

THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI FRIDAY 2 AUGUST 2024



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BJP reaches out to Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury after he quits as WB Congress chief



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Sensex crosses 82K; Nifty moves above 25K for first time

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Dimple Kapadia says she was naive when she married Rajesh Khanna



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RNI No. 57290/94, Regd No: DL-SW-05/4189/15-17

Vol. 31 No. 168 | 16 PAGES | ₹5.00

WINDOWS



Rashmika Mandana during an event at in New Delhi on Wednesday. — PTI

2 Americans among 26 freed in Russia, West prisoner swap

Ankara (Turkey): US reporter Evan Gershkovich and former US marine Paul Whelan were among 26 prisoners released Thursday in Ankara in a swap between Russia and six western countries, Turkey announced. Ten Russians, including two minors, were handed over in return for 16 westerners detained by Russia, said a statement by the Turkish presidency, which hailed a "historic prisoner exchange operation" organised by its MIT national intelligence service. *Wall Street Journal* journalist Gershkovich was released just weeks after being sentenced by a Russian court to a 16-year prison term for espionage. — AFP
Full report on Page 6

'Acted like some goon': SC raps Bibhav Kumar

New Delhi: Coming down hard on Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's aide Bibhav Kumar for allegedly assaulting AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Malwal, the SC on Thursday asked "is this kind of goon supposed to work in the CM's residence." — PTI
Full report on Page 2

Hamas military chief killed in Israeli attack

Jerusalem: The Israeli military said Thursday that it has confirmed that the head of Hamas' military wing, Mohammed Deif, was killed in an airstrike in Gaza in July. The announcement comes a day after an apparent Israeli strike killed Hamas' top political leader. — AP
Full report on Page 6

COUNTERPOINT



25% extra for coaching in swimming along with IAS!

WEATHER

Max: 33°C
Min: 27°C
RH: 76%
Rain: 11%

Forecast: Thunderstorms

ASTROGUIDE

Krodhi: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Ashada Bahula
Trayodasi till 3.29 pm
Star: Ardra till 11 am
Variyam: 11.30 pm to 1.10 pm
Durmuhurtam: 8.32 am to 9.23 am; 12.48 pm to 1.39 pm
Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 pm
SUNSET TODAY 7.11 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.44 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 4.16 AM
MOONSET TODAY 6.00 PM

Most marginalised to benefit ■ 'Creamy layer' will be out ■ TN, Bihar, T'gana hail ruling ■ SC overturns 2004 order
In 6-1 verdict, SC allows states to 'sub-classify' SC, ST quotas

RAKESH K. SINGH
NEW DELHI, AUG. 1

In a landmark verdict, a seven-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court on Thursday okayed sub-classification within the Scheduled Caste and Schedule Tribe categories to provide reservations in jobs and education for the more marginalised sub-sets.

The apex court verdict for quotas within the reserved categories sets the ball rolling for the Centre and state governments to divide their SC and ST lists based on relative deprivation among various castes in these categories and provide enhanced opportunities to the more marginalised sub-sections.

The verdict was passed by a bench led by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud by 6-1 majority, with Justice Bela Trivedi dissenting.

Clashes after teargas fired in Imphal to quell protests

MANOJ ANAND
GUWAHATI, AUG. 1

A major clash broke out on Thursday between Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and the security forces when the police fired teargas to disperse a protest march in Imphal East district of trouble-torn Manipur.

A mass rally organised by the Committee on Protection of Meetei Victims (COPMeV) in Singjamei's Akampat area quickly escalated as the demonstrators advocating for the rehabilitation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) confronted the police.

The residents of the relief camp, carrying placards and banners, were demanding their rehabilitation and a resolution of the ongoing ethnic violence in the state. They sought to return to their homes in Moreh, Tengnoupal district, and other affected areas.

It is significant that the state government officially claimed that the ethnic violence in the state which started in May 2023 has so far claimed 226 lives and left over 59,000 people displaced.

The IDPs marched through the streets of Akampat, demanding urgent government intervention. Educational institutions in the Akampat area also bore the brunt of the escalating situation as schoolchildren took shelter in their classrooms.



Telangana chief minister A. Revanth Reddy, state minister Damodara Raja Narsimha and other party MLAs celebrate after the Supreme Court verdict on "sub-classifications" of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes at the CM chamber of the Assembly on Thursday. — PTI

Six verdicts running into 565 pages overturned the 2004 judgment of a five-judge Constitution Bench in the E.V. Chinniah versus State of Andhra Pradesh, which had held that sub-classification was not permissible.

The CJI said: "The state can sub-classify, inter alia, based on inadequate representation of certain castes. However, the state must establish that the inadequacy of representation of a caste/group is because of its backwardness," it said. The state will have to collect data

SC's judgment is another recognition of our #DravidianModel journey to establish #SocialJustice for the social liberation of the oppressed people

— M.K. Stalin
Tamil Nadu CM

on inadequacy of representation in government jobs because it is used as an indicator of backwardness, he said.

Hailing the verdict, Tamil Nadu chief minister M.K. Stalin said it was heartening that the bench upheld the internal reservation granted to the Arunthathiyar community, as laid down in a law passed by the Tamil Nadu Assembly.

"Today's Supreme Court judgment is another recognition of our #DravidianModel

Modi, Vietnam PM take a dig at China, sign 6 MoUs

Plan to expand ties, oppose 'expansionism' in region

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI
NEW DELHI, AUG. 1

Taking a veiled dig at China following wide-ranging talks with visiting Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said that both India and Vietnam oppose "expansionism" in the Indo-Pacific. Mr Modi announced two credit lines totaling \$300 million from India to bolster the maritime security of the Southeast Asian nation.

India and Vietnam signed six memoranda of understanding (MoUs) and finalised three other documents to broaden cooperation in a range of



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh during a meeting at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on Thursday. — PRITAM BANDYOPADHYAY

documents to broaden cooperation in a range of

Wayanad toll 280, CM holds all-party meet

■ Rahul, Priyanka visit hospitals, assess relief ops ■ Over 1,500 rescued, 240 still missing

GILVESTER ASSARY
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG. 1

Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha and Rahul Gandhi, along with sister and Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, visited Kerala's Wayanad district two days after massive landslides struck. The former Wayanad MP assessed the search and rescue operations at the disaster-stricken sites in Mundakkai and

individuals have been rescued from areas affected by landslides. As the search for more than 240 missing persons, including 25 children, carries on, the injured receive treatment in various hospitals and medical centres. The search efforts, halted on Wednesday night due to relentless rains, resumed on Thursday morning.

After visiting the epicentre of the landslides, Mr Gandhi and Ms Vadra, who will be the Congress candidate from this seat



US vice-president Kamala Harris during an event at a Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority gathering in Houston, Texas, on Wednesday. — AP

'Is she Black or Indian?' Trump targets Kamala's racial identity

Washington, Aug. 1: Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has launched a racially insensitive attack against Kamala Harris by questioning whether she is "Indian or Black", drawing a sharp reaction from his Democratic rival who termed his remarks "the same old show" of "divisiveness" and "disrespect".

Mr Trump, 78, falsely claimed that vice-president Harris had only emphasised her Asian-American heritage until recently when, he claimed, "she became a



Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi along with party leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra during their visit in Wayanad on Thursday. — PTI



Donald Trump

Black person". "I've known her a long time, indirectly, not directly very much, and she was always of Indian heritage, and she was only promoting Indian heritage. I didn't know she was Black until a number of years ago when she happened to

turn Black, and now she wants to be known as Black." Mr Trump said at a convention in Chicago on Wednesday, as the race for the November 5 presidential election gained momentum with opinion polls showing that Ms Harris has narrowed the gap with her Republican rival. "So I don't know — Is she Indian? Or is she black?" he added.

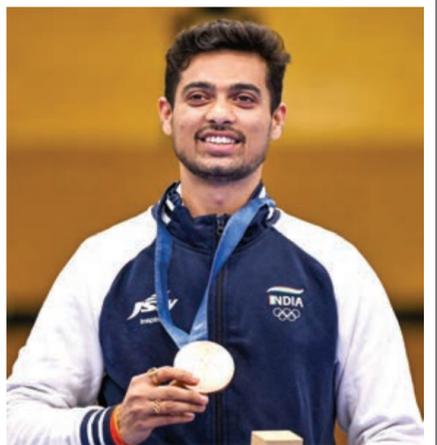
Ms Harris' mother is originally from India, and her father is from Jamaica. Mr Trump's comments prompted immediate criticism.

— PTI

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Swapnil Kusale grabs 3rd bronze for India

Bronze medalist Swapnil Kusale during the presentation ceremony at the Olympics Games in Chateauroux, France, on Thursday. Swapnil clinched the first ever Olympic bronze in 50m rifle 3 positions event, taking the country's overall tally to three. In badminton Lakshya Sen registered a straight-game win over compatriot H.S. Prannoy to become only the third male player ever from the country to reach the quarterfinals of the Olympics badminton competition. He notched up a 21-12 21-6 win over world no. 13 Prannoy in a 39-minute pre-quarterfinal clash. — PTI



Report on Page 8

Over 20 die as heavy rains batter U'khand, Himachal

■ Kedarnath Yatra halted ■ Road link to Manali cut off

PRITHVIRAJ SINGH
DEHRADUN/SHIMLA/
NEW DELHI, AUG. 1

Disaster struck the hilly areas of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand on Thursday as rains wreaked havoc, killing at least 20 people and damaging infrastructure.

In Uttarakhand, 15 people died, six were injured and four were reported missing in heavy overnight rains since Wednesday evening, triggering flooding and house collapses as several rivers swelled.

The state witnessed two cloudbursts at Lincholi in Kedarnath and Tehri districts. Around 300 roads are reported to be blocked in different parts of the state, impairing vehicular movements, especially in the hills. Over 1,500 tourists and pilgrims were rescued as normal public lives were paralysed due to two cloudbursts.

The cloudburst at Lincholi led to a complete blockade of the



The partially washed-away Manali-Chandigarh highway alongside a swollen Beas river in Kullu district of Uttarakhand on Thursday. — PTI

THE CLOUDBURST at Lincholi led to a complete blockade of the Kedarnath pilgrimage route, leaving more than 1,500 pilgrims stranded 4 km ahead of the holy shrine

Kedarnath pilgrimage route, leaving more than 1,500 pilgrims stranded 4 km ahead of the holy shrine.

All the stranded pilgrims were safely taken to a nearby Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam (GMVN) building and

Bhimbali police post in the night. As many as 425 pilgrims were airlifted on Thursday, while rescue of the remaining pilgrims is in process," informed Rudraprayag district magistrate Ashutosh Gaharwar.

The Kedarnath Yatra has been stopped till the weather improves, keeping in view the safety of the pilgrims amid landslides at many places on the Kedarnath foot journey route.

On Thursday, Uttarakhand chief

Vaishnav says Cong is trying to instil fear in rail passengers

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 1

Railway minister Ashwini Vaishnav on Thursday went on the offensive in the Lok Sabha to counter the Opposition's concern about the increasing number of train accidents.

Mr Vaishnav accused the Congress and "its social media troll army" of trying to amplify every small incident on the railway network to instil a sense of fear in more than two crore passengers who use the railway network every day.

Trying to downplay the accidents, Mr Vaishnav blamed the Opposition regime for failing to install various safety measures.

The Lok Sabha approved the "Demands for Grants" of railways to the tune of ₹7.89 lakh crores with Mr Vaishnav assuring the House that the Centre will make every effort to implement automatic train-protection system "Kavach" in the right earnest.

"Unfortunately, during the 58 years of the Congress rule, the automatic train-protection system was not implemented on even one km on Indian Railways till 2014," he added.

More on Page 3

IN BRIEF

Centre writes to BCCI, SAI over tobacco ads

New Delhi: Union health ministry has written a letter to the BCCI and Sports Authority of India (SAI) on preventive measures against tobacco advertisement. The directorate-general of health services (DGHS) has urged both the sports authorities to take measures to prevent the 'surrogate advertisement of tobacco and alcohol related products by sportsman'. In a letter to BCCI, the DGHS has asked "Taking a considerate view of the issue, the BCCI may take positive measures to prevent these surrogate advertisement of tobacco and or alcohol related products by sportspersons. Few suggested measures are signing an anti-tobacco declaration of interest form (attached), not promote/advertise in stadiums or events hosted or partnered by BCCI, issuing directive(s) to sportspersons under BCCI's ambit to refrain from surrogate promotion/partnership/advertisement of tobacco and related products". The health body has also requested not to allow such surrogate advertisements by other celebrities in sporting events of BCCI, such as the IPL.

Cong blasts AAP, BJP over flooding

New Delhi: The Delhi Congress on Thursday lambasted AAP and BJP for merely locking horns and continuing their political slugfest even as lives are lost due to the failure of the government in the national capital. Delhi Congress president Devender Yadav said that the repeated claims by the AAP and its ministers and the AAP-ruled MCD of taking all the preparations to prevent yet another deluge after the first two monsoon rains had heavily flooded the roads and colonies, was laid bare yet again when the entire city was waterlogged. He said that it was a matter of grave concern that the court had taken cognisance of the waterlogging in Delhi because of the inefficiency and inaction of the government. The AAP cannot escape the blame of such mishaps.



Devender Yadav

Saxena transfers 7 senior IPS officers

New Delhi: Delhi's lieutenant-governor V.K. Saxena on Thursday transferred seven senior IPS officers of the Arunachal Pradesh-Goa-Mizoram and Union Territory (AGMUT) cadre to the national capital. According to the official order, Nuzhat Hassan, a 1991-batch IPS officer, who is serving as a special commissioner of the economic offences wing (EOW) has been transferred to special CP in human resource division. Neeraj Thakur, a 1994 batch IPS officer, has been transferred from special CP, MD, Delhi Police Corporation Ltd., to special CP MD, Delhi Police Housing Corporation Limited, the order said.

CENTRE TO SELL TOMATOES AT ₹50/KG IN DELHI

New Delhi: Amid the soaring prices of tomatoes, the centre will start selling it at a subsidised rate of ₹50 per kg from Friday in Delhi-NCR and Mumbai retail markets to provide relief to the common man. Union food and consumer affairs minister Pralhad Joshi had launched sales of tomatoes at a subsidised rate of ₹60 per kg in Delhi-NCR on Monday. Later, the sales started in Mumbai also. He said the prices of tomatoes have come down after our intervention. Consumer affairs secretary Nidhi Khare said, "We will start selling tomatoes at ₹50 per kg from tomorrow (August 2) in Delhi-NCR and Mumbai". She said the ministry will consider roping in Mother Dairy to sell tomatoes through its Safal stores in the Delhi-NCR market. The National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India Ltd is selling tomatoes through mobile vans. According to the department of consumer affairs data, the all-India average price of tomatoes stood at ₹61.74 per kg on July 31. In Delhi, the average price was ₹70 per kg on Wednesday. Last month, the rates soared to more than ₹100 per kg.



Debris fallen on cars (right) after a wall of Happy School in Darya Ganj area collapsed due to heavy rains in New Delhi on Thursday. A caved in portion of a road near Hauz Khas.



A caved in portion of a road near Hauz Khas.

■ 2,727 traffic jam calls, 119 for waterlogging; several buildings collapse

Rain deaths climb to 6 in Delhi

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA
NEW DELHI, AUG. 1

A day after heavy rains unleashed chaos and mayhem, many parts of Delhi remained inundated on Thursday, officials said, adding that six people have died in separate rain-related incidents so far.

