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**SPORT 7**  
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## INDIA bloc NDA in Assembly bypolls

Win 10 out of 13 seats



TMC supporters celebrate after party candidate Madhuparna Thakur won Bagda Assembly by-election, in North 24 Parganas, on Saturday

Sabha Elections 2024. Congress chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh said the results of the Assembly elections in Uttarakhand "reflect the changing political climate in the country". The DMK emerged victorious in the bypoll to the Vikravandi Assembly constituency against NDA constituent Pattali Makkal Katchi. The by-election was necessitated due to the death of DMK legislator N. Pugazhenti in April this year. The DMK-led alliance had won all 39 Lok Sabha seats in Tamil Nadu and the lone Puducherry segment in the 2024 Parliamentary elections.

The AAP retained the Jalandhar West Assembly seat with its candidate Mohinder Bhagat defeating BJP's Sheetal Angural by 37,325 votes in the bypoll, in a boost for Punjab's ruling party following its drubbing in the Lok Sabha polls. The bypoll to this reserve Assembly seat was necessitated following the resignation of Angural as AAP legislator. He joined the BJP in March. With this victory, the AAP will now have 91 MLAs in the 117-member Punjab Assembly. The Congress has 15 MLAs, SAD three, BJP two, BSP one and one Independent.

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PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/SHIMLA/KOLKATTA

The Opposition parties under the banner of INDIA Bloc on Saturday won 10 out of the 13 Assembly seats that went to polls on Wednesday across seven States. While the TMC swept West Bengal, winning all four seats, the Congress secured two out of the three seats in Himachal Pradesh. The bypoll results of Himachal Pradesh ensured

that for the first time in the electoral history of the State, a husband and wife — CM Sukhvinder Sukhu and Kamesh Thakur — would be members of the Himachal Pradesh Assembly. In another first, there will not be a single Independent MLA in the State Assembly. The grand old party also claimed victory in two seats in Uttarakhand, including Badrinath that went to polls on July 10. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) emerged

victorious in the lone seat in Punjab while the one seat which went to bypolls in Bihar was secured by an Independent candidate. Bypolls for 13 Assembly seats were held in Punjab (1), Himachal Pradesh (3), Uttarakhand (2), West Bengal (4), Madhya Pradesh (1), Bihar (1) and Tamil Nadu (1). Bypolls are seen as significant test for the Opposition INDIA Bloc as it faced off against the BJP-led NDA in first electoral battle after Lok

## Modi vows to make Maha economic powerhouse

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Seeking to dispel public perception built up in recent years that Mumbai was losing out to Ahmedabad in terms of importance as a financial hub, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said he aimed to use the power of Maharashtra to transform it into a global economic powerhouse and make Mumbai the fintech capital of the world.

Laying foundation stone and also inaugurating ₹29,400 crore worth road, railways and ports sector projects in Mumbai ahead of the forthcoming Maharashtra Assembly polls, Modi spoke about the power of industry, agriculture and the finance sector that make Mumbai the financial hub of the country. "I aim to use the power of Maharashtra to transform it into an economic powerhouse of the world; make Mumbai the fintech capital of the world," the Prime Minister said, while laying foundation stones and dedicating multiple road, railways and ports sector projects.

Throwing light on Maharashtra's magnificent forts of Shivaji Maharaj, the Konkani coastline and the Sahyadri Mountain Range, Modi expressed his desire for Maharashtra to scale the top spot in tourism. He also spoke about the State's potential in medical tourism and conference tourism. "Maharashtra is going to write a new chapter of development



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Maharashtra Governor Ramesh Bais, Union Minister Piyush Goyal, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy Chief Ministers Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar during the foundation stone laying and inauguration ceremony of multiple developmental projects in Mumbai on Saturday

in India, and we are its co-travellers", Modi said, underlining his Government's commitment to make Maharashtra a focal point in the country's growth story. Among other projects, the Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for Thane Borivali Tunnel Project worth ₹16,600 crore. The 11.8 km tunnel will reduce the journey from Thane to Borivali by 12 km with a saving of about 1 hour in travel time. Modi laid the foundation stone for 6.5 km Tunnel work at Goregaon Mulund Link Road (GMLR) Project worth over ₹6,300 crore. The GMLR envisages road connectivity from the Western Express Highway at Goregaon to the Eastern Express Highway at Mulund. The Prime Minister also laid

the foundation stone for Kalyan Yard Remodelling and Gati Shakti Multi-Modal Cargo Terminal at Turbhe in Navi Mumbai. The Prime Minister dedicated the New Platforms at Lokmanya Tilak Terminus and the extension of Platforms No. 10 & 11 at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus Station to the nation. The Prime Minister launched the Mukhyamantri Yuva Karya Prashikshan Yojana with an outlay of around ₹5,600 crore. It is a transformative internship programme that addresses youth unemployment by providing opportunities for skill enhancement and industry exposure for youth aged 18 to 30 years. Elaborating on the national

resolution of Viksit Bharat in the next 25 years, Modi underscored the role of Mumbai and Maharashtra in the country's development journey. "It is our goal that quality of life goes up for everyone in Mumbai and Maharashtra. We are trying to improve the connectivity in the nearby areas of Mumbai", the Prime Minister said. Alluding to the completion of the coastal road and Atal Setu, Modi said that 20,000 were using Atal Setu daily, saving an estimated 20-25 lakh rupees worth of fuel. "The Metro system is developing rapidly in Mumbai as the length of the Metro line increased from 8 km a decade ago to 80 km today and work is going on the 200 km Metro network", he said.

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## More power to LG sparks political storm in J&K

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Ahead of holding the maiden Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir after the Abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, the Centre's move to give more powers to the Lieutenant Governor (LG) of Jammu and Kashmir for taking decisions on police, and officers of all-India services such as the IAS and the IPS, and giving sanctions for prosecution in various cases has once again triggered a political storm in the region.

As per the notification issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs on July 12, 2024, the decisions regarding the appointment of Advocate General and other law officers, besides matters related to the anti-corruption bureau will also be taken by the Lieutenant Governor. These powers were given to the L-G by the Union Home Ministry on Friday by amending the rules issued under the Jammu Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, which was enacted for the bifurcation of the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir into Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. According to the amendments, almost all key proposals would now go to the L-G through the Chief Secretary. However, the move has invited



File Photo: PTI

sharp political reactions from different political parties in the Union Territory. Reacting strongly to the decision, the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference leader Omar Abdullah Saturday said the Centre's move would render the new Chief Minister "powerless". Omar also indicated that the polls would be held soon in Jammu and Kashmir. "This is why a firm commitment laying out the timeline for restoration of full, undiluted statehood for J&K is a prerequisite for these elections. The people of

J&K deserve better than powerless, rubber stamp CM who will have to beg the LG to get his/her peon appointed," the NC vice president said in a post on X (earlier Twitter). The chief spokesperson of the National Conference Tanvir Sadiq termed the decision "a blatant misuse of power" by the BJP-led Government at the Centre to "disempower" the people. The Congress party claimed the only meaning that can be drawn from this notification is that full-fledged Statehood for J&K does not seem likely in the immediate

future. Congress leader Jairam Ramesh in a post on X claimed, "There has been a consensus across political parties that J&K must immediately become a full-fledged state of the Indian Union once again, and not remain as a UT". PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti's daughter and her media advisor, Iltija Mufti, said the order seeks to disempower the powers of an elected Government in Jammu and Kashmir. "At a time when there's been considerable speculation about GOI holding elections in J&K this new MHA order & farmaan widening the already unbridled powers of an unelected LG make a few things abundantly clear," Iltija Mufti said in a post on X. She said the order makes it clear that Assembly elections will be conducted this year itself, and that the Centre "is well aware if & when State elections are held in J&K a non-BJP Government will be elected". "The order seeks to disempower the powers of the next J&K State Government only because BJP doesn't want to cede control or lose its iron grip over Kashmir. Statehood is out of the question. An elected government in J&K will be reduced to a municipality," she added.

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## X user booked for lewd remark against Kirti Chakra awardee's widow

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police's Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations (IFSO) cell has registered an FIR regarding an alleged lewd remark made about the widow of Kirti Chakra awardee Captain Anshuman Singh on the social media platform X. A senior police on Saturday stated, "A complaint was received from National Commission of Women (NCW), alleging that a facebook profile has made extremely lewd and derogatory comment on a picture of a widow of a martyr, has committed the offence under section 79, BNS- 2023 and sec 67 of the IT Act, 2000".

The NCW on Monday took a suo motu cognisance and filed a complaint before the Delhi Police regarding the matter. The commission also demanded a fair and timely investigation into the matter and requested a detailed action taken report (ATR) within three days. Taking cognisance of the complaint and after preliminary examination of its contents, a case was registered under section 79 of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and sec 67 of the IT Act 2000 and investigation has been taken up. Section 79 of the BNS states



"Whoever, intending to insult the modesty of any woman, utters any words, makes any sound or gesture, or exhibits any object in any form, intending that such word or sound shall be heard, or that such gesture or object shall be seen, by such woman, or intrudes upon the privacy of such woman, shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years, and also with fine." Section 67 of the IT Act, 2000 deals with the punishment for publishing or transmitting obscene material in electronic form. The social media platform has also been contacted to provide details about the handle that allegedly passed the lewd comments according to the officer.

## PM BLESSES AMBANIS



## Union Minister surprises with daring skydiving feat

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Known more for his political endeavours as the BJP MP from Rajasthan's Jodhpur, Union Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, aged 56, surprised everyone on Saturday by showcasing his adventurous spirit as he took part in a daring skydiving sortie at the country's first private skydiving facility located in Haryana's Narnaul. His daring leap also marked the inaugural World Skydiving Day with a gravity-defying feat that captured the imagination of both enthusiasts and onlookers alike. The Minister was guided by a professional as he went high up in the skies and landed softly on the ground before being helped up. He was full of excitement as he saw a bright future for



Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat performs skydiving on World Skydiving Day in Narnaul on Saturday

India's tourism sector and aero sports through the Narnaul-based facility. This is for the first time India has opened its skies for the exhilarating sport of skydiving. After his skydiving trip, the Union Minister spoke to the media and called his experience 'awesome'. He also

said on the occasion of World Skydiving Day, it is very important to attract people to this sport who can enjoy it with all the safety harnesses in place. "Today is very important for India and the world. It is important for India because the very first private skydiving facility has opened

in Narnaul. It is important for the world because World Skydiving Day commences today. Being India's Tourism Minister, it is my responsibility to ensure the availability of facilities for everyone to experience them," he told reporters. He said the Centre will work with the State Government and private partners engaging in this field to further promote it in different places in the country. Social media X, formerly known as Twitter was buzzed with excitement over Shekhawat's unexpected foray into skydiving after he posted a few pictures and a video in a post on X on the adventure activity at Narnaul that was

organised by a private entity. "Today on World Skydiving Day, I too enjoyed its unique thrill. Its facility has started on a private level in Narnaul, Haryana. I am happy that the tourism sector in India is getting equipped with world-class facilities. We invite tourists with open arms from the ground to the sky," he wrote on X. The Minister's adventurous spirit not only sparked admiration but also ignited discussions about India's emerging skydiving sector. Some lauded it as an excellent initiative, while others offered suggestions to nurture this newfound interest in adventure sports.

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### THE PIONEER WINS

One of our esteemed colleagues GYANESHWAR DAYAL has won as Joint Secretary in the prestigious Press Association of India in elections held today.

# Trend is against BJP: Mamata after Assembly bypoll results

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday said that the people of India had begun to reject the BJP which was proved by the results of the recently concluded general elections and the July 10 by-elections in several States.

Congratulating the people of Bengal for "presenting the Trinamool Congress all the four out of four Assembly seats," Banerjee said, the "election results show that the people have begun to reject the BJP not only in Bengal but all over the country... while in Bengal the TMC has won all the four seats... I have information that except for two seats in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh the BJP has lost in all the places where by-elections were held... so we can easily say that the trend is against the BJP in India."

Her statement assumes importance in the wake of her talks with Uddhav Thackeray of Shiv Sena, Sharad Pawar of NCP and Akhilesh Yadav of SP



in Mumbai where she went to attend the wedding ceremony of Anant Ambani the son of industrialist Mukesh Ambani. Banerjee's reactions came soon after Saturday's election results showed that the TMC had won all the four Assembly seats of Raiganj in North Bengal, Ranaghat South in Nadia district, Bagda in North 24 Parganas and Manikata in North Kolkata. Out of the four seats the BJP had won three in 2021 Assembly elections. The saffron party had secured lead in Ranaghat and Bagda Assembly segments even in the recently concluded par-

liamentary elections. While in Manikata TMC's Supti Pandey defeated BJP's Kalyan Chaubey by a margin of over 62,312 votes party candidate Madhuparna Thakur wrested the Bagda seat defeating BJP's Binay Kumar Biswas by a margin of 33,455 votes. TMC's Mukut Mani Adhikari defeated BJP's Manoj Kumar Biswas by a margin of 39,048 votes at Ranaghat South while Raiganj Assembly seat was wrested by TMC's Krishna Kalyani by a margin of 50,077 votes. He defeated BJP's Manas Kumar Ghosh. Even in the 2024 general polls BJP had a

lead of about 40,000 votes in Raiganj which was won by the TMC for the first time in its 26 years of existence. Referring to the electoral success Banerjee said that "the victory has made us more responsible and we will undertake to work for the people with more conviction... the victory belongs not to the TMC but to the people of Bengal who have rejected the temptations of the BJP and ignored the pressure of the central agencies... this once again proves that disinformation campaigns and falsehood cannot win elections." Banerjee who on Saturday returned from Mumbai she met a number of national and international celebrities at the wedding ceremony and invited many of them to Kolkata. "I met many of them like Amitabh Bacchan ji, Javed Akhtar ji and Shabana Azmi ji and invited them to come to the Kolkata in the International Film Festival in December." Banerjee who held talks with Uddhav Thackeray, Sharad Pawar and Akhilesh Yadav would nonetheless dwell on what transpired in the talks.

# Dams have turned Sutlej into rivulet, says SC judge

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Supreme Court judge Justice Sanjay Karol has said the construction of dams on the Sutlej has turned the trans-Himalayan river into a rivulet, altering the entire ecosystem and eco chain. Speaking at the launch of a book titled "Climate Change: The Policy, Law and Practice" by lawyer Jatinder (Jay) Cheema on Friday, Justice Karol also highlighted that climate change is heavily impacting the agriculture sector in the country.

The Supreme Court judge noted that stretches of certain rivers are drying up due to rising temperatures and human activity. "The only trans-Himalayan river in India, the Sutlej, has turned into a rivulet because of the construction of several dams, changing the entire ecosystem and eco chain," he said. Justice Karol said successive governments have spent Rs 30,000 crore on cleaning the Ganga. "We know the current state. We have all seen it. A lot more needs to be done on this issue. The famous Gangetic

river dolphins, unfortunately, are nowhere to be seen." He added that farming has suffered due to the erosion of climate stability over the years. "With nearly 58 per cent of the Indian population relying on agriculture and its allied activities for their livelihood, and even while other sectors have seen tremendous growth, agriculture retains its predominance. While India accomplished the noteworthy milestone of self-reliance in the 1970s with the Green Revolution and now produces an adequate amount of food-grain for its entire population, farming in India is embroiled in a host of socio-economic and environmental issues," he said. "Owing to climate change, India's agricultural yield is said to have reduced. Other factors leading to the erosion of farming conditions and agricultural produce include the adoption of unsustainable practices such as the use of heavy chemical fertilisers — we have seen what is happening in Punjab — over-irrigation, and excessive groundwater extraction," Justice Karol said. Citing an example of climate

impact on agriculture, the judge said that the cultivation of renowned "paan" (betel) leaves in Bihar has taken a significant hit, with temperatures rising to nearly 50 degrees Celsius. He emphasised that the health of the agriculture sector in India is closely linked to the country's rivers. However, due to shifts in monsoon patterns, the rivers and the vast network of flora, fauna, and communities have been impacted. Justice Karol also said that climate change needs to be recognised as an independent branch of law, "distinct from environmental law at large." "It is the need of the hour for everyone to be made aware of environmental laws, the impact of climate change, and the modern practices that need to be adopted," he said. At the same event, Supreme Court judge Justice K V Viswanathan said climate change is a serious existential threat and called for the establishment of a permanent commission in India, similar to NITI Aayog, to find a comprehensive solution to the problem.

# Desai's magical tunes enthrall audience at cultural fest



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

From enchanting performances to electrifying competitions and tantalising culinary delights, there was something to captivate every soul at EDESA, an annual cultural festival of NIFTEM-K. The highlight of the fest was a live performance by Bollywood singer Yasser Desai which captivated the audience to the fullest. Yasser started the programme by singing one of his superhit song 'Hum To Deewane' and enthralled the audience with his melodious voice. He also sang many other famous Bollywood songs including 'Naino Ne Bandhi' and 'Dil Ko Qaraar Aaya'.

# Maha council polls: Boost to BJP-led Mahayuti ahead of Assembly polls

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

After its poor performance in the recent Lok Sabha polls — in which it managed to mere 17 out of 48 seats in the State, ruling BJP-led Mahayuti has redeemed its morale ahead of the Assembly polls, by winning nine out of 11 seats — one seat more than than eight seats it could have bagged in the normal course.

Though the Mahayuti's impressive victory will have no direct bearing on the State Assembly polls to be held in October this year, the poll outcome has pepped up the mood in the ruling BJP- Shinde Sena- Ajit

Pawar NCP alliance camp. The ruling MahaYuti — with a combined tally of 202 seats — had the strength to win eight MLC seats. It needed five more votes to win the ninth seat. However, by securing five additional votes in the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) camp, the MahaYuti managed to win the ninth seat as well. On the contrary, the MVA had fielded three candidates in the MLC poll but it managed to win two seats. The MVA had a tally of 65 votes ( MLAs in the Assembly) and it needed four additional votes to win all the three seats it had contested. Since at least six to seven og



MLAs cross-voted, the MVA not only failed to win the third seat, but also gave one additional seat on a platter to the ruling MahaYuti. The results of the MLC polls were declared late on Friday

night. Owing to the cross-voting, the MVA won all the nine seats it had contested. The winners were: Pankaja Munde, Yogesh Tilekar, Parinay Phuke, Amit Gorkhe and Sadabahu Khot (all from the BJP), Krupal

Tumane and Bhavana Gawali ( both from Eknath Shinde Sena), Shivajirao Garje and Rajesh Vitekar (both from the Ajit Pawar-led NCP). After its superlative performance in the recent Lok Sabha polls, the Opposition MVA comprising the Congress-Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (Sharad Pawar) alliance -- which had won 31 out of 48 LS seats — finds itself in a strong position ahead of the State Assembly polls. However, cross-voting in its camp and consequent failure to win the third seat — has come as a dampener for the Opposition in the run-up to win the Maharashtra Assembly

polls. Following the disheartening MLC poll outcome, the Opposition MVA has gone into a crisis management mode. The assessment by the MVA constituents has revealed that six to seven Congress MLAs cross-voted in favour of the of the BJP-led Maha Yuti (NDA) candidates in the biennial State Council polls held to 11 MLC seats. The MLAs of different political parties voted in the polls. If anything, the MLC poll outcome has established that chief minister and Shiv Sena chief leader Eknath Shinde, deputy

chief minister Devendra Fadnis of the BJP and deputy chief minister-NCP president Ajit Pawar have hold over the the MLAs of their respective parties. From the Opposition MVA side, Milind Narvekar, a close aide of Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray, and Congress candidate Pradnya Satav won the MLC polls. The Left-wing Peasants and Workers Party of India general secretary Jayant Patil, who was backed by Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP), lost the polls. "I got my twelve votes. The Shiv Sena (UBT) got the (extra) Congress votes. Some of the

Congress votes were split. Don't want to talk anymore," defeated candidate Jayant Patil said. Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole indicated that the party has information about who has cross-voted. "We set a trap during the biennial council election and those cross-voted were today trapped. We have briefed the Congress high command about the poll outcome and identified those of our MLAs who cross-voted in the polls," Patole said. "The party will take action against those who have committed anti-party work and betrayed the party. They will be shown the doors," Patole said.

# Wanted criminal Rakesh alias Kala arrested

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

In a major breakthrough the Special Task Force (STF) of the Haryana Police has arrested Rakesh alias Kala Khairmpuria, a wanted criminal known for his extensive involvement in serious crimes across Haryana and Rajasthan. STF chief Simardeep Singh said the accused operated under the alias Kala Khairmpuria and had been evading law enforcement agencies since he jumped parole in 2020. Throughout this period, he continued to orchestrate criminal activities initially from within India and after fleeing abroad from countries such as UAE, Armenia and Thailand. Rakesh entered the crime world in 2014 and was involved in several serious offences like dacoity, robbery, murder, and illegal possession of firearms. "Rakesh was first convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment for a murder that he



committed in 2015 in Bhadra, District Hanumangarh in Rajasthan. He was sentenced in 2018 and after serving the sentence till 2020, he was released on parole and he never returned," Singh said. During this period, he evaded arrest and further expanded his criminal operations in Haryana and Rajasthan. He committed another murder in Village Darauli in Fatehabad district of Haryana in 2021. Kala could not be arrested and was declared a proclaimed offender (PO) in 2023. The Haryana police also announced Rs 1 lakh on his arrest.

# Union Minister surprises with daring skydiving feat

From Page 1

Tourism operators are equally optimistic at the opening of the new tourism stream in the country, calling it a significant moment in adventure tourism. Rajnish Kaistha, Senior Vice President Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) said, "Sky diving being an international sport we are glad that it has now come to India also with Haryana taking the lead. Inspired by the movie Hirthirk Roshan starrer 'Jindagi na milegi dubara' many Indians have been going abroad to enjoy the thrill offered by adventurous sports like skydiving. However, it shall now be within the reach of more people here also without traveling abroad and it shall inculcate the spirit among the youth. And of course even foreigners travelling to India shall be able to enjoy this additional activity and we welcome more such initiatives, he said.

