



WAYANAD: EXAMINING LEGALITIES TO DECLARE AS NATIONAL DISASTER

P4



'INDIA BLOC SHOULD PREPARE ITSELF TO SIT IN OPPOSITION IN 2029 TOO'

P5



AFTER SMOOTH CAMPAIGN START, HARRIS FACES A CRUCIAL WEEK AHEAD

P9



INDIA'S CAMPAIGN IN BOXING ENDS WITH LOVLINA'S LOSS

P12

WEATHER

Generally cloudy sky with light to moderate rain / thundershower likely to occur. Maximum and minimum temperatures likely to be around 32 °C and 27 °C respectively.

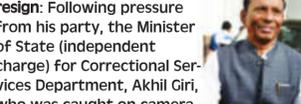
RAINFALL: 1.4 mm
RELATIVE HUMIDITY
Max. 97 % Min. 80 %
TEMPERATURE
Max: 31.6°C (+ 0.4) Min: 27.2°C (+ 0.7)
SUN RISES 05:10 hrs SUN SETS 18:16 hrs
MOON RISES 04:44 hrs MOON SETS 18:26 hrs
Full Moon on 19 August

THUMBNAILS



A pleasant view of white clouds hovering over the sky in the Capital on Sunday. ■ SUBRATA DUTTA

Bengal minister Akhil Giri to resign: Following pressure from his party, the Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Correctional Services Department, Akhil Giri, who was caught on camera using abusive language against a woman forest department officer, announced on Sunday that he would resign from his post. Mr Giri, speaking to media on Sunday afternoon in Kanthi, however made it clear that he has not apologised to the woman forest officer and will not do so in the future. On Saturday, he allegedly abused the woman officer while she and her team were removing illegal encroachments at the Tajpur Sea resort in East Midnapore district. (Page 3)



90 killed as fierce clashes erupt across Bangladesh

Renewed anti-govt protests swept across nation with protesters calling for PM to resign

THE DAILY STAR/ANN
DHAKA, 4 AUGUST

At least 90 people, including 14 police personnel, were killed and over a thousand others injured, many with bullets, as a new wave of violence convulsed Bangladesh.

Ruling party activists and police clashed with protesters in Dhaka and other parts of Bangladesh on Sunday in three-way attacks on the first day of the student-led non-cooperation movement.

The day began peacefully, but it turned violent after supporters of the ruling Awami League descended on streets and neighbourhoods to put up resistance against anti-government protests.

An angry mob attacked Enayetpur Police Station in the northern district of Sirajganj, beating 13 police personnel to death as violence spread.

A number of houses of ruling Awami League lawmakers, police stations, AL offices, police vehicles, hospital buses, and prison vans were torched or vandalised throughout the day, forcing the authorities to tighten a nationwide curfew. The telecom authorities blocked 4G mobile internet services to quell



Men run past a burning vehicle inside the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital in Dhaka, set on fire by protesters during a rally against the government. ■ AP

protests.

The government announced the shutdown of public and private offices, including banks, for three days, while the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement scheduled a long march to Dhaka for today.

In the capital, at least 12 people were killed, with nine of them brought to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Details of violence emerged from across the country until late in the night: 18 died in Sirajganj, eight each in Laxmipur, and Feni; six in Narsingdi; five in Bogura; four each in Rangpur, Magura and Sylhet; three each in Pabna,

Munshiganj, Cumilla, Kishoreganj and Sherpur; one each in Habiganj, Barishal, Savar, Joypurhat, Bhola and Cox's Bazar.

The death toll is expected to rise as reports of many with bullet injuries got admitted to hospitals and health complexes.

An uneasy situation has been prevailing since Saturday night following Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader's announcement that the ruling party's men would be on the streets to maintain their positions against protesters.

Most shopping malls, shops, bank branches and other establishments were

closed in Dhaka. Public transport disappeared from the streets, forcing people to walk to work, while long-haul buses and trains suspended their services.

It all came as protesters whittled their demands down to just one - the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her cabinet members. Simultaneously, they started a non-cooperation movement, urging citizens not to pay taxes and workers abroad not to send back remittances.

The job quota reform protests by students pulled in people from all walks of life. The protests entered a dangerous phase after at

least 204 people were killed in indiscriminate firing by law enforcers, members of Border Guard Bangladesh and ruling party activists, in a spasm of violence from 16 to 21 July.

On Sunday, parts of the capital felt like battlefields as police and ruling party activists clashed with protesters in Farmgate, Dhanmondi, Mirpur 10, Uttara, Shahbagh and Gulistan areas.

Outside the capital, in Narsingdi, at least six Awami League leaders were beaten to death and several others injured in a clash between AL supporters and protesters.

In Feni, at least five people were killed in clashes as Awami League men attacked protesters. Several people were injured in the incident.

In the northern city of Rangpur, four people died in clashes. One of the dead was identified as Haradhan Roy, president of the Parshuram Thana Awami League. In Sylhet, two people were shot dead and at least 25, including policemen and members of Border Guard Bangladesh, were injured in a clash.

In Bogura, at least three persons were killed and many others injured, with 32 hospitalised, in separate clashes.



14 children among 18 killed in rain-related incidents in MP

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHOPAL, 4 AUGUST

RAIN WOES

In a tragic incident, nine children were killed while two others were seriously injured after a dilapidated wall fell on them due to heavy rain in the Sagar district of Madhya Pradesh on Sunday morning.

According to police, the tragedy occurred during a Bhaagwat Katha and clay Shivaling preparation event inside the Hardaul Temple in Shahpur in the Sagar district.

While the children were preparing the Shivalings, the wall of an adjoining house, said to be more than 50 years old, came crashing down on them.

The nine children who died in the incident included Divyansh Sahu (12), Vansh Lodhi (10), Nitesh Patel (13), Dhruv Yadav (12), Parv Vishwakarma (10), Divyaraj Sahu (12), Ashutosh Prajapati (15) and Khushi Patwa (12) and Hemant (10). Two children were seriously injured in the incident.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr Mohan Yadav expressed grief over the incident. The CM announced an ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh to each of the families of the deceased children.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also expressed condolences to the kin of the nine children and announced Rs 2 lakh from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund as ex gratia and Rs 50,000 for the injured.

In another incident on Sunday, five youths from Nagpur in Maharashtra were swept away when the car they were travelling in fell into the swollen Katta River in the Chhindwara district of the state. Police and rescue workers were able to save the lives of four youths while one was swept away with the vehicle.

In another case of wall collapse in Rewa district, four children, including a brother and sister, were killed along with a woman who was the mother of one of the kids.

» Nine children died after a dilapidated wall fell on them amid heavy rain at a temple in Shahpur in Sagar district of Madhya Pradesh. Two children were seriously injured in the incident.

» Four children, along with the mother of one of them, died in Garh in Rewa district, when a wall they were passing by on their way home from school fell on them on Saturday evening.

er and sister, were killed along with a woman who was the mother of one of the kids.

According to the police, the mishap occurred in village Garh when the children on their way home after school on Saturday evening came near a dilapidated wall.

The wall caved in trapping the five children and the mother of one of them under its debris.

In Narsinghpur district, a child and a youth were killed when a kucha house collapsed in village Rampura. According to the police, the house of one Pawan Namdev collapsed and seven members of his family were trapped under the debris. Neighbours and other villagers rescued the family members and rushed them to a hospital.

However, a three-year-old girl and a youth died during treatment.

A man was crushed to death under a wall that fell on him while he was taking shelter near the wall due to heavy rain in Tikamgarh district.

The incident occurred in village Bhagwantpura on Saturday evening when the victim, Tulsidas Palera, who was riding his motorcycle, took shelter behind the wall as it suddenly started raining.

Central govt to overhaul Wakf Act, check powers, increase women representation

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 4 AUGUST

The Centre is likely to introduce a Bill soon in Parliament seeking several amendments to the Wakf Act, which may cut its 'unfettered' powers to call any property its asset, and also ensure representation for women.

According to sources, the Bill is likely to propose around 40 amendments to the Wakf Act.

The sources also said that the Bill was approved by the Union Cabinet on Friday.

As per the sources, the Bill proposes to repeal a few clauses of the Act primarily aimed at reducing the arbitrary powers currently held by Wakf Boards.

The claims laid by the Wakf Board often lead to disputes. For instance, in September 2022, the Tamil Nadu Wakf Board claimed ownership of the entire Thiruchendurai village, which had a

majority Hindu population living there for centuries. With this legislation, the Centre seeks to end the autocracy of the board. Some of the key highlights of the bill include mandatory verification to ensure a more transparent process; Amendments to Section 9 and Section 14 to alter the composition and functioning of the Wakf Boards to ensure representation for women; Properties claimed by Wakf Boards will undergo fresh verification to resolve disputes; Magistrates may be involved in the monitoring of Wakf properties.

As per sources, the demand

to change the existing laws has come from Muslim intellectuals, women and various sects like Shia and Bohra.

There are around 8.7 lakh properties under Wakf Boards across the country and the total land under these properties is around 9.4 lakh acres. The Wakf Act was enacted in 1995 and regulates assets donated and notified as wakf by a wakif - the person who dedicates a property for purposes recognised by Muslim law as pious, religious, or charitable.

During the UPA-2, the Congress-led Centre gave additional powers under the Wakf Act making it virtually impossible to get the land back from the hands of the board. It is these amendments which have since been a point of contention.

In order to address the Board's arbitrariness, the Centre is planning to introduce the Bill in Parliament in the coming week.

According to sources, the Bill is likely to propose around 40 amendments to the Wakf Act. The sources also said that the Bill was approved by the Union Cabinet on Friday.

Search operations continued with additional men and equipment in the landslide-hit areas of Wayanad for the sixth consecutive day on Sunday.

Search operations on Sunday focussed on the areas of Mundakkai and Panchirimattam. Rescue teams are using advanced radars, drones, and heavy machinery in their endeavour.

Search teams also continued operations on Sunday along the 40-kilometre stretch of the Chaliyar River, which flows through Wayanad, Malappuram, and Kozhikode districts. Many bodies and remains were recovered from the river near Nilambur in Malappuram.

The latest efforts by various agencies, including the Army, the Navy, police, Fire and Rescue teams, and the NDRF, along with local residents,

Search ops focus on Mundakkai and Panchirimattam areas; toll touches 369

ACHUTHANANDAN KUNILIL
KALPETTA, 4 AUGUST

Search operations continued with additional men and equipment in the landslide-hit areas of Wayanad for the sixth consecutive day on Sunday.

Search operations on Sunday focussed on the areas of Mundakkai and Panchirimattam. Rescue teams are using advanced radars, drones, and heavy machinery in their endeavour.

Search teams also continued operations on Sunday along the 40-kilometre stretch of the Chaliyar River, which flows through Wayanad, Malappuram, and Kozhikode districts. Many bodies and remains were recovered from the river near Nilambur in Malappuram.

The latest efforts by various agencies, including the Army, the Navy, police, Fire and Rescue teams, and the NDRF, along with local residents,



NDRF personnel conduct a search and rescue operation in Wayanad on Sunday. ■ ANI

led to the recovery of three more bodies and 13 body parts from the river on Saturday.

These recoveries bring the total number of bodies found in the Chaliyar River to 73 and body parts to 132, making a grim total of 205. The river carried these bodies, or rather parts of human bodies mutilated by the devastating landslide, for around 25 km to Pothukallu near Nilambur in Malappuram district.

Meanwhile, the death toll from the massive landslides in Wayanad has risen to 369 with the recovery of four

more bodies on Sunday. However, the official count stands at around 240. Of the deceased, 148 bodies have been identified and handed over to their relatives.

A total of 206 people are still missing.

Among the deceased, 30 are children. Reports indicate that 49 children from the affected region remain unaccounted for, some of whom are students of Vellarimala GVHSS. The exact number of missing students is still unknown as authorities continue their efforts to ascertain the details.

CM speaks to Soren, urges to dial back water discharge

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 4 AUGUST

With discharge of water from dams in Jharkhand amid torrential rainfall posing a threat of further flooding in the lower basin in Bengal, state Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday spoke to her Jharkhand counterpart Hemant Soren over the issue.

"Just now, I spoke to the Chief Minister of Jharkhand, Hemant Soren ji, and discussed with him the evolving flood situation. I discussed with him the case of sudden and huge release of water from Tenughat, which has already started flooding Bengal," the Chief Minister said in a message posted on social media platform X.

Miss Banerjee said she had informed Mr Soren that

Jharkhand waters have been flooding Bengal.

Claiming that the situation was "man-made", Miss Banerjee said that she requested Mr Soren to look into the matter.

Miss Banerjee also expressed worry about the high tide and has alerted all the district magistrates of South Bengal to keep monitoring the situation.

"I have meanwhile been monitoring the situation and have spoken to all the DMs concerned in South Bengal as well as in North Bengal. I have asked the DMs to be particularly vigilant and take proper care of the calamity situation in the next 3/4 days. I told them to take all precautionary measures so that there is no untoward incident anywhere," Miss Banerjee stated.

(Details on Page 2)

Ten-man India stop Britain to enter Olympics hockey semi-final

SS RAMASWAMY
PARIS, 4 AUGUST

Reduced to playing with only ten men for two thirds of the match, India brought off a Houdini-like escape act to get past Britain via the penalty shootout and enter the hockey semi-finals in the Olympic Games here on Sunday.

India and Britain were locked 1-1 at the end of regulation time before the eight-time champions marched into the semi-finals by outwitting the latter 4-2 in a rip-roaring penalty shootout to trigger wild celebrations in the Indian camp, backed by vociferous support from sections of the crowd at the Yves-du-Manoir Stadium.

India, down by one man for 43 minutes of the quarter-final tie after Amit Rohidas was controversially red-carded,

defended with gusto with man-of-the-match Parattu Ravindran Sreejesh guarding the goal rock-like to force the match into a penalty shootout.

Sreejesh, who came up with save after save from the start of the match, also brought off a crucial save by stopping a goal-bound strike with aplomb in the tie breaker to truly emerge as the man of the moment. The veteran goalkeeper was fully backed by the rest of the team who worked tirelessly to help Sreejesh defend the Indian citadel when the need arose.

India succeeded in the shootout on all four tries through captain Harmanpreet Singh, who also scored the first goal off the first off four penalty corners earned in the 22nd minute, Sukhjeet Singh, Lalit Upadhyay and Rajkumar Pal.

Britain, who equalised through Lee Morton in the 27th minute, scored through James Albery and Zach Wallace while Conor Williamson struck over the crosspiece and Philip Roper's try was blocked by Sreejesh.

India, in fact, took the lead after Rohidas was given the marching orders in the 17th minute of the game by South Africa's S Rapoport when his stick was declared to have struck a British player through a video replay when the action was near the centre line.

This unexpected setback brought out the best from the entire Indian team who all fell back repeatedly to help Sreejesh keep the Brits at bay. In all he made ten saves in regulation time. Britain also did not have the sort of skills inside the ring and repeatedly were foiled by a crowded Indi-

an defense whenever they made deep inroads. They forced as many as ten penalty corners but couldn't find the mark from any of those.

India, at the other end, earned four and got their lone goal in regulation time through the first set-piece. India made eight attempts at the rival goal in contrast to 21 by Britain.

Both Sreejesh and Manpreet, who played as the extra defender after the sending off of Rohidas, and Sreejesh hailed the victory as "a total team effort", when speaking to reporters after the memorable win.

"The coach told us we need to maintain our composure as we will get some chances to score. We did get some chances but couldn't avail of them," revealed Manpreet about the inputs from coach Charles Fulton at halftime.

(Lakshya Sen loses; Pg 12)



India's Harmanpreet Singh and teammates celebrate during the men's quarterfinal hockey match against Great Britain, in the Olympic 2024, at Yves Du Manoir Stadium in Paris on Sunday. ■ ANI

CM dials Hemant Soren, urges to slow water discharge

As huge quantities of water have been disgorged from Tenughat dam, state govt has already asked DVC to decrease discharge of water from its Maithon, Panchet dams

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
ANSOL/BURDWAN, 4 AUGUST

As the rivers of Jharkhand are swelling due to torrential rainfall in the upper catchment areas of the Chhotanagpur Plateau since the past few days, the authorities there have been discharging water from Maithon, Panchet and Tenughat dams leading to worsening of the flood situation in the lower basin in neighbouring West Bengal.



discharges by DVC from its dams.



incident anywhere," she said in her X handle.



today and it's carriage load level reached 483.10 feet at 6:00 p.m., against its maximum level of 495 feet.



flight operations will resume on Monday and from what time," said Kailash Mondal, KNI Airport director.

In a telephone call, Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee has urged her Jharkhand counterpart Hemant Soren to dial back discharge of water from rivers as huge quantities of water have been disgorged from Tenughat dam and to keep a watch on the flood situation.

The West Bengal CM has shared in her X handle about her appeal to Hemant Soren, the CM of Jharkhand with whom she has very good relations.

Miss Banerjee referred to yesterday's sudden discharge of 1 lakh cusecs of water by the Jharkhand government-owned Tenughat reservoir upstream of the Panchet reservoir in the Damodar river.