The torrential downpour choked key stretches with unending traffic and people were left stranded forcing the Delhi government to declare a holiday for all the state and private-run schools.

A 22-year-old woman and her three-year-old son drowned in East Delhi's Ghazipur after they slipped into a drain due to waterlogging and a 62-year-old man lost his life in a building collapse in the Sabji Mandi area.

In two separate incidents, a 12-year-old boy and a 28-year-old man were electrocuted in Southwest and Southeast Delhi taking the death toll in rain-related incidents to five, with as many injured in separate incidents across the city.

Mudit (12) was returning home from tuition class in the Bindapur area when the incident took place. The boy was rushed to hospital where doctors declared him dead.

While in the Mithapur area, Prabhat (28) died of electrocution at his home when he had gone to the terrace during rain and came in contact with a wire.

The 62-year-old Anil Kumar Gupta was inside the building when it collapsed at 8.30 pm.

Three more were injured—two in Shastri Park and one in Defence Colony. In the Ghazipur area, Tanuja (22) along with her three-year-old son, Priyansh, who had gone to a weekly market, drowned after they slipped into an under-construction waterlogged drain.

The AAP attacked the Delhi L-G, who is the chairman of DDA, over the incident. On its part, the DDA defended itself, stating that the major portion of the drain was handed over to the MCD while their part was covered with RCC slabs.

Till 12.00 am, the police received 26 calls of building collapse and one more such incident was reported till 7.00 am on Thursday, data showed.

Around 2,727 calls related to traffic jams and 119 calls of waterlogging were received till 12.00 am.

There were another 218 calls of traffic jams and eight of waterlogging till 7.00 am, it showed. Fifty calls for uprooted trees were also received by the police.



Local shop owners and residents near the debris of the house that collapsed due to heavy rains in Sabji Mandi area in New Delhi on Thursday.

MCD to survey buildings with basement

Immediate action, including sealing, against those violating norms

AVINASH PRABHAKAR
JHA
NEW DELHI, AUG. 1

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) on Thursday announced that buildings having basements will be surveyed in the city and immediate action including sealing will be done against those violating the norms.

The civic body has also directed that all building plans should be made available in the public domain.

The civic body has ordered a survey of buildings with basements, open hanging wires, and old barrels catering to the combined drainage system across the city.

In an official notification, the civic body said

BJP alleges scam in desilting by AAP, demands CBI probe

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 1

The BJP on Thursday alleged a scam in desilting in the national capital by the AAP government's agencies and demanded a CBI probe into it.

In a press conference, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva alleged that "corruption and loot of the AAP led Delhi government and the MCD is responsible for the deaths of three civil services aspirants in a flooded basement library of a coaching centre in Old Rajinder Nagar and other rain related

Aspirants' deaths: Students continue protest for 5th day

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 1

Civil services aspirants protesting the Rajinder Nagar coaching centre deaths continued their agitation for the fifth day on Thursday, a day after the area was again submerged following heavy rain.

"We will continue our protest. The rain on amount of water, said deputy commissioner of Karol Bagh zone Abhishek Kumar Mishra. "We left last night only after it (waterlogging) was cleared to a considerable extent and only some patches of undulating surface remained," he said.

"Needless to say, it is the primary responsibility of MCD to provide a safe and liveable city to the public..." read the circular.

It added, "In this regard, a delegation of students met the commissioner on Sunday, the 28th of July, 2024, and expressed their concerns on this issue. It was explained to them by the commissioner that MCD will take all necessary steps urgently so as to prevent such a mishap in the future."



Virendra Sachdeva

incidents in the city". Mr Sachdeva said that in 2022-23, the Delhi government's irrigation and flood control (I&FC) department, Public Works Department (PWD), Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and Delhi jal board (DJB) removed three lakh metric ton, two lakh met-

SUV driver gets bail in coaching deaths

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 1

A court here on Thursday allowed the second bail plea of an SUV driver, arrested for his alleged role in drowning of three civil services aspirants in the basement of a coaching centre. During the proceedings, the Delhi police told the court that they have decided to drop harsher charge of culpable homicide not amounting to murder against Manuj Kathuria, the SUV driver.

"The bail is allowed," the judge said. A detailed order of the court is awaited.

JNUSU protests hostel seepage

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 1

The Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union (JNUSU) protested on Thursday against waterlogging on campus and seepage through the ceiling in hostel rooms.

They gathered outside the office of the dean of students and demanded immediate action.

According to the JNUSU, dean of students Manuradha Chaudhary assured the students of getting the hostel rooms repaired urgently. The drainage system outside the hostels and that along the roads will be built and other repair work will be undertaken, it added.

SUV driver gets bail in coaching deaths

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"The bail is allowed," the judge said. A detailed order of the court is awaited.

SC junks Bibhav's bail: How can goon work in CM house?

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 1

Coming down hard on Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's aide Bibhav Kumar for allegedly assaulting AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal, the Supreme Court on Thursday asked, "Is this kind of goon supposed to work in the CM's residence?"



Bibhav Kumar

A bench of Justices Surya Kant, Dipankar Datta, and Ujjal Bhuyan posted Kumar's bail plea for next Wednesday and told senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi that the court was shocked by the details of the incident recorded by the Delhi high court.

Mr Kumar has challenged the July 12 order of the Delhi high court denying him bail in the case and claimed that the allegations against him are false. He has also said his custody was no longer required as the probe was over.

The apex court issued a notice to the Delhi government on his petition. "Is the CM's residence a private bungalow? Is this kind of 'goon' supposed to work in the CM's residence?" the bench asked Mr Singhvi, who said there were non-serious injuries and the FIR was lodged three days after the May 13 incident.

In its terse remarks, the bench also asked Mr Singhvi what Ms Maliwal calling the police helpline number 112 during the assault indicated.

"Every day we grant bail to contract killers, murderers, robbers, but the question is what kind of incident..." the bench said while asserting that the manner in which the incident had taken place bothered it.

The top court said, "He (Bibhav Kumar) acted as if some 'goon' had entered the official residence of the CM."

The bench said the entire argument by Kumar before the high court was that her allegations were concocted.

Mr Singhvi said on the day of the incident Ms Maliwal went to the police station,

then came back without saying anything but then after three days she lodged an FIR. The bench told the senior lawyer, "We are shocked? Is this a way to deal with a young lady? He (Mr Kumar) assaulted her even after she told him about her physical condition."

Mr Singhvi said the court is relying on the details of the FIR lodged by her but Kumar's complaint was not registered by her "friendly" police and the Delhi lieutenant-governor.

To this, Justice Kant said, "We are not on your internal politics and the court is only going by the case records and the FIR."

Referring to the case records, the bench said it did not want to read it in open court but "once she told him to stop due to her particular physical condition, this man continued assaulting her."

"What does he think of himself? Has power gone into his head?" the bench remarked.

Mr Singhvi said all these allegations are matters of trial and at present he is only seeking bail.

Even taking the case at the highest level and looking at the offence, Kumar is entitled to bail as he cannot tamper with evidence or influence witnesses, Mr Singhvi said.

"Yes, we are on bail only," the bench said and added that if this kind of a person cannot influence witnesses, then who can.

"Look at the records, was there any person in the drawing room (of the CM residence) who dared to speak against him? He was not even ashamed, we think," Justice Kant said.

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
Open E-Tender Notice	
For and on behalf of President of India, Sr. Divisional Mechanical Engineer (Chg.), Northern Railway, Delhi Division invites sealed e-tender on 'SINGLE PACKET SYSTEM' for following work from experienced and capable tenderers.	
1 Name of Work	Contract of Berths 81, 82 & 83 for Linen Storage in AC Economy (LWACCNE) Coaches, as per CAI No. - CAJ/RCF/MECH/LHB/038 dated 24.09.2022 or any amendments, at the C&W depots of DLI
2 Work Place	Delhi
3 Period of Work	Six (06) Months
4 Advertised Value	Rs. 12,43,413.20/- (including provision of GST)
5 Earnest Money to be deposited	Rs. 24,900.00/-, through net banking or gateway only
6 Tender Document Cost	Nil
7 Date and Time availability of E-Tender Document	From 31.07.2024 to 22.08.2024 at 14:00 hrs
8 Date and time of E-Tender Closing	22/08/2024 at 14:00 hrs
9 Date and time of E-tender Opening	On 22.08.2024 after 14:00 hrs, if the date of opening happens to be holiday then E-Tender shall be opened on the next working day
10 Place for opening E-Tender	Mechanical Department, Divisional Railway Manager's Office, Northern Railway, State Entry Road, New Delhi-55
Note: The complete particulars of the tender may be found in website www.reps.gov.in	
No. NR-DLJOMCNW492024 Date: 31.07.2024	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 2345/24	

NORTHERN RAILWAY				
Invitation of Tenders through E-procurement System				
Principal Chief Materials Manager, Northern Railway, New Delhi-110001, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites e-tenders through e-procurement system for supply of the following items:-				
S. No.	Tender No.	Brief Description	Qty.	Closing Date
1	09242042	Key Bolt With Nut	281142 Nos.	26.08.2024
2	07240473	Foot Step Complete for LHB Coaches	5432 Nos.	27.08.2024
3	09242411	Centre Pivot Liner	10701 Nos.	27.08.2024
4	19240885	Twin Beam LED Head Light	848 Set	27.08.2024
5	19240632	Elastic Ring Aclathran Ring	884 Nos.	27.08.2024
6	07240207	Control Arm Assembly Left	935 Nos.	28.08.2024
7	07240146	Secondary Lateral Damper for Fiat Bogie	1769 Nos.	30.08.2024
8	07241825	Face Plate, for Buffer Plunger	7753 Nos.	02.09.2024
9	01241778	Structure Bond 40mm x 6mm MS Flat	5929 Nos.	09.09.2024
10	07241972	Kit of Brake Gear Bushes	3422 Set	18.11.2024
Note: 1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. www.reps.gov.in for details. 2. No Manual offer will be entertained.				
Tender Notice No.: 38/2024-25 Dated 31.07.2024 2341/2024				
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE				

REVISED TIMING OF TRAIN

This is notified for the information of rail passengers that the timings of the following Train No. 12424 New Delhi - Dibrugarh Rajdhani Express will be revised as under:-

Stations	Existing Time		Revised Time		Date (from Originating Station)
	Arr.	Dep.	Arr.	Dep.	
Dibrugarh	06:00	--	06:00	--	05.08.2024
New Tinsukia	04:46	04:56	04:30	04:40	
Mariani Jn.	02:33	02:38	02:20	02:25	
Dimapur	00:10	00:17	00:02	00:09	
Lumding Jn.	22:45	22:50	22:40	22:45	

For any kind of information, 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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SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

SHORT TAKES

'Discuss working of home ministry in RS'

New Delhi: Opposition INDIA bloc parties have demanded that the working of the Union home ministry be discussed in Rajya Sabha as the House is deliberating on various ministries after the Budget presentation. According to the sources, the Opposition parties made the proposal on Tuesday during a meeting of the Business Advisory Committee to decide which ministries should be discussed in the House. On Wednesday, a Rajya Sabha bulletin said the BAC decided to discuss the Housing and urban affairs ministry, on which the deliberations were initiated by the BJP, and agriculture and farmers welfare, which will be started by the Congress. The Upper House began discussing the housing and urban affairs ministry on Wednesday while on Thursday it initiated discussion in the working of agriculture and farmers welfare.

MEA summons Lanka envoy after fisher dies

New Delhi: India on Thursday lodged a strong protest with Sri Lanka over a collision between a Lankan naval vessel and an Indian fishing boat that killed a fisherman and left another missing. The ministry of external affairs (MEA) called in island nation's acting high commissioner, Priyanga Wickramasinghe, to register a protest over the incident. "We expressed our shock and anguish at the unfortunate loss of life. Our high commissioner in Colombo will also be raising the matter with the Sri Lankan government," the MEA said. Opposing the use of force by the Lankan Navy, New Delhi said that out of the four Indian fishermen who were on board the vessel, the remaining two have been rescued and brought ashore to Kankesanthurai.

G'garh CM vows to restore 2 schemes

Raipur: Chhattisgarh chief minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Thursday announced that the two welfare schemes, discontinued during the previous Bupesh Baghel government, would be restored very soon. The two schemes, "Charan Paduka" and Saraswati cycle distribution, which were launched during the previous Raman Singh government, were discontinued when Congress returned to power in Chhattisgarh in 2018. Under the "Charan Paduka" scheme, a pair of shoes were provided to the tribals who go to the forests to collect forest produce. Similarly, under the Saraswati cycle distribution scheme, the girl students in the government-run schools were provided a cycle to go to the school. The key objective of the scheme was to check the dropout of the girl students in the schools.

18 J'KHAND BJP MLAs SUSPENDED FROM ASSEMBLY

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI/RANCHI, AUG. 1

As many as 18 Jharkhand BJP MLAs were suspended from the Assembly till 2 pm of August 2 and were removed by marshals after they refused to leave the House on Thursday. Speaker Rabindra Nath Mahto took action against the BJP members after they created ruckus in the House in protest against the eviction of Opposition MLAs by marshals on the previous day and chief minister Hemant Soren's "refusal" to reply to their queries. Leader of the Opposition Amar Kumar Bauri alleged that dictatorship prevails in Jharkhand, since the BJP MLAs did not hurl bombs in the House as was done by revolutionaries in Delhi Assembly in 1929 but followed the non-violent path of Mahatma Gandhi. He also alleged that action was taken against the saffron party legislators at the behest of the JMM-led government. Mr Mahto suspended 18 of the 20 BJP legislators present. Since they refused to leave even after being suspended, he called marshals who removed those Opposition members. The Speaker said the Assembly ethics committee will probe the matter and submit a report to him within a week.

'Cong did nothing for rail safety in 58 years'

Will implement 'Kavach' on entire network: Vaishnaw

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 1

Railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Thursday went on the offensive in the Lok Sabha to counter the Opposition's concern about the increasing number of train accidents.

Mr Vaishnaw accused the Congress and "its social media troll army" of trying to amplify every small incident on the railway network to instil a sense of fear in more than two crore passengers who use the railway network every day.

Trying to downplay the accidents, Mr Vaishnaw blamed the Opposition regime for failing to install various safety measures.

The Lok Sabha approved the "Demands for Grants" of railways to the tune of ₹7.89 lakh crores with Mr Vaishnaw assuring the House that the Centre will make every effort to implement automatic train-protection system "Kavach" in the right earnest.

Replying to a debate on the Demand for Grants of the railway ministry, Mr Vaishnaw said,



Railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw speaks in the Lok Sabha during the Monsoon Session of Parliament in New Delhi on Thursday. — PTI

"Unfortunately, during the 58 years of the Congress rule, the automatic train-protection system was not implemented on even one km on Indian Railways till 2014. I acknowledge that many experiments were carried out, but there was no focussed approach to take it to fruition."

The minister listed out steps taken by the government in eliminating unmanned level crossings, implementation of electronic interlocking at stations for better manage-

ment of train movements.

The railways minister did not give any timeline for implementation of Kavach on the entire railways network, but mentioned that smaller countries having much smaller railways networks took more than 20 years to implement the automatic train-protection system.

"I can assure you that no stone will be left unturned in the rollout of Kavach. We will work hard day and night and make every effort to install Kavach along every kilometre," the minister said.

