honest," Haaland said. "The second one was lovely. ... I like to shoot a bit hard sometimes, as well. Not

only easy shots. So it's good to get a little bit of power out of my body." While there's another 35 games left, Haaland's prolific form makes any small gap to City look tough to overcome. So perhaps it's no wonder Arsenal manager Mikel

Arteta was so frustrated after what he felt was a decisive refereeing decision. In the early kickoff, Arsenal was 1-0 up at Emirates Stadium and looked in control when Rice was shown a second yellow card in the 49th minute, apparently for nudging the ball

to the side as Joel Veltman tried to take a quick free kick near the sideline deep in Brighton's half. Veltman kicked Rice from the process and the home crowd was screaming for the Brighton player to get sanctioned, only for referee

Chris Kavanagh to show Rice a red card instead. "I was amazed. Amazed, amazed, because of how inconsistent decisions can be," Arteta said, arguing that similar offenses went unpunished earlier in the game. "It was a really, really hard one to take." That decision turned the game completely and Joao Pedro equalized from a rebound in the 58th after David Raya saved a shot from Yankuba Minteh. Kai Havertz put Arsenal ahead in the 38th with a lob over goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen and had a chance to restore Arsenal's lead when he ran through on goal again in the 74th but his low shot was saved that time. Last-placed Everton could only lament its own inconsistencies - and inability to defend crosses - after giving up a 2-0 lead in the final minutes to lose 3-2 at home against Bournemouth, while Brentford showed again that it can cope just fine without Ivan Toney by beating Southampton 3-1. Everton and Southampton were without a point at the bottom of the table, while Arsenal and Brighton saw their perfect starts to the league come to an end. Liverpool also has six points from two games and plays at Manchester United on Sunday.

EVERTON COLLAPSE
A bad start to Everton's last season at Goodison Park got worse on Saturday, with frustrated home fans flooding out of the stadium at the final whistle. Everton looked set to earn its first points of the season after Michael Keane and Dominic Calvert-Lewin gave it a 2-0 lead that stood until the 87th minute. But as soon as Antoine Semenyo pulled one back, nerves seemed to set in among the Everton players and home fans, and Lewis Cook took advantage by heading home an equalizer in the second minute of injury time. With Goodison Park shell-shocked, Bournemouth kept pouring forward and found a winner in similar fashion, as Luis Sinisterra was left unmarked to head home another cross at the far post three minutes later. "Just threw the game away," Everton manager Sean Dyche said. "We were in control, complete control." Bournemouth moved to five points after opening the season with two draws. Toney watches as Mbuemo shines. Toney was on hand to watch Brentford from the stands after completing a deadline-day move to Saudi Arabian club Al-Ahli on Friday, and watched as Bryan Mbuemo took up his role as goalscorer instead.

Minority athletes hope their Olympic journeys will sway hearts and minds

AP ■ PARIS

Before she cut the air on the world's biggest sporting stage with head-spinning, gravity-defying moves, Logan Edra, aka B-Girl Logistix, held herself with a razor-sharp focus. Brows furrowed and hands anchored at her hips, Team USA's youngest breaker this year seemed more serious than some of her competitors at the Paris Olympics. This was not just a contest for the 21-year-old daughter of Filipino immigrants, but a pressure-packed chance to bring her cultural heritage into a traditionally American art form for all to see. Representing both Filipinos and immigrant families more broadly was "the most overwhelming part" of breaking on the Olympic stage, Edra said, calling it "a different layer of love." As the spotlight now shifts to the Paralympics, athletes like Edra shoulder not only their countries' hopes for gold, but the responsibility of representing their identities and cultures, which spectators increasingly scrutinize. Edra did not advance past the quarterfinals in the Paris b-girl competition, but her Olympic journey and current No. 10 world ranking clearly showcase her skill. When an athlete excels at this level, she said, stigma and judgment often give way to respect. "If someone's doing a crazy move on their elbows, and they spin on their head -



