



**OPINION 6**  
GENDER REFORM IN  
19TH-CENTURY BENGAL

**WORLD 8**  
DHAKA'S TRAFFIC FACING CHAOS  
DUE TO SPORADIC PROTESTS

**MONEY 10**  
SENSEX RALLIES  
600 POINTS

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PRANNOY  
TAKES BREAK  
11 SPORTS

## UKRAINE SENDS RUSSIA ITS 9/11 MESSAGE

AP ■ KYIV

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Monday condemned Russia's overnight and early morning barrage on his country as "vile" and said it involved over 100 missiles of various types and about 100 "Shahed" drones. Ukraine's leader said there were deaths and dozens of injuries and that the attack caused a lot of damage to Ukraine's energy sector. "Like most previous Russian strikes, this one was just as vile, targeting critical civilian infrastructure. Most of our regions - from the Kharkiv region and Kyiv to Odesa and our western regions," Zelenskyy said. The barrage began around midnight and continued beyond

daybreak in what appeared to be Russia's biggest attack against Ukraine in weeks. Russian forces fired drones, cruise missiles and hypersonic ballistic Kinzhal missiles at 15 Ukrainian regions - more than half the country, Ukraine's Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said Monday morning. "The energy infrastructure has once again become the target of Russian terrorists. Unfortunately, there is damage in a number of regions," Shmyhal said, adding that Ukraine's state-owned power grid operator, Ukrenergo, has been forced to implement emergency power cuts to stabilise the system. He called on Ukraine's allies to provide Kyiv with long-range weapons and permission to use

### MODI AND BIDEN DISCUSS UKRAINE

them on targets inside Russia. "In order to stop the barbaric shelling of Ukrainian cities, it is necessary to destroy the place from which the Russian missiles are launched," Shmyhal said. "We count on the support of our allies and will definitely make Russia pay." According to Ukraine's air force, there were multiple groups of Russian drones moving toward eastern, northern, southern, and central regions of Ukraine, followed by multiple cruise and ballistic missiles. The Russian Defence Ministry said in a statement that the attacks used "long-range precision air-

and sea-based weapons and strike drones against critical energy infrastructure facilities that support the operation of Ukraine's military-industrial complex. All designated targets were hit." Explosions were heard in the capital, Kyiv. Power and water supplies in the city have been disrupted by the attack, Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said. At least three people were killed - one in the western city of Lutsk, one in the central Dnipropetrovsk region and one in the partially occupied Zaporizhzhia region in the southeast, according to local officials. Thirteen others were wounded - one in the Kyiv region

that surrounds the Ukrainian capital, five in Lutsk, three in the southern Mykolaiv region and four in the neighbouring Odesa region. Blackouts and damage to civilian infrastructure and residential buildings were reported across the country, from the region of Sumy in the east, to the Mykolaiv and Odesa regions in the south, to the region of Rivne in the west. In Sumy, a province in the east that borders Russia, local administration said that 194 settlements were in a full power blackout, while 19 others had a partial blackout. Ukraine's private energy company, DTEK,

introduced emergency blackouts, saying in an online statement that "energy workers throughout the country work 24/7 to restore light in the homes of Ukrainians." In the wake of the barrage and the power cuts, regional officials all across Ukraine were ordered to open "points of invincibility" - shelter-type places where people can charge their devices and get refreshments during energy blackouts, Prime Minister Shmyhal said. Such points were first opened in Ukraine in the fall of 2022, when Russia targeted the country's energy infrastructure with weekly barrages. In neighbouring Poland, the military said Polish and NATO air defences were activated in the

eastern part of the country as a result of the attack. In Russia, in the meantime, officials reported a Ukrainian drone attack overnight and on Monday morning. Four people were injured in Russia's central region of Saratov, where drones hit residential buildings in two cities. One drone crashed into a residential high-rise in the city of Saratov, and another hit a residential building in the city of Engels, home to a military airfield that had been attacked before, local officials said. Russia's Defence Ministry said that a total of 22 Ukrainian drones were intercepted overnight and in the morning over eight regions, including the Saratov and Yaroslavl regions in central Russia.

## Final countdown in Jammu and Kashmir

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The top brass of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Monday faced a piquant situation following a strong backlash from a section of party workers soon after the party released a list of 44 candidates for the upcoming Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir. However, the original list of candidates was swiftly withdrawn by the party and a trimmed-down list of 16 candidates for the first round of polling was released again to pacify the angry workers who held a protest at its headquarters in Jammu and claimed "parachute candidates" were picked over hardworking workers. Three former MLAs and a woman candidate, Shagun Parihar, whose father Ajeet Parihar and uncle Anil Parihar were gunned down by terrorists in Kishtwar district in November 2018 figured in the list of 16 candidates. The party had earlier dropped names of former Cabinet Ministers, a Deputy Chief Minister, and other non-performing MLAs facing a high degree of anti-incumbency in their respective constituencies. Ironically, the same list also included the names of all those leaders who joined the BJP after dumping their respective parties. Meanwhile, the party's high command went into a huddle in New Delhi and reviewed the fast-paced developments taking place in Jammu, a strong bastion of BJP. This was necessitated as several workers threatened to work against the party in the polls starting September 18, warning that their votes would go against the party



thereby weakening its position. The first list, which caused a flutter, was cleared by the National Election Committee under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi late on Sunday night. The meeting was also attended by BJP President JP Nadda, Home Minister Amit Shah, General Secretary (Organisation) BL Santosh, and other members of the Central Election Committee who deliberated on the names during the two-hour-long meeting in New Delhi. As the list was made public via the social media handles of the party early on Monday morning a high-voltage drama unfolded at the State party headquarters in Jammu much to the chagrin of the party's high command. Several senior party leaders, present in the office, were surrounded by slogan-shouting supporters of leaders left out of the list. "I have been working for the party for the last 18 years and was expecting a ticket, but the list of 44 candidates showed

the party has chosen retired police officer Mohan Lal Bhagat, who joined BJP just two days ago. I have worked tirelessly to bring people into the party fold," Jagdish Bhagat, former president of SC Morcha told reporters here at the party headquarters. Welcoming the withdrawal of the initial list, Bhagat said, "We hope that committed and long-serving party leaders would be given preference over those who have done nothing for the party." "If they ignore us, there will be serious consequences. We will not allow any wrongdoing and will protest against this injustice within the party," Bhagat said. Many workers were also seen protesting at the BJP office demanding a ticket for Omi Khajuria from the Jammu North constituency. In the withdrawn list, the BJP had fielded former Congress leader Sham Lal Sharma from this seat. "We have been associated with the BJP since we attained the voting age. The party has

### Ladakh is now seven districts

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday announced the creation of five new districts in the Union Territory of Ladakh, taking the total number of districts to seven in the region. The new districts are Zaskar, Drass, Sham, Nubra, and Changthang. Ladakh currently has only two districts, Leh and Kargil, each managed by its autonomous district council. Announcing the decision the Union Home Minister said, "The Narendra Modi Government is committed to creating abundant opportunities for the people of Ladakh. The new districts, namely Zaskar, Drass, Sham, Nubra and Changthang, will take the benefits meant for the people to their doorsteps by bolstering governance in every nook and cranny." Ladakh got a Union Territory status after the Centre revoked Article 370, which gave special status to the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcated it into two UTs in 2019. Being a UT, Ladakh comes under the direct administrative control of the Home Ministry. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also hailed the creation of five new districts in Ladakh as a step towards better



governance and prosperity. Zaskar, Drass, Sham, Nubra, and Changthang will now receive more focused attention, bringing services and opportunities even closer to people, he said, congratulating them. He said on X, "Creation of five new districts in Ladakh is a step towards better Governance and prosperity." Chairman/Chief Executive Councillor, Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Tashi Gyalson also extended greetings to both Modi and Shah for the historic announcement. Engineer turned education reformer and environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk also welcomed the announcement and hoped the newly created districts would be administered by the Independent district councils under the sixth schedule.

Chief Minister Nirmal Singh and former ministers Sat Paul Sharma, Bali Bhagat, Priya Sethi and Sham Lal Choudhary and Sukhmandan Choudhary.

Continued on Page 2



## Malayalam women call out sleazy film industry men

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The turmoil faced by Malayalam film industry got worsened on Monday with three more actresses alleging that veteran actors sexually abused them in the course of movie making and script discussions. The prominent actors to face the accusation of sexual molestation are Mukesh, who is a CPI(M) MLA, Baburaj, an actor essaying the roles of evil characters, Jayasoorya, a Kerala State Film Award winner for the best actor category and Manian Pillai Raju. This is not the first time Mukesh, who hails from a family of artists in Kollam, figures in a controversy. His first wife Saritha, South India's prominent actress who had bagged national awards for her portrayal of challenging characters in Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada films, "ran away" with her sons to escape torture by the actor-turned-politician. Methil Devika, eminent danseuse whom he married later too gave up on him and left his household following the ill-treatment by Mukesh and divorce proceedings are on in a family court.

A junior artiste was the first person on Monday to come out with allegations of sexual abuse against Baburaj (who is also the vice-president of AMMA), Shine Tom Chacko and Sreekumar Menon (ad film maker). The day also saw a senior artiste accusing Jayasoorya, Idavela Babu, and MP Raju for their sexual misdemeanour towards her. "Since these people hold important positions in Association of Malayalam Movie Artists, female artists are afraid to file any complaints against them. The situation in Malayalam film industry is that the female artistes have to make a lot of compromises to survive in the profession," she said. Even as this report is being filed, Geetha Vijayan, a film actress who was rated as the star of the future by critics, disclosed that she was ousted from the industry for not making any kind of adjustments with the directors and lead artists who approached her seeking sexual favours. "I have come out of many projects asking them to get lost. Though I lost my chances, looking back, I feel happy and satisfied," said Geetha Vijayan.

The current upheaval in Malayalam film industry started with the release of K Hema Committee Report on the victimisation and harassment faced by women artistes in Malayalam industry. The report "claimed" two persons on Sunday viz Ranjith (moviemaker and chairman of Government run-Chalachitra Academy) and Siddique, general secretary of AMMA who were accused of inappropriate behaviour by Bengali actress Sreelekha Mitra and an upcoming artist Revathy Sampath. Both Ranjith and Siddique have resigned from their official positions. The Kerala Government on Monday appointed a Special Investigation Team consisting of women IPS officers to probe the findings of the Hema Committee Report and also to look into the complaints by the women artistes. Ministers and bureaucrats got a reprieve from the heart rending devastation of Wayanad as the focus is on the spicy reports emerging from Mollywood. Even the evening debates in Malayalam satellite news channels have been monopolised by discussions on sexual abuse featuring the stars.

## Bengal stunned by psychopath rapist

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Former RG Kar Medical College principal Dr Sandip Ghosh aided by his "team of crony doctors" and even an advocate had taken all the measures so as to "sabotage and dilute" the forensic test results of the victim postgraduate lady doctor who had allegedly been raped and murdered in the night intervening August 8 and 9 triggering massive nation-wide stir paralysing medical services both in Bengal and other parts of India. According to a former head clerk of the RG Kar mortuary section Ghosh had influenced the constitution of "team of doctors who belonged to his own coterie" to perform the autopsy test. This was done by ignoring and keeping out "very senior doctors of the forensic department of the Hospital," he said adding also that "despite the RG Kar Hospital has a most modern system of preservation of dead bodies with 68 chambers... in 4 degree temperature... the forensic team conducted an hurried autopsy in about one hour" while the police threw all norms and protocols to the

wind by disposing off the body in a matter of a few hours. "The autopsy report seems to have been prepared in a most amateurish manner... proper terms have not been used in right places... minute details have been avoided... which will make it very difficult for the prosecution to prove the case beyond doubts... a good defence lawyer will pierce through the prosecution case and it will be difficult for the Court to award punishment to the prime accused who is now in CBI custody," said Dr Subarna Goswami a senior doctor. Besides, buttressing the CBI's arguments footages have gone viral in the social media where it is seen that a number of "outside doctors and an advocate belonging to a political party" who are not connected to the RGKMCH visiting the place of occurrence along with Dr Sandip Ghosh in the night of August 9, hours after the victim's body was discovered. The said former head clerk of the Hospital also questioned the reason behind the police failing to cordon off the area



RG Kar Medical College and Hospital junior doctors during their sit-in protest against the alleged rape and murder of a trainee doctor, in Kolkata, on Monday PTI

and allowing Dr Ghosh and his friends to visit the place of occurrence and hold meeting there. "If what is being said is true then the conduct of these people is under question... the role of the police should come under the scanner... the thumb rule is that after a heinous crime like this everyone around comes under suspicion and so no one... even the principal... let alone any outsider should be

allowed in the PO and here people roamed about the area freely... the question is whose interests they were serving," asked the said head clerk of the hospital. Meanwhile, in a related development the Kolkata Police on Monday declared illegal the protest march towards the State Secretariat Nabanna demanding the resignation of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee as illegal and warned that strict action

would be taken against those who would play mischief. Additional Director General of Police (South Bengal) Supratim Sarkar said, "An unknown students' organisation called Paschimbanga Chhatra Samaj has given us intimation - but not sought any permission - that they will be taking a procession to the prohibited areas... one of their leaders yesterday met a senior politician at a five star hotel... apparently making their intentions to create trouble... they as well as all the right thinking people of the State are requested not to participate in such protest march." He also said a joint forum of citizens had indeed sought such permission but that had been "rejected" considering law and order issues and also a UGC NET exam scheduled for Tuesday. However, the leadership of the students' wing said it would march towards the Nabanna and force the Chief Minister to resign "taking responsibility as the Health Minister and the Home Minister of the State for the RG Kar incident."

## Bole Kangana, bole BJP

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Expressing disagreement with MP Kangana Ranaut's remarks on the farmers' protests, the BJP on Monday said the Lok Sabha MP from Mandi had been directed to not make such statements in the future. This came after Ranaut stated a controversy by suggesting that the farmers' protests could have led to a Bangladesh-like situation in the country if the top leadership was not strong enough. The BJP MP from Mandi recently alleged that "rapes, murders" were committed during the farm struggle, but farmers continued to stage protests. In a video shared by the Mandi MP on X, she alleged that "bodies were hanging and rapes were taking place" during the farmers' protest against the now-repealed three farm laws. "The statement made by the BJP MP in the context of the farmers' movement is not the opinion of the party. The Bharatiya Janata Party expresses its disagreement with the statement made by Kangana Ranaut," the BJP said in a statement. On behalf of the BJP, Ranaut is neither permitted nor authorised to make statements



on the party's policy issues, it said. "On behalf of the Bharatiya Janata Party, Ranaut has been directed not to make any such statements in future," the statement said. "The BJP is committed to follow the principles of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas' and social harmony," it added. Ranaut's comments come at an awkward time for the BJP, with Assembly elections in Haryana just weeks away. Party insiders maintained Ranaut's statement might serve as a fresh trigger for farmers' outrage against the party and adversely impact its prospects in certain farmer-centric areas. During the recently held Lok Sabha elections, BJP candidates faced a stiff opposition from farmers

while campaigning in the State. A BJP leader said at present, there was no resentment among farmers against the party, but Ranaut's statement could create trouble for the candidates as campaigning progressed. Farmer organisations have expressed anger over the way Ranaut has again raked up issues pertaining to farm protests, calling her a "habitual offender" and have asked the Punjab Government and the Centre to investigate at whose instance she is "spitting venom" against the protesters. Farmers also see a "conspiracy" to create trouble to get support for her upcoming film. Congress leader Randeep Singh Surjewala has also posted on X wishing the BJP MP to "Get well soon, Kangana!". He asked, "Why do BJP people hate the country's food providers so much? Were these just Kangana's words or did someone else copy them?" BJP has always lied, deceived, conspired and oppressed our farmers. And once again a BJP MP has made baseless allegations against our food providers." Continued on Page 2

# Cong, NC to contest 85 seats in alliance in J&K

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The alliance partners Congress and the National Conference late Monday evening brokered a deal whereby both parties have decided to contest 85 seats in alliance while there will be a friendly contest on five Assembly segments in the upcoming September 18.

The deal was struck at the end of several rounds of talks held between the team of Congress leaders which included AICC General Secretary KC Venugopal, Salman Khurshid, and Pawan Khera. JKPC Chief Tariq Hamid Qarra was also part of the day-long negotiations. Addressing a joint press conference in Srinagar Congress leader KC Venugopal said, "We will fight together, we will win J&K. We will form the Government in Jammu and Kashmir..."

Commenting on the seat-sharing formula JKPC Chief Tariq Hamid Qarra told reporters, "National Conference will contest on 51 seats, Congress on 32 and we have agreed to have a friendly but disciplined contest



on 5 seats. Over and above these 88 seats, we have left 1 seat for CPI (M) and 1 seat for Panthers Party..." Venugopal said, "BJP is trying to destroy the soul of Jammu and Kashmir. Our INDIA alliance's main objective is to save the soul of Jammu and Kashmir so that is why Congress and National Conference are coming together to make a Government in Jammu & Kashmir which is friendly with the people of J&K. We had a discussion in accordance and we entered into a formula which our leaders will share now. We will fight together, we will win J&K. We

will form the Government in Jammu and Kashmir..." National Conference President Farooq Abdullah said "It is a matter of great happiness that we started this campaign and both of us will fight together against those forces who are trying to divide people here. The whole country and INDIA alliance was formed so that we can fight those forces who want to communalise, divide and break the country. Today we have completed the negotiations and have done coordination in a very good cordial atmosphere. Congress and the National Conference will fight the elections together..."

# RG Kar's descendants upset over incidents in college

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The descendants of Dr Radha Gobindo Kar or RG Kar the founder of the first private medical college in Asia are livid at the goings on in the RG Kar Medical College.

"Just a few days ago we celebrated the 172nd anniversary of Dr RG Kar who was not only a doctor but a great philanthropist who had selflessly served the countrymen during the 19th century great plague and subsequently set up the Asia's first private medical college ... and now what we are seeing ... it was not expected at all ... it hurts not only us but the great soul of Dr Kar," said Swagata Ghosh one of the descendants of Dr Kar. "I felt a cold horror just imagining what the poor victim, the lady doctor had to go through moments before her death ... this is because my great, great grand uncle made this college ... hopeless ... but things were not like that ... things have deteriorated in the past a few years otherwise we have known this college to be one of the best in India and for sometime the best in the eastern India," another relative at Betor in Santragachi area of Howrah from where Dr Kar belonged said. Radha Gobinda received



his degree in medicine from Edinburgh in 1883 after pursuing studies at Calcutta Medical College. He returned to Calcutta three years later and immersed himself in treating poor patients of the country for free and, subsequently set up the medical college in 1886 without taking any support from the colonial British rulers. He with the help of Dr Mahendranath Banerjee, Dr Akshoy Kumar Dutta, Dr Bipin Behari Moitra, Dr ML De, Dr BG Banerjee, Dr Kunda Bhattacharya and numerous others, founded the Calcutta School of Medicine which subsequently became a Government college after Independence and was named RG Kar Medical College. "Such was his dedication that running short of funds he would even stand outside the houses of the rich people organising wedding ceremonies and seek funds from

them ... and now see what they have done to this College," he says adding "this is all the result of dirty politics and vested interests. "Till recently this college was ranked 19th in rank among the best colleges of South-East Asia and today you see what has happened to this college ... this must stop and the citizens must do something to save this medical college," said Arindam Das another descendant from Howrah. "I cannot believe that the College our alma mater has degenerated to this level ... When the dead bodies are sold, organs are allegedly traded and other rackets are run including extortion of money from the students in the name of making them pass their exams ... this is horrible ... that we could have even imagine in our wildest of dreams," said Dr Sibabrata Banerjee one of the alumni of the college.

# Nanded Cong MP Vasant dies at private hospital in Hyderabad

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Senior Congress politician Sand sitting Congress MP from Nanded Vasant Chavan died at a private hospital in Hyderabad on Monday, following prolonged illness.

He was 69 only. He is the first MP from the newly-elected Lok Sabha to have passed away. Chavan breathed his last at KIMS Hospital in Hyderabad where he had been admitted a few days back following breathlessness and multiple health issues. Mourning the death of Chavan, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla wrote on "X": "Pained to know about sad demise of Vasant Chavan, MP from Nanded. My heartfelt condolences to his family members and relatives. May his pious soul attain eternal peace".

Several Congress leaders, including Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole, leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly Vijay Wadetiwar and Congress Legislature Party leader Balasaheb Thorat, condoled Chavan's death.

"The news of the demise of a senior leader of Congress party, MP of Nanded Lok Sabha

Constituency Vasantrao Chavan is very shocking. He always remained loyal to the Congress party even in adverse conditions and brought the idea of the Congress party home...The entire Congress party is with the Chavan family in this grief," Patole said.

In the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, Chavan had trounced sitting BJP MP Prataprao Patil Chikhlikar by 59,442 votes from Nanded constituency.

Nanded has been a traditional Congress bastion. Barring four terms, Nanded has been under the control of the Congress since 1952. While late SB Chavan represented the constituency twice (1980 and 1984), Ashok Chavan himself was elected to Lok Sabha once in a bye-election in 1987, following the resignation of his father. Late SB Chavan's son-in-law and Ashokrao's brother-in-law Bhaskarao Khatgaonkar has represented the constituency thrice (1998, 1999 and 2009).

The Congress suffered a major jolt when Maharashtra's former Chief Minister and senior party leader Ashok Chavan resigned from the grand-old party and joined the BJP in February this year.