"The attempts by the Congress to spread misinformation will not succeed," the minister said, adding that attempts were made by the Congress and the Samajwadi Party to spread "incorrect" information about incidents at the Ayodhya railway station.

The minister's apparent reference to the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's meeting with loco pilots at the New Delhi railway station last month had the Opposition members on their feet.

Opp. attacks Modi govt over NCERT textbooks revision

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 1

Opposition in Lok Sabha on Thursday took on the education ministry for changing history and removing Darwin's theory of evolution from textbooks. TMC MP, Pratima Mondal said that such removal of and change of history would lead to "intellectual stagnation" and "political manipulation" of Indian students.

"The systematic revision of school textbooks under the current government poses a threat to our children's education and intellectual integrity," said Ms Mondal while participating in a debate in Lok Sabha on the demands for grants for the education ministry. "Deleting chapters on significant Muslim rulers and their contribution from the NCERT curriculum, omitting reference to events like the 2022 Gujarat riots, altering narratives around Gandhi's assassination and promoting mythological theories over scientific ones, have been widely criticised by academicians," said the MP from Jaynagar. She said that

these changes are leading to intellectual stagnation and political manipulation of Indian students.

Replying to the debate, education minister Dharmendra Pradhan said that the government doesn't discriminate with Muslims. He said that Modi government appointed Naima Khatoun as the first female vice-chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University. He said that she had studied in the same university and was selected on the basis of her qualification. "She is not from RSS," said the minister.

He alleged that it was Opposition which was spreading fear among the minorities. Mr Pradhan said that in 2013-14 the budget on education was ₹4.3 lakh crores. "Today this is ₹9.19 lakh crores," he said.

Birla to MPs: Stay alert or lose chance to ask questions

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 1

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Thursday said that members will lose the opportunity to ask supplementary questions during the Question Hour if they don't pay attention to the House proceedings.

Mr Birla said this after Shiromani Akali Dal member Harsimrat Kaur Badal was unable to respond to the Speaker's call on time.

During the Question Hour, a question posed by Ms Badal related to Punjab was listed in the agenda for discussion. When the Speaker took Ms Badal's name for a few times, she failed to respond in time as she was apparently busy talking to a fellow member.

Soon after, the SAD MP responded and urged the Speaker to allow her to raise the issue. "I have called your name thrice. But you were busy talking. You have to be alert when your question is listed. I want to tell all honourable members that if you don't pay attention to the proceedings, you will not get the chance to raise issues," Mr Birla said.



A Kanwariya carries his mother during "Kanwar Yatra" in the holy month of Shravan in Meerut on Thursday. — PTI

'Paper leakage outside, water leakage inside' 'Old was better': Opp. jabs govt over Parl water leak

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 1

The Opposition leaders on Thursday took a swipe at the Modi government over "water leakage" in a lobby of the new Parliament building and hailed the "sturdy" old Parliament building.

However, Lok Sabha Secretariat said a "minor water leak" in the new Parliament building was due to displacement of an adhesive material used to fix glass domes over the lobby and corrective measures were taken immediately.

Congress' Lok Sabha MP Manickam Tagore posted on X a video of water leaking from the roof in a lobby of the new Parliament building and a bucket placed to collect it. "Paper leakage outside, water leakage inside. The recent water leakage in the Parliament lobby used by the President highlights urgent weather resilience issues in the new building, just a year after completion. Moving



This screenshot shows rain water leaking from a ceiling of the New Parliament building in New Delhi on Thursday. — PTI

Adjournment motion on this issue in Lok Sabha," he posted on X.

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav also took a swipe at the government over the issue. "The old Parliament was better than this new Parliament as there even former MPs could come and meet. Why not go back to the old Parliament building, at

least till the time the water leakage programme is going on in the (new) Parliament building built with billions of rupees," he said in a post on X and shared the video of the leakage.

"People are asking whether water dripping from every new roof constructed under the BJP government is a part of their well thought out design or...." Mr Yadav said.

In a post on X, TMC MP Mahua Moitra said, "New Parliament lobby is leaking water. Given the building is a monstrous edifice to Narendra Modi's ego it is only fitting that it has got shaky post 2024 lok sabha results. Bharat Mandapam leaks another case in point."

"There are reports that heavy rains in Delhi on Wednesday caused water leakage into the lobby of the newly inaugurated Parliament building, raising concerns about the weather resilience of the structure," said Lok Sabha secretariat.

Only 19-seater aircraft can operate flights under Udan scheme Kargil will soon have airport of its own

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 1

Kargil will soon have an airport of its own. Civil aviation minister K. Ramamohan Naidu said in the Lok Sabha on Thursday that the government has conducted a survey for the construction of a civil airport in Kargil. However, considering the runway at the existing Kargil airport, terrain difficulties as well as landing and take-off protocols, only 19-seater aircraft can be operated under the Udan scheme. He also said that efforts will be made to start services soon.

Replying to a question by Ladakh MP Haji Mohammad



Rammohan Naidu

Haneefa Jan regarding the construction of airport at Kargil, the minister said a multi-disciplinary team from the Airports Authority of India (AAI), Indian Air Force and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had visited sites at Wakha Kargil, Turtuk, Diskit, Nyoma and Padum/Zanskar in 2021 for examining feasibility of

these sites for construction of airports in the Union territory of Ladakh. However, none of the sites were found suitable for airport construction.

In addition, at the request of the Ladakh administration, the AAI engaged the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) to explore the feasibility of operating narrow-body planes Boeing 737 and Airbus 320 aircraft at the Kargil airport

planes Boeing 737 and Airbus 320 aircraft at the Kargil airport. ICAO's study observed that the operation of such aircraft is not feasible in the existing airstrip.

The minister said an amount of ₹9.2 crores has been sanctioned for the airport and some electrical works have also been done.

"We are making all efforts to start civilian flights to Kargil... If some airlines say they are ready to provide connectivity from Kargil to Srinagar or Jammu, then we are ready to do the remaining work and provide for the civilian services," the minister said.

Punjab CM Mann flags off 58 new ambulances

AGE CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH, AUG. 1

Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Mann flagged off 58 new ambulances equipped with the latest medical equipment. Mr Mann said that with this addition, the ambulance fleet size has reached 325 in the state.

These ambulances have been mandated to reach needy patients within 15 minutes in urban areas and 20 minutes in rural areas, Mr Mann said.

These GPS-enabled ambulances will work in tandem with the 'Sadak Surkhya Force' (Road Safety Force) and will ensure that people's lives

are saved in case of emergency by providing health care facilities to them at times, the chief minister said. The 58 ambulances have been purchased for ₹14 crores and are equipped with lifesaving drugs and ultra-modern equipment, he said.

These ambulances will act as a catalyst to provide primary treatment to the patients so that their lives are saved well in time, Mr Mann said.

The fleet of ambulances has already been doing a great service to humanity as more than one lakh patients were transported to hospitals through these ambulances in the current year, he said.

BJP reaches out to Adhir after he quits as Bengal Cong chief

RAJIB CHOWDHURI
KOLKATA, AUG. 1

Close on the heels of Congress veteran Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury stepping down from the party chief's post in West Bengal, a section of state BJP leaders have started reaching out to him to rope him into their party.

While Rajya Sabha MP Samik Bhattacharya asserted that the former Berhampore MP has no option other than siding with the BJP, Bishnupur MP Saumitra Khan indicated that Mr Chowdhury may get a call from the



Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury

BJP. However, he advised him to float a new outfit.

Mr Bhattacharya, who is also the state BJP spokesperson, said on Thursday, "The Congress has betrayed Mr Chowdhury. He is an effective player playing in the wrong party. One can't oppose the Trinamul Congress and attack its

supreme Mamata Banerjee by being part of the Congress. Mallikarjun Kharge (Congress chief) and others have made it clear."

"The people of Bengal have set a binary, which is the TMC vs the BJP. Only the BJP can defeat the TMC. If Mr Chowdhury thinks the end of the TMC rule is the need of the hour in Bengal for its next generation and a battle is required against institutional loot and unlimited greed, he has no option other than supporting the BJP," he added.

We're making J&K a global film destination: L-G

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, AUG. 1

Lieutenant-governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday said that his government is making an all-out effort to make Jammu and Kashmir a global film destination, where filmmakers can discover a diverse range of facilities and a leading hub for movie production. He said that J&K's film tourism market is already on an upward

trajectory, with more big-name Bollywood producers turning to the scenic Himalayan region for outdoor shootings.

"We're working on a model to build better film-shooting infrastructure on the lines of European countries. I remember Raj Kapoor loved to shoot his films in Kashmir. It wasn't all about just shooting. There has been an organic relation between film shooting and cinema in



Manoj Sinha

J&K. We are trying to revive the Bollywood of yesteryears," he said. Mr Sinha, who was

speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the J&K Film Conclave, an initiative to establish the Union territory as a Bollywood and Hollywood pitstop, asserted, "In the last five years, we've succeeded in reviving the cinema culture in J&K."

"We had rolled out a film policy in 2021, but there were some gaps and loopholes. Today, we have launched the New Film Policy 2024, where all pre-

vious gaps have been filled. The new policy entails a single window cell that will make the film shooting easier for directors and producers interested in doing it in J&K. There will be ease in giving permissions for shooting and hiring local talent, as well," he added.

He said efforts are afoot to provide a compact film ecosystem to film-shooting lovers, directors and producers.

Amid rain fury govt tables bill on disaster law

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 1

The government on Thursday introduced "The Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024", in Lok Sabha which aims to strengthen the efficient working of the national and state disaster management authorities besides bringing more clarity and convergence among stakeholders working in the field of disaster management.

Union minister of state for home Nityanand Rai, who introduced the bill, asserted that there is no interference in the rights of the states and disaster management is the first responsibility of the states.

The bill also provides to bring more clarity and convergence in the roles of authorities and committees.

59 deaths due to AES in country since June: Govt

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 1

The Union health ministry on Thursday said that 148 cases of Acute Encephalitis Syndrome have been reported in the country since June, and 59 patients have died. The ministry said that Chandipura virus (CHPV) has been confirmed in 51 cases.

Total 140 AES cases have been reported from 24 districts of Gujarat, four from Madhya Pradesh, three from Rajasthan and one from Maharashtra till July 31. The ministry said that since early June, Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) cases have been reported from Gujarat in children under 15 years of age.

RSS an 'anathema' to Patel: Cong on Dhankhar's praise

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 1

A day after Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar praised the RSS in the House, the Congress on Thursday alleged that the organisation has a long history of "corroding the sovereignty and integrity of India" and was an "anathema" to the country's first home minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

Independent MP Kapil Sibal said that Mr Dhankhar's remarks that the RSS has "unimpeachable credentials" were contrary to tradition and that such an opinion can be expressed by a member but not by the Chair.

During the Question Hour in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday, Samajwadi Party's Ramji Lal Suman said the RSS affiliation was the criterion for the government in selecting the head of the National Testing Agency (NTA).

At this point, Mr Dhankhar ordered that the comments will not go on record. "I hereby rule that the RSS is an organisation that has full constitutional rights to partici-

RSS body 4-day meet to focus on people-connect

Bhopal: The four-day meeting of a key Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) body on Thursday began in Indore in Madhya Pradesh to deliberate on the strategy to connect people with the RSS. The annual meeting of the "Sampark Bibhag" or the public relations wing of the RSS is scheduled to hold 24 sessions where senior leaders of the RSS, including the "Sarkaryabah" Dattatreya Hoshbole and "Saha Karyabah" Krishna Gopal, would take part in the event to deliberate various aspects of mass contact strategy, a senior RSS leader said.

participate in the development journey of this nation. This organisation bears unimpeachable credentials, comprises of people who are deeply committed to serving the nation selflessly," he said.

SHORT TAKES

NBCC staff arrested for taking ₹5L bribe

New Delhi: The CBI on Thursday said it has arrested a deputy general manager of the NBCC, Varun Popli, for allegedly taking a bribe of ₹5 lakhs from a construction contractor for a project in Leh. Mr Popli, the accused DGM posted in Ladakh, had allegedly demanded ₹11.40 lakhs from the contractor, officials said. During the negotiations, he allegedly agreed to take part payment of ₹5 lakhs in Delhi for which he had especially come to the national capital, they said. Mr Popli was caught when he was allegedly taking the bribe Wednesday evening. "The complainant, had submitted a written complaint against the DGM alleging therein that the said DGM was demanding an undue advantage of ₹7.40 lakhs for allowing a contract item. During verification of the complaint, the accused DGM demanded ₹11.40 lakhs following that the probe agency registered a case against the said accused," a CBI spokesperson said in a statement.

Over 20 die as rains batter U'khand, HP

Continued From Page 1 minister Pushkar Singh Dhama conducted a ground and aerial inspection of the disaster-affected areas of Tehri and Rudrapur. He directed the officials to be alert and take necessary measures according to the weather forecast and warnings issued by the meteorological department. In HP, at least five people were reported dead and about 50 missing following several incidents of cloudbursts that washed away many houses, bridges and roads. The cloudbursts took place in Nirmand, Sainj and Malana areas in Kullu, Paddar in Mandi and Rampur in Shimla districts. The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police, state police and home guards teams have started rescue operations. Drones are deployed to locate the missing persons. State agencies, however, are finding it difficult to carry out relief and rescue operations since many roads have been washed away.

Locals joined hands with the government teams to rescue people and animals. Amid widespread disaster, a heart-warming video of a female dog with her two puppies nearly buried in the debris and mud being rescued by locals in Samba has been widely shared on social media.

As per official sources, a breach was reported at Malana Dam, but the situation was under control. It was reported that some people are stuck in underground buildings at the Malana I hydropower project. The NDRF and home guard teams are making efforts to rescue them, said an official of the state. Union home minister Amit Shah spoke to the chief minister of Himachal Pradesh Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu and assured all support from Delhi.

Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi, Mallikarjun Kharge and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also spoke with Mr Sukhu.

India to record above-normal rainfall in Aug and Sept: IMD

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUGUST 1

India is predicted to record above-normal rainfall in August and September, with a good chance of favourable La Nina conditions developing by the end of August, the India meteorological department (IMD) said on Thursday. Prediction of above-normal rain means there's a high possibility of landslides and floods.

The IMD said that rainfall over India in August and September would be 106 per cent of the long-period average of 422.8 mm. The country has so far recorded 453.8 mm against the normal of 445.8 mm since June 1, a surplus of two per cent, owing to a wetter-than-normal July after a drier June.

IMD chief Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said that nor-



Officials and locals stand near a washed away area at Rajvan village after a cloudburst in Mandi district on Thursday.

mal to above-normal rainfall is predicted in most parts of the country. Below-normal rainfall is expected in parts of the northeast, adjoining east India, Ladakh, Saurashtra and Kutch, and pockets of central and peninsular India. He also anticipated

deficient rainfall in parts of western Himalayan region in August-September.

Speaking further on weather conditions, he said above-normal maximum temperatures are expected over most parts of the country. "Normal to

below-normal maximum temperatures are likely in some areas in the Gangetic plains, central India, and the southeast coast of India," Mohapatra said, adding that India recorded nine per cent more rainfall than normal in July, with the central region receiving 33 per cent excess rain.

Mr Mohapatra said that central India, which heavily relies on monsoon rainfall for agriculture, has been receiving good rainfall for the third consecutive monsoon season, benefiting agriculture.