clearly it takes so much human strength. You can't deny that," Edra said. However, this effect of positive exposure can unravel if a minority athlete becomes politically outspoken. It's a real dilemma: Voicing opinions on a sensitive topic can jeopardize the breadth of their influence, yet remaining silent can feel like betraying their true selves. Navigating this balance between embracing authenticity and preserving respect is a constant challenge. Social scientists call this dynamic the "arasocial contact hypothesis," which

suggests prejudice can be reduced through positive exposure to athletes or other members of marginalized or stigmatized groups. Researchers tested the theory by exploring soccer's influence on Islamophobia in British culture. After Egyptian striker Mohamed Salah, known for his prayers on the pitch, was instrumental in a decisive Liverpool win, viral videos showed British fans celebrating with chants like "If he scores another few, then I'll be Muslim, too," and "Mohamed Salah, a gift from Allah. He's always scoring; it's almost boring." Researchers analyzed 15

million tweets and hate-crime data from 25 police departments, finding a 16% drop in Liverpool-area hate crimes and a halving of anti-Muslim tweets by Liverpool fans after Salah joined the team. Surveys showed Salah's Muslim identity increased belief in Islam's compatibility with British values. Salma Mousa, a political scientist at University of California, Los Angeles, who specializes in prejudice reduction and who co-authored the 2021 study, pointed out the limitations of this influence - she said Salah maintained a "completely apolitical" stance on controversial issues at the

time. "Practically this does place a burden on minority players," said Ala Alrababah, another co-author of the study and a political scientist at Bocconi University. "As a Muslim player, as a Black player, as an LGBTQ player, or as any other minority, knowing that playing well can improve attitudes or playing badly can worsen attitudes - This is adding pressure. This is tough." Whether it's their intention or not, minority Olympians become emblematic figures for entire ethnicities or religions. Gabby Douglas and Simone Biles have ignited waves of Black participation in gymnastics. Sunisa Lee, who in Tokyo became the first Hmong-American and first Asian American to win women's all-around gold, sparked surges in Google searches for "Hmong" and "What is Hmong descent?" And when Lee began battling an incurable kidney condition after her 2021 win, she raised awareness about high rates of kidney disease among the Hmong American population. Biles waited until after she had won a sixth gold medal at Paris before posting an apparent reference to the U.S. Presidential campaign on X, writing "I love my black job." "All sports go way beyond what happens on the field of play, but that is true to a factor of 10 for the Olympic Games," USA Gymnastics spokesperson Jill Geer said.

Serena Williams visits US Open the first time after 2022

AP ■ NEW YORK

Welcome back to the U.S. Open, Serena Williams. Williams, a 23-time Grand Slam singles champion, returned to Flushing Meadows on Saturday - but she was watching tennis, not playing it. And she brought back an old look, wearing a denim skirt similar to the one she sported while competing in New York in 2004. This was the first visit to the U.S. Open by Williams since 2022, when she played there in the final tournament of her career. She made it to the third round then before losing to Ajla Tomljanovic in her last match, although Williams was careful not to say she was retiring, but rather described it as "evolving" away from professional tennis. She's been plenty busy ever since, pursuing her business interests, signing a book deal, putting out a documentary series currently airing on ESPN and, in July, hosting the ESPYS. Williams gave birth to her second daughter a year ago. The 42-year-old American won six singles championships at the U.S. Open - tied with Chris Evert for the most - during her decades of dominance with a racket in her hands. This time Williams was sitting in a suite in Arthur Ashe Stadium while Jannik Sinner, the No. 1-ranked man, earned a straight-set victory in the third round against Chris O'Connell.



Williams made her way around the grounds, checking out American Tommy Paul's win at Louis Armstrong Stadium and stopping by the players' gym at one point for a chat with the current women's No. 1, Iga Swiatek, who was scheduled to play on Saturday night. One of Williams' good friends, 2018 Australian

Open champion and former No. 1 Caroline Wozniacki, joked after winning Saturday to get to the fourth round that she was disappointed not to have spotted Williams in the spectator seats on the Grandstand. "I'm going to text her," Wozniacki said with a laugh. "I'm pretty mad at her for not showing up at my match."