Damodar Valley River Regulation Committee. He said: "After the recent overhauling of the channels in lower Damodar Valley, the river system is capable of accommodating at least 1.50 Lakh Cusecs of discharge. So there is probably no need for worry."

embankments of the Kuye River have washed away and in Labhpur another embankment was washed away leading to inundation in several villages in Birbhum district.

The state government has already asked the Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) to decrease discharge of water from its Maithon and Panchet dams.

She also expressed about the high tide and has alerted all the district magistrates of South Bengal to keep monitoring 1 on 5 and 6 August.

Since Tenughat doesn't have additional flood storage, it only has the option to transfer the excess inflow to Panchet - about 141 km downstream in the Bengal - Jharkhand border.

Already three people have been killed because of the floods in Ansol. Flight operations at Kazi Nazrul Islam Airport in Andal remained cancelled for the third consecutive day. It is still not clear whether flight operations will resume from tomorrow.

In Bid Bihar of Kanksha, a temporary bridge upon River Ajay has been washed away. It was the link between West Burdwan and Birbhum districts. Though the rainfall has stopped, the water levels have been receding slowly in West Burdwan and Birbhum districts, while the river is overflowing. Large areas have been marooned and agricultural fields are under water.

Miss Mamata Banerjee calls the flood as man-made every year after the water

"I have asked the DMs to be particularly vigilant and take proper care of the calamity situation in the next three to four days. I told them to take all precautionary measures so that there is no untoward

since 6:00 a.m today, which has hit the Durgapur Barrage at 5:00 p.m. The barrage, according to Sanjoy Majumdar, Executive Engineer, Damodar Headworks of state Irrigation, "maintained 1,14,439 Cusecs of discharge at 6:30 p.m. today, which we may scale up to 1.35 Lakh Cusecs by midnight."

The reservoir experts fear overtopping only if there is further rain in the upper catchment areas. Overtopping can be a precursor to dam failure that occurs when water level coupled with strong wind exceeds the crest of the dam. "We've been maintaining every 3 hour's record and every development is being informed to the Bengal government officials," said Shashi Rakesh, Member Secretary,

The situation in Birbhum district has also worsened as the Kankalitola temple complex is flooded. The

BUILDING BONDS



Elder Youth Party members celebrate Friendship Day on streets of Kolkata on Sunday. ■ SNS

Tourism body writes to CM, to roll back VAT on ATF in Bagdogra

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SILIGURI, 4 AUGUST

The Himalayan Hospitality and Tourism Development Network (HHTDN) has requested Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to roll back the Value Added Tax (VAT) on air turbine fuel (ATF) for Bagdogra Airport from the newly imposed 12.5% back to its previous rate of 0%.

Mr Sanyal emphasised the sudden withdrawal of flights by airlines from the Bagdogra sector, fluctuating airfares during peak periods, and the implications of the increased VAT

Sanyal said, adding: "Your consideration in this matter will ensure that the northern part of West Bengal remains an attractive destination for tourists and businesses alike."

This follows a similar plea from Darjeeling MP Raju Bista. In a letter to the Chief Minister, HHTDN Secretary Samrat Sanyal outlined three major concerns, seeking her intervention.

Mr Sanyal emphasised the sudden withdrawal of flights by airlines from the Bagdogra sector, fluctuating airfares during peak periods, and the implications of the increased VAT.

Mr Sanyal further noted that even with the 0% ATF surcharge, the region has experienced high airfares during crises and other peak periods.

Mr Sanyal praised the West Bengal government's visionary leadership that introduced a full waiver of VAT on

ATF in 2013, a policy that benefited airlines over the past 11 years and contributed to Bagdogra Airport's rapid growth.

Additionally, there have been instances of airlines reducing or withdrawing flights to and from Bagdogra without proper explanation.

net, were designated to the post. Sources said with Trinamul General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee already hinting at organisational restructuring keeping in mind the 2026 West Bengal polls, there is a high possibility of bringing back the post. The likely move is aimed at maintaining better coordination between the district and state leadership to ensure smoother functioning of both units, the sources said.

He said that the increase in VAT on ATF could lead to higher operational costs for airlines, resulting in increased airfares.

In July and August 2024, many direct flights to and from Bagdogra were reduced or withdrawn, and flight fares from Mumbai have risen to approximately Rs 14,000 per person one way from mid-September 2024.

Mr Sanyal requested your kind intervention to reconsider and revert the VAT on ATF back to its initial rate of 0%," HHTDN Secretary Samrat

"This, in turn, could negatively impact various sectors, including tourism, hospitality, retail, and local businesses reliant on strong air connectivity.

Mr Sanyal urged the Chief Minister to address this matter with the Ministry of Civil Aviation, highlighting the cascading effects of the policy on the region's tourism movement.

Lion Club organises blood donation camp



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SILIGURI, 4 AUGUST

To address the pressing need for blood transfusions, a blood donation camp was held today at Hatiyadanga, organised by the Lions Club of Siliguri Pragati in collaboration with the Lions Club of Terai.

President of the Lions Club of Siliguri Pragati, Lion Sujata Ghosh, announced that the camp successfully collected 25 units of blood.

She noted the enthusiastic participation of women alongside men in donating blood, expressing hope that this support will help

mitigate future blood shortages.

In addition to the blood donation drive, Ghosh highlighted the club's permanent project at Hatiyadanga, which includes a tailoring center and a vending machine aimed at empowering women by promoting self-reliance.

As part of today's initiatives, the club also provided 100 sanitary pads for the vending machine.

The event underscored the community's commitment to addressing both immediate healthcare needs and long-term socio-economic empowerment for women.

Opposition demands introduction of Bidhansabha TV in West Bengal Assembly

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SILIGURI, 4 AUGUST

Dr. Sankar Ghosh, the Chief Whip of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly, today urged the State Government to introduce a dedicated television channel for the Assembly, similar to Lok Sabha TV.

The demand for Bidhansabha TV was also supported by Alipurduar MP Manoj Tigga, who was recently nominated as Chairman of the central committee for trade unions in tea plantations.

Addressing the press after the formation of a central committee for BJP leaders associated with tea plantations in North Bengal, Dr. Ghosh highlighted several unresolved issues affecting tea plantation workers, including the provision of land rights, conversion of leasehold land into freehold land, and the implementation of minimum wages.

Mr. Tigga, a former Chief Whip of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly, criticized the state's handling of tea plantation issues, emphasizing that law and labor are state subjects.

He criticised the recent decision by the Assembly Speaker to discard these matters without debate.

Mr. Tigga cited his experience in the Lok Sabha, where a two-hour debate was allowed on the issue of abnormal air fare hikes raised by an Opposition MP.

"There has been no debate or discussion on these crucial issues. The people remain in the dark about what transpires during Assembly sessions, learning only from press conferences by ruling party ministers and MLAs," Dr. Ghosh stated.

He contrasted this with the lack of discussion in the State Assembly on critical issues affecting tea plantation labourers, including minimum wages and other benefits.

Expressing concern about the closure of several tea plantations, Mr. Tigga demanded that the state government grant land rights to tea workers for the land they currently occupy.

The Opposition leaders underscored the need for greater transparency and public awareness of Assembly proceedings through the proposed Bidhansabha TV, ensuring that the voices of marginalized communities are heard and addressed.

He called for the introduction of Bidhansabha TV to provide the public with transparency and real-time access to Assembly proceedings.

On the occasion were present Serampore MP Mr Kalyan Banerjee, Serampore

Trinamul might revive district observers' post in organisational rejig



AGENCIES
KOLKATA, 4 AUGUST

There is a buzz in the Trinamul Congress in West Bengal that the post of district observers might be brought back in the internal structural overhaul of the party that might take place in the next couple of months.

The system will streamline coordination between the party and the administration," said a senior Trinamul leader and member of the state Cabinet who didn't wish to be named.

The post of district observers was there in the organisational structure of the Trinamul till March 2021, when senior party leaders, including the heavyweight members of the state Cabinet,

To recall, while addressing Trinamul's annual Martyr's Day rally on July 21, Abhishek Banerjee hinted at possible rejigs in the party at the organisational level. "I was not visible in any political event for the past month as I was analysing the (election) results. You will see the outcomes of the analysis within the next three months," he had said.

ART PIECES



Clay sculptures of Swami Vivekananda, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Raja Ram Mohan Roy at artisans Village, Kumartuli, in Kolkata on Sunday. ■ BISWAJIT GHOSHAL

Serampore MP unveiled Kishore Kumar statue on his 95th birth anniversary

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HOOGHLY, 4 AUGUST

The Konnagar Kishore Kumar Fans Club on the 95th birth anniversary of legendary singer Kishore Kumar Ganguly organised a cultural programme and distributed mosquito nets among the needy and poor.

town president Mr Santosh Singh, Konnagar municipal chairman Mr Swapan Das, journalist Mr Prabir Ghoshal and other dignitaries.

engage in social welfare activities followed by cultural programme.

songs of Kishore Kumar are appropriate in any situation and circumstances that human beings come across in their day to day life. Bengal is proud of him, he has won the hearts of millions across the world. I am happy that the Konnagar Kishore Kumar Fans club is doing different kinds of social welfare activities as an appropriate way to pay tribute to the legendary singer."

On the occasion were present Serampore MP Mr Kalyan Banerjee, Serampore

The Konnagar Kishore Kumar Fans Club was established in the year 1988. The founder of the club Mr Ratan Das is himself a well-known singer.

The Serampore MP Mr Kalyan Banerjee today unveiled a statue of Kishore Kumar within the premises of Kishore Kumar Fans Club.

Amidst my hectic schedule I find myself in great bliss recollecting his hits song and singing to myself. The hit



CANCELLATION OF MAITREE EXPRESS
As per message received from Bangladesh Railways, 13107 Dhaka - Kolkata Maitree Express (JCO 06.08.2024) and 13109 Kolkata - Dhaka Maitree Express (JCO 06.08.2024) will remain cancelled. Inconvenience is regretted.
Chief Passenger Transportation Manager
EASTERN RAILWAY
Follow us at: @EasternRailway @easternrailwayheadquarter

Giri: Will resign as minister but not apologise to woman forest officer

The minister was asked to resign by the party after he allegedly abused the woman officer on Saturday at Tajpur

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA, 4 AUGUST

Following pressure from his party, the Minister of State (independent charge) for Correctional Services Department, Akhil Giri, who was caught on camera using abusive language against a woman forest department officer, announced on Sunday that he would resign from his post.

He was also reportedly told that if he did not resign, he would be sacked from the council of ministers. This is an unprecedented example of the zero tolerance policy of the Trinamul Congress setting an example of stern action against a minister.

On Sunday, when asked about apologising, Mr Giri said: "I do not apologize to any government official. I have never apologised to an official in my political career, and there is no question of apologising now."

A video of Mr Giri's heated exchange with the female forest officer surfaced on Saturday, in which the state's correctional home minister is heard using derogatory language towards her. Within 24 hours of the incident coming to light, the party directed Mr Giri to resign from his ministerial post.

Trinamul's state president Subrata Bakshi also informed Mr Giri that he must publicly



apologize to the woman he insulted. On Sunday, following this message from the state president, Mr Giri announced his decision to resign.

He stated: "The party believes my actions have tarnished its image. Therefore, I have been instructed to resign. I am a loyal party worker, so I will follow the party's directive. My resignation letter is ready. I will email it today and submit it in person tomorrow."

However, while complying with one party directive, Mr Giri has made it clear that he

will not follow the other directive. On Sunday, he said, "In the heat of the moment, we sometimes say things we later regret. If that's considered a mistake, then it is my mistake."

When asked about party leaders Mamata Banerjee and Abhishek Banerjee advising restraint from the stage on 21 July, and whether his lack of restraint led to the party's disciplinary action against him, Mr Giri responded that the party has also asked them to be humane, and he acted out of humanity.

Regarding Mr Giri's statement, Trinamul spokesperson

Shantanu Sen said: "The party had unanimously given certain directives. Whether he follows them or not is his decision. However, the party's next steps will be determined based on his actions. What those steps will be will be known once a decision is made."

Meanwhile, forest minister Birbaha Hansda said that she will submit a sealed report to chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday regarding the incident. Ms Hansda had earlier spoken to the officer over the phone.

The controversy began when forest department officials, following the chief minister's orders, were obstructed by Mr Giri while trying to evict "illegal occupants" in Tajpur. In a heated exchange, Mr Giri was heard threatening the female officer, saying, "You have 7-8 days left, 10 days!" and using derogatory terms like "animal" and "insolent."

FLORAL TRIBUTE



Ministers and Tollywood stars pay tribute to legendary singer Kishore Kumar on his 95th birth anniversary at Tollygunj in Kolkata on Sunday. ■ SNS

WEEKEND OUTING



People enjoying a boat ride on river Hooghly on a Sunday afternoon. ■ MOUL MONDAL

Administration extends help to tornado-hit areas in Tarkeswar

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE HOOGHLY, 4 AUGUST

A tornado which hit Tarkeswar last evening have left a trail of destruction.

The people of Santospur and Gupinathpur gram panchayat area in Tarkeswar were taken unaware by the sudden



tornado, which lasted for a minute or more. Many trees got uprooted and several semi-pucca houses were razed to the ground.

were rendered homeless. Soon after the tornado the SDO, BDO, local MLA and a relief team visited the affected areas. Temporary shelter, food, drinking water and medical aid were provided. Electric generators were put into service. The district administration has taken steps on war footing to clear the debris and restore power and water supply. The affected victims who have lost their houses have been assured that their issues would be looked into urgently by the administration.

ED starts probe against ex-minister in Bengal ration distribution case

AGENCIES KOLKATA, 4 AUGUST

Enforcement Directorate (ED) has initiated a probe against the cash deposits linked to former Food and Supplies Minister Jyotipriya Mallick, who is currently in judicial custody, in connection with the Bengal ration distribution case.

Sources said that it has come to the notice of the ED that during the financial year 2021-22, over Rs 6.50 crore were deposited in the bank accounts of a corporate entity, linked to the former minister Jyotipriya Mallick.

They said that Rs 1 crore was also deposited by Anisur Rahaman a.k.a. Bidesh, Trinamul Congress Block President of Deganga in North 24 Parganas district, who is in ED custody along with his brother



Alif Nur a.k.a. Mukul. They added that the ED has information that this particular corporation was mainly a shell company meant for diversion of funds. The ED believes that the huge cash deposits made in the accounts of the company were essentially the ill-gotten proceeds of the ration distribution case.

Bidesh and Mukul are cousins of businessman Bakibur Rahaman, the first to be arrested by ED officials in

the ration distribution case. On Friday, the ED counsel informed a special court of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) that the rice mill jointly owned by Bidesh and Mukul received Rs 45 crore from the state government in phases to procure paddy from the farmers.

However, they subsequently showed procurement from "fake farmers" in the guise of the employees of the said mill.

Fishing trawler capsizes in Bay of Bengal; all 14 fishermen rescued

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA, 4 AUGUST

A fishing trawler, carrying 14 fishermen who had set out from Patharpratima, capsized this morning in the Bay of Bengal after encountering rough seas.

Fortunately, all the fishermen were rescued.

The incident occurred near Bagher Char Island when sudden rough waves overwhelmed the trawler, causing it to overturn.

On Sunday morning, the trawler named 'FB Dashabhuj' had departed from Patharpratima's jetty to fish. Near Bagher Char Island, the waves were particularly strong, causing the trawler to capsize and submerge quickly, with all 14 fishermen falling into the sea.

Another trawler named

'Ma Lakshmi' was nearby and successfully rescued the fishermen, bringing them safely back to shore. However, the trawler itself remains missing.

Due to a low-pressure system, it has been raining in South Bengal for the past few days, causing water levels in various rivers to rise.

The low-pressure system is currently situated over Jharkhand, where rain has led to water being released from dams, raising the threat of flooding in Bengal.

The weather department had issued a warning for fishermen recently, advising against going deep into the sea due to winds that could reach speeds of 40 to 50 kmps per hour.

This warning was lifted recently, after which the fishermen from Patharpratima set out to fish.

Bengal school job case: Out on bail, TMC legislator summoned by ED on Monday

AGENCIES KOLKATA, 4 AUGUST

Enforcement Directorate (ED), on Sunday, summoned Trinamul Congress legislator Jiban Krishna Saha, who is currently out on bail, in connection with the multi-crore cash-for-school job case in West Bengal.

Saha has been asked to be present at ED's office at the central government office (CGO) complex at Salt Lake on the northern outskirts of Kolkata by Monday afternoon.

Sources said that the ED officials have summoned him for interrogation related to the irregularities in teaching jobs in state-run schools both in the secondary and higher secondary levels. Saha was arrested last year



by the sleuths of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) which is conducting a parallel probe in the school job case. However, earlier this year, he was released on bail.

ED officials, conducting the money laundering aspect of the scam, have now decided to question him and hence he has been issued notice for

interrogation. Earlier, ED officials questioned Saha's wife Jagari Saha in this connection.

Jiban Krishna Saha became the headlines in April last year, as during the search operation by the CBI sleuths at his residence in Murshidabad district, he threw off his two mobiles at a pond adjacent to his house.