# Shivaji statue unveiled by PM collapses in Sindhudurg, sparks row

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A 35-foot tall statue of Maratha king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj -- inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Rajkot Fort in Sindhudurg district in coastal Konkan region in December last year -- collapsed all of a sudden on Monday afternoon, sparking a major political controversy in Maharashtra. The statue collapsed at 12.30 pm on Monday. The exact cause of the collapse of Shivaji's statue has not been established yet. Sindhudurg has been reeling under heavy rains for the last several days. Following the collapse, officials of Sindhudurg, including district collector Kishor Tawade rushed to the spot to review the situ-

ation. The Rajkot Fort is located on a rocky stretch around 3 kilometers away from the Sindhudurg Fort. The Sindhudurg Fort was built by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in 1660 and Rajkot Fort in Malvan bordering the Arabian Sea was built around 1664 and both remain a glorious testament to India's maritime heritage. Under severe flak from the MVA leaders and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's direct royal descendant Chhatrapati Yuvraj Sambhajiraje of Kolhapur, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde deployed his senior PWD Minister Ravindra Chavan to Sindhudurg for an on-spot assessment. The development came after

the MVA leaders came down heavily on the Eknath Shinde government for the collapse of Shivaji's statue. They termed the incident an insult to Maharashtra's pride and a blow to the country's image globally and it smacked of corruption. It may be recalled that during the Navy Day celebrations on December 4, 2023, Modi had unveiled the 35-foot-tall statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj --- with the sword held high in his right hand -- at Rajkot Fort in Malvan of Sindhudurg district during which Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Admiral R Hari Kumar (Retd), the then Chief of Naval Staff and the top brass of the Indian Navy were present. Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and



two Deputy Chief Ministers Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar too were present at the function. Under severe flak from the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) leaders and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's direct royal descendant Chhatrapati Yuvraj Sambhajiraje of Kolhapur over

the collapse of iconic statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde rushed his senior PWD Minister Ravindra Chavan to Sindhudurg for an on-spot assessment. The development came after the MVA leaders came down heavily on the Eknath Shinde government for the collapse of

Shivaji's statue. They termed the incident an insult to Maharashtra's pride and a blow to the country's image globally and it smacked of corruption. Flaggng the issue on "X" Shivaji Maharaj's 13th direct descendant Chhatrapati Yuvraj Sambhajiraje said that the statue was erected in 'haste' for inauguration by the PM and it has collapsed. "It was then that we wrote to the PM and demanded to change this statue which was basically shapeless and not according to sculpture and was erected in haste. In this Maharashtra, there is no such unfortunate thing as Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's memorial collapsing within a year. In such a situation, with what authority will we talk

about Maharaja's forts!" the Yuvraj wrote. The Opposition NCP (SP) leaders, including Supriya Sule, Jayant Patil and Jitendra Awhad held the MahaYuti government directly responsible for the statue collapse. Suspecting corruption behind the whole thing, Patil demanded a thorough inquiry into the construction of the statue. Awhad lamented that the collapse of the statue as a blow to the country's image how the statue of a national icon has crashed. Alleging corruption, Supriya posted a work order dated September 8, 2023 issued to a firm from Thane, which incidentally is the home district of chief minister Eknath Shinde and demanded he (the con-

tractor) be "blacklisted". Congress spokesperson Atul Londhe castigated the ruling BJP-led MahaYuti government for "consistently misusing Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's name for elections" and now even for indulging in corruption in his statue. He warned that the MahaYuti will face the consequences of this in the forthcoming State Assembly elections. Shiv Sena leader Aditya Thackeray rooted for a detailed inquiry and action against all those responsible for the incident. Meanwhile, supporters of SS (UBT) Kudal MLA Vaibhav Naik vandalised the PWD offices in Sindhudurg, demanding a FIR against the officials.

# India's bio economy to reach \$300 billion by 2030: Jitendra



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India's bio economy has experienced remarkable growth, skyrocketing from USD10 billion in 2014 to over USD130 billion in 2024, with projections to reach USD300 billion by 2030. This all set to position the country as a potential leader in the 4th industrial revolution, Union Minister for Science and Technology, Dr Jitendra Singh said on Sunday attributing the surge to the BioE3 Policy announced recently. While briefing the media about the recent Union Cabinet decision on the ambitious BioE3 (Biotechnology for Economy, Employment, and Environment) Policy, he said, "The policy is set to accelerate this growth trajectory, making substantial contributions to the 'Make in India' initiative by fostering the development of bio-based products with minimal carbon footprints." According to Dr Jitendra Singh the BioE3 Policy is designed to address critical global challenges such as climate change and depleting non-renewable resources by facilitating the shift from chemical-based industries to sustainable bio-based models; promoting a circular bio economy; achieving net-zero carbon emissions through innovative waste utilisation from biomass, landfills, and greenhouse gases and encouraging the development of

bio-based products and expanding job creation. Highlighting the key features, Dr Jitendra Singh said the policy encourages entrepreneurship across diverse sectors, including bio-based chemicals, smart proteins, precision bio therapeutics, climate-resilient agriculture, and carbon capture. It establishes cutting-edge bio manufacturing facilities, bio foundry clusters, and Bio-AI hubs, he added. The Minister further said, renewed focus is on ethical biosafety considerations and global regulatory harmonisation by aligning with international standards. Understanding the Importance of Biomufacturing hubs Dr Jitendra Singh highlighted that it will serve as centralised facilities crucial for the production, development, and commercialisation of bio-based products. He said "These hubs will bridge the gap between laboratory-scale and commercial-scale manufacturing, fostering collaboration among startups, SMEs, and established manufacturers." The Minister also categorically mentioned that these will play a vital role in large-scale manufacturing of products like mRNA-based vaccines and proteins. He expressed confidence that Bio-AI hubs will drive innovation by integrating AI to analyse large-scale biological data, paving the way for new gene therapies and food processing solutions.

# SAU president meets Nepal's Foreign Minister Arzu in Delhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prof KK Agarwal, President of South Asian University established by SAARC countries in New Delhi, paid a courtesy visit to Nepal's Foreign Minister Arzu Rana Deuba in New Delhi today. During the meeting, he informed the Foreign Minister about the courses being conducted in the university as well as other activities. Agarwal informed her that this was the first and only university in South Asia run jointly by all SAARC including India, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Agarwal said that the professors teaching in the university and the students studying there are from SAARC member countries, so the atmosphere of the campus is filled with all the colours with unity in diversity. Nepal's Foreign Minister Arzu Rana Deuba congratulated SAU Vice Chancellor Prof KK Agarwal and praised the concept of knowledge without border of this international university which is becoming a bridge to promote relations between the member countries. The Foreign Minister described the South Asian University as a light beam of education for the SAARC countries. Foreign Minister Deuba said that she will soon come to New Delhi again to visit the university. She appreciated the efforts being made by Prof KK Agarwal to bring SAU on the global map in educational matters and advised to do educational research keeping in mind the needs of the SAARC countries. Agarwal told the Foreign Minister that such courses are being started in the Institute of South Asian Studies which are focused on solving the social, economic and geographical problems of the SAARC countries.

# Final countdown in Jammu and...

From Page 1

The list also included the names of several ex-MLAs and ex-Ministers including those of Sunil Sharma, D.S. Rana, S.S. Salathia, Shakti Raj Parihar, Sham Lal Sharma, Chander Prakash Ganga, Syed Mushtaq Bukhari and Balwant Singh Mankotia and many new faces including Veer Saraf, Showkat Gayoor, Yudhvir Sethi and Shagun Parihar. Ex-MLC of PDP Murtaza Khan and APNI Party candidate Zulfikar Ali

were also on this list. Addressing the concerns raised by the agitated workers and leaders, Ravinder Raina, president of the BJP's Jammu and Kashmir unit, said he would have one-on-one talks with everyone. "Every problem can be resolved through dialogue. The party is like a family where it does not matter who gets the mandate as "we believe in the nation first, party second and self last".

# Bole Kangana, bole...

From Page 1

The question is that...Has Kangana made this cheap allegation on the farmer as per BJP's election strategy? Were these just Kangana's words or did someone else copy them? If not, then why are the Prime Minister of the country, the Chief Minister of Haryana and all the BJP MPs and MLAs silent on this issue?" Surjewala said in a post. The All India Kisan Sabha on Monday condemned BJP Lok Sabha MP and actor Kangana Ranaut for suggesting that the farmers' protests against the now-repealed three farm laws could have led to a Bangladesh-like situation in the country if the top leadership was not strong enough. AIKS president Dr Ashok Dhawale said Ranaut's remarks were highly condemnable, adding these were made by the actor-turned-politician to please her "external and internal bosses who want to devour agriculture". The "kisan struggle" against the three farm laws, which would have compromised the sovereignty and food

security of the country, amid harsh weather, COVID pandemic and "state violence" had 736 martyrs, the AIKS statement claimed. Kisan Mazdoor Morcha leader Sarvan Singh Pandher said she (Kangana) is a "habitual offender". Now it is a matter of investigation as to whether she is reading the script provided from Nagpur [the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh headquarters] or there is another angle to her outbursts. In June 2024, a CISF woman constable allegedly slapped the actress inside Chandigarh airport for her derogatory comments on This is not the first time Ranaut has faced backlash for her comments on farmers. In 2020, in the midst of the anti-farm laws protest, she stoked a huge row after misidentifying a woman farmer from Punjab and making derogatory remarks about her. Shortly after being elected to Parliament, Ranaut was also involved in an altercation with a CISF personnel at Chandigarh airport, who allegedly slapped her over her anti-farmer comments.

# Badlapur sexual abuse case: Accused sent to judicial custody

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A Kalyan Court on Monday remanded the accused in the case involving the alleged sexual abuse of two nursery school girls at Badlapur in the adjoining Thane district in judicial custody for 14 days. Twenty-three-year-old Akshay Shinde, the accused in the much-discussed Badlapur children sexual abuse incident, was produced before the court of Special Women Judge V. A. Patrawale at Kalyan in Thane district, amid tight security. After the prosecution informed the court that Shinde had been booked under the relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, the Judge remanded Shinde in judicial custody for 14 days. It may be recalled that two nursery girls -- aged four and six years -- were sexually abused allegedly by sweeper Shinde when they in the washroom of the kindergarten school run by Adarsh Vidya



Prasarak Sanstha (AVPS) on August 13 for using the toilet there. Shinde was arrested on August 17 and his police custody was subsequently extended till August 26, after all lawyers from the Kalyan Bar Association have resolved not to defend him in the case. The Badlapur police have also booked the AVPS President, Secretary and school principal in the same case. After massive citizen protests erupted in Badlapur town on August 19, the Maharashtra government set up a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to investigate the sexual crime, suspended the AVPS board of

trustees and appointed an Administrator to manage the affairs for now. Under flak from various quarters, the state government also initiated a series of measures to ensure the safety of school children like compulsory installation of CCTVs, only women support staff for toilets or changing rooms, full background check of all staffers appointed to various positions, etc. Meanwhile, the Maharashtra Congress General Secretary Sachin Sawant has demanded a full security audit of all schools in the state to ascertain if relevant infrastructure and safety measures are in place.

# Three dead, two critical as canter truck runs over sleeping people in Shastri Park

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Three died and two were left critically injured after a canter truck allegedly ran over five men sleeping on a central verge in the Shastri Park area of northeast Delhi in the wee hours of Monday. The alleged incident occurred at the Tarbuz market near Shastri Park metro station around 4:30 am, the police said and added the victims were homeless and sleeping on the footpath. An officer said the medium goods vehicle (MGV) was approaching the Iron Bridge from Seelampur when it climbed the central verge and ran over the five men sleeping on the footpath. The trucker abandoned his vehicle and fled the spot after the accident. "A PCR call was received at 4:56 am regard-

ing accident in Shastri Park area. An MGV, Canter truck coming from Seelampur and going towards Iron Bridge, climbed on the central verge and ran over five persons sleeping on footpath. Driver fled from spot leaving the vehicle behind," a senior official said. People who saw the incident unfolding said that the vehicle was coming in a high speed and ran over the poor people sleeping on the verge. Meanwhile, as the driver realized what has happened, drove towards the metro station and parked his truck there and fled. When they tried to catch him, he threw stones at them. "We thought of saving the lives of those he ran over and went to the place. Three men died at the spot and two were badly injured so we took them to the hospital," a resident of the area said.



ISKCON Mandir Sant Nagar East of Kailash



Devotees at a temple in New Delhi



A child dressed as Lord Krishna during Janmashtami

# Political leaders, devotees throng temples to seek Lord Krishna's blessings on Janmashtami

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

On the occasion of Janmashtami festival, devotees flocked temples across the national Capital to seek Lord Krishna's blessing on his birth anniversary with prominent personalities like New Delhi BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj and Union Minister of States Harsh Malhotra paying their obeisance. The usually mundane Monday transformed into a day of joy and celebration amid tight security arrangements by police. Devotees visited several temples in the city including at Laxmi Narayan Mandir in New

Delhi, ISKCON Temple in East of Kailash, Dwarka Sector 13 and Rohini Sector 25, Janmashtami Park in Punjabi Bagh, Adhya Katyani Shakti Peeth in Chhattarpur, Santoshi Mata Mandir in Hari Nagar, DDA Ground in Dwarka Sector 10, Golok Dham Temple in Dwarka Sector 10 and Gufawala Mandir in Preet Vihar. The Birla Mandir in Gole Market was beautifully illuminated while witnessing devotees turning up in huge numbers since early morning to attend the Krishna Aarti. Similarly, the ISKCON temples across Delhi witnessed grand

celebrations, drawing large crowds who came to mark the auspicious occasion. Malhotra, who went to ISKCON Temple in Greater Kailash, took to X and said, "Heartiest greetings to all of you on Krishna Janmashtami. On this auspicious occasion, we had the great fortune of performing the Abhishekam of Lord Krishna, which was performed with great reverence and devotion at the ISKCON Temple, Greater Kailash." Swaraj, who also visited the temple in the morning, shared, "On the auspicious occasion of Krishna Janmashtami, I had the good fortune of visiting the



ISKCON temple in East of Kailash. The life of Lord Krishna shows us the true path of religion, karma, and service, which will always inspire us. It is my heartfelt wish that this festival may become a symbol of happiness, prosperity, peace and health for all of you." Director of ISKCON National Communication Vrajendra Nandan Das expressed his happiness on the overwhelming response. "Devotees have started arriving at the temple since early morning. More than one lakh devotees have offered prayers at the temple, and I am hopeful that the record of four lakh devotees will be broken.

Many political leaders like Harsh Malhotra and Bansuri Swaraj have paid obeisance at the temple. I appeal to everyone to come in large numbers to offer prayers at the temple," he said. Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) Mayor Shelly Oberoi, was seen attending aarti at both the Birla Mandir and ISKCON temple. Speaking on the occasion, Oberoi said, "On the occasion of Janmashtami, we have come to offer prayers to Lord Krishna at the ISKCON temple in Dwarka. I extend best wishes to everyone on the occasion of Krishna Janmashtami. I wish that God's blessings remain

on everyone and that happiness and prosperity come to everyone's home." In addition to the spiritual fervor at the temples, cultural events also played a significant role in the celebrations. At the Kamani Auditorium in Mandi House, the Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra hosted the 48th edition of its renowned dance drama, "KRISHNA." Another highlight of the celebrations was the 'Matki Phod' event held at the Indira Gandhi Stadium. The event featured a live performance by singer Padmashri Kailash Kher, whose soulful voice uplifted the festive spirit.

## AAP to launch 'AAP ka vidhayak, aap ke dwaar' campaign from September 1

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP will launch a campaign 'AAP ka vidhayak, aap ke dwaar' from September 1 to reach out to people as the party gears up for the Delhi Assembly polls due early next year. Following a meeting of senior party leaders to chalk out the strategy for the polls on Monday, which was chaired by former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, the party said that the campaign will be intensified in the days to come. "There was a detailed discussion on various aspects related to governance, political scenario and each assembly constituency in Delhi. Manish Sisodia's 'padyatra' has been getting a very positive response," Rajya Sabha AAP MP Sandeep Pathak, who is



also the party's national general secretary (organisation), said. "Wherever he is going people are coming out and saying 'you have been faced a lot of injustice'. We will continue these padyatras," he added. The party will also be rolling out its campaign 'AAP ka vidhayak, aap ke dwaar' from September 1 wherein the MLAs will hold meetings at the 'mandal' level

and booth level where there will be discussions on political scenario and the work done by the party. "We will also expose the conspiracy being hatched by the BJP against the people of Delhi during this campaign. Slowly, the campaign will be intensified," said Pathak. When asked whether there was any discussion on alliance with the Congress, the AAP leader said that there was no talk in this regard. Sisodia had recently held a meeting with senior party leaders to discuss the strategy for the polls. The former Delhi Education Minister, a trusted lieutenant of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, walked out of jail on bail on August 9 after spending 17 months behind bars in connection with the excise policy case.

## AAP has been out of touch with public for ten years: BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the AAP launching a campaign from next month to reach out to people as the party gears up for the state assembly polls due early next year, the Delhi BJP on Monday hit out at the party and said that the AAP, which has been out of touch with the public for ten years, is now forced to launch the gimmick 'AAP ka vidhayak, aap ke dwaar'. The Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva claimed that the AAP appears to be politically completely desperate. "In the last ten years, AAP MLAs, councillors, and even Rajya Sabha MPs have been disconnected from the public, as a result of which, in the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections, the public gave AAP a severe defeat in 52 assembly

constituencies, including 9 reserved for Scheduled Castes in Delhi," he asserted. Sachdeva alleged that according to reliable sources, in the review meeting held by AAP leaders after the Lok Sabha elections, the second main reason for the party candidates' defeat, after the corruption of the party leadership, was found to be the wave against the MLAs. "The wave against AAP in Delhi is so strong that the party fielded three MLAs—Kuldeep Kumar, Sahiram Pehlwan, and Somnath Bharti—in the Lok Sabha elections. All three lost badly in the Lok Sabha elections, and two of them, Kuldeep Kumar and Somnath Bharti, even lost their assembly seats, while Sahiram Pehlwan barely managed to save his assembly seat," the Delhi BJP chief said.

## AAP demands LG's resignation over felling of 1,100 trees in Ridge area

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP on Monday demanded Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena's resignation for allegedly approving the felling of 1,100 trees in Delhi's Ridge area. There was no immediate reaction from the Lt Governor's Office. Addressing a press conference, Delhi Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj said the affidavit of the company that felled the trees lays bare the facts. "In the affidavit filed in the Supreme Court, it is written that LG Delhi visited CAP-FIMS (Central Armed Police Forces Institute of Medical Sciences) road on February 3 and directed to clear the trees coming in the ROW (right of way). "The email from DDA clearly states that the Lieutenant



Governor of Delhi visited there and ordered that all the trees coming in the way of the road should be felled. What bigger proof can you get than this? Delhi's LG and BJP have been exposed," he claimed. Bharadwaj claimed the BJP and the lieutenant governor have been "exposed" in front of whole Delhi. "The LG should resign today on immediate basis because he has been exposed in front of Delhi. This email is telling that

the trees were cut on the LG's order," he alleged. Challenging the lieutenant governor, Bharadwaj asked him to come out and debate on the matter. "I am inviting LG sir. You can choose the place, the time, the date. I am challenging you in front of the media, you come and debate, do not hide behind the walls of the LG House. "The people of Delhi are asking you questions, the elected government of Delhi is asking you questions. The elected minister of Delhi is asking you questions," he said. Echoing similar views, AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh demanded a high-level investigation into the matter and said all the facts be placed in the Supreme Court to ensure action against all those responsible, including the lieutenant governor.

## Ensure marriage witnesses genuine, HC tells Arya Samaj Mandir

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Taking note of a marriage solemnised between a girl and her 'phupha' (uncle) who falsely claimed to be unmarried, the Delhi High Court has asked an Arya Samaj temple to ensure that those who stand witness to such ceremonies are genuine and bonafide. A bench headed by Justice Prathiba M Singh said the temple shall endeavour to have at least one witness from both the sides, who is either a relative or an acquaintance who has known them for a reasonable period of time. In the present case, the court observed, the manner in which the girl's own uncle falsely declared himself to be unmarried before the Arya Samaj Mandir was "clearly contrary to law" and the marriage was void. It noted that apart from the



couple and the priest who solemnised the marriage, nobody was present at the wedding ceremony performed at the Arya Samaj Mandir in Malviya Nagar. Its "validity and sanctity," the court said, was "completely suspect". The court was informed that the Arya Samaj temple takes affidavits of parties with respect to their marital status but no further verification is conducted.

"The Arya Samaj Mandir shall henceforth ensure that when witnesses etc. are produced for the purposes of marriage, they are genuine and bonafide witnesses, whose status can be verified properly. The temple shall endeavour to call at least 1 witness who is a relative, from both the sides, i.e. the bride and the bridegroom and if there is no relative, some acquaintance who

knows the parties concerned for a reasonable period of time shall be permitted to become a witness," said the bench, also comprising Justice Amit Sharma, in the order. "A copy of the present order be sent to the Chief Secretary, GNCTD for necessary information and to take appropriate measures in this regard," it ordered. The court was dealing with a petition by the girl's father who sought production of his daughter who was missing since July 1. The girl, who appeared in the court, claimed that the petitioner is not her biological father but the second husband of her mother, and that she was now living together with her "husband" after the marriage. The court observed that since the marriage was solemnised on the basis of false affidavits by both the parties with respect to the uncle's marital status, it has no

standing in the eyes of the law. "It is unfortunate that Mr. S. (the uncle) has abandoned his wife/child and claims to have got married to a girl who is his niece. This court holds that the alleged marriage ceremony which has been conducted by the Arya Samaj Mandir, on the face of it, is a void marriage as Mr. S has declared in the affidavit submitted for the marriage, that he is unmarried, when clearly his wife, Ms. K, is alive and they also have a son," the court stated. Since the girl is a major and has refused to accompany the petitioner, the court said no further orders can be passed. It, however, clarified that the wife of the uncle was free to proceed with her criminal complaint and take action against him as per law. Police, it said, can also investigate the matter in accordance with law.

## Firing at cafe in Satya Niketan: Five held

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Birthday celebration turned into a tragic affair in southwest Delhi's Satya Niketan area as the Delhi Police arrested five men who had come to the café in the posh area and opened fire after a scuffle with the owner of the place. According to the police on Monday, a shot was fired at the cafe on Sunday following an argument over seating. The police had arrested two accused, both 26 years old, Ahmed and Aurangzeb alias Mangal alias Monu shortly after the incident. "A PCR call at about 8:48 pm regarding firing at Satya Niketan was received at South campus police station and immediately the beat staff who was on patrol nabbed one of the accused after a hot chase. He was identified as Ahmed, resident of Jhangir Puri and was working as paneer vendor



in Jahangirpuri," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southwest) Rohit Meena said, adding that other staff and forensic team also arrived at the spot. Further, the police also nabbed Aurangzeb, who sells footwear, at a petrol pump in Jhangir Puri. On Monday, they arrested 20 year old Atul, 23 year old Javed, who was previously involved in six cases and 19 year old Adil. All are residents of Jahangirpuri and had come

from there for a birthday celebration, according to the initial investigation. Meena said the SUV Thar car the accused arrived in and the illegal firearm used in the shooting had been confiscated. "Vehicle Thar used in the crime was recovered from accused Aurangzeb. Illegal firearm which was used in the incident was also recovered from accused Javed. We recovered a 7.65 mm pistol with five live rounds," he said.