Jannik Sinner never gives US Open opponent hope of an upset like those against Djokovic and Alcaraz

AP ■ NEW YORK

Jannik Sinner never gave his third-round opponent at the U.S. Open on Saturday, Chris O'Connell, even a moment to contemplate pulling off the sort of monumental upset that eliminated Novak Djokovic and Carlos Alcaraz. "It shows that this sport is unpredictable. Whenever you drop a little bit of your level - if it's mental, if it's tennis-wise or physical - at the end, it has a huge impact on the result," Sinner said. "Both opponents who they lost against, they played some incredible tennis. And it happens." Not to the No. 1-ranked Sinner, who is suddenly the favorite to win the men's championship at Flushing Meadows. He won the first five games and 21 of the first 29 points to make quite clear how things would go at Arthur Ashe Stadium and wrapped up a 6-1, 6-4, 6-2 victory over O'Connell in under two hours. "I felt like he was on from the get-go," O'Connell said. "I felt a little bit clueless, to be honest. ... Every

single shot, I just felt like I had to do something with it, because he was just on me. He was suffocating me." Stepping on court less than 15 hours after Djokovic's loss to Alexei Popyrin, and two days after Alcaraz's loss to Botanic de Zandschulp, Sinner was as dominant as can be in every facet of the sport. With 23-time major champion Serena Williams watching from an Ashe suite, Sinner struck 15 aces. He never faced a break point. He won five of O'Connell's 12 service games. He finished with more than twice as many winners, 46, as unforced errors, 22. "The best tennis player I've ever played, for sure," the 30-year-old O'Connell said. The only past men's champion at the U.S. Open still in the bracket is 2021 winner Daniil Medvedev. "For sure didn't expect to have this in the fourth round when Novak and Carlos are here," Medvedev said after beating No. 31 Flavio Cobolli 6-3, 6-4, 6-3. "So it's a fun feeling from one side, but from the other side it's a



new tournament. I need to play my best to try to win it again." The No. 5 seed will next face Nuno Borges, who was a point away from elimination at 6-3 in a fourth-set tiebreaker, then rallied to beat Jakub Mensik 6-7 (5), 6-1, 3-6, 7-6 (6), 6-0. Top-ranked Iga

Swiatek, who counts the 2022 title at Flushing Meadows among her five Grand Slam trophies, beat No. 25 seed Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova 6-4, 6-2 to reach the fourth round of the U.S. Open for the fourth straight year. Earlier Saturday, Jasmine Paolini

joined Coco Gauff as the only women to reach at least the fourth round at every major in 2024, getting that far at the U.S. Open for the first time with a 6-3, 6-4 victory over No. 30 seed Yulia Putintseva. The fifth-seeded Paolini was the runner-up at the French Open in June and Wimbledon in July and next meets 2023 French Open finalist Karolina Muchova. Also advancing were No. 6 Jessica Pegula, No. 16 Liudmila Samsonova, No. 18 Diana Shnaider and 2018 Australian Open champion Caroline Wozniacki. Since losing the first set he played in New York, against Mackie McDonald - which also was the first set Sinner had played since news emerged of a doping case that involved two positive tests in March for trace amounts of a banned anabolic steroid - the 23-year-old from Italy has performed impeccably, dropping a total of 18 games across nine sets. Trying to collect his second Grand Slam title of the year after gaining the first of his career at

the Australian Open in January, Sinner will face No. 14 Tommy Paul of the United States in the fourth round on Monday. Paul defeated Canadian qualifier Gabriel Diallo 6-7 (5), 6-3, 6-1, 7-6 (3). "He's a great mover. He has improved a lot in the last period of time. It's going to be a tough challenge," Sinner said about facing Paul, a 2023 Australian Open semifinalist. "He plays some great tennis, especially here in America." Perhaps there was some wariness on Sinner's part heading into Saturday, given recent events. This is, after all, only the third time in the Open era (the others were in 1973 and 2000) that two of the top three seeded men were gone before the fourth round. So Sinner woke up as the man considered likeliest to win the U.S. Open, a status that belonged to No. 3 Alcaraz - the champion at the French Open and Wimbledon this season - before the tournament began. No. 2 Djokovic - the defending champ