Reetu Jain, Director, Coterie Tours Pvt Ltd highlighted the potential of adventure sports in addressing the youth's need for entertainment and lifestyle alternatives, which currently lead to risky behaviors like stunting on roads and highways. She also suggested partnerships with foreign adventure clubs for training and certification, stringent enforcement of regulations, and the establishment of dedicated facilities like skating rinks and auto tracks. Industry experts said the first annual celebration of World Skydiving Day is taking place on July 13 and will be repeated every second Saturday of July. The inaugural World Skydiving Day was announced by four organisations - the US Parachute Association (USPA), the Australian Parachute Federation, the British Skydiving and the Canadian Sport Parachuting Association. The event aims to set the record for most skydives on this day and celebrate the thrilling experience of the extreme sport. World Skydiving Day is a call to people from all walks of life to take a leap and be part of history. We invite you to experience this adventure of a lifetime-it's not just for adrenaline junkies or a distant dream on your bucket list," USPA Executive Director Albert Berchtold said in a statement here.

# INDIA bloc NDA in Assembly...

From Page 1

Further, resigning and switching to the BJP proved costly for two Independent legislators of Himachal Pradesh who lost to Congress candidates from their seats. Congress' Hardeep Singh Bawa defeated his nearest rival and BJP candidate KL Thakur in the bypoll to the Nalagarh Assembly seat by 8,990 votes. Bawa is a five-time Indian National Trade Union Congress president. BJP's Ashish Sharma, however, managed to win the assembly bypolls from Hamirpur seat from nearest rival and Congress candidate Pushpender Verma. In the 2022 Assembly

elections in the state, three Independents namely Hoshiyar Singh (Dehra), Ashish Sharma (Hamirpur) and K L Thakur (Nalagarh) were elected but they resigned after voting for BJP candidate Harsh Mahajan in the Rajya Sabha election on February 27. Six Congress rebels had also cross-voted for the BJP nominee in the election and later joined the saffron party. There was anger among the electorate against the Independents who vacated their seats to join the BJP," HP Congress president Pratibha Singh said, claiming this to be a reason behind her party's win in the Dehra and Nalagarh bypolls on Saturday.

# More power to LG...

From Page 1

Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) president Vikar Rasool Wani termed the move a "murder of democracy." "The murder of democracy in Jammu and Kashmir is evident before the restoration of proper democracy and statehood. MHA gave more powers, including the Police, Law and order, and the transfer of officers etc have been vested in the LG," Wani said on X. Apni Party chief Altaf Bukhari appealed to Jammu and Kashmir's political parties to shun differences and unitedly raise voices against the

Centre's move. "This new decision aims at making the state hollow in which no powers will be left for an elected government... The people of Jammu and Kashmir do not support this," Bukhari said at a press conference here. Bukhari, a former minister, said if the Centre wants to create a "powerless assembly" in Jammu and Kashmir, it will not be acceptable. "If they want the chief minister to be a toothless tiger and befool the people, then I do not think this will solve any of the issues confronting the people of Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

# Surge in lightning...

From Page 1

"People have documented that the frequency of thunderstorms is increasing everywhere, including India, due to climate change," he told PTI. "Unfortunately, we do not have long-term data for lightning flashes to confirm an increase in incidents. However, we can conclude that global warming leads to more convective activity, resulting in more thunderstorms and, consequently, more lightning strikes," he said. Rajeevan explained that lightning is attributed to deeper clouds with large vertical extensions. "With climate change increasing the moisture-holding capacity of the air, more such clouds are forming," he added. According to the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, lightning incidents in India increased by 30 to 40 per cent between 1995 and 2014. National Crime Records

Bureau's (NCRB) Crimes in India Report 2022 said lightning accounted for 2,887 of the 8,060 deaths caused by forces of nature. Data from the India Meteorological Department shows six per cent of the districts and four per cent of the population are moderately to highly vulnerable to lightning strikes. Odisha ranks as the most vulnerable state. D S Pai, a senior scientist at the IMD, said the higher the surface temperature, the lighter the air and the higher it will rise. "So, with higher temperatures, there is a greater chance of convective activity or thunderstorms, which naturally leads to more lightning strikes. Climate change is making such events more frequent," he told PTI. The senior meteorologist pointed out that the large number of lightning strikes in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh that claimed several lives last week were also due to large-scale thunderstorm activity.

# Govt plans to reduce digital divide in border villages

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home and Cooperative Development Minister Amit Shah announced on Saturday that the Government has embarked on an ambitious goal to ensure mobile 4G network coverage in all villages located within 19 border areas across Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Ladakh by the end of December. This initiative, part of the Vibrant Village Programme (VVP), aims to significantly reduce the digital divide and bolster connectivity in these

remote and strategically vital regions of India. "Mobile 4G connectivity is being worked on rapidly in these areas and by December, all villages under the VVP will be covered by the 4G network," said the Minister as he reviewed the implementation of the "Vibrant Villages Programme" at a high-level meeting here. He also directed all concerned to continue the efforts being made by senior Ministers and officials to better understand the issues of border villages under the special initiative taken by the Central Government and

stressed the need to provide employment opportunities to residents of border villages and increase connectivity to prevent migration from such remote areas. During the meeting attended by senior officers of the Ministry of Home Affairs besides Director General of Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) Rahul Rasgotra, the Home Minister said the Narendra Modi Government is committed to the all-round development of the border villages under the VVP. Shah said Central armed police forces and Army deployed around the border villages should encourage

purchase of local agricultural and handicraft products through cooperatives. The Minister also shared that work is being done to develop tourist circuits to bring vibrancy to these select villages and promote tourism. In this endeavour, capacity building and tourism related infrastructure is being developed in coordination with the Ministry of Tourism. Shah said the healthcare facilities of the Army and Central armed police forces should be regularly made available to benefit the residents of nearby villages.

# Modi vows to make Maha economic...

From Page 1

"Transformation of Indian Railways benefitting Mumbai and Maharashtra in a big way. Today new platforms were dedicated to the nation on Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus and Lokmanya Tilak Station enabling 24 coaches long trains to ply from there," said. Modi, whose stress was on the development activities initiated by his government during the last ten years, said that the length of National highways in Maharashtra has tripled in the last 10 years. "The GMLR Project is a great example of nature and progress. The Thane Borivali

Twin Tunnel Project will reduce the distance between Thane and Boriveli to a few minutes," the Prime Minister said. The Prime Minister reiterated the government's endeavor to develop the pilgrimage sites of the nation while also easing travel and extending services to the pilgrims. "This connectivity infrastructure is helping tourism, agriculture and industry, improving employment and resting ease for women. "These works of the NDA government are empowering the poor, farmers, women power and youth power" Modi said

"Skill development and employment in large numbers is India's need of the hour," the Prime Minister said. Alluding to a recently released detailed report on employment by the Reserve Bank of India, Modi said that approximately 8 crore jobs have been created in the last 3-4 years, thereby silencing the critics. The Prime Minister also asked the people to remain cautious of the false narratives being spun against India's development. He said that employment is created when bridges are built, railway tracks are laid, roads are constructed, and

local trains are manufactured. He noted that the rate of employment in the country is directly proportional to infrastructure development. "The development model of the NDA government has been to give priority to the deprived," the Prime Minister emphasized, referring to his government's first decision of the new government to build 3 crore houses for the poor. "crores of families have already received houses. Lakhs of dalits and deprived in Maharashtra also benefited from the Awas Yojana. "We are committed to fulfilling the dream of owning a house

for both the poor and the middle class living in cities", he said. He talked about the role SVANidhi Scheme is performing in restoring dignity in the life of the street vendors. He informed that about 90 lakh loans have been approved under the scheme including 13 lakhs in Maharashtra and 1.5 lakh in Mumbai itself. He quoted a study that says that the scheme has resulted in a monthly increase of 2 thousand rupees in the income of these vendors. Highlighting a speciality of the SVANidhi scheme, Modi said that the self-respect and power of the poor, especially

the street vendors of the country who have availed bank loans under the scheme and also repaid it in time. "The beneficiaries of SVANidhi scheme have so far made digital transactions worth Rs 3.25 lakh crore," he said. Maharashtra Governor Ramesh Bais, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Deputy Chief Ministers of Maharashtra, Shri Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal and Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Ramdas Athawale were present on the occasion.

# Breach in Munak Canal fixed

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The breach in one of the sub-branch of Munak Canal, which led to flooding in outer Delhi's Bawana area and impacted water supply in different parts of the city, has been fixed and the Dwarka water treatment plant is likely to be operational from 4 pm. Informing about the development, Delhi Water Minister Atishi on Saturday said that water supply in Dwarka will also resume from night. "The repair of the Munak Canal embankment was completed last (Friday) night. Haryana released water from the Kakroi head at 10.30 am. This water will reach Delhi by 1.30 to 2 pm. The Dwarka water treatment plant will start operating from 4 pm and water supply in Dwarka will resume from tonight," Atishi said in a post on X (formerly Twitter).



stated that the repair work, including reinforcement and concreting, was completed in all respects by Friday midnight. "Since a minimum of eight hours was required for curing, the HID had conducted a fitness test at the site on Saturday morning after the curing period and thereafter HID released water from Kakroi regulator (40 Km above from Delhi border at 11 am in the CLC Canal). Water released in the canal has since reached Delhi," he stated. The official also added that the operation of Dwarka water treatment plant (which was

earlier affected due to closure of CLC) will start functioning from evening. "The scheduled Water supply in the command areas of Dwarka plant will commence from Sunday morning smoothly," he added. The Delhi government, in a statement issued on Friday night, said that the Jamuna

Canal breach was fixed. Jeetesh, an official from the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) who was present in the affected area, said, "We (DJB) have been tasked with night duty for canal supervision. The repair work is being managed by the Haryana government but we are overseeing the entire process to provide updates on the progress". A junior engineer from the DJB said that the repair work was completed around 11 pm on Friday. "Concrete usually takes at least 11 to 12 hours to dry. The water will also take two to three hours to reach Delhi from Haryana," he said. On Friday, Atishi said that a team from the Haryana Irrigation Department, which had built the Munak Canal and maintains it, was present at the spot and was being assisted by a team of the DJB. Speaking about the affected area and the JJ colony, Atishi said the water has been cleared from the area, and a health camp set up for medical provisions as waterborne diseases can occur in such situations.

## No water in Rohini 3 days after canal breach: Vijender



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Former Delhi BJP President and MLA Vijender Gupta stated that the water scarcity in Rohini continues due to the breakage of the canal in Bawana. Even three days after the canal break, the Delhi government has failed to restore the water supply. Gupta warned the Delhi government that if the water problem is not resolved by tonight, Rohini residents will be forced to take to the streets. He added that due to the Kejriwal government's negligence towards public issues, Delhiites are facing one problem after another.

## Jharkhand CM Soren meets Kejriwal's wife



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren and his wife Kalpana Soren on Saturday met the wife of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who is in jail in connection with the corruption case related to the alleged excise policy scam, Sunita Kejriwal. Senior AAP leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh was also present during the meeting at the Delhi chief minister's official residence here. AAP posted a video of the meeting on social media platform X (formerly twitter) and captioned it "INDIA is united against dictatorship".

Posting photos of the meet, the party tweeted, "Hail Johar - Hail India. Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren and his wife Kalpana Soren met Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's wife Sunita Kejriwal and AAP MP Sanjay Singh today at the Chief Minister's residence." The issue of Soren and Kejriwal's arrest by the central probe agency was prominently raised by the leaders of the opposition INDIA bloc during the Lok Sabha poll campaigning. Kalpana Soren and Sunita Kejriwal too had joined the poll campaigning on behalf of their jailed husbands and raised voices against their arrests.

## Government School Teachers' Association holds appreciation ceremony for BJP leaders

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Government School Teachers' Association on Saturday held an appreciation ceremony at New Delhi Municipal Hall in honour of state BJP President Virendra Sachdeva and party MPs for halting the transfer orders of over 5,000 teachers. The event was organised by the association's General Secretary Arjun Veer Singh. He stated, "Following the efforts of Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva, the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi has halted the transfer orders of 5004 teachers. In gratitude, the Government School Teachers' Association has honoured Sachdeva, along with North West MP Yogendra Chandolia, West Delhi MP Kamaljeet Sehrawat, and New Delhi MP Bansuri Swaraj." On this occasion, the Delhi BJP chief stated, "There is no one



greater in this world than a teacher, and there is always something to learn from them. It is unacceptable that teachers should be transferred just because they have spent 10 years at a school." He accused the Kejriwal government of planning to exploit teachers during elections but failing in their attempt and emphasised that the BJP understands the pain of Delhi's citizens and has taken steps to address it.

"There should be no compromise on the dignity and respect of teachers. A conducive environment is necessary for teaching, but when the government turns teachers into event managers, the quality of education suffers, as seen in Delhi today. Delhi has changed and needs to be transformed back to its former state. Previously, people could bathe in the Yamuna, but now they can't even touch the water," Sachdeva said.

## No demolition drive near Majnu Ka Tila gurdwara this weekend: DDA

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) will not be carrying out the demolition drive against encroachment on the Yamuna flood plain near south of Majnu Ka Tila gurdwara on Saturday and Sunday. According to sources, the authority will not carry the drive while no immediate reason was cited for this. The DDA, in a public notice released on Thursday, said that it will undertake a demolition drive in the area on Saturday and Sunday. Residents of Majnu Ka Tila, where Pakistani Hindus are staying, said they received the notice from the land owning agency late Thursday evening. In its notice, the DDA asked the residents to vacate the area by Friday. The notice referred to the National Green Tribunal's April 3 order and the Delhi High



Court's March 12 order behind the move. "In the compliance of order, it is proposed to organise a demolition drive against the encroachment in the river Yamuna flood plain area near south of Gurudwara Majnu Ka Tila (Western Bank) on Saturday and Sunday," the DDA notice read. The affected families can take temporary harbour at Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) shelters, it said. "Hence, the residents of the area are hereby requested to vacate

the area by July 12 otherwise they will be self-responsible for any loss due to demolition drive against the encroachment on July 13 or later," the notice stated. In its order on April 3, the NGT had said that the status report filed by the DDA did not disclose any substantial effective steps by the agency for removing the encroachment from the area. The NGT asked the agency to file a compliance report at least one week before the next date of hearing, which is July 15, by e-mail.

## Woman electrocuted after coming in contact with live wire

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amid high humidity levels, Delhi and adjoining region of Noida on Saturday woke up to light to moderate rain lashed parts of the national Capital. However, the rain became deadly for some as a 34 year old homemaker, identified as Poonam, died due to electrocution. DCP North east Joy Tirkey stated, "On Saturday at 7:39 am, the deceased was electrocuted near Moral Hospital in Bhajanpura. Due to rain, there was water logging in the area. A live wire from an electricity pole near the footpath caused her to get electrocuted and fall down in the water." He added that she was rushed to Moral Hospital, where the doctor declared her dead and a case of negligence has been registered. Safdarjung, the city's primary weather station, recorded high humidity levels at 92 per cent on 8:30 am and 94 per cent on 5:30

pm. The maximum temperature was recorded at 35.6 degrees Celsius, marking no deviation from the normal, while the minimum temperature settled at 25 degrees Celsius, two notches below the normal. Additionally, 3 mm of rainfall was recorded at Safdarjung, Lodhi Road recorded 3 mm, the Ridge observatory recorded 0.4 mm and Salwan Public School Mayur Vihar recorded 15.5 mm of rainfall between 5.30 to 8.30 am, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). The weather department has predicted a generally cloudy sky with light rain throughout the day. This comes a day after the met department issued a rainfall advisory for Delhi NCR, predicting ongoing light to moderate rains in the national capital over the coming days. According to IMD's latest update, Delhi and Noida can expect light rainfall until July 17.

# BJP conspiring to keep Kejriwal in jail to play with his health: AAP leader

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Senior AAP leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh on Saturday claimed that the weight of the incarcerated Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has dropped by 8.5 kg since his arrest on March 21 and alleged that the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi are conspiring to keep him in jail 'to play with his health'. Singh alleged, "When Arvind Kejriwal was arrested on March 21, his weight was 70 kg and today his weight has dropped by 8.5 kg to 61.5 kg. The reason for this is not known, no serious investigation is being done to find out how he lost so much weight. Losing 8.5 kg weight and not knowing the reason for it are symptoms of many serious diseases, you can



ask any doctor." He added that this is a matter of serious concern. He claimed that this is part of a conspiracy hatched by the BJP and said, "We have been saying from day one that on

one hand, BJP's aim is to harass Arvind Kejriwal, to keep him in jail. On the other hand, the aim of the BJP and the Modi government is to play with Arvind Kejriwal's life." "A conspiracy is being hatched

by the BJP and its central government to make him suffer from the most serious disease, for an incident to take place with him in jail, to have some serious health problem," Singh said, adding that since Kejriwal is in jail, it has happened about five times, when his sugar level suddenly fell below 50 at night. The Rajya Sabha MP asked the court to take cognizance and stated, "When there was every possibility that he would get relief from the Supreme Court, just before that the CBI made a false case against Kejriwal so that these people could play with his life. They are harassing Arvind Kejriwal, but it is a conspiracy of the BJP and Prime Minister Modi that some accident happens to Kejriwal in jail. Therefore, the court should also take cognizance of this."

## Sanjay's statements nothing but repeat of rhetoric: Sachdeva

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva claimed that the statement made by senior AAP leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh related to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's jail, bail and health is nothing but a repeat of rhetoric. He stated that the AAP leaders blame the BJP everytime they see any chance of the AAP chief getting bail. "Every time AAP leaders see any hope of bail for Arvind Kejriwal they start their old rhetoric that BJP wants to keep Kejriwal in jail and that



his health is steadily deteriorating, he is losing weight with possibility of serious illness," the state BJP chief

treatment instead his political diatribes increase to new heights," Sachdeva stated claiming that Delhiites have no trust in Kejriwal anymore. "Sanjay Singh should note that people of Delhi have no trust left in Arvind Kejriwal and AAP as they showed by rejecting AAP in recent lok sabha elections despite Kejriwal's 'Jail Ka Jawab Vote Se' campaign," he said. Sachdeva added that Kejriwal repeatedly said to the electorate to vote for him if they want him, to be freeman but the people of Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana and Punjab totally rejected Kejriwal and his call.

## One minor among four gangsters arrested for attempted extortion

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Four members, including a 17 year old CCL (Children in Conflict with the Law) of a gang, involved in a firing incident in an attempt for extortion of money from a gym owner in North Delhi's Burari were arrested by the Delhi Police. According to the police on Saturday, the complainant namely Rohit, who was on the target of a jailed gangster for extortion bid, was hesitant to file a formal complaint against the accused out of fear but did so later on June 9. The accused worked on the orders of the gangsters who gave instruction to one of the accused from jail. The gangster had hired the members from Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to follow the complainant for one month and subsequently carry out the crime. "From CCTV Footage, it was found that the accused followed a local road for enter-

ing Delhi from Haryana and avoided the main road. Accused were followed till Sonipat, Haryana and were located in Narela, Delhi. From Local input and body structure of the accused, one suspect namely Nikhil resident of Village Hiranki, Delhi was identified as one of the assailants," DCP North Manoj Kumar Meena said. He added that Nikhil was identified as a member of the criminal Gang as he was earlier arrested with Rohit Rana, alias Moi, another criminal Gang member in January 2022. It was also revealed that Nikhil was receiving directions from a jailed criminal on the phone. Further, the DCP stated that the gang used to hire minors for shooting and relevant sections of law have been invoked. "A case under section 125, 351(3), 3(5) of the BNS & 27, 54, 59 of Arms Act was registered at Police Station Burari and further investigation has been taken up," he stated.

## Plantation drives carried out in different parts of city

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Development Authority on Saturday carried out plantation drives in different parts of the national Capital under the directions of Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena in a bid to make the city greener and maintain a sustainable habitat. An official of the DDA stated, "During the financial year 2024-25, till now 50,000 trees and 5,50,000 shrubs have already been planted at various locations across the city. The Authority is also taking all possible steps to ensure that the saplings being planted are nurtured sufficiently, so as to achieve optimal survival." He added that on Saturday plantation was done at Dwarka in DDAs Sector 19B housing development. "Plantation drives in District Park and Lake, G17, Paschim Vihar were also undertaken recently. It has also organised 'EkPedMaKeNaam' campaign at District Park Vikaspuri as part of the plantation programme.

## Three Burger King murder accused killed in police encounter

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Three gangsters, including two shooters allegedly behind the west Delhi's Burger King murder last month, were shot dead on Friday in a joint operation by the Haryana Police and the Delhi Crime Branch in Sonipat. A day after the shootout, a police official said that a total of 43 shots of bullets were exchanged in the shootout between gangsters and a joint police team which also left one Delhi Police Sub Inspector Amit of the Crime Branch injured. The gangsters fired 24 shots as the police retaliated with 19 shots. The Delhi Police Crime Branch team was led by Assistant Commissioner of Police Umesh Bharatwal under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Amit Goel. DCP West Sonipat Narinder Singh said that a Haryana Police Special Task Force (STF) member also suffered injuries. Another police official from Sonipat said the encounter took place on Chhinoli Road in Kharkhoda. Ashish alias Lalu, Sunny



Kharar and Vicky Ridhana, all three hailing from Haryana, died in the shootout. Ashish and Vicky allegedly also shot 26-year-old Aman Joon dead at a Rajouri Garden Burger King outlet on June 18. After getting a tip-off, Special Commissioner of Police (crime) Shalini Singh said the team intercepted the trio travelling in a Kia Seltos car on Rohtak-Chinaulti road around 8.40 pm. Sensing police presence, they tried to flee from the spot and went towards a 'kachha' road but their vehicle got stuck near a farm. The officer said the accused persons started firing upon the police party while sitting inside the car. They fired around 24

shots at the police party and one bullet each hit SI Amit on his leg and the bullet-proof jackets worn by Deputy Commissioner of Police Amit Goel and ACP Umesh Bharatwal. In self-defence, the police party also retaliated and fired, the officer said. Another officer said the police party fired 19 shots, Sunny receiving five of them, and Ashish and Vicky receiving three each. The officer said the gangsters were facing multiple criminal cases, including 20 cases against Sunny, three against Vicky and four against Sunny, ranging from murder, attempt to murder and extortion in Delhi and Haryana. All three of them were mem-

bers of the Himanshu Bhau gang. Himanshu Bhau is suspected to be operating from Spain and Portugal in Europe. A week ago, a purported social media post claimed that the police had picked the trio and they might be killed in a fake encounter. The police officer said the post was later deleted as it might be a part of their

tactic to build pressure on the police. The officer clarified that the accused were never held by the police before their encounter in Sonipat on Friday. The officer further said all three deceased were not scared of opening fire on anyone and had allegedly opened fire previously at various auto

showrooms, sweetshops and threatened businessmen to extort money. The officer said Ashish and Vicky were also involved in the shooting and killing of a businessman outside Gulshan Daba in Murthal in March. The Haryana Police has announced rewards of over Rs 1 lakh on both of them.