After a lot of toiling, the CBI officials ultimately were able to recover both mobiles from the pond and retrieve the data.

During that search operations, the CBI sleuths claimed to have recovered documents, both paper and digital, about his involvement with the recruitment of at least 3,200 candidates as teaching and non-teaching staff in state-run schools in West Bengal.

East Kolkata wetlands fast turning into death traps for aquatic ecosystem

BISWABRATA GOSWAMI KOLKATA, 4 AUGUST

The East Kolkata Wetlands (EKW), often celebrated as the "Kidney of East Kolkata", are facing severe threats from pollution and unsustainable practices.

This vital ecosystem, recognized as a Ramsar site and the world's largest wastewater-fed aquaculture system, spans 12,500 hectares on the city's eastern periphery and plays a crucial role in supporting fish production, rice, and vegetable cultivation.

Dr. Biswajit Bera, who has led extensive research on the EKW, has highlighted the dire state of this landscape.

The wetlands encompass water bodies, 254 drainage-based fishing grounds covering

5,852.14 hectares, agricultural land of 4,718.56 hectares, productive agricultural areas totaling 602.78 hectares, and urban and rural settlements of 53.26 hectares.

Kolkata's wastewater, channeled through an intricate system of underground sewers and pumping stations, ends up in these wetlands, where local fishermen use the naturally treated wastewater to sustain a unique and low-cost fish farming model.

Every day, organic waste, amounting to 20 to 70 kg per hectare, is introduced into these fishponds.

Sunlight facilitates photosynthesis, creating a thriving plankton population that serves as food for the fish. This process is essential for main-



taining the pond's ecosystem and converting nutrients into a form usable by humans.

However, Dr. Bera's studies reveal a troubling scenario. Kolkata generates approximately 600 million litres of sewage and 2,500 tonnes of solid waste daily, much of which is improperly

treated and discharged near the EKW site. A 61 km canal system, meant to distribute this sewage to fish farmers, often carries pollutants that degrade the wetland ecosystem.

The use of toxic chemical fertilizers in nearby agricultural fields further exacerbates the problem. Ammonium Sulphate, Calcium Nitrate, Super Phosphate, Ammonium Nitrate, and Urea are some of the harmful compounds that find their way into the wetlands, especially during the monsoon season.



ents that leads to phytoplankton overgrowth and depletes oxygen levels, harming aquatic life.

To address these challenges, Dr. Bera advocates for a series of urgent measures. Promoting sustainable agricultural practices, including organic farming, and ensuring proper treatment

of urban sewage before its discharge into the wetlands are critical. The construction of protective dams, regular dredging of silt, replacement of high-turbidity water with fresh rainwater, and the use of phytoremediation techniques - using plants to clean contaminants - are essential steps toward restoring the health of the wetlands.

The EKW's unique integration of waste management with aquaculture stands as a sustainable model that balances ecological and economic needs.

However, the mounting pollution and unsustainable practices threaten its very existence. Local authorities, environmentalists, and the community must unite to implement these solutions.

Protecting the East Kolkata Wetlands is not only crucial for the environmental health of Kolkata but also for the well-being of its residents who rely on this ecosystem for their livelihoods.

By adopting sustainable practices and investing in modern waste management technologies, the health of the EKW can be preserved, ensuring the survival of this critical ecological system.

As the threats to the East Kolkata Wetlands grow more pressing, concerted efforts are required to safeguard this invaluable resource.

The future of Kolkata's environmental health and the livelihoods of many depend on the successful preservation and restoration of these wetlands.

'Legal aspects to be evaluated to declare landslides as national disaster'

Suresh Gopi visited Mundakkai, Churalmala areas in Wayanad where impact of the landslides were severe

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE KALPETTA, 4 AUGUST



Union Minister of State for Petroleum and Tourism Suresh Gopi visited the landslide-affected areas of Wayanad on Sunday as the death toll crossed 360, with at least 200 people still missing. He said that the legal aspects of declaring the landslide in Wayanad as a national disaster will be examined.

Suresh Gopi visited Mundakkai and Churalmala areas in Wayanad where the impact of the landslides severely affected the people. He also visited Panchiri Matam in Mundakkai, the origin points of the landslide, on Sunday morning and assessed the situation and

received updates on the ongoing search operations from officials.

He also held discussions with Kerala PWD Minister Mohammad Riyaz and the army officers who are leading the rescue operations.

The Army officials briefed Suresh Gopi about the rescue operations.

He also visited the relief camps.

the Union Minister.

Suresh Gopi said that the Centre is assessing the situation closely and that if more force is required for the search operation, Kerala government has to request it to the Centre.

The Kerala government and various parliament members from state have demanded to the Centre to declare the landslides in Wayanad as a national disaster. Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan also raised the same demand in the Governors' conference held in New Delhi on Saturday. Meanwhile, the Union Home Ministry has clarified that there is no provision to declare all natural calamities as a national disaster. The clarification came in response to a question by K Sudhakaram, MP.

Later speaking to media persons, Suresh Gopi said that the legal aspects of declaring the landslides in Wayanad as a national disaster will be examined.

"In order to declare the landslide as a national disaster, its legal aspects must first be evaluated. Currently, the primary focus is on the mental health and rehabilitation of the survivors," said

Kerala Gov seeks assistance for Wayanad disaster

MATHURA, 4 AUGUST

Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan, while calling for assistance for the landslide disaster in Wayanad.

"Many deaths have occurred due to landslides in Kerala, and life has been severely affected. I urge everyone to contribute whatever you can — whether it's Rs 2, Rs 5, or any amount within your capacity — so that the people of Kerala are assured that the entire country stands with them in this hour of grief," he said. **SNS**

Wayanad landslides: Kerala forest officers' daring operation saves stranded tribal family

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 4 AUGUST



In a remarkable display of bravery and dedication, a team of Kerala forest officers undertook an eight-hour long rescue mission deep in the forests of landslide-affected Wayanad, successfully saving a tribal family including four children.

The family, belonging to the Paniya tribe, had taken refuge in a cave atop a hill after being cut off from their community due to the devastating landslides that struck the region earlier this week.

Despite the hazardous conditions including heavy rain and rocky paths, the officers managed to bring the entire family back to safety. The arduous journey and the selfless actions of the forest officers have been widely lauded.

The operation, led by Kalpetta Range Forest Officer

K Hashis has garnered widespread praise, including commendations from Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi.

Kerala Chief Minister Vijayan expressed his deep admiration for the rescue team, stating, "Their heroism reminds us that Kerala's resilience shines brightest in the darkest times. United in hope, we will rebuild and emerge stronger."

Rahul Gandhi, former Wayanad MP, also extended

his heartfelt gratitude to the Kalpetta Range Forest Officers, for risking their own lives to save the tribal family.

"I extend my sincere gratitude to the Kalpetta Range Forest Officers who risked their lives traversing through difficult terrain amidst heavy downpour, undertaking a tireless 8-hour operation to successfully rescue a family in distress. Your selfless service, commitment, and unity will help us overcome this crisis and emerge stronger," Gandhi said in a statement.

Northeast Frontier Railway recovers 28 Kgs Ganja: The Railway Police Force (RPF) team of Agartala on July 30 apprehended two persons and recovered 28 kgs Ganja worth Rs. 2.80 Lakh (approx.) Later, the apprehended persons along with the recovered Ganja were handed over to Government Railway Police in Agartala for necessary legal action. **ANI**

Prez, VP & PM condole demise of Bharatanatyam doyenne Yamini Krishnamurthy

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 4 AUGUST

President Droupadi Murmu, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday condole the demise of veteran Bharatanatyam dancer and Padma Vibhushan awardee Dr. Yamini Krishnamurthy.

In a post on X, Murmu said, "I feel very sad to know about the demise of the eminent dancer and Padma Vibhushan awardee Dr. Yamini Krishnamurthy. She was a leading exponent of Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi. Her passing is a big loss to the world of art and culture. My condolences to her family, friends and followers."

Dhankhar also expressed his grief over Krishnamurthy's death.

In a post on X, Dhankhar said, "Saddened by the passing of veteran classical dancer Dr. Yamini Krishnamurthy ji. She was a cornerstone of Indian classical dance and was honoured with the Padma Vibhushan for her contributions to Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi. Her demise is an irreparable loss to the world of dance. My condolences to her family, friends and many admirers."

Condoling the demise of

the veteran Indian classical dancer, the Prime Minister said Krishnamurthy worked greatly to enrich Indian heritage.

In a post on X, the Prime Minister said, "Pained by the passing away of Dr. Yamini Krishnamurthy. Her excellence and dedication to Indian classical dance have inspired generations and left an indelible mark on our cultural landscape. She has worked greatly to enrich our heritage. Condolences to her family and admirers. Om Shanti."

83-year-old Krishnamurthy displayed unparalleled talent in Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi and rose to the highest echelons of these classical dance forms.

Krishnamurthy, who had been admitted to Apollo Hospital due to a long-standing history of multiple medical issues, passed away on Saturday afternoon.

According to a statement from Apollo Hospital, Krishnamurthy was being treated by a multi-disciplinary team headed by Dr Sunil Modi. "Despite the team's best efforts, Dr. Krishnamurthy passed away this afternoon. We extend our deepest condolences to the family of Dr. Krishnamurthy," Apollo Hospital said on Saturday.

SC orders medical re-test of CSE-2014 candidate to do 'complete justice'

AGENCIES NEW DELHI, 4 AUGUST

The Supreme Court has directed the Central Standing Medical Board to undertake a medical re-test of a candidate who passed Prelims, Mains and Interview of Civil Services Examination (CSE)-2014 but was declared 'temporarily unfit' in medical assessment.

The petitioner was declared 'temporarily unfit', due to his Body Mass Index (BMI) being 31.75, which is higher than

the prescribed standard of 30 BMI.

He applied for a re-medical test but did not appear.

Thereafter, in January 2016, a consolidated reserve list of candidates was published for filling up the remaining posts.

KTR wishes Revanth Reddy 'all the best' for US trip

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD, 4 AUGUST



Telangana chief minister A Revanth Reddy reached New York today as a part of his 10-day long trip to USA and South Korea to attract investment to Telangana. Meanwhile, BRS working president KT Rama Rao wished "All the Best" to the chief minister for his trip after a particularly acrimonious Budget session in the Assembly while claiming that the Opposition party would always put Telangana interest ahead of politics.

The chief minister is slated to hold more than 50 meetings with top business honchos of several multinational companies including Pepsico, Amazon, Google, Apple, Hyundai, Samsung, LG and so on. He is accompanied by industry and IT minister D Sridhar Babu as well as senior officials of the state government. The government has claimed the twin visits

will bring about agreements for massive investments worth Rs16,000 crore in the state. He will be visiting Stanford University as well.

In South Korea his schedule includes a visit to the Han River Front. Musi River Front development project is a pet one for the chief minister who will return to Hyderabad on 14 August.

According to Telangana Congress the chief minister received a warm welcome upon his arrival at John F

Kennedy airport as hundreds of Telugu NRIs waited to greet him. He also met the Indian diaspora in the US at New Jersey today.

BRS working president KT Rama Rao took to 'X' ahead of the chief minister's tour to wish him and his team while tagging the chief minister and the industry minister.

"Politics aside, for me and our BRS party, it will always be 'Telangana First'. I sincerely hope the current government

can continue bringing in tangible investments and build upon the strong foundation we have established," he said while tactfully claiming that the Congress government was building on the solid foundation left by the erstwhile BRS government. He said under BRS supreme K Chandrababoo Naidu as chief minister a favourable eco system had been created in the last decade. He stated that they had been successful in creating investments over Rs4,00,00,000 crore as well 24 lakh private sector jobs.

"I'm pleased to see that the relationships we have nurtured over the years along with our relentless persistence, continue to attract significant new investments from marquee companies. The numerous announcements about the expansion of existing establishments are a testament to the success of Telangana's policies and initiatives," Mr Rao said in his post.

Owaisi accuses PM Modi govt of trying to grab Waqf properties through amendments

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD, 4 AUGUST



Owaisi criticised the Centre for not informing Parliament about the proposed amendments while it was in session. He also accused the Centre of creating legal ambiguity regarding Waqf Board properties through these amendments.

Owaisi criticised the Centre for not informing Parliament about the proposed amendments while it was in session. He also accused the Centre of creating legal ambiguity regarding Waqf Board properties through these amendments.

He also questioned why the "political executive" should resolve disputes instead of leaving this matter to the judiciary.

"The Modi government will first create a dispute and then conduct a survey through the executive, Chief Minister, or BJP. We all know what the outcome will be. This is a tactic to turn a property into

a disputed one and then, after the survey, declare it not a Waqf property.

There are many mosques and dargahs which the BJP claims are not legitimate. If media reports are correct, the Modi government aims to seize the Waqf Board's properties," Owaisi alleged. He claimed that the Centre's move is part of the 'Hindutva

agenda'. The Hyderabad MP warned that government interference in the Waqf Board would result in the loss of its autonomy.

He dismissed claims that the amendments would lead to increased representation of women in the Waqf boards. He said, "The real reason is interference in the freedom of religion." He urged BJP allies to pressure the Centre on this issue, specifically mentioning Bihar and Andhra Pradesh. The Hyderabad MP said, "The BJP allies should consider whether they want to seize the Waqf properties of Muslims. Parties supporting the BJP must think about this." According to media reports, the Centre plans to introduce up to 40 amendments to the Waqf Board Act.

Dharavi residents support government survey to speed up \$3 billion redevelopment project

AGENCIES MUMBAI, 4 AUGUST



The world's largest redevelopment project in Mumbai's Dharavi by the Adani Group has been gaining massive local support and now, citizens of the world's largest slum have supported a key state government survey for the \$3 billion redevelopment project.

The survey is being spearheaded by the Dharavi Redevelopment Project/Slum Rehabilitation Authority (DRP/SRA) of the state government along with the Dharavi Redevelopment Project Private Ltd (DRPPL), a joint venture between the Government of Maharashtra and the Adani Group.

The aim of the survey is to collect data from lakhs of residents to help the state government determine their

eligibility criteria to aid rehabilitation under the proposed redevelopment project.

The survey began on March 18 this year.

It is mapping informal tenements, paving the way for modern housing and amenities to transform the densely populated slum.

Dharavi's geographical area is just over 2.39 square

km in size.

Now, the Citizen and Society Development Welfare body of Dharavi residents has written to DRP/SRA, requesting them to conduct the survey fast to ensure that the redevelopment can move forward without further delays.

The welfare body has submitted a memorandum seek-

ing to expedite the Dharavi survey. The residents also urged the key surveying authorities to take necessary action against any person or group of persons, who are hindering the survey.

In the memorandum, they said that ensuring the lawful and uninterrupted progress of the survey is essential for the benefit of all residents of Dharavi. Several Dharavi residents took to the streets last week, opposing the disruption of the survey by some people.

According to the Adani Group, the redevelopment project in Dharavi will not only provide dignity of living to its over one million residents but, at the same time, will build an unmatched ecosystem of sustainable living and innovation in the heart of Mumbai.

The redevelopment of Asia's largest slum to help improve the standard of living of its residents. Under the redevelopment project, the tenement holders will be provided a house of 350 square feet, which is 17 per cent more than any other SRA scheme in Mumbai.

The Dharavi Redevelopment Tender is one of the most progressive in terms of its outlook towards informal settlers of Dharavi. It is completely pro-people which includes free and highly concessional housing, stamp duty and property tax exemption, ten-year free maintenance and a ten per cent commercial area in residential premises to enable the prospective housing societies to have a sustainable revenue stream in addition to the corpus being provided, sources submitted.

TENDER

INTEGRAL COACH FACTORY, CHENNAI - 38

TENDER NOTICE No. ICF/PCMM/EOT/31/2024 Dated: 02.08.2024

The following e-tenders are published in IREPS website. Firms are requested to login to www.ireps.gov.in and quote against these tenders. Manual quotations will not be entertained for these tenders. Closing and Opening time for all tenders are 14.15 hrs. Hindi version of tender notice is available on website www.icf.indianrailways.gov.in.