IMD data showed significant rainfall deficits in east Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Gangetic West Bengal, and parts of the northeast. The rainfall deficit in Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu and Kashmir ranged from 35 per cent to 45 per cent.

SC cites Ramcharitmanas, Gita, Purana in quota order

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUG. 1

The Supreme Court ruling on sub-classification within the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has quoted the Bhagavad Gita, Ramcharitmanas and Skand Purana, saying in primitive India there was no existence of any caste system rather there was categorisation of the people according to their profession, talent, qualities and nature.

In its 6:1 verdict, the apex court said the Constitution virtually visualises a casteless society and a unified society. However, in the name of "equality" to accord facilities and privileges to the depressed class/down-trodden, it is said that we have continued with the so-called "Manuwadi" sys-

tem of caste.

Justice Pankaj Mithal said: "I am not an expert of religious scriptures nor do I claim that I have any knowledge of any one of them though I may have gone through Bhagavad Gita and Ramcharitmanas some times. According to my limited understanding of the scriptures, especially the Gita, I am of the firm view that in primitive India there was no existence of any caste system rather there was categorisation of the people according to their profession, talent, qualities and nature."

Quoting the Bhagavad Gita, Justice Mithal said: "Lord Krishna says that I have categorised humans in 4 varnas according to their nature and characteristics. The Gita thus only promotes the varna system which is different

from the present-day caste system. It lays emphasis on abilities, qualities and consciousness of a person to have a balanced structure of society and to bring out the best in every person."

The four varnas (occupational categories) as per the Bhagavad Gita describe the intrinsic qualities of each of the varnas. Quoting the Skand Purana, he said that the duties of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras were distributed according to their qualities (gunas) and nature and not by birth. All people have different natures and characteristics. Their personality is shaped according to their qualities (gunas). Thus, different professionals' duties are suited to persons of different nature and character.

4 held, 8 cops, including DCP, face action for negligence Woman groped by mob in Lucknow

Lucknow, Aug 1: A woman riding pillion on a motorcycle was groped and harassed by a group of men in a waterlogged area here, prompting police to arrest four people and take action against eight officials, including the DCP concerned.

While five police personnel, including the local police station incharge, were suspended, the deputy commissioner of police (East Lucknow), additional DCP and ACP were shunted out for negligence, an official statement said on Thursday.

A purported video of the

incident, which took place near the underpass close to the Taj Hotel in the posh Gomti Nagar area on Wednesday, went viral on social media.

In the video, the men are seen splashing water on the motorcycle wading through the waterlogged road. The men quickly surround the motorcycle and some start pulling it from behind. Amidst the melee, while the man driving the motorcycle tries to pull through, at least one of the accused gropes the woman who is riding pillion.

The men stop pulling the motorcycle only when the

THE ACCUSED booked under sections 191(2) (rioting) and 74 and other relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita

woman falls down. "Taking cognizance of the incident, an FIR was lodged at Gomti Nagar police station. The police formed four teams to apprehend the culprits. As a result, four accused were arrested and based on the evidence collected and CCTV footage, additional relevant sections have been added to the FIR,"

the statement issued by police said.

The accused have been booked under sections 191(2) (rioting) and 74 (assault or use of criminal force with intent to outrage modesty) and other relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, it said. Lucknow police commissioner Amrendra Kumar Sengar said two of the four arrested accused — Pawan Yadav and Sunil Kumar — were identified through CCTV footage on Wednesday night and they led police to the other two — Mohammed Arbaaz and Viraj Sahu. — PTI

Kid, 2 more die in Jaipur as rainwater floods basement

Jaipur, Aug 1: A six-year-old girl was among three people who drowned after rainwater gushed into the basement of their house in Vishwakarma area of Jaipur city early Thursday morning, officials said.

The bodies of Kamal Shah (23), Pooja Saini (19) and her niece Purvi Saini were recovered by the SDRF during a rescue operation that lasted several hours, they said.

After the water entered the basement of their houses, the families began removing their belongings, DCP West Amit Kumar said. The passage to the basement of the house is narrow and deep.

During this time, three people from two families got trapped in the basement as it started filling



Vehicles move through a waterlogged road after rains in Jaipur on Thursday.

with water, Kumar said, adding that a rescue operation was initiated and the rainwater was pumped out.

Expressing condolences over the incident, chief minister Bhajanlal Sharma directed officials to provide financial assistance of ₹5 lakh to the family of each deceased. — PTI

Approval to grant ₹4 lakh from disaster relief fund and ₹1 lakh from chief minister's relief fund has been given, officials said.

On the other hand, the residents of the area have been advised not to stay in their basements during rainfall, the police said. — PTI

Kanwariyas die of electric shock in Jharkhand

Latehar, Aug 1: Five Kanwar Yatra pilgrims, including two minors, were electrocuted to death in Jharkhand's Latehar district on Thursday morning when their vehicle came into contact with a high-tension overhead wire, police said. Five others were injured in the accident that occurred at Tam Tam Tola in Balumath police station area around 3 am.

The pilgrims were returning from Baba Baidyanath temple in Deoghar when their vehicle hit an electricity pole, a senior officer said. "A high-tension overhead wire fell on their vehicle. Five people were killed and 3 others injured," Balumath sub-divisional police officer Ashutosh Satyam said. — PTI

1 killed as BSF foils infiltration in J&K

YUSUF JAMEEL SRINAGAR, AUG. 1

The Border Security Force (BSF) on Thursday said that it shot dead an intruder along the International Border (IB) with Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba district, pre-empting a possible major infiltration bid.

A BSF spokesman said in Jammu that at about 10.15 pm on Wednesday, the border guards noticed some suspicious movement near the border outpost Khoara in the Mangyachak area of the Samba sector.

"The movement of the person, aged about 45, was kept under observation. He was challenged when he walked into the Indian side of the border. He tried to flee but was shot dead," the spokesman said.

BSF inspector general (Jammu frontier) D.K. Boora, while confirming it, said, "The intruder tried to flee but was fired upon by the alert personnel and neutralised. The search of the area is still

going on."

"It seems the intruder was deliberately sent to gauge the possible gap to be utilised later to push armed terrorists. But this operation is an achievement and a lesson that anyone trying to step his foot on the Indian soil with nefarious design will meet the same fate as that of the intruder," Mr Boora told reporters after visiting the area.

Officials said the body of the intruder was recovered near the border fence but nothing objectionable was recovered from him. They added that his identity is being ascertained and, meanwhile, the corpse has been handed over to the J&K police for a post-mortem and other legal formalities.

Last week, an Army officer and four jawans were hurt while repulsing an attack possibly by a Pakistani Border Action Team (BAT) at a forward military post along the LoC in Kashmir Valley's Kupwara district.

HC rejects Muslim's plea on Mathura temple-mosque row

Prayagraj, Aug 1: The Allahabad high court on Thursday ruled that the trial in 18 cases relating to the Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah dispute in Mathura can continue, dismissing a petition filed by the mosque committee that challenged the maintainability of these suits.

Justice Mayank Kumar Jain had on June 6 reserved his judgment on

the plea moved by the Muslim side on maintainability of the suits.

New date for framing of issues is now August 12. The suits filed by Hindu litigants seek "removal" of the Shahi Idgah mosque.

The petitions claim that the Aurangzeb-era mosque was built after the demolition of a temple that marked the spot where Lord Krishna was born. — PTI

Modi, Vietnam PM take a dig at China

Continued From Page 1 areas. The two Prime Ministers adopted a "plan of action" to strengthen the comprehensive strategic partnership (CSP) between both nations from 2024-28 which was among nine pacts inked.

At a special briefing on the visit of Mr Chinh, ministry of external affairs secretary (east) Jaideep Mazumdar told the media that the two credit lines — one of \$180 million and the other of \$120 million — are for Coast Guard ships and fast-craft border patrol boats for the Vietnamese forces. Both leaders jointly inaugurated in virtual mode the Army Software Park at the Telecommunications University in Nha Trang, Vietnam, which was described as a "beautiful symbol of defence ties" between India and Vietnam. The Army Software Park has been built with an Indian grant assistance of \$5 million and has 17 classrooms and 200 computers with a data centre, which is expected to boost the educational training and scientific research capabilities of the Vietnam People's Army.

At the briefing, Mr Mazumdar said both sides have inked an implementation arrangement for defence industry cooperation that will establish a framework. The secretary (east) also said India has an "overarching approach" for defence supplies for Vietnam, guided by that country's specific requirements. He added that Vietnam had expressed interest in technology transfer from India for defence production.

According to reports, Vietnam has also been keen to acquire the BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles from India.

It may be recalled that both India and Vietnam have fought separate border wars against China. Vietnam also has serious maritime disputes with China in the South China Sea. Notably, Mr Chinh said in his remarks that "security challenges have become fiercer".

In his remarks, the Vietnamese PM said his country shares a "special bond" with India and referred to the "high level of political trust" between the two nations, while calling for "deeper defence and security ties" with New Delhi.

Mr Modi too referred to Vietnam as an "important partner" in India's Act East policy and Indo-Pacific vision, adding that Mr Chinh's visit to India adds a "new and golden chapter to our relations".

After the PM mentioned that mutual cooperation between the two nations has "gained a new momentum" with "new steps taken" along with the "union of views" of the two nations in their Indo-Pacific vision, the Vietnamese PM said both nations will continue to work to ensure peace and stability in the South China Sea in order to uphold the freedom of navigation there as "waters of peace". Mr Modi too shared the sentiments by stating that both nations will "continue our cooperation for a free, open, rules-based and prosperous Indo-Pacific".

Mr Chinh also referred to the resolve of both nations to double

their bilateral trade in the next three to five years, even as Mr Modi mentioned that bilateral trade has increased by more than 85 per cent.

Mr Modi said that the review of the Asean-India Trade in Goods Agreement should be concluded at the earliest to "realise the potential of mutual trade". He also said that an agreement has been reached between the central banks of both nations for digital payment connectivity. He said the focus will be on areas of the green economy and added that mutual capabilities in energy and port development will be harnessed. Calling for even "more strategic trust" between the two nations, Mr Chinh referred to the need to strengthen cooperation in areas such as green technologies, information technology, semiconductors, artificial intelligence and other fields.

As Mr Chinh called for greater cooperation in cultural and people to people exchanges, Mr Modi referred to India's cooperation in the conservation of temples in the My Son region of Vietnam. Referring to Buddhism as the "common heritage" of both nations, Mr Modi invited the people of Vietnam to visit the "Buddhist circuit" in India.

Following the meeting between the two Prime Ministers, it was announced that Vietnam will join the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. Pacts inked between the two sides included MoUs in the spheres of agriculture, customs capacity building, renovation of cultural heritage, medicines, law and justice and broadcasting.

In 6-1 verdict, SC allows states to 'sub-classify' SC, ST quotas

Continued From Page 1 journey to establish #SocialJusticefor the social liberation of the oppressed people," Mr Stalin said in a post on a social media platform.

Welcoming the verdict, Telangana chief minister A. Revanth Reddy told the Assembly that it was the state government that strongly argued in the apex court for sub-classifications. Mr Reddy said: "I sincerely thank the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court of India. Six out of seven judges said that state governments can take up the sub-classification. On behalf of the state government, I am making a statement that Telangana would be the first state to implement the sub-classification." He said his government, if necessary, will bring an ordinance to implement sub-classification in the ongoing job notifications as well.

Bihar minister and JD(U) leader Vijay Kumar Chaudhary said that the state government has already created sub-categories like "Mahadalits" and "ati-pichda" (extremely backward classes). "These sub-quotas ensure that reservation benefits reach the most needy people. It is for the same reason that there is another category called 'creamy layer', which covers the relatively better-off people among SCs, STs and OBCs, who no longer require the facility. The Supreme Court judgment vindicates the Bihar government's old stand," he said.

The CJJ, in the judgment written for himself and Justice Manoj Misra, referred to historical evidence, which suggested

that Scheduled Castes are not a homogeneous class. The CJJ said sub-classification does not violate the principle of equality enshrined under Article 14 of the Constitution. Sub-classification does not violate Article 341(2) of the Constitution, Justice Chandrachud said, adding that there is nothing in Articles 15 and 16 which prevents the state from sub-classifying a caste.

The CJJ said: "Historical and empirical evidence demonstrates that the SCs area socially heterogeneous class. Thus, the state in exercise of the power under Articles 15(4) and 16(4) can further classify the SCs if (a) there is a rational principle for differentiation; and (b) the rational principle has a nexus with the purpose of sub-classification."

The majority verdict said the basis of sub-classification has to be justified by "quantifiable and demonstrable data by the states (that sub-classified castes are not adequately represented), which cannot act on its whims" for political expediency. Clarifying that the state cannot earmark 100 per cent reservation for a sub-class, the bench also held that the sub-classification will be amenable to judicial review.

The principal issue for adjudication by the bench was whether sub-classification of the Scheduled Castes for reservation is constitutionally permissible in the light of the E.V. Chinniah judgment.

The bench, also comprising Justices B.R. Gavai, Vikram Nath, Bela M. Trivedi, Pankaj Mithal, Manoj Misra and Satish

Chandra Mishra, was hearing 23 petitions, including the lead one filed by the Punjab government challenging a 2010 verdict of the Punjab and Haryana high court.

Overturning its 2004 judgment, the top court said members of SCs and STs are often unable to climb up the ladder due to the systemic discrimination faced by them.

The majority verdict upheld the Punjab Scheduled Caste and Backward Classes Act, 2006, and the Tamil Nadu Arunthathiyars Act, 2009. Justice Gavai, in a separate verdict, said states must identify the creamy layer in SCs and STs and take them out of reservations.

In his concurring judgment, he said that it was the duty of the state to give preferential treatment to the more backward communities as only a few people within the category of SC/ST are enjoying the reservations. Justice Gavai said the ground realities cannot be denied and there are categories within the SC/STs which have faced more oppression for centuries.

The basic error in the E.V. Chinniah judgment, Justice Gavai said, is that it proceeded on the understanding that Article 341 is the basis of reservations. Article 341 only deals with the identification of castes for the purpose of reservation, he said, adding, the grounds for sub-classification is that a group from the larger group faces more discrimination. Justice Gavai also expressed the opinion that the state must evolve a policy to identify creamy layers among the SC/ST categories and take them out of the fold of affirma-

tion. This is the only way to gain true equality, he added.

Justice Nath also concurred with this view that the creamy layer principle as applicable to OBCs also applies to SCs. A similar view was expressed by Justice Pankaj Mithal, who said that reservations should be limited to one generation. If the first generation reached a higher status through the reservation, the second generation should not be entitled to it, Justice Mithal said. Justice Sharma also supported this view.

In her dissenting verdict, Justice Trivedi said states cannot tinker with the Scheduled Caste list notified under Article 341 of the Constitution and the affirmative action of states has to be within the constitutional fold. The state's action to provide reservation even if well intentioned cannot be justified by the Supreme Court using powers under Article 142, she said. Justice Trivedi said in the absence of executive or legislative power, the states do not have any competence to sub-classify the castes and sub-classify the benefits which are reserved for all of the SCs. Allowing states to do so will amount to allowing a colourable exercise of power.

After hearing the matter for three days, the top court had reserved the verdict on February 8 on pleas seeking a review of the E.V. Chinniah judgment, which in 2004 had ruled that all Schedule Caste communities which suffered ostracisation, discrimination and humiliation for centuries represented a homogeneous class incapable of being sub-categorised.