**HMR INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT**  
**HAMIDPUR, DELHI-110036**  
(An ISO 14001: 2015 Certified, AICTE Approved & GGSIP Affiliated Institute)  
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 Website: www.hmrinstitute.ac.in

Admission Notice: Management Quota Academic Session: 2024-2025  
 Applications are invited for 10% seats under Management Quota for the given courses:

- **B.Tech** - Computer Science & Engineering, Information Technology, Artificial Intelligence and Data Science, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, CSE (Cyber Security), Computer Science & Technology and CSE (Data Science)
- **B.Tech (Lateral Entry)** in 2<sup>nd</sup> year courses - Computer Science & Engineering.
- **Eligibility:** As per eligibility criteria given in the Admission Brochure of GGSIP University.
- **Application Forms:** The form can be obtained from the Institute Reception between 9:00am to 3:00pm on all working days or can be downloaded from the institute website or can be filled online at www.hmrinstitute.ac.in, latest by 31st July, 2024 (Wednesday).
- **Display of merit list and Conduct of Counselling** will be done tentatively between 1st August 2024 to 9th August 2024. The detailed schedule will be displayed on our website on 1/8/2024.  
Reservation of seats as per Reservation Policy given in Admission Brochure of GGSIPU.

Last date for Submission of Application Forms alongwith payment of registration and counselling participation fee Rs. 2500/- (non-refundable): is 31st July, 2024 (Wednesday).

**DIRECTOR**

# BJP raps Opp for opposing Samvidhan Hatya Diwas

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**  
The BJP on Saturday attacked the Congress and its allies for opposing the Centre's decision to

observe June 25 as 'Samvidhan Hatya Diwas', saying that even those who fought against the Emergency are ready to be called anarchists for the sake of power.

"Since a decision has been taken to observe June 25 as Samvidhan Hatya Diwas, there is so much pain in the hearts of those who are pretending to be the saviours



of the Constitution." They are asking what is the need (to observe Samvidhan Hatya Diwas) when it's been 50 years (since the Emergency was imposed)," BJP national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said.  
"In the lust for power, you are ready to put the stamp of anarchy even on yourself" Trivedi charged and asked RJD chief Lalu Prasad and Samajwadi Party President Akhilesh Yadav to clarify if the JP movement was an anarchy for them as well. Trivedi's remarks came in response to a statement by Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut who, earlier in the day, said it has been 50 years since the Emergency, but the Bharatiya Janata Party continues to look at the past instead of the future.  
Prime Minister Narendra Modi had imposed Emergency in 1975 as there was anarchy in the country, he had said, adding, even her future counterpart Atal Bihari Vajpayee would have imposed it had he faced such a situation. Raut also compared Prime Minister Narendra Modi's tenure to Emergency. The RJD, an INDIA bloc constituent, had on Friday slammed the Modi Government for declaring June 25 as 'Samvidhan Hatya Diwas', saying that with such moves, the BJP was seeking to recover from the "jolt" it had received in the Lok Sabha polls due to its efforts to "tamper with" the Constitution.  
RJD MP Manoj Jha had also accused the ruling BJP of following "double standards" and demanded that the Centre declare January 30, the day Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated, as 'Gandhi Hatya Diwas'. "And tell who killed 'Bapu' (Mahatma Gandhi), what was his ideological leaning, which organisation he was associated with," Jha told PTI, as he asked the ruling BJP to "look in the mirror" and apologise for misusing the central probe agencies against political rivals and harassing rights activists in the country.  
Trivedi said the government's decision to observe June 25 as Samvidhan Hatya Diwas was necessary to commemorate the dark days of Emergency.



## MoPSW approves research to create value from dredged sediments

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) has approved a research proposal on Valorisation of Dredged Sediments. The project, sanctioned at an estimated cost of Rs 46,47,380/-, will be implemented over a duration of three years by the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT Bombay), officials said here on Saturday.  
The primary objective of this research is to create value from dredged sediments by converting them into aggregates suitable for various construction fields. This innovative approach aims to transform dredged sediment, typically seen as waste, into a valuable resource, thus contributing to sustainable development and environmental conservation, they said.  
The proposal was thoroughly deliberated in the 45th Research Committee Meeting chaired by the Additional Secretary (Ports, Shipping & Waterways). After detailed discussions, the Research Committee, recognising the study's potential benefits, recommended the proposal for further consideration.  
Following this recommendation, the proposal has been officially approved. This research initiative signifies an important advancement in

sustainable maritime practices. Through the conversion of dredged sediments into useful construction aggregates, it efficiently addresses environmental concerns and resource utilisation. MoPSW is dedicated to fostering research and innovation within the maritime sector.  
By supporting cutting-edge projects and collaborating with leading academic institutions like IIT Bombay and IIT Madras, the Ministry aims to develop sustainable and efficient solutions for port operations and environmental conservation. MoPSW, will convene the State Maritime and Waterways Transport Committees (SMWTC) meeting on July 16 via video conferencing, chaired by TK Ramachandran, Secretary, MoPSW. The committee aims to ensure comprehensive development of maritime and waterways transport across India, expanding its reach to include the remaining states.  
The meeting will focus on the preparation of state-specific Maritime and Waterways Transport Master Plans, formulation of Maritime Sector Policies, Green Initiatives, Waterways Development, Cruise Tourism, Urban Water Transportation, and the Development of Lighthouses. Recognising the need for a unified approach to manage and integrate the waterways transportation sector, the Ministry has established SMWTCs to coordinate various initiatives and schemes within each state. These committees will be pivotal in consolidating efforts and providing focused leadership in the maritime and waterways sector.  
Each SMWTC will be headed by the Chief Secretary or Additional Chief Secretary and include representatives from major ports, maritime boards, state PWD, Inland Waterways, Department of Fisheries, Railways, NHAI, Customs, etc.

## Modi Govt targeting my phone with malicious spyware, says Venugopal

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Congress General Secretary KC Venugopal on Saturday accused the Modi Government of targeting his phone with a "malicious spyware" and asserted that "we will oppose this blatantly unconstitutional act" and breach of privacy. Venugopal shared the screenshot of a message purportedly from Apple which said that "you are being targeted by a mercenary spyware attack that is trying to remotely compromise the iPhone associated with your Apple ID". In a social media post, Venugopal said, "Thank you PM Modi ji for sending your favourite malicious spyware on my phone also! Apple has been kind enough to intimate me about this special present of yours!"  
"Let's be clear, the Modi Government is acting in a criminal and unconstitutional manner, going after political opponents and invading their privacy in this manner," the Congress general secretary, in-charge organisation, said.  
The message of the Lok Sabha elections was that the people reject any attack on the Constitution and the "BJP's fascist agenda," he said. "We will oppose this blatantly unconstitutional act and breach of our privacy tooth and nail," Venugopal said. The message purportedly from Apple, whose screenshot Venugopal shared, stated that Apple had previously sent him a notification on October 30, 2023 but this was not a repeat notice and was to inform him that another attack against his device had been detected. "Apple detected that you are being targeted by a mercenary spyware attack that is trying to remotely compromise the iPhone associated with your Apple ID".  
This attack is likely targeting you specifically because of who you are or what you do. Although it's never possible to achieve absolute certainty when detecting such attacks, Apple has high confidence in this warning. Please take it seriously," the message read. "These attacks cost millions of dollars and are individually deployed against a very small number of people, but the targeting is ongoing and global. Since 2021, we have sent Apple threat notifications like this one multiple times a year as we detect mercenary spyware attacks," it said.  
Today's notification is being sent to targeted users in 98 countries, and to date we have notified users in over 150 countries in total," it further said.

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STANDALONE & CONSOLIDATED UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER ENDED 30.06.2024							
S. No.	Particulars	STANDALONE			CONSOLIDATED		
		3 months ended	Year ended	3 months ended	3 months ended	Year ended	3 months ended
		30.06.2024	31.03.2024	30.06.2023	30.06.2024	31.03.2024	30.06.2023
1.	Total income from operations	3.37	45.07	13.41	3.37	45.07	13.41
2.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Exceptional Items and tax)	-6.79	3.11	-4.32	-6.79	3.11	-4.32
3.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional Items)	-6.79	3.11	-4.32	-6.79	3.11	-4.32
4.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax and Exceptional Items)	-6.79	2.30	-4.32	-6.79	2.88	-4.32
5.	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and other Comprehensive income (after tax))	-6.79	2.30	-4.32	-6.79	2.88	-4.32
6.	Paid-up equity share capital (Face value of ₹ 10/-)	3460.92	3460.92	3460.92	3460.92	3460.92	3460.92
7.	Other Equity	-	-2560.73	-	-	-2560.73	-
8.	Earning Per Share (of ₹ 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations)						
	(a) Basic	-0.02	0.01	-0.01	-0.02	0.01	-0.01
	(b) Diluted	-0.02	0.01	-0.01	-0.02	0.01	-0.01

**NOTES :**  
1. The above Unaudited Quarterly financial results as reviewed by the Audit Committee were approved by the Board of Directors in its meeting held on 13.07.2024. The above results have been audited by the Statutory Auditors of the Company and they have expressed an unqualified and unmodified opinion in its Limited Review Report.  
2. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the quarterly financial results are available on the Stock Exchange website : www.bseindia.com & Company's website : www.spaceincubatics.com.

SPACE INCUBATRICES TECHNOLOGIES LTD. Sd/- (Nishant Mittal) Managing Director DIN : 02766556  
Place : Muradnagar Dated : 13.07.2024

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

#### SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR KANWAR MELA - 2024 (FROM 22.07.2024 TO 19.08.2024)

For the convenience of Kanwariyas during Kanwar Mela-2024, Northern Railway has decided to extend the nominated train services up to Haridwar, run of Kanwar Special Trains and to provide temporary stoppages to some of existing services. The details are as under:

Extension of Train No. 04465/04466 Delhi - Shamli - Delhi DEMU upto Haridwar					
Train No. 04465	STATIONS		Train No. 04466	ARR.	DEP.
22:50	22:55	Delhi	09:25	06:30	
23:20	23:22	Shamli	06:25	05:27	
23:44	23:46	Thana Bhawan	05:25	05:27	
00:15	00:17	Rampur Maniharan	05:02	05:04	
00:56	00:58	Tapri	04:46	04:48	
01:38	01:40	Roorkee	04:17	04:19	
01:55	-	Jwalapur	03:15	03:17	
		Haridwar	--	03:05	

Date of run :- 04465 Ex. Delhi from 21.07.2024 to 03.08.2024 and 04466 Ex. Haridwar from 22.07.2024 to 04.08.2024. Accommodation : General.

Extension of Train No. 04403/04404 Delhi - Saharanpur - Delhi MEMU upto Haridwar					
Train No. 04403	STATIONS		Train No. 04404	ARR.	DEP.
20:50	21:10	Delhi	08:45	-	
21:48	21:50	Saharanpur	03:40	04:20	
22:25	22:27	Roorkee	02:53	02:55	
22:50	--	Jwalapur	02:10	02:12	
		Haridwar	--	02:00	

Date of run :- 04403 Ex. Delhi from 22.07.2024 to 03.08.2024 and 04404 Ex. Haridwar from 23.07.2024 to 04.08.2024. Accommodation : General.

#### Run of Mela Special Trains as per Time-Table given below :

Train No. 04322/04321 Moradabad - Laksar - Moradabad Mela Special Train					
Train No. 04322	STATIONS		Train No. 04321	ARR.	DEP.
07:15	-	Laksar	-	12:00	
-	04:15	Moradabad	15:15	-	

Date of run:- 04322 Ex. Moradabad and 04321 Ex. Laksar from 22.07.224 to 19.08.2024. Accommodation : General.

Stoppages : Balawali, Muazzampur Narain, Najibabad, Nagina, Dhampur, Seohara & Kanth Stations.

Train No. 04324/04323 Haridwar - Delhi - Haridwar Mela Special Train					
Train No. 04324	STATIONS		Train No. 04323	ARR.	DEP.
20:50	-	Haridwar	04:25	-	
-	15:45	Delhi	-	22:00	

Date of run :- 04324 Ex. Haridwar and 04323 Ex. Delhi from 29.07.2024 to 02.08.2024. Accommodation : General.

Stoppages : Jwalapur, Roorkee, Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar, Meerut City & Ghaziabad Stations.

Train No. 04330/04329 Yog Nagari Rishikesh - Delhi - Yog Nagari Rishikesh Mela Special Train					
Train No. 04330	STATIONS		Train No. 04329	ARR.	DEP.
-	20:35	Yog Nagari Rishikesh	11:00	-	
04:15	-	Delhi	-	04:45	

Date of run :- 04330 Ex. Yog Nagari Rishikesh and 04329 Ex. Delhi from 29.07.2024 to 02.08.2024. Accommodation : General.

Stoppages : Raiwala, Motichur, Haridwar, Jwalapur, Roorkee, Saharanpur, Shamli & Delhi Shahdara Stations.

Train No. 04372/04371 Yog Nagari Rishikesh - Lucknow - Yog Nagari Rishikesh Mela Special Train					
Train No. 04372	STATIONS		Train No. 04371	ARR.	DEP.
-	20:35	Yog Nagari Rishikesh	23:00	-	
11:15	-	Lucknow	-	11:45	

Date of run :- 04372 Ex. Yog Nagari Rishikesh and 04371 Ex. Lucknow from 06.08.2024 to 19.08.2024. Accommodation : General.

Train No. 04370/04369 Yog Nagari Rishikesh - Bareilly - Yog Nagari Rishikesh Mela Special Train					
Train No. 04370	STATIONS		Train No. 04369	ARR.	DEP.
-	20:35	Yog Nagari Rishikesh	23:00	-	
05:15	-	Bareilly	-	15:50	

Date of run :- 04370 Ex. Yog Nagari Rishikesh and 04369 Ex. Bareilly from 03.08.2024 to 05.08.2024. Accommodation : General.

Stoppages : Raiwala, Motichur, Haridwar, Jwalapur, Laksar, Balawali, Muazzampur Narain, Najibabad, Moradabad & Rampur Stations.

#### TEMPORARY STOPPAGES OF TRAINS FROM 22.07.2024 TO 03.08.2024

Train No. & Name	Frequency	Temporary Stoppages	Arr.	Dep.
14113 Subedarganj-Dehradun Express	Daily	Jwalapur 10:43 10:45 Motichur 11:04 11:06 Raiwala 11:14 11:16		
14114 Dehradun-Subedarganj Express	Daily	Raiwala 14:15 14:17 Motichur 14:34 14:36 Jwalapur 15:15 15:17		
14309 Ujjain-Dehradun Express	Bi-Weekly	Jwalapur 15:53 15:55 Motichur 17:00 17:02 Raiwala 17:35 17:37		
14310 Dehradun - Ujjain Express	Bi-Weekly	Raiwala 07:08 07:10 Motichur 07:24 07:26 Jwalapur 07:52 07:54		
14317 Indore-Dehradun Express	Bi-Weekly	Motichur 17:00 17:02 Raiwala 17:35 17:37		
14318 Dehradun-Indore Express	Bi-Weekly	Raiwala 07:08 07:10 Motichur 07:24 07:26 Jwalapur 07:52 07:54		
19565 Okha-Dehradun Express	Weekly	Jwalapur 15:53 15:55 Motichur 17:00 17:02 Raiwala 17:35 17:37		
19566 Dehradun-Okha Express	Weekly	Motichur 07:24 07:26 Jwalapur 07:52 07:54		
22659 Kochuveli - Yog Nagari Rishikesh Superfast Express	Weekly	Jwalapur 12:08 12:10 Motichur 12:45 12:47 Raiwala 13:00 13:02		
22660 Kochuveli - Yog Nagari Rishikesh Superfast Express	Weekly	Raiwala 07:08 07:10 Motichur 07:24 07:26 Jwalapur 07:52 07:54		
14610 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Yog Nagari Rishikesh Hemkund Exp.	Daily	Jwalapur 06:48 06:50 Motichur 07:20 07:22		
14609 Yog Nagari Rishikesh - Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Hemkund Exp.	Daily	Jwalapur 18:31 18:33		

#### TEMPORARY STOPPAGE OF TRAINS FROM 22.07.2024 TO 19.08.2024

04303 Bareilly-Delhi Special Exp.	Daily	Kankather	23:36	23:38
04304 Delhi-Bareilly Special Exp.	Daily	Kankather	02:40	02:42

For detailed information, please call RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit enquiry website: www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in

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**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
To be known to all that, we (1) Smt. Ranjana Umrao Jadhav, (2) Smt. Rajkumar Umrao, (3) Smt. B. Block-CD, LIG Flat, Ghanta Ghar, Hari Nagar, New Delhi-110064 and (2) Smt. Sadhana Khanna, (3) Smt. Late Shri Khanna Khanna R/o F/3D, G-8 Area, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi-110064, are mutates and in physical possession of DDA Built-up Flat No.E/3-B on First Floor, Category MIG, situated at G-8 Area, Rajouri Garden, now known as Vatika Apartment, New Delhi-110064, which has been allotted by DDA vide File No.M/56 (32377)/HB (M) and applied for conversion from lease hold into free hold of said flat in D.D.A. The Original Allotment Letter, Possession Letter, Possession Slip and NOC for Electricity & Water connection and other related documents of said flat have been lost. An F.I.R. lodged in Crime Branch Police Station, New Delhi, NCR/IR No:1926597/2024 dated 12.07.2024. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest having any objection or found in possession of original documents may write/contact with above named person at above address/Phone No.9953395811 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objections with respect to this flat can personally inform or write to Dy. Director (LAB) H or Director (H-I, D Block 3) Floor, Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Notice is hereby given to the general public at large that SMFG India Home Finance Co. Ltd. is going to create mortgage over property being Flat no. 203, area measuring 150sq. Yds. built on Plot no. 16, 15A, 16B, Khanna no. 455/46/497/498, M. Sarabadi Sec 73 Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar, UP, belonging to M/S SAP Homes Bulidcon vide Sale Deed dt. 11.10.2022 executed by Mr. Gaurav Yadav as GPA holder of Mr. Jaipal, which will be sold to Borrower of SMFG India Home Finance Co. Ltd., Now M/S SAP Homes Bulidcon is the undisputed owner of above said property. In case if any person/Financial Institute / Bank / Authority / Board or any other entity having objection/contingent or vested interest over the same may contact our advocate Ajay Kumar Gini within 07 days of this publication either through his Office phone No.01140513994 or through post or visit his office at H. No. 26/161, Basement, Vikram Vihar, Lajpat Nagar 4, New Delhi 110024 along with supporting documents. It may be further noted that after lapse of aforesaid time no claim in any manner shall be entertained and same will be considered as waived or abandoned.  
Ajay Gini (Advocate) H No. 26/161, Basement, Vikram Vihar, Lajpat Nagar 4, New Delhi-110024

**कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम, भोपाल**  
केन्द्रीय कर्मशाला (मैके. शाखा)  
निविदा सूचना  
भोपाल, दिनांक 12.07.2024  
क्र. 171/के.कर्म./2024  
नगर निगम भोपाल केन्द्रीय कर्मशाला के द्वारा विभिन्न प्रकार की बेट्टीयां क्रय किये जाने हेतु ऑनलाईन निविदा निम्नानुसार आमंत्रित की जाती है।  
क्र. निविदा क्र. सामान का विवरण अनुमानित लागत बरोहर राशि निविदा फार्म का मूल्य प्रदाय अवधि  
1. 2024 UAD PURCHASING OF DIFFRENT SIZE BATTERY 22641920/- 113210/- 15000/- माँग अनुसार  
357218-1 AT MUNICIPAL CORPORATION BHOPAL  
BID SUBMISSION END DATE- 09.08.2024 TIME- 05:30 PM  
BID OPENING DATE- 12.08.2024 TIME- 12:00 PM  
निविदा से संबंधित अन्य विस्तृत जानकारी वेबसाईट mptenders.gov.in पर देखी एवं केन्द्रीय कर्मशाला (मैकेनिकल) से कार्यालयीन समय में प्राप्त की जा सकती है।  
उपायुक्त परिवहन शाखा नगर निगम भोपाल  
चि.क्र. 171/024/025

### 'TRAIN HANDLING PLAN' FOR TRAFFIC BLOCK ON DELHI-AMBALA SECTION

In order to upgrade the existing infrastructure and enhanced the safety standards, Northern Railway will launch girders of new Foot Over Bridge at Mohri station on Delhi-Ambala section. To execute this work, Railways will take a suitable traffic block of duration of 3 hrs. (from 03:10 hrs. to 06:10 hrs.) on 19.07.2024. During this period following trains will temporarily be affected as under:-

Train No. & Train Name	Date(s) from Originating Station
04139 Kurukshetra Jn.-Ambala Jn. MEMU Special	18.07.2024
04140 Ambala Jn.-Kurukshetra Jn. MEMU Special	19.07.2024

Train No. & Train Name	Diverted Route	Date(s) (from originating station)
11906 Hoshiarpur-Agra Cantt. Express	Ludhiana Jn.-Dhuri-Jakhal Jn.-New Delhi	18.07.2024
12446 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra-New Delhi Exp.	Jakhal Jn.-New Delhi	18.07.2024

**RESCHEDULING OF TRAINS**  
Train No. 12426 Jammu Tawi-New Delhi Express will depart from Jammu Tawi at 23:55 hrs. (150 minutes late) on 18.07.2024

Train No. & Train Name	Regulation period	Date(s) from originating station)
04076 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra-New Delhi Exp Spl.	35 minutes in Ambala Division	18.07.2024
19411 Sabarmati-Daulatpur Chowk Express	20 minutes at Dhola Mazra	18.07.2024

Note: Special train or late running train, if any, will be regulated accordingly.  
For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table and stations enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in or NTEs App.