## JNU administration, students' union reach consensus on several demands

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The ongoing stalemate between the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) administration and its students' union, which has been staging a hunger strike for the past 15 days over various unresolved issues, may soon come to an end as the two sides have reached a consensus on several demands. The university has agreed to fulfill at least six of the 12 major demands of the protesting students' union. These include reinstating the old in-house entrance exam system -- JNU Entrance Exam (JNUEE) -- for admissions, conducting a caste census of the campus, increasing scholarship amounts, and proposing a reduction in the weightage

given to the viva for admissions. Despite these developments, the union has continued its protest, with President Dhananjay and Councillor Nitish Kumar remaining on hunger strike, which entered its 16th day on Monday. They are demanding written confirmation of the agreed-upon demands. The hunger strike started on August 11. "Dhananjay has lost more than 5 kg and has a ketone level of 4+, which indicates severe pressure on his kidneys due to the hunger strike. He has also developed jaundice and urinary tract infection (UTI). Nitish has lost around 7 kg and has become extremely weak, suffering from severe joint and muscle pain," the students'

union said in a statement. The JNUSU has called for a relay hunger strike and night vigil to press their demands. In a negotiation meeting held on August 23, the day of the long march to the Ministry of Education by the JNUSU, Rector-I of the university, Brijesh Kumar Pandey, assured the students that the university would accept some of the demands raised, according to a statement by the students' body. When contacted, Pandey said, "The administration will accept all the positive demands of the students in their best interest. Anything beyond our authority cannot be fulfilled." He added, "The university is currently facing a funding crunch. We will write to the UGC to request an allocation



so that we can increase the scholarship amount as demanded by the students. As for the caste census, the data regarding the categories in

which students have been admitted is already available on our website. That won't be an issue." According to the JNU Students

Union (JNUSU), the university has agreed in principle to increase the merit-cum-means scholarship from Rs 2,000 to Rs 5,000 and extend the provision to students of the School of Engineering and the School of Management. Reinstating the JNUEE was a central agenda item in the Charter of Demands. The Rector-I has verbally assured that admissions will be conducted through JNUEE starting from the next academic session, the union said. Conducting a caste census was another prominent agenda item in the Charter of Demands. The administration has verbally assured the union that they will publish the category-wise data of JNU students, faculty, and staff within the next 15 days, it

added. The university has also agreed to present the Nafey Committee report at the upcoming Academic Council (AC) meeting for approval, which recommends reducing the weightage of viva marks to 10-15 percent in admissions. "Reducing the weightage of viva marks has been a long-standing demand of the JNUSU. Three committees have been formed over time to address this matter. The Nafey Committee, chaired by renowned scholar Professor Nafey, unequivocally recommended that the viva weightage be reduced to 10-15 percent," the statement said. Furthermore, the administration has also agreed to drop the inquiries initiated against students who were part of a water

protest outside the VC's residence and in a sexual harassment case where the survivor staged a protest at the North Gate of the campus, blocking the main entrance for several days. However, the parties could not reach a consensus on the opening of Barak Hostel, which has remained shut since its inauguration in January. The demand to include JNUSU in Academic Council meetings, where policy-level issues such as deprivation points and viva weightage are discussed, will be addressed by Vice-Chancellor Santishree D Pandit on August 27. Previously, the JNUSU was included in AC meetings, but this practice was discontinued during the tenure of the previous Vice-Chancellor.

# PM Modi to spearhead BJP's Assembly polls campaign in J&K

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lead the BJP's campaign in the upcoming assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, the first such democratic exercise after the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019. Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, BJP national president J P Nadda and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath were also included in the list of 40 star campaigners submitted by the party to the Election Commission for the first phase of assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir. Union ministers Nitin Gadkari, Manohar Lal Khattar, G Kishan Reddy, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Jitendra Singh and former



Union ministers Anurag Thakur and Smriti Irani and Gen (Retd.) V K Singh besides Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma and former

Himachal Pradesh chief minister Jai Ram Thakur are other prominent faces who will visit Jammu and Kashmir during the campaigning. The

three-phased assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir are scheduled for September 18, 25 and October 1. The counting of votes will be

taken up on October 4. In a letter addressed to the Election Commission, BJP national general secretary and in-charge headquarters Arun Singh said the list of the 40 star campaigners of the party may be treated as valid for the remaining phases "unless we forward an amended list" within the prescribed time limit. The list also included former BJP general secretary and recently appointed election in-charge for Jammu and Kashmir Ram Madhav, party national general secretary in-charge Jammu and Kashmir Tarun Chugh, Jammu and Kashmir BJP chief Ravinder Raina, Member of Parliament Jugal Kishore Sharma, Rajya Sabha member Ghulam Ali Khatana, General secretary (organization) Ashok Kaul and Jammu and Kashmir BJP vice president Sofi Yousuf.

# Growing ties with Australia reviewed in telephonic talks between Modi, Albanese

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and Australia on Monday reviewed the entire spectrum of their growing ties during telephonic talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his counterpart Anthony Albanese. A statement by Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said Prime Minister Narendra Modi today spoke with the Prime Minister of Australia, Mr Anthony Albanese. Both leaders took stock of progress in the bilateral relations and cooperation in the multilateral fora, including the Quad. The Prime Minister posted on social media "Delighted to speak to my friend Anthony Albanese. We took stock of progress in our bilateral relations and cooperation in the



multilateral fora, including the Quad." The talks also came in the backdrop of growing Chinese assertiveness in the strategically important Indo-Pacific region. In November 2017, India, Japan, the US, and Australia gave shape to the long-pending proposal of setting up the Quad to develop a new strategy to keep the critical sea routes in the Indo-

Pacific free of any influence. India is likely to host the Quad summit this year wherein heads of states of the four countries may discuss the future course of Quad combine. The 2023 summit was held in Hiroshima, Japan. China has all along criticized the Quad claiming it will lead to the militarization of the Indo-Pacific.

# Congress asks if each new district in Ladakh would have AHDCs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With the government announcing the creation of five new districts in Ladakh, the Congress on Monday asked whether there will be elected Autonomous Hill Development Councils for each of the new districts and will they have a much more meaningful and relevant say in how budgets are spent. Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said that his ministry has decided to create the five new districts in pursuit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to build a developed and prosperous Ladakh. "The new districts namely Zaskar, Drass, Sham, Nubra and Changthang will take the benefits meant for the people to their doorsteps by bolstering governance in every nook and cranny," he said. Reacting to the development, Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said, "The elected Autonomous Hill Development Council for Leh was established in 1995. The elected Autonomous Hill Development Council for Kargil was set up in 2003." "Now five new districts have been formed in Ladakh in addition to Leh and Kargil. Will there be elected Autonomous Hill Development Councils for



each of the five new districts as well?" he asked. Presently, the two existing elected Autonomous Hill Development Councils have control over less than 10% of the total expenditure allocated to Ladakh and the balance 90% is being under the control of the lieutenant governor and the bureaucracy, he said. Will the elected AHDCs have a much more meaningful and relevant say in how budgets are spent? Ramesh asked. Earlier, the home minister said the Modi government is committed to creating abundant opportunities for the people of Ladakh. Ladakh was made a UT after the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir was bifurcated into two UTs on August 5, 2019. The other UT is Jammu and Kashmir. Article 370, which gave special status to the erstwhile state, was also abrogated on that day five years ago. Being a UT, Ladakh comes under the direct administrative control of the Union Home Ministry.

# Coast Guard rescues 11 crew members from ship sinking off WB coast

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) on Monday rescued 11 crew members from the distressed MV ITT Puma during a challenging night-time search and rescue operation. The Mumbai-registered general cargo vessel was en route from Kolkata to Port Blair when it reportedly sank about 90 nautical miles south of Sagar Island (West Bengal), defence ministry said here. The Maritime Search and Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) Chennai initially received a distress signal late Sunday evening. The ICG's Regional Headquarters (North East) in Kolkata promptly mobilised two ICG vessels and a Dornier aircraft to the site. The Dornier aircraft, equipped with advanced night-capable sensors detected adrift life rafts and sighted survival red flares from the distressed crew.

# Centre must increase funding for anti-pollution measures: Congress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday criticized the Modi government for its handling of the deteriorating air quality in India and demanded that it must drastically increase the funds for the anti-pollution measures being proposed under the National Clean Air Program (NCAP). Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh said there are clear steps the government must take moving forward, and the first must be to acknowledge the public "health crisis" associated with air pollution across wide swathes of India. "Among the lesser-known tragedies of the non-biological PM's reign is the rapidly deteriorating air quality nationally and the inattentiveness and policy chaos that has characterised the Government's response to it," Ramesh said in a statement. To make his point, the former environment minister cited various recent studies that have highlighted the deteriorating air quality across the States in the Country. "Aap chronology samajhiye: In early July, a study published in the prestigious Lancet journal showed that 7.2% of all deaths in India are associated with air pollution - about 34,000 deaths each year in just 10 cities," he said. In mid-July, a study by the



Centre for Science and Environment revealed that the government's pollution control interventions are poorly designed, with the National Clean Air Program (NCAP) largely focused on mitigating road dust rather than industrial, vehicular, and biomass emissions -- the source of PM 2.5 -- that are the leading causes of mortality, Ramesh said. To make matters worse, in the past five years, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has left more than 75 per cent of the Environment Protection Charge (EPC) and Environmental Compensation (EC) funds unspent, he said, claiming that in total Rs 665.75 crores have been left unutilised. "On July 29, 2024, upon being asked a question about the Lancet study, the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change made the

shocking claim in the Rajya Sabha that there was 'no conclusive data' to directly correlate air pollution and deaths," he pointed out. In districts where air pollution exceeds National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), there is a 13 per cent increase in premature mortality for adults and around 100 per cent increase in mortality for children, he said. Ramesh called for a substantial boost in financial resources allocated to the NCAP. "Our cities need at least 10-20 times more funding - NCAP must be made a Rs. 25,000 crore programme. NCAP must adopt measurement of PM 2.5 levels as the yardstick for performance NCAP must reorient its focus to key sources of emissions -- burning of solid fuels, vehicular emissions, and industrial emissions," he said.

# Chief Secretaries of 17 States, UTs to make personal appearance in SC today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In what may appear to be a rare event, the Chief Secretaries of 17 State Governments and Union Territories (UTs) are slated to appear before the Supreme Court on Tuesday over non-implementation of the Second National Judicial Pay Commission's (SNJPC) recommendations on payment of pension arrears and retirement benefits to judicial officers. According to the cause list uploaded on the Supreme Court's website, a bench led by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and comprising justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra is scheduled to hear on Tuesday the case on the plea of the All India Judges Association and 22 other similar petitions. The Association is seeking the implementation of welfare and other measures for former judges and judicial officers. The top-most bureaucrats of Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Bihar, Goa, Haryana and Odisha have to be present in the apex court in person on August 27. "I can see there is no substantive compliance. They will have to personally appear before us or we will issue non-



ailable warrants (NBWs) against them," the CJJ had observed on August 22. Advocate K Parmeshwar, amicus curiae in the matter, had contended before the top court earlier that as many as 18 States and UTs have not complied with the SNJPC recommendations fully though several orders have been issued. The All India Judges Association (AIJA) is seeking implementation of welfare and other measures for former judges and judicial officers. The Bench said the top bureaucrats will have to appear personally to explain the delay and rejected the request of various States that the Chief Secretaries be permitted to appear virtually. On July 11, the Bench had summoned the Chief Secretaries of 23 States for non-compliance with the SNJPC recommendations on August 23. The amicus curie later informed the court that five more States have complied with the directives in the meantime.

# Rajnath Singh visits museum, interacts with Indian community in Tennessee

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh visited the National Civil Rights Museum and interacted with the Indian community in Memphis, Tennessee on Sunday on the last day of his tour to US, defence ministry said here on Monday. Giving details, officials said the National Civil Rights Museum traces the history of the civil rights movement in the US from the 17th century to the present, and is built around the site of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr in 1968. It also has a bust of Mahatma Gandhi, acknowledging his inspiration for non-violent struggle. Interacting with the Indian diaspora from Memphis, Atlanta, Nashville, and other nearby areas, the defence



minister lauded the achievements of the community members and their contribution to society, science and economy. He described them as a 'living bridge' between India and US, fostering close relations and goodwill. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh also acknowledged the efforts of the Indian community in establishing an exhib-

it of Mahatma Gandhi and placing two honorary 'Gandhi Way' street signals near the National Civil Rights Museum on the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi in 2019. In this last event of his US visit, he underlined India's growth story in the last decade, and the immense potential with a promising future.

# SC directs States to provide info on functioning of open prisons

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has directed several states and Union Territories (UTs) to provide complete information with regard to the functioning of open prisons within four weeks. Semi-open or open prisons allow convicts to work outside the premises during the day to earn a livelihood and return in the evening. The concept was introduced to assimilate the convicts with society and reduce psychological pressure as they faced difficulties in leading normal lives outside. A bench of Justices B R Gvai and K V Viswanathan was informed by senior advocate K Parmeshwar, who is assisting the top court as an amicus curiae in a matter related to congestion in jails, that several states and UTs have not yet filed their responses. The bench noted that states and UTs like Delhi, Himachal



Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Punjab have not yet submitted the qualitative/quantitative charts despite circulation of a questionnaire seeking information in respect of the status and functioning of open correctional institutions and whether such institutions exist within their jurisdiction." We, therefore, direct that all the States/Union

Territories, which have not yet filed their response, to file complete response within a period of four weeks from today," the bench said in its order passed on August 20. It said the states and UTs, which have not given complete information, shall also ensure compliance within four weeks. "We further clarify that if any

of the state governments or Union Territories do not respond in terms of the orders passed by this court, we will be compelled to direct the presence of the chief secretary of the states/Union Territories concerned before this court," the bench said and posted the matter for further consideration after four weeks. The apex court noted that on

July 15, it had directed the chief secretaries of various states and UTs to submit their responses on the issue of open jails. The amicus told the bench that states and UTs of Gujarat, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Lakshadweep, Puducherry and Ladakh, have not filed their responses yet. While hearing the matter on May 9, the apex court had observed that establishing open jails can be one of the solutions to overcrowding and also addressing the issue of rehabilitation of prisoners. In its May 17 order, the bench had noted the submission of the amicus that a model draft manual has been prepared by the Union of India where the nomenclature 'open correctional institutions' is used for such facilities.

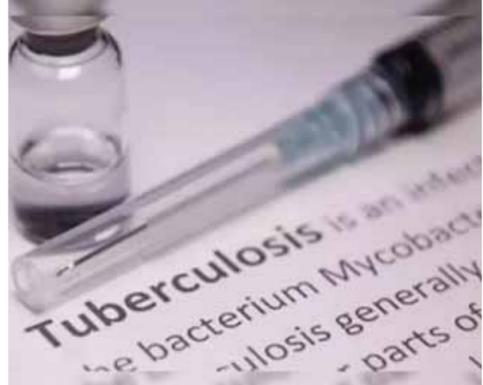
# ICMR centre in Assam develops technology for precise TB testing priced at ₹35

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

As India races to meet its ambitious target of eliminating Tuberculosis (TB) by 2025, the Indian Council of Medical Research's (ICMR) regional center in Dibrugarh, Assam, has made a significant breakthrough: It has developed an affordable precise TB testing technology priced at just Rs 35, which employs a CRISPR-based system to detect the deadly disease using a patient's sputum sample. This innovative testing method, known as the 'CRISPR-Cas12a-based sys-

tem', is not only cost-effective but also efficient. It offers a rapid and precise diagnosis, a critical advancement in the fight against TB, especially in resource-limited settings. The low cost and ease of use make it a promising tool for widespread implementation, potentially accelerating India's progress toward its TB elimination goal, said an official from the ICMR. In contrast, conventional TB tests, such as culture, microscopy, and nucleic acid-based techniques, are often time-consuming and require sophisticated equipment. For example, TB cultures can take

up to 42 days to confirm a negative result, and other methods may suffer from issues related to sensitivity, specificity, speed, and cost. "However, the new testing technology can analyze over 1,500 samples in a single run within approximately two and a half hours, offering a significant improvement over traditional diagnostic methods," said the official about the diagnostic tool developed by Regional Medical Research Centre at Dibrugarh, one of the 26 permanent institutes of ICMR in the country. "Current diagnostic methods often exhibit limitations in



terms of sensitivity, specificity, speed and cost, emphasizing the need for innovative approaches. Conventional diagnostic techniques for TB commonly rely on culture (which requires 42 days to confirm as TB negative), microscopy, and nucleic acid-based methods. These are time-consuming and may require sophisticated equipment. Additionally, some molecular diagnostic methods, while offering improved sensitivity, may lack the desired specificity or face challenges associated with cost and ease of handling," said an official from the

ICMR. India has the highest TB burden in the world, accounting for an estimated one-fifth of global cases. The new CRISPR-Cas12a-based system, branded as 'GlowTBPCRKit', includes an amplification step using a thermal cycler and the 'RapidGlow' device. This approach aims to address the limitations of current diagnostic tools by providing a more accurate, rapid, and cost-effective solution for detecting Mycobacterium tuberculosis. The ICMR is now seeking Expressions of Interest (EoI)

from organisations, companies, and manufacturers to commercialize this technology. The ICMR-RMRCNE institute will offer expert guidance and technical support throughout the production and commercialization phases. According to the India TB report 2024 released by the Union Health Ministry in March, the incidence rate in India had fallen from 237 per lakh population in 2015 to 199 per lakh population in 2022, while the mortality rate had declined from 28 per lakh population in 2015 to 23 per lakh population in 2022.

# Batenge toh katenge: UP CM Yogi says B'desh mistakes shouldn't happen in India

PTI ■ AGRA (UP)

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath here on Monday urged people to stay united to reach the pinnacle of prosperity, saying the mistakes in Bangladesh should not happen in India. "Batenge toh katenge (if divided, we will be cut up)," he said during an inauguration event in Agra. Bangladesh recently saw massive anti-government protests, leading to the ouster of prime minister Sheikh Hasina. The country continued to witness incidents of violence, including targeted attacks on the Hindu minority community, even after the fall of the Hasina-led government. Addressing the gathering at the programme here, Adityanath said, "There can be nothing bigger than the nation, and when will a nation be strong, when we are united and good." "Aap dekh rahe hain Bangladesh mein kya ho raha hai? Wo galatiyan yahan nahi honi chahiye. Batenge toh katenge! Ek rahenge to nek rahenge, surakshit rahenge aur samridhhi ki parakashtha ko pahuchenge," the chief minister said in Hindi. Roughly translated, he asked people if they are watching



what is happening in Bangladesh and said those mistakes should not happen here, adding, "If divided, we will be cut, if together, we will be good, secure and reach the pinnacle of prosperity." The chief minister also shared a clip of his speech on X. "We have to realise the resolve of Viksit Bharat (developed India)," Adityanath said after inaugurating a statue of Durga Das Rathore near the Taj Mahal metro station here. Rathore was a commander in the army of erstwhile Jodhpur province's king Maharaja Jaswant Singh who took on Mughal ruler Aurangzeb in the 17th century. After unveiling the statue, the chief minister said "evil and cunning" Aurangzeb killed Singh by deceit. He added that it was an

honour for him to inaugurate the statue in the centenary year of the 'Kakori Train Action', which is being celebrated in the state, and on the day of Janmashtami. "In a country where great heroes like Durgadas Rathore are born, no foreign invader can harm that country in any way. Humble tribute to him!" he later said on X. Addressing the gathering in Agra, Adityanath said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given a clarion call for making India a developed nation by 2047 and it is the everyone's combined duty to work towards realising this resolve. Highlighting the mythological significance of Agra, he said, "Agra is an important part of the Braj region. Every particle of this region is believed to be the abode of Lord Krishna. This place has art, culture, faith, and devotion."

# Cong's DNA is anti-public, says Scindia

PTI ■ GWALIOR

The DNA of the Congress is anti-public and the party stands in support of oppressors and those who are corrupt, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Monday. In Gwalior to take part in Krishna Janmashtami events, he further said the Congress opposes the rule of justice. Asked about the Congress' opposition to authorities razing the house of a man accused of indulging in violence during a protest in Chhatarpur, Scindia said, "The Congress will oppose every step taken for public welfare. The Congress' DNA is anti-public. They will oppose the Unified Pension Scheme and bulldozing houses of those who oppress people." "The Congress is standing in support of oppressors and those who are corrupt. This character of the party has been exposed. It is talking in favour of those involved in crimes against women as is being seen from West Bengal to Karnataka. There is rule of oppression when the Congress is in power. It opposes the rule of justice,"



Scindia added. The Congress has condemned MP authorities for bulldozing the house of Shahzad Ali, who is accused of indulging in violence during a protest called in Chhatarpur to condemn the allegedly objectionable remarks against Islam by Nashik-based spiritual leader Ramgiri Maharaj. The protest was held on August 21 and Ali's house was brought down the next day, with authorities claiming it was built without requisite permission. Speaking on local issues, Scindia said a regional industry conclave being held on August 28 will pave the way for further development of Gwalior.

# After repartee, Rajini, TN Minister Duraimurugan hold out olive branches

PTI ■ CHENNAI

DMK senior Minister Duraimurugan, who had reacted strongly to Tamil film superstar Rajinikanth's "old timers" in DMK remark, held out an olive branch on Monday saying both of them will remain friends forever. Playing down the sudden repartee between the two, the film star said he had no regrets over Duraimurugan's remark that "old actors" were denying opportunity to youngsters. "He (Duraimurugan) is my long-time friend. I like him very much. I have no regrets over what Duraimurugan has said. Our friendship will continue," Rajinikanth told reporters at the airport on Monday when his comments were sought. On Sunday, DMK General Secretary Duraimurugan, who holds the Water Resources portfolio as minister in the M K Stalin cabinet, said, "Actors who have grown old, with falling teeth, and sporting beards in their end stages are continuing to act, denying opportunity to young actors." The minister made the remarks aimed at the top actor when reporters in Vellore drew his attention to Rajinikanth's earlier comment likening the DMK



seniors to old students refusing to leave the classroom even after securing a rank in the exams. While speaking at the release of the book 'Kalaignar Ennum Thaa', authored by Public Works Minister E V Velu here on Saturday, Rajini who received the first copy from Chief Minister M K Stalin, compared the DMK senior Ministers to old students making it difficult for the class teacher to handle them. "The DMK has many old students who refuse to leave the classrooms even after securing a rank in exams. There's Duraimurugan who could even make life difficult for Kalaignar (late Chief Minister M Karunanidhi)," Rajini said at the event. Turning to the chief minister, Rajini said in his inimitable

style "to a school teacher, handling new students isn't difficult. But, managing old students is not an easy task. Here there are many old students. They are not normal but are rank holders. How to manage them? Stalin sir, hats off to you." This evoked spontaneous laughter from the audience and even the chief minister was amused. Bringing the sudden controversy to a close, Duraimurugan told reporters here on Monday, "Let's not convert humour into hostility. We will forever remain as friends." Meanwhile, BJP state chief K Annamalai took a dig at the DMK, saying the actor's comments could be interpreted as a sign of brewing discontent within the ruling party.