THE ASIAN AGE

2 AUGUST 2024

With Hamas, Hezbollah hits, Israel aborts truce bid hopes

As the war in Gaza Strip has been raging for nine months, events have occurred every other week that have served only to kill any lingering hope that a way would be found to end it. The killing in Tehran of Ismail Haniyeh, the political leader of Hamas, in what must have been an Israeli missile strike, coming on top of an Israeli strike in the Lebanese capital Beirut to kill a top Hezbollah commander in Fuad Shukur, has not only plunged the Middle East into a fresh crisis but also left the hope of a ceasefire hanging by a very slim thread.

Even as the leaders of Hamas and Hezbollah are mourning the deaths of two top people, they, along with a wounded Iran, are already contemplating what sort of revenge they will seek in retaliatory attacks that could well plunge the conflict-ridden Middle East into a full-scale regional war against Israel with Hamas and Iran and its "Axis of Resistance" allies Hezbollah and the Houthis rebels of Yemen.

Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu is the one to be blamed squarely for this latest escalation in his forces targeting a political person who was actively involved in the negotiations for a hostages-prisoners swap between Hamas and Israel. He was eliminated with a missile that took out the window and a wall of Haniyeh's room in Tehran and killed him and his bodyguard just hours after he had attended the investiture ceremony of Iran's new President, Masoud Pezeshkian.

It is one man's political career that may end if the war closes with a ceasefire. Backed by several hawks in his war cabinet, Mr Netanyahu has, meanwhile, not hesitated to mortify his backers.

While Iran's security is exposed by such a strike, perhaps carried out using Mossad's intelligence inputs in tracking Haniyeh's movements, it does place it in the delicate position of calibrating its response to the death, not of an Iranian but that of an honoured guest at a state ceremony.

The only glimmer of hope that the situation would not go out of hand with a major Iranian strike lies in Iran's soft retaliatory attacks on Israel when two top commanders and five of their colleagues in the Quds force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps were killed in a missile strike on a diplomatic compound in Damascus, Syria, in April.

There are no winners in this conflict that began with a shocking Hamas attack on Israeli civilians at their homes and at a concert on October 7 from where hundreds of hostages were taken to Gaza. Israel has since bombed almost every city of the Gaza Strip, reducing most of them to rubble while killing nearly 40,000 Palestinians. While Israel has stayed quiet on the Haniyeh killing, it has confirmed that it killed the Hamas military commander Mohammed Deif in an aerial attack in Gaza in July.

The commander is, despite the strikes at Hamas personnel and other targets there was always an opportunity for Israel to call off its expensive defensive and offensive war operations in exchange for hostages in a ceasefire deal that seemed close enough to take and come out with some gains from give-and-take negotiations that have been on for months. A Hezbollah attack that killed a dozen kids on a soccer field in the Golan Heights last week had added a deadlier dimension by inviting counterattacks.

And yet it is one man's political career that may end if the war closes with a ceasefire that is keeping the pot boiling. But then Mr Netanyahu, backed by several hawks in his war cabinet, has not hesitated to embarrass his backers in the US and the West by springing extra-territorial attacks to wipe out peace initiatives attempting to shape a ceasefire from which Israel and its economy will also get breathing space.

Wayanad: Stop the blame game

Whatever be the error that triggered a tragedy causing heavy loss of innocent lives, those who committed it, either by omission or commission, should be held responsible. Mainly because that is a sure-fire way of preventing a recurrence of the disaster anywhere, anytime in future. But in the case of the Wayanad catastrophe, the blame games that have erupted from different quarters, even before the rescue operations have been completed, seem to have not only political contours but are also soaked in insensitivity. Apart from Union home minister Amit Shah trying to point fingers at the Pinayari Vijayan-led state government in Kerala, there were also other voices regretting the dumping of the Gadgil report.

Isn't it a bit premature and insensitive to scream "you erred" amidst wails of horror and agony that the unexpected natural disaster has set off in the otherwise-scenic district? True we need to figure out the causes for the landslides that took away so many lives and left so many others with nothing to live for since we can't afford to see the recurrence of such cataclysms, we should mend our own ways. But let's not be judgmental at this hour of collective grief, when families are in tatters and victims have to be helped to rebuild lives. The state government, too, needs to be allowed to deal with the catastrophe.

The Union minister trying to blame the state government for alleged failure to take note of his government's warning and the chief minister replying with a "you did not tell me properly" are not statements that would help anyone, be it the administration or the victims. Neither is it seemly to butt in at his moment of loss and confusion with grouses of an old report being not adhered to or rather opposed by the people for various reasons. Perhaps we could dust it up and look at it again. But at a moment when the world should stand by the people of Wayanad, exacerbating their agony is nothing but inhumane.

THE ASIAN AGE

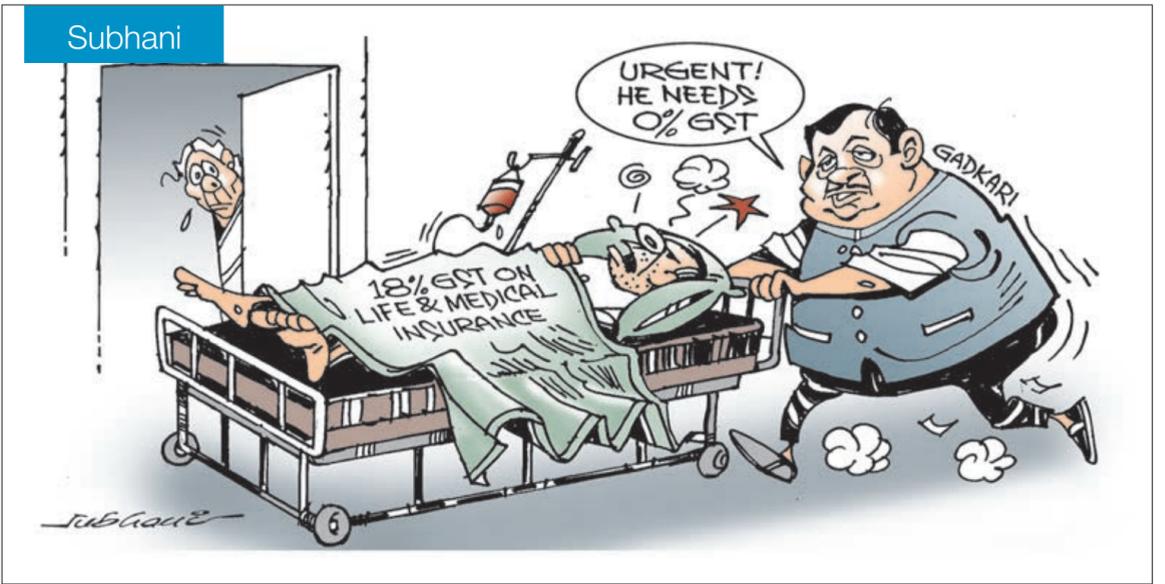
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The Asian Age office is located at:
New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Phone: (011) 23211124.

Published and Printed on behalf of and for:
Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited, Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi 110 002 at BFL Infotech Ltd., C-9, Sector-III, Noida -201301.
London: Quickmarsh Ltd, 8th Floor, Block 2, Elizabeth House, 39 York Road, London, SE1 7NQ.
RNI Registration number: 57290/94

Subhani



Kamala entry opens race: Dems cheer, GOP in a fix



K.C. Singh

The Joe Biden-Donald Trump presidential debate on June 27 unleashed cascading events which eventually ended with President Joe Biden's withdrawal from the race on July 21. In between came the assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump.

President Biden addressed the media to allay concerns about his physical and mental fitness for another term, but worsened matters with each appearance. The pressure mounted as big donors and even former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Hollywood icon George Clooney joined in the demands for his exit. The failed Trump assassination worsened matters as Mr Trump gained public sympathy and enthused his faithful.

The denouement was sudden as Mr Biden, confined to his seaside retreat due to testing positive for Covid-19, quietly released a letter on July 21 announcing his exit. Quickly thereafter, he endorsed his vice-president Kamala Devi Harris as his favoured replacement. She in turn acted with great dispatch to neutralise potential rivals and garner the support of a majority of the 3,636 delegates to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago on August 19-22.

Ms Harris has strengths and weaknesses. First, the element of surprise catches the Trump campaign gear to handling President Biden. Now they must quickly recalibrate and devise a new line of attack. Second, because she was not an overly pro-active vice-president, she can disassociate from the unpopular policy decisions of the Biden presidency. Third, being two decades younger than Mr Trump, the age argument, which was Mr Biden's albatross, now hangs around Mr Trump's neck.

On the negative side, she

On policy issues, her strong defence of women's reproductive rights should help her gain women's support nationally. This is the reverse of the stand of J.D. Vance, Mr Trump's running mate.

ents. But walls do not stop the movement of people. The solution lies in a mix of law enforcement and economic evolution of countries of Central and South America.

Ms Harris' likely nomination elicited excitement in India. Jocularly, considering that Mr Vance's wife is a Telugu, some called it an Andhra Pradesh versus Tamil Nadu contest. Levity aside, any person of Indian origin, and even less one of mixed race, born and brought up in the United States, will first think of US interests. Our permanent representatives to the United Nations, when Nikki Haley was the US ambassador, did not get any special treatment officially from her. However, at a social level, she was easier to engage.

However, Ms Harris has in the past stood for freedom and human rights. She supported, while she was a senator, an Indian-origin colleague whom external affairs minister S. Jaishankar had once rebuked by cancelling a meeting. As President, she would view occasional actions of the Indian government to compromise human rights and democratic institutions in the broader context of strengthening Indo-US relations. But personal comfort in dealing with the Indian leadership is a different matter. Thus, bilateral relations may not be visibly affected but, in her case, personal warmth may well evaporate.

Donald Trump, when last in office, was shrewdly managed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, through a mix of flattery and public theatre. But a Trump presidency will always have unpredictable dimensions. In his latest interview with Businessweek, he is still fixated on his Harley David-

son story and Indian motorcycle imports. He recounts how company executives, when meeting him in the White House, had cribbed about the difficulties of doing business. He adds: "I said 'You mean like India'. India's an amazing abuser. One of the best." The story proceeds: "Let me guess: India's tariffing you, right?" The story continues with Indian tariffs of 200 per cent imposed to compel them to open an Indian plant, thereby shutting the American one. The facts: Indian duty on motorcycle imports was 50 per cent. Harley announced an Indian plant in 2010, six years before Mr Trump entered office. Talleyrand's quote about a French dynasty applies aptly to Donald Trump: "The Bourbons have learnt nothing and forgotten nothing". In Mr Trump's case, it also covers all fact-free stories.

India-US relations are close and multidimensional, but the Indian commitment to strategic independence jars the Americans occasionally. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to Moscow as the 75th anniversary summit of Nato opened in Washington is one such example. India will manage bilateral relations with whomever gets elected as the US President. But geopolitically, a Trump presidency will cause far more disruption. He will blindly back Israel, increasing the possibility of an Israel-Iran conflict. The situation has already worsened with the killing of the top leaders of Hamas, in Iran, and of Hezbollah in Lebanon.

His solution to the Ukraine war rests on the acceptance by Ukraine of the status quo. This can cause fissures in Nato. Mr Biden had largely followed Mr Trump's China policy which Mr Trump will happily resume. The European nations and US allies in the Pacific, including Japan, are already mentally preparing for a world with an isolationist US. The Trump-proofing of foreign policies is perhaps underway even in China and Russia. Hopefully, South Block is similarly attuned.

The writer is a former secretary in the external affairs ministry. He tweets at @ambkcsingh.

LETTERS DARING GAEKWAD

Dashing opening batsman Anshuman Gaekwad has been clean bowled by cancer at 71 years. Gaekwad, who was in London till last month for blood cancer treatment, died in Baroda after a brief time in the ICU. Gaekwad belonged to an era of no helmets and no limit on bouncers bowled. This right-hand opening batsman dashingly faced the borderline bowling of West Indies and other teams of his era. He was a complete team man and contributed as an right arm off-break bowler too. His Test career lasted 11 long years (1974-1985). He was a mixture of patience, perseverance and elegance. Yet BCCI turned a blind eye to him in his hour of need until cajoled to aid.

P.V. Srinivas Sreelekha
Secunderabad

GST ON INSURANCE

NTIN GADKARI has shown some spine in requesting the finance minister to drop the 18 per cent GST on health and life insurance premiums. After paying all kinds of taxes the government is expected to take care of some of the needs of the people after retirement. Unfortunately, it not only does nothing but also charges GST on insurance premiums. The reason why even the Opposition is silent is because in percentage terms only a minuscule buys insurance. When 80 crores Indians depend on free rations for survival, can anyone expect them to? In their quest for votes, governments are coming up with all kinds of schemes for poor, but will not lift a finger to lighten the burdens on the middle class.

Anthony Henriques
Mumbai

RESPECT BROWSERS

WORLDWIDE WEB DAY is a global celebration dedicated to web browsing, the online activity that brings the whole world to your fingertips, and places a wealth of knowledge at your feet. It is celebrated on August 1 every year. Most people rely on the Worldwide Web in order to find out information and carry out everyday tasks. It is integral to a lot of jobs as well. Therefore, it is only right that we have a day to honor the worldwide web, and that is what Worldwide Web Day is all about.

Jubel D'Cruz
Mumbai

Saeed Naqvi
Wide Angle



In Middle East's endgame, where will Israel finally be left standing?

The brutal realism of Tarantino's *Django Unchained* may well cause the weak of stomach to throw up. A white plantation owner in America's Deep South, seated on a sofa in his living room, watches two burly slaves wrestle to the grim end or at least until one of them has gouged out the other's eyes. Outside, a pack of hungry dogs, larger than wolves, are let loose on a slave who tries in vain to clamber onto a tree. "As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods", laments Lear in the wilderness, "they kill us for their sport". Replace "gods" with "whites" in Shakespeare's line and put it in the mouth of a bleeding black slave at a climactic moment on Broadway or the West End, and the actor will get multiple standing ovations.

All standing ovations pale before what Benjamin Netanyahu coaxed out of the US Congress. They wouldn't stop rising like there were nails on their seats. This wasn't the first time Mr Netanyahu had joint sessions of the US Congress riveted. It submitted to his choreography four times, one more than Winston Churchill's record. At one time, President Barack Obama had opposed his presence in Washington. Mr Netanyahu defied the White House and addressed the session anyway, one ovation after another. The egg on Mr Obama's face was stark.

What explains Israel's extraordinary influence in Washington? I have interviewed Prime Ministers Yitzhak Shamir, Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres and

Mr Netanyahu. There is no doubt that Mr Netanyahu knows his America better than the others. There are simple reasons. His stints at Harvard and MIT gave him a wide, influential network. His stint as Israel's UN ambassador in 1984-88 helped consolidate his links with Jews in New York and California. After Tel Aviv, New York has the world's largest, most influential Jewish population. Analysts say the US Jewish lobby keeps US foreign policy totally aligned with Israel's interests. Studies have shown how deep the lobby's tentacles are all across the US establishment.

Shameful is a mild word to describe representatives of the American people doing jumping-jack exercises, with a mixture of military precision and uncommon obsequiousness. Do people not matter in American democracy when Israel is involved? Is it exclusively a circus of capital, donors and lobbies? The National Rifle Association will thwart any reform even though gun violence kills 12 children every day in America.