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**CORRIGENDUM - 1**  
Corrigendum - 1 against Tender Notice No. RE-NJP-TENDER-ENGG-WT-296, dtd. 06-07-2024 has been cancelled on administrative ground.  
Chief Engineer-II/Con, Maligaon  
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY Construction Organization  
Serving Customers With A Smile

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
I, Manju Joshi W/o Lt. Sh. Rajesh Kumar Joshi and Daughter-in-Law of Lt. Sh. Tilak Raj Joshi, R/o 4/45, 11th Floor, Subhash Nagar, New Delhi-27 is the legal heirs of property No. D-1/77, Rewari Line, Ph-II, New Delhi-64 vide file No.F.22(162)1975/LSB(I) My Late husband has lost all the original documents i.e. Allotment-Cum-Demand Letter, Possession Letter, Perpetual Lease Deed of above mentioned DDA property, FIR to this effect has been lodged with Delhi Police Station, vide LR No.126890/2024 dated 12/07/2024. Finder may please Contact: 8076429551

**THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS**  
CHANGE OF NAME  
I, Aarab Singh Rathore S/O Shree Amar Singh Rathore R/o Flat No. 1, 3rd floor, Surya

# Israeli attack on southern Gaza kills 71

AP ■ JERUSALEM

An Israeli attack on the south of the Gaza Strip on Saturday killed 71 people and injured scores, the Health Ministry in Gaza said, while an Israeli official said it targeted the head of Hamas' military wing. The Israeli official identified the target of the strike in Khan Younis as Mohammed Deif, believed by many to be the chief architect of the Oct 7 attack that killed some 1,200 people in southern Israel and triggered the Israel-Hamas war. Deif has topped Israel's most-wanted list for years and is believed to have escaped multiple Israeli assassination attempts in the past. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity pending a formal announcement, said Rafa Salama, another top Hamas official, was also target-



Palestinians check the bodies of their relatives killed in the Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip, at a hospital morgue in Deir al-Balah on Saturday. AP/PTI

ed in the strike. The official did not have details on whether the two targets were killed. The Gaza Health Ministry said at least 289 others were injured in the attack and that many of

the injured and dead were taken to nearby Nasser Hospital. At the hospital, Associated Press journalists counted over 40 bodies and witnesses there described an attack that included several

strikes. It remains unclear if the attack landed inside Muwasi, an Israeli-designated humanitarian zone, which stretches from northern Rafah to Khan Younis.

The coastal strip is where hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians have fled to in search of safety, sheltering mostly in makeshift tents. Israel launched its campaign in Gaza after Hamas' Oct 7 attack in which militants stormed into southern Israel, killed some 1,200 people — mostly civilians — and abducted about 250. Since then, Israeli ground offensives and bombardments have killed more than 38,300 people in Gaza and wounded more than 88,000, according to the territory's Health Ministry. The ministry does not distinguish between combatants and civilians in its count. More than 80% of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been driven from their homes, and most are now crowded into squalid tent camps, facing widespread hunger.

# Taiwan on alert after missile test by China

AP ■ TAIPEI

Taiwan's Defence Ministry said Saturday it was monitoring "waves of test-firing" by China's missile unit in a region more than 1,600 kilometres (1,000 miles) from the self-ruled island and that its air force stepped up its alertness. China views the democratic island as a breakaway province that should be reunified with the mainland. According to Taiwan's military news agency, the ministry had detected "multiple waves of test-firing operations" by China's Rocket Force in Inner Mongolia on Saturday. It did not give details on the tests taken by the force, which takes charge of China's arsenal of missiles. It is not immediately clear whether the tests were related to China's harassment of Taiwan. In recent years, China has ramped up its military activities around the island, which is ruled by the Democratic Progressive Party. In May, Taiwan's newly elected President Lai Ching-te said in

his inauguration speech that he wants peace with China and urged it to stop its military threats and intimidation of the island. China's military has displayed a strong show of force toward Taiwan since Wednesday, when the US new top envoy to Taipei promised that Washington would help the island defend itself. Taiwan's Defence Ministry said Thursday it had detected 66 warplanes around the island and that dozens flew across the median line in the Taiwan Strait, the de facto boundary between the two sides. On Saturday, 30 warplanes also were detected around Taiwan over a 24-hour period with 20 crossing the median line. The US, like most countries, does not recognise Taiwan. But it's the island's main partner and is bound by US laws to provide it with the means to defend itself. Less than a month ago, the US State Department approved the sale to Taiwan of missiles and drones for an estimated \$360 million.

# Princess of Wales set to attend Wimbledon final

AP ■ LONDON

The Princess of Wales is set to attend the Wimbledon men's final on Sunday in a rare public appearance after her cancer diagnosis. Kensington Palace confirmed on Saturday that Kate, wife of heir to the throne Prince William, will be in the Royal Box on Centre Court to watch defending champion Carlos Alcaraz play Novak Djokovic. However, she will not attend Saturday's women's final between Jasmine Paolini and Barbora Krejickova. Wimbledon organisers said the winner's trophy will instead be handed out by Deborah Evans, the chair of the All England Club. Kate has been the patron of the All England Club since 2016, with ceremonial duties that include handing out the winner's trophy after each men's and women's singles final. But she has only one made one public appearance since announcing in March that she had been diagnosed with cancer, which was to attend the birthday parade for King Charles III in March.

# N Korea threatens to boost N-capability

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korea threatened Saturday to boost its nuclear fighting capability and make the US and South Korea pay "an unimaginably harsh price" as it slammed its rivals' new defence guidelines that it says reveal an intention to invade the North. On Thursday, President Joe Biden and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol authorised the signing of joint nuclear deterrence guidelines as part of efforts to enhance their capabilities to cope with North Korea's growing nuclear arsenal. The guidelines were adopted a year after the two countries established a consultation body to bolster information-sharing on nuclear operations and discuss how to integrate US nuclear weapons and South Korean conventional weapons in contingencies. In a statement carried by state media, North Korea's Defence Ministry said the US-South Korea guidelines betrayed "their sinister intention to step up their preparations for a

nuclear war against" North Korea. The statement said its enemies' escalating nuclear threats urgently require North Korea to further improve its nuclear deterrent readiness and add unspecified "important elements to the composition of the deterrent". It said the US and South Korea will "pay an unimaginably harsh price" if they fail to stop provocative acts. Details of the US-South Korean guidelines weren't available, but experts say they are largely about how the two countries would integrate US nuclear weapons and South Korean conventional weapons to respond to various potential contingencies caused by North Korean attacks and provocations. Experts say the US and South Korea are expected to map out detailed concept and operation plans based on the guidelines and review them via bilateral military exercises. The guidelines are the first of kind between the allies. The US has repeatedly promised to use all its military capabilities to

# Imran acquitted in illegal marriage case

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

A Pakistani court on Saturday acquitted jailed former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi in the un-Islamic marriage case, the only case keeping the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party founder behind bars since August last year. On February 3 — days before the general elections on February 8 — an Islamabad court convicted the couple based on a complaint filed by Bushra Bibi's ex-husband, Khawar Fared Maneka, who alleged that they contracted marriage during the former first lady's Iddat period. In Islam, a woman can't remarry before completing four months after divorce or the death of her husband. The couple had challenged the sentence in a district and ses-

sion court of the capital Islamabad where Additional District and Sessions Judge (ADSJ) Afzal Majoka heard the case. The judge announced the judgment in the afternoon after reserving the verdict earlier in the day, acquitting Khan, 71 and Bushra, 49. "If they are not wanted in any other case, then PTI founder Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi should be released [from jail] immediately," the judge said after accepting their appeals. But it was not clear if he would be released. However, it was the only case for which Khan was in jail after the Toshakhana corruption case sentence was suspended and acquittal in the cipher case. The cricketer-turned-politician has been behind bars since August last year after he was sentenced in the Toshakhana

corruption case and subsequently sentenced in other cases ahead of the February 8 elections. Bibi's ex-husband, Maneka, filed the case against the couple in November 2023, alleging that they married without her observing the mandatory waiting period of Iddat. He asked the court to declare the marriage null and void. Khan and Bibi married in 2018, the year Khan went on to win elections and become prime minister. Bibi was ostensibly his spiritual guide but the two developed affection for each other during their meetings. She got divorced from her husband of 28 years with whom she had five children. She is the third wife of Khan, a former cricketer hero, who during his heydays of sporting career had a playboy reputa-

tion. PTI chief Gohar Khan welcomed the verdict and said it was a victory for the independent judiciary. "All these cases were fake and he will also get justice in all other cases," he said, demanding that Imran Khan should be freed as it was the last case in which he was convicted. The judgment in the case comes a day after Khan's embattled Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party won a huge legal battle when the Supreme Court declared it eligible for the reserved seats in Parliament and in the provincial assemblies following the controversy-ridden general election on February 8. Pakistan's Supreme Court on Friday ruled that the party was eligible for more than 20 seats reserved for women and minorities in Parliament.

# Russian oil depot struck by drones

AP ■ KYIV

A Russian oil depot caught fire in Rostov region Saturday following a Ukrainian drone attack in the early hours, local officials said, in the latest long-range strike by Kyiv's forces on a border region. Ukraine has in recent months stepped up aerial assaults on Russian soil, targeting refineries and oil terminals in an effort to slow down the Kremlin's war machine. Moscow's army is pressing hard along the front line in eastern Ukraine, where a shortage of troops and ammunition in the third year of war has made defenders vulnerable. Rostov regional Governor Vasily Golubev said a drone attack had caused a blaze but there were no casualties.

# Rescuers recover body of Indian from buses swept away in Nepal

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Rescuers in Nepal on Saturday recovered the body of a 40-year-old Indian national, the first from two buses that were swept by a mudslide into a rain-swollen river with more than 50 passengers. The two buses carrying 54 passengers, including seven Indians, went missing in the Trishuli River in the landslides at the Simtatal area along the Narayanghat-Mugling road in Chitwan district on Friday. Three people swam to safety later. The first body from the buses has been recovered from 50 km away from the accident site. The deceased was identified as Rishi Pal Shahi from India, police said. The body was found half covered by sand in the Narayani River of Chitwan district, police said, adding that he was carrying an Indian ID. Other missing Indian nationals are earlier identified as Santosh Thakur, Surendra Sah, Adit Miyaan, Sunil, Shah Nawaj Alam, and Ansari. Rescuers assisted by divers from Nepal's security forces on Saturday resumed the search for the missing persons. Earlier, it was reported that there were more than 60 people on board the two buses. The Nepali Army, Nepal Police and armed police personnel along with deep divers are being mobilised to resume the search operation, according to the Nepal Police. The Armed Police Force (APF) deployed a water drone to find the missing buses in the Trishuli River. MyRepublica news portal reported. DSP Shailendra Thapa, co-spokesperson of APF, said that a search operation has been resumed by using a sonar camera through pipeline inspection.

There were 24 people including seven Indian nationals on board a bus heading towards Kathmandu from Birgunj and another bus heading to Gaur from Kathmandu was carrying 30 local people. The two buses fell into the river as the landslide accompanied by muddy water, triggered by heavy rain, swept them away. More than 500 security personnel are involved in the search operations, according to the police official. The search operation was stopped on Friday evening as it

events over the past decade and a half. Evidence suggests that maximum temperatures in Nepal are rising faster, at 0.056 degrees Celsius a year, compared to the global average rise of 0.03 degrees Celsius a year, The Kathmandu Post newspaper reported. Experts say extreme weather events—excessive rainfall in a short period, continuous rains for several days after the monsoon, dry spells, droughts, below-average precipitation, and above-normal winter tem-



Nepal army personnel carry out a search operation looking for the survivors after two buses were swept by a landslide off the highway and into a swollen river near Simtatal, about 120 kilometers (75 miles) west of the capital Kathmandu, on Saturday. AP/PTI

was not possible to work during the night with high water current coupled with muddy water, the police official said. The search operation resumed at 8 am Saturday. "All possible locations will be searched and we will put all our best efforts into search and rescue," he said. Nepal is one of the world's most vulnerable countries to the climate crisis and has witnessed multiple extreme weather

peratures—have become more frequent in Nepal. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority estimates that 1.81 million people and 412,000 households will be affected by monsoon this year. Of them, 83,000 households will be directly impacted, and 18,000 families will require rescue due to monsoon-related disasters.

# IMF bails out Pak

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb on Saturday said the USD 7 billion aid package deal struck with the IMF would help bring macroeconomic stability to the cash-strapped country. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced the aid package, spread over more than three years, late on Friday night, giving much-needed respite to the nation that has been facing chronic economic issues. The programme needs to be approved by the IMF's Executive Board. The Washington-based international lender in a statement said the deal should enable Pakistan to "cement macroeconomic stability and create conditions for stronger, more inclusive and resilient growth". The latest bailout package follows a commitment by the government to implement reforms, including a major effort to broaden the country's tax base, the Dawn newspaper reported on Saturday. Aurangzeb said it would aid

Pakistan in achieving macroeconomic stability. "We need to ensure structural reforms and bring self-sustainability in areas of public finance, energy and state-owned institutions," the finance minister was quoted by Geo News. Pakistan's economy has faced multiple challenges in the past few years, from the COVID-19 pandemic, the effects of the war in Ukraine and supply difficulties that fuelled inflation, as well as the devastating flooding that affected a third of the country in 2022, the Dawn said. Pakistan found itself in a debt crisis with its foreign currency reserves dwindling and was forced to turn to the international lender obtaining its first emergency loan in 2023. The IMF's statement said, "Building on the economic stability achieved under the 2023 Stand-by Arrangement (SBA), IMF staff and the Pakistani authorities have reached a staff-level agreement on a 37-month Extended Fund Facility Arrangement (EFF) of about USD 7 billion."

# Man held in UK over human remains found in suitcases

AP ■ LONDON

British police said Saturday they have arrested a man in connection with the deaths of two men whose remains were found in two suitcases in southwest England. The Metropolitan Police said armed officers detained a 24-year-old suspect at a train station in Bristol early Saturday. Police also said more human remains were found at an address in Shepherd's Bush, west London, the previous day, believed to be connected to those found in the suitcases dumped near the Clifton Suspension Bridge in Bristol on Wednesday. The suspect "will be taken to London for questioning later today," police said in a statement. "Extensive enquiries are ongoing, however at this stage police are not looking for anyone else in connection with the incident."

# Oli-led government to be sworn-in on Monday

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

KP Sharma Oli, who is set to become Nepal's new Prime Minister, was busy on Saturday consulting his alliance partner Nepali Congress in preparing the list of ministers to be inducted into the new coalition government that is likely to be sworn in on Monday. President Ram Chandra Paudel is expected to appoint Oli, 72, as the new Prime Minister of the Nepali Congress (NC)-UML coalition by Sunday afternoon. "However, the President is likely to administer the oath to the new PM and other members of the cabinet on Monday morning. A small cabinet is likely to be announced on Monday before the oath-taking ceremony starts," said sources close to the NC and UML. Amid political turmoil in the Himalayan nation, Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) chair-



man Oli, 72, is set to become prime minister once again after in-cumbent Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' on Friday failed to win a trust vote in Parliament. Late on Friday night, Oli had staked his claim to become the next Prime Minister with the backing of Nepali Congress (NC) president Sher Bahadur Deuba and submitted the signature of 165 House of Representatives (HoR) members — 77 from his party and 88 from the NC — to form the government under Article 76-2 of the Constitution. President Ram Chandra Paudel on Friday had called on political parties to stake claim to form the new government with a Sunday evening deadline to prove the majority. Out of a total of 21 ministries,

the Nepali Congress will get nine ministries and the UML eight plus the post of Prime Minister, a source close to Oli said. "Key positions such as Home, Foreign, Finance and Energy will be divided between NC and UML. Nepali Congress is likely to get the portfolio of Home while the Finance will go to the UML," the source said. Earlier in the day on Saturday, CPN-UML held a high-level meeting to discuss the future course of action and finalise the names of ministers to be included in the new cabinet. However, in the beginning, there will be a small cabinet, which will be expanded later, according to senior leader of the party and Standing Committee member Rajan Bhattarai. Nepali Congress also held its Central Work Performance Committee meeting to discuss and finalise the ministerial list and the policy to be adopted by the party.

# Biden signs into law a bill enhancing US support for Tibet

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden has signed into law a bill which enhances US support for Tibet and promotes dialogue between China and the Dalai Lama toward a peaceful resolution of the dispute over the status and governance of the remote Himalayan region. China had opposed the Resolve Tibet Act and described it as a destabilising Act. The Act was passed by the House of Representatives last February and it cleared the Senate in May. "Today, I have signed into law S. 138, the 'Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act' (the 'Act'). I share the Congress's bipartisan commitment to advancing the human rights of Tibetans and supporting efforts to preserve their distinct linguistic, cultural, and religious heritage,"

Biden said on Friday in a late-night statement. "My Administration will continue to call on the People's Republic of China to resume direct dialogue, without preconditions, with the Dalai Lama, or his representatives, to seek a settlement that resolves differences and leads to a negotiated agreement on Tibet," Biden said. The 14th Dalai Lama fled Tibet in 1959 and came to India where he set up the government-in-exile at Dharamshala in Himachal Pradesh. From 2002 to 2010, the Dalai Lama's representatives and the Chinese government held nine rounds of dialogue that did not produce any concrete outcome. China views the 89-year-old Tibetan spiritual leader, who is based in India, as a "separatist" who is working to split Tibet from the rest of the country.

# Manslaughter case against Alec Baldwin dismissed

AP ■ SANTA FE

A New Mexico judge on Friday brought a sudden and stunning end to the involuntary manslaughter case against Alec Baldwin, dismissing it in the middle of the actor's trial and saying it cannot be filed again. Judge Mary Marlowe Sommer dismissed the case based on the misconduct of police and prosecutors over the withholding of evidence from the defense in the 2021 shooting of cinematographer Halyna Hutchins on the set of the film "Rust." Baldwin cried, hugged his two attorneys, gestured to the front of the court, then turned to hug his crying wife Hilaria, the mother of seven of his eight children, holding the embrace for 12 seconds. He climbed into an SUV outside the Santa Fe courthouse without speaking to media. "The late discovery of this evidence during trial has impeded the effective use of evidence

in such a way that it has impacted the fundamental fairness of the proceedings," Marlowe Sommer said. "If this conduct does not rise to the level of bad faith it certainly comes so near to bad faith to show signs of scorching." The decision ends the criminal culpability of the 66-year-old Baldwin after a nearly three-year saga that began when a revolver he was pointing at Hutchins during a rehearsal went off, killing her and wounding director Joel Souza. The career of the "Hunt for Red October" and "30 Rock" star and frequent "Saturday Night Live" host — who has been a household name for more than three decades — had been put into doubt, and he could have gotten 18 months in prison if convicted. He and other producers still face civil lawsuits from Hutchins' parents and sister. Sommer put a pause on the trial earlier Friday while she considered the defense motion

to dismiss the case over ammunition evidence they say prosecutors hid from them that may have been related to the shooting on the set of the Western "Rust" in 2021. The defense said they should have had the ability to determine its importance. The prosecution said that the ammunition was not connected to the case and was not hidden. The issue emerged Thursday on the second day of the actor's trial during defense questioning of sheriff's crime scene technician Marissa Poppell. Baldwin lawyer Alex Spiro asked whether a "good Samaritan" had come into the sheriff's office with the ammunition earlier this year at the end of the trial of Hannah Gutierrez-Reed, the film's armorer, for her role in Hutchins' death. She was sentenced to 18 months in prison on an involuntary manslaughter conviction, which she is now appealing.

# First Indian ship takes perishable food items to Maldives port

PTI ■ MALE

The first shipment carrying 150 tonnes of perishable food items from India to a port at Addu is set to reduce the cost and complexity of imports into the southern atolls of Maldives, according to media reports here. An Indian ship carrying fresh fruits, vegetables, onions, garlic, and eggs had set sail from Tuticorin Port and reached Hithadhoo Port at Addu, the southernmost atoll of this archipelagic nation, late on Wednesday night. The arrival of the Indian cargo ship also saw the opening of a direct shipping route by the Maldives Ports Limited (MPL) from Tuticorin Port in Tamil Nadu to Hithadhoo Port at Addu. Atoll Times news portal said several years ago perishable food items were brought to Addu from Tuticorin in wooden ships, which could sail only at certain times of the year. "Now with steel ships, food can be brought to Maldives without interruption," the report said on Friday. The service will be operated by Kerala-based Finesse



Group, which is the largest supplier of fruits and vegetables to the Maldives, a report said.

"This marks a new chapter in the collaboration between MPL, Hithadhoo Regional Port, and Indian shipping companies to deliver fresh fruits, vegetables, onions, garlic, and eggs directly to Addu residents," another news portal Truth MV said. Calling it as "a landmark development poised to transform the logistics

landscape for Addu City," Maldives Maritime Journal (MMJ) said this initiative is set to significantly reduce the cost and complexity of importing goods, particularly perishables, into the southern atolls. MMJ quoted MPL CEO Mohamed Wajeeh Ibrahim, who highlighted the importance of this initiative saying, "This will result in significant conveniences for the people of Addu. Instead of shipping goods to Male,

shipping directly to Addu will bring down costs. Addu can now get fresh vegetables and fruits."

The establishment of this route is also a result of enhanced security measures at Hithadhoo port, implemented to address concerns raised by Indian shipping companies, MMJ added.

This is being looked at as the beginning of a potential bi-weekly service. Meanwhile, Maldives' Minister of State for the Ministry of Construction and Infrastructure Ibrahim Thooam Mohamed has announced that the Thilamale Bridge project has reached 40.47 per cent completion. The first segment of the bridge's marine precast deck near Villimale has been completed, he stated in a post on social media. The Thilamale Bridge project, spanning 6.7 km and connecting four areas, will cost more than USD 454 million. Signed during the previous administration, the project highlights the strong bilateral ties between the Maldives and India, state-run PSM media said on Friday.