and owner of a men's-record 24 major trophies - moved atop the odds when Alcaraz was sent home Thursday night, only to relinquish that after his own early exit Friday night. The 87th-ranked O'Connell harbored hope of producing yet another surprise, even if he's never beaten a member of the top 10 or been past the third round at a Slam. What van de Zandschulp and Popyrin did allowed O'Connell to dream of producing something similar against Sinner. "I mean, yeah, I've got to believe," O'Connell said, "but I just felt that he was really on fire." There is something quite difficult about trying to follow up one career-best win with another, and van de Zandschulp didn't really show up on Saturday, eliminated by No. 25 Jack Draper 6-3, 6-4, 6-2. Draper, a 22-year-old left-hander from Britain, never has been past the fourth round at a major, and neither has his next opponent, unseeded Tomas Machac, a 6-3, 6-1, 6-2 winner against David Goffin.

Badoni: Never thought of hitting record 19 sixes; focus on timing the ball

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

South Delhi Superstar skipper Ayush Badoni, who hit a record 19 sixes, believes his ability to time the ball is the reason behind a record-smashing 55-ball 165 runs effort in the Delhi Premier League match against North Delhi Strikers. The 24-year-old right-hander's superb effort guiding his team to a 112-run win on Saturday. Ayush, who also shared a 286-run partnership with

opener Priyansh Arya for the second wicket, bettered the record for most sixes by a batter in an innings which stood in the name of West Indian great Chris Gayle and Estonia's Sahil Chauhan. They had both hit 18 maximums in T20 games. "I was just looking to time the ball well, I never thought I would end up hitting 19 sixes in an innings. I just focus on timing the ball and not trying to hit the ball hard," Badoni told PTI Videos.



Badoni, who plays for Lucknow Super Giants in the IPL, has had a decent run with the bat in the lucrative league in his short cricketing career. After his heroics in the ongoing DPL, the batter would be on the radar of several franchises. "I am not thinking about the (IPL) mega auction yet; my focus is on winning the Delhi Premier League right now as a skipper," he said. "Playing in the IPL has made life a lot easier for me as a batter here (DPL). We face

world-class bowlers there, and then coming here and playing becomes relatively easy." LSG assistant coach Jonty Rhodes compared Badoni to former Proteas hard-hitting batter Herschelle Gibbs. "Jonty and I have a great relationship. I want to thank him for his kind words and just want to say that 'see you soon, Jonty'." Badoni has led South Delhi Superstar from the front. He along with Priyansh Arya have amassed 1,091 runs in

the inaugural edition of the DPL. The skipper conceded that good partnerships take the pressure off batters coming down the order. "I know that Priyansh and I have done well and our batting does help take the pressure off the team. But they come and tell me after the game that they too are eager to contribute with the bat. There are a few youngsters who have impressed and now it is our turn to groom them well," he said.

Mandhana and five other Indian cricketers picked up WBBL teams

PTI ■ MELBOURNE, (PTI)

Six Indian cricketers, including vice-captain Smriti Mandhana, will be part of the upcoming Women's Big Bash League (WBBL), starting October 27, after being picked by different teams. While Mandhana was pre-signed by Adelaide Strikers, Dayalan Hemalatha will play the league for the first time after the top-order batter was drafted by the Perth Scorchers, where she will add firepower to their line-up. Wicketkeeper-batter Yastika Bhatia will also make her WBBL debut after being picked up by the Melbourne Stars, where she'll join national



teammate Deepti Sharma. India all-rounder Shikha Pandey has been picked up by Brisbane Heat, where she is expected to inject much-needed pace into the squad and add plenty as a powerful middle-to-lower-order batter. Pandey will be available

for the entire season as she is not part of India's T20 World Cup squad. She joins Jemimah Rodrigues in Brisbane Heat's squad. The WBBL will start on October 27 in Adelaide with a match between Adelaide Strikers and Brisbane Heat.