The "Nakba" (catastrophe) of 1948, when Israeli villages were emptied of Palestinians, was horrible. There have been similar horrors down the line. But the endlessness of current brutalities is, ironically, a harbinger of a better future for Palestinians.

All previous Nakbas were a function of Israeli self-confidence. Israel knew all its tantrums would be overlooked, sometimes encouraged, by the sole superpower. Former US defence secretary Caspar

Weinberger's definition of Israel as America's "unsinkable aircraft-carrier in the Middle East" was apt — only so long as the US was an uncontested superpower.

In 2008, after Lehman Brothers came down like the *Titanic*, there has been no arrest of the hegemon's decline. Many US institutions have lost their sheen, such as the military-industrial complex. This much-touted complex has not enabled the US to win wars in Vietnam and Iraq, and we remember vividly the messy departure from Afghanistan in 2021. The complex can help destroy countries, not win wars. One purpose of provoking Russia's Vladimir Putin into the Ukrainian theatre was for the US to recover lost prestige. The opposite has happened. President Joe Biden has had to bow out for unfortunate reasons; while Mr Putin, holding Xi Jinping's reliable hands, is looking plausible as a global statesman, the two navigating Brics way beyond G-7.

Seen in this perspective, the 2024 Nakba is different. On all previous occasions, Israel could take for granted the absolute support of the sole superpower. Today the hegemon is in free fall.

Meanwhile, Mr Netanyahu has placed himself in a corner. He cannot dismount the tiger because the tiger will devour him if he does. So, he must fight on, albeit by keeping bombing Palestinians. Also he has promised total victory over Hamas, an impossible proposition by all calculations. But any ceasefire short of that will be tantamount to defeat. The

Palestinians will be in wild celebration, 160,000 deaths, going by *Lancet's* calculations, notwithstanding. The US, which is staring at defeat in Ukraine as well, cannot allow the Israeli "aircraft-carrier" to sink. That will be a nail in the collective coffin of the West.

People forget that America's relations with Saudi Arabia came long before the State of Israel was born in 1948. It was in 1945 that President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Shah Saud, founder of the Saudi monarchy, met on the *USS Quincy* in the Suez Canal to ratify agreements on how Arab oil will be shared by the West in exchange for guarantees of security in the Cold War. When the Cold War ended in 1990-91, the Iranian Revolution, the Shia axis and Islamic terror were brought into play to scare the Arabs — to keep the oil for security policies in place. But this situation has changed. Saudi Arabia, nudged by China, has shaken hands with Tehran. It has, effectively joined the Global South. This Israel can't do. At China's behest again, all Palestinian groups, Hamas and Fatah included, have agreed to join hands for managing Gaza after the war is over.

Wait a minute. The other day the Ukrainian foreign minister was sighted in Beijing, a capital most friendly with President Putin. What on earth is going on?

The writer is a senior journalist and commentator based in New Delhi

SHORT TAKES

XI FOR SMART SYSTEM TO BOOST BORDER DEFENCE

Beijing, Aug. 1: Chinese President Xi Jinping has called for greater use of technology and the deployment of a "smart system" for border defence to meet "new opportunities and challenges", amidst Beijing's unresolved land and maritime territorial disputes with its neighbours.

The instructions were made during a group study session on Tuesday attended by the Communist Party's 24-member Politburo. Xi highlighted the need to "strengthen technological empowerment" in border defence.

UK SCRIBE SEEKS MEETING WITH IMRAN, DEPORTED

Islamabad, Aug. 1: A 73-year-old British-American author and journalist, who sought an interview with Pakistan's jailed former premier Imran Khan, has been deported after his tourist visa was revoked.

Charles Glass, an author, journalist, broadcaster, and publisher, was told by law enforcement agencies on Wednesday that his visa had been cancelled and he had five hours to leave the country. Glass has served prominent media organisations such as Newsweek, ABC TV, and The Telegraph, among others, and currently works as a freelance journalist.

SK SAYS READY TO OFFER FLOOD RELIEF TO NORTH

Seoul, Aug. 1: South Korea is ready to provide North Korea with relief supplies for damage caused by recent heavy rainfall, South Korea's Red Cross said on Thursday, marking a rare outreach to its neighbour.

Authorities in the South were ready to discuss the relief supplies needed, the scale of aid and how to transfer it and looked forward to a swift response from Pyongyang.

The statement was issued by the South's unification ministry, which handles inter-Korean affairs. The Red Cross has taken the lead in carrying out projects between the rivals.

GEORGIA AIMS TO RESET RELATIONS WITH AMERICA

Tbilisi, Aug. 1: Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze on Thursday proposed a "reset" to mend relations with the United States, Interpress news agency reported, after Washington paused more than \$95 million in aid over concerns about democratic backsliding.

Georgia was plunged into crisis this spring over the passage of a law on "foreign agents", which came into force on Thursday. Opposition and the West say the law, which requires organisations that receive more than 20% of their funding from abroad to register as "agents of foreign influence".

MEXICAN DRUG KINGPIN TO SHOW UP IN U.S. COURT

El Paso, Aug. 1: Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada, the notorious alleged co-founder of the Sinaloa Cartel, is expected to appear in a US court on Thursday after pleading not guilty last week to drug trafficking charges following his arrest.

Zambada is due to appear for a status conference before United States District Judge Kathleen Cardone in El Paso, Texas, federal court at 1 pm MDT (1900 GMT). Such hearings normally deal with legal matters such as the disclosure of evidence by prosecutors to the defence and preliminary scheduling.

DUTCH RAIL OPERATOR WILL CUT 500 JOBS

The Hague, Aug. 1: Dutch rail operator NS on Thursday announced it will cut 500 jobs to curb costs, with the state-owned company posting a 109-million-euro (\$118 million) loss for the first half of 2024.

"NS continues to make efforts to reduce the cost level" through a savings programme that includes 500 job cuts mainly at the head office, said a company statement.

Despite passenger numbers rising by 6.4 percent compared to the same period last year, ticket sales do not cover costs, it said.

Iran, proxies to discuss retaliation against Israel

Israel confirms death of Oct. 7 mastermind, Hamas' Deif

Cairo, Jerusalem, Dubai, Aug. 1: The head of Hamas' military wing, Mohammed Deif, was killed in an Israeli airstrike in Gaza last month, the Israeli military said on Thursday, a day after the group's political leader was assassinated in Tehran as top Iranian officials will meet the representatives of Tehran's regional allies from Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen on Thursday to discuss potential retaliation against Israel, five sources told Reuters.

The region faces a risk of widened conflict between Israel, Iran and its proxies after Ismail Haniyeh's assassination in Tehran on Wednesday and the killing of Hezbollah's senior commander on Tuesday in an Israeli strike on the outskirts of the Lebanese capital Beirut.

Representatives of Iran's Palestinian allies Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, as well as Yemen's Tehran-backed Houthi movement, Lebanon's Hezbollah and Iraqi resistance groups will attend the meeting in Tehran, said the sources, who declined to be named due to the sensitivity of the issue.

Deif is believed to have been one of the masterminds of Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel which triggered the Gaza war. "The IDF (Israel Defence Forces) announces that on July 13th, 2024, IDF fighter jets struck in the area of Khan Yunis, and following an intelligence assessment, it can be confirmed that Mohammed Deif was eliminated in the strike," the military said.

Hamas group neither confirmed nor denied the killing of Deif, but one official, Ezzat Rashaq,



A handout picture provided by the Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's office shows him (C) leading the prayer, next to Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (C-R), over the coffin of late Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and his bodyguard, during his funeral procession in Tehran, on Thursday, ahead of his burial in Qatar. — AFP

said any word on deaths of its leaders was its responsibility alone. "Unless either of them (the Hamas political and military leadership) announces it, no news published in the media or by any other parties can be confirmed," Rashaq said.

The Israeli announcement came as crowds gathered in the Iranian capital for the funeral procession of Hamas' Haniyeh.

Iran and Hamas have blamed Haniyeh's killing on Israel, which has neither denied nor confirmed a role in the assassination. It did however confirm it killed a senior commander of the Lebanese Hezbollah movement in Beirut on Tuesday.

Hezbollah and Hamas are backed by Iran. The latest killings have raised concern of an escalation in hostilities in the Middle East, with revenge threats against Israel. — Reuters



Khalid Sheikh Mohammed

U.S. REACHES PLEA DEAL WITH 9/11 MASTERMIND

Washington, Aug. 1: The United States has announced that it had entered into a pretrial deal with the alleged 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, a Kuwaiti-Pakistani engineer, and two other co-accused in the 2001 terror attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people.

The agreement — reached after 27 months of negotiations — takes death sentence off the table for Mohammed, Walid Bin Attash, and Mustafa al Hawsawi, prosecutors said in a letter sent to the families of 9/11 victims and survivors shortly before the department of defence announced the news in a press release Wednesday.

Mohammed and his co-defendants, who have spent almost two decades in the United States military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, will enter guilty pleas at a hearing that could come as early as next week, according to the letter obtained by CNN.

The settlement agreements with the Pentagon bring partial closure to a case that has dragged on for years and become mired in legal delays over whether the evidence extracted through torture during their interrogations was admissible in court. — PTI

WHAT HAPPENED: On Sept. 11, 2001, two hijacked passenger planes hit the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. A third plane struck the Pentagon in Washington. A fourth plane, heading to Washington, crashed in Pennsylvania after passengers fought back with the hijackers.

Jamaat-e-Islami banned in B'desh

Dhaka, Aug. 1: Bangladesh on Thursday banned the Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir under anti-terrorism law following nationwide unrest, citing the threat posed by the fundamentalist party to public security.

Bangladesh police freed six student leaders on Thursday whose campaign against civil service job quotas sparked deadly nationwide unrest, as the government looked to calm tensions and forestall fresh demonstrations.

"All six quota movement coordinators have been returned to their families this afternoon," deputy commissioner Junaed Alam Sarkar said.

A notification issued by the public security division of the ministry of home affairs on Thursday confirmed the ban on the

Islamist party, a key ally of former prime minister Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party. The ban on Jamaat, Chhatra Shibir and other associated groups came through an executive order under Section 18(1) of the Anti-Terrorism Act.

"They (Jamaat-Shibir and BNP) just used the students as their shield," Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on Thursday when Italian Ambassador Antonio Alessandro called on her at her official residence Ganabhaban here.

The Bangladesh government on Tuesday decided to ban the Jamaat-e-Islami following the deadly nationwide students' protests over quotas in government jobs, accusing it of exploiting the movement that left at least 150 people dead. — PTI



Protestors rally to demand justice for victims arrested and killed in the recent countrywide violence in Dhaka on August 1. — AFP

KEEPING BALANCE

Global warming is on track to exceed 1.5°C above pre-industrial times Net zero goal critical to Earth's stability: Study

Paris, Aug. 1: Bringing planet-heating emissions to net zero by 2100 is critical to avoid triggering "tipping points" that could destabilise the systems that keep Earth in balance, a new study said on Thursday.

If left unchecked, global warming could set in motion dangerous and irreversible changes to planetary systems such as the disappearance of ice sheets or a collapse of ocean currents. Researchers said action today would have an influence on the chances

of triggering these catastrophic events, even if they are very slow moving and likely to unfold over tens to thousands of years. "What we do now matters for the next decades, and centuries and even millennia to come," said Nico Wunderling, one of the study's authors from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany.

The level of global action on climate change is currently insufficient to avoid the risk of at least one of Earth's critical systems

from tipping into collapse. Global warming is on track to exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial times — the cap scientists say must be respected to avert the most disastrous impacts of climate change. "Permanently exceeding this limit would substantially increase the probability of triggering climate tipping elements," said the study published in the journal Nature Communications.

Under the 2015 Paris climate agreement, nearly 200 countries committed

Turkey helps carry out swap of 26 people Gershkovich, Whelan freed by Russia in deal

Moscow, Ankara, Aug. 1: Jailed U.S. Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich and ex-U.S. Marine Paul Whelan were among 26 prisoners from the United States, Russia and a number of their allies being freed in a major exchange on Thursday, Turkey's presidency said.

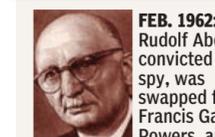
It said 10 prisoners, including two minors, had been moved to Russia, 13 to Germany and three to the United States. Also involved in the swap were Poland, Slovenia, Norway and Belarus. Turkish intelligence had announced earlier that it was coordinating an extensive prisoner exchange, signalling a major swap between Russia and the United States was underway.

"Our organisation has undertaken a major mediation role in this exchange operation, which is the most comprehensive of the recent period," the National Intelligence Agency (MIT) said.

Both the Kremlin and the White House had declined to comment when asked about a possible exchange. The exchange was the biggest prisoner swap since the Cold War. In the last major exchange in 2010, 14 prisoners were exchanged.

In December 2022, Russia traded US basketball star Brittney Griner, sentenced to nine years for having vape cartridges

PRISONER EXCHANGES IN THE PAST



AMERICAN PILOT ON THE GLIENICKE BRIDGE, WHICH WAS COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE "BRIDGE OF SPIES."

FEB. 1962: Rudolf Abel, a convicted Soviet spy, was swapped for Francis Gary Powers, an American pilot on the Glienicke Bridge, which was commonly known as the "Bridge of Spies."

JUNE 1985: Marian Zacharski, a Polish former intelligence officer convicted of espionage against the US, was swapped alongside three other Eastern Bloc agents for 23 Westerners.

FEB. 1986: Soviet Jewish dissident Anatoly Shcharansky, and Czechoslovak nationals Karl and Hana Koecher, were exchanged.

SEPT. 1986: Nicholas Daniloff, a correspondent for US News & World Report in the Soviet Union and Gennadi Zakharov, an employee of the Soviet mission to the UN were swapped alongside Soviet dissident Yuri Orlov.

JULY 2010: 10 Russian sleeper agents detained in the US were exchanged for four prisoners held in Russia. One of the swapped individuals was Sergei Skripal, a colonel in Russia's Military Intelligence Service.

APRIL 2022: Trevor Reed, a US Marine veteran arrested in Russia, was released for Konstantin Yaroshenko, a Russian pilot and aviation transport expert.

DECEMBER 2022: US basketball star Brittney Griner was exchanged for convicted Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout.



containing cannabis oil in her luggage, for arms dealer Viktor Bout, serving a 25-year sentence in the US. Among those included in Thursday's swap was Vadim Krasikov, a colonel in the Russian FSB security

service serving life in Germany for murdering an exiled Chechen-Georgian dissident in a Berlin park, whom President Vladimir Putin had indicated he wanted back. — Reuters

Harris hits back at Trump for his heritage comments

Washington DC: US Vice President, Kamala Harris, hit back at her presidential rival and former president Donald Trump over the latter's remarks against her racial identity and said the American people "deserve better."

More than 60 South Asian American state and local elected officials from across the US have endorsed Kamala Harris for the presidency, saying that as the daughter of an Indian immigrant mother, she will create a "fairer and more inclusive" immigration system.

Harris asserted that today the country faces a choice between two different visions, and alleged that Trump and his campaign aim to take the country "backward."

Harris was speaking at a Houston fundraiser. "In this moment, we face a choice, between two very different visions for our nation. One focused on the future, the other focused on the past. And we in this room, are fighting for the future," she said. — PTI



Kamala Harris



Donald Trump

Harris is a puppet candidate: Trump

Harrisburg, Aug. 1: Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump has alleged that the left Democratic Party bosses have installed Kamala Harris as a "puppet candidate" who is "totally scripted, owned, and controlled" by the donors and the power brokers.