# Domestic investors infuse USD 638 mn in realty sector in April-June: Vestian

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Domestic investors pumped USD 637.9 million in the Indian real estate during April-June -- a fivefold jump on annual basis -- expecting better returns amid strong demand, according to Vestian. Real estate consultant Vestian on Saturday released data for institutional investments in real estate during the second quarter of 2024 calendar year. As per the data, institutional investments in the Indian real estate rose 96 per cent in April-June to USD 3.1 billion from USD 1.6 billion in the corresponding period of the previous year. Shrinivas Rao, CEO, Vestian said, "The Indian real estate sector garnered significant investments in the second quarter of 2024, dominated by foreign investors as the looming uncertainty over the major economies of the world has faded away." Moreover, he said, domestic investors actively participated to capitalize on the robust economic growth. As per the data, foreign investors infused USD 2,218.1 million in April-June as against USD 1,459.2 million in the year-ago period. Funds infused in real estate from domestic investors rose



to USD 637.9 million from USD 127 million. Co-investments from both foreign and domestic investors increased to USD 260.2 million from USD 5.5 million. Vestian said foreign investors accounted for the highest share of 71 per cent of the total investments received during the second quarter of 2024 as they flocked to India to capitalize on its robust economic growth. On the other hand, domestic investors accounted for around 20 per cent share of the total investments in Q2 2024. "Industrial & Warehousing sector reported a single large deal worth USD 1.5 billion, accounting for 48 per cent of the total investments received in Q2 2024," Vestian said.

Residential and commercial (office, retail, co-working, and hospitality projects) assets followed with 24 per cent and 20 per cent share, respectively. In commercial assets, inflow of institutional investments declined to USD 622.3 million from USD 1,400 million on higher base effect. Institutional investments in residential assets rose to USD 732.8 million from USD 57.8 million. Industrial and warehousing assets got USD 1,500 million in April-June 2024 as against USD 133.9 million in the year-ago period. On the outlook, Rao said investments are anticipated to increase in the upcoming quarters on the back of robust economic growth and infrastructure development.

# Direct tax mop-up rises 20 per cent to ₹5.74 lakh crore on higher corporate advance tax

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Net direct tax collection grew 19.54 per cent to over Rs 5.74 lakh crore so far this fiscal on higher advance tax payment by corporates. The first instalment of advance tax, which was due on June 15, rose 27.34 per cent to Rs 1.48 lakh crore. This includes Corporation Income Tax (CIT) at Rs 1.14 lakh crore and Personal Income Tax (PIT) at Rs 34,470 crore. The net direct tax collection of Rs 5,74,357 crore (as of July 11, 2024) includes CIT at Rs 2,10,274 crore and PIT at Rs 3,46,036 crore, as per data released by Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) on Saturday. Securities Transaction Tax (STT) contributed Rs 16,634 crore to the direct tax collection, it said. During the same period last year, net direct tax collection was Rs 4,80,458 crore. e funds amounting to Rs 70,902 crore have also been issued in FY25 till July 11, which is 64.4 per cent higher than refunds issued during the same period in the previous year.

# Tomato prices may ease in coming weeks on supplies from Andhra, Karnataka

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Retail tomato price, which soared to Rs 75 per kg in the national capital, is expected to cool in the coming weeks as supply improves from southern states, a government official said on Saturday. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said prices of potato and onion, which also spiked due to supply disruptions, are expected to stabilize soon. "Prices of tomato, potato and onion are ruling high in Delhi and some other cities. Extreme heat followed by spells of excess rainfall disrupted supplies, causing a spike in prices in consuming areas," the consumer affairs ministry official told PTI. Tomato price in New Delhi has surged to Rs 75 per kg, but is likely to ease if heavy rainfall does not further disrupt supply chains, he said. According to the ministry data, retail tomato price in Delhi was Rs 75/kg on July 12, down from Rs 150/kg in the year-ago period. In Mumbai, the price was Rs 83/kg, while Kolkata reported it at Rs 80/kg. The all-India average retail price of tomato stood at Rs



65.21/kg on July 12, compared to Rs 53.36/kg last year. Currently, Delhi is receiving tomato supplies from Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. "Prices will start easing as hybrid tomatoes from Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka reach the national capital," the official said. The government does not plan to reintroduce subsidized tomato sales, a measure implemented last year when the price exceeded Rs 110 per kg. The official exuded confidence that prices would normalise within 1-2 weeks as supplies improve from Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. The official noted that India has 283 lakh tonne of stored potato, sufficient to meet

domestic demand despite lower production compared to the previous year. Onion prices, which have eased in Maharashtra's wholesale markets, are expected to decline further with the arrival of the new crop in September. Heavy rainfall has disrupted the supply of tomatoes, potatoes, onions, and green vegetables in key consuming areas, leading to price hikes across metros. In Delhi, retail potato price was Rs 40/kg on July 12, up from Rs 25/kg last year, while onion price increased to Rs 57/kg from Rs 33/kg. The government remains optimistic about price stabilisation in the coming weeks, provided there is no further disruption.

# Govt mulls handing over MTNL operations to BSNL; merger unlikely

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government is considering the option of handing over operations of Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd (MTNL) to BSNL through an agreement, instead of pursuing a merger route, a source privy to the development said. A final call on this is likely to be taken in a month's time. The source said the option of handing over debt-laden MTNL's operations to Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) through an agreement is being looked into. The source said that given MTNL's high debt, a merger with BSNL was

not a favourable option. Once the decision is taken, the proposal would be placed before the Committee of Secretaries, and thereafter taken to the Cabinet. Amid mounting financial woes, MTNL this week informed in a statutory filing that it is unable to make interest payment to certain bondholders "due to insufficient funds". "The second semi annual interest with regard to 7.59 per cent MTNL's bond series... is due on July 20, 2024. As per the structured payment mechanism of Tripartite agreement (TPA) signed among MTNL,



Department of Telecom and Beacon Trusteeship Ltd, MTNL has to fund the semi-

annual interest into the Escrow account with adequate amount 10 days before the due date," it said. In view of the provisions of TPA, it is informed that due to insufficient funds, MTNL could not fund the Escrow account with adequate amount, the corporation said in the BSE filing. While MTNL offers services in Delhi and Mumbai, BSNL runs all India operations (except Delhi and

Mumbai). Even as private telcos like Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel have scaled their subscriber tally in past months capitalising on Indian users' massive appetite for data and voice services, the customer base of MTNL has been dwindling - from just 4.66 million (wireless and wireline) in January-March 2023 to 4.1 million a year later. MTNL's losses mounted to Rs 3,267.5 crore in FY24 from Rs 2,915.1 crore in FY23. Revenue from operations in last fiscal year was Rs 798.56 crore, down 14.6 per cent from a year ago.

# GeM achieves significant milestones

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Showcasing robust growth and impactful reforms in India's e-procurement landscape, the Government e Marketplace (GeM) has achieved significant milestones at the end of the first quarter of FY 24-25 as it reported a Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) of Rs1,24,761 Lakh crore, marking an impressive 136 per cent quarter-on-quarter growth compared to last year's GMV of Rs 52,670 Crore.

Launched in 2016, GeM has transformed the fragmented procurement system into a comprehensive platform widely utilized by government buyers and serviced by a nationwide network of sellers and service providers. In the services segment alone, GeM recorded a GMV exceeding Rs 80,500 crore in Q1 FY 24-25, representing a remarkable 330% growth over the corresponding period in FY 23-24. Notably, procurement by Central Ministries and CPSEs

surpassed the Rs 1 Lakh crore milestone, with Ministries of Coal, Defence, and Petroleum & Gas emerging as top procurers in this quarter. CPSEs accounted for over Rs 91,000 Crore of this total, said Prashant Kumar Singh, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the GeM. GeM's efforts extend to enhancing ease of doing business through initiatives like the 'GeM SAHAYAK' program, aimed at creating a nationwide network of trained accredited trainers to assist sellers and buyers.

# Tier 1 cities dominate in blue-collar gig job opportunities: Report



PTI ■ MUMBAI

With a rise in gig economy, tier-one cities led in short-term blue-collar employment opportunities, accounting for 67.1 per cent openings from June 2023 to June 2024, a report said on Saturday. These tier-I cities, which have a large concentration of gig working opportunities, saw 63.11 per cent job applications originating from these urban hubs, a report by tech-enabled blue-collar workforce recruitment platform WorkIndia said. Tier-II cities saw 26 per cent of such job openings and accounted for 25 per cent of applications, indicating balanced growth potential, the report said. However, tier-III cities exhibited a lower proportion of job openings (6.7 per cent) compared to 11 per cent applications, hinting at heightened competition amidst an oversupply of gig workers, the report stated. The WorkIndia report, an annual index representing the state of blue collar workers in the Indian job market and hiring activity, is based on job listings on its platform during June 2023 to June 2024. It further revealed that Delhi emerged as the prime hub for gig workers, leading with 17.7 per cent of job openings and

22.9 per cent of applications, reflecting robust demand across sectors. This was followed by Mumbai with 16.57 per cent of job openings and 15.8 per cent of applications, while Bengaluru and Pune showed promise as emerging gig economies, with focused efforts needed to attract more employers and workers. Back-office roles dominated the gig economy job market, comprising 34.5 per cent of openings, followed by delivery executives (19.3 per cent) and cooks (16.3 per cent). The rise in online marketing roles (5.27 per cent) signals a growing demand for digital skills in the gig workforce, it said. Majority of gig workers (60.56 per cent) are aged 18-29 years, while 30-49-year-old workers constitute 20.97 per cent of the workforce, it said. Sector-wise, back-office roles, delivery services, and culinary positions lead in demand, with digital marketing roles on the rise. "As the gig economy continues to expand, understanding these trends becomes increasingly crucial for stakeholders aiming to optimise their workforce strategies and capitalise on evolving market dynamics," WorkIndia Co-Founder and CEO Nilesh Dugarwal said.

# Macrotech Developers Q1 sale bookings up 20 per cent on strong housing demand



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Macrotech Developers has posted a 20 per cent growth in sale bookings to Rs 4,030 crore for the first quarter of this fiscal year as housing demand continues to be strong. Sale bookings of Macrotech Developers, which markets its properties under Lodha brand, stood at Rs 3,350 crore in the year-ago period. As per its latest operational update posted on stock exchanges, the collection from customers rose 12 per cent to Rs 2,690 crore in April-June FY25 from Rs 2,400 crore in the corresponding period of the previous year. The company registered 20 per cent growth in its sale bookings (pre-sales) to a record Rs 14,520 crore during 2023-24 as against Rs 12,060 crore in the previous year. It has given a guidance of

achieving 21 per cent annual growth in sale bookings this fiscal to Rs 17,500 crore. Macrotech Developers, which has a significant presence in Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) and Pune and has just entered Bengaluru, will launch 17 housing projects this fiscal year, having a revenue potential of Rs 12,000 crore, to boost sale bookings. The company will launch 10 projects and seven new phases in existing residential projects during 2024-25 across the three cities. The total area to be launched is estimated at 10.1 million square feet with an estimated gross development value (GDV) of Rs 12,100 crore. Macrotech Developers has delivered around 100 million square feet of real estate and is developing more than 110 million square feet under its ongoing and planned portfolio.

# Global trends to influence trading activity in markets in holiday-shortened week: Analysts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Quarterly earnings from several blue-chip firms, including Infosys and Reliance Industries, global trends, along with trading activity of foreign investors, would act as the major driving factors for equity markets' movement in a holiday-shortened week ahead, analysts said. The domestic WPI inflation data for June -- scheduled to be announced on Monday -- will also influence trading sentiments, traders said. Markets will remain closed on Wednesday for Muharram. Among major quarterly earnings to be tracked this week are from HDFC Life Insurance Company, Bajaj Auto, BPCL, JSW Steel, Asian Paints, Infosys, and Reliance Industries. "Q1 earnings will be a key focus this week as numerous companies, including heavyweights Infosys, and Reliance, are set to release their results. Additionally, pre-Budget discussions are expected to contribute to market volatility," Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investment Ltd, said. On the global front, a significant focus will be on



China. The country is scheduled to announce its GDP and Industrial Production (IIP) numbers, Meena said. "Other global factors to watch include the speech by the US Federal Reserve Chairman, US retail sales figures, and macroeconomic data from Japan," he added. Meanwhile, IT services company HCL Tech on Friday posted a 20.4 per cent rise in consolidated net profit to Rs 4,257 crore for the June-ended quarter and gave a revenue growth guidance of 3-5 per cent for FY25 on GenAI diversification and strong operational execution.

"On Monday, markets will react to India's inflation data. Key results this week include Jio Financial Services, HDFC Life, Asian Paints, LTIMindtree, Infosys, Wipro, JSW Steel, Paytm, etc. Also globally, investors will take cues from China's GDP numbers, US core retail sales data, and ECB (European Central Bank) interest rate decision," Siddhartha Khemka, Head, Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said. Retail inflation increased to four-month high of 5.08 per cent in June as food items, including vegetables, became dearer, according to

government data released on Friday. Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said, "We expect stock-specific moves to gain traction due to the ongoing earnings season; indeed, IT will be in the limelight due to the good start to the earnings and outlook." In the week ahead, economic data like China GDP, EuroZone CPI inflation, ECB policy, and the US Fed chair speech will be watched by investors to get cues on market momentum, Nair added. On a weekly basis, the BSE benchmark jumped 522.74 points, or 0.65 per cent, while the Nifty climbed 178.3 points, or 0.73 per cent. The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 622 points, or 0.78 per cent, to settle at a record closing level of 80,519.34 on Friday. During the day, it zoomed 996.17 points, or 1.24 per cent, to hit an all-time high of 80,893.51. The NSE Nifty surged 186.20 points, or 0.77 per cent, to settle at a record closing high of 24,502.15. Intra-day, it jumped 276.25 points, or 1.13 per cent, to hit a new lifetime peak of 24,592.20.



# Gukesh and Praggnanandhaa to headline Indian team in 45th Chess Olympiad

PTI ■ CHENNAI

D Gukesh and R Praggnanandhaa are notable Indian names who will take part in the upcoming Chess Olympiad set to be held in Hungary's Budapest in September. Gukesh, who will be challenging defending world champion Ding Liren of China in the World Chess Championship in November, will treat the event as dress

rehearsal leading up to the summit clash. The 18-year-old has been on a great run this year, having won the prestigious Candidates event in Toronto earlier in April to become the youngest to compete in the World Championship finale. Confirming the teams to PTI, AICF President Nitin Narang stated that the team also comprises Arjun Erigaisi, Vidit Gujrathi and Harikrishna Pentala.

The women's team features Harika Dronavalli, Vaishali Rameshbabu, Divya Deshmukh, Vantika Agrawal and Tania Sachdev. One of the notable omissions from the Women's side happens to be Grandmaster Koneru Humpy for reasons unknown, who won the bronze medal in 2022. Meanwhile, Narang also confirmed that discussions are underway with coaches to organize a pre-event camp.

"Camp is scheduled in the end of August. The venue and date will be finalized soon," he added. India hosted the previous edition of the Olympiad for the first time in 2022, where the hosts took the bronze medal in both the Open and Women's categories. It will be the 45th edition of the Olympiad. Hungary will host the event for the first time in an official manner, having hosted the second unofficial Chess Olympiad in 1926.

# Bhaichung backs Spain in Euro Cup final against Kane's 3 Lions



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India captain Bhaichung Bhutia has backed Spain to win the Euro Cup final against England on Sunday, expecting Lamine Yamal and Nico Williams to mesmerize the fans worldwide with yet another stunning show in the summit clash. "Spain definitely is going to have upper hand in the final because the way they've been playing, the team is completely balanced. They look technically so good, they have been outstanding with six out of six wins. They're definitely a team which is in form. "Yamal and Williams are going to come up with another stellar show," Bhutia told PTI Videos in an interview. The 47-year-old legendary India striker acknowledged that 17-year-old Yamal "is

definitely "a superstar in the making". "We saw in this tournament, how he's been, he's got his assists, he's got his goal in the semi-finals. He knows when to release ball, when to dribble past the defenders. The greatest quality of player is making the right decision. And with Yamal as a 16-year-old boy, we can see that he does not overdo," he observed. "The quality and football brains, we can see quite a lot in him. Seven to eight years down the line, I'm sure, we will be seeing him as a contender or winner of the Footballer of the Year, Ballon d'Or. He might be getting quite a few in his career in years to come," Bhutia said of Yamal. Bhutia, however, reckoned that Williams could be the big surprise in the final on

Sunday. "For Spain, I feel Williams, though Yamal is there, can be a big surprise in the finals because he's got that pace. He can be a major factor in game changing moments in the finals. If he can get his judgment right, he's definitely going to be a huge problem because right-hand side, if they're going to play with three defence in England, they are going to get a lot of space." On why England is not his favourite for the final, he said, "I've never been a fan of Gareth Southgate's formation of going very defensive. I think they started with 4-2-3-1 and they were more defensive and not positive-minded. The kind of quality players they have, they should be playing free-flowing, attacking football, what Spain does. "But I think in quarter-finals,

semi-finals, he's changed the formation 3-4-3, where Phil Foden, even Bellingham has been able to come out and play quite their natural game. One of the main reasons why Phil Foden could do his best was the formation which they were playing, they don't really give him that attacking support where he needed that." He, however, said he will still bet on England captain Harry Kane because he is known to be a natural goal scorer. "He's scored goals in Premier League, he's gone to Bundesliga, he's a goal scorer at Bayern Munich. I think he is one of the best goal scorers in this generation. If you have to bet anybody to score goals, it's Harry Kane. And we've not seen his best so far. "Kane is still somebody who can score goals and can win matches single-handedly."



# Euro 2024 final: Spain eye record 4th title, England look to end 58-year wait

AP ■ BERLIN

Spain and England meet in the final of the European Championship on Sunday. Spain is seeking a record fourth title at the Euros to break a tie with Germany, while England is bidding for a first major trophy in men's soccer since the 1966 World Cup. **HERE'S WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT THE MATCH:** Match facts: Spain will start as the favorite after winning all six of its matches at Euro 2024 and being widely regarded as the best team at the tournament. Winning the title would continue a strong period of success for Spanish national teams, with the men having captured the UEFA Nations League in June last year and the women following that up by winning the World Cup two months later. ■ Lamine Yamal is Spain's new star having set up three goals before the semifinals, where he scored a spectacular long-range strike in the victory over France - all at the age of 16. He turned 17 on Saturday, the day before the final. It is a breakthrough major tournament for Yamal, much like it was for a 19-year-old Kylian Mbappé at the 2018 World Cup and a 17-year-old Pelé at the 1958 World Cup. ■ Spain last appeared in a final at a major tournament in 2012, when the team won the third of its European Championship titles by beating Italy 4-0. England played in the final of Euro 2020, which was played in 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic, and lost in a penalty shootout to Italy. ■ England has shown

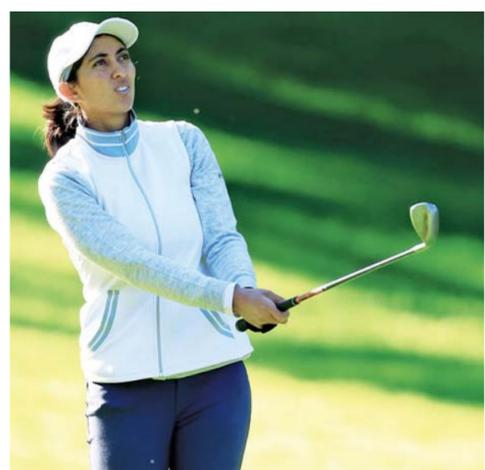
resilience by coming from behind in all three of its knockout-stage matches at Euro 2024. Jude Bellingham scored an equalizer from an overhead kick in the fifth minute of stoppage time in the extra-time win over Slovakia in the last 16, Bukayo Saka equalized in the 80th minute against Switzerland in the quarterfinals before England won a penalty shootout, and substitute Ollie Watkins scored a winner almost exactly on 90 minutes against the Netherlands in the semifinals. ■ England coach Gareth Southgate is often criticized for his in-game management but he has changed the culture inside the squad and is regularly getting the team deep at major tournaments. In Southgate's tenure that started in 2016, England has reached the World Cup semifinals in 2018 and now back-to-back European Championship finals. **Team news:** Spain captain Alvaro Morata has been in training this week after limping out of the semifinal win over France after being knocked to the ground in the post-match celebrations by a steward trying to stop a pitch invader. Right back Dani Carvajal returns from suspension, leaving the only real selection dilemma at center back for coach Luis de la Fuente, with Nacho and Robin Le Normand vying to partner Aymeric Laporte. Dani Olmo should again fill in for the injured Pedri as Spain's attacking central midfielder. ■ Southgate has to decide who to play at left back - or left wing back - out of Kieran Trippier or Luke Shaw. Shaw is a natural on that side but has

only made two appearances as a second-half substitute at Euro 2024 after recovering from an injury that had sidelined him since February. Otherwise, Southgate will choose the same players, with the 19-year-old Kobbie Mainoo having nailed down the problematic spot in central midfield alongside Declan Rice. **By the numbers:** Spain's previous European Championship titles came in 1964, 2008 and 2012. ■ There are six players on a tournament-high three goals at Euro 2024 and two are playing in the final: England captain Harry Kane and Spain playmaker Dani Olmo. The others are Georges Mikautadze of Georgia, Cody Gakpo of the Netherlands, Ivan Schranz of Slovakia and Jamal Musiala or Germany. ■ It has been six years since Spain and England met in a senior men's international. In 2018, they played a Nations League double-header, with Spain winning 2-1 at Wembley Stadium and England winning 3-2 in Sevilla a month later. **What they're saying:** "I don't say it becomes run of the mill but it's a little bit more normal for us. That statement in itself is probably ridiculous given our history." - England coach Gareth Southgate on reaching a second straight final at the Euros. ■ "I would like him to work with the same humility, keep his feet on the ground in order to keep improving, learning with the same kind of attitude and that professionalism, that maturity that he shows on the pitch. He looks like a much more experienced player, to be honest.

# Aditi makes cut, Diksha exits at Evian

PTI ■ EVIAN LES BAINS

Aditi Ashok assured herself of the cut but fellow Indian Diksha Dagar withdrew before the truncated second round on medical grounds at the Amundi Evian Championship here. Play was suspended on the day due to lightning in the area. The officials met twice to see if resumption was possible but the storm continued to intensify with heavy rain, thunder and lightning. Aditi added 1-under 70 to her first round 71 and was 1-under for 36 holes and T-44th up from overnight T-52. The second round is yet to finish. Diksha, who had a rough 76 on the first day, however, withdrew on medical grounds.