Sl. No.	Tender No.	Tender Title	Quantity	Due Date / Time
1	07240231A	SET OF LAYOUT OF NOTICES (NON-BRAILLE) FOR LWACCN COACHES	623 Sets	06.08.2024
2	07240271	SET OF LAYOUT OF NOTICES (NON-BRAILLE) FOR LWACCN COACHES	523 Sets	12.08.2024
3	03241866	LONGITUDINAL STOP END PLATE ASSEMBLY	7846 Nos	19.08.2024
4	07241945	LP SHEET	472 Nos	20.08.2024
5	02241013	1 C/S CANTRAIL KOLKOTTA METRO	31 Sets	20.08.2024
6	06241261	SALOON SLIDING DOOR APRIGT /LWFC	24 Sets	20.08.2024
7	03241810	GANGWAY SLIP FREE FINISH STAINLESS STEEL SHEET	1944 Nos	20.08.2024
8	06241129	AUTOMATIC FIRE DETECTION CUM SUPPRESSION SYSTEM	194 Sets	20.08.2024
9	08241577	PUMP MONO BLOCK ASSEMBLY FOR SL DEMU	233 Sets	20.08.2024
10	04241042B	SEALANT-FORMED-IN-PLACE-GASKET	29 Nos	21.08.2024
11	07241983	ALUMINIUM INNER FRAME	322 Sets	21.08.2024
12	08241739	SBC Non AC PANTRY LWCB / PP	28 Sets	21.08.2024
13	07241956	ONE COACH SET OF WINDOW INNER FRAMES FOR LSLRD AMRITH B	70 Sets	21.08.2024
14	06241497	SS TUBE & FITT ICF / SK-10-2-632	1061 Sets	21.08.2024
15	07242068	ALUMINIUM INNER FRAME FOR BUS TYPE WINDOW(1460X700)	430 Nos	21.08.2024
16	08241578A	UNF ASR PNEUMATIC CONT EQPT FOR LHB	2999 Sets	22.08.2024
17	07241977	SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF DOG BOX ARRANGEMENT	70 Sets	22.08.2024
18	02241192	S & I OF SS NOSE CONE FOR 3PH	15 Sets	23.08.2024
19	02241658	END PART AC/EMU TRAILER	23 Sets	23.08.2024
20	06241820	D,MM&I T&C PANTRY EQPTS LWCB	28 Sets	23.08.2024
21	06241319	SUPPLY OF PAINTS FOR MUTP	173 Sets	26.08.2024
22	06241812	AXLE MOUNTED DISC BRAKE	1483 Sets	26.08.2024
23	02241550	SIDEWALL ASSY AND DOOR CUT OUT ASSY FOR VANDE BHARAT NOTC	8 Sets	26.08.2024
24	03241913	SWINGING LINK PIN FOR CONNECTING BODY TO BOGIE	22625 Nos	26.08.2024
25	02241102	S & I of NOSE CONE	36 Sets	26.08.2024
26	01235481B	THE HYDRAULIC PRESS SET, BOGIE LIFTING AND TURNING TABLE	1 Set	26.08.2024
27	03241870	SECURITY CABLE	20601 Nos	27.08.2024
28	06241028	ONE C/SET OF AUTOM IC DOOR TS	60 Sets	27.08.2024
29	02240109	LACGW ROOF ASSEMBLY	36 Sets	27.08.2024
30	03241803	STAINLESS STEEL SHEET TO SIZE 3MM X 1250MM X 3000MM	32700 Kg	28.08.2024
31	06241644	SET OF LED FITTINGS LSSD AMRIT B	278 Sets	28.08.2024
32	03241957	PRIMARY INNER SPRING FOR CHAIR CAR	629 Nos	28.08.2024
33	02241182	FOOTSTEP ASSEMBLY	201 Sets	28.08.2024
34	08241579A	UNF FIBA TO STR NO. RDSO/2015/CG-05	4556 Sets	28.08.2024
35	03241959	SPRING-F 07 (PRIMARY OUTER)	7314 Nos	29.08.2024
36	01235417B	THE HYDRAULIC ANTI ROLL BAR FORK, ANTI ROLL BAR BEARING PULL	1 No	29.08.2024
37	02241606	SOLEBAR FOR LSLRD	55 Sets	29.08.2024
38	03241956	SPRING - F 06 (PRIMARY INNER) & SPRING - F 05 (PRIMARY OUTER)	1007 Nos	30.08.2024
39	03241192	LOWER SPRING SEAT FORGED	1402 Nos	30.08.2024
40	01235509A	SHOT PEENING MACHINE FOR COIL SPRING	1 Set	02.09.2024
41	02241591	LAVATORY SIDEWALL LS AND LSCN	56 Sets	03.09.2024
42	07241603	S & I OF FRP PANEL IN MEMU/TC6	40 Sets	03.09.2024
43	02241546	DOOR CUTOUT LGS	799 Nos	03.09.2024
44	07241813	BEARING BRACKET COMPLETE FOR BACK REST OF LACCN COACHES	9246 Nos	04.09.2024
45	02241554	ROOF ASSLY FOR LSCN	55 Sets	04.09.2024
46	02241124	END WALL FOR 3PH MEMU/DMC	27 Nos	06.09.2024
47	02241558	COACH SET OF SS CARLINE	37 Sets	10.09.2024
48	02241470	ROOF SHEET FOR LACCN	142 Sets	10.09.2024
49	07241140	S & I OF AC DUCT FOR LWFC	19 Sets	10.09.2024
50	07241150	S & I OF AIR INLET DUCT FOR AC - 2T	97 Sets	10.09.2024
51	02241473	ROOF DETAILS FOR LACCN	79 Sets	11.09.2024
52	02241147	ANGLES & BRACKETS FOR KM DTC	19 Sets	11.09.2024
53	02241230	ANGLE & BRACKETS FOR KM MC & TC	22 Sets	13.09.2024
54	08241697	S & I of EPDM BRAKE PIPE SEALING EMU / M	119 Nos	13.09.2024
55	02241112	SIDEWALL AND ROOF MEMU/DMC	40 Sets	16.09.2024
56	02241330	LACGW LAVATORY SIDEWALL	350 Sets	16.09.2024
57	02241514	CONNECTION SHEET	788 Sets	17.09.2024
58	02241107	ROOF FOR SPIC	35 Sets	18.09.2024
59	02241056	DETAILS FRAME WORK-LACGW	84 Sets	18.09.2024
60	02241124	KIT ITEMS FOR LACGW UNDERFRAME	258 Sets	19.09.2024
61	02241480	ROOF FLOOR ITEMS	110 Sets	20.09.2024
62	02241214	TROUGH FLOOR	152 Sets	20.09.2024
63	02241255	FINAL ROOF ELEMENT LACCN	77 Sets	23.09.2024
64	02240106	BODY SHELL ITEMS FOR LWLRM	66 Sets	24.09.2024
65	02240100	ROOF SHEET COMPLETE	128 Nos	25.09.2024

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE
(Construction Department)

NOTICE NO. - ECR-CAO-C-N-ETN-10-24-25

E-tenders is invited on behalf of the President of India for the under mentioned work.

- Name of work with its location: Construction of Road Over Bridge in lieu of Level Crossing No. 145 at Pipra yard in Muzaffarpur-Sagauli section.
- Approx. cost of the work: Rs. 46,81,24,249.35
- Bid Security Amount: Rs. 24,90,600.00

4. Date and time for closing of tender: 26.08.2024 at 14.30 hrs. 5. Website particular, Notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form be purchased etc.: The above E-Tender, E-Tendering document alongwith full information is available on website i.e. <http://www.ireps.gov.in>.

Note: In case of any discrepancies found in tender notice, English version will be final. Tenderers are requested to visit the website <http://www.ireps.gov.in> at least 15 days before last date of closing for latest corrigendum/corrections etc in response to this E-tender.

For CAO/Con/North EC Rly. MXX, Patna
PR/00833/CON/ENGG/724-25/36

THUMBNAILS

Several RJD leaders join JD-U in Bihar: Several RJD leaders joined JD-U on Sunday in the presence of Bihar ministers Vijay Kumar Chaudhary and Ashok Chaudhary who welcomed them into the party.

Fire breaks out in empty train at Visakhapatnam, no casualties: Three air-conditioned coaches of an empty stationary express train were gutted in a fire accident at Visakhapatnam Railway Station on Sunday.

'INDIA bloc should prepare itself to sit in Oppn in 2029'

Amit Shah said NDA will again register victory in the 2029 LS elections in the country

AGENCIES CHANDIGARH, 4 AUGUST

Taking a dig at the INDIA bloc, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said that they should prepare to sit in the opposition in 2029 as well.

Shah, while inaugurating the water supply project Nyay Setu and launching the smart city mission in Chandigarh made these remarks.

He also hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said that NDA will again register victory in the 2029 Lok Sabha elections in the country.

"INDIA bloc should prepare itself to sit in the opposition in 2029 as well. I assure you that let the opposition do whatever it wants to do, in 2029 NDA will come, and Modi ji will come. They (the opposition) do not know



that BJP has won more seats in this election than the number of seats Congress got in three elections," said the Union Home Minister.

Lashing out at the Opposition, Amit Shah said that the INDIA bloc wants to create instability and they must learn the way of working in the opposition.

"These people who want to spread instability, repeat-

edly say that this government is not going to last. I have come to assure them that not only will the government complete its term but the next government will be of NDA and be ready to sit in the opposition and learn the way of working in the opposition properly," he said.

Further, speaking on the importance of the Nyay Setu project, the Union Home

Minister said, "This is an important programme. Water is very important, we cannot exist without it. When it is not clear, we get a lot of diseases. For this whole area, 24/7 supply of filter-cleaned water will be provided through this for the people in the area. It will stand to the test of time."

"This project is spread over about 125 acres. Ever since Modi ji became the Prime Minister, the focus has been on smart cities and Chandigarh was first on this list. So far Rs one lakh crore has been spent. The mission of providing clean drinking water to 74 per cent of the households in the country has been completed and water-borne diseases have reduced significantly. The work of providing clean water to every household in the country will be completed before the end of Modi ji's third term," he added.

Congress alleges NTA netted a profit of ₹448 crore, blames government

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 4 AUGUST

Claiming that the National Testing Agency (NTA) made a profit of Rs 448 crore in the last six years, Congress said on Sunday that the future of millions of India's youths has become a "mere revenue-raising exercise" for the ruling dispensation.

In a post on X, Congress General Secretary in-charge of Communications Jairam Ramesh said, "The National Testing Agency (NTA) is at the very heart of the NEET scandal. It is a body of the Education Ministry whose only purpose is to function via outsourcing to private vendors. Not only do these vendors very often have dubious credentials but the NTA itself is headed by a person who presided over the Madhya Pradesh Public Service Commission, which has seen mega-scams."

Ramesh, who is the Congress MP in Rajya Sabha, said, "In an answer to the Rajya Sabha, the Union MoS



for Education has revealed that the NTA collected an estimated Rs 3,512.98 crore while it spent Rs 3,064.77 crore on the conduct of examinations - it therefore netted a profit of Rs. 448 crores in the last six years."

Attacking the BJP government, he said, "This corpus, however, has not been used to build the agency's capabilities to conduct tests itself, or to strengthen regulations and monitoring capabilities for its vendors. The future of millions of India's youths has ultimately become a mere revenue-raising exercise for the non-biological

PM's government." The Congress leader along with the post also shared the written statement made by Union Minister of State for Education Sukanta Majumdar in Rajya Sabha on 31st July in response to a question on NTA.

"NTA was established in the year 2018. Since its inception, NTA has conducted over 240 examinations involving over 5.4 crores candidates. NTA is self-supporting through the examination fee collected," he said.

The minister further said, "Considering the sensitivity involved in competitive examinations, various operational and security measures are undertaken for their smooth and fair conduct. Such measures involve engagement of specialised/experienced agencies for providing services like capturing of Biometric, frisking, CCTV surveillance, AI analytics with a view to identify any potential impersonation, exam delivery, etc."

Anil Deshmukh claims Sachin Waze, Param Bir Singh made same allegations three years ago at Devendra Fadnavis' behest

AGENCIES NAGPUR, 4 AUGUST

Nationalist Congress Party (Sharad Chandra Pawar) leader Anil Deshmukh alleged on Sunday that dismissed police inspector Sachin Waze and former Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh had made similar accusations against him three years ago, claiming it was done on the instruction of Devendra Fadnavis, now Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister.

"The allegations made against me yesterday by Sachin Waze were also levelled by him and Param Bir Singh three years ago, at the behest of Devendra Fadnavis," Deshmukh told ANI.

The former Maharashtra Home Minister also said that when he was accused three years ago, he requested an investigation into the matter.

An inquiry was conducted by High Court Justice Chandival, whose report cleared him of wrongdoing.

Deshmukh alleged that Maharashtra DyCM Devendra Fadnavis was not making Justice Chandival's report public because the report had exonerated him.

"When I was accused three years ago, I asked the Chief Minister to investigate



the allegations. The Chief Minister assigned the task to Justice Chandival of the High Court. Justice Chandival conducted a detailed inquiry over 11 months, producing a 1,400-page report. The report was handed over to the government 2 years ago... I have been given a clean chit in that report. Because of this, Devendra Fadnavis is not making the report public.

I urge him to make the 1,400-page report public," Deshmukh said.

He further stated, "Yesterday, Devendra Fadnavis again used Sachin Waze to level allegations against me. Everyone knows that Sachin Waze is accused in a terrorist case and two murder cases. He is in jail, and Fadnavis has to rely on him to level allegations against me. It is surprising."

Sachin Waze is accused in the 2021 Antilia bomb scare and the Mansukh Hiren murder case. He is the prime accused in placing an explosive-laden vehicle near Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani's house, Antilia, in Mumbai on February 25, 2021.

The NIA arrested Waze in March 2021 in connection with the recovery of explosives from a car parked near Mukesh Ambani's house.

Former Home Minister Anil Deshmukh was arrested by the ED in 2021 in an alleged money laundering case and spent several months in jail.

The CBI had registered a corruption case against Deshmukh following allegations that, as home minister, Deshmukh directed police officials to collect Rs 100 crore per month from bar owners. Deshmukh was later arrested in the case and subsequently secured bail.

went through his (Deshmukh's) PA; the CBI has the evidence. I have also written to Devendra Fadnavis and submitted all the evidence, including mentioning Jayant Patil," Waze told ANI.

Waze also said, "I am ready for that (a NARCO test)."

Sachin Waze is accused in the 2021 Antilia bomb scare and the Mansukh Hiren murder case. He is the prime accused in placing an explosive-laden vehicle near Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani's house, Antilia, in Mumbai on February 25, 2021.

The NIA arrested Waze in March 2021 in connection with the recovery of explosives from a car parked near Mukesh Ambani's house.

Former Home Minister Anil Deshmukh was arrested by the ED in 2021 in an alleged money laundering case and spent several months in jail.

The CBI had registered a corruption case against Deshmukh following allegations that, as home minister, Deshmukh directed police officials to collect Rs 100 crore per month from bar owners. Deshmukh was later arrested in the case and subsequently secured bail.

Army hospital in Chandimandir honoured with national recognition

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE JAMMU, 4 AUGUST

Bagging the prestigious title of 'Best Emerging National Transplant Retrieval Hospital' at an award ceremony of the National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation, the Command Hospital of Indian Army's Western Command (CHWC), Chandimandir, got a national recognition.

The hospital's tireless efforts and extraordinary expertise have not only set a new benchmark in the field of transplantation but have also opened new doors of hope for countless patients and their families. This pioneering procedure showcases the pinnacle of what can be achieved when brilliance in medicine is combined with a deep compassion for humanity, added the spokesman.

The hospital's tireless efforts and extraordinary expertise have not only set a new benchmark in the field of transplantation but have also opened new doors of hope for countless patients and their families. This pioneering procedure showcases the pinnacle of what can be achieved when brilliance in medicine is combined with a deep compassion for humanity, added the spokesman.

The CHWC has also achieved several significant

Lord Shiva's mace taken to Srinagar temple for traditional rituals

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE JAMMU, 4 AUGUST

In connection with the ongoing Amarnath yatra, the Chhari Mubarak (Holy Mace of Lord Shiva) was on Sunday taken to Srinagar's Shankracharya Temple as a traditional ritual of prayers before proceeding to the Amarnath cave shrine.

Mahant Deependra Giri, the custodian of the Chhari Mubarak, performed prayers at the hilltop Shankracharya

Temple. He said the prayers were held on the occasion of 'Haryali-Amavasya' (Shravan Amavasya) as per the age-old custom. The sound of a conch shell charged the whole atmosphere and the Pujan was performed amid chanting of Vedic hymns. Sadhus who accompanied the Holy Mace participated in the prayers that lasted for more than two hours. Collective prayers were also offered for peace and prosperity of Jammu & Kashmir.

Budget debate ends; no chakravyuh, India growing fastest: Finance Minister Sitharaman



DEEPAK RAZDAN NEW DELHI, 4 AUGUST

Parliament concluded the General Discussion on the Union Budget 2024-25 last week, after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's forceful replies in both Houses, noted for their strong political and economic content. There were short discussions on the Wayanad disaster and the Delhi tragedy in which three students died in the flooding of an IAS coaching institute basement. Members expressed their shock over the incidents but used the opportunity to make political attacks also.

The Finance Minister's replies came after Leader of the Opposition (Lok Sabha) Rahul Gandhi's "chakravyuh" speech in which he said the common man lived in a vicious trap of government policies, just as Abhimanyu was caught in a chakravyuh (trap-formation) and killed in the epic Mahabharat. He said the government was running from a Caste Census as it could show the strength of disadvantaged communities like Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and backward classes in the country's total population, and what



should be their share in the nation's prosperity, accordingly.

Drawing from epic tales and mythology has been part of the country's public discourse for quite some time. Mr Gandhi narrated part of the epic tale and sought to show the country's youth is without hope because of unemployment. The farmers are disappointed because their demand for legally-bound minimum support prices (MSP) for their produce was not accepted. The Agniveer scheme would neither help the Army nor the young men who join the armed forces for a few years, he said. The youth had another cause for frustration as the job exams they appeared for were often cancelled after paper leaks.