Gambhir makes an impact wherever he goes: Rhodes

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

South Africa cricket legend Jonty Rhodes believes the Indian team will only become stronger under new head coach Gautam Gambhir, and said the former opener has the ability to make an instant impact in any side. "Wherever GG (Gautam Gambhir) goes he makes an impact, we saw this when he left the Lucknow Super Giants and went to the Kolkata Knight Riders the impact that he had," Rhodes told PTI videos at the Pro Cricket League launch event on Saturday. "He is very much a hands-on guy and is certainly somebody who knows what he

wants and speaks his own mind. "Gambhir leaves no stone unturned, and now that he has taken over the reins of the Indian team, they will go from strength to strength," he added. Rhodes, who is the fielding coach of Lucknow Super Giants, also lauded Zaheer Khan's appointment as mentor of the IPL side. He said Zaheer's calm head will help the side get through tense situations during a game. "A calm cricketing mind is what you need at the IPL level, especially in the dugout scenario. You need people with calm heads because it gets very tense. If emotions start to get the better of you it



impacts everybody sitting in the dug-out or on the field. In such situations, it is great to have someone like Zak (Zaheer), because he brings the skills and the knowledge, and he also brings the mojo," he said. "We have worked together at Mumbai Indians and he is

technically very sound indeed." Rumours are doing rounds that Rohit Sharma is set to replace KL Rahul in LSG. "I spent a lot of time with Rohit Sharma at the Mumbai Indians and I am just so grateful that had I had an opportunity to watch him play there. The

changes, if there are, will not be my decision and I am not worried about them right now," Rhodes said. Rhodes also compared young LSG batter Ayush Badoni with former Proteas batting great Herschelle Gibbs after the latter broke the record for smashing the most number of sixes

(19) by a batter in a single innings of a T20 game in the ongoing Delhi Premier League. "He is a precocious talent that is for sure, he is short so he has got a low centre of gravity. He gets under the good length deliveries he can hit it anywhere around the ground, he has such fast hands. Justin Langer was so impressed with the sheer talent that he has," he said. "He reminds me a bit of Herschelle Gibbs. He has tremendous hitting ability and when he matches that with calmness, presence of mind, good game plan, he will become a really tough guy to bowl to because he can play both conventional and unconventional shots with ease."

Bopanna-Sutjiadi pair enters mixed doubles quarterfinals of US Open

PTI ■ NEW YORK

India's Rohan Bopanna and Indonesian partner Adila Sutjiadi moved into the mixed doubles quarterfinals of the US Open here. Bopanna and Sutjiadi, seeded eighth, beat the Australian duo of John Peers and Katerina Siniakova of the Czech Republic 0-6 7-6(5) 10-7 in a second-round match that lasted one hour and 13 minutes. Bopanna and Sutjiadi will next play fourth seeds Matthew Ebden and Barbora Krejickova.



Manisha advances to semifinals; Palak, Mandeep bow out of Paris Paralympics

PTI ■ PARIS

Shuttler Manisha Ramdass kept India's medal hopes alive by progressing to the women's single semifinals in SU5 category but Mandeep Kaur and Palak Kohli were eliminated from the Paris Paralympics following contrasting defeats in their respective quarterfinals here on Sunday. The 19-year-old Manisha, who was born with Erb's palsy which affected her right arm, had no trouble in dispatching Japan's Mamiko Toyoda 21-13 21-16 in the quarterfinal. The second seed Indian left-hander needed 30 minutes to down her unseeded rival. In SU5 category, the players have impairment of the upper limbs. The impairment could be on the playing or non-playing hand. Competing in SL3 category, Mandeep hardly posed a challenge to Nigeria's third seed Bolaji Mariam Eniola, losing the contest 8-21 9-21 in

23 minutes. It was the second consecutive defeat for Mandeep against Eniola, having lost to the Nigerian in the Group stage as well. SL3 category is for players with severe lower-limb disability competing on a half-width court. In SL4 category, para world champion bronze medalist Palak went down fighting 19-21 15-21 to Indonesia's Khalimatus Sadiyah in 28 minutes. SL4 is a class for athletes competing standing with less severe impairment than in SL3. Later in the day, Nithya Sivan Samathy will compete in the last-eight stage in SH6 category against Poland's Oliwia Szmigiel. The men's singles semifinal in SL4 category will be an all-Indian affair with Suhas Yathiraj and Sukant Kadam clashing against each other. Nitesh Kumar will fight it out with Japan's Daisuke Fujihara in the men's singles semifinal in SL3 category.