Aditi, who won a LET event at Hero Women's Indian Open in her first year, has since won four more. The last win came in Spain in November 2023 and she has been on the LPGA since 2017. At 12-under-par after 13 holes, Ayaka Furue of Japan holds a three-stroke lead, over Australian Stephanie Kyriacou and Haeran Ryu of South Korea, after 16 and 11 holes respectively. First-round co-leader, Patty Tavatanakit of Thailand, who held a three-way share of the overnight lead, is a stroke further back in a tie for fourth position alongside the 2018 Amundi Evian Championship winner Angela Stanford of the United States. First-round co-leader Ingrid Lindblad of Sweden is tied for

sixth with South Korean trio Hyo-Joo Kim, the 2014 champion, Mi Hyang Lee and Yu Jin Sung, who had the lowest round of the day, an eight-under-par 63. Fellow first-round co-leader Gemma Dryburgh of Scotland lies in a six-way tie for 10th on six-under-par after nine holes, with Lauren Coughlin of the United States, South Korean trio Hye-Jin Choi, Jin Young Ko, Narin An and England's Georgia Hall, who fought back from a rough start to card a 67, whilst carrying an injury. The Evian Championships is a 72-hole stroke play competition, with a cut to the top 65 professionals and ties after 36 holes and a purse of USD \$8 million with a winner's share of \$1.2 million.

# Ex-Olympians say India's preparations for Olympics should be continuous process

PTI ■ KOLKATA

India's preparation for the Olympics should be a continuous process and the authorities should not wake up just months before the commencement of the 'greatest show on earth', former Olympians said. They were speaking at a panel discussion here "In search of glory: India's prospects in the 2024 Olympics" organised by Indian Chamber of Commerce at a city hotel on Friday night. Hockey icon Gurbux Singh, a member of the gold-winning hockey team in 1964 Olympics and bronze-winning team in 1968 Olympics, underscored the importance of inculcating a sports culture among the youth, to have sporting infrastructure and grounds at every educational institution. "We wake up when the Olympics comes. The whole country wakes up. That attitude must change," he said, adding that 90 per cent of parents want their children to pursue vocations other than sports. About India's prospects in hockey in the 2024 Olympics, Singh said, "We are in a difficult group and our first target should be to secure a berth in the semi-final. One important thing should be when you go for the match you only have win in mind." Gymnast Dipa Karmakar, who missed the bronze



Professional chess player Pravin Thipsay with Gymnast Dipa Karmakar, former hockey player Gurbux Singh and others at a talk show in Kolkata on July 13, 2024. Photo: ANI

narrowly in the 2016 Rio Olympics by finishing fourth at the vault event, said: "One should have the will power to achieve everything..." Recalling how a former foreign coach had discouraged her from trying the difficult vault event in gymnastics, Karmakar asked every aspiring girl to turn every disadvantage and adversity in her favour, to fight any discrimination and make the motherland proud. Recalling the unforgettable moments during and after the Rio event, the Arjuna awardee said: "As I finished fourth I had told sir Bisweswar Nandi how can I face the crores of countrymen who had reposed

so much faith in me, who had put so much expectations on me, I had wanted to go straight to my city Agartala on return but he said the entire country is waiting for you." "And I really saw how ecstatic and amazing the response of people were to my arrival. I still remember the motivational words of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who amazed me the way he narrated every minute detail of my performance," she said. To a question by moderator Boria Majumder, Karmakar said she is expecting a "double-digit medal tally" in athletics in the coming Olympics.

"But as I said, our preparations should continue throughout the year, in four years, continuously," she added. Karmakar's coach and Dronacharya recipient Nandi said "Only in five-six states in India gymnastics is practised as a sport and that should change if we want more youngsters including girls to follow Karmakar's footsteps." "We need more support from states to back budding talents from not-so-affluent families," he added. India's heptathlon sensation Soma Biswas said "Previously one had to nourish the ultimate dream to be an Olympian which needs to be

transformed in the belief to win Olympics medal," including the yellow metal. Commonwealth Chess Championship winner Pravin Thipsay said the country is already a chess superpower. Referring to the former Chess World Cup Champion Viswanathan Anand, Thipsay said "When Anand became a champion, he inspired young talents like Surya Sekhar Ganguly and that tradition continues." "There has to be an outstanding achievement by an individual," Thipsay said. Asked about any possibility of chess being included in future editions of the Olympics, he said Gary Kasparov had mooted the suggestion in past. "They (IOC) must have their own standards. The future inclusion of chess in Olympics... Administrators have to make the move," he said. Thipsay pointed out the 44th Chess Olympiad was participated by 186 countries which is not a small number. Ex-Olympian Archer Rahul Banerjee said a sportsperson should always learn from failure. "If you win in your first tournament you celebrate and if you lose the next tourney you are branded as a failure," he said. Majumder chipped in "Sports is the only thing where both success and failures are celebrated in public."

# ICC Board likely to discuss expenses of US leg of T20 World Cup during Colombo meet



**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
The United States-leg of the T20 World Cup is believed to have exceeded the budget and the all-powerful ICC Board will discuss the losses suffered when it meets during the Annual Conference of the world governing body in Colombo on July 19. Since the auditing isn't complete, it is difficult to quote a figure of losses as the amount received through gate receipts (ticketing) is yet to be fully computed.

However, there is feeling among prominent board members that losses for the US-leg of the tournament could run into millions of dollars. It has been learnt that Tournament Director Chris Tettey has resigned but according to sources aware of the developments, the 49-year-old Englishman had decided to put in his papers even before the start of the tournament. "Many members aren't happy with Tettey's performance. He had tendered his resignation but it can't be said that USA leg

of the T20 World Cup has got anything to do with it," an ICC board source told PTI on conditions of anonymity. "With at least three ICC global tournament and all associate nation getting T20 status, management work is relentless. Tettey, it is believed had decided to quit some time back." Those who have worked closely to conduct the event believe that ICC will actually earn handsomely through the ticket sales. However what has irked the influential members of the

ICC is choice of New York city as one of the venues for the marquee event. The pitch and outfield of the Nassau County Cricket stadium had received a lot of flak and that was avoidable. "The event was supposed to be held in the USA and there were other cities apart from New York where matches could have been organised. Why wasn't it considered? "No practice matches were played to test the strip, which was certainly unsuitable for top flight cricket," the source said.

# Jhulan joins Trinbago Knight Riders as mentor ahead of women's CPL

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
Former India pacer Jhulan Goswami has joined Trinbago Knight Riders (TKR) as a mentor ahead of the women's Caribbean Premier League. In an illustrious international career spanning 20 years, Goswami bagged 355 wickets across formats for India before retiring in 2022. She will be seen in the role of mentor to a team led by star all-rounder Deandra Dottin, who captained TKR Women to the championship title in the inaugural season of WCPL in 2021. "It's an honour to join such a quality franchise," Goswami, the former speedster from Kolkata, said in a release. "Knight Riders have done so well in India and around the world, and to join TKR Women at the WCPL is a pleasure. Thanks to KKR management for thinking about me as a mentor and I'm really looking forward to this tournament." The Knight Riders management recently added international superstars Jemimah Rodrigues, Meg Lanning, Jess Jonassen and Shikha Pandey to the squad, in a quest to lift a second WCPL trophy when the action begins in Trinidad & Tobago this August. Speaking on Goswami's addition to the TKR setup, Venky Mysore, CEO of the Knight Riders group said: "Jhulan Goswami is an



absolute legend of the game, and we are very happy to have her on board as the mentor of the TKR Women's team. TKR is a very proud unit, with five championship titles between the men's and women teams over the last 10 years." "We strongly believe that under Jhulan's mentorship, the team will reach greater heights. It's a fantastic opportunity for the youngsters to pick Jhulan's brains and learn from her experiences to become better cricketers themselves. We would like to wish her all the best, and look forward to seeing her in the TKR setup soon."

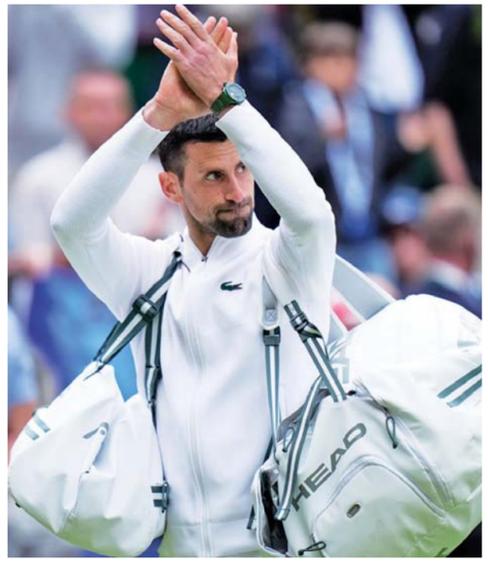
TKR Women will play four league matches (vs Barbados Royals and Guyana Amazon Warriors) from August 22-27. The final is scheduled for August 29 at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Tarouba. TKR Women's squad for WCPL 2024: Retained Caribbean Players: Deandra Dottin (c), Kycia Knight (wk), Shamila Connell, Zaida James, Samara Ramnath; New Signings: Meg Lanning, Jemimah Rodrigues, Jess Jonassen, Shikha Pandey; Note: The remaining six slots in the 15-member squad will be filled in the WCPL Draft later this month.



# Anahat, Tiana enter third round of World Junior squash

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**  
Young Anahat Singh has stormed into the girls' third round of the World Junior Squash Championships in Houston. The 16-year-old women's national champion, seeded 5/8, on Friday eased past South African Dene Van Zyl 11-3 11-2 11-6 in the second round following a first-round bye. She will next meet Samantha Jaffe (17/32) of the US. Compatriot Tiana Parasarapurua (17/32) also advanced to the third round with a 14-12 11-5 11-5 win over Emma Merson of New Zealand, while five Indian boys recorded first-round victories. **OTHER INDIAN RESULTS: Boys: 1st round:** Ayaan Vaziralli bt Md Alnasfan (Saudi Arabia) 12-10 11-6 11-5; Shaurya Bawa (17/32) bt Md Ammad (Pak) 12-10 11-3 11-9; Arianth KS bt Jonathan Reyes (Philippines) 11-5 11-3 11-6; Harith Danial Jefri (9/16) (Malaysia) bt Tanveet Singh Munda 11-4 11-7 11-7; Yuvraj Wadhvani (17/32) bt Shu Takahashi (Japan) 11-3 11-3 11-9; Avlokith Singh bt Kasper Cheung (Australia) 11-9 11-9 11-2. **Girls: 2nd round:** Malika Elkarakasy (17/32) (Egypt) bt Shameena Riaz 11-3 11-6 11-2; Dixon Hill (17/32) (USA) bt Nirupama Dubey 11-4 11-4 11-5; Helen Tang (17/32) (Hong Kong) bt Unnati Tripathi 11-4 11-5 11-8. **1st round:** Shameena bt Maiden-Lee Coe (NZ) 11-4 13-11 11-1; Nirupama bt Maria Gomez (Colombia) 11-4 11-6 7-11 11-4; Savannah Moxham (Belgium) bt Shear Nayar 11-8 11-7 11-5; Unnati bt Mariam Ayad (Germany) 12-10 11-2 11-2; Tiana bye.

# Novak Djokovic says Nick Kyrgios hinted at return at US Open but it might have been a joke



**AP ■ LONDON**  
No one knows for sure when 2022 Wimbledon runner-up Nick Kyrgios will return to competition after nearly two years away from the tour because of injuries. But perhaps Kyrgios dropped a

hint to Novak Djokovic while the two were practising this week at the All England Club. "He hit a really good serve, and he said, Well, I might come back at the US Open." So I don't know if he was joking about it or not," Djokovic said after winning his semifinal on

Friday. "But let me tell you, he's hitting the ball as good as ever, really." Kyrgios, a 29-year-old Australian, lost to Djokovic in the Wimbledon final two years ago, before knee and wrist problems sidelined him. Kyrgios has played just one official singles match since October 2022. He has been doing TV commentary during Wimbledon. The US Open starts in late August. "Yeah, I think that the return is near, but it's hard to say, really, because (it's) one thing ... Really practising for like an hour or two, but completely something different when you are out there on the tour playing in a tournament where you have to come back every single day - maybe for four, five, six days in a row," Djokovic said. "I guess he will also not know if his wrist will react well until he actually plays a tournament." Djokovic, who plays Carlos Alcaraz for the Wimbledon title on Sunday, said he hopes Kyrgios can compete again. "I think everyone in tennis hopes he can come back quickly," Djokovic said, "because we definitely need him on the tour."

# Uruguay coach Marcelo says players deserve apology, not sanctions after Copa America fight

**AP ■ CHARLOTTE (US)**  
Uruguay coach Marcelo Bielsa thinks his players deserve an apology, not sanctions, for going into the stands at Bank of America Stadium and participating in a fight with Colombia fans following his team's 1-0 Copa America semifinal loss. An angry Bielsa criticised tournament organizers for not doing enough to protect the families of players seated behind the Uruguay bench and he justified players taking matters into their own hands to protect their loved ones. "We are in the United States, the country of security," Bielsa said through an interpreter during an emotional 45-minute news conference Friday. "How can you not defend your mother, your sister, a baby? If they did not do it, they would have been condemned by all of us." CONMEBOL, South American soccer's governing body, said on Thursday its disciplinary committee opened an investigation. "It is unacceptable that an incident like this turns passion into violence," the federation said in a statement. Asked if he feared sanctions for his team, Bielsa grew irate. "The sanction does not have to be for the footballers, but for those who forced them to act like this," Bielsa said. "This is a witch hunt. It is a shame." Uruguay had the option of seating families



in luxury boxes instead of in the crowd. The team returns to the same venue for Saturday night's third-place game against Canada. While the crowd is expected to be more subdued, the same level of security is planned. A raucous crowd of more than 70,000 - the vast majority of whom were wearing Colombia's colours - attended the match on Wednesday night at the downtown Charlotte stadium, home of the NFL's Carolina Panthers and Charlotte FC. There were only a few small patches of Uruguay fans in the crowd at the start of the game, many of them behind the team's bench. After an emotional and physical game that included seven yellow cards and one red, a fight broke out in the stands and drinks

were thrown. Shoving and punches ensued. The melee grew in terms of the magnitude of people involved before more than a dozen Uruguay players, including Darwin Núñez, climbed a small set of portable stairs into the crowd. Bielsa said not enough precautions were in place and an emergency exit path for Uruguay fans was not provided. Many in the Uruguayan soccer association delegation got away from the fighting by climbing down onto the playing field while Mecklenburg County Police and security restored order as the stadium was cleared. The melee in the stands lasted more than five minutes. At one point during the news conference, Bielsa got into a heated exchange with a reporter who wound up leaving halfway through. "You should have asked me if we have received an apology, not if I fear sanctions," Bielsa shouted. Bielsa went on to attack media outlets, saying "journalism responds to the interests of those who administer power, who are the ones who distribute the money. There is a percentage of journalism that responds to this. Those who do not respond to the interests of power are the ones who suffer because they are loyal." Bielsa said he didn't plan to talk about the incident but couldn't hold back. "I am very afraid of sports revenge," Bielsa said.

# Dutch rower makes it to Paris Olympics two years after nearly losing her life in bicycle crash

**AP ■ AMSTERDAM**  
Two years ago, doctors were by the hospital bed of Dutch rower Marloes Oldenburg asking if she wanted to donate her organs in case the risky surgery they were about to perform on her didn't go well. She had just been airlifted to a hospital with her back broken into multiple places following a nasty bicycle crash during a trip to celebrate the silver medals she had won at the world championships a week earlier. Doctors didn't know if Oldenburg would survive, or even walk again, so rowing wasn't really a priority at the time. About 12 weeks later, Oldenburg was back training. And in less than a month, she will be rowing again at the Paris Olympics - still carrying the pins that were inserted under the skin of her neck, and still unable to turn her head sideways because of the surgery that saved her life and changed her perspective on sports. "It sounds a bit weird when you are 36, but I'm really happy I'm alive. If you've been so close to

death, you have to appreciate a lot," she said. "My goal really changed. Beforehand, it was: I need to go to the Olympics, I need to get a medal. And now it's more like: I'm going to the Olympics. How cool!" Oldenburg had to learn how to swim again before getting back in a boat, but quickly got up to speed and will arrive in France as one of the medal favorites with the Dutch team in the coxless four event. "It went really fast," she said. "My teammates picked me up, they supported me. After six months we got bronze at the European (championships). And after 10 months, we became world champions. It was insane." Oldenburg landed on top of her head after her bicycle flipped over while she went across a tiny bridge on a mountain biking route in the Netherlands. She broke the first vertebrae and damaged a main artery in the neck during the fall. "It was stiff, I could not move," she said. "My body was, like, protecting itself. I would want to move, but my body didn't want to." A nurse who was biking along the same route was among the first to stop to help, and he immediately told Oldenburg to try to stay still. Her husband was biking ahead of her and returned to the scene of the accident to find Oldenburg motionless - she only had feeling in her toes and fingers at that point - but was in good spirits. "I thought: Well, tonight I'll be fine and we'll have dinner," she said. "And then the ambulance came and every time they move me, I cannot describe the pain in the neck. It was a lot." Oldenburg was taken to a hospital and doctors said her injury "was really bad." She was immediately transferred by helicopter to a bigger hospital in Austria so they could

# years after nearly losing her life in bicycle crash



operate on her. The surgery lasted nearly six hours as doctors put six pins to her spine. She still couldn't move her legs right after the operation, and it took almost a month before she could walk

again. "The first thing I did when I woke up was like, Can I move my head a bit?" she said. "Because they said there were two options: One is we connect everything, head and

vertebrae, and the other option, which luckily is the reason why I still row, is only the vertebrae are connected." Oldenburg was able to move her head up and down, which allowed her to row, but not laterally, which is a smaller hindrance for her on the boat. It is more of a problem when she is training, as she can't look for other boats or obstacles. "Everybody in Amsterdam knows I cannot turn, so the whole community is always calling if there is a duck or something else," she said. "I'm never going alone. That's the price I have to pay." There were also some adjustments needed for Oldenburg during competition. She had always been fastest while sitting in the bow position, where the rower needs to turn her head a bit, but instead of switching her to a different position, the coaches realized it would be better to keep her there and have her teammates take over the task of looking around when needed. Oldenburg said she was able to go through the gruelling recovery process by setting small goals for herself - it took

her five days before she could eat a piece of bread, and two weeks before she could go to the bathroom by herself. Brushing her teeth was especially difficult because she couldn't hold her head still. She said she played "the floor is lava" at times to help with her movement. "I celebrated the little goals. I set many goals, like 500 goals, really small goals," she said. "So instead of being really miserable because of the pain, I had a lot of pain, but making tiny goals every day was really joyful." She stayed two weeks in the hospital in Austria and needed about six weeks of rehabilitation back in the Netherlands. She joined the Dutch team's training camp about 12 weeks after the accident even though she still "couldn't do anything." "I only could make my own bread and eat it slowly," she said. "I had first to learn to swim again, which is totally unusual as a rower. I did some swimming in a really tiny swimming pool and it was OK. So in the end, after almost four months, I was in a boat." And "the weird thing was," she said, "she was still rowing as fast as she was before the accident."