The former president's remarks came at an election rally in Pennsylvania, a state where he escaped an assassination attempt on July 13.

"The radical left Democrat party bosses have installed a puppet candidate to fight only for themselves. Kamala Harris got zero votes. She's totally scripted, owned, and controlled by the donors and the power brokers who created her campaign and who rip off our government and make billions and billions of dollars," Trump, 78, said. He has intensified his attacks on Harris as the poll race gains momentum. — PTI

Vivek accuses Kamala of leaning into identity politics

Washington, Aug. 1: Former Republican presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy has accused Vice President Kamala Harris of leaning into "identity politics" and claimed that she only considered herself Indian-American when "convenient."

Ramaswamy, who supports for president and the

Republican Party's nominee Donald Trump now, said that Harris, the Democratic presidential nominee, leaned on her Indian-American heritage while running for office in California, where there is a significant Asian American population, but has since shifted her focus away from that identity on the

national stage. The 38-year-old Indian-American biotech entrepreneur drew a comparison between Harris' heritage and his own to share his views on the subject. "On a very personal level, my parents were immigrants to this country, legal immigrants from southern India." — PTI



Global warming could set in motion dangerous and irreversible changes to planetary systems. — Agencies

quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	81,867.55 0.15
Nifty 50	25,010.90 0.24
S&P 500*	5,563.51 0.75
Dollar (₹)	83.72 0.01
Pound Sterling (₹)	106.80 0.59
Euro (₹)	90.24 0.45
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	69,940*928 1.34
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	81.27 0.53
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.916 -0.008
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	4.054 -0.05

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Brainbees IPO aims to raise ₹4,187 crore

Baby products retailer FirstCry's promoter Brainbees Solutions announced ₹4,187 crore IPO in the price band of ₹440 to ₹465 per equity share of ₹2 face value. The public issue opens on Aug. 6 and closed on Aug. 8. FirstCry's IPO comprises of a fresh issue of equity shares aggregating to ₹1,666 crore and an offer for sale of over 5.43 crore equity shares by corporate investor selling shareholders.



NMDC produces 2.1 million tonne iron ore in July

Iron ore miner NMDC reported an 11 per cent year-on-year fall in production at 2.17 million tonnes in July. The company had produced 2.44 MT of iron ore in corresponding month of previous fiscal, NMDC said. Sales in the reporting month rose to 3.06 MT from 2.91 MT a year ago. NMDC's cumulative iron ore output in the April-July period dropped to 11.36 MT from 13.15 MT same period of previous fiscal.

Adani arm to demerge food, FMCG division

Adani Enterprises will demerge its food-FMCG division and also its strategic investments in Adani Commodities LLP to Adani Wilmar as part of the strategy to give focus on this business and unlock value for shareholders. Adani Wilmar is an equal joint venture between Adani Group and Singapore's Wilmar Group. Post this demerger, Adani Wilmar will cease to be joint venture entity of Adani Enterprises.

Incuspaze leases space in Mumbai to meet demand

Co-working firm Incuspaze has taken on lease 57,351 sq ft of office area in Mumbai to expand its business amid rising demand for premium flexible workspace. The company has taken office space in 'Hiranandani Light Hall Business Park'. The workspace is designed to accommodate up to 800 workstations, the company said. It plans to expand 2 million sq ft of workspace over the next two years in South India.

Printed & Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at BFL Infotech Ltd, C-9 Sector 3, Noida-201301. Published at 219, N D Tiwari Bhawan, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Editor: Kaushik Mitter, RNI Registration number 30074/09, Air surcharge Re 1. © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission of The Editor, Financial Chronicle is prohibited.

GST mop-up in July up 10.3% to ₹1.82 lakh crore

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO
NEW DELHI, AUG. 1

India's gross goods and services tax (GST) collection in July recorded a 10.3 per cent rise to over ₹1.82 lakh crore. It was ₹1.74 lakh crore in the previous month. Also, manufacturing expanded at a solid pace in July on robust demand, two separate data showed on Thursday.

The pace of GST growth climbed back above double digits, after it fell below 10 per cent for the first time post-pandemic in June. The GST mop-up in April was a high of ₹2.1 lakh crore. The rise in GST collections is credited to the robust economic activity and improved tax compliance.

Total refunds stood at ₹16,283 crore in July and net GST collection was ₹1.66 lakh crore, showing a growth of 14.4 per cent. "The gross revenues from domestic activities grew 8.9 per cent to ₹1.34 lakh cr in July and the GST revenue from imports jumped 14.2 per cent to ₹48,039 cr," the data said. Meanwhile, India's manufacturing activity expanded at a solid pace in July due to robust demand. Cost pressures were high as prices charged to clients rose at the steepest rate in over a decade, a monthly private survey showed Thursday.

As per the survey, the seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) moderated slightly from 58.3 in June to 58.1 in July. A print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"India's headline manufacturing PMI showed a marginal slowdown in Jul. With most components remaining at robust levels, the small drop is no cause for concern," said Pranjal Bhandari, chief India economist at HSBC. "The overall rate of expansion was marked and the second-strongest in over 13 years. Indian manufacturers, however, reported paying more for coal, leather, packaging, paper, rubber and steel," the survey said.

Indian manufacturers saw an increase in international sales as demand from Asia, Europe, North America and the Middle East increased in July. "The continuous increase in the output price index, driven by input and labour cost pressure, may signal further inflationary pressure in the economy," Bhandari further noted.

With net additions lower than in May, the industry saw cards in force increase 17 per cent year on year in June. The growth in credit card spend value at ₹1.58 lakh crore fell from 26.2 per cent year on year in June 2023 to 15.7 per cent in June 2024. The June spend volume grew 36.2 per cent year on year to ₹357 lakh crore.

Car sales see slight drop as pent-up demand tapers

Three top car makers in the country such as Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai, and Tata Motors, on Thursday, reported a drop in car sales to domestic dealers in July as pent-up demand from last year began to taper off.

The three companies accounted for roughly two-thirds of retail car sales in June, with Maruti holding a 40 per cent market share, per industry data.

Maruti Suzuki's July sales fell 9.6 per cent on-year at 1,37,463 units, notching the first drop since December 2023. Hyundai Motor's sales to dealers also dropped 3.3 per cent on-year at 49,013



● **MANUFACTURING ACTIVITY** expanded at a solid pace in July due to robust demand. Cost pressures were high as prices charged to clients rose at the steepest rate in over a decade.

units in July, the first decline in the fiscal year that started in April. Similarly, Tata Motors' sales slid by 6 per cent on-year to 44,725 units, dropping for the second consecutive month.

Auto analysts expect retail sales to slow down this fiscal as urban customers upgraded to newer vehicles and sports utility vehicles (SUVs).

Amit Hiranandani, automobile sector lead analyst at brokerage SMIFS, said that for about two years, the industry had grown substantially. "One year of consolidation is expected, so this year would be flat-ish," he noted, adding that hardly any growth could be expected in the passenger vehicle segment this fiscal.

Analysts expect SUV sales to fare better. Sales at Mahindra & Mahindra, whose portfolio mainly has SUVs, said sales to dealers grew 15 per cent at 41,623 units in July, faring better than Hyundai and Tata but still recording its slowest growth this financial year.

Sales at Toyota Kirloskar Motor surged 44 per cent on-year to 31,656 units last month. Honda Cars sold 4,624 units while JSW MG Motor retailed 4,572 units in July.

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Nifty-50 breaches 25,000-mark

Sensex also touches new high of 82,149.2 on favourable global cues

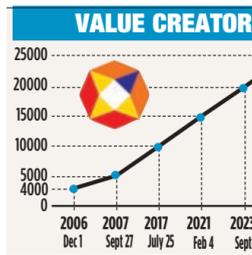
RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, AUG. 1

NSE's benchmark index hit the 25,000-mark for the first time as the market opened on positive global cues.

The US Fed's dovish stance after the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting pointing to increased likelihood of interest rate cut in September, led to a rally in the overnight US market.

BSE benchmark Sensex also hit 82,000 mark for the first time touching a new high of 82,149.29 intraday. Foreign portfolio investors were net buyers of equities worth ₹2089.2 cr while domestic institutions were net sellers by ₹337.03 crore.

The Nifty-50 closed at 25,010, gaining 0.24 per cent or 59.75 points after hitting a new high of 25,078.3. Sensex closed at



● Nifty 50 Index is a broad-based index consisting of 50 blue chip large and liquid stocks listed on the National Stock Exchange of India

● Nifty 50 Index, which was started on November 3, 1995, was constructed using a unique concept of impact cost, which helps in the selection of highly liquid stocks and results in the creation of a replicable index.

11 COMPANIES ARE IN THE NIFTY-50 INDEX SINCE INCEPTION

1. Reliance Industries
2. HDFC Bank
3. ICICI Bank
4. Hindustan Unilever
5. ITC
6. State Bank of India
7. Bajaj Auto
8. Tata Motors
9. Tata Steel
10. Hindalco Industries
11. Larsen & Toubro

81,867, gaining 0.15 per cent or 126 points.

Nifty-50 took 10 months to travel from 20,000 that it hit on Sept.11 last year to 25,000 on Thursday.

"The benchmarks started positive, taking cues from the global market following the Fed Chair's indication that a rate cut might be considered at the September meeting due to easing inflationary pressures. However, the broad-

er market closed on a negative bias due to escalating geopolitical tensions in the Middle East leading to rising crude oil prices. Sector-wise, capital goods and realty were impacted by profit-booking coupled with auto sectors owing to below-expected monthly auto sales figures," said Vinod Nair, head-research, Geojit Financial Services. Markets have seen phas-

es of consolidation but they rose again in tandem with supporting fundamentals like political stability, monsoon rains and alrge participation of retail investors directly and through mutual funds and insurance companies.

"The 25,000-level on the Nifty is currently discounting FY25 earnings growth of 15 per cent fully. Now, Nifty-50 would be tracking FY26 earnings.

Nifty can go up from here but would be more comfortable in individual stocks in the broader markets," Manish Sonthalia, director, Emkay Investment Managers, said.

"The Indian equity market's new milestone reflects the resilience of the domestic economy. Despite global volatility, India's economy remains strong, as indicated by the recent Budget's emphasis on infra, fiscal prudence, and rural welfare. While mid and smallcap stocks have made significant gains, it is believed that large-cap stocks may see increased investor interest in near future," said Neeraj Chadawar, head-fundamental and quantitative Research, Axis Securities.

Some retail investors faced difficulties logging to some brokerage apps on Thursday, said sources.

Tour, travel operators to see revenues rise 15%, says report

New Delhi, Aug. 1: Rising domestic tourism and increasing propensity to travel overseas will expand the revenue of India's tour and travel operators by 15-17 per cent this fiscal, Crisil Ratings said on Thursday.

Factors like improving infrastructure, rising disposable incomes, a behavioural shift in travel patterns, and the government's increasing focus on boosting domestic tourism will support the sector's revenue growth. "The credit profiles of travel operators, too, are

expected to remain healthy, supported by strong balance sheets and steady operating margins of 6.5-7 per cent, in line with last fiscal resulting in sizable cash flows and low reliance on debt," Crisil Ratings stated.

Poonam Upadhyay, director at Crisil Ratings, observed that the trend of 'revenge travel' seen after the pandemic has evolved into 'regularised travel' in recent years with a significant shift towards shorter and frequent vacations, for both domestic and overseas trips. —PTI

Hiring in banking to grow at 7.2%: Report

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, AUG. 1

The banking sector is on a hiring spree poised to experience the most substantial net employment growth at an impressive 7.21 percent, positioning it as the leader in employment expansion within banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) sector, said a report.

The Employment Outlook Report for the first half of FY25 by TeamLease Services said



that closely following the banking sector is the non-banking financial companies (NBFC) sector that is expected to witness significant employment growth with a projected net increase of 5.41 per cent.

The insurance sector is projected to demonstrate steady growth, with a net

employment increase of 5.25 per cent, it said.

Meanwhile, FinTech exhibits the lowest growth among the mentioned sectors, with forecasted net employment growth of 4.89 per cent.

"The banking industry is poised for significant development in growth areas such as retail lending, SME financing, and digital banking, driven by increased credit demand," said Krishnendu Chatterjee, VP, TeamLease Services.

BANKS ADD 5.1 LAKH CREDIT CARDS IN JUNE

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, AUG. 1

The net addition of credit cards by lenders in June 2024 was at the slowest pace since October 2022.

The industry added 5.1 lakh credit cards in June versus 7.6 lakh in May '24 and 9.3 lakh in June 2023, a decline of 33 per cent month on month and 45 per cent year on year.

With net additions lower than in May, the industry saw cards in force increase 17 per cent year on year in June.

The growth in credit card spend value at ₹1.58 lakh crore fell from 26.2 per cent year on year in June 2023 to 15.7 per cent in June 2024. The June spend volume grew 36.2 per cent year on year to ₹357 lakh crore.

Car sales see slight drop as pent-up demand tapers

MICHAEL GONSALVES
PUNE, AUG. 1

Three top car makers in the country such as Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai, and Tata Motors, on Thursday, reported a drop in car sales to domestic dealers in July as pent-up demand from last year began to taper off.

The three companies accounted for roughly two-thirds of retail car sales in June, with Maruti holding a 40 per cent market share, per industry data.

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Moderna sees low uptake for Covid shot

Massachusetts, Aug. 1: Moderna's shares plummeted after the company reduced its sales outlook for the year, saying that it expects low uptake for its Covid shot in Europe.

The company now sees 2024 sales ranging between \$3 billion and \$3.5 billion, down from its previous outlook of about \$4

billion, according to its second-quarter earnings.

The Massachusetts-based company is trying to maintain its Covid vaccine business while spending on research to develop new uses for the mRNA technology.

Despite cutting costs, Moderna posted a second straight quarterly loss and said it doesn't expect to break even until 2026. Total revenue was \$241 million in the quarter. While that's down about 30 per cent from the same period a year ago.

Moderna chief financial officer James Mock attributed the sharp year-on-year sales decline to the fact that some 2022 vaccine orders were included in last year's figures.

Moderna has been in discussions to sell its Covid shot in Europe, where Pfizer and its partner, BioNTech, already have a deal in place. Based on recent discussions, Moderna said it now expects very low sales in the region. —Bloomberg

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DIGITAL | HELP

Firm will work to deliver better results for advertisers, marketers

Reddit acquires start-up Memorable AI

San Francisco, Aug. 1: Reddit is acquiring Memorable AI, a start-up that uses generative artificial intelligence to help marketers create better ads, in its first acquisition since going IPO.

Memorable AI has built technology to help advertisers find the most effective text, images and videos to use in their sponsored messages, and Reddit hopes the acquisition will improve the quality of ads on its service.

"This acquisition allows Reddit to accelerate our work in optimising, generating, and selecting ad cre-



ative to deliver even better results for advertisers," Reddit chief operating officer Jen Wong said. Memorable AI was founded in 2021, and uses AI to help marketers predict how often an ad will lead to a direct action, such as downloading an app or visiting a website.

● **THE COMPANY** has also been striking deals with AI companies. It signed data licensing deals worth \$203 million with companies including OpenAI and Alphabet Google, to help train their AI models.

The company first launched ads nearly two decades ago, shortly after Reddit was founded, but didn't begin heavily investing in advertising technology until 2018. Since then the company has added a variety of new advertising features, including shopping and video ads.