# Tripura: 12 houses set on fire after idol defaced at temple

PTI ■ AGARTALA

At least 12 houses and a few vehicles were set on fire by unidentified persons after an idol was found defaced at a temple in Ranirbazar area in West Tripura, police said on Monday. Prohibitory orders under Section 163 of BNS were imposed in Jirania subdivision under which Ranirbazar falls. Heavy security deployment has also been made in the area to defuse tension. "Around 12 dwelling houses were set on fire at Ranirbazar by miscreants late on Sunday after an idol of Goddess Kali was found defaced in Kaiturbari. A few motorcycles and pick-up vans were also gutted in the blaze," Assistant Inspector General (Law and Order) Ananta Das told PTI. No human casualties were reported in the incident. Eyewitnesses said that the residents fled their dwellings upon seeing the raging mob. Das said heavy deployment of security forces have been made to defuse tension and Director General of Police, Intelligence,

Anurag Dhankar and West Tripura Superintendent of Police Kiran Kumar have visited the area. "Police will register a suo moto case once the assessment of loss of properties is completed. The situation is under control," he said. Following apprehension of breach of peace, prohibitory orders under Section 163 of BNS have been imposed in Jirania subdivision of West Tripura district from August 26 to 28, District Magistrate Vishal Kumar said in an order. Under the prohibitory orders, assembly of five or more people will be prohibited due to violent activities in the subdivision, it added. Tipra Motha supremo Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma on Monday expressed concern over the incident and appealed to everyone to maintain law and order. "Last night incident in Ranirbazar Kaiturbari area is a worrying sign with reports of communal clashes. I appeal to those who are responsible for maintaining law and order to follow the rule of law," he wrote on Facebook.

# Mayawati recalls '95 guest house incident to berate SP, Congress

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

BSP chief Mayawati on Monday referred to the 1995 Lucknow 'state guest house incident' to attack the Samajwadi Party for the "deadly assault" on her, and the Congress for not coming to her aid despite being in power at the Centre at that time. The fresh salvo comes three days after the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief expressed her gratitude to Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav for his stance on the "objectionable comments" made by a BJP MLA against her during a TV debate. The SP had carried out a deadly attack on me on June 2, 1995, after the BSP withdrew its support, then why does Congress never speak on this? The Congress government at the Centre during that time also did not fulfil its responsibility on time," the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister said in a post on X. "Even when Kanshi Ram ji was in a serious condition and hospitalised, the home minister had to be



reprimanded and the opposition also gheraoed the Parliament, only after that did the Congress government take action," she said in Hindi. "Because at that time the central Congress government's intentions had also become bad, which after some untoward incident wanted to run its government from behind the scenes by imposing president's rule in Uttar Pradesh, whose conspiracy was foiled by BSP," Mayawati further claimed. "But after the caste census, will the Congress be able to ensure the rightful rights of Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs)? Those who are still silent on the issue of classification and creamy layer in SC/ST reservation should answer," she added.

house where Mayawati was scheduled to meet her party leaders and allegedly attacked her. She was rescued from the guest house by BJP leaders. Later, the governor sacked the Mulayam Singh Yadav dispensation and invited Mayawati to form the government. Mayawati said the entire opposition, including the BJP, had fulfilled its duty to save her from criminal elements of the SP in the name of humanity. "So why does the Congress keep having trouble with this from time to time? People should be aware of it." "Apart from this, the BSP has been putting full pressure for a caste census for years, first on the Congress at the Centre and now on the BJP," Mayawati said. "But after the caste census, will the Congress be able to ensure the rightful rights of Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs)? Those who are still silent on the issue of classification and creamy layer in SC/ST reservation should answer," she added.

# Devotees throng temples across Jaipur to celebrate Janmashtami

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Thousands of devotees on Monday thronged Govind Devji temple and Shri Radha Gopinathji temple and paid obeisance amid tight security arrangements on the occasion of Janmashtami. From early morning, devotees made a beeline for 'mangla darshan' at the Govind Devji Temple at 4.30 am. Jaipur Police Commissioner Biju George Joseph said the influx of devotees is expected to increase as the day advances. Accordingly, we have made adequate security arrangements for their safety. A huge rush of devotees was also seen in several temples including Shri Radha Gopinathji Temple. Joseph said facial recognition CCTV cameras to identify pickpockets, vehicle thieves and other miscreants have been installed in Govind Devji temple, ISKCON temple and Akshaya Patra temple.



Control rooms have been set up at each of the three temples for surveillance. Teams of policemen in plain clothes have also been deployed in the temples, he said. "Photos and other details of criminals of the state and interstate are already fed in the database. Whenever these criminals come in the range of the CCTV, they will be identified and immediately an alert will pop up and security personnel on duty will nab them immediately," the officer said. Temples in Jaipur and across the state have been decorated with flowers and lights for Janmashtami celebrations.

# IMD warns of torrential rain in MP, Rajasthan Gujarat, Maha

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A depression over northwest Madhya Pradesh and adjoining east Rajasthan has intensified into a deep depression, the India Meteorological Department said on Monday and warned of heavy to extremely heavy rainfall in parts of the two states and Gujarat, Goa and Maharashtra over the next two to three days. At 11:30 pm on August 25, the deep depression lay centred near 70 km south-southeast of Chittorgarh, Rajasthan. This system is expected to move west-southwest, affecting South Rajasthan, and Gujarat, and reaching Saurashtra, Kutch, and parts of Pakistan by August 29, the IMD said in an update issued at 2 am. "The weather department said another low-pressure area is located over Bangladesh and adjoining Gangetic West Bengal. It is likely to intensify further and move towards Gangetic West Bengal, north Odisha, and Jharkhand over the next two days. Issuing a red alert, the IMD said heavy to extremely heavy rainfall is expected in West Madhya Pradesh on August 26. Similar conditions are forecast for east and south Rajasthan, Gujarat, Saurashtra and Kutch from August 26 to 29. Konkani, Goa, Madhya Maharashtra, Odisha, Gangetic West Bengal, and Jharkhand are also expected to receive heavy to extremely heavy rainfall over the next two days. The IMD has warned of strong winds reaching up to 50 kmph in Madhya Pradesh on August 26 and up to 60 kmph in south Rajasthan on August 26-27.

# Trademark suit: HC temporarily restrains Pune eatery from using brand name 'Burger King'

PTI ■ MUMBAI

In an interim relief to US giant Burger King in a trademark infringement suit, the Bombay High Court on Monday restrained a Pune-based eatery from using the brand name till September 6. The company moved the high court last week, challenging an order passed by a Pune court dismissing its suit alleging trademark infringement against a namesake eatery in Pune. A division bench of Justices A S Chandurkar and Rajesh Patil on Monday said that it would first hear the company's application seeking interim injunction against the eatery on September 6.



Until then, the ad-interim order granted by the Pune court in January 2012 restraining the eatery from using the name "Burger King" shall be extended, the high court said. The fast-food company, in its suit, sought an injunction against the eatery from using the name "Burger King", as it

was causing the company huge loss, damage and harm to its goodwill, business and reputation. A Pune court had dismissed the 2011 suit filed by Burger King Corporation, noting that the city-based eatery had been operating since 1992, which was even before the US burger joint opened shop in

India. Burger King Corporation also filed an application in the high court seeking an interim injunction against the eatery owners from using the name pending the hearing and final disposal of its appeal. The company's advocate, Hiren Kamod, on Monday submitted to the court that until their plea or application seeking an interim injunction is heard, the ad-interim order passed in 2012 by the Pune court shall be extended. Advocate Abhijit Sarwate, appearing for the eatery owners, Anahita Irani and Shapoor Irani, submitted to the court that they have started using the name 'Burger King' online since two days.

# Seven prison officials suspended in K'taka for giving special treatment to jailed actor Darshan

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Seven prison officials have been suspended for allegedly giving special treatment to Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa, who is currently in judicial custody in the Renukaswamy murder case. A Superintendent of the Central Jail at Parappana Agrahara here has also been transferred following an inquiry after a photo of the actor smoking with a coffee mug in hand emerged on social media on Sunday sparking a row. The picture shows Darshan sitting leisurely on a lawn on the jail premises along with three others, including two alleged rowdy-sheets. Those suspended are jailers



Sharan Basappa Amingad and Prabhu S Khandelwal, assistant jailers L S Kuppeswamy, Srikanth Talwar, head warders Venkappa, Sampath Kumar and warden K Basappa, Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara told reporters here on Monday.

The new jail superintendent will be asked to strictly deal with such incidents of "dereliction of duty," he said. Parameshwara said soon after the matter came to his knowledge he directed the Director General of Police to conduct a probe following which a team of senior police officials visited the jail.

# Buried under mining waste, river pulled back from brink in Rajasthan

PTI ■ KOTA (RAJASTHAN)

Environmentalist Bitthal Sanadhya was roaming near the Labhakho and Peepalada areas of the Dabi forest range in Rajasthan's Bundi district when he was told by a forest ranger that the place was a river buried by debris from illegal mining sites. Stunned by the revelation, Bundi Jal Biradari president Sanadhya -- who

draws inspiration from Ramon Magsaysay Award winner Rajendra Singh -- was driven to revive the river, a tributary of the Chambal known locally as the Aeru. Armed with GPS images of the illegal mining sites and the buried river, he approached Rajasthan High Court in 2018 and filed a PIL to revive the Aeru in the region. An eight-kilometre stretch of the Aeru, which covers 40



kilometres through the Bhilwara and Bundi districts before merging into the Chambal, had been buried

under debris from illegal mines. The Aeru originates from Tilaswa Mahadev in Bhilwara and passes through

six villages before entering Bundi at Lamakhoh. For years, suspected mining mafia illegally mined stones and slabs in the Aeru, turning the river into a dump yard. "The ranger's response when he said it was part of the Aeru river buried under mining dump stunned me," Sanadhya said. "Since then, I devoted myself to bringing the river back to life," he added. Following a five-year battle,

the high court last year ordered the Department of Mines & Geology to prepare an action plan for the removal of the mining waste from the river and allocate funds for its implementation. Complying with the order, Bundi collector Akshay Godara allocated Rs 10 crore from the District Mining Foundation Trust for removing the waste earlier this year.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Information is given to general public at large that Mrs. Rani Devi W/o Mr. Mithlesh Sahi who is/are purchasing the premises bearing a portion of property No. B-17, admeasuring around 50 Sq. Yds., out of Khassa No. 16/27, situated in Block A of an Abadi known as Jagpuri, Village Khurduha, Baga Shahdara, Delhi-110051 from Mrs. Reena Rani W/o Mr. Krishan Lal who acquired the said property, vide Sale Deed dated 05.01.2024 (Doc. No. 125) executed by Mr. Ashok Kumar Chopra S/o Late Mr. Govind Lal Chopra. Intend to mortgage the same against the financial assistance from Shubham Housing Development Finance Company Limited, Surviving Member Certificate of Late Mr. Govind Lal Chopra alias Govind Lal Chopra is not available with Seller i.e. Mrs. Reena Rani w/o Mr. Krishan Lal. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any person(s) having any objection regarding ownership and/or creating mortgage of the said property is/are hereby requested to intimate in writing to the undersigned within 07 days at below address.

**NCR LAW ASSOCIATES**  
Advocates & Consultants A-98, Sector-9, New Vijay Nagar, Ghaziabad, (U.P.)-201009

**Public Notice**  
I have lost my Share certificate issued by Adarsh Schkari Awasth Samiti, R14, Rail Enclave, Pratap Vihar Ghaziabad, 201009. I am a resident of Icon apartments sector, CH103, Greater Noida 201310. Please report if someone finds it.

**Ashwani Kumar Malhotra**

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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Give peace a chance

The Cairo talks represent a glimmer of hope for war ravaged Gaza in an otherwise bleak situation

As fighting continues unabated in Gaza, negotiators gathered in Cairo this weekend for crucial discussions aimed at securing a ceasefire. The talks come at a pivotal moment, with the conflict between Hamas and Israel now in its tenth month. Despite the ongoing hostilities, there is hope that a breakthrough might be within reach, though significant hurdles remain. The war has left Gaza in ruins and triggered a humanitarian crisis of immense proportions. The conflict has displaced nearly all of Gaza's population at least once, and efforts to broker a ceasefire have so far failed to bring lasting peace. The international community, led by the United States, Egypt, and Qatar, has been engaged in persistent but ultimately inconclusive negotiations to end the violence. The Cairo talks, held under the shadow of ongoing violence, are seen as a critical step towards ending the conflict. However, the talks are complicated by the fact that Hamas, while sending a delegation to Cairo, has stated that it will not participate directly in the negotiations. Instead, the Hamas delegation is expected to meet with senior Egyptian officials to receive updates on the progress of the talks. Hamas continues to insist on a complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, including from the Philadelphi Corridor along the Gaza-Egypt border, a key sticking point in the discussions. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has his own reservations and is unwilling to withdraw troops from border.



The framework for the current talks is based on a plan outlined by U.S. President Joe Biden on May 31, which has been endorsed by the United Nations Security Council. The plan envisions a three-phase process, beginning with a full and complete ceasefire, during which hostages would be exchanged for Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. Despite initial agreement on the plan by Hamas leadership, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has expressed reservations, particularly regarding the continued presence of Israeli troops along the Gaza-Egypt border, which he argues is necessary to prevent Hamas from rearming. The United States is exploring new proposals to bridge the gap between Israel and Hamas. The success of talks likely hinging on whether the U.S. can pressure Netanyahu into accepting a compromise. Meanwhile the war rages on in Gaza. Israeli airstrikes and artillery fire have devastated the territory, with reports of dozens of civilian casualties in recent days. The United Nations has reported large-scale evacuations from areas such as Deir el-Balah and Khan Yunis, as Israeli military operations intensify. The humanitarian situation in Gaza remains dire, with displaced families forced to flee daily in search of safety. Both Israelis and Gazans are increasingly desperate for an end to the bloodshed. Protests have erupted across Israel, with thousands calling for a deal to secure the release of the remaining hostages. The path to peace remains fraught with challenges, and the coming days will be crucial in determining whether a lasting ceasefire can be achieved.

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## PICTALK



A farmer harvests grapes, at Repora Lar area in Ganderbal, Kashmir

PTI

## Life's dilemmas: Lessons from everyday conflicts

We should recognise the value of pausing and reflecting, to determine whether our reactions to perceived insults are genuinely justified

We face conflicts and dilemmas many times in our lives. We resolve a few of those, avoiding others to avoid confrontation. We went through some fascinating times recently. We cast our votes to elect the next central government. The excitement of the crowd at the polling booth was palpable even early in the morning. There was another major event, which was at our society level. We also had elections for the governing body of our residents' welfare association. I realised that the two elections mirrored each other. New alliances were formed, and old ones were discarded. Sworn foes smiled at each other with a warmth not unlike the hot Delhi summers. There were many heartbreaks too if friends vied for the same position. Two of the prospective candidates for a position went about venting their frustration when told by well-meaning friends about the intent of the other. I suggested a mutual tete-a-tete. The conflict was resolved. I faced a dilemma as an



adolescent half a century back. One afternoon, I had an argument with a friend, which went a little overboard, and I punched him. He was taller than me and did not take kindly to my aggression. He punched me back. It did not erupt into a full-blown fist fight only because I had already rationalised his punch a little before it had connected with my soft abdomen. After all, I had started the battle; he was entitled to retaliate. Many of us hesitate to ask for personal favour, apprehensive of facing rejection. It is also a dilemma, albeit in our minds. I had no say in the allotment of the zonal

railways after the completion of our railway probation training. I did get an opportunity to express my heart's desire, when my senior asked me if I had any preference for the place of posting. I was diffident and I gave a convoluted reply, "Anywhere, though my preference would be Mughalsarai." This was a small town in my native state. He took the first part of my statement at face value. I was posted at Sealdah, the other end, and a long way from my hometown - physically, linguistically, and culturally. I understood much later in life the importance of plain speaking, however unpalatable it might be. It may cause initial bitterness, but the relationship would be stronger eventually. The self-realisation still did not give me the courage to upbraid a junior colleague for his tardiness. I chose to walk away from confrontation by not allocating him any responsibilities. I envy those who have mastered sugar-coating the bitter pill. It softens the blow, yet hits the person equally

hard. But it might even convey a wrong meaning. During a recent conversation, my wife and her friend contemplated conveying a rather difficult sentiment to another friend through a message. A small phrase was added to be polite. I felt that this changed the intent to something entirely different. They did not agree and chose not to send the message. Yet, the friend had not hesitated to upbraid another friend a few days earlier over a trivial issue. I saw conflict in the two situations, she did not. Conflicts have been a part of our lives since ages. I would not like to be the Arjun who faced the biggest challenge of his life. I am a mere mortal. I have my follies. It is not for me to preach to be perfect. I would look at the words of author Jo Coudert to give me strength, "Every life is a dilemma that must be solved by the person living it." (The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)



SANJAY CHANDRA

In the 19th century, as British colonialism reshaped the Indian socio-cultural landscape, intellectuals like Captain N. Augustus Willard and Indian reformers grappled with the status of women in India. Willard, like many British officials, viewed Indian women with a mixture of pity and a sense of moral duty, perceiving them as victims of ignorance, reflected in their preference for songs that were considered passionate and sensual. At the same time, English-educated Bengali elites, inspired by both Western ideas and traditional Hindu values, sought to reform women's education while retaining patriarchal norms. It is pertinent to mention the role played by the renowned social reformer Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, a key figure among the Bengali bhadralok, who championed the cause of widow remarriage and women's education. Influenced by Western education, yet deeply rooted in his cultural heritage, Vidyasagar sought to balance these dual influences. He established numerous schools for girls, believing that education was essential for their empowerment and societal upliftment. Another key figure in India's renaissance movement, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, a luminary in Indian literature, is celebrated for his seminal contributions to both educational reforms and the Indian freedom struggle. His multifaceted legacy extends beyond his literary genius, encapsulating his role as an intellectual force in the socio-political landscape of 19th-century India. Bankim Chandra was a pioneering figure in the sphere of educational reforms in India. His vision for education was grounded in the belief that a modern, enlightened society could only emerge through an educated populace. Chattopadhyay advocated for the modernization of the education system, emphasizing the need to integrate Western scientific knowledge with traditional Indian learning. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's engagement with educational reforms is evident in his writings



and his role as a Deputy Magistrate - the first in-charge (Sub-divisional magistrate) of the Arambag subdivision in West Bengal. He used his position to influence educational policies and advocate for the establishment of institutions that could impart contemporary education. Author of India's National Song Vande Mataram became a clarion call during India's Independence movement, Bankim Chandra's novels, often interwoven with themes of social and educational upliftment, served as a medium to propagate his ideas to a broader audience. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's novels often depicted strong, complex female characters, who played crucial roles in the narrative, challenging the traditional views of women in society. "Vande Mataram," depicted in Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's novel "Anandamath," serves as the manifesto of the Sanyasi group, celebrating a land abundant with rice, lush greenery, vibrant flowers, and sparkling rivers. The song idolizes the country as a goddess incarnate. While historically and politically significant, "Anandamath" unfolds through semiotic, discursive, and aesthetic dimen-



BANKIM CHANDRA CHATTOPADHYAY'S NOVELS OFTEN DEPICTED STRONG, COMPLEX FEMALE CHARACTERS, WHO PLAYED CRUCIAL ROLES IN THE NARRATIVE, CHALLENGING THE TRADITIONAL VIEWS OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY

sions. The narrative, through characters like Mohendra, Kalyani, and Sukumari, intertwines with India's traditional and cultural contexts. The Santan of the Math, led by guru Satyananda and his disciples, embody qualities of truth, knowledge, emotion, patience, and being. "Vande Mataram" transcends patriotism, embodying philosophical renderings of existential and metaphysical human attributes, with women depicted as equals, exemplified by Shanti's bravery and sacrifice. Bankim Chandra's portrayal of women was significant as it challenged the prevailing societal norms and provided a progressive vision of women's roles in society. In "Devi Chaudhurani," (1884) the protagonist Prafulla transforms from a submissive girl into the powerful Devi Chaudhurani, a leader of a band of rebels. Her character embodies the potential for women's empowerment and the possibility of their active participation in societal change. By depicting women as strong, capable, and essential to the nation's progress, his novels contributed to the broader discourse on women's rights and empowerment in pre-independent India, which, however, is debatable.

Novels like "Kapalkundala," "Debi Chaudhurani," and "Durgeshnandini" feature characters such as Kapalkundala, Prafulla, and Ayesha, who exhibit depth and complexity. "Brisabhriksha" (The Poison Tree) and "Krishnakanter Ul" addresses social issues like widow remarriage and polygamy through the stories of Suryamukhi, Kundanandini, and Rohini. In "Sitaram," the tragic effects of polygamy are highlighted, while "Anandamath" contrasts the nation's depiction as Mother, while the exclusion of women from the fight for its cause is also depicted. It can be said that Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's depiction of strong, independent female characters - despite their complexities - challenged existing gender norms and inspired a rethinking of women's potential and place in society. By showcasing women as central figures in the fight against oppression and as leaders in their own right, Bankim Chandra's works resonated with the growing movements for social and political reform. (The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## SANGTITY OF OATH

Madam - We all expect aspirants who desire to make a career in public service must be clean in their thoughts and acts. All MPs, MLAs take oath and swear on this but the reality is different. For those of whom read this information don't be confused and conclude yourself that this is the tally of medals in the recently concluded Paris Olympics 2024. Anybody would have been shocked and put their head in shame to feel pity for the people who have voted for the respective candidates from their constituency by the fond hope that they will deliver well for them. The update is that there are as many as 151 sitting MPs and MLAs declared cases related to crimes against women in their election affidavits, with West Bengal having the highest number of lawmakers facing such cases, according to a recent report by a poll rights body. West Bengal tops the list with 25 sitting MPs and MLAs facing charges related to crimes against women, followed by Andhra Pradesh with 21 and Odisha with 17, according to the report that comes under the ongoing nationwide protests. BJP tops the list with 54 MPs and MLAs facing charges of crime against women, and Congress follows with 23. It would be more appropriate if the law takes its course to prove or clear those of charges by putting them before the fast track so that people's trust on them can be delivered on its own merits.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

## YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Madam - Today, we are facing a serious threat in the form of youth unemployment, which is hindering India's long-term development and growth. It stresses the need to tackle this problem for sustainable economic development. A few announcements have been made in the recent budget to address the issue of the job crisis in India. The key factors responsible for the employment cri-

## Chalk vs cheese!



This relates to your edit "Surging Ahead" (Aug.24). Words, they say, are the dress of thoughts. And it is by their words that Americans are today judging Kamala Harris and Donald Trump. Trump's utterances are akin to Modi's in the last lap of the 2024 elections when he neither had issues nor proper words to bash the Opposition with. He spoke like one cornered and defeated, rather than one who was optimistic of winning the election. In the end, his "mutton,

mughal and mangalsutra" rants did not resonate even with those aligned with the BJP. In the fight for the US' presidency, Trump is not coming out trumps with his all too palpable lies, slanderous remarks at Kamala and his fist-pumping which is not helping him or his party to take the battle into the 'enemy' lines. Poor leadership is on full display, with Trump seemingly tilting at the windmills. In contrast, Kamala has shown much grace, sense and sensibility as she speaks about issues rather than engaging with Trump in a shouting match. Trump already has the baggage of making the USA a laughing stock of the world with his open calls for violence and questioning institutions that constitute America's bedrock of democracy. As the hour of reckoning approaches, it is becoming increasingly clear that it's going to be chalk Vs cheese, and that there are no fence-sitters this time.