Odisha FC secure AFC Women's Champions League group stage berth

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Odisha FC have secured AFC Women's Champions League Group Stage berth, by topping their preliminary round in Zarqa, Jordan. Making their international debut, the Indian Women's League champions first defeated Lion City Sailors FC (Singapore) 4-1 before notching a hard-fought 2-1 win over hosts Etihad Club on Saturday to qualify for the Group Stage of Asia's elite women's club competition. A brace from 19-year-old Lynda Kom Serto and two own goals paved the way for Odisha FC's 4-1 win over the Singapore outfit. With Etihad Club winning 5-0 against Lion City Sailors in the next match, Odisha FC required nothing less than three points against the Jordanian champions to qualify from the group. Expectedly, it started as a close contest but the Juggernauts managed to take a 1-0 lead at half-time thanks to Jennifer Kankam Yeboah's 27th-minute goal after she was released in space by Neha. However, Etihad Club found the equaliser in the 57th minute via Jordan's all-time top-scorer Maysa Jbarah, who scored with a left-footed strike into the bottom corner.



But Odisha FC were not to be denied. They found their second goal in the 70th minute, with Lynda picking out Yeboah, who took advantage of an error in judgement by the Etihad goalkeeper, before slotting it into the back of an empty net. The Juggernauts defended in numbers for the remaining 20 minutes. India custodian Shreya Hooda also made a couple of remarkable saves in the dying minutes to ensure the win and cap off a historic night in Indian women's football. In the Group Stage of the AFC Women's Champions League, Odisha FC will travel to Vietnam to face Urawa Red Diamonds Ladies (Japan), Taichung Blue Whale Women's Football Team (Chinese Taipei), and hosts Ho Chi Minh City

Women's FC (Vietnam). The Group Stage comprises three groups of four teams and will also be contested in a centralised league format from October 6-12. The top two finishers of each group and the two best third-placed sides will progress to the quarters to be played on March 22 and 23, 2025. A knockout stage draw will be conducted prior to the quarterfinals to determine the four pairings, which will be contested in a single-leg format, with the higher-ranked team of each tie to serve as the home side. This will be followed by a centralised finals, which will see the semi-finals and final -- all single-leg ties -- being played out from May 21-24, 2025, to determine the AFC Women's Champions League.

Odisha FC secure AFC Women's Champions League group stage berth

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Odisha FC have secured AFC Women's Champions League Group Stage berth, by topping their preliminary round in Zarqa, Jordan. Making their international debut, the Indian Women's League champions first defeated Lion City Sailors FC (Singapore) 4-1 before notching a hard-fought 2-1 win over hosts Etihad Club on Saturday to qualify for the Group Stage of Asia's elite women's club competition. A brace from 19-year-old Lynda Kom Serto and two own goals paved the way for Odisha FC's 4-1 win over the Singapore outfit. With Etihad Club winning 5-0 against Lion City Sailors in the next match, Odisha FC required nothing less than three points against the Jordanian champions to qualify from the group. Expectedly, it started as a close contest but the Juggernauts managed to take a 1-0 lead at half-time thanks to Jennifer Kankam Yeboah's 27th-minute goal after she was released in space by Neha. However, Etihad Club found the equaliser in the 57th minute via Jordan's all-time top-scorer Maysa Jbarah, who scored with a left-footed strike into the bottom corner. But Odisha FC were not to be denied. They found their

second goal in the 70th minute, with Lynda picking out Yeboah, who took advantage of an error in judgement by the Etihad goalkeeper, before slotting it into the back of an empty net. The Juggernauts defended in numbers for the remaining 20 minutes. India custodian Shreya Hooda also made a couple of remarkable saves in the dying minutes to ensure the win and cap off a historic night in Indian women's football. In the Group Stage of the AFC Women's Champions League, Odisha FC will travel to Vietnam to face Urawa Red Diamonds Ladies (Japan), Taichung Blue Whale Women's Football Team (Chinese Taipei), and hosts Ho Chi Minh City Women's FC (Vietnam). The Group Stage comprises three groups of four teams and will also be contested in a centralised league format from October 6-12. The top two finishers of each group and the two best third-placed sides will progress to the quarters to be played on March 22 and 23, 2025. A knockout stage draw will be conducted prior to the quarterfinals to determine the four pairings, which will be contested in a single-leg format, with the higher-ranked team of each tie to serve as the home side.