Several Opposition members attacked the Budget, stating it had no emphasis on job-creation, or inclination

to control rising inflation. The GST on health insurance continued, indexation benefit on property sale was withdrawn, while there was no relief to students on education loans as they had failed to get any job. Members alleged the Central Government has 10 lakh jobs vacancies which are not being filled up.

A common charge from the Opposition was the Budget favoured Bihar and Andhra Pradesh as they were ruled by parties which gave crucial support to the BJP government. Dimple Yadav (Samajwadi Party) said the Budget had ignored agriculture, allocation for education was low and there was a big gap between the demand and supply of health infrastructure. N K Premachandran (RSP) said the country has had jobless growth only. The Economic Survey before the Budget said the economy needs to generate 78.5 lakh non-farm jobs every

year till 2030, he said. Satabdi Roy (Trinamul Congress) said people expect from the Budget some relief in prices of food items, petrol and taxes on pension, besides increase in bank interest so that life become easy for them. They were disappointed, she said.

The Finance Minister, in her reply in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday, said the Budget was in continuity of the Interim Budget presented before the General Elections. The Budget sought to consolidate all the earlier accomplishments and outlined measures to overcome major challenges, she said. Rejecting allegations that disadvantaged groups were not getting justice or that some States were favoured, she said the Budget highlighted social inclusivity, that is reaching out to all people in the society, along with geographical inclusivity through equitable development for all regions in the country.

Mrs Sitharaman showed Budget speeches during the Congress rule often mentioned just a few States. It does not mean money does not go to the other States. She wondered how Mr Gandhi was championing a Caste Census when most Congress Prime Ministers had spoken against reservation in jobs or promotions. She said an SBI Research report had said 12.5 crore jobs were created during the NDA period of 2014-23 against 2.9 crore

jobs during UPA's 10 years. The Minister said the Budget's record proposal for capital expenditure of Rs 11 lakh crore should not be underestimated for its multiplier effect in job creation.

She told the Rajya Sabha the country had become the fastest growing economy in the world, and this could not be possible if there was general frustration in the country.

Several parties took part in the short discussion on the Wayanad disaster. The Opposition had queries whether the Kerala government was given early warning system advisories on time. Home Minister Amit Shah informed the members that the State was given advisories on 24 July and NDRF teams were sent by the Centre with the first warning. Members expressed concern that the State had experienced similar disasters in the past few years also and still timely action was not taken to prevent loss of life and property.

Members in the two Houses expressed horror over the Delhi tragedy in which three students drowned in a flooded basement of a coaching institute. The short discussion became an opportunity for some members to attack the AAP administration in Delhi. Members brought to the notice of the government that there is no law to regulate the coaching institutes.

TENDER advertisement for Government of West Bengal, including various notices for construction, wildlife, and forest management.

WBEIDC advertisement for Weel Bhavan, Sector-V, Salt Lake, Kolkata 700 091, including notice inviting e-tender for water proofing.

WEST BENGAL STATE ELECTRICITY TRANSMISSION COMPANY LIMITED advertisement for various power transmission projects.

WBSETCL advertisement for various power transmission projects, including cable route painting and power transformer work.

The Statesman

Incorporating and directly descended from THE FRIEND OF INDIA - Founded 1818

Cyber Security

The unveiling of Karnataka's Cyber Security Policy 2024 marks a significant step in addressing the burgeoning menace of cybercrime. As online fraud and cyber felonies escalate, this policy emerges as a crucial safeguard, aiming to fortify the state's IT infrastructure and assets while promoting a secure cyber ecosystem. The policy's comprehensive approach is commendable. By establishing a Security Operation Centre (SOC) for all critical government IT infrastructure projects, Karnataka aims to ensure round-the-clock monitoring and response to cyber threats. This proactive stance is essential in today's digital age, where cyber threats are not just frequent but also sophisticated and evolving. One of the policy's standout features is its dual focus on immediate threat management and long-term cyber-security ecosystem development. The first part of the policy, which is public, aims to build a robust cyber-security ecosystem. This includes facilitating internships for students and providing incentives for start-ups in the cyber-security domain. By investing in the next generation of cyber-security professionals, Karnataka is not only addressing current threats but also building a resilient future workforce capable of tackling emerging challenges. The second part, which is internal, focuses on strengthening the cyber-security posture of the state's IT assets. This involves creating a comprehensive incident response and crisis management framework. The integration of predictive, preventive, and protective measures ensures a holistic approach to cyber-security, enhancing the state's ability to mitigate risks effectively. Financial investment is another critical aspect of this policy. With an estimated outlay of Rs 103.87 crore over five years, the policy demonstrates a serious commitment to cyber-security. This funding will support various initiatives, including internships, research and development projects, and incentives for start-ups. Such investments are vital for fostering innovation and encouraging local enterprises to contribute to the cyber-security landscape. A noteworthy initiative is the policy's support for research and development in cyber-security, particularly projects driven by Karnataka-based start-ups in collaboration with academic institutions. By offering grants covering up to 50 per cent of the project's total research and development cost, the policy incentivises innovation and collaboration, driving advancements in cyber-security technologies. Moreover, the policy addresses the need for a secure cyber ecosystem for government-to-government (G2G), government-to-business (G2B), and government-to-customer (G2C) services. This comprehensive approach ensures that all facets of digital interaction within the state are safeguarded, building trust among citizens and businesses. The partnership with a multinational IT firm to train 40,000 individuals in cyber-security skills is another strategic move. With the increasing frequency and complexity of cyber threats, there is a pressing need for skilled professionals who can effectively manage and mitigate these risks. This collaboration will enhance Karnataka's cyber-security capabilities, ensuring the state remains at the forefront of technological advancement. As cyber threats continue to evolve, such proactive measures are essential to protect a state's digital assets and maintain the trust of its citizens and businesses. Karnataka's approach serves as a model for other states to follow.

US Slowdown

The rise in the US unemployment rate to 4.3 per cent, a near three-year high, underscores significant changes in the global economic landscape. This increase, coupled with the modest 114,000 rise in nonfarm payrolls in July, signals more than just a domestic economic concern for the United States. It reflects potential reverberations across the global market, affecting economies from Asia to Europe. One of the most telling aspects of this report is the persistent yet decelerating wage growth, which rose by just 0.2 per cent in July. This marks the smallest annual increase in more than three years, pointing towards an underlying softness in economic activity. While the Federal Reserve has maintained interest rates, the evident slowdown may prompt a reconsideration of this stance, with potential rate cuts as early as September. Such a move could have far-reaching implications, influencing not just the US economy but also global financial markets. For global markets, the developments in the US labour market are of particular significance. The interconnectivity of global markets means that fluctuations in the US economy can impact trade, investment, and currency exchange rates. Companies worldwide with significant exposure to the US market might face reduced demand for their products and services, leading to potential adjustments in their growth strategies. Moreover, the rising US unemployment rate and the subsequent market reactions - such as the drop in US Treasury yields and stock market declines - can lead to increased volatility in global stock markets. Investors, both domestic and international, often respond to shifts in major economies by reassessing their portfolios, which can cause short-term turbulence in various markets. However, it is not all gloom and doom. A potential slowdown in the US economy might present certain opportunities for other economies. For instance, if the Federal Reserve cuts interest rates, it could lead to a shift in global investment flows as investors seek higher returns elsewhere. Lower US interest rates could result in a search for higher yields, driving more investment towards other regions. The healthcare sector in the US showed significant employment gains in July, adding 55,000 jobs. This sector's growth could be a boon for global pharmaceutical and IT companies that provide services and products to the US healthcare industry. As demand for healthcare continues to rise, there may be increased opportunities for firms worldwide to expand their presence in the US market. While the slowdown in US job growth and the rise in unemployment are causes for concern, they also highlight the complex interplay between major global economies. The key will be to navigate these changes with strategic foresight, leveraging potential opportunities while mitigating risks. As the global economic landscape continues to evolve, staying attuned to these developments will be crucial for maintaining economic resilience and growth. This applies especially to India with its strong links to the American economy.

Japan reaches out ~ II

Viewed objectively, the PALM10 summit successfully laid the road map for Japan to deepen ties with the Pacific Island nations. Japan and the PALM10 leaders affirmed shared values, climate initiatives, security cooperation and a strengthened partnership. The impactful imperial hospitality also conveyed a sense of oneness of Japan with the cause of the Pacific Island nations



The PALM10 meeting was held exactly two months after New Caledonia, an island nation strategically located close to Australia and a French overseas territory, was hit by riots, threatening to destabilise the region. What triggered the riots and deadly violence in New Caledonia was that lawmakers in Paris approved a constitutional amendment to allow recent arrivals to the territory to vote in provincial elections.

Though the island territory is no stranger to violence, the unrest was alarming and the riots were the worst in four decades. French President Emmanuel Macron flew to New Caledonia in a bid to calm tensions.

Why is the island of New Caledonia important and why are Japan and other stakeholders keen to maintain the existing equilibrium in the South Pacific, even as they are worried about the developments in the island nation? The protests over France's voting reforms were the latest flashpoint in a decades-long tussle over France's role in the island.

New Caledonia is located in the waters of the southwest Pacific, about 1,500 km (930 miles) east of Australia. Of the total population of 270,000, 41 per cent are Melanesian Kanaka and 24 per cent are of European origin, mostly French. The archipelago was given its name by British explorer Captain James Cook in 1774. It was annexed by France in 1853 and was used as a penal colony until shortly before the turn of the 20th century.

France has realised the strategic significance of the island nation after understanding China's design. It is one of the five island territories spanning the Indo-Pacific held by France and has emerged as central to Macron's plan to maintain a firm French foothold in the Pacific.

There is an economic dimension to New Caledonia's strategic importance as well. It is the world's third-largest nickel pro-

ducer and lies at the heart of a geopolitically complex maritime region where the US, China, India, Australia and Japan are jostling for power and influence in security and trade.

When many Western powers were in a colonising spree of Asia in the 19th century and before the anti-colonisation movement gathered steam, France officially accepted the status of New Caledonia in 1946 as its overseas territory.

New Caledonia's importance suddenly rose after a nickel boom in the 1970s that drew outsiders. This led to conflicts between Paris and Kanaka independence movements. In 1998, a Nouméa Accord was reached.

This helped ease relations by outlining a path to gradual autonomy and restricting voting to the indigenous Kanaka and migrants living in New Caledonia before 1998.

The accord allowed for three referendums to determine the future of the country. In all three, independence was rejected. Why then did tensions explode suddenly in May 2024?

Under the terms of the Nouméa Accord, voting in provincial elections was restricted to people who had resided in New Caledonia prior to 1998, and their children. The measure aimed to give greater representation to the minority Kanaks, but Paris has since come to view it as undemocratic.

Local leaders say the new reform, which still needs a final joint vote of the two houses of parliament in Versailles, will dilute the vote of the indigenous Kanaka. Pro-independence parties want Macron to scrap the electoral reform.

With Japan's initiative during the PALM10, leaders across

the Pacific including New Caledonia held a caucus meeting on the margins to discuss the New Caledonia issue.

Indeed, Japan and other stakeholders are concerned about the developments in New Caledonia and are trying to address the issue in order to find solutions.

The Cook Islands Prime Minister and Pacific Islands



RAJARAM PANDA
The writer is former Senior Fellow at Pradhanmantri Memorial Museum and Library, Ministry of Culture, New Delhi

Forum Chair Mark Brown underlined that the issue of New Caledonia was a pressing issue for the PIF. As it transpired, the New Caledonia issue was not just a marginal theme for all PALM participants but an issue in need of PIF regionalism and political leadership.

As the Chief of Staff to the President of the Autonomous Government and Special Envoy of the New Caledonian government, Claude Gambeys sought support of the caucus. The PIF agreed to request the French government to conduct a field survey by the General Assembly in Tonga by August-end. This was a major political move.

Here, too, the China factor emerges as important. Though China has also held meetings similar to the PALM, the political leadership and the sense of regionalism (despite the fact that only three countries in the Pacific - Palau, Tuvalu, and the Marshall Islands - continue to support Taiwan, with its half-century old PIF history) ensured it could successfully withstand pressure from Beijing and defy the recent security agreement it had signed with the Solomon Islands. Thus, Japan accordingly strategized its policy and sought to protect its national interests by promoting the PALM and working with the PIF.

Viewed objectively, the

PALM10 summit successfully laid the roadmap for Japan to deepen ties with the Pacific Island nations. Japan and the PALM10 leaders affirmed shared values, climate initiatives, security cooperation and a strengthened partnership. The impactful imperial hospitality also conveyed a sense of oneness of Japan with the cause of the Pacific Island nations.

The hosting of a tea ceremony by Their Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako for the Pacific Island leaders and their spouses at the Imperial Palace on 17 July was more than a symbolic event. This hospitality and the symbolism implicit in it was an event that celebrated the importance of the Pacific Island nations and their significance to Japan.

At the conclusion of the summit, the Pacific Island Leaders' Declaration and Joint Action Plan wherein both sides affirmed the importance of shared values such as freedom and democracy. They also underscored the necessity of upholding a "free and open international rules-based order".

Hinting at China, the declaration explicitly expressed strong opposition to "any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by the threat or use of force or coercion anywhere in the world". The summit declaration aimed to achieve balanced diplomacy and rebuild trust with diverse countries and regions.

Japan proposed seven priority cooperation areas in the Joint Action Plan. These included climate change, disaster resilience, resources and economic development, all of which correspond to the seven pillars of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent of the PIF. Prime Minister Kishida unveiled the Pacific Climate Resilience Initiative, centred on disaster relief support. Beijing must be watching these developments keenly.

(Concluded)

A MEMBER OF THE ANN ASIA NEWS NETWORK

Speed up construction

The government on Tuesday announced 14 candidate sites for dams to be built or redeveloped. Four are in the Han River area, six in the Nakdong River area, one in the Geum River area, and three in the Yeongsan and Seomjin Rivers area.

The decision has overturned the declaration by the Moon Jae-in administration six years ago that it would no longer build government-initiated large dams. Three of the 14 envisioned dams are multipurpose dams, seven are for flood control and four are for water supply. It would be the first time in 14 years that multipurpose dams will be built.

Unusual weather due to climate change has become a global phenomenon, and South Korea is no exception. Considering the country suffered great damage from torrential rain and severe droughts, the decision to add dams looks inevitable.

In 2022, Typhoon Hinnamnor caused a stream in Pohang, North Gyeongsang Province, to overflow, flooding three underground parking lots of nearby apartment buildings and residential areas. Nine died and one went missing. All three furnaces of Posco, the country's top steelmaker, were also inundated and shut down for the first time in 49 years.

In the same year, the southwestern region including Gwangju and South Jeolla Province suffered a 227-day drought, the longest in half a century. The area suffered a shortage of water for residential use, and industrial complexes were on the brink of

The Korea Herald

shutdown. Last month, heavy rain poured onto Paju, Gyeonggi Province (873 millimeters), Buyeo, South Chungcheong Province (809 mm) and Iksan, North Jeolla Province (704 mm). The figures are more than half of the annual average precipitation there.

Over the past three years, torrential rain has caused more than 1.6 trillion won (\$1.15 billion) in damage and loss of 85 lives. If there had been more multipurpose or flood-control dams, the damage could have been reduced.

Each envisioned dam, once completed, should be capable of handling a single rainfall event of up to 220 millimeters.

The 14 dams will increase the annual water supply capacity by 250 million metric tons, sufficient to meet the water needs of 2.2 million people.

A large semiconductor cluster requiring massive water is under construction in Yongin, Gyeonggi Province. Dams are needed not just to respond to climate change but also to secure the competitiveness of strategically important industries.

The decision to build dams is meaningful in that it normalizes the Moon government's misguided policy on water resource management.

The Moon government stigmatized President Lee Myung-bak's Four Major Rivers Restoration Project as "old evils to clean up," dismantled some barrages along the Geum and Yeongsan rivers and kept others open constantly. It also suspended the construction of two dams in the Chungcheong provinces.

And yet the improvements in water quality and the environment that were used to justify the policy did not happen. Instead, it worsened flood damage, especially in Chungcheong and Jeolla provinces.

Constructing dams will take more than a decade. Even if construction begins now, there would be no means to reduce floods or drought damage pending construction. The government should try to shorten the construction period as much as possible.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Right chord

SIR, This is with reference to 'States can sub-classify SCs/STs, rules top court', published today.

The Supreme Court has delivered a landmark and laudable verdict by bestowing powers on states to sub-categorize among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

This will ensure substantive justice and equality of opportunity to other communities which are often subjugated and unrep-

resented within the group.

The court has struck a right chord by stating that classification should be based on quantifiable data, but it is uncertain if state governments will do so, ignoring their political whims.

This judgement is bound to create a lasting impact in Indian politics and it will be a panacea at a time when the politicization of caste is at its peak.

The judgement will lay the foundations of corrective affirmative action, mitigating fears of reverse discrimination. States must implement the judgment without any ruckus and must not distort it for political gains.

Yours, etc., M. Rishidev, Dindigul, 2 August.