Avinash Godbole | Dewas

is are outdated labor laws acting as disincentives for large-scale employment. The government's past efforts to enhance private investment have mainly been focused on increasing production activities rather than creating jobs. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the share of unemployed youth in the total unemployed population was 82.9% in 2022.

The government of India should consider increasing industrialization and investment in agriculture, as it can create more job opportunities and boost the productivity of the overall nation.

Neha Tomar | Ujjain

## PROTECT TEMPLE LANDS

Madam - In the state of Andhra Pradesh, many temple lands have been illegally occupied and used for unnecessary constructions. Due to this, the temples are not able to conduct their puja programs properly. Strict measures should be taken to prevent land encroachment.

There should be important laws and regulations for the protection of lands. Such laws need to be framed and strictly enforced. Special ordinances should also be framed to protect temple lands. People's cooperation is very important for the protection of temple lands. Conservation of lands is possible if temples, their administrators and local people work together. All necessary measures regarding protection of lands can be taken by deputing specially trained personnel to protect temple lands. By recording land status and other details in digital form, illegal encroachments can be detected quickly. It is good for conservation of lands.

Protection of temple lands means protection of spiritual, cultural and social rights. Hence, it is imperative that the government, local institutions, and people work together.

Appanna Gonapa | Visakhapatnam

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN

## ALL WORK AND NO SPORTS MAKES YOU DULL

Sports are essential for achieving physical and mental balance to have wholesome life



SAKSHI SETHI

The question of whether India is overly focused on work and less on sports is a valid concern, especially in a country where academic and professional success is often prioritized over physical activities. In many Indian families, there is a strong emphasis on academics and securing stable, well-paying jobs. However, this focus often overshadows the importance of sports, which sometimes are viewed as extracurricular activities rather than potential career paths. Despite living in the 21st century, the competitive nature of academic exams, such as the IIT-JEE, NEET, IIFT and various public service exams, place enormous pressure on students to excel in academics and as a result, sports often end up taking a backseat during the crucial educational years.

There is no denying the fact that sports teach valuable life skills such as teamwork, leadership, discipline and resilience, which are beneficial in both personal as well as professional life. Today, if we look back, India's journey in the Olympics has been marked by significant achievements, challenges and a growing presence in various sports disciplines be it archery, weightlifting, badminton, athletics and the list goes on and on. Increasing media coverage of a diverse range of sports beyond cricket has helped in promoting other sports. Moreover, sports have proved to be a powerful tool for promoting peaceful and inclusive societies. They bridge divides, foster understanding, and create opportunities for personal and collective growth as can be seen in the 2024 Olympics being held in Paris. Enhancing sports in India



requires a multi-faceted approach that involves government support, private-sector investment, grassroots development and public engagement.

By addressing these areas, India can unlock its vast potential in sports, leading to greater national pride, improved public health and economic benefits which even include initiatives to encourage female participation thereby providing equal opportunities, safety assurance and challenging societal norms that restrict women's involvement in sports. Moreover, sports can be adapted for individuals of all abilities thereby promoting inclusivity for people with disabilities. This will help not only in breaking down barriers but ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to participate.

Sports can be a tool for conflict resolution, providing a neutral ground where individuals or groups in conflict can engage constructively. It even teaches important life skills such as leadership, resilience and teamwork. These skills are transferable to other areas of life, contributing to personal development and societal harmony. Programs that use sports for peacebuilding have been successful in areas of conflict around the world. International sports events such as the Olympics often serve as platforms for diplomacy and dialogue between nations, helping to ease tensions and promote global peace. While there has traditionally been a strong focus on academics and work in India, there is a growing recognition of the importance of sports.

However, for sports to gain equal footing, there needs to be a cultural shift, increased investment and better integration of sports into daily life. By promoting a balanced approach that values both work and sports, India can and will foster a healthier, more active and well-rounded society. Achieving this balance involves effective time management, prioritization and a shift in mindset that values both mental and physical well-being.

(The writer is an educator; views expressed are personal)

## How feasible is the goal of \$5 trillion economy by 2025



B K JHA

Can India truly sustain such high growth rates, or do these figures oversimplify the complex realities of its socio-political landscape?



In any discussion involving economists, a common saying goes, "When six economists gather and deliberate, there will be seven views." This adage humorously reflects the diversity of opinions that often arises in economic discourse. While economists are inclined to project growth through metrics like GDP, inflation, and depreciation rates, these projections sometimes oversimplify the complexities of real-world politics and societal dynamics. Indeed, even the most well-reasoned economic forecasts can falter when confronted with the unpredictable nature of political realities and the broader socio-economic context. Economists from the Reserve Bank of India, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, other big financial institutions, and even our government-serving prominent experts arrive at different projections of India's growth story. Going by the latest two projections, Krishnamurthy Venkata Subramanian, the former Chief Economic Adviser to the Narendra Modi government and current Executive Director for India at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) says India will be reaching a \$55 trillion economy by 2047. Subramanian's projection of a \$55 trillion economy appears optimistic, especially when juxtaposed with Ernst & Young's prediction of \$26 trillion by 2047. At this point, it is difficult to say whose projection is realistic given the very dynamic nature of the Indian economy where several socio-economic and political forces are at work simultaneously. Subramanian has made a bold claim in his new book, India @100: Envisioning Tomorrow's Economic Powerhouse. Released recently by Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal at a Special Session organized by ASSOCHAM in New Delhi, the book envisions India reaching a \$55 trillion economy by 2047. Subramanian's proposition, while ambitious, is grounded in a comprehensive analysis of India's economic trajectory and the policies required to sustain high growth rates. It is not difficult to find the economic rationale behind such an ambitious projection, considering India's historical inflation rates, currency depre-



SINCE 2014, NEW FIRM CREATION IN INDIA HAS SURGED, ESTABLISHING THE COUNTRY AS THE THIRD-LARGEST ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM GLOBALLY. ENTREPRENEURSHIP NOT ONLY DRIVES PRODUCTIVITY IN NEW FIRMS BUT ALSO COMPELS INCUMBENT FIRMS TO INNOVATE

ciation, and recent economic policies. He rightly emphasizes that achieving this target hinges on maintaining a real growth rate of 8% and an inflation rate of around 5%.

Historically, the depreciation of the Indian rupee against the dollar has averaged between 3% and 3.5%, primarily due to India's higher inflation rates. Subramanian notes that before the adoption of inflation targeting in 2016, India's inflation averaged above 7%, necessitating higher depreciation rates. However, with inflation targeting and subsequent economic stability, India's inflation rate has moderated to around 5%, even amid global economic shocks like COVID-19 and the Ukraine war. The rule of 72—a simple formula to estimate the doubling time of an investment—to project India's economic growth may have some limitations. Subramanian posits that if India's real growth rate remains at 7% and inflation at 5%, the nominal growth rate in rupee terms would be 12%. Accounting for a historical depreciation rate of 3%, the dollar-denominated growth rate would be around 9%, doubling the economy every eight years. This would place India's GDP at \$26 trillion by 2047. However, Subramanian argues that with improved inflation targeting, resulting in lower inflation and depreciation rates, India could achieve a nominal growth rate of 13% in rupee terms and 12% in dollar terms. This would lead to the economy doubling every six years, reaching the \$55 trillion mark by 2047.

To many economists and experts, these projections seem unreasonable as it is very difficult to predict 20 years of macroeconomic environment and political realities. Political stability would be a growth driver certainly but if India's current stable coalition

government loses its strength the entire economic journey would face a difficult path. Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal may disagree as while releasing the book launch, he also emphasized that the target appears realistic due to the current political stability in India. He noted that even in a coalition government, the ability to make bold decisions has been a key factor in driving economic reforms. Goyal highlighted that political stability, particularly with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) maintaining a dominant position, provides a conducive environment for long-term economic planning. He pointed out that most seats the BJP lost in the last general elections were by margins of less than 30,000 votes, suggesting a strong underlying support base. This political backdrop, according to Goyal, is essential for sustaining bold economic reforms over the next two decades and beyond. It is widely admitted that achieving these ambitious targets requires sound economic policies, particularly those that promote formalization, innovation, and entrepreneurship. India's informal sector, which constitutes a significant portion of the economy, is far less productive than the formal sector. Enhancing formalization through digital infrastructure and regulatory reforms could substantially boost productivity.

Additionally, the importance of entrepreneurship and innovation. Since 2014, new firm creation in India has surged, establishing the country as the third-largest entrepreneurial ecosystem globally. Entrepreneurship not only drives productivity in new firms but also compels incumbent firms to innovate, leading to overall economic growth. A key pillar of Subramanian's vision is ethical wealth creation, which he believes

is essential for fostering a large, prosperous middle class. He refutes the notion that wealth creation and employment are opposing forces, citing examples from his personal experiences and the broader economy. Wealth creators, he argues, generate significant employment and pay higher wages, contributing to overall economic welfare. Emphasis on ethical wealth creation stems from past instances of crony capitalism, which stifled economic growth and led to systemic inefficiencies. By promoting a transparent and fair business environment, India can ensure that wealth creation benefits a broader spectrum of society, thereby enhancing social and economic inclusion. The claim of a \$55 trillion economy may be viewed by some economists as hypothetical, given the complexities of global and domestic economic landscapes.

Nevertheless, India's inherent economic strengths and resilience could indeed support the realization of the India@100 vision. Despite the slowing pace of globalization, geo-political tensions, and other unseen negative forces could pose significant threats to India's growth trajectory. Nonetheless, with the right policies, particularly those that encourage domestic investment and exports, India can navigate these challenges and sustain high growth rates, controlled inflation, prudent currency management, and robust economic policies that foster innovation, formalization, and ethical wealth creation. As India stands on the cusp of a new economic era, these pillars will be crucial in shaping its journey toward becoming a global economic powerhouse.

(The author is a senior journalist. Views expressed are personal)

## Building the foundation for the future: The struggles of adolescent girls in slums

Despite government initiatives, the young girls are often deprived of education facilities as they have to work and shoulder domestic responsibilities

In Narrow lanes of Baba Ramdev Nagar, a slum in Jaipur, 12-year-old Pooja (name changed) cradles her three-year-old brother while her mother Sharda cooks nearby. Pooja obediently runs back and forth fetching water and other necessities as her mother instructs.

In contrast, her 8-year-old brother plays undisturbed. The scene takes a poignant turn when a friend of Pooja's, returning from school, stops by. Pooja's eyes light up as they discuss school, revealing her longing for education. But when asked why Pooja isn't attending school, Sharda interjects, "If she goes to school, who will look after the children?" Pooja's dreams seem to slip further from her grasp.



HARSHALI NEELKANTI ZALKE

Sharda and her husband, daily wage labourers, are among the many families in Baba Ramdev Nagar, a slum of over 500 people. Predominantly inhabited by Scheduled Castes and Tribes, including Lohars (blacksmiths), Jogis, Kalbeliyas, and daily labourers, these families have migrated from remote rural areas of Rajasthan, driven by the hope of better employment opportunities in

the city. While some families have settled permanently, others migrate seasonally, depending on the availability of work.

However, the migration process and the economic hardships it brings take the greatest toll on the education of children, particularly girls. The struggle to make ends meet often forces families to prioritize immediate survival over long-term investments like education.

In these situations, girls bear the brunt of the burden. The economic strain on the household disproportionately affects girls compared to boys, stunting not only their education but also their physical and mental development. Another story echoes Pooja's in this slum—14-year-old

Asha (name changed), the eldest of four siblings. With her parents working as scrap dealers, Asha is left to care for her siblings and manage the household. On days when her mother cannot work, Asha steps in. Despite her strong desire to learn, Asha hasn't seen the inside of a classroom since fifth grade.

Her education, like that of many girls in the slum, halted as she took on responsibilities at home. An elderly resident, Kanti, questions, "If the girl goes to school, who will take care of the house and the younger siblings?" Yet, she remains silent on why these responsibilities aren't placed on the boys. Akhilesh Mishra, a social worker who has been active in the slum for eight years, points out, "There is



still a lack of awareness about educating girls in urban slums like Baba Ramdev Nagar. Economic challenges and a lack of social consciousness about the importance of education lead parents to prioritize income over

schooling, often dragging children into child labor." He adds that although the government has launched programs to promote girls' education, the distance girls in Baba Ramdev Nagar maintain from school prevents

them from benefiting. IndiaSpend's report highlights a concerning trend: while primary school dropout rates for girls in 2021-22 were 1.35%, this figure jumped to 12.25% at the secondary level. The report underscores the urgent need for not just policy implementation but also grassroots awareness. Societal awareness is critical to ensuring girls' education is valued as highly as boys'. The struggle for education is most pronounced for adolescent girls, particularly in urban poverty-stricken areas like Baba Ramdev Nagar. Though some urban areas are beginning to reduce barriers to education, the girls in this slum continue to fight for their right to learn.

In Baba Ramdev Nagar, the pursuit of education for girls like Pooja and Asha faces formidable obstacles. Economic hardships and entrenched societal norms prioritize immediate survival over long-term education, leaving many girls out of school. Despite government initiatives, the gap in educational attainment remains wide due to factors such as child labor and domestic responsibilities disproportionately shouldered by girls. Addressing these challenges is crucial for breaking the cycle of poverty and securing a brighter future for these young girls.

(The author is a grassroots worker from Jodhpur, Rajasthan. Charkha Features)

# Despite regime change, Dhaka's traffic facing chaos due to sporadic protests

PTI ■ DHAKA

Dhaka's roads, known for its notorious traffic, have become more chaotic as sporadic protests by various organisations have led to severe congestion, leaving commuters stranded and scrambling for alternative routes.

On Monday morning, rickshaw pullers blocked the Shahbagh intersection to demand a ban on battery-operated auto rickshaws and other issues, stopping all traffic on nearby roads. The protest began around 10:30 a.m.

The rickshaw pullers protesting at Shahbagh claimed that autorickshaw drivers were charging too little-Tk20 (approx Rs 14) instead of the standard Tk50 (approx Rs 35)-from passengers, which meant they weren't getting any business. They also pointed out that autorickshaws, which previously operated in the alleys, now run on main roads, ignoring traffic rules and causing traffic jams and accidents.

This situation has worsened the already chaotic traffic and led to a shortage of public transportation options for commuters.

On Sunday, the city's traffic came to a standstill in key locations including the High Court, Motsho Bhaban, Shahbagh, Science Lab, and Dhanmondi. Protesters took to the streets in these areas to voice their demands, further aggravating the already notorious traffic situation in Dhaka.

Many commuters found themselves abandoning their vehicles and walking to their destinations due to the prolonged congestion.

"I was stuck in traffic for hours. After crossing Shahbagh and reaching the High Court area, my vehicle



came to a halt. I had no choice but to get out and continue on foot," said Rakibul Hasan, a commuter travelling from Dhanmondi to Paltan.

His experience is a testament to the widespread disruptions faced by many in the city. In 2023, Dhaka was ranked the fifth worst city in the world for traffic congestion in Numbeo's Traffic Index, up from ninth place in 2022, with the average one-way travel time increasing from 61 minutes to 57.8 minutes.

Adding to the congestion, a programme by the Ansars, a volunteer security force, led to significant traffic jams around Purana Paltan, Bijoy Nagar, Gulistan, and Segunbagicha. The disruption extended to areas like Banglamotor, Kawran Bazar, and Farmgate, creating a ripple effect throughout Dhaka's road network.

"The protests are constant and sporadic, making it nearly impossible to predict traffic conditions from one day to the next," said Ajijul Ahmed, another frustrated commuter.

"It feels like every few hours there's a new roadblock or demonstration, and it's causing a lot of inconvenience for people trying to go about their daily lives," he said.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has been struggling to manage the traffic chaos. A senior official of traffic police said various organisations have been holding programmes and sit-ins leading to road blockades and traffic.

"On Sunday there were a lot of processions and also sit-ins by the Ansar group. Demonstrations and protests by several groups and communities in various pockets have been a regular affair for the last few weeks. That has led to a lot of traffic congestion," a traffic police official said.

With one side of the road closed, traffic pressure has shifted to surrounding areas. Although we have advised using alternative routes, drivers are often disregarding this, resulting in additional congestion." The reopening of the metro

services, which had been closed due to the violent anti-government protests, has somewhat alleviated the strain on other modes of transportation.

However, the relief has been limited as continuous and sporadic protests continue to disrupt traffic flow.

Commuters who previously relied on the metro are now facing the dual challenge of navigating congested roads and dealing with the unpredictability of protest-related disruptions.

With the metro back in operation, many students and office-goers have returned to using this mode of transport. However, the impact of the prolonged protests is still felt.

The return of metro services has not fully resolved the traffic issues, as the ongoing demonstrations continue to create bottlenecks and delays. The economic impact of these disruptions has been significant.

business operations and daily routines.

Middle-class families and students, already strained by rising costs, find themselves further burdened by the need to navigate through the traffic chaos.

"There is a problem of inflation in Bangladesh and the ongoing traffic crisis has only aggravated the situation for middle-class people like us who have to depend on public transport. In several places cabs and auto-rickshaws charge us more than the normal rates," Sukumar Mitra, an employee at a three-star hotel here.

Both Shahbagh and the adjoining Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) area, close to Dhaka University, were central to the protests that led to the ousting of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government on August 5. Hasina fled to India amid escalating violence and unrest, leaving a volatile situation in her wake.

As Dhaka grapples with the ongoing and sporadic protests, the city's infrastructure and public services are under severe strain.

Commuters like Sadikul Hasan and Ajijul Ahmed are left to navigate a constantly shifting landscape of roadblocks and delays, hoping for a resolution to the unrest that has so profoundly impacted their daily lives.

The city's traffic woes, exacerbated by the protests, highlight the broader issues facing Dhaka's transportation system and the ongoing struggle for stability in the capital.

After unprecedented anti-government protests, which reached a crescendo on August 5, Hasina resigned as prime minister and fled the country. She landed in India on August 5 and is currently staying there.

# Bangabandhu to toppled statue: Mujibur Rahman's contested legacy post Bangladesh upheaval

PTI ■ DHAKA

When a popular uprising in Bangladesh brought down the Sheikh Hasina-led government, college student Alif Hossain felt the deposed prime minister got what she deserved, but the toppling of the Dhaka statue of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by protesters on August 5 left him deeply disturbed.

"It was just wrong. He fought for the liberation of our country, he is the Father of the Nation, our Bangabandhu, how could he be so disgraced in the fit of anger," the Dhaka-based student rued.

The legacy of Rahman or Mujib, as he was popularly called, lives on in the names of streets, institutions, public landmarks, his fiery speeches made during the struggle for independence, the face of Bangladesh currency, and till recently in statues and murals.

The unprecedented protests precipitated the fall of the previous government as Hasina fled to India on August 5 leaving behind a country in political turmoil.

In the wake of her departure, she courted even more public opprobrium, and her father's legacy too became a prime target as anti-government protesters vented their ire on Rahman's towering statue at Bijoy Sarani in the heart of Dhaka and pulled it down, with images being broadcast on local and international media channels.

Public murals depicting Bangabandhu ('Friend of Bengal') — a sobriquet that characterised the legacy of Bangladesh's first president — were defaced, and his house in Dhanmondi where he and most of his family members were assassinated on August 15, 1975 and which was later turned into a memorial, was badly damaged by protesters.

In the Dhaka University area, a series of wall panels on the front side of the building of the famous Teacher Student Centre (TSC) bears old mosaic panels depicting legendary personalities and historic moments like the signing of the Instrument of Surrender of Pakistani forces in Dhaka on December 16, 1971, which led to the birth of the new nation of Bangladesh.

The mosaic panel depicting Rahman has been defaced, his face blackened. On the Dhaka University campus, a huge mural on a wall depicting Bangabandhu was defaced with graffiti scrawled all over the artwork.

Many artworks made on public walls in the university area after August 5 mock Hasina and her fleeing to India and extol the public resistance culminating in what many Bangladeshis now call the 'Victory Day' of '36 July'. From being revered by countrymen to his images and memorials being disgraced, Rahman's legacy is now much contested in the post-upheaval society of Bangladesh.

The 'Gen Z' as the young protesters are being labelled by many, were born after the Liberation War of 1971, and political observers say their idea of Bangladesh is "different" from what the pre-1971 generations may have had.

Hasina, 76, resigned as the prime minister on August 5 amid mass protests against her



government. The protests, which started last month initially with a demand to end the quota system that reserved 30 per cent of government jobs for the families of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's War of Independence against Pakistan in 1971, later turned into anti-government demonstrations.

Abdul Moyeen Khan, a senior leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and a former Cabinet minister of Bangladesh criticised Hasina and accused her of "destroying" the several institutions of the country which resulted in this "revolt by students" that was later supported by the general masses.

"If she was a real leader, she wouldn't have led the country to drive to that stage," Khan told PTI in an interview in Dhaka on Thursday. Asked if the denigration of Rahman's legacy is undermining the 1971 liberation war, he said, "No".

"It is a continuous process, you have to formulate and reformulate, the human society doesn't remain static at any place. It (recent movement) is not undermining anything," Khan said. But, a section of Bangladeshis feels a palpable fear that "Mujib's legacy may be slowly erased or whittled down", an argument countered by protesters who claim that "he was given undue space in history by the Awami League government" and "many controversial facets of his life have not been told to people".