Boxing's future hangs in balance after Asian body votes in favour of IBA

PTI ■ AL AIN (IAE)

Boxing's already uncertain Olympic future was thrown into further jeopardy after the sport's Asian governing body voted against leaving the suspended International Boxing Association (IBA) to join the rival association. The polling was held via a secret ballot with 21 countries voting in favour of continuing with IBA, while 14 cast their ballot in favour of joining World Boxing, the new body constituted to run the affairs of the sport. There was one invalid vote.

Besides India, which participated as an observer, the other countries whose names figured on the roll call included, Bahrain, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Chinese Taipei, Timor Leste, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Lebanon, Macau, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Syria, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Vietnam and Yemen. The IBA has been at loggerheads with the IOC,



with the latter managing the Olympics qualification process for the Tokyo and Paris Games. With the Asian Boxing Confederation (ASBC) refusing to join World Boxing, which is being pushed as an alternate to IBA, the

future of the sport in the 2028 Los Angeles Games hangs in a balance. Following the voting, IBA hit out at World Boxing, saying the new body lacked the wherewithal to organise major international events. "World Boxing, to tell the truth, has no finances, expertise and support to organise any proper major events, no means to support their members and no intention to develop boxing," said IBA in a statement. "They (World Boxing) claim that they want to keep boxing at the heart of the Olympics, fair enough; that said, they do not care about the

development of the sport in the countries, grassroots boxing, performance path of the athletes. They have no program, no vision -- just a standalone idea of boxing being at the Olympics," the statement added. IBA also asked the national federations to make decisions carefully, as there will be no way for a U-turn, should a federation decide to leave. The IBA remains committed to supporting its athletes, coaches and National Federations.

<p>बैंक ऑफ इंडिया Bank of India BOI Relationship beyond banking</p>	<p>LOHARDAGA BRANCH Upper Bazar, Main Road, Lohardaga, PIN 835302, Jharkhand</p>	<p>POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable property)</p>
<p>Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of Bank of India, Lohardaga Branch under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated 03.02.2024 calling upon the borrower Md. Aslam, S/o Late Md. Sakil to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 15,51,154.72 (Rupees Fifteen Lakh Fifty One Thousand One Hundred Fifty Four and paise Seventy Two Only) and interest thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.</p>		
<p>The Borrower 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/ies described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on this 31st day of August of the Year 2024.</p>		
<p>The Borrower and Guarantor in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies and any dealings with the said property/ies will be subject to the charge of the Bank of India, Lohardaga Branch for an amount Rs. 15,51,154.72 and interest thereon.</p>		
<p>The Borrower's attention is invited to the provisions of Sub Section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.</p>		
<p>Description of the Immovable property Consisting of Sale Deed in the name of Mr. Mohammad Aslam, S/o Mohammad Sakil, Sale Deed No. 829 & Sl. No. 847 dated 10.07.2019 & Rectification Sale Deed No. 1520 & Sl. No. 1553 dated 17.12.2019, R.S. Khata No. 178, New Khata No. 1004, R.S. Plot No. 1286, New Plot No. 1402, Area - 4½ Decimal, Mouza - Senha, P.S. No. 189 situated at P.S. - Senha, Village + Thana - Senha, Dist. - Lohardaga - 835302, State - Jharkhand. Bounded : On the North by - PCC Road, On the South by - Land of Mahibun Khatun, On the East by - Land of Sheikh Hanif, On the West by - Land of Sheikh Hanif</p>		
<p>Date: 31.08.2024 Place : Lohardaga Authorised Officer Bank Of India, Lohardaga Branch</p>		