NOW BINDING

SIR, The West Bengal Assembly is reported to have passed a resolution seeking a review by the Central government of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, which has been

recently implemented.

Such a resolution ought to have been passed by the state government before the Bill was passed in Parliament.

After having got the assent of the President of India, the Bill has now become law and is now binding on all states. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita can only be challenged in the Constitutional bench of the apex court.

Yours, etc., Arun Gupta, Kolkata, 2 August.

ANTI-PEOPLE

SIR, Apropos today's report "CM writes to FM, seeks withdrawal of 18 pc GST on insurance premiums", the request of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is justifiable and legitimate.

The GST on life insurance and health insurance premiums will put citizens under greater stress and anxiety, deprive them of a social security net, and act as a deterrent for many to continue their existing policies, or from taking new policies.

Insurance policies are meant for providing financial support to

LEAKS

SIR, First, it was the question papers. And now, our new parliament building leaks. Both the leaks are a blot on the accountability and credibility of the government.

The saddest part is that in both cases, the people at the helm of affairs are playing it down instead of accepting the lapses and failures honestly.

In the NEET question paper leak case, the government was initially in denial mode. Only later on, it was forced by media heat and the constant pressure of the opposition parties to act on a serious matter affecting the lives and careers of lakhs of students.

In the roof leak case too, the government, even after being left red faced, is maintaining silence, instead of submitting a public apology. It is the people's money that is dripping into a hastily placed bucket.

Yours, etc., Avinash Godbole, Dewas, 2 August.

victims and their families during challenging times like severe illness, accidents or untimely deaths, and so act as a vital component of the social safety and security net.

For calculating the taxable income, the new tax regime even ignores deduction of the professional tax levied by the state government. How can a further tax

be imposed on a tax deducted at source such as professional tax?

If the government does not care about the social security of the citizens during their trying times, there is nothing wrong in tagging the tax structure as "anti-people".

Yours, etc., Sukhendu Bhattacharjee, Hooghly, 3 August.

OCCASIONAL NOTE

WITH two world-flights still in progress, the news of a third in preparation can arouse only a mild degree of interest. The airmen who engage in these trials of skill and endurance will always be heroes. But a repetition of the exploits of D'Oisy, MacLaren and the American airmen is likely to come as anti-climax. The newly projected flight will start from Amsterdam, but it will not be a purely Dutch enterprise and thus one source of interest will be lacking. Hitherto the world flights, so far as they have gone, have revealed the difficulties rather than the facility of circumnavigating the globe through the air. The task is a much greater one than had ever been imagined by the man-in-the-street. Its successful completion by MacLaren and the Americans will be a triumph fully entitling the airmen to the plaudits awaiting them. Apart from information of technical value, however, regarding the capacities of machines and the practicability of air routes, it is hard to see what can be demonstrated by world flights beyond the fact that, given sufficient resources and means of assistance, it is possible to fly from one place to another until a circuit of the globe is completed. It is a splendid adventure. But two such demonstrations are enough to satisfy popular curiosity.

NEWS ITEMS

NOTE TO PERSIA

AMERICA'S SERIOUS VIEW OF SITUATION

THE American Note to Persia indicates that the United States expects Persia to meet the expenses of sending American warships to bring home Major Imbrie's body and also to furnish military guards at the American Legation as long as necessary. The Note adds that the continuance of diplomatic and consular representation in Persia will be dependent upon the action that the Persian Government takes to vindicate the principles of international law. The Note emphasizes the seriousness with which the Washington Government views the present situation.

BRITISH BEET SUGAR

NEW ENTERPRISE FOR DEVELOPMENT

LORD WEIR and Lord Invernairn are associated with a new enterprise to increase and extend the production of beet sugar in Britain. According to the Times, a factory costing £300,000 is being built near Nottingham for the manufacture of sugar from beet to be grown in the neighbourhood. Sites for further factories have been provisionally selected, in various parts of England, and Scotland where sugar beet is at present being grown experimentally. The Nottingham factory, which is nearly complete, will have a yearly capacity of 6,000 tons with possibilities of development to 10,000 tons.

THE MONSOON

ACTIVE OVER A LARGE AREA

THE monsoon has given a little rain in the Deccan Plateau and the United Provinces, but continues active elsewhere. Rainfall has been nearly general in Lower Burma, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. South-West Punjab, Lower Sind, East Hajputana, Gujarat, Central India, Central Provinces, Konkan, Malabar and North Hyderabad; and local in Upper Burma, North-West Frontier Province, West Rajputana. Bombay Deccan, Mysore and north Madras coast. A few falls have occurred in Assam United Provinces Kashmir and North-East Baluchistan.

Chief amounts are:-Mergui, Tavoy and Diamond Island, two inches; Rangoon and Bassein, one; Kyaukpyu and Akyab, five; Dhubri, one, Cox's Bazar and Khulna, two; Calcutta, one and a half; Berhampore, Noakhali, Hazari-bagh and Naya Dumka, one; Gaya, three; Khushab, one; Sonamarg', one and a half; Dera Ismail Khan, three; Harnai, half; Mount Abu, one and a half; Kotah, three; Ajmer and Dessa, two; Ahmedabad, one; Dwaraka, half and Neemuch two. Forecast: Increase in east of the Central Province and of United Provinces.

HOCKEY AT MADRAS

THE first match in the qualifying round of the Lord Willingdon hockey tournament, conducted by the South Indian Athletic Association, Ltd., was played this evening on the Association grounds between the Port Staff Club and the Young Men's United Club. An evenly contested game ended in a draw, each side scoring two goals.

Chipko spirit needed to save Himalayan ecology

BHARAT DOGRA

Speaking at an event 'Mountain Dialogues' on July 26 in New Delhi, the former Governor of Jammu and Kashmir NN Vohra made a strong plea for a campaign to save the Himalayas. Mr. Vohra, who was earlier the President of the Indian Mountaineering Foundation (apart from holding senior positions in the Home and Defense Ministries) questioned existing development trends and said that we ought to be concentrating on planting millions of trees in this ecologically endangered region. He was supported by Shyam Saran, former Foreign Secretary, who is known for his keen interest in ecological issues and was chairing the event. Mr. Saran, who is presently President of India International Centre, added: "We need a national movement to save the Himalayas and the IIC would be very happy to join this effort."

For this writer, this brings back memories of the late 1970s and the 1980s when he was covering the Chipko movement and its follow-up actions in Tehri Garhwal district and came close to the group of Gandhian or Sarvodaya workers including Vimla and Sunderlal Bahuguna, Dhum Singh Negi, Kunwar Prasun, Vijay Jardhari, and others. Of course there were several Chipko groups in various districts but I was involved more with this group. There were several movements in forests like Advani, Salet, Badiyargad, Kangar etc. where villagers (particularly women) and activists rushed to hug trees to protect them from the axe of the contractor and his men, or where there were fasts to protest against indiscriminate tree felling. Earlier, villagers including women protested against the auction of trees and courted arrest. The movement remained non-violent in the midst of the various provocations.

After the initial success - with the government announcing a ban on

commercial tree felling above a certain height - Sunderlal Bahuguna embarked on a Kashmir to Kohima foot march. Although chief ministers like Virbhadra Singh and Farooq Abdullah welcomed him personally, this was a very risky undertaking in the course of which at times he came close to death. As he told me, he had taken this up to get a first-hand view of the extent of ecological ruin in the Himalayan region of India and Nepal. In Delhi, he got a very good response from Prime Minister Indira Gandhi who was very open to suggestions for protecting Himalayan ecology.

Later, the struggle against the Tehri Dam proved so difficult that some other aspects of this campaign could not receive as much attention as needed. Nevertheless while living with and learning from these Gandhian activists, I absorbed a very important aspect of campaigning for saving Himalayan ecology - namely that this should be deeply based among people and should not be an elitist campaign. These activists were interacting all the time closely with people regarding their most urgent issues. If one day they were in action to protect trees, then the next they would be involved in saving indigenous trees, a day after in opposing liquor vends, and the next day in regeneration of degraded land. In other words, they were close to people and responded to their needs. This is how what appeared to be impossible at one stage became a reality. Women who seldom ventured out of their villages became willing to even go to prison and to confront policemen and contractors in forests. A true campaign should be a truly people-based campaign. Later when I was asked to participate in some elitist campaigns, I could see that they were not able to present issues and demands in ways that were favourable to the needs of people.

As a new campaign may emerge soon, its pro-people orientation should get special emphasis. Talking only of ecology while ignoring the

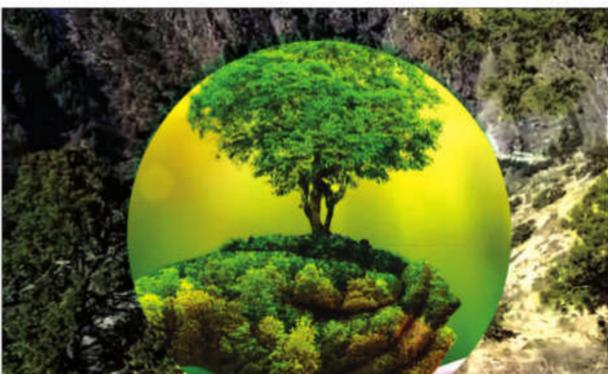
needs of people will not take us very far.

The Indian Himalayas stretch majestically for nearly 2,500 km. Over 50 million people live here, but the number of people whose life is closely influenced by the Himalayas is many times more.

For all their grandeur, the Himalayas are geologically young and fragile formations, prone to disturbances and landslides. Most of this region falls in the highest seismic zone. Hence policies for this region should take extra care to be protective towards the environment. At the national level, people tend to discuss the Himalayan region in terms of tourism and pilgrimage destinations, but greater attention should be given to the lives and livelihoods of common people living in the region as well as the need to protect the environment.

The Himalayas with their varying heights and slopes, peaks and valleys are suitable for preserving rich biodiversity. Traditional farming practices have made good use of this to provide a diversity of nutritious food, which is particularly rich in millets and herbs. Some farm scientists who were trained in green revolution monocultures could not appreciate these strengths and so disruptive new crops and technologies were introduced at some places. Fortunately this mistake is being realized by many. There are several initiatives to base farming more on organic and natural methods. This is welcome, but often a holistic approach of natural farming is missing in official efforts.

Forests are crucial for protecting Himalayan ecology, but with due care and understanding, they can also play the most important role in supporting sustainable livelihoods of local people. This would be based on providing people livelihoods in protecting forests and biodiversity, regenerating mixed natural forests with due place for more soil and water-conserving indigenous trees like the oak, and giving people better rights



over sustainable use of minor forest produce. A rural economy based on such protective livelihoods, fruits and dry fruits, organic farm produce in raw and processed forms, and supported by eco-friendly tourism and pilgrimage can provide a firm livelihood base without endangering the environment.

Unfortunately not just tourism but even pilgrimages are getting commercialised, with record numbers of helicopter sorties bringing pilgrims to their favoured shrines. Instead of allowing all this to be guided mainly by commercial factors, we must bring in important factors like protecting the environment and promoting livelihoods of common hill people.

There has been a lot of controversy around several big development projects, particularly dam and highway projects. A time has come when the government should make room for a completely unbiased evaluation of the overall impact of these projects so that future policy is guided entirely by the unbiased conclusions that can be drawn from the experiences so far. There are several concerns - loss of forests and trees, destabilization of slopes and land-slides, displacement of people among them - but a particularly serious concern is that of avoiding any massive disasters.

The role which hydel projects had played in aggravating the highly disastrous floods in Uttarakhand in 2013 has been widely discussed and even a committee appointed at the initiative of the Supreme Court had drawn attention to this. We cannot forget that at least 6,000 lives were lost in these floods. Sadly, the possibility of even bigger disasters still exists, given present conditions. A top priority should be to avoid such disasters. More than one officially appointed committee has drawn attention to very serious risks associated with the Tehri Dam Project in Uttarakhand, for instance, and we should not ignore or neglect such well-documented warnings.

Sunderlal Bahuguna used to say that the ecology is a permanent economy. He is no more, but we still have amidst us Vimla Bahuguna and other senior activists who had hugged trees to save them at the peak of the Chipko movement. We must seek their guidance and prepare for a campaign to save Himalayan ecology through a people-oriented campaign.

(The writer is Honorary Convener, Campaign to Save Earth Now. His recent books include Planet in Peril, Protecting Earth for Children, Man over Machine and A Day in 2071.)

IT CAME TO MIND | MANISH NANDY

The unclouded mind

I was in New Delhi on a project of short duration. I found a charming three-story house in Jor Bagh near the Lodi Gardens. At the back of my home, there was another house of the same design.

I could not help noticing that every day there was a fair number of people who visited the other home. Almost all of them were women, several relatively young. I was curious about what transpired in that house. What attracted so many young women there?

I returned from dinner one late evening and was parking my car when I saw a man about to enter the other home.

I got out of my car and said, "Hello."

When he responded, I asked, "You live in that house?" and, when he nodded, I said, "I am your new neighbour. I wanted to meet you."

He smiled, shook my hand and asked if there was any special reason.

I said, "Clearly, you have something that I haven't: extraordinary charm. I see a procession of women every day to visit you."

In halting English, he explained that he was a Zen monk from Japan, who holds classes most of the days.

I was embarrassed and apologized for my flippant remark. Then I said, "I have always been curious about Zen. But I know nothing about it. Perhaps you can help me."



Illustration by: Debabrata Chakrabarty

He smiled and nodded but said nothing further. I said goodbye and left.

The next morning the guard brought a package and said a stranger had left it for me. The package contained Shunryu Suzuki's book, Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind.

The title intrigued me. The beginner's is a raw, untrained mind. Why

should the enlightened Zen mind be anything like that?

Suzuki opened my eyes in a second. Learning may be a good thing, but every time you learn something, you also alter your mind, re-shape it, give it a new configuration. You could almost say that you clutter it, for the mind has then lost its pristine quality. It is no longer the beginner's mind.

Such a 'learned' mind, whatever other advantages it may have, has the prime disadvantage that it cannot approach a new object, experience or even learning with the innocence it earlier had. That kind of innocence is critical to be receptive to a new experience or new learning.

You start judging every new experience in the light of the altered, 'learned' mind you now have. The pure, unalloyed mind that you need to approach anything without bias, judgment or prior assumption is lost. The fullest absorption of the new remains beyond your reach. The essence of Zen is to give your mind the capacity to approach a new idea or experience with undiluted innocence, with a beginner's mind.

Something strange happened with Suzuki's book that very day.

Jane mentioned over dinner that she had had a serious problem in the office and her mind was greatly disturbed. She knew my habit of working late at night and said she would like to retire early. The next morning when I came down Jane was at the breakfast table sipping coffee. Unexpectedly, she had a peaceful and contented look.

She narrated a curious experience. She had gone to bed to forget her troubles, but the troubles would not leave her. Her mind wasn't at peace; she could not sleep. Not to disturb me, she got up and went to sit in

my study. Her mind was quite upset.

She found on my desk Suzuki's book. She turned the pages idly for want of anything better to do. Jane is from a rural area of Minnesota and the reference to a cow drew her attention. Suzuki uses the example of a man who leaves his cow to pasture in a meadow but ties him to a long rope affixed to a stake. The cow has all the freedom it needs to roam and eat as much grass as it wants, but it is never lost. The stake in the earth is the symbol of control over a freely wandering creature. The problem, says Suzuki, is that our mind is without control: it wanders out of control and causes us great distress for we don't have a stake in the ground.

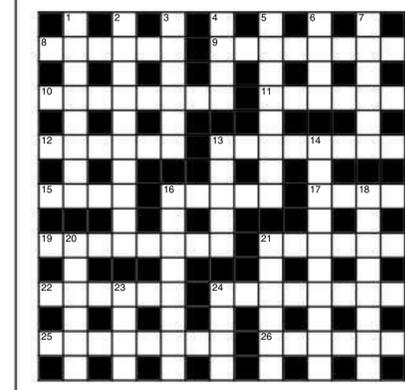
Jane said she read the passage twice. It brought her unexpected peace. The metaphor remained in her mind as she went back to the bed. She was soon fast asleep.

Suzuki's idea of a beginner's mind has left an indelible imprint on my mind. I have gone through difficult periods when stress has threatened to cloud my judgment and rob my peace. Then I think of the cow wandering in the meadow but not lost and the exquisite power of a pristine beginner's mind. One can always begin anew.