Alif Hossain, who studies at a college in Dhaka, however, pleads for a "more mature" approach to looking at history.

"In retrospect, we cannot go back and start attacking Mujibur Rahman's legacy. History should not be erased even if it is contested. His daughter (Sheikh Hasina) did wrong things and faced consequences. But, toppling statues and defacing Bangabandhu's murals is just plain wrong," he told PTI here.

Opposite the TSC is the famous Raju Memorial — an iconic sculpture mounted on a raised platform — located in a traffic roundabout that faces

the Suhrawardy Udyan, a national memorial which marks the spot where Rahman had delivered the historic March 7, 1971 speech during the independence struggle.

On two Dhaka Metro piers, one on each side of the Raju Memorial, huge murals of Rahman and Hasina were earlier painted. During the agitation, both artworks were defaced by anti-government protesters, and still stand sullied, making a visible dent in Mujib's legacy in Dhaka. The Bangabandhu National Stadium, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Novo Theatre, and the Bangabandhu Avenue in Dhaka, all carry the name of the founding father of Bangladesh.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Novo Theatre, inaugurated in September 2004, was established as a non-formal science educational institution to "eradicate superstitions and blind faith from the society and to inculcate positive scientific temper in the mind of people, especially among the students", reads a description on its website. The headquarters of the Awami League is located on Bangabandhu Avenue. The party, formed in 1949, under Rahman had led the struggle for independence of Bangladesh. Its offices were also targeted by anti-government protesters recently.

Rahman was born in 1920 in undivided India. Bangladesh evolved from Bengal presidency to East Bengal to East Pakistan and eventually as a separate nation born in 1971. According to a profile of Rahman on the Dhaka University website, "he is regarded as 'Jatir Janak' or 'Jatir Pita' (both meaning 'Father of the Nation') of Bangladesh. The then Hasina government had marked his birth centenary by declaring 2020-21 as 'Mujib Year'.

In the highly charged environment that Bangladesh is in right now on the back of anti-government protests, there is an element of uncertainty around the future of Mujib's legacy, but his legend shall live on.

# Greek-flagged tanker burning after Houthi attacks, but no sign of oil spill

AP ■ DUBAI

A Greek-flagged tanker repeatedly attacked by Yemen's Houthi rebels in the Red Sea remains ablaze but hasn't sprung a major oil leak in the waterway, a European Union naval command said Monday.

The attack on the Souinion marks the most serious assault in weeks by the rebels, who continue to target shipping through the Red Sea corridor over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip. The attacks have disrupted the \$1 trillion in trade that typically passes through the region, as well as halting some aid shipments to conflict-ravaged Sudan and Yemen.

Images published by the EU's Operation Aspidos, whose mission is to protect shipping in the area, showed smoke rising from multiple points along the Souinion's deck and its bridge Sunday. Fires could be seen burning in at least nine different locations on the deck



of the vessel, which had been loaded with 150,000 tons of Iraqi crude oil — roughly 1 million barrels. Some flames appeared near hatches of the tanker's oil tanks.

"So far there are no obvious signs of an oil spill," the EU mission said. The Souinion "is both a navigational and an imminent environmental hazard. This situation underlines that these kinds of attacks pose not only a threat against the freedom of

navigation but also to the lives of seafarers, the environment, and subsequently the life of all citizens living in that region."

The U.S. State Department similarly warned about the ecological danger to the Red Sea, home to coral reefs and other natural habitats and wildlife. Footage showing explosions on board the Souinion released earlier by the Houthis and later analyzed by The Associated Press suggested that the rebels again

boarded an abandoned vessel and rigged it with explosives in an attempt to sink it.

"While the crew has been evacuated, the Houthis appear determined to sink the ship and its cargo into the sea," State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said in a statement Saturday.

"Through these attacks, the Houthis have made clear they are willing to destroy the fishing industry and regional ecosystems that Yemenis and other communities in the region rely on for their livelihoods, just as they have undermined the delivery of vital humanitarian aid to the region through their reckless attacks."

For their part, the Houthis' al-Masirah satellite news channel highlighted the EU's photographs and described the Souinion as being targeted for "punishment to the company that owns the ship for violating the decision to ban access to the ports" of Israel.

The Souinion came under repeated attack last week by the Houthis. A French destroyer operating as part of Operation Aspidos later rescued the Souinion's crew of 25 Filipinos and Russians, as well as four private security personnel, and took them to nearby Djibouti.

The Houthis have targeted more than 80 vessels with missiles and drones since the war in Gaza started in October. They seized one vessel and sank two in the campaign that also killed four sailors. Other missiles and drones have either been intercepted by a U.S.-led coalition in the Red Sea or failed to reach their targets.

The rebels maintain that they target ships linked to Israel, the U.S. or the U.K. To force an end to Israel's campaign against Hamas in Gaza. However, many of the ships attacked have little or no connection to the conflict, including some bound for Iran.

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Singapore's Indian-origin leader of the Opposition Pritam Singh has applied to have his case heard in the High Court instead of the State Courts.

Singh, 48, faces two charges of lying to a parliamentary committee that was convened in November 2021 to look into the lying controversy involving his party's former MP Raeesah Khan. Khan has resigned from Parliament.

He applied to have the case heard in the High Court on Monday, according to a Channel News Asia report.

Singh's lawyers, Andre Darius Jumabhoy and Aristotle Emmanuel Eng, relied on the case of former transport minister S. Iswaran which has been rescheduled for hearing in the High Court next month.

Citing the Iswaran case, the lawyers said in the arguments that there was also "strong public interest" for Singh's case to be heard in the High Court.

# Singapore Indian-origin Opposition leader seeks High Court trial over alleged lies to Parliament

my characterisation," said the lawyer. He referred to a speech that Leader of the House, Minister Indranee Rajah, made in February 2022 to refer Singh's case to the public prosecutor. She said: "Fundamentally, the motions are about safeguarding the essence of democracy - our democracy - and preserving its most vital and essential characteristic, which is trust. They are about the need to ensure the integrity of our institutions and Parliament in particular, and about the confidence Singaporeans can have in their elected representatives."

Jumabhoy said the minister's "eloquent summary" touches on what is at stake, and said it seems "almost churlish" in such circumstances to say Singh's case does not warrant a transfer to the High Court. The lawyer said he was not denigrating the State Courts or attempting to insult the State

Courts' capabilities by providing reasons for why the High Court is better suited to hear the case.

If not, every such application would involve some form of disparagement and leave the application "entirely redundant", said Jumabhoy. He said the prosecution appeared to be taking a position that Singh's application was "offensive" in and of itself, using the term "scandalous" and saying the defence is questioning the integrity and independence of the State Court judges.

"It's not only the resources that are being brought to bear against what I say is a straightforward application, it's the tenor of the (prosecution's) submissions that are troubling," said Jumabhoy. Justice Hoo Sheau Peng, who heard the motion, said there seems to be an implication that the State Courts and their judges are "not well-placed to hear this case" because of the nature of the case.



Jumabhoy said the trial judge, whoever he is, will have to grapple with important personalities in the Singapore context, and this is very different from the usual run-of-the-mill cases that come before the court.

He said the defence did not intend to make any implication in relation to the State Court judges. "I think in fairness to ourselves, if we intended to make that point, we would have come out and said it," he said.

The prosecution, which Jumabhoy characterised as "something of a star-studded line-up", comprised a four-member team led by Deputy Attorney-General and Senior Counsel Ang Cheng Hock. Ang pointed out that Iswaran's case was referred to the High Court under a different section. Singh's application was made under Section 239 of the Criminal Procedure Code, which states that the High Court may order the transfer for three reasons: That a

fair and impartial trial cannot be had in any State Court, that some question of law of unusual difficulty is likely to arise, or that it is expedient for the ends of justice or is required by the Criminal Procedure Code or any other law to transfer the case.

Ang explained that Singh's lawyers had written to the prosecution to ask the prosecution to exercise its powers to transfer the case to the High Court.

The prosecution replied to say they were "unable to accede to this request" and did not agree to do so.

At this point, Singh and his lawyers should have applied for a judicial review of the prosecution's decision, but instead, they filed the criminal motion under Section 239 of the Criminal Procedure Code, said Ang.

"There is nothing to be gained in law at least by the applicant relying and referring to Iswaran's case, said Ang. "Instead... There are all manner of attempts to refer to Iswaran's case as if the matter is the case, the facts are analogous, there's the same level of public interest, etc. And we say this is really a backdoor attempt to review the public prosecutor's discretion," said Ang.



# TAIWAN DRILLS WITH ANTI-AMPHIBIOUS LANDING MISSILES TO DETER CHINA

AP ■ PINGTING (TAIWAN)

Taiwan drilled Monday with anti-amphibious landing missiles as part of strategy to remain mobile and deadly in an attempt to deter an attack from China, which claims the democratically ruled island of Taiwan as its own territory to be brought under its control by force if necessary.

Troops fired tube-launched, optically tracked, wire-guided missiles known as TOW 2A missiles mounted on M1167 Humvees at floating targets off a beach in Pingtung County during the two days of exercises. The area on Taiwan's southern tip faces both toward the Taiwan Strait and China, and toward the Pacific Ocean.

The missiles are among the most effective and popular anti-tank weapons in the world and a key component in what some experts say is Taiwan's best strategy to resist a potential Chinese invasion. China has ramped up its military threat in recent years based on its vast edge in numbers of warplanes, ships and missiles.

Taiwan bought 1,700 units of the newer TOW 2B system from the U.S., the last of

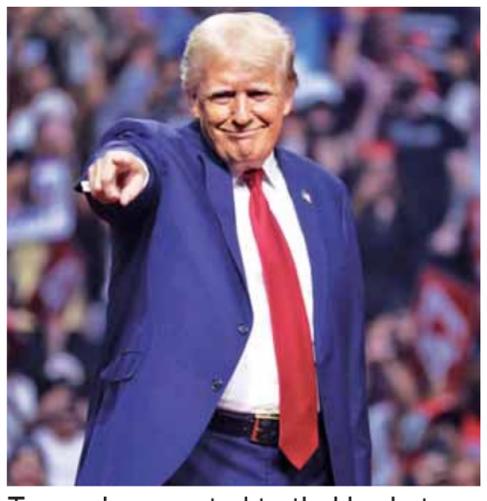


which are due to be delivered by the end of the year. The two days of testing will also gauge the more sophisticated TOW 2B's interoperability with the TOW 2A and its ability to acquire targets at night, the Defense Ministry said.

Advocates of such weaponry argue that these more mobile systems stand the best chance in an asymmetric battle against a much larger Chinese force. China has the world's largest standing military, but most of Taiwan is composed of steep mountains, mud flats and heavily built-up urban areas poorly suited to such a conventional force. Others have argued Taiwan needs more warplanes and surface ships.

China sends warplanes and warships near Taiwan on a near-daily basis in an attempt to intimidate its citizens and degrade the island's defenses. In response, Taiwan has extended the period of national military service to one year, building its own submarines and importing sophisticated new equipment from the U.S.

The vast majority of Taiwanese favor the current status of de-facto independence for their island, which separated from mainland China amid civil war in 1949.



## Trump is expected to tie Harris to chaotic Afghanistan war withdrawal in speech to National Guard

AP ■ WASHINGTON

In a speech Monday to National Guard soldiers in Michigan, former President Donald Trump is expected to promote his foreign policy record and tie Vice President Kamala Harris to one of the Biden administration's lowest points: the chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan after 20 years of war.

The speech coincides with the third anniversary of the Aug. 26, 2021, suicide bombing at Hamid Karzai International Airport, which killed 13 U.S. Service members and more than 100 Afghans. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attack.

Trump, the Republican presidential nominee, is set to appear at 2 p.m. Eastern time at the National Guard Association of the United States' 146th General Conference & Exhibition in Detroit.

Since Biden ended his reelection bid, Trump has been zeroing in on Harris, now the Democratic presidential nominee, and her roles in foreign policy decisions. He specifically highlights the vice president's statements that she was the last person in the room before Biden made the decision on Afghanistan.

"She bragged that she would be the last person in the room, and she was. She was the last person in the room with Biden when the two of them decided to pull the troops out of Afghanistan," he said last week in a North Carolina rally. "She had the final vote. She had the final say, and she was all for it!"

The relatives of some of the 13 American servicemembers who were killed appeared on stage at the Republican National Convention last month, saying Biden had never publicly named their loved ones. The display was an implicit response to allegations that Trump doesn't respect veterans and had previously referred to slain World War II soldiers as suckers and losers - accusations denied by Trump.

Under Trump, the United States signed a peace agreement with the Taliban that was aimed at ending America's longest war and bringing U.S. troops home. Biden later pointed to that agreement as he sought to deflect blame for the Taliban overrunning Afghanistan, saying it bound him to withdraw troops and set the stage for the chaos that engulfed the country.

A Biden administration review of the withdrawal acknowledged that the evacuation of Americans and allies from Afghanistan should have started sooner, but attributed the delays to the Afghan government and military, and to U.S. Military and intelligence community assessments.

The top two U.S. Generals who oversaw the evacuation said the administration inadequately planned for the withdrawal. The nation's top-ranking military officer at the time, then-Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Mark Milley, told lawmakers earlier this year he had urged Biden to keep a residual force of 2,500 forces to give backup. Instead, Biden decided to keep a much smaller force of 650 that would be limited to securing the U.S.



## Israel-Hamas war latest: Iran's Foreign Minister vows definitive retaliation against Israel

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Iran's foreign minister again has referenced his country's planned retaliation over the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran.

Abbas Araghchi said late Sunday he made the remark in a conversation with Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani by telephone.

"Iran reaction to Israeli terrorist attack in Tehran is definitive, and will be measured & well calculated," Araghchi wrote on the social platform X. "We do not fear escalation, yet do not seek it - unlike Israel."

Tajani said in a statement he "called for restraint and to pursue a constructive approach, in order to stop the cycle of military actions in the region, which only risks bringing more suffering."

"It is important that Iran exercises moderation towards Hezbollah in order to avert an escalation on the Lebanese-Israeli border, where Italian soldiers of the UNIFIL contingent are operating, and towards the Houthis in order to avoid an increase in tensions in the Red Sea area, where Italy plays a leading role in the (European Union's) Aspidem mission," he said in the statement. Their call came after Israel and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, long backed by Iran, traded heavy fire early Sunday but backed off from sparking a widely feared all-out war.

Meanwhile, a round of high-level talks in Cairo meant to bring about a cease-fire and hostage deal to at least temporarily end the 10-month Israel-Hamas war in Gaza ended Sunday without a final agreement, a U.S. Official said. But talks will continue at lower levels in the coming days in an effort to bridge remaining gaps.

The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the talks, said lower level "working teams" will remain in Cairo to meet with mediators the United States, Qatar and Egypt in hopes of addressing remaining disagreements. The talks included CIA director William Burns and David Barnea, the head of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency. A Hamas delegation was briefed by Egyptian and Qatari mediators but did not directly take part in negotiations.

**HERE'S THE LATEST:**

**Israel says more polio vaccines are delivered to Gaza:** Polio vaccines for more than 1 million people have been delivered to Gaza, Israel's military said Sunday, after the first confirmed case of the disease in the territory in a quarter-century.

It was not immediately clear how, or how quickly, the more than 25,000 vials of vaccine would be distributed in Gaza, where ongoing fighting and unrest have challenged humanitarian efforts during more than 10 months of war.

Other polio cases are suspected across the largely devastated territory after the virus was detected in wastewater in six different locations in July.

Aid groups plan to vaccinate more than 600,000 children under age 10 and have called for an urgent pause in the war to increase vaccinations. The World Health Organization and the United Nations children's agency have said that, at a minimum, a seven-day pause is needed.

The U.N. Has aimed to bring 1.6 million doses of polio vaccine into Gaza, where hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians are crowded into tent camps lacking clean water or proper disposal of sewage and garbage.

## North Korea shows new drone attacking a target as Seoul and US hold large military exercises

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un supervised a demonstration of new exploding drones designed to crash into targets and pledged to spur development of such weapons to boost his military's war readiness, state media said Monday.

Kim has been flaunting his growing military capabilities amid tensions with Washington and Seoul. North Korean photos of the test showed a white drone with X-shaped tails and wings supposedly crashing into and destroying a target resembling South Korea's main K-2 battle tank. Most combat drones stand off from targets and fire missiles.

The test, which state media said took place Saturday, came as the U.S. and South Korean militaries are conducting a large-scale exercise aimed at enhancing their combined capabilities to defend against growing North Korean nuclear threats.

The allies said the Ulchi Freedom Shield drills, which continue through Thursday, are focused on enhancing their readiness against North



Korean threats and will also reflect lessons learned from recent armed conflicts.

The United States and South Korea also on Monday began a separate amphibious landing drill involving dozens of aircraft and vessels from their navies and marines, including U.S. F-35 fighters and amphibious assault ship USS Boxer. South Korea's military said the Ssangyong Exercise, which will continue through Sept. 7, is aimed at sharpening combat interoperability.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said Saturday's drone test involved various types of drones built to fly different ranges to attack enemy targets on land and sea.

It said the drones flew along various routes before accurately hitting test targets.

Kim said global trends in military technologies and modern combat show the importance of drones in war and that the North's military should be equipped with advanced drones "as early as possible."

He called for accelerated development and production of various drones that explode on impact, conduct reconnaissance or attack targets underwater, KCNA said.

Lee Chang Hyun, spokesperson of South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, said during a briefing that South

Korea's military was closely examining North Korea's drone capabilities but did not provide a detailed assessment. He said without elaborating that the South's military is equipped with systems to detect and intercept such drones.

Some analysts suggest the North Korean drones shown in state media photos resemble Russia's Zala Lancet-3 drones, and Lee said the South was looking into the possibility Russia had helped North Korea acquire its drone capability.

"We are aware that during the past exchanges between North Korea and Russia that some (drones) were given (to North Korea) as gifts," Lee said. "We would need to analyze various aspects, including whether (North Korea) would have modified to improve their capabilities, or other possibilities."

North Korea and Russia have been aligning closely in the face of their separate confrontations with the United States, with Kim Jong Un and Russian President Vladimir Putin holding back-to-back summits in September last year and June.

## Protesters against judiciary overhaul plan urge Mexican president to respect democracy

AP ■ MEXICO CITY

Thousands demonstrated in Mexico's capital Sunday in the latest opposition to President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's proposed judicial overhaul and other moves by the governing party that critics say will weaken democratic checks and balances.

Thronges of people, many of them striking federal court workers and judges, ended their march outside the Supreme Court building in the heart of the capital, waving flags reading "Judicial independence" and "Respect democracy."

"Right now, we're protesting the reforms, but it's not just the reforms," said lawyer Mauricio Espinosa. "Its all of these attacks against the judicial branch and other autonomous bodies. What it does is end up strengthening the executive, the next president." Following big electoral victories in

June by the president's Morena party and its allies, the government has pushed for sweeping changes to Mexico's judicial system, long at odds with López Obrador, a populist who has openly attacked judges and ignored court orders.

His proposal includes having judges elected to office, something analysts, judges and international observers fear would stack courts with politically biased judges with little experience.

That was the concern for Espinosa, who said judges "will have to raise money to campaign, find someone to have their backs. So their sentences will no longer be 100% independent."

The proposed changes would require approval by Mexico's Congress, where the governing coalition has the majority.

And electoral authorities on Friday allocated Morena and allied parties 73% of the seats in the lower house of



Congress, though they won a significantly smaller 60% of the vote. That would give the governing bloc the two-thirds majority in Chamber of Deputies needed to push through constitutional changes with little or no compromise.

The coalition will be a few seats short of a two-thirds majority in the Senate, but it could feasibly win the needed votes from a smaller party.

While the new legislators don't take office until Sept. 1, a congressional committee on Friday already began pushing forward another contentious initiative - the elimination of seven

autonomous bodies, including the National Institute of Transparency.

Morena argues Mexico's independent oversight and regulatory bodies are a waste of money. It says oversight responsibilities should be given to government departments instead, essentially allowing them to police themselves.

The collective moves by the president and his party have fuelled concerns about undermining democratic institutions. But for many in the crowds, the overhaul of the judiciary represents the greatest threat.

Federal court employees and judges are on strike, the value of the peso has slumped and international financial firms have voiced concerns. At midweek, U.S. Ambassador Ken Salazar warned that electing judges is a "risk" for Mexico's democracy and "threatens the historic commercial relationship" between the two countries.

## Gunmen kill 33 bus passengers in Pakistan's restive Balochistan

PTI ■ KARACHI

Heavily-armed gunmen killed at least 33 people in two separate attacks in Pakistan's Balochistan province on Monday, as insurgent attacks spiked in the restive region.

In the first incident, at least 23 people from Pakistan's Punjab province were killed in a targeted attack in Balochistan's Musakhel district after gunmen offloaded them from buses and checked their identities.

Senior Superintendent of Police Ayub Khoso said: "The passengers were told to get down from buses and shot dead after being identified from their national ID cards,"

Khoso said. "Most of those killed belonged to southern Punjab and some are from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa suggesting they were killed because of their ethnic background," he added.

In another attack, gunmen killed at least 10 people, including four police officers, in the Qalat district also in Balochistan, authorities said.

Security sources told Geo News that terrorists attacked multiple sites in Balochistan on the night of August 24 and 25.

Khoso said the armed men also set some 12 vehicles on fire on the highway in Musakhel.

The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), the most active

militant group in the province, claimed responsibility for the attack in Musakhel.

President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif strongly condemned the attack, Radio Pakistan reported.

Expressing grief and sorrow over the loss of precious lives in the despicable incident, they prayed for the departed souls and condoled with the bereaved families.

Zardari said the brutal killing of innocent people was the killing of the entire humanity and called for the culprits to be brought to justice.

The Prime Minister directed the local administration to fully cooperate with the bereaved families and provide



medical aid to the injured. He also directed the law enforcement agencies to immediately investigate the incident.

"The terrorists responsible for this incident will be severely punished," the premier vowed, adding that any kind of terrorism was not acceptable in the country.

Both the president and the

prime minister expressed Pakistan's unwavering commitment to eradicate the menace of terrorism.

Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfaraz Bugti strongly condemned the incident of terrorism.

He expressed heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the families of those who died in the cowardly act of terrorists.

The terrorists and their facilitators will not be able to escape an exemplary end, he said, adding that the Balochistan government will pursue the terrorists.