"Do not dwell in the past,  
do not dream of the  
future, concentrate the  
mind on the present  
moment"  
— Buddha

## DEHRADUN MOURNING THE LOST SIGHTS

The once lush and serene Dehradun has undergone drastic changes with rapid urbanisation, changing the appearance and characteristics of the city. As high-rise buildings replace traditional housing, the environment and lifestyle here have undergone change, which may have brought profit for some, but long-term benefit for none, write **SIDHARTH MISHRA** and **PARITOSH KIMOTHI**

"Dehra Dehra Dun, Dehra Dehra Dun ...  
Many roads can take you there, many different ways  
One direction takes you years, another takes you days  
Dehra Dehra Dun...  
Many people on the roads looking at the sights  
Many others with their troubles looking for their rights  
Dehra Dehra Dun...  
See them move along the road in search of life divine  
...beggars in a goldmine  
Dehra Dehra Dun...  
Many roads can take you there, many different ways  
One direction takes you years, another takes you days  
Dehra Dehra Dun..." - Beatles

The legendary members of band Beatles stayed at the ashram of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in Rishikesh in the spring 1968 composing some fabulous music. The old timers recall that during their stay in Rishikesh, the Beatles came to Dehradun on two occasions. Something struck them about the beautiful town and they went onto to compose the extremely hummable song. Almost five decades later, this song has become the hymn to mourn the demise and death of the much loved Dehra of Doon. Dehradun was once an idyllic city with colonial bungalows surrounded by sprawling gardens. There were three arterial roads, one going to Mussoorie, the other to Chakrata and the third to Haridwar. All the three roads merged at Clock Tower, from where a fourth road took you inside the legendary Paltan Bazaar. On the Chakrata side you had the sprawling paddy fields, home to the famed Dehraduni basmati rice. The other two roads had the forests and the fruit orchards. Rajpur Road, the one which went to Mussoorie, had the bakeries and the bookshops. No wonder, Beatles said, "Many roads can take you there, many different ways 1 One direction takes you years, another takes you days". Two decades later in the year 2000, the hill districts of Uttar Pradesh became a separate state called Uttaranchal (later rechristened as Uttarakhand) with Dehradun as the temporary Capital. Quarter of a century later, Dehradun continues to be the seat of the government losing its gloss on a daily basis in the dust and pollution kicked by development. Rapid urbanisation and large scale constructions have changed the very character of the city. In recent years multi-storeyed buildings have become a sight as common as the homes with expansive gardens were once. Large orchards and homes with greens have been demolished to build high rise apartments, commercial complexes and malls. Does Dehradun, capital of a state which is seeing a large exodus of its population in search of employment



Photos: Mangesh Kumar/Pioneer

elsewhere, need multi-storeyed buildings. Multi-storeyed buildings first came up in India in Mumbai mainly to accommodate the flocks which arrived looking for jobs. Industrial and commercial activities attracted a large workforce of people. Chawls (labour colonies) were initially constructed and they were followed by the construction of flats to provide housing for the people who came to work in the nation's commercial capital. Similarly, multi-storeyed buildings were constructed in Delhi, Noida, Gurugram and Ghaziabad to provide housing for the growing working force which settled in these locations. However, Dehradun city has insignificant employment generation comparable to these cities. Yet the sprawling gardens and the lychee orchards the city was once famous for have been cut to build multi-storeyed buildings. In many cases, units in apartments and townships remain vacant as the owners are residents of Delhi-NCR, who have bought the property to spend the winter in Doon to get away from pollution. Some may view this as a sign of development but there are many who disagree. Anoop Nautiyal, the founder of Social Development for Communities (SDC) Foundation says, "There is a design in facilitation of such unplanned urbanisation. Though the draft master plan 2041 prepared by the Mussoorie

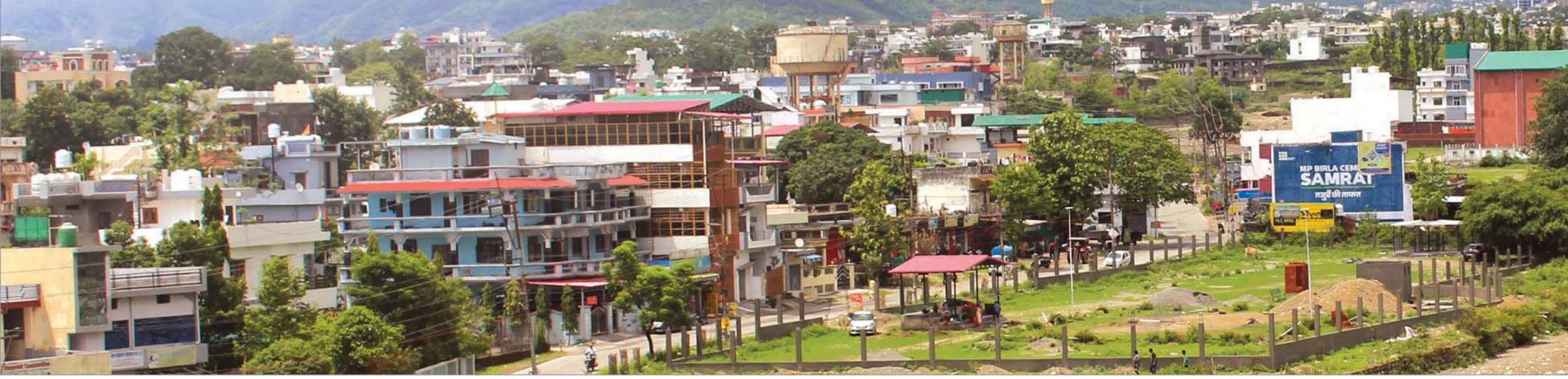
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”

Dehradun Development Authority (MDDA) mentions the seismic fault lines passing through this region, the construction activities here display a sense of bravado and a cavalier attitude.”  
The draft master plan recommended no development activities within 50 metres from the centre of the fault lines. The plan marks 35 fault lines, including three major ones - the Main Boundary Thrust (MBT), the Himalayan Frontal Fault (HFF) and the Main Central Thrust (MTC) that pass through the Doon Valley. Dehradun city is located in seismic zone IV which is a high risk zone of earthquake occurrence. Others point to the rapid dilution of the Doon Valley Notification of 1989. This notification was brought to preserve the unique and sensitive nature of the Doon Valley and to save Dehradun and Mussoorie from indiscriminate limestone quarrying. Social activist Reenu Paul mentions, "The Doon Valley Notification prevented construction of high rise buildings in the northern part of the valley and regulated other activities in the region. Diluting the

notification constructions has been carried out doing irreparable environmental damage in the valley." She adds, "The foothill policy too is being violated as hills are being cut for constructions which has led to considerable rise in the frequency of landslides." Paul also expressed concern at the damage caused to the Shivalik range for the construction of the much-touted Delhi-Dehradun expressway. Thus the Dehradun-Mussoorie Road which was once lush and peaceful is now dotted by scores of apartments, commercial buildings and shopping malls. Such areas which were once serene are now crowded by people and vehicular traffic from neighbouring states with noise replacing the sounds of the wind and birdcalls which were once the character of such sites. The building construction bye-laws have provisions like prohibition of any development on sites prone to landslides and which have a local gradient of more than 30 degrees. Such regulations have not

always been enforced as there are many ways to circumvent it. The emergence of apartment complexes has also altered the culture and lifestyle of the city which was once known for its sedated pace of life. The rampant concretisation and infrastructural construction at the cost of the green cover has affected the local environment drastically. A city where even ceiling fans were not common till a few decades ago experienced a record breaking maximum temperature of 43 degrees Celsius this summer. The multi-storeyed buildings have brought with them a different lifestyle which counts air conditioners, luxury vehicles and SUVs along with recreation dependant on commercial establishments as its essential part. A number of large malls have come up in different parts of the city along with shops selling branded products in various localities. The suburban areas which were once much more tranquil than the city are now bustling with crowds and noise as newer constructions continue to emerge to occupy what were once large open spaces. In recent times, concerned citizens and public groups have staged protests against the cutting of trees, which the government counters saying that it is for maintaining a balance between the ecology and economy. "This is misconstrued concept of development. Constructions in Dehradun have brought no benefit to the people of Uttarakhand. A few who had land sold it and left, the builders benefitted and those who passed their plans took a share in the profit, completely destroying the character of the city," says Rakesh Tyagi, an NRI entrepreneur with home base in Dehradun. Moaning development, Bhumika Chandola, who returned to Doon last year to escape pollution of Delhi-NCR, says, "Liquor shops are more frequent to cross by then chemist shops or other essentials. And the jams and traffic, construction, pollution, change in the eco system and weather is so visible. I guess I had the harshest summer in the last 25 years ...this time." Seeing Dehradun today, Beatles would have changed lines to say, "Many people on the roads mourning at the lost sights."

(Sidharth Mishra is author & a Doon lover, PARITOSH KIMOTHI is associate editor, The Pioneer, Dehradun Edition)



# CHEFS GO DOWN CULINARY LANE TO RELIVE THE JOY OF CHILDHOOD DISHES

**SHARMILA CHAND** gets on a discovery trail of the heartwarming childhood dishes chefs remember fondly....

*The taste of their home food lingers. It triggers wistful memories. Chefs share how they have recreated these memories, into their signature dishes. Till date every dish they cook is infused with personal experience and a lifetime of memories.*

*To relive the joy of their home food, let's hear from them as they share some of their heartwarming memories associated with their mother's cooking.*

## NAWANSHAR KATIRA PHIRNI

BY CHEF GAGAN SIKKA  
Chef In-Charge, Loya Taj Palace, New Delhi



## THAP TAWAN SMOKED FISH

BY CHEF ANIL RAWAT  
Executive Chef  
Le Méridien Khao Lak Resort & Spa  
Khao Lak, Thailand

"I am working in Thailand since 2006 and I miss my home food of Uttarakhand a lot. My mother used to cook for us a great BBQ fish which was regularly caught by my maternal grandfather. It was cooked in the house in small clay stove - chulha and I used to watch it with utmost concentration. My mother used several local spices of Garhwal hills to finish the marination including turmeric, cumin, salt, lemon, garam masala, mustard oil, garlic and coriander. I used to love mint chutney which she prepared on sil batta and served along with it. So I have tried to take inspiration from there and serve 'Thap Tawan Smoked Fish' in my menu. Thap Tawan is local fisherman village here. We receive fresh



fish on daily basis, I clean and marinate for few hours, then put in slow fire with wood, cook for 20 minutes - squeeze fresh lemon on top and serve hot with mint chutney. I am extremely happy to carry on my home recipe here and get compliments."

# NO MONKEY BUSINESS THIS!

Whether you're a food enthusiast, a nightlife aficionado, or simply someone looking for a unique dining experience, Monkey Bar promises an unforgettable adventure. Join **GYANESHWAR DAYAL** as he explores this happening night out

In the heart of Vasant Kunj, New Delhi, lies a vibrant and eclectic haven that beckons to the city's cosmopolitan crowd - Monkey Bar. This charming gastropub effortlessly combines quirky aesthetics with a menu brimming with innovative culinary delights, making it a must-visit destination for both food enthusiasts and nightlife aficionados. The sky is cast over and my heart is filled with anticipation. As I step into Monkey Bar, I am immediately enveloped in an ambiance that's both playful and inviting. The decor is interesting and awe-inspiring at the same time. There are no boring brick walls or a roof for that matter; it is a glass pyramid. And so, you are going to spend your evening in a pyramid with a lot of funky music and very hospitable staff. Monkey Bar is a brainchild of Chetan Rampal and Chef Manu Chandra. They are the owners of the popular gastropub Monkey



Bar. The two met at the Olive Bar & Kitchen in Mumbai and opened their first Monkey Bar in Bengaluru in 2012, and thereafter never looked back, going on to open it in other metropolitan cities. Coming to the interior, the large glass panes allow natural light to flood in during the day, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere. By night, the space transforms with dim lighting and an energetic vibe, perfect for those looking to unwind after a long day. The interior is a visual treat with colorful murals and an eclectic mix of furniture; it is a perfect setting for the night. The bar area, with its well-stocked shelves, is a focal point,



drawing patrons for both its visual appeal and the promise of expertly crafted cocktails. As a teetotaler, I am, of course, not qualified to comment on the cocktails served, but happy faces around me suggest they are next level. My friends tell me that the bartenders here are true mixologists, crafting drinks that are both visually stunning and tantalizing to the taste buds. I guess they

are right. Monkey Bar has its own signature cocktails - Jalapeno Lassi, VV Corner, Rasam TEQ, and, of course, Down and Dirty. The names are as funky as they could be. My mocktail is surely something I can talk about and recommend. My mojito (without alcohol), called a 'nojito', has a coconut flavor to it and is refreshing as well!

Cozy nooks and communal tables cater to both intimate gatherings and larger groups, ensuring that everyone feels at home. We have a party going, so the tables are joined, and the best thing about it is that the food is served. Starters are both veg and non-veg. Monkey Bar's menu is a celebration of creativity and flavour, offering a diverse range of dishes that cater to varied palates. The kitchen is



homed by a talented chef Sumit who is a super cool young guy, takes your comments seriously, and is eager to make amends as per your preference. His expertise results in a fusion of Indian and international cuisines, resulting in an array of dishes

that are as exotic as they are delicious. The main courses, like the starters, are well thought out, tantalizing the taste buds. They have an interesting array of dishes for mains: Puliogare Rice and Bhindi Raita, Herby Lemon Chicken, and Country

Mutton Curry. The desserts are Snicker Bar and Mobar Sundae Sandwich. One could try it all to feel truly gluttonous. My favourite is, of course, the avocado dish that alone could satiate my appetite, but I try rice and other Indian options, leaving little space for dessert, which I have any way. It is nutty and melts in the mouth. Monkey Bar in Vasant Kunj is more than just a place to eat and drink; it's an experience. The thoughtful blend of ambiance, innovative menu, and signature cocktails creates a unique and memorable outing. Whether you're looking to enjoy a casual brunch with friends, a lively evening out, or a romantic dinner, Monkey Bar caters to all, making it a must-visit destination in New Delhi's bustling nightlife scene. So, next time you find yourself in Vasant Kunj, let the playful vibes and exotic flavors of Monkey Bar sweep you off your feet. As I walk out after the sinful evening, it is drizzling, and I get wet. A little price to pay for a wonderful, sinful evening!



## BHATT KI CHURKANI

BY HITESH PANT  
Executive Chef  
Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Center

"My culinary journey blossomed from the heartfelt memories woven around my mother's & aunt's (Maasi's) Bhatt Ki Churkani recipe. This cherished delicacy embodies more than just a flavor; it represents a profound connection to my childhood and the love that filled our kitchen during gatherings with friends and relatives. Each time I watched my mother or my Maasi (aunt) meticulously craft this culinary delight, I absorbed more than just the technique; I absorbed the essence of their nurturing spirit and the joy they found in creating something delicious from simple ingredients. Those moments ignited a passion within me, guiding me towards a career where I could share the warmth and comfort of home-cooked meals with others. Bhatt Ki Churkani is a delicious and nutritious lentil dish (Dal) that



originates from the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand. It is made with black soybeans also known as Bhatt, which are a rich source of protein, fiber and vitamins and all-time favorite among locals and tourists alike. Bhatt Ki Churkani is a cherished cultural heritage Dal (served with hot rice) of the Kumaon region, representing their traditions and culinary expertise." Today, as I create dishes in my own kitchen, I pay homage to my mother's legacy, infusing every bite with the same love and care that inspired me to pursue my dreams as a chef. Thank you motherhood for your warmth and nourishment you've always provided, both in kitchen and in life - I am forever grateful to call you my mom! 'Bhatt Ki Churkani' is often served in our all-day dining restaurant, Feast during buffet meals & brunches, each bite of which is a heartfelt tribute to my mother's enduring presence and love."

transporting us back to those cherished moments. The second inspiration comes from my childhood streetside favorite from Amritsar - the hearty and indulgent Kulfa. Known for its rich, creamy kulfi and silky falooda, this dessert has always held a special place in my heart. In my rendition at Loya, I've created what we call the Nawanshar Katira Phirni. I've replaced the traditional rice with Gond Katira, an ingredient that's currently trending for its incredible cooling properties and unique texture. Gond Katira not only adds a distinctive mouthfeel but also offers health benefits like

boosting immunity, aiding digestion, and promoting healthy skin. And to make the dessert truly unique, I've added a house-churned Gulab Jamun ice cream, drawing inspiration from the Kulfa's sumptuous kulfi and falooda. The dessert is completed with a dollop of Gond Katira, adding a final touch of texture and complexity. This reimaged dessert - the Nawanshar Katira Phirni that echoes all the lovely memories of my favourite Custard Phirni and Kulfa, is not just a treat for the taste buds but a sensory journey through cherished memories and innovative flavours."

## THAI CRAB OMELETTE

BY CHEF RUNGTIWA SORLAE  
Thai Cuisine Specialty Chef, InAsia  
Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Center



"My journey through South Thailand immersed me in the vibrant flavors of Thai cuisine. Inspired by my mother's recipes, I perfected the Thai Crab Omelette - a cultural delight now also on our menu and a hot star, I must say. Be it lunch or dinner, my diners ask me to prepare Thai Omelette which I prepare from my heart. Infused with authentic Thai seasonings and crafted with Sheraton Bengaluru Whitefield's finesse, this dish promises a symphony of textures and flavors,



whether made with fresh crab or umami-rich canned varieties. Quick to prepare in just 90 seconds, it combines sautéed crab meat, onions, tomato, and bell pepper with whisked eggs, creating a crispy yet fluffy omelette that embodies my promise & dedication to global culinary excellence. My mother's cherished recipe continues to influence me to create delicious and memorable recipes."



## MOTHER'S BANANA CREPES

BY CHEF SAJID PATEL  
Executive Chef  
Sheraton Grand Bangalore Hotel at Brigade Gateway

"It is the act of incorporating the emotions of childhood innocence and nostalgia with a spin of modern culinary infusion is what I try to serve my guests. I was in the years of notorious nine and bananas used to be one of my primary foods of distaste. There was something about their yellow peeled, mushy texture that was enough to scrunch up my face in disfavor. Until I remember what it was a summer Sunday afternoon and I had just come home from my weekly cricket practice, thirsting for something sweet, like every other naive kid I went in search of my mother who I knew was the only one at that hour who could quench my sweet tooth with yet another of her simple yet ever comforting innovations just like she did that day. With three ingredients that sound ever so simple she played something in front of me that I till date can deem as my soul food and I know I always will further on. She picked up three ripe bananas from the counter and cut them into slices, heated some homemade ghee and added sugar to it to gather a glaze like consistency and went on to add the slices of bananas to have it braised in the glaze, once done



she procured a day old wheat parantha from the casserole and wrapped the ombre braised bananas in it. She cut it into triangles for me and as I recall that savory afternoon and the child inside me finds solace in the sheer flavours of sweet something out of nothings and innocence. Having given you the background, I have aspired always to give my guests the similar taste of nostalgia and innocence that we carry from our boyhood days. My spin on the rendition of bananas that my mother made me fall in love with would be nothing too different but just a spin on the French dessert, Crepes."



## DAL MORADABADI

BY CHEF MANISH MEHROTRA  
Culinary Director - Indian Accent

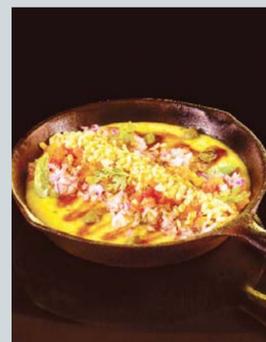
"Lentils are a staple of Indian cuisine, and in no other country are they used in so many ways to make such a variety of dishes - stews, fritters, salads, snacks and this chaat. Made with the humble split moong dal, often derided as diet for the sick or elderly, this famous chaat from Moradabad, a small town in northern India, is a favourite of mine. My mother hails from Moradabad, and when we visited my maternal grandparents during vacations, we looked forward to eating Dal Moradabadi, made in our kitchen as well as we excited to have it from the chaat-wala ringing his cycle-bell to announce his arrival on our street. At Indian Accent, I take pride in offering my own version as I temper the boiled dal with a variety of ingredients. Since the dish is thick and pasty, it is accompanied with a chur chur paratha."

## INGREDIENTS

- Split moong dal 3 tsp
- Turmeric powder ½ tsp
- Ghee 1 tsp
- Cumin seeds ½ tsp.
- Asafoetida ½ tsp
- Ginger, chopped 1 tsp
- Green chillies, chopped ½ tsp
- Salted butter 1 tsp
- Coriander leaves, chopped 1 tsp
- Cloves 2-3 nos.
- Black salt ½ tsp
- Salt to taste
- Water 300 ml

## TO SERVE

- Tamarind chutney 2 tsp
- Green chutney 1 tsp
- Onions, chopped 2 tsp
- Tomatoes, chopped 2 tsp
- Lime juice ½ tsp
- Fried moong dal or chana chur, dal moth, 1 tsp or Bombay mix (as garnish)
- Bhuknu masala ½ tsp



## METHOD

Clean and thoroughly wash the dal. Soak for at least 1 hour. Boil the soaked dal with turmeric powder in a heavy bottom pan till it is pasty. As the dal boils, stir continuously to avoid it sticking to the bottom of the pan.

Heat ghee in a heavy bottom pan. Crackle some cumin seeds. Add asafoetida. Add chopped ginger and green chillies. Sauté briefly, add cloves, black salt and salt, and then add this tempering to the dal. Cover the pan immediately so that the dal is infused with the tempering. Add butter and chopped coriander. Pour the hot dal into a serving bowl. Drizzle some tamarind and green chutneys over it. Sprinkle chopped onions and tomatoes. Add a dash of lime juice. Garnish with fried moong dal, chana chur, dal moth, or Bombay mix. Finish with bhuknu masala. A specialty from Unnao in Uttar Pradesh, this is a type of chaat masala with a strong flavour of hing. Bhuknu masala can be substituted with regular chaat masala.

Sharmila Chand is an author and independent journalist who writes on Travel, Food and Lifestyle

# A MESMERISING ODE TO THE EYES

Apeksha Niranjani captivated the audience with her emotive Bharatanatyam recital, "Nayanam." This performance showcased the profound expressive power of the eyes, highlighting their role in conveying a spectrum of emotions and stories  
says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

In a Magical evening of dance and expression, Bharatanatyam artist Apeksha Niranjani presented her latest production, "Nayanam," at the India Habitat Centre in Delhi. "Nayanam," meaning "eyes" in Sanskrit, delved into the myriad emotions conveyed through the eyes, ranging from joy and love to sorrow and longing. This thematic exploration highlighted the eyes' significance as windows to the soul, showcasing their ability to define beauty, communicate emotions and enhance the storytelling aspect of dance.

Bharatanatyam, a classical Indian dance form, relies heavily on the eyes as a powerful medium of expression, transcending language, race and culture. Apeksha Niranjani's performance beautifully captured this essence, showcasing how the eyes can communicate the unspoken and tell stories that resonate deeply with the audience. The evening began with an alarippu that depicted the various shaped eyes of the gods, setting a spiritual and mystical tone for the recital. Alarippu, traditionally an invocation, was presented with intricate eye movements that conveyed a multitude of divine perspectives. Apeksha's eyes danced with each movement, narrating stories and emotions without uttering a word. Her portrayal of the divine and the human, the sacred and the mundane, was nothing short of enchanting. Apeksha's dedication to her art form was evident as she seamlessly transitioned from one emotion to another, her eyes capturing the essence of each character she portrayed. The audience was immediately drawn into the performance, experiencing the spirituality and depth of the dance. In the Varnam segment, Apeksha explored the complex emotions that

eyes can convey, such as anger, fear, sparkle and joy. Each sentiment was meticulously portrayed through her expressions, making the audience feel the intensity of each emotion. Apeksha's eyes were the protagonists of her performance, embodying every character and narrative with authenticity and grace. The Varnam segment is traditionally the centerpiece of a Bharatanatyam performance, known for its complexity and depth. Apeksha's rendition was a masterclass in emotive storytelling. Through her eyes, she conveyed the myriad facets of human emotions, from the tender glances of a lover to the fierce gaze of a warrior. Her performance illustrated the power of non-verbal communication, proving that sometimes, a single glance can speak volumes. A unique feature of the evening was the special presentation on Polish folk music, where Apeksha depicted a young girl expectantly waiting for her lover. This unexpected fusion of Bharatanatyam with Polish folk music left the audience mesmerised. The applause and never-ending appreciation were a testament to the seamless integration of these two diverse cultures through dance.