The platform makes about 98 per cent of its revenue from advertising, and last year reported \$804 million in sales. Ads on

Reddit appear in several places, including home feed, inside of discussion forums called subreddits and below user posts.

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Reddit had previously acquired AI companies Spell, MeaningCloud and Spiketrap, start-ups that helped the social media site improve its content recommendations and place ads. —Bloomberg

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Nasscom says many firms facing avoidable litigation

New Delhi, Aug. 1: After Infosys was slapped with a ₹32,403 crore GST notice, apex IT body Nasscom on Thursday said the latest tax demand reflects a lack of understanding of the industry's operating model and sheds light on sector-wide issues wherein multiple companies are facing avoidable litigation and uncertainty.

Nasscom asserted that government circulars issued based on recommendations of the GST Council must be honoured in enforcement mechanisms so that notices do not create uncertainty and negatively impact perceptions on India's ease of doing business.

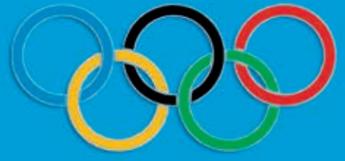
"Recent media reports of a GST demand of over ₹32,403 crore reflects a lack of understanding of the industry's operating model. This is an industry-wide issue, and multiple companies are facing avoidable litigation, uncertainty, and concerns from investors and customers," Nasscom said without naming Infosys. The issue at hand



involves the applicability of GST through the reverse charge mechanism (RCM).

Nasscom argued that the GST enforcement authorities have been issuing notices for remittance by the Indian head office to its foreign branches for cases where there is no service between the head office and foreign branch for this RCM, ignoring that this is not a case of 'import of service' by the head office from the branch.

"This is not a new problem, and courts have been ruling in favour of the industry in these cases," Nasscom said. "Infosys has paid all its GST dues and is fully in compliance with the central and state regulations on this matter," the company said. —PTI



MEDAL TABLE

COUNTRY	G	S	B	T
China	11	7	3	21
France	8	10	8	26
Japan	8	3	4	15
Australia	7	6	4	17
USA	6	13	12	31
Great Britain	6	7	7	20
S. Korea	6	3	3	12
Italy	3	6	4	13
Canada	2	2	3	7
Germany	2	2	2	6
India	0	0	3	3

short takes

Hockey men suffer first loss vs Belgium

The Indian hockey team suffered its first loss of the Olympic Games here, going down 1-2 to defending champions Belgium after letting slip a one goal lead in a pool match on Thursday. Abhishek gave India the lead in the 18th minute before Belgium made a strong comeback after half-time to score through Thiabeau Stockbroekx (33rd) and John-Dohmen (44th) to seal the win and remain unbeaten in the tournament so far.

Both India and Belgium have already qualified for the quarterfinals from Pool 'B'. India had defeated New Zealand 3-2 before drawing 1-1 against Argentina. In their last match, the Harmanpreet-led side beat Ireland 2-0. They will next play Australia in their final pool match on Friday.

The Indians were by far the better side on display, at least in the first two quarters as they dominated the possession and created more chances than the Red Lions. The Indian defence did well to start with and didn't allow the Belgian forwards to create any real scoring chances and thwarted two penalty corner opportunities. Veteran India custodian P. R. Sreejesh stood like a rock in front of the goal. However, it was Belgium which had the first chance in the form of a penalty corner in the eighth minute but Sreejesh made a terrific save to deny Alexander Hendrickx.

Golfer Diksha in car accident, doing fine

Indian golfer Diksha Dagar, who is due to take part in the the Olympics, was involved in an accident but is doing fine and will compete in her event as planned. The Dagar family — Diksha, her father and caddie Col Naren Dagar, her mother and brother — were in the car, which was hit by another vehicle on Tuesday night while they were returning from a function at India House.

According to Col Dagar, Diksha is fine and will play the event as per schedule from August 7 and is also going for practice.

However, Diksha's mother has been hospitalised with a suspected injury in the spinal area. This is Diksha's second Olympic Games and the women's competition will start on August 7 and run through to August 10. On Thursday the men's competition, with Shubhankar Sharma and Gaganjeet Bhullar playing for India, got underway.

Published by K. Sudhakar for and on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited at Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi 110 002. and Printed by him at BFL Infotech Limited, C - 9, Sector - III, Noida - 201301. Editor - Kaushik Mitter, RNI Registration number 57290/94 Price in Nepal - Nep.Rs. 20.00 per copy.



SWAGNIL

Kusale shoots India's 3rd medal in style

Swapnil Kusale competes in the 50m rifle 3 positions men's final in Chateauroux, France, on Thursday. — AP

Bags India's first bronze in 50m rifle 3P

Chateauroux (France), Aug. 1: On an empty stomach and with his heart racing, Indian shooter Swapnil Kusale kept his composure to stage a remarkable comeback and help the country claim its first ever Olympic bronze in the 50m rifle 3 positions event here on Thursday. Kusale shot an aggregate of 451.4 in the eight-shooter final to finish sixth at one stage. It took the country's overall tally to three, all bronze in shooting, at the Paris Games.

His medal comes following the stunning performance of Manu Bhaker, who clinched the women's 10m air pistol and mixed team 10m air pistol bronze alongside Sarabjot Singh. "I did not eating anything, was feeling the butterflies (in my stomach). Just had black tea and came here. The night before every match, I just pray to god," Kusale said. "Today the heartbeat was on the higher side. I just tried to control my breathing and did not try anything different. Everyone is more or less the same at this level," he added. Kusale, whose father and brother are teachers in a district school and

in 2012 London when Joydeep Karmakar finished fourth in 50m rifle prone event, which has been discontinued at the Olympics. "To be honest, I did not see the scoreboard. It was my years of hard-work and that is what I kept in mind while shooting. I was listening to the announcements of scores but was ignoring it. I just wanted the Indian supporters to keep cheering for me." Kusale, who was a Railways Ticket Collector and draws inspiration from cricket icon MS Dhoni, was slow to start with but fought his way back to bag the

third prize in his very first appearance in the world's biggest sporting spectacle. He was in the fourth place after the first standing series. Considered a high-scoring round, Kusale's first shot of the final in kneeling was a lowly 9.6, but he made an excellent recovery after that. A 10.6 and 10.3 saw Kusale jump momentarily into the second place. But a 9.1 and a 10.1 in his next attempts pushed him back to fourth. However, a 10.3 propelled him to the third place and he maintained that position to win a medal. — PTI

Mumbai, Aug. 1: Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Thursday announced a prize of ₹1 crore for shooter Swapnil Kusale, who won a bronze medal in the 2024 Paris Olympics. Shinde also told reporters he had spoken to Kusale's father and coach and had wished the ace shooter via a video call. "The Maharashtra government is announcing a prize of Rs 1 crore for Kusale. He will be felicitated on his arrival from the Olympics," the Chief Minister said. — PTI

₹1 CR PRIZE FOR SWAPNIL: MAHA

Exceptional performance by Swapnil Kusale! Congrats to him for winning the Bronze medal in the Men's 50m Rifle 3 Positions at the #ParisOlympics2024. His performance is special because he's shown great resilience and skills. He is also the first Indian athlete to win a medal in this category. Every Indian is filled with happiness. — Narendra Modi Prime Minister

Absolutely thrilled for Swapnil's epic bronze medal win in shooting at the Paris Olympics! Your hard work, grit, and passion have truly paid off. Competing at the highest level and coming away with a medal in shooting is a testament to your dedication and talent. You've made India so proud. — Abhinav Bindra Olympic gold medalist shooter

I always used to wonder why Indians can't do well in this event (50m rifle 3 positions). Swapnil has broken a glass ceiling. He has done it for all of us. I always thought he is an underdog but I was confident he will do well. This medal is worth more than gold. — Gagan Narang Olympic medalist rifle shooter

Congratulations to Swapnil Kusale for winning a historic BRONZE medal in the Men's 50m Rifle 3 Positions at the #ParisOlympics2024! The first Indian to win a medal in #Olympics in this event — your achievement makes us incredibly proud! — Mansukh Mandaviya Sports Minister

Lakshya sails into quarters, Satwik & Chirag make exit

Paris, Aug. 1: In-form Lakshya Sen stayed on course for a maiden Olympic medal but Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty's dreams came crashing down after a heartbreaking three-game loss in the men's doubles quarterfinals at the badminton competition of the Paris Games here on Thursday. One of the favourites for the gold medal, Satwik and Chirag, the reigning Asian Games winners and Commonwealth Games

champions, squandered a first-game advantage to go down 21-13, 14-21, 16-21 in a hard-fought quarterfinal against world number 3 Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik of Malaysia. Sen then brought some cheers back to the Indian camp after registering a comfortable 21-12, 21-6 win over a tired-looking H. S. Prannoy in an all-Indian pre-quarterfinals contest to become only the third male player ever from the country to reach the round of 8 of the

Olympics badminton competition. Sen, a reigning Commonwealth Games champion and a 2021 World Championships bronze-medallist, joined Parupalli Kashyap and Kidambi Srikanth, who had reached the quarterfinals in the London and Rio edition of the Olympics in 2012 and 2016 respectively. Currently ranked 22, Sen will face 12th seed Chinese Taipei's Chou Tien Chen in the quarterfinals. — PTI



India's Lakshya Sen returns to compatriot H. S. Prannoy during their men's singles Round of 16 match in Paris on Thursday. — PTI

CHINA'S YU OUTPUNCHES NIKHAT 5-0

Paris, Aug. 1: In one of the biggest upsets of the Olympic Games boxing competition, two-time world champion Nikhat Zareen (50kg) bowed out after a 0-5 loss to Asian Games gold medallist Wu Yu, completely outmanoeuvred by the Chinese in a stunningly lopsided bout here on Thursday. Nikhat was unseeded for the Games as the International Olympic Committee, which is holding the boxing competition, doesn't recognise the International Boxing Association, which conducts the world championship. One of India's strongest medal contenders, she had been tasked to navigate a nightmarish draw. "Sorry guys," an emotional Nikhat said after the loss. Nikhat thus becomes the fourth boxer out of the six-member Indian contingent to get knocked out of the Paris Games.

PADDLER SREEJA'S DREAM RUN ENDS

Curtains fell on India's historic singles table tennis campaign at the Paris Olympics following Sreeja Akula's fighting loss against world number one Yingshaw Sun. Sreeja produced a valiant fight against Sun before losing 10-12, 10-12, 8-11, 3-11 in her Round of 16. Never ever India had two singles players competing for quarterfinals berths but Manika Batra and Sreeja showed that TT had potential to do better at the big stage by reaching the Round of 16. — PTI

INDIA TODAY

- GOLF**
 - Men's Individual Finals (Round 2): Shubhankar Sharma and Gaganjeet Bhullar — 12.30 pm.
- SHOOTING**
 - Women's 25m Pistol Qualification Precision: Esha Singh and Manu Bhaker — 12.30 pm.
 - Men's Skeet Qualification Day 1: Anantjeet Singh Naruka — 1.00 pm.
- ARCHERY**
 - Mixed Team (1/8 Eliminations): India (Dhiraj Sommadevara and Anikita Bhakat) vs Indonesia — 1.19 pm.
- ROWING**
 - Men's Single Sculls Finals (Final D): Bairaj Panwar — 1.48 pm.
- JUDO**
 - Women's 25m +78kg (Elimination round of 32): Tulika Mann vs Idalys Ortiz (Cuba) — 2.12 pm.
- SAILING**
 - Women's Dinghy (Race 3): Nethra Kumanan — 3.45 pm.
 - Women's Dinghy (Race 4): Nethra Kumanan — 4.53 pm.
 - Men's Dinghy (Race 3): Vishnu Saravanan - 7.05 pm.
 - Men's Dinghy (Race 4): Vishnu Saravanan — 8.15 pm.
- HOCKEY**
 - Men's Tournament (Group stage): India vs Australia — 4.45 pm.
- BADMINTON**
 - Men's singles quarterfinals: Lakshya sen vs Chou Tien Chen (Chinese Taipei) — 6.30 pm.
- ATHLETICS**
 - Women's 5,000m (Heat 1): Anikita Dhyani — 9.40 pm.
 - Women's 5,000m (Heat 2): Parul Chaudhary — 10.06 pm.
 - Men's Shot Put (Qualification): Tajinderpal Singh Toor — 11.40 pm.

India eager to settle Rahul vs Pant debate

Colombo, Aug. 1: The Gautam Gambhir-led Indian team management has an opportunity to decide who among K. L. Rahul and Rishabh Pant will be India's long-term first-choice wicketkeeper-batter in ODIs when the side takes on Sri Lanka in a three-match series beginning here on Friday. There will be clamour around the first sighting of veterans Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli as well, after the recent T20 World Cup triumph. But the think-tank will look to shut out that outside noise, focusing on sorting

out the combination in a season that has some marquee one-day events including the Champions Trophy. In that context, the Rahul vs Pant conundrum is certain to get priority treatment in this series. Rahul is the incumbent wicketkeeper-batter and has been assigned to that role by the previous set-up under Rahul Dravid since last year's Asia Cup, a tournament in which he made his comeback from a long injury-forced layoff. Since then, Rahul has done

full justice to his duty both in front and behind the wicket. Since the continental showpiece last year, Rahul has made 834 runs from 21 matches at a fine average of 69.50 with two hundreds. Besides, Rahul also captained India in the ODI series against South Africa earlier this year. As a stumper too, the 32-year-old has been pretty good. But will Gambhir follow the same route since Pant is back in the reckoning?

Pant's return to India fold through a clutch of T20Is after that horrific accident in 2022 has been heartwarming but he has not set the field ablaze with his outings. There have been encouraging sparks during the last month or so. But is that enough to convince the powers that be to pick him ahead of Rahul? If Gambhir and skipper Rohit decide to keep both Rahul and Pant in the 11, then they will have to think as to how to accommodate Shreyas Iyer, another formidable player in the 50-over version. — PTI

Ex-cricketer Gaekwad cremated

Vadodara, Aug. 1: Former India cricketer Anshuman Gaekwad was cremated in Vadodara city of Gujarat on Thursday afternoon. The last rites were performed at Kirti Mandir in the presence of his family members and prominent personalities from sports, politics and other fields. Gaekwad, who served Indian cricket as a player, coach and selector, succumbed to blood cancer on Wednesday night at a private hospital in Vadodara at the age of 71. After his death at the hospital, Gaekwad's mortal remains were taken to

his residence in Sevasi area of the city, from where a funeral procession was taken out till Kirti Mandir and the last rites were performed there around 1.30 pm. President of Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) Roger Binny, former wicket keepers Nayan Mogia and Kiran More along with several former and current office-bearers of Baroda Cricket Association were present for the present during the last rites performed by his son Shatrughan Gaekwad. Vadodara BJP president Vijay Shah and Congress spokesperson Narendra Rawat also attended Gaekwad's cremation. Family sources have revealed that a prayer meeting will be organised soon in the city in Gaekwad's remembrance. Gaekwad represented

India in 40 Test matches and 15 One Day Internationals. He was also the coach of the Indian team that finished runners-up at the 2000 ICC Champions Trophy. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also condoled the death of Gaekwad. "Shri Anshuman Gaekwad Ji will be remembered for his contribution to cricket. He was a gifted player and an outstanding coach. Pained by his demise. Condolences to his family and admirers. Om Shanti," Modi said. — PTI