In a separate terrorist attack, a railway bridge was blown up in Bolan's Dozan area, said police. Balochistan is

Pakistan's largest province but, although it has more resources than other provinces, it is the least developed.

The BLA and other Baloch separatists have intensified attacks on Punjabis and Sindhis from elsewhere in Pakistan working in the region. They have also targeted foreign energy firms they accuse of exploiting the region without sharing profits.

The attacks come nearly four months after a similar attack targeting people from Punjab. In April, nine passengers were offloaded from a bus near Noshki and shot dead after gunmen checked their ID cards.

In October last year, unidentified gunmen fatally

shot six labourers hailing from Punjab in Turbat in Balochistan's Kech district. According to the police, the killings were targeted. All victims belonged to different areas of southern Punjab, suggesting they had been chosen for their ethnic background.

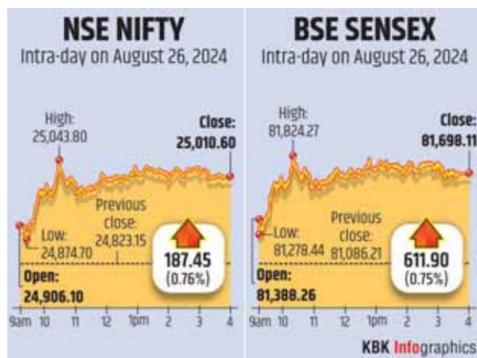
A similar incident occurred in 2015 when gunmen killed 20 construction workers and injured three others in a pre-dawn attack on a labourers' camp near Turbat.

There were at least 170 militant attacks in Balochistan last year which killed 151 civilians and 114 security personnel, according to the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies.

# Sensex rallies 600 points

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Stock market benchmark Sindices Sensex and Nifty surged nearly 1 per cent on Monday, propelled by intense buying in metal, IT and consumer durable stocks amid hopes that the US Federal Reserve will start cutting interest rates soon. Renewed Foreign fund inflows and buying in frontline stocks HDFC Bank and Reliance Industries further bolstered investor sentiment, traders said. Rising for the fifth straight day, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 611.90 points or 0.75 per cent to settle at 81,698.11. During the day, it surged 738.06 points or 0.91 per cent to 81,824.27. A total of 2,189 stocks advanced, while 1,860 declined and 148 remained unchanged on the BSE. The NSE Nifty soared 187.45 points or 0.76 per cent to 25,010.60, registering gains for the eighth session in a row. Among the 30 Sensex firms, HCL Technologies, NTPC, Bajaj Finserv, Tech Mahindra, JSW Steel, Titan, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Steel, Larsen & Toubro and Tata Consultancy Services were the biggest



gainers. On the other hand, Kotak Mahindra Bank, IndusInd Bank, Maruti and Hindustan Unilever were among the laggards. In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge jumped 0.66 per cent and the smallcap index soared 0.20 per cent. "US Fed has signalled a rate cut in September, reflecting in the decline in US treasury yields and the dollar index, which has led to a rally in global markets despite there being no indication of the size of cuts. Indian markets hit a new high led by a change in FI stance to positive from negative, along

with continued strong DII inflows. "Although the overall trend was positive, large caps outperform on account of healthy earnings and relatively fair valuation compared to broader markets. IT, Realty, FMCG and Consumption gained on account of improved outlook," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said. Among the indices, metal surged 2.03 per cent, realty (1.69 per cent), consumer durables (1.43 per cent), IT (1.37 per cent), teck (1.11 per cent) and commodities (0.91

per cent). Telecommunication and services were the laggards. In Asian markets, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled in the positive territory while Seoul and Tokyo ended lower. European markets were trading mostly lower. The US markets ended with significant gains on Friday. "Markets kicked off the week on a positive note, gaining over half a per cent, driven by a dovish stance from the US Fed," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 1,944.48 crore on Friday, according to exchange data. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 1.08 per cent to USD 79.87 a barrel. "Optimism was the order of the day as dovish statements by the Fed Chair last week sparked positivity across the globe and also at Dalal Street. Markets shrugged off the recent sluggish trading sessions, as the US Fed chairperson, last week, pointing towards a likely rate cut fuelled a major rally that saw Nifty close above the crucial 25k mark.

# RBI constantly working on policies, platforms to make India's financial system strong: Guv Das

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Monday said the central bank is constantly working on policies, systems, and platforms to make the country's financial sector strong, nimble and customer centric. Addressing the RBI@90 Global Conference on 'Digital Public Infrastructure and Emerging Technologies', Das recalled various initiatives being taken by the RBI with regard to Unified Lending Interface (ULI) and Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC). The Governor also said that the UPI system has the potential to evolve into a cheaper and quicker alternative to the available channels of cross-border remittances and "a beginning can be made with small value personal remittances as it can be quickly implemented." According to the Economic Survey tabled in Parliament in July, remittances to India, the second largest source of external financing after service exports, are projected to grow at 3.7 per



cent to USD 124 billion in 2024 and at 4 per cent to reach USD 129 billion in 2025. Das said the Reserve Bank of India is looking forward to the journey towards RBI@100 with considerable optimism. "We are constantly working on devising policies, approaches, systems and platforms that will make our financial sector stronger, nimble and customer centric," he said. Speaking on the theme of DPI and emerging technologies, he said over the last decade, the traditional banking system has undergone an unprecedented technological

transformation. By all indications, this process is likely to become even more intense in the coming years, he added. He said DPI spurs market innovation by reducing transaction costs, democratising access, maintaining competition through interoperability, and attracting private capital. Referring to the country's experience, Das said "DPI has enabled India to achieve, in less than a decade, levels of financial inclusion that would have otherwise taken several decades or more." Digital Public Infrastructure refers to basic technology

systems, created mainly in the public sector, which are openly available to users and other developers. India's DPI journey is a unique model, wherein the base technical infrastructure is built, operated and managed in the public sector, while the private sector accesses the DPI to create innovative customer facing services. "The advantage of developing DPI in the public sector is that typically the private sector would be averse to capital investment to create infrastructure with uncertain returns," the Governor said and added that privately created infrastructure may not also be amenable to democratised access or interoperability. The Governor talked about India's advancements in the field of digitalisation of the financial services. He further said Unified Payments Interface (UPI), a real-time payment system, has emerged as a robust, cost-effective and portable retail payment system and is attracting active interest across the globe.

# Alembic Pharma gets USFDA nod for generic drug

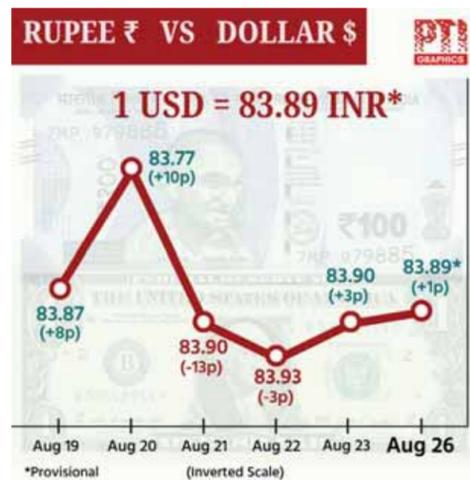
PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Alembic Pharmaceuticals on Monday said it has received approval from the US health regulator to market a generic medication used to treat moderate-to-severe psoriasis of the scalp. The company has received final approval from the US Food & Drug Administration (USFDA) for its abbreviated new drug application (ANDA) for Betamethasone Valerate Foam, the drug firm said in a statement. The approved ANDA is therapeutically equivalent to the reference listed drug product Luxiq Foam (0.12 per cent), of Norvium Bioscience, LLC (Norvium). Betamethasone valerate foam is a topical corticosteroid indicated for relief of the inflammatory and pruritic manifestations of corticosteroid-responsive dermatoses of the scalp.

# Rupee settles on flat note, closes 1 paisa higher at 83.89 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee pared its initial gains and settled for the day on a flat note, rising just 1 paisa to 83.89 (provisional) against the American currency on Monday, weighed down by a surge in crude oil prices. Forex traders said the Indian rupee gained in morning trade on rise in domestic markets and a weak US Dollar. However, a surge in crude oil prices capped sharp gains for the local unit. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.83 and touched an intra-day high of 83.80 against the US dollar and a low of 83.91. The domestic currency finally settled at 83.89 (provisional), 1 paisa higher than its previous close. On Friday, the rupee traded in a narrow range and settled higher by 3 paise at 83.90 against the American currency.



Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.07 per cent higher at 100.78. The US dollar had witnessed a sharp correction and fell to the lowest level since July 2023, on dovish comments by Fed Chair Jerome Powell at the Jackson

Hole Symposium. "We expect the rupee to trade with a slight positive bias on risk in global risk sentiments amid dovish Fed speak and rising expectations of a rate cut by the Fed in September. However, geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and rising crude oil prices may cap sharp upside," said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas. Meanwhile, Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, advanced 0.92 per cent to USD 79.75 per barrel. On the domestic equity market front, Sensex advanced 611.90 points, or 0.75 per cent, to close at 81,698.11 points. The Nifty rose 187.45 points, or 0.76 per cent, to 25,010.60 points. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets on Friday, as they purchased shares worth Rs 1,944.48 crore, according to exchange data.

# Finance Minister-led inter-ministerial panel meets Singapore president, discusses boosting ties

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Inter-ministerial delegation led by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday met Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam and discussed boosting partnership between the two countries. Both sides discussed boosting the India-Singapore Strategic Partnership by focusing on key areas like digitalisation, green initiatives and skill development. "FM Smt. @nsitharaman appreciated President Mr. @Tharman\_S for being a strong proponent of multilateralism through his seminal contribution to developing far-reaching reforms that can enable governments and institutions to deal with 21st century challenges," the finance ministry said in a post on X. During the meeting, Sitharaman expressed gratitude to the Singapore



President for his invaluable contributions as a member of the G20 Expert Group on Strengthening MDBs during India Presidency in 2023. Along with Sitharaman, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw were present for the meeting. India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable is a unique mechanism established to set a new agenda for India-Singapore bilateral relations. Its inaugural meeting was held in New Delhi in September 2022. This meeting will enable both sides to review various aspects of their strategic partnership and identify new avenues to further elevate and broaden it. The delegation also met Singapore Prime Minister Lawrence Wong earlier during the day. During the interactions, the leaders discussed the need to strengthen partnership and broaden cooperation between the two countries.

# Over 23 lakh Govt employees under NPS get option to choose unified pension scheme

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The just-announced Unified Pension Scheme for central government employees will be available only for those who are currently subscribers of the New Pension Scheme (NPS), including retirees. The new scheme guarantees employees 50 per cent of their average basic pay over the last 12 months before retirement as a pension for a minimum qualifying service of 25 years against a market returns linked payout under the NPS. According to the scheme approved by the Union Cabinet, the pension will be proportionate for a lesser service period of up to a minimum of 10 years. Also, assured pension of Rs 10,000 per month on superannuation



after a minimum of 10 years of service. The scheme has been brought out to address the concerns of government employees over NPS, which came into effect from January 1, 2004. Under the old pension scheme (OPS), effective before January 2004,

employees got 50 per cent of their last drawn basic pay as pension. Unlike the old pension scheme, OPS is contributory in nature, wherein employees will be required to contribute 10 per cent of their basic salary and dearness allowance while the employer's

contribution (the central government) will be 18.5 per cent. Under the NPS, the employer contribution is 14 per cent, and the employee contribution is 10 per cent. However, the eventual payout depends on the market returns on that corpus, mostly invested in government debt. Employees, under the OPS, were not required to make any contribution. They, however, contributed to the General Provident Fund (GPF). The accumulated amount, along with interest, was paid to the employee at the time of retirement. As the NPS was less attractive than the OPS, several non-BJP-ruled states decided to go back to the old pension scheme, which offered a DA-linked benefit.

# GST taxpayers without valid bank a/c to be barred from filing GSTR-1 from September 1

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

GST taxpayers who do not furnish bank account details to GST authorities will be barred from filing outward supply return GSTR-1 from September 1, GST Network (GSTN) has said in an advisory. As per GST Rule 10A, a taxpayer is required to furnish details of a valid bank account within a period of 30 days from the date of grant of registration, or before furnishing the details of outward supplies of goods or services or both in Form GSTR-1 or using Invoice Furnishing Facility (IFF), whichever is earlier. "From 1st September, 2024 this rule is being enforced. Therefore, for the tax period August-2024 onwards, the taxpayer will not be able



furnish GSTR-01/IFF as the case may be, without furnishing the details of a valid bank account in their registration details on GST portal," GSTN said in an advisory dated August 23. The GST Council in its meeting in July last year, had approved amendment to Rule 10A to strengthen the registration process and to effectively deal with the menace of fake and fraudulent registrations in

goods and services tax (GST). As per the amendment, a registered taxpayer was required to furnish the details of bank account having his name and PAN within 30 days of grant of registration or before filing of statement of outward supply in Form GSTR-1/IFF (invoice furnishing facility), whichever is earlier. In the advisory, the GSTN asked all the taxpayers who have not yet furnished the details of a valid bank account to add their bank account information in their registration details by visiting the GST portal. "...In absence of a valid bank account details in GST registration, you will not be able to file GSTR-1 or IFF as the case may be, from August 2024 return period," the GSTN advisory added.

# India offers huge opportunity, economic trajectory fantastic: Infosys CEO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India offers a "huge opportunity" for Infosys, CEO Salil Parekh said, noting that the country's "fantastic" economic trajectory has set it apart from the rest of the world. The Bengaluru-headquartered IT company has clocked "strong growth" in its India business in the first quarter of this fiscal year, although revenue from the market is relatively small. "India is a huge opportunity... The growth that we are seeing for different types of work across Indian environment is massive, and we are very much part of making sure that we engage both with private sector companies and with Government agencies," Parekh told PTI.

# Sebi issues notice to Paytm on ESOPs given to CEO Sharma; firm says disclosure already made

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Market regulator Sebi has issued notice to fintech firm One97 Communications, which owns the Paytm brand, in the March 2024 quarter on employee stock options given to its MD and CEO Vijay Shekhar Sharma, according to the company filing on Monday. In response to a query from stock exchanges, Paytm said the notice is not a new development, and it is in regulatory contact with the market regulator to make required representations. According to Paytm's financial year 2024 annual



result filing, it had issued 2.1 crore employee stock options (ESOP) to Sharma in the financial year 2022. Sebi had issued a show cause notice to Paytm on ESOP issued to Sharma. "This is not a new development, as the Company had already made relevant disclosures on this matter in its financial results for the quarter and year

ended March 31, 2024, as well as the quarter ended June 30, 2024. The Company is in regular communication with the Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and making necessary representations regarding this matter," Paytm said in response to a stock exchange query. The disclosure made on May 22 and July 19 said that Paytm had submitted its preliminary response and is in the process of seeking further information from the regulator in this regard. "Based on an independent legal opinion obtained by the management, it believes that the Company is compliant with the relevant regulations.

# India adds record 15 GW solar capacity in Jan-June: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India has registered record solar installations of about 15 GW during the first half of 2024 as "developers raced" to complete delayed projects, a report by Mercom Capital said. The country added 3.89 GW of solar capacity during January-June 2023, the US-based research firm said in its latest report. "In the first half, solar installations in India reached 15 GW, surpassing all previous years records, posting an increase of 282 per cent compared to 1H 2023," the report titled 'India Solar Market Update' said. The record installations were registered as developers raced



to commission the previously delayed projects, it said. As of June 2024, India's

cumulative installed solar capacity stood at 87.2 GW, of which the utility-scale

projects accounted for nearly 87 per cent, and rooftop solar over 13 per cent. Solar energy accounted for 19.5 per cent of India's installed power capacity and over 44 per cent of the total installed renewable energy capacity. The average cost of large-scale solar projects was down by almost 26 per cent year-on-year and 2 per cent quarter-on-quarter. The year "2024 is shaping up to be a breakout year for India's solar industry, with an impressive first half. "However, to ensure that the strong pipeline of projects and ramped-up tender activity translate into timely installations, it is critical that we tackle the component

supply and grid connectivity challenges with urgency so we can meet the 280 GW target by 2030," Raj Prabhu, CEO of Mercom Capital Group, said. In 1H 2024, a total of 41.4 GW of tenders were announced. The tendered capacity issued during the period increased 51 per cent from 27.5 GW in 1H 2023. In the first half of 2024, about 31.8 GW of projects were auctioned, up 321 per cent from 7.6 GW in 1H 2023. Mercom Capital specialises in providing market intelligence on energy storage, smart grid technology and solar energy, in addition to offering advisory services on emerging markets and strategic decision-making.



## Players from 13 countries to compete in junior badminton meet

**PTI ■ PUNE**  
Abhishek Kanpala and Prakriti Bharath will lead the Indian boys and girls respectively against participants from 13 countries in the Late Sushant Chipalkatti Yonex Sunrise India Junior International Grand Prix Badminton Tournament, starting here from Tuesday. It will be organised by Poona District Metropolitan Badminton Association under the auspices of Badminton Association of India at the PE Society's Modern PDMBA Sports Complex. The tournament, held in memory of the late Sushant Chipalkatti, has become a key fixture in the international junior badminton calendar. A total 280 players from 13 countries including India, USA, UAE, Australia, Indonesia, Thailand, Nepal, Malaysia, Switzerland, England, Taipei, Iran will be seen in action during this event. In previous editions, star players such as Saina Nehwal, PV Sindhu, Kidambi Shrikant, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, Priyanshu Rajawat, and Chirag Shetty have played in this tournament. The tournament will feature competitions in U-19 boys and girls singles, doubles and mix doubles categories. As part of the Badminton World Federation (BWF) circuit, it offers participants an opportunity to earn ranking points and gain international experience.

## Para-athletes laud Svayam, PCI for transportation accessibility



**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
Accessibility organisation Svayam, which is partnering the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI), has been lauded by top para-athletes like table tennis player Bhavina Patel for making transportation accessible for them during their stay in the national capital before heading to Paris for the Paralympics starting on Wednesday. Svayam donated special vehicles that can accommodate wheelchairs without the athletes having to be displaced to board and deboard, ensuring greater mobility. Patel thanked SAI (Sports Authority of India), and the Table Tennis Federation of India among others for the initiative. "Svayam has played an important role by providing special vehicles that enhance accessibility and travel comfort, highlighting their crucial role in improving our overall experience and performance," she said in a press release issued by PCI. Para discus thrower Sakshi Kasana also appreciated the organisation, which started as an online portal providing information on policies, laws, and healthcare before expanding its focus to promote "Accessibility For All." "The special vehicles provided to us significantly eased our journey, allowing me to focus more on my training and preparation. They made a real difference in my daily routine, helping me to practice better and allowing me to stay focused on achieving the best results," Kasana said. Svayam has earlier collaborated with PCI in the 5th Indian Open Para-Athletic International Championship & Regional Sports Training held at Bangalore in 2023. It is also associated with the Khelo India Para Games and the Disability Cricket Council of India (DCCI) since 2020. Speaking about the collaboration with Svayam for a second Paralympics, PCI President, Devendra Jhajharia said, "Svayam has not just understood and addressed the needs of our para-athletes they have given out a strong message to the nation on the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility. "Athletes have to travel a lot for their competitions so if they are given this kind of ease of transportation, it gives them mental strength and more confidence." Sminu Jindal, Founder-Chairperson, Svayam said the partnership has broken barriers and promoted dignity and independence for people with reduced mobility.



## Swimmer Ali makes Paralympics a year after losing lower leg in shark attack while snorkeling

**AP ■ PARIS**  
The first step for swimmer Ali Truweit was overcoming her newfound fear of the one place she had always felt safe - the water. Because the sound of water, any sound involving water, instantly triggered flashbacks to the day she swam for her life after being bitten by a shark. She and a friend were snorkeling in the ocean off Turks and Caicos on May 24, 2023, when a shark charged and bit Truweit's lower left leg. Bleeding and with the shark circling, Truweit went into competitive swim mode and raced 75 yards toward the safety of the boat. Truweit was rushed to the hospital and airlifted to the United States, where she had three surgeries, including one to amputate her leg below the knee. To reclaim her love of the water, she went to the family's backyard pool. She waded up to her waist, fought off fear and almost took back control. The plunge not only started her path toward healing but to Paris for the Paralympics. "I love comeback stories," said the 24-year-old from Darien, Connecticut, who qualified for Paris in the 100 free, 400 free and the 100 back. "I've definitely relied on other people's comeback stories to help me hold on to what feels like a bold and unrealistic hope - of fighting off a shark and surviving and losing a limb and making the Paralympics all in a year. Her itinerary for that summer involved fun and adventure before starting work at a consulting firm. Truweit had just graduated from Yale after a career in the pool in which she was a four-year letter winner. She kicked things off by running a marathon with her mom on Mother's Day. Next on the list: joining friends for some sun on the beaches in Turks and Caicos. She went snorkeling with Yale teammate and good friend Sophie Pilkinton in an area not known for sharks. On their way back to the boat, a shark aggressively approached and began bumping them. "We tried to fight back," Truweit said. What was believed to be a bull shark bit her on the foot and lower leg. "My immediate thought was, Am I crazy or do I not have a foot right now?" Truweit said. "It was a really hard image for me. But you move immediately into action." Stay calm. Remain conscious. Just get to the boat. That's all she focused on as she and Pilkinton sprinted through the water, intensely aware the shark was still there. Once on the boat, Pilkinton applied a tourniquet to slow the bleeding. Truweit was later airlifted to a trauma hospital in Miami for two surgeries to fight infections. She was transported to a hospital in New York, where on her 23rd birthday, she underwent a transtibial - below-the-knee - amputation. "A lot of dark days," she said. "But I'm alive and I almost took back control. The plunge not only started her path toward healing but to Paris for the Paralympics. "That's who she is every single day now." At U.S. Paralympic trials in Minneapolis in late June, she won the 100 backstroke, 400 free and 100 free. She joins a team that includes Paralympic swimming great Jessica Long and a host of returning medalists from Tokyo. "I think hearing my name on that team was just a reminder to me that I'm stronger than I think," said Truweit, who launched the "Stronger than you think" foundation to help others navigate through the healing process. "That we're all stronger than we think." In Paris, she will have the support of about 50 family members and friends. "A year ago, I was just working to get back in the water," Truweit said. "I now get back in the water and that sense of joy comes back, and the smile comes back. To have that again is something I'm so thankful for. Honestly, it's one of the moments in my swim career that I'm the proudest of, because I know how much work it took.