The Polish folk music piece was a refreshing departure from the traditional Bharatanatyam repertoire, yet Apeksha managed to weave it into the narrative effortlessly. Her portrayal of the young girl, filled with anticipation and longing, was both poignant and powerful. The use of Bharatanatyam to express the emotions in Polish folk music showcased Apeksha's versatility as a dancer and her ability to transcend cultural boundaries through

**BHARATANATYAM, A CLASSICAL INDIAN DANCE FORM, RELIES HEAVILY ON THE EYES AS A POWERFUL MEDIUM OF EXPRESSION, TRANSCENDING LANGUAGE, RACE AND CULTURE**



her art. Apeksha's performance continued to captivate with a segment on a Surdas bhajan, showcasing the love of a bhakt for his lord. Her eyes, reflecting devotion and surrender, brought the bhajan to life, creating a profound spiritual experience for the audience. Each gesture and expression was imbued with deep reverence, highlighting the spiritual connection between the devotee and the divine. The Surdas bhajan segment was a testament to Apeksha's ability to convey complex emotions through her dance. Her portrayal of the bhakt's unwavering devotion and love was deeply moving, resonating with the audience on a spiritual level. Apeksha's eyes, filled with devotion and reverence, were the focal point of this performance, drawing the audience into the spiritual journey of the bhakt. Another remarkable composition was the Vatsalya Padam, where she portrayed a mother searching for her child after a scolding. This piece beautifully captured the nuanced emotions of a mother's love and concern, again through the eloquence of her eyes. Apeksha's performance in this segment was both tender and powerful, showcasing the depth of a mother's love and the emotional turmoil that comes with it.

The Vatsalya Padam was a touching portrayal of maternal love and concern. Apeksha's eyes conveyed the mother's desperation, regret and eventual relief upon finding her child. The audience could feel the intensity of the mother's emotions, making this segment one of the highlights of the evening. The recital was not just about dance; it was about preserving and showcasing the rich heritage of classical dance to the world. Apeksha Niranjani's "Nayanam" was a celebration of the language of

the eyes, a tribute to their unparalleled ability to communicate emotions and stories. Through her performance, Apeksha demonstrated the timeless beauty and relevance of Bharatanatyam in today's world. Apeksha Niranjani's "Nayanam" was a vivid reminder of how the eyes, with their silent eloquence, can speak volumes. Her performance was a journey through emotions, stories and traditions, all conveyed through the captivating language of the eyes. It was an evening that left an indelible mark on everyone present, reinforcing the timeless adage that the eyes are indeed the windows to the soul. As the curtains drew to a close, the audience was left in awe of Apeksha Niranjani's ability to convey such profound emotions through her dance. "Nayanam" was more than just a performance; it was a celebration of the expressive power of the eyes and the rich heritage of Bharatanatyam. Apeksha's dedication to her craft and her ability to transcend cultural boundaries through her art were truly inspiring. In a world where appreciation for classical arts is dwindling, it is crucial for us to recognise and celebrate the talents that keep our cultural heritage alive. As those who were present can attest, Apeksha Niranjani's performance was a witness to the timeless beauty of Bharatanatyam, a dance form rooted deeply in our culture and heritage. In the words of Apeksha herself, "Jo lafze nahi baya karti wo, aankhein baya karti hain," meaning, "What words cannot express, the eyes do." Her performance was a testament to this truth, leaving the audience with a deeper appreciation for the art of Bharatanatyam and the silent eloquence of the eyes.

Photos: Pankaj Kumar/Pioneer



# SCULPTING INDIA'S CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

The Artistic Vision of Dr Masooma Rizvi is not just a contributor but a visionary architecture, shaping the way millions of people experience and understand India's cultural richness, writes **SAKSHI PRIYA**

In the vibrant heritage of India's cultural renaissance, Dr Masooma Rizvi emerges as a luminary figure, weaving art, history and modernity into breathtaking narratives that captivate millions. As a preeminent art curator, designer and museologist, Dr Rizvi has become the architect of India's evolving aesthetic identity, transforming public spaces and prestigious institutions into galleries that showcase the nation's rich heritage and contemporary dynamism. From the corridors of power to the gateways of the nation, Dr Rizvi's artistic touch is worldwide. As the art curator for 15 airports under the Airport Authority of India, she has transformed these bustling center points into galleries that showcase India's rich heritage to travelers from around the globe. Her crowning achievement in this realm is perhaps the mesmerising depiction of Lord Ram's return at the Maharishi Valmiki International Airport in Ayodhya Dham, a piece that marries mythology with modernity in a truly magnificent manner. The New Parliament Building of India bears the indelible mark of Dr Rizvi's artistic acumen. As the project's art curator, she has infused this symbol of Indian democracy with a visual narrative that echoes the nation's past while embracing its future. Her collaboration with the Culture Ministry for the building's art galleries ensures that each carefully selected piece not only beautifies the space but also tells a story of India's diverse cultural and aspirations. Dr Rizvi's expertise shines brightest in her museum projects, where she breathes life into history. Her work on multiple Deendayal Upadhyaya Museums across India, from Mumbai to Noida, demonstrates her unparalleled ability to create immersive experiences that educate, inspire and connect visitors with India's intellectual and cultural heritage. These museums, under her guidance, become more than repositories of artifacts; they are vibrant spaces where the past converses with the present, inspiring future generations. What sets Dr Rizvi apart is her versatility. She moves effortlessly between projects for government ministries, educational institutions and military organisations. Her work for the IIT Delhi campus, focusing on a 'Science and Technology Theme', showcases her ability to adapt her artistic vision to diverse contexts. Internationally, Dr Rizvi has left her mark through projects like the Indo Bahrain Friendship Mural and the Indian Buddhist Temple artwork in China's White Horse Temple Complex.



These projects not only beautify spaces but also serve as cultural bridges, enriching understanding and appreciation between nations.

Perhaps most impressively, Dr Rizvi's work has consistently garnered recognition from India's highest offices. Many of her projects have been inaugurated by dignitaries including the Prime Minister, President and various ministers, underscoring the national importance of her contributions. As India continues to evolve and grow on the world stage, Dr Masooma Rizvi stands as a cultural ambassador, using her artistic vision to showcase the nation's rich heritage and contemporary dynamism. Through her work, she not only beautifies spaces but also tells the story of India - its past, present and future in vivid, unforgettable strokes.

As India continues to assert its cultural identity on the global stage, Dr Masooma Rizvi stands at the forefront, wielding her artistic vision like a brush that paints the nation's story on the canvas of public consciousness. Her work goes beyond just aesthetics; it is a powerful medium for preserving heritage, national pride and inspiring future generations. Through her work, Dr Masooma Rizvi is not just curating art; she is curating the very essence of India's cultural identity for generations to come.

In the grand narrative of Indian art and culture, Dr Masooma Rizvi is not just a contributor but a visionary architect, shaping the way millions of people experience and understand India's cultural richness. Her legacy is etched not just in the artworks she creates, but in the cultural consciousness she helps to mold and elevate.

# Exploring Humanity's Connection in Art

Explore the transformative experience of art in the exhibition "The Divine Elements Volume Two", where artist Divyaman Singh merges art and astronomy to explore humanity's profound connection with the universe. This exhibition invites viewers on a transformative journey of introspection and wonder, says **TEAM AGENDA**

In the heart of New Delhi, the India Habitat Center hosts a transformative artistic journey with "The Divine Elements Volume Two", curated by Shahzada Khurram and featuring the visionary artworks of Divyaman Singh. This highly anticipated solo exhibition transcends traditional boundaries, inviting viewers on an immersive exploration of humanity's intricate coexistence with the celestial universe. Building upon the thematic foundation of its predecessor, Volume Two explores deeper into the profound connections between human existence and the cosmos, drawing inspiration from the concept of 'Samavesha' - the harmonious interplay between humanity and divine elements. Through a blend of astronomy and spirituality, Singh's artworks illuminate the symbiotic relationship between humanity and the stars, prompting introspection and wonder among its audiences.

The exhibition, "The Divine Elements Volume Two" is a meticulous fusion of artistic expression and academic inquiry. Each artwork in this collection is more than a visual masterpiece; it is a tribute to Singh's rigorous research



and scholarly approach. Over the course of two years, Singh has meticulously explored themes of cosmic balance and human interconnectedness, culminating in a series of artworks that transcend more than just aesthetic appeal. One of the exhibition's centerpieces, "Horizon," symbolises the boundary where Earth meets the sky. Through this painting, Singh invites viewers to contemplate the convergence of human perception with cosmic dimensions, highlighting our interconnectedness with celestial forces and natural rhythms. Similarly, "Reflection" employs vibrant hues of red, black and white

to explore the reflection of human existence within the vast universe. This artwork draws inspiration from Vishnu as the cosmic sustainer, emphasising the interconnectedness of every individual soul (jiva) with the cosmic order (dharma). Another striking piece, "Atman - soul," captivates with its depiction of the human soul as inseparable from the cosmic fabric. This artwork symbolises spiritual evolution and liberation, echoing beliefs in interconnectedness across cosmic principles. Themes of balance and harmony resonate throughout the exhibition, as seen in artworks like

"Black Hole" and "Galaxy," which depict the cosmic forces that shape our universe. Beyond the visual allure, Singh's artworks in Volume Two serve as a journey through the stages of academic exploration. Each piece represents a culmination of in-depth research and contemplation, offering viewers a deeper understanding of humanity's place in the cosmic. In a conversation with the artist, Singh shares his inspiration behind the exhibition, rooted in the concept of Vishnukaran and the cosmic balance of the universe. He expresses his hope that viewers will

engage not only with the art's visual appeal but also with its underlying academic depth. Volume Two expands upon Volume One's exploration of astronomy and spirituality, aiming to provoke thought and spark conversations about humanity's role within the universe. In contemporary art, few exhibitions offer such a transformative experience. By bridging the gap between art and academia, Divyaman Singh and Shahzada Khurram have curated more than a just showcase of paintings; they have crafted a narrative that resonates with the

very essence of human existence. As visitors navigate through the galleries, they are not mere observers but participants in a profound dialogue about human existence and cosmic interconnectedness. "The Divine Elements Volume Two" transcends the boundaries of traditional art exhibitions, offering an immersive experience that merges artistic expression with scholarly inquiry. Through Singh's meticulous artworks, viewers are invited to reflect on their place within the universe, assisting a deeper appreciation for the beauty and mystery that surround us.

In closing, "The Divine Elements Volume Two" stands as an exemplification to the transformative power of art to provoke introspection and inspire wonder. It leaves an indelible mark on its audience, encouraging them to contemplate the intricate threads that connect humanity with the cosmos. As the exhibition draws to a close, its legacy endures, leaving viewers with a renewed sense of wonder and deeper understanding of our interconnected existence in the vast expanse of the universe.

Photos: Pankaj Kumar/Pioneer

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

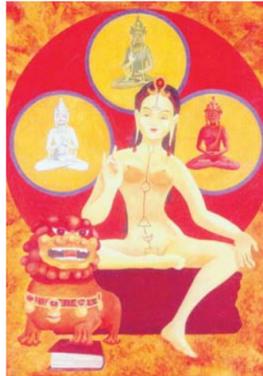
MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19

This is a time of heightened self-esteem and pride. The struggles you've faced in the past will be overcome, and new opportunities will present themselves. Your investments of money, energy, and effort are well-directed, earning you admiration. You may become a significant figure to others, gaining respect and attention. Your dedication to your work is evident, with increased creativity and productivity. Expect changes or new beginnings in your career, education, or finances. However, be cautious of chaotic situations or psychological challenges. Misinformation and hidden motives could influence you, potentially leading to false beliefs and misguided actions. Relying too heavily on subjective feelings may harm you, creating false reasoning and erroneous conclusions. Stay grounded and seek clarity in your decisions.

Lucky number 7 | Lucky colour Lavender  
Lucky day Tuesday



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

Personal relationships will thrive, bringing joy and harmony. At the workplace, communication with your superiors will be smooth, fostering a sense of trust and cooperation, which in turn enhances your confidence to tackle life's challenges. Your romantic relationship will be blissful, and there's a chance of happy news regarding a new addition to the family. This period is also inspiring, with new ideas and creative ventures capturing your interest, prompting immediate action. A new responsibility might come your way, making the week busy and demanding. Both domestic and professional matters are demanding your attention, leading to exhaustion. However, by the week's end, you'll focus on finding happiness and re-evaluating your situation. Passion and excitement will infuse your romantic life, adding a delightful spark.

Lucky number 5 | Lucky colour Mustard  
Lucky day Friday



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

You have a lot on your mind, leading to confusion and conflicting efforts. Domestic pressures are overwhelming, leaving you unsure of your next steps. Allow this turbulent period to pass. Midweek, you may feel restricted and disinterested in work. It's time to reassess your life and attitude. A balanced approach or blending opposing ideas might offer solutions. Engaging in discussions with friends, coworkers, and like-minded individuals can provide fresh insights. Nostalgia may prompt you to reconnect with old classmates or friends. Expect money in the form of a gift or check. A pleasant surprise awaits at the week's end. Luck is on your side, bringing new opportunities. You may feel the urge to prove yourself through exciting ventures, indulging in luxuries to regain stability.

Lucky number 19 | Lucky colour Olive  
Lucky day Wednesday



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

This period brings significant growth and profit, especially in business ventures. Long-term plans will finally come to fruition. You'll exhibit patience and persistence, learning valuable lessons from past experiences. Simultaneously, your warmth, sensitivity, and faithfulness will shine through. Your strength and determination will unleash your creative energy. You'll soon encounter someone with a fiery temperament and charismatic personality. Despite their charm, they may try to dominate you, but stand firm in your beliefs. You have the strength to protect yourself. By the week's end, you might feel stressed or disappointed if your efforts don't seem to yield results. However, patience and perseverance are key; you're on the verge of success. Remain steadfast, and victory will be yours. This week is highly creative and encourages you to stand firm for success.

Lucky number 18 | Lucky colour Aqua  
Lucky day Monday



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22

A fantastic week is ahead, bringing a vibrant mix of experiences. Be prepared to embrace the diverse opportunities life presents. Work, family, socializing, and networking will occupy your mind, yet you'll feel at ease. Your positive and creative mindset keeps you inspired. Progress is swift, and you're making the most of this flourishing period. There's a possibility of foreign travel, and a distant friend or relative may visit. Your focus will be on financial matters, leading to lavish spending to enhance your life's excitement. Amidst these changes, love also finds its way, offering a delightful respite. Rapid and positive changes are unfolding, and you're set to enjoy every moment of this dynamic phase.

Lucky number 13 | Lucky colour Peach  
Lucky day Saturday



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

This week will present two opposing situations. In the first part, adjustments in emotional and love life are necessary, as your partner may be more demanding. Avoid ignoring or neglecting these issues to prevent serious consequences. Take time to introspect and identify any shortcomings. Solitude will help you reassess and recharge with fresh ideas. Midweek is ideal for meditation, providing both mental and physical strength. Over the next month, expect negotiations on important matters, potential conflicts, or the arrival of a new person. By week's end, you'll have strengthened your bond with your partner, leading to better understanding and intimacy. Professional gains will also uplift your spirits, making you feel confident and on the right path.

Lucky number 8 | Lucky colour Charcoal  
Lucky day Tuesday



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

Rapid changes are set to unfold in your life. Expect news or opportunities from abroad, possibly involving travel. A swift shift in your employment status is likely, perhaps aligning you with a role demanding quick thinking and decisive action. This fast-paced environment will challenge your mental agility. Midweek, a wave of pessimism may wash over you, bringing emotional setbacks, temporary delays, or regrets. However, love remains a constant. By week's end, you may find yourself overwhelmed with work. Heavy responsibilities and unexpected duties will keep you busy. This workload will arise unexpectedly, not from your own planning. Health issues such as neck and shoulder pain, headaches, and vision problems may occur. It's essential to take a break and relax now.

Lucky number 2 | Lucky colour Coral  
Lucky day Wednesday



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

Your credibility, popularity, and authority will significantly increase. Through self-evaluation, you will experience genuine growth, earning the respect of others. You will immerse yourself in creative pursuits, whether in cinema, television, performing arts, or various hobbies. Your dedication to your profession will yield substantial rewards, leading to easy success. Midweek brings both professional and personal recognition, free from false expectations. Your excellent people skills will shine, and you've reached a stage in personal growth where hurt no longer affects you. The benefits you gain will be lasting and satisfying. Self-care activities like spa treatments, grooming, and massages will make you feel light and relaxed. However, towards the end of the week, be cautious as unexpected financial conflicts might arise, potentially causing emotional imbalance and disappointment.

Lucky number 15 | Lucky colour Maroon  
Lucky day Thursday



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

This week, you will harness your innate resilience to navigate through various challenges, emerging with renewed strength. Expect to encounter some resistance and a lack of cooperation at work, alongside questions about your dedication at home due to your involvement in other activities. Despite these obstacles, your ability to reason effectively and maintain balance will shine through. Your communication skills and insightful approaches will impress those in leadership positions, helping you gain influence over your colleagues and partners. By week's end, the harmony you've cultivated will lead to positive outcomes. Celebrate the strength and wisdom that have guided you through these times. Trust in your ability to adapt and thrive as you move forward.

Lucky number 14 | Lucky colour Fuchsia  
Lucky day Thursday



**CANCER** June 21-July 22

It's essential to find equilibrium in your emotional life, as excessive emotions can lead to vulnerability. Embrace the concept of karma; our past actions shape our future paths. The midweek period invites you to step back from material concerns and engage in self-reflection. This introspective phase will reveal a powerful force that encourages you to let go of trivial pleasures, paving the way for renewal. This renewal is crucial for your personal growth. During this week, you'll notice a significant shift in your outlook, attitude, and behavior. This period signifies the end of a cycle and the beginning of a new one. Positive changes such as a new addition to the family, a marriage, moving to a new home, adopting a new diet, schedule, or making new friends are on the horizon.

Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour Mint  
Lucky day Tuesday



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

New opportunities at work will enhance your focus on earnings and business. Family matters will require attention, with potential domestic expenses depending on your marital status. Children will be a source of happiness, and their activities will delight you. Financial gains are on the horizon, involving deeds, documents, agreements, and letters of intent. It's crucial to share financial matters with family members but maintain discretion. Be clear and alert about your goals, as making the right decisions now will shape your future. By the end of the week, you'll meet a significant, authoritative figure. Career activities will keep you busy and engaged, so embrace this dynamic period and enjoy the momentum.

Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour Turquoise  
Lucky day Sunday



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

The start of the week might feel challenging, with a wave of negativity and unsettling emotions possibly affecting your daily life. It's crucial to navigate interpersonal dynamics at work skillfully. Stay vigilant to avoid becoming embroiled in any unfavorable situations. As the week progresses, a surge of inspiration and creativity could mark a pivotal turning point for you. A positive outlook towards your ambition will help you achieve it. Some might find themselves contemplating a promising career opportunity. Achievements in various forms—be it professional advancements, significant personal milestones, or joyful family additions—could enrich your life. As the week concludes, the atmosphere around personal relationships promises to improve, bringing harmony and deeper connections. At work, your efforts to foster cooperative relationships may pay off, enhancing your professional environment.

Lucky number 4 | Lucky colour Amber  
Lucky day Wednesday

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**ASTROTURF**  
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Energy Trinity – The concept of Om

At the outset, my humble thanks to the readers who showed concern after missing my piece on two successive Sundays, and continuously extending their patronage and love. Friends, I have been writing this column for the last 22 years. It's time to call it a day. You may kindly appreciate that having written for more than two decades, every time I try to script a new piece, it has become difficult to find a new perspective/dimension. So, it is high time I hand over the baton to someone else who may prove true to your expectations. I am sure, Pioneer will find out a suitable alternative soon. Meanwhile on Editor's request I will continue contributing for few more weeks before the alternative arrangement is in place. I take the opportunity to thank Pioneer team for having trusted me for so long and allowed me to write freely. An occasion arose in 2004 when in my opening issue of the year I predicted the fall of Vajpayee government. Pioneer team's assessment was just the opposite. They could have interfered with my writeup. But they published

my piece unabridged. Finally, when my prediction came true, Chandan Mitra in his weekly column that followed, while explaining reasons for their failed assessment, said: "I am not a soothsayer like Mr. Bharat Bhushan for having foreseen the result precisely." That has been the intellectual honesty exhibited by Pioneer team, and therefore once again my humble thanks to them. Before finally saying goodbye, I am offering a serialised note on a profound subject of great importance in Indian context: "the energy principle of creation symbolised by Om." There seems to be similarity in the perception of both modern science and ancient India's Vedanta, in so far as energy principle of creation is concerned. Both schools agree that following entropy (disorder) at the primal-source, emerged energy-streams. They, in turn, set into motion the creation chain, which they have put forth in their own perspectives. Ancient India's energy-concept of creation has been beautifully symbolised by a single word: 'Om'. The architects of the ancient Indian



philosophy - the seers - were communicators-par-excellence. Brevity was their essence. In few words or just through a symbol, they could say a great deal that could easily reach out all and sundry, transgressing all divides of lingua franca and intellect. 'Om' is one such reflection of

their genius. It encompasses a complete picture about the world process, right from the source down to the manifest living order. It contains a wholesome philosophy over which volumes have already been written over the years. Many more insights may follow - and yet be

incomplete. For, it has within itself as much enfolded mysteries as could nature's complex mechanisms have. Every fresh look, and the symbol has the potential to unfold a new dimension. 'Om' is a pure energy concept. It epitomises the way things would have moved at the Primal-Source before manifestation, following which the creation chain was set into motion. It also tells us how the creation chain progressively evolved to build an intelligent system, which has been continuously engaged in creation, sustenance, and recycling of the living order. When this energy, as symbolised by Om got triggered, in turn, it excited many other modes of differentiated energies. It had and continue to have a resounding effect on the world process as well as fundamental conduct of man. 'Om' is supposed to be the primal-sound excited following self-created entropy (disorder) at the primal-source. It is said to be inaudible to human ears. The forces emanating from the Primal-Source, following arousal of this primal-sound, set into

motion the creation chain. That progressively evolved into the manifest plural world, with all its enormity and diversity. Here, it may be interesting to note that from the beginning to the end of creation, there is a perennial sound in play, but operating on various pitches. For example, in music all over the world, there are seven key notes, which in fact personify seven levels of consciousness. There is one more form of sound, which is called soundless sound (meaning inaudible inner sound). It can be heard only by a true seeker who turns his attention inward. This, in Indian context is called 'Anahata nada', which is nothing but the Om sound. This primal sound is also called 'Shabda Brahman', as it lies at the root of all creations. It is purposely said so because, all differentiated sound-energies are said to have evolved out of the actions that followed the stirring of the Primal-Sound.

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