(The writer is a US-based international development advisor and had worked with the World Bank. He can be reached at mnandy@gmail.com)

CROSSWORD

NO-292858



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

CURIOUS SCRAPES
HEUWETIN
ADAPTABLE SNAKE
NRSSEETNA
CARDIAC PEACOCK
EADRRE
DANDELION TAPIR
GBIR
STEEL ENGENDERS
OAHOCLE
LIGHTER TENSILE
IURAMPD
COATI NEARTHING
IVNDROCE
TRAGEDY EMPRESS

- ACROSS**
- 8 Five yoga exercises on European cruise (6)
 - 9 Broadcast mike in a van (8)
 - 10 Transcend extravagant endless pain (8)
 - 11 District attorney initially thinks I have a case (6)
 - 12 Smart game to play outside (6)
 - 13 How rook flapping by motorway gets a parasite (8)
 - 15 Like a member of the military? (4)
 - 16 At any time that is weird (5)
 - 17 Greeny-yellow mucus after wiping top of sleeve (4)
 - 19 Half out of uniform ointment on cut leg's rough (8)
 - 21 Security needed for place on the border (6)
 - 22 Struggle to keep dry in a load of hay? (6)
 - 24 Proof of a base immorality around hideout (8)
 - 25 Russian fighter speeds and leaves country (8)
 - 26 Charlie, like so often, needing us to go easy (6)
- DOWN**
- 1 Like these down entries and calm our nerves, just a bit churned up (8)
 - 2 Fungus perhaps mostly evenly dispersed (10)
 - 3 What's left for instance in puddled clay (6)
 - 4 Cut out central section of rough drawings (4)
 - 5 Attire of doctor in conflict with honour (8)
 - 6 Independent's new head of telesales? On the contrary (4)
 - 7 A metal splinter I picked up (6)
 - 13 Many a white one's seen from rocky shore (5)
 - 14 Gnu edible when minced in boiled stew (10)
 - 16 Take food into doorway for begging (8)
 - 18 Wizard guy conceals all-American private intelligence (8)
 - 20 Vitamin in one way and another gives protection for a cold (6)
 - 21 Royal Navy invested in value (6)
 - 23 It's ending in aftermath (4)
 - 24 Start off banquet as one at table (4)

NOTE: Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required. (By arrangement with The Independent, London)

Unemployment rate drops by 1.3 pc points in July from eight-month-high

In absolute terms, the number of unemployed declined to 35.4 million in July from 41.4 million in the month before

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 4 AUGUST

Unemployment rate (UR) in India dropped by 1.3 percentage points in July from an eight-month high of over 9 per cent in the previous month.

Experts attribute the decline in the unemployment rate to the sowing season and the progress in hiring of workers.

According to the Consumer Pyramids Household Survey, the UR fell to 7.9 per cent in July from 9.2 per cent in June. The survey was conducted periodically by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), covers 1,78,000 sample households.

In absolute terms, the number of unemployed declined to 35.4 million in July from 41.4 million in the month before, according to an estimation made by the survey based on its



sample.

The male unemployment rate decreased from 7.8 per cent in June to 7.1 per cent in July. For females, it dropped from 18.6 per cent to 13.2

per cent. Despite this larger decline among females, their unemployment rate remains higher than the national average.

Unlike in June, the UR

stood higher at 8.5 per cent in urban areas in July against 7.5 per cent in the rural parts.

In June, the urban parts saw this rate at 8.8 per cent, while the rural areas had it

at 9.3 per cent. As such, the decline in UR was higher in rural areas at 1.8 percentage points compared to 0.3 in urban areas over this period.

The numbers may indicate some mitigation in the rural distress but are unlikely to give relief to the government striving hard to engage the private sector to hire more people, amid elevated joblessness in urban areas which is the hub for formal jobs.

Naukri JobSpeak Index, which tracks new job listings and job-related searches from recruiters, saw an increase to 2,877 in July from 2,582 the month before.

Meanwhile, the labour participation rate (LPR), which shows the proportion of working-age people (above 15 years) willing to work, declined from 41.3 per cent in June to 41 per cent in July, according to CMIE. This indicated a rise in the number of people not actively seeking work.

The LPR for males declined to 67.7 per cent in July from 68% in the previous month, while it remained the same at 11.2 per cent for females.

8 of top-10 most valued firms lose ₹ 1,28,913.5 cr in market valuation

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, 4 AUGUST:

Last week, eight of the top-10 most valued firms together lost Rs 1,28,913.5 crore in market valuation.

IT majors Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Infosys emerged as the biggest laggards, amid weak trend in equities.

The top loser remained the TCS as its valuation tumbled Rs 37,971.83 crore to Rs 15,49,626.88 crore, the most among the top-10 firms.

In terms of ranking, Reliance Industries retained the number one rank followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Infosys, LIC, Hindustan Unilever and ITC.

Another IT major Infosys market capitalisation (mcap) tanked Rs 23,811.88 crore to Rs 7,56,250.47 crore.

The valuation of Reliance Industries Limited declined by Rs 13,125.49 crore to Rs 20,28,695.57 crore while ITC's mcap dropped by Rs 16,619.51 crore to Rs 6,11,423.11 crore.

The valuation of Reliance Industries Limited declined by Rs 13,125.49 crore to Rs 20,28,695.57 crore.

M-cap of the State Bank of India slumped by Rs 13,431.54 crore to Rs 7,56,717.85 crore while the ICICI Bank diminished by Rs 7,843.75 crore to Rs 8,42,176.78 crore.

HDFC Bank's mcap jumped Rs 32,759.37 crore to Rs 12,63,601.40 crore. The valuation of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) soared Rs 1,075.25 crore to Rs 7,47,677.98 crore.

Bharti Airtel's market valuation went lower by Rs 11,821.5 crore to Rs 50,389.88 crore.

The valuation of Hindustan Unilever dipped by Rs 4,288 crore to Rs 6,32,862.41 crore.

On Friday, after five consecutive days of gains, investors chased to book profits across Indian equities, sending benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty lower. Last week, the Nifty surpassed the 25,000 mark for the first time ever and Sensex broke the psychological 82,000 mark.

Markets to correct, throwing up select buying opportunities

AGENCIES NEW DELHI, 4 AUGUST

Things were rolling along fine for the markets until the FED meeting. Thursday, saw US markets fall as thoughts of an impending recession hit the markets overseas. Our markets too got worried and we had a sharp fall on Friday, followed by another fall in the US.

Probably, we could see the week beginning on Monday, the 5th of August, opening with a downward bias.

Markets saw yet again a series of new highs being made on the BSE Sensex and Nifty. The new intraday high on BSE Sensex was 82,129.49 points while the closing high was at 81,867.55 points. Similar levels on the Nifty were at 25,078.30 points and 25,010.90 points.

Friday was a sea of blood and markets fell across the board. The week ended with BSE Sensex losing 350.77 points or 0.43 per cent to close at 80,981.95 points while Nifty lost 116.65 points or

0.47 per cent to close at 24,717.70 points.

The broader markets saw BSE100, BSE200 and BSE500 lose 0.37 per cent, 0.17 per cent and 0.13 per cent respectively. BSE midcap lost 0.07 per cent but BSE smallcap was up 0.62 per cent.

Markets gained on the first four days of the week and lost on Friday. This incidentally also brought to an end the weekly gains which the markets achieved for the previous eight weeks in a row. Incidentally, 8 is a

Fibonacci number and has great relevance in technical analysis.

The Indian rupee lost 2 paise or 0.02 per cent to close at Rs 83.75 to the US dollar. Dow Jones gained on two of the five trading sessions and lost on three.

The last two days of the week were brutal and markets lost significant ground. Dow ended the week with losses of 852.08 points or 2.10% to close at 39,737.26 points. The US FED had its policy review meeting on Wednesday. At

the end of the same, it appears that at the next meeting to be held in September, there is every possibility of a rate cut, though the quantum is not yet sure. The markets did not like the fact that the rate cut did not happen as yet or the fact that the US could slip into recession going forward. Strange are the ways of the markets and we are all yet learning.

Primary markets saw a lot of action. There was one issue which opened and closed during the previous week for

subscriptions, while another two have opened and will close in the coming week. Yet another two issues would open and close in the coming week.

The issue from Akums Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Limited, which had launched its IPO in a price band of Rs 646 - 679, received excellent response and was oversubscribed 63.56 times. The QIB portion was subscribed 90.09 times, the HNI portion was subscribed 42.21 times and the Retail portion was sub-

scribed 21.3 times. There were 23.95 lakh applications in all.

The issue from Ceigall India Limited opened on Thursday, the 1st of August, and would close on Monday, the 5th of August. The issue consists of a fresh issue of Rs 684.25 crore and an offer for sale of 1,41,74,840 shares in a price band of Rs 380 - 401. At the end of day 2 of the application, the issue is subscribed 1.29 times overall. One must remember that in IPOs the largest part of the

subscription comes on the third afternoon with QIB and HNI bids getting bunched at that time. The company is a road developer and had revenues of Rs 3,066.19 crore and a net profit of Rs 304.91 crore for the year ended March 24. The PE multiple for the share is 19.62 - 20.57. The share has decent prospects going forward. The second issue is from Ola Electric Mobility Limited which opened on Friday, the 2nd of August, and would close on Tuesday, the 6th of August.

Bank of India's net profit reaches ₹ 1,703 crore

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE SILIGURI, 4 AUGUST



5,915 crore in Q1 FY24.

The Capital Adequacy Ratio (Capital to Risk-Weighted Assets Ratio) also showed improvement with an increase of 58 basis points (bps) from June 30, 2023 to June 30, 2024.

The bank's retail, agriculture and MSME advances all saw positive growth with a Year over Year (YoY) increase of 18.78 per cent. These advances made up a majority (56.01 per cent) of total advances as of June 2024.

Domestic Current Account Savings Account (CASA) deposits also showed a YoY increase of 5.51 per cent, reaching Rs 2,74,973 crore in June 2024 with a CASA ratio of 42.68 per cent.

Furthermore, during Q1 FY25, Bank of India opened over three lakh new Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana accounts. As of June 30, 2024, the bank operates a total of 5,155 domestic branches.

The bank's Net Interest Income (NII) increased by 6 per cent Year-on-Year (YoY) to reach Rs. 6,275 crore in Q1 FY25 compared to Rs.

32 Indian startups raised record funding last week

AGENCIES NEW DELHI, 4 AUGUST

In a robust funding week, at least 32 Indian startups secured more than \$341 million in funding.

The Indian startup ecosystem saw six growth-stage funding deals and 22 early-stage deals last week.

Six startups raised more than \$216 million, led by mobility startup Rapido which secured \$120 million.

Among other Indian startups that raised a substantial amount of funding, like fintech firms Navi and BharatPe, and sports tech company KheloMore.

Among other startups that secured funding last week were renewable energy firm BluPine and EV startups Simple Energy and Kinetic Green.

Meanwhile, the government has empowered more than 10,000 technology startups through various schemes in the last five years.

The government has disbursed a total funding of Rs 580 crore to startups through incubators including over 3,600 tech startups.

The Department for Pro-



motion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has recognised 1,40,803 entities as startups.

As reported by IANS, Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Jitin Prasada said regarding the Startup India initiative: "The government undertook flagship schemes such as Fund of Funds for Startups, Startup India Seed Fund Scheme and Credit Guarantee Scheme for Startups."

These schemes helped startups raise investments from angel investors or venture capitalists or seek loans.

Prasada added that with the help of these schemes, there are over 1.43 lakh startups operating in India that are recognised by DPIIT.

Mahindra University seeks to enhance global collaboration, outreach

RITWIK MUKHERJEE KOLKATA, 4 AUGUST



Mahindra University, Hyderabad (India) is a multi-disciplinary university. It works towards "Educating future citizens for and of a better world" and is envisioned to be a private University that will play a significant role in driving quality improvements and innovation in higher education in the coming years.

Mahindra University will focus on generating new knowledge through engagement in cutting-edge research, creating a spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship, and undertaking collaborative projects with industry and other academic institutions.

In 2021, Mahindra University launched the School of Management, the Indra Mahindra School of Education, and the School of Law. The University is backed by Mahindra Educational Institutions (MEI), a subsidiary of Tech Mahindra Ltd., the flagship IT company of the Mahindra Group, a US \$19.4 billion industrial entity that employs in excess of 2,56,000 employees across 100 countries.

Speaking to The Statesman exclusively, Dr. Yajulu Medury, Vice-Chancellor, Mahindra University, outlines his plans for enhancing global collaborations, other expansion plans, overall future roadmap in terms of innovation and research, and much more.

Excerpts: Q: How does Mahindra University plan to enhance global collaboration opportunities for students through its new initiatives?

A: With the rising demand for industry-ready professionals, many universities nationally are opting for global collaborations to ensure that students gain exposure to different skills and perspectives. The enriching educational experiences offer students opportunities to study abroad and gain temporary work permits which opens doors for global job prospects and build international networks. Mahindra University aims to significantly enhance global collaboration opportunities for students through a range of new ini-

tiatives. The university leverages the expertise of Indian faculty members to bring forward insights into socio-economic and political conditions, fostering co-authored research papers, books, and collaborative projects with global counterparts. The university has established robust collaborations with esteemed institutions like Centrale-Supélec, University of Florida, Babson College, Frankfurt School of Finance & Management, La Trobe University, University of Agder, Virginia Tech, and Cornell University's SC Johnson College of Business. These collaborations span various formats including online engagements, semester exchange programs, joint research projects, and curricular development initiatives. By facilitating such collaborations, Mahindra University not only broadens students' academic horizons but also prepares them to thrive in a globally interconnected world.

Q: What are the key expansion plans of Mahindra University aimed at broadening academic offerings and campus facilities?

A: Infrastructure plays a key role in students' growth and learning. Mahindra University's expansion plans are geared towards significantly broadening its academic offerings and enhancing campus facilities. Anand Mahindra has committed over Rs 500 crore to the university, with investments scheduled from FY25 to FY29. These funds

will support the addition of new disciplines and elevate the university to a centre of eminence. The focus is on rapid expansion, bolstering academic quality, attracting top faculty, and ensuring state-of-the-art facilities across all colleges. Currently offering 45 programs across six schools and four centres at undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral levels, Mahindra University plans to establish two new schools - the School of Hospitality Management and the School of Liberal Arts - by 2024-25. Additionally, the launch of the School of Design Innovation underscores the university's commitment to diversifying its academic offerings.

Furthermore, Mahindra University is advancing in AI innovation with the establishment of its Artificial Intelligence (AI) Center of Excellence, leveraging NVIDIA's accelerated computing platforms. This initiative aims to drive cutting-edge AI research, provide comprehensive education programs, and foster practical applications. These strategic initiatives reaffirm Mahindra University's commitment to academic excellence and innovation in higher education. These initiatives reinforce Mahindra University's proactive approach to growth and innovation in higher education.

Q: Could you please elaborate on Mahindra University's future roadmap in terms

of fostering innovation and research across various disciplines?

A: Mahindra University is committed to fostering innovation and research across diverse disciplines as part of its future roadmap. Recently, the university hosted a delegation of provosts, deans, and academic leaders from 15 prestigious US universities, aimed at enhancing collaboration between Indian and American academia. This initiative aligns with Mahindra University's vision to become a global hub for cutting-edge research and academic excellence. To support this vision, Mahindra University has established multiple Research Centers of Excellence spanning fields such as energy, nanotechnology, Terahertz photonics, artificial intelligence, robotics, and more. These centers engage in advanced research projects in collaboration with industry partners and leading academic institutions worldwide. The university actively encourages faculty and students to pursue research initiatives by providing them with robust infrastructural resources and seed funding. This commitment has resulted in significant achievements, including 700+ patents and publications in renowned journals, showcasing Mahindra University's commitment to international research competitiveness.

Q: What unique facilities and amenities does Mahindra University offer to attract students, and how do these contribute to the overall campus experience?

A: Mahindra University offers a wealth of unique facilities and amenities designed to enhance the campus experience and attract students. Situated on a sprawling 100-acre campus in Hyderabad, the university boasts modern infrastructure and cutting-edge facilities that foster an optimal learning environment. State-of-the-art laboratories, technologically advanced classrooms, extensive libraries, international standards sports fields and recreational spaces contribute significantly to the academic and personal growth of students.

Classified

<p>CHANGE OF NAME</p> <p>I, RAHUL Ghosh, S/o. Arindam Ghosh, born on 14-12-2003, residing at W2CR 5/10, Phase-4B, Golfgreen, Kolkata-700095 have changed my name to Snigdhadev Ghosh vide Affidavit No.-1243, dated: 10-06-2024 sworn before Metropolitan Magistrate Calcutta, Affidavit Section.</p> <p>I, RINA, spouse of Prabhat Kumar Das, resident of 609/A, Diamond Harbour Road, Dist.: South 24 Parganas, West Bengal-700063, have changed my name from Rina to Rina Das vide affidavit 19-07-2024 at Alipore Court.</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>NOTICE OF LOSS OF SHARES OF HINDUSTAN UNILEVER LIMITED [Formerly Hindustan Lever Limited (HUL)]</p> <p>Regd. Off.: Hindustan Unilever Limited Unilever House, B.D. Savant Marg, Chakala, Andheri (East) Mumbai-400099</p> <p>Notice is hereby given that the following share certificate has been reported as lost / misplaced and Company intends to issue duplicate certificates in lieu thereof, in due course.</p> <p>Any person who has a valid claim on the said shares should lodge such claim with the Company at its Registered Office within 15 days hereof.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Name of the holder</th> <th>Folio No.</th> <th>No. of shares (Re. 1, F.V.)</th> <th>Certificate No.</th> <th>Distinctive No.(s)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>NAMITA SANGANERIA</td> <td>HLL-2949325</td> <td>320</td> <td>5270695 to 1154940570</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Date: 03-08-2024 Dev Bajpai Company Secretary</p> <p>All Advertisements are carried Free of cost on our website https://epaper.thestatesman.com</p>	Name of the holder	Folio No.	No. of shares (Re. 1, F.V.)	Certificate No.	Distinctive No.(s)	NAMITA SANGANERIA	HLL-2949325	320	5270695 to 1154940570		<p>The Statesman</p> <p>CLASSIFIED</p> <p>TO BOOK AN ADVERTISEMENT PLEASE CALL</p> <p>98307 80924 (SHUBHRO DEV MITRA)</p> <p>98308 74087 033 4801 8471</p>	<p>The Statesman</p> <p>CLASSIFIED</p> <p>TO BOOK AN ADVERTISEMENT PLEASE CALL</p> <p>98308 74087 98303 02169</p>
Name of the holder	Folio No.	No. of shares (Re. 1, F.V.)	Certificate No.	Distinctive No.(s)									
NAMITA SANGANERIA	HLL-2949325	320	5270695 to 1154940570										

Readers are requested to make appropriate enquiries and seek appropriate advice before sending money, incurring any expenses, acting on medical recommendations or entering into any commitment in relation to any advertisement published in this publication. The Statesman Group doesn't vouch any claim made by the advertisers of products and services. The printer, publisher, Editor and owners of The Statesman Group publications shall not be held liable for any consequences, in the event succumbances are not honoured by the advertisers. For any loss incurred, the onus lies entirely with advertisers and not with the publication.