## If fitness permits, I hope to play LA 2028 Olympics: Manpreet Singh

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
He will be on the wrong side of 30s and maintaining fitness would be no stroll in the park but veteran Indian hockey mid-fielder Manpreet Singh foresees an unprecedented fifth Olympic appearance for himself in the 2028 Los Angeles Games before he calls time on his career. The 32-year-old is a two-time Olympic medallist. He captained the side that ended a 41-year-old Olympic medal drought in Tokyo 2020, before remaining a part of the squad under Harmanpreet Singh for an encore in Paris 2024. "My target is till Los Angeles but it all depends upon my fitness. If I can maintain my fitness and game, I will surely be there in LA," the ace mid-fielder told PTI in an exclusive interview. "In today's hockey fitness is very important so at the end everything will boil down to my fitness," added the player, who has rarely faced any fitness issues in his career. Former greats Udham Singh, Leslie Claudius, and Dhanraj Pillai along with Manpreet's recently-retired contemporary P R Sreejesh also have four Olympic appearances to their credit. And Manpreet, a veteran of 378 international games and 44 goals, is now aiming to go one better on them by making the cut for LA 2028. The easy-going player, who hails from Mithapur village in Punjab, is grateful for all that he has achieved with the team. "Winning back-to-back medals is a something wonderful for me. It was after a long time that we won back-to-back medals and every athlete aspires to win an Olympic medal. "I have played four Olympics. In the first two, I didn't get any medal but in the last two, I won medals and you can't imagine my happiness," he said. A multi-faceted player, Manpreet can play in a defensive position as well when the team needs. His skills came in handy in India's 4-2 penalty shootout win over Britain in the quarterfinals of the Paris Olympics despite being down to 10 men with 42 minutes remaining in the match. "I am always prepared to play in every scenario. I always adjust to every position which the team demands. When (Amit) Rohidas got the red card, I immediately realised that I had to play in the defence. "I have trained a lot for that, even in Pro League matches. So, it was not very difficult for me. I knew my roles and responsibilities, I just had to execute my plans," Manpreet said. The show against Britain tested the Indian team's mental toughness and Manpreet credited a short three-day camp at renowned adventurer Mike Horn's base in Switzerland before the Olympics for that. "That camp was very useful for us. It changed our mindset and taught us to be strong. When we went there, nobody knew what we were supposed to do there," he recalled. "That camp taught us how to tackle adverse situations with a strong mentality. That camp also taught us how to be together and help each other in difficult situations." We learnt to play as a team and be united," he said. Talking about Sreejesh, who retired at 36 after the Paris Games, Manpreet was effusive in his praise for the former teammate. "Everyone knows how good a goalkeeper he (Sreejesh) was but it was his personal decision and it is with every athlete. But we need to look at how we need to cope with this situation. "Krishan (Bahadur Pathak) and Suraj (Karkera) are good goalkeepers and already have the experience of playing at the highest level," he said. Manpreet's Malaysian wife Illi Najwa Saddique and their two-and-half-year-old daughter Jasmine were there in Paris when he won his second Olympic medal and the star said it was the best moment of his life to share the joy with his family. "After the medal ceremony, my daughter and wife were with me at the ground and my daughter was running around the ground. I had a photo of my daughter wearing the medal, it was a really proud feeling," he said. Manpreet revealed that Jasmine, despite her tender age, seems to have developed a liking for shooting after meeting double Olympic medallist pistol shooter Manu Bhaker recently.



## Chhetri's Bengaluru FC to take on Mohun Bagan SG in Durand Cup semis

**PTI ■ KOLKATA**  
Charismatic former India captain Sunil Chhetri will be pivotal to Bengaluru FC's chances of making it to the Durand Cup summit clash when they take on Mohun Bagan Super Giant in the last-four contest at the iconic Salt Lake Stadium, here on Tuesday. As Asia's oldest football tournament enters the final stages of the competition, Bengaluru FC have their task cut out against the defending champions. Mogan Bagan have not only scored 10 goals but also stoutly defended their citadel, conceding just three goals. Bengaluru FC too have shown great promise in the tournament, scoring 11 goals and conceding only two in the four games they have played. They overcame Kerala Blasters

## Praggnanandhaa holds Liren, Gukesh draws with Vachier-Lagrave

**PTI ■ ST LOUIS (USA)**  
Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa navigated his match against the reigning world champion Ding Liren with remarkable ease, holding him to a draw in the sixth round of the Sinquefeld Cup, the final leg of the Grand Chess Tour. World championship challenger D Gukesh also played out another enterprising draw with France's Maxime Vachier-Lagrave while Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi suffered a shocking loss, going down to Fabiano Caruana of United States in just 25 moves. The sixth round saw no other surprises as the games between Anish Giri of Holland and Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan and Alireza Firouzja of France versus local star Wesley So ended draws. With just three rounds remaining, Caruana seems determined to give Firouzja a run for his money even though the former still leads the fray on 4 points. Caruana and Wesley So are on 3.5 points each. Praggnanandhaa, Gukesh, Vachier-Lagrave and Liren share the fourth spot on three points each with Nepomniachtchi and Abdusattorov following them a half point behind. Anish Giri stands last on two points in the USD 3,50,000 prize money tournament. Gukesh has been trying hard in almost every game but so far the lady luck has not smiled on him. Playing white against Vachier-Lagrave, he went for the King pawn opening and faced the tried and tested Najdorf Sicilian. Gukesh came up with a double-edged idea in the middle game that fetched him a pawn in return for a king side attack for Vachier-Lagrave. For sometime it looked like the Frenchman had a powerful attack but Gukesh always found the best manoeuvres. In the end, the Indian had an extra pawn but black had counterplay compensating for the same. The game was drawn vide stalemate after 72 moves. Praggnanandhaa did not have to sweat much against Liren, who has been pretty solid in the tournament and is not taking much risk ahead of the World Championship match against Gukesh in November. The Kings Indian defense by Praggnanandhaa as black did not see any serious mistake from either side and the game was drawn without much ado. Results round 6: Ding Liren (Chn, 3) drew with R Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 3); Alireza Firouzja (Fra, 4) drew with Wesley So (Usa, 3.5); Anish Giri (Ned, 2) drew with Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb, 2.5); Ian Nepomniachtchi (Fid, 2.5) lost to Fabiano Caruana (Usa, 3.5); D Gukesh (Ind, 3) drew with Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra, 3).



## Prannoy takes break to recover from impact of chikungunya

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
Seasoned Indian shuttler HS Prannoy on Monday said he is taking a break from the sport to allow his body to fully recover from the effects of chikungunya, which had adversely impacted his performance at the Paris Olympics. The 32-year-old, a 2022 Thomas Cup title winner and a world and Asian Games bronze-medallist, had been laid low by a week-long bout of the mosquito-borne viral disease that causes severe pain in the joints just ahead of the Paris Olympics. "Unfortunately, the battle with chikungunya has taken a toll on my body, leaving me with persistent pains that make it impossible to compete at my best," Prannoy wrote on X. "After careful consideration with my team, I've decided to withdraw from some of the upcoming tournaments to focus on recovery. Thank you for your understanding and support during this challenging time. I'll be back stronger," he added.



Prannoy, however, did not provide a time line for his recovery or mentioned the tournaments he has withdrawn from. The Kerala shuttler, who won the world championship bronze in 2023, had been ravaged by a spate of illnesses, including a chronic stomach disorder and a nagging back injury. At the Paris Games, despite not being fully fit, Prannoy won both his Group matches to progress to the round of 16. He, however, went down to compatriot Lakshya Sen in the pre-quarterfinal.

# Focus on Suryakumar, Shreyas and Sarfaraz in Buchi Babu meet

PTI ■ COIMBATORE

India dasher Suryakumar Yadav will turn up for Mumbai in their Buchi Babu contest against TNCA XI, beginning here on Tuesday, with an aim to get his Test career back on track. Shreyas Iyer, also part of Mumbai's squad, too will be looking to make a statement in the pre-season event, having last played a Test in February. The star-studded Mumbai side will be captained by Sarfaraz Khan, who too will be jostling for space in a full strength Test squad when the home season begins next month despite a promising beginning against England earlier this year. The likes of Virat Kohli, K L Rahul and Rishabh Pant, who were not available for different reasons over course of the five games against England, are expected to be available for the two Test series against Bangladesh beginning September 19 in Chennai. The centre of attention in the round three of the Buchi Babu match undoubtedly will be Suryakumar, who recently led India to victory in his first series as T20 skipper. Not in the team's ODI plans for the



moment, the 33-year-old remains determined to play in all three formats. His sole Test appearance came against Australia in February 2023. Since then, he has continued to flourish in white-ball cricket before taking up the T20 International captaincy duties for the Men in Blue. Effectively, the Buchi Babu

outing will be a mere warm-up for Suryakumar and others in the mix, given they all will be part of the Duleep Trophy beginning September 5. Suryakumar's last competitive outing in First-Class cricket came during the Duleep Trophy last year. Playing for West Zone, Suryakumar managed only 71

runs in four innings at an average of just 17.75, with a top score of 52, while his side, led by Priyank Panchal, lost the final to South Zone by 75 runs. Besides Surya, Sarfaraz and Shreyas will also be among the attractions in the Mumbai squad. Sarfaraz, who made his Test debut earlier this year against

England, has been promising with the bat, managing 200 runs in five innings at an average of 50.00, including three half-centuries. As for Iyer, he is yet to leave a mark in the longest format after 14 Tests, while since January 2023, he has only managed 187 runs in 12 innings at an average of only

17.00, with a top score of only 35.

Therefore, while there is no headache for Sarfaraz heading into this Buchi Babu meet, the upcoming domestic season holds more significance for Iyer, who will be leading Team D in the Duleep Trophy. Mumbai's opponents TNCA XI will be led by R Sai Kishore, who was the leading wicket-taker in Ranji Trophy last season.

### TEAMS (FROM)

**TNCA XI:** R Sai Kishore (c), Pradosh Ranjan Paul (vc), Mokit RS Hariharan, G Ajitesh, Indrajith Baba, Boopathi Vaishna Kumar, S Lokeshwar (wk), SR Athish (wk), R Sonu Yadav, P Vidyuth, S Lakshya Jain, S Ajith Ram, G Govinath, CV Achyuth, H Trilok Nag and V Yudheeswaran.

**MUMBAI:** Sarfaraz Khan (c), Suryakumar Yadav, Shreyas Iyer, Akhil Herwadkar, Divyansh Saxena, Musheer Khan, Vedant Murkar, Siddhanth Addhatrao, Suryansh Shedge, Shams Mulani, Tanush Kotian, Himanshu Singh, Atharva Ankoalekar, Roystan Dias, Mohit Avasthi, Sylvester Dsouza and Junaid Khan.



# Australia name fit again Darcie Brown in T20 World Cup squad, Jonassen misses out

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Pacer Darcie Brown, who has recovered from her foot injury, was on Monday named in Australia's 15-member squad for the T20 World Cup even as the defending champions left out experienced spinner Jess Jonassen. Brown, who pulled out of the tour of Bangladesh in March due to a foot injury, is now fully fit and will be joined by fellow pacer Tayla Vlaeminck. "The pace duo of Tayla and Darcie is one we've been wanting to unleash for a while and is a real point of difference for us," selection chief Shawn Flegler said.

The team, which will be vying for a fourth consecutive T20 title, will be led by Alyssa Healy while Tahlia McGrath will be her deputy in the tournament beginning in the UAE on October 3. "This is the first time in a long time we've had our entire contract list available for selection ahead of a World Cup and it's resulted in a really stable and balanced squad," Flegler said.

"It's the first time Alyssa will have the reins at a World Cup and we've already seen what her and Tahlia bring from a leadership perspective, so it's exciting for them to have this opportunity to lead their country on the biggest stage," Flegler added. Left-arm spinner Sophie Molineux and Grace Harris have also recovered from their injuries. Molineux was forced to pull out of The Hundred having

suffered an acute rib fracture after being struck by a ball while batting in the off season while Harris also missed the English franchise league due to a calf injury. However, left-arm spinner Jonassen has been left out of the squad again despite being the joint highest wicket-taker for Delhi Capitals in the Women's Premier League and the third-highest wicket-taker in The Hundred earlier this month. "Jess Jonassen is again unlucky to miss out but we've been impressed with the way she's bounced back and we'll continue to monitor her form ahead of the home summer," Flegler said.

She will miss a T20 World Cup for the first time since her debut in 2012, having featured in five tournament wins since then. Rising star Phoebe Litchfield will star in her first World Cup and Flegler said she will be "a real x-factor" within an experienced squad. Australia will play three T20Is against New Zealand next month in the run up to the T20 World Cup.

All-rounder Heather Graham, who won't travel to the UAE, will be the only addition to the squad for the series against New Zealand.

**SQUAD:** Alyssa Healy (c), Tahlia McGrath (vc), Darcie Brown, Ashleigh Gardner, Kim Garth, Grace Harris, Alana King, Phoebe Litchfield, Sophie Molineux, Beth Mooney, Ellyse Perry, Megan Schutt, Annabel Sutherland, Georgia Wareham, Tayla Vlaeminck.

# US Open 2024: Even players aren't sure who will be at their best on New York's hard courts

AP ■ NEW YORK

Tennis fans unable to decide who has the best shot at doing well at the U.S. Open have company as the year's last Grand Slam tournament is set to begin Monday. Even the players themselves aren't sure what to expect. "We've seen people, all the time, surprise us every single week, every single tournament, every Slam. Sometimes there's no rhyme or reason why someone maybe does well," said Jessica Pegula, a six-time major quarterfinalist. "Sometimes it doesn't make any sense." There is the usual uncertainty that comes in New York, thanks to the vagaries of injuries and the grind of a long season. One additional factor this time could be all of the surface-switching: Tennis at the Summer Olympics was played on courts at Roland Garros, also the French Open site. So players went from clay in

Paris to grass at Wimbledon, then back to clay, before shifting to hard courts before the U.S. Open. "It's a strange year," British player Dan Evans said. "That's for sure." Pegula, for one, handled that last transition just fine, going from the Olympics to a title at Toronto and a runner-up showing at Cincinnati. Her doubles partner in Paris, 2023 U.S. Open champion Coco Gauff, played in three Olympics events, exiting early in each, then lost her second match in Toronto and her first in Cincinnati. "Changing surfaces, it's tough, not just on your body, but mentally. ... But it's part of the job, and we'll adjust," said Tommy Paul, who won a bronze medal in doubles with Taylor Fritz for the U.S. In Paris and had a 1-2 record in Montreal and Cincinnati. "Maybe there's one player or two players that are burned out from the (Olympic) experience. But other than that, for



the most part, everyone is pretty adjusted by now." The woman who defeated Pegula in the Cincinnati final, No. 2 Aryna Sabalenka, skipped the trip back to France for the 2024 Games but said she isn't all that convinced that

having - or not having - normal preparation necessarily will dictate results the next two weeks. "Everyone who came here, they think they are ready to win. I think it's not about who is ready. You can be ready better than the rest of the group," said

Sabalenka, a two-time champion at the Australian Open and runner-up to Gauff at last year's U.S. Open, "but at the end of the day, it's all about how hard are you ready to fight for it - especially on those days when you don't feel your best." Another player not at the Olympics, Frances Tiafoe, reached the Cincinnati Open title match before losing to No. 1 Jannik Sinner, whose two positive steroids tests in March came to light less than a week ago. Tiafoe, a 26-year-old from Maryland, finds the home crowds and high attention of the U.S. Open bring out his best, so he wanted to concentrate on getting ready for the site of his first Grand Slam semifinal in 2022. "It's open for a lot of guys this year, for sure. ... It's always different in a Slam. The lights are a little brighter," he said. "We'll see what ends up happening. Personally, I just like where I'm at." Then there are those such as defending U.S. Open champion Novak Djokovic, who won a gold medal at the Paris Games but didn't play a single hard-court tuneup event, or Carlos Alcaraz, the silver medalist whose only recent match on a hard court was a loss in Cincinnati.



# Lydia Ko completes Cinderella-like story by winning British Open

AP ■ ST ANDREWS (SCOTLAND)

Lydia Ko covered her face with her hands and cried tears of joy. An Olympic gold medal. Entry into the Hall of Fame. And now another major championship title - at the home of golf, no less. Summers don't come much better than that. Ko completed what she described as a "Cinderella-like story" by breaking free from a logjam of world-class talent to win the Women's British Open by two strokes at St. Andrews on Sunday, securing a third major title - and a first in eight years. Just two weeks ago, the 27-year-old New Zealander took gold at the Olympic Games in Paris. "This is almost too good to be true," Ko said. She rolled in a left-to-right birdie putt at the storied 18th hole on the Old Course to shoot 3-under 69 - for 7 under overall - and then had to wait to finish ahead of top-ranked Nelly Korda, defending champion Lilia Vu and two-time champion Jiyai Shin. That quartet got or present No. 1s shared the lead at one

point down the stretch of an engrossing final round played mostly in cold, blustery and wet conditions before ending in sunshine. Ko was waiting on the practice putting green not far from the 18th green, doing stretches while wearing ear muffs, when Vu lined up a 20-foot putt for birdie that needed to go in to force a playoff. It came up short, and Vu ultimately made bogey to shoot 73 and drop to 5 under alongside Korda (72), Shin (74) and also Ruoning Yin (70) in a four-way tie for second place. Ko wept in the embrace of her caddie. Ko qualified for the Hall of Fame by winning the gold medal in Paris on Aug. 10 and now has what many believe to be the ultimate prize in the sport - a major championship title at the home of golf. Ko was asked what feels better: an Olympic gold medal, her first two majors, or winning a third at St. Andrews. "It's kind of like saying, Do you like your mother better or your father better?" she said, eliciting laughter from the crowd around the 18th green. "They are all special in their own way."

AP ■ CASTLE ROCK (US)

Adam Scott is playing in the Presidents Cup for the 11th straight time, the most of any player from the International team. That wasn't much of a surprise. Neither were the six players for the American team. The BMW Championship was the final tournament for six automatic qualifiers for the U.S. And International teams who will compete Sept. 27-30 at Royal Montreal. The leading six players remained unchanged. Scottie Scheffler, Xander Schauffele, Wyndham Clark, Collin Morikawa, Patrick Cantlay and newcomer Sahith Theegala qualified for the Americans. Sam Burns could have grabbed the sixth spot only if he had won. He finished one shot behind Keegan Bradley. The six qualifiers for the International team were Hideki Matsuyama, Tom Kim, Sungjae Im, Jason Day, Scott

# Presidents Cup teams get six automatic qualifiers with half teams still to be picked

and Byeong Hun An. Corey Connors of Canada had a chance with a big finish at Castle Pines, but he closed with a 73 and tied for 22nd. The International team is based on the world ranking. Jim Furyk and Mike Weir of Canada will announce their six captain's picks after the Tour Championship, and that's where the intrigue lies. "I hope I didn't throw a huge wrench in everybody's plans," Bradley said, whose victory moved him to No. 10 in the U.S. Standings. Bradley, 38, already is the youngest Ryder Cup captain since Arnold Palmer (34) was a playing captain in 1963. He also has PGA Tour titles in each of the last three years, and his win at the BMW



Championship moved him to No. 11 in the world ranking. Burns moved to No. 7, followed by Tony Finau, Russell Henley, Bradley, Brian

Harman and Max Homa. Henley has never played in the Ryder Cup or Presidents Cup team. Harman and Homa have not

been in good form for most of the summer. And then there is Justin Thomas, who has played for every U.S. Team since 2017. He is at No. 19, following a year in which he was the lowest-ranked player in the Ryder Cup standings when he was picked. Thomas at least made it to the Tour Championship - the 30th and final spot - giving him a week to perform. "I feel like I played well in some big tournaments this year. I just did it earlier in the season," Thomas said. "I know I'm playing well enough, but that's up to Jim and the rest of the captains and the guys on the team. My hope is that I get to Atlanta and I prove that I belong." Weir would like to have Canadians on his side for the

home crowd. None qualified. Connors was at No. 7, followed by Cam Davis and Min Woo Lee of Australia, Christiaan Bezuidenhout, and three Canadians - Taylor Pendrith, Nick Taylor and Adam Hadwin. Pendrith played in the last Presidents Cup. He led it together on the back nine to assure a spot at the Tour Championship next week. "I want to be at East Lake. I want to be on the Presidents Cup badly. But I've had a great season, and if I didn't play great these last two weeks, I'd be OK with it," he said. "It would sting a little bit for sure, but to come out here and do it and perform under the pressure, it feels incredible. I can't wait to keep going." Scott has played on every Presidents Cup team since 2003 - one year after Tom Kim was born - but has never been on a winning team. The 2003 matches ended in a tie in South Africa, and the Americans have won nine in a row.

# Kvaratskhelia inspires Napoli to 1st win of Conte era with 3-0 victory over Bologna

AP ■ MILAN

Antonio Conte has Khvicha Kvaratskhelia back to his brilliant best and Napoli back to winning ways. Kvaratskhelia set up one goal and scored the second as Napoli beat Bologna 3-0 on Sunday for the first Serie A win of the Conte era - and the team's first league victory since April 7. Conte became Napoli's fifth coach in little more than a year when he was hired in June but his new team crumbled 3-0 at Hellas Verona in his first match back in Serie A. "The punch in the face we got in

Verona made us immediately understand that if we want to forget the past we have to stay in the center of the ring, you give punches and you get them, but you have to keep standing," Conte said. "I have a lot of faith in this group ... it was a tough week but we united even more, you won't get anywhere individually. These are my first three points with Napoli and I have great emotion. It is these feelings that push you to go further." Napoli also lost Kvaratskhelia to a minor head injury in Verona but the Georgia winger was back on Sunday - despite also having

recently returned from his home country after his wife gave birth to their first child this week. It was a different team right from the start in Naples and Giacomo Raspadori almost scored in the opening minute. Kvaratskhelia hit the crossbar shortly before halftime with a looping header from the tightest of angles but Napoli didn't have to wait much longer for the first goal under Conte. Giovanni Di Lorenzo started the move in first-half stoppages, cutting inside from the right before passing to Kvaratskhelia, who played him a superb ball back,



dinking it over the Bologna defense for Di Lorenzo to sweep into the far side of the net. And Kvaratskhelia got on the scoresheet himself in the 75th, racing downfield from just inside the Bologna half and firing into the bottom left corner from the edge of the area, with the help of a slight deflection. Kvaratskhelia celebrated by sucking his thumb in an apparent dedication to his newborn son. Kvaratskhelia also had a hand in the third, in stoppage time. As he threaded the ball through to new signing David Neres, who rolled it across for Giovanni Simeone to slot past Lukasz Skorupski.