We aim to establish seamless railway communication from the Baltic and Barents Seas to the shores of the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean

VLADIMIR PUTIN RUSSIAN PRESIDENT

US military destroys Houthi missile, launcher in Yemen

SANAA, 4 AUGUST

The US Central Command has said that its forces successfully destroyed an Iranian-backed Houthi missile and launcher in a Houthi-controlled area of Yemen in the past 24 hours.

"It was determined these weapons presented an imminent threat to the US and coalition forces, and merchant vessels in the region," it said on Saturday in a post on the social media platform X.

"These actions were taken to protect freedom of navigation and make international waters safer and more secure," it added.

The Houthi group, which controls much of northern Yemen, has yet to comment on its media outlets, Xinhua news agency reported.

Meanwhile, Britain's Maritime Trade Operations reported on X on Saturday that it received a report of an incident 170 nautical miles east of Aden, Yemen.

It said the merchant vessel observed a small explosion close to the vessel. The vessel's master confirmed there was no damage and all crew are reported safe. The vessel is proceeding to its next port of call.

Since November last year, the Houthi group has been targeting Israeli-linked vessels in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, using ballistic missiles and drones, to show solidarity with the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. In response, the naval coalition of the US and Britain stationing in the waters has since targeted the Houthi military sites to deter the group, but it led to the expansion of the Houthi attacks to include US and British naval and merchant ships.

Strikes on Gaza kill 18 as stabbing in Israel kills two

A woman in her 70s and an 80-year-old man were killed in the stabbing attack

AGENCIES TEL AVIV, 4 AUGUST

Israeli strikes early Sunday killed 18 people in Gaza, including four who were sheltering in a tent camp for displaced Palestinians inside a hospital complex, while a stabbing attack carried out by a Palestinian killed two people in a Tel Aviv suburb.

Tensions have soared following nearly 10 months of war in Gaza and the killing of two senior militants in separate strikes in Lebanon and Iran last week. Those killings brought threats of revenge from Iran and its allies and raised fears of an even more destructive regional war.

A woman in her 70s and an 80-year-old man were killed in the stabbing attack, according to Israel's Magen David Adom rescue service and a nearby hospital, and two other men were wounded. The police said the attack was carried out by a Pal-



stinian militant, who was "neutralized."

The rescuers said the wounded were found in three different locations, each about 500 meters (yards) apart. Police initially said they were searching for other suspects but later ruled out the possibility of there having been more than one assailant.

Israel has been bracing for retaliation after the killing of a senior Hezbollah commander in a strike in Lebanon and Hamas' top political leader in an attack in Iran's

capital last week. Both targeted killings were linked to the ongoing war in Gaza, which was triggered by Hamas' Oct. 7 attack into Israel.

In Gaza, an Israeli strike earlier on Sunday hit a tent camp housing displaced Palestinians in the courtyard of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, killing four people, including one woman, and injuring others, Gaza's Health Ministry said.

An Associated Press journalist filmed men rushing to the scene to help the

wounded and retrieve bodies, while trying to extinguish the fire.

The Israeli military said it targeted a Palestinian militant in the strike, which it said caused secondary explosions, "indicating the presence of weaponry in the area."

The hospital in Deir al-Balah is the main medical facility operating in central Gaza, and thousands of people have taken shelter there after fleeing their homes in the war-ravaged territory. A separate strike on a home near Deir al-Balah killed a girl and her parents, according to the hospital.

Another strike flattened a house in northern Gaza, killing at least eight people, including three children, their parents and their grandmother, according to the ministry. Another three people were killed in a strike on a vehicle in Gaza City, according to the Civil Defense - first responders who operate under the Hamas-run government.

Palestinian militants in Gaza fired at least five projectiles at Israeli communities near the border on Sunday, without causing casualties or damage, the military said.

An Israeli strike on a school-turned-shelter in Gaza City on Saturday killed at least 16 people and wounded another 21, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which announced the toll on Sunday. Israel's military, which regularly accuses Palestinian militants of sheltering in civilian areas, said it struck a Hamas command center.

Israel says it tries to avoid harming civilians, but the military rarely comments on individual strikes, which often kill women and children. Gaza's Health Ministry does not differentiate between civilians and militants in its tallies.

Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took around 250 people hostage in their surprise attack into southern Israel last October.

Hamas starts consultation to choose new chief



AGENCIES GAZA, 4 AUGUST

Hamas said that wide consultation has started in its leadership and consultative institutions to choose a new chief for the movement.

Past decades witnessed the killing of a number of its leaders, but the group was quick to choose alternatives to them in accordance with the regulations of the movement, Hamas said in a statement on Saturday.

The movement's executive institutions and its Shura, the main consultative body, are continuing their work, and it will announce the results of its consultations

Past decades witnessed the killing of a number of its leaders, but the group was quick to choose alternatives to them in accordance with the regulations of the movement

once they are completed, reports Xinhua news agency, quoting the Hamas statement. Hamas Politburo Chief Ismail Haniyeh was killed in the Iranian capital city of Tehran on Wednesday morning after he attended the inauguration of Iran's new President Masoud Pezeshkian.

Police officers injured as far-right activists face off against anti-racism groups across UK

AGENCIES LONDON, 4 AUGUST

A number of British police officers were injured Saturday as far-right activists faced off with anti-racism protesters in cities and towns across the country, following a stabbing rampage at a dance class earlier this week that left three girls dead and several wounded.

With dozens of similar gatherings taking place around the country this week and sunny weekend, police mounted a significant security operation, deploying thou-

sands more officers onto the streets, many in riot gear. Police have also made more prison cells available and are using surveillance and facial recognition technology. Court hours have also been extended to judge those arrested.

On Saturday, Merseyside Police said a number of officers were injured in "serious disorder" in the center of Liverpool, about 20 miles away from the scene of the stabbing attack in the seaside town of Southport in the northwest of England that has resulted in understand-

able anguish across the country.

"Let's call this out for what it is—mindless thuggery by people looking for an excuse to spew hatred and carry out acts of violence," Liverpool City region Mayor Steve Rotherham said.

And Humberside Police in a statement said three police officers have been injured and four people arrested following disorder in the city of Hull, in the northeast of England. Earlier, windows of a hotel in Hull that is used to house migrants were smashed.

Somali police say 32 people died in an attack on a beach hotel; Al-Shabab claimed responsibility

AGENCIES MOGADISHU, 4 AUGUST

Police in Somalia said Saturday that 32 people died and 63 others were wounded in an attack on a beach hotel in the capital, Mogadishu, the previous evening.

Al-Qaida's East Africa affiliate, al-Shabab, said through its radio station that its fighters carried out the attack.

Police spokesperson Maj. Abdifatah Adan Hassan told journalists that one soldier was killed and another wounded, while the rest of the dead



were civilians. Witnesses reported an explosion followed by gunfire.

Lido Beach, a popular area in Mogadishu, is bustling on Friday nights as Somalis

enjoy their weekend.

A witness, Mohamad Moalim, told The Associated Press that he saw an attacker wearing an explosive vest moments before the man "blew himself up next to the beach-view hotel."

Moalim said some of his friends who were with him at the hotel were killed and others were wounded.

Another witness, Abdissalam Adam, told the AP that he "saw many people lying on the ground" and had helped take some wounded people to the hospital.

The Lido Beach area has in the past been targeted by militants allied to al-Shabab. The most recent attack last year killed nine people.

In a separate attack on Saturday, state media reported that seven people died after a passenger vehicle hit a roadside bomb some 40 kilometers (25 miles) from the capital.

Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud last year declared a "total war" on the militants as the country started taking charge of its own security.

Opposition leader joins rally calling for Venezuela presidential election results to be overturned

AGENCIES CARACAS, 4 AUGUST

Thousands of people rallied in the streets of Venezuela's capital Saturday, waving the national flag and singing the national anthem in support of an opposition candidate they believe won the presidential election by a landslide.

Authorities have declared President Nicolás Maduro the winner of last Sunday's election but have yet to produce voting tallies to prove he won. Maduro also urged his backers to attend his own "mother of all marches" later Saturday in Caracas.

The government arrested hundreds of opposition supporters who took to the streets in the days after the disputed poll, and the president and his cadres have threatened to also lock up opposition leader, María Corina Macha-



do, and her hand-picked presidential candidate, Edmundo González.

On Saturday, supporters chanted and sang as Machado arrived at the rally in Caracas. Ecstatic, she crushed around her as she climbed onto a raised platform on a truck to address the crowd.

"After six days of brutal repression, they thought they were going to silence us, intimidate or paralyze us," she told them. "The presence

of every one of you here today represents the best of Venezuela."

Machado, who has been barred by Maduro's government from running for office for 15 years, had been in hiding since Tuesday, saying her life and freedom are at risk. Masked assailants ransacked the opposition's headquarters on Friday, taking documents and vandalizing the space. On Saturday, she held aloft a Venezuelan flag

and promised that the government whose policies forced millions of Venezuelans to leave was finally coming to an end.

"We have overcome all the barriers! We have knocked them all down," Machado said. "Never has the regime been so weak."

González, who remains in hiding, was not seen at the event, and when the rally ended, Machado was given a non-descript shirt and whisked away on the back of a motorcycle.

Carmen Elena García, a 57-year-old street vendor was at the rally even though she feared a government crackdown. "They have to respect me and they have to respect all the Venezuelans who voted against this government," García said. "We will not accept them stealing our votes. They have to respect our votes."

Russia's Putin offers disaster aid to North Korea to help it cope with recent flooding damage

AGENCIES SEOUL, 4 AUGUST

Russian President Vladimir Putin offered humanitarian assistance to help North Korea cope with damages from recent floods, both countries said, in another sign of expanding relations between the two nations.

In a message to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Saturday, Putin "extended deep sympathy and support" and conveyed his willingness to provide immediate disaster aid to help North Korea recover from the floods, the North's official Korean Central News Agency reported Sunday.

Russia's state news agency Tass carried a similar report, saying that Putin told Kim in the message: "You can always count on our assistance and support."

Ties between North Korea and Russia have been improv-



ing significantly amid widespread outside beliefs that North Korea has supplied conventional weapons to Russia for its war in Ukraine in return for military and economic assistance. During a meeting in Pyongyang in June, Kim and Putin signed a pact stipulating mutual military assistance if either country is attacked, in what was considered the two countries' biggest defense deal since the end of the Cold War.

Kim expressed his gratitude to Putin over the offer for aid, saying he "could deeply feel the special emotion towards a genuine friend in the most difficult period." But Kim said North Korea has established its own rehabilitation plans and will ask for Russian assistance later if it is needed, according to KCNA.

Heavy rains on North Korea's northwestern region on July 27 flooded 4,100 houses, 7,410 acres of agricultural fields and numerous other

public buildings, roads and railways, according to KCNA. The scale of casualties isn't known. KCNA recently quoted Kim as saying the flood caused a "casualty that cannot be allowed" but didn't elaborate. On Thursday, rival South Korea also offered humanitarian support to North Korea. Observers say North Korea will likely ignore or turn down the South Korean proposal, as animosities between the two countries are at one of their highest points in years.

During a Friday visit to a military unit involved in operations to evacuate residents stranded by the floods, Kim called South Korea "scum" as he lambasted what he called "rubbish" South Korean media for allegedly tarnishing the North's image by exaggerating the death tolls from the floods. Kim didn't mention South Korea's offer to provide aid.

After smooth campaign start, Kamala Harris faces a crucial week ahead

AGENCIES WASHINGTON, 4 AUGUST

The crowds are psyched. The campaign donations are flooding in. Volunteers are showing up at field offices in droves.

After a mostly smooth two-week campaign startup, Vice President Kamala Harris is headed into a crucial week that includes her most critical decision yet — choosing a running mate — while grappling with how to keep that early political momentum alive.

Harris, a former prosecutor known for being deliberative, effectively has a deadline of Tuesday to select who will be her No. 2 from a list that has been whittled down to four governors, a senator and a Cabinet official who was also one of her 2020 foes. It's a high-pressure decision that usually spans several months, but in this case is compressed into a matter of just weeks.

From there, Harris and her running mate will launch



into an aggressive, seven-state battleground tour that begins in Philadelphia on Tuesday and winds through Wisconsin, Michigan, North Carolina, Georgia, Arizona and Nevada. Her early rallies have attracted enthusiastic thousands.

Campaign officials are aware that momentum can be fleeting and are working to capitalize on the energy now, while managing expectations by continuing to emphasize the race with

Republican nominee Donald Trump is tight. But the strong rollout has allowed the Harris campaign to put a number of states back in play that had been feared out of reach when President Joe Biden remained at the top of the ticket.

Harris faces new tests in the coming days as she works through key decisions — including her vice presidential pick, with the potential to disappoint elements of the coalition.

Harris turns down Trump's election debate proposal

AGENCIES WASHINGTON, 4 AUGUST

US Vice President and Democratic Presidential nominee Kamala Harris has turned down a September 4 debate on Fox News proposed by Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump.

The Harris campaign said that Trump was trying to "back out" of a debate with US President Joe Biden that had already been set to run on ABC.

After securing the Democratic nomination for the

November 5 election, Harris said on Saturday that she plans to participate in the originally planned debate. Taking to social media platform X, she said, "It's interesting how 'any time, any place' becomes 'one specific time, one specific safe space.'"

"I'll be there on Sept. 10, like he agreed to. I hope to see him there," she posted.

Trump had suggested that the debate should be moved to Fox, which is most popular with his followers.

On the proposed debate, Harris' message is coming into clearer focus with each day. Her first television ad last week portrayed her as "fearless" and emphasized what has emerged as a rallying

cry for her campaign: "We are not going back."

She is also repeatedly emphasizing the concept of freedom, focusing not just on Trump as a threat to democracy but also the freedom to have an abortion and be safe from gun violence.

'Deplore the offence done to many Christians': Vatican slams Olympic ceremony skit on 'Last Supper'

AGENCIES VATICAN CITY, 4 AUGUST

The Vatican has said it had been saddened by a skit at the Paris Olympics opening ceremony appearing to parody Leonardo da Vinci's "The Last Supper" painting, the media reported.

"The Holy See was saddened by certain scenes at the opening ceremony of the Paris Olympic Games and cannot but join the voices raised in recent days to deplore the offence done to many Christians and believers of other religions," it said on Saturday evening in a press statement.

"In a prestigious event where the whole world comes together around common values, there should not be allusions ridiculing the religious convictions of many people," the Vatican added as quoted by Reuters reported.

The segment in the July 26 ceremony resembled the biblical scene of Jesus Christ and his apostles sharing a last meal before the crucifixion, but featured drag queens, a transgender model and a naked singer as the Greek god of wine Dionysus.

Paris 2024 organisers apologised two days later, saying there was never an intention to disrespect any religious group, Reuters reported.

The artistic director behind the scenes said it had not been inspired by the Christian Last Supper, but rather a pagan feast linked to the historical Olympics.

"Freedom of expression, which is not called into question, finds its limit in respect for others." The Vatican did not say why it was issuing its statement more than a week after the opening ceremony, Reuters reported.



Raahgiri programme promotes the spirit of love and brotherhood among the people as well as provides a platform for children to showcase their talent through various activities

HARYANA CHIEF MINISTER NAYAB SINGH SAINI

WHILE ADDRESSING CHILDREN, SPORTSPERSONS AND DIGNITARIES AT A RAAGHIRI PROGRAMME

UP govt gears up to amend law on Nazul Land in next session

There are around 75,000 acres of Nazul land in the state, the value of which is estimated at ₹2 lakh cr

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE LUCKNOW, 4 AUGUST



In the wake of the resistance not only from the Opposition but also from within the party, the BJP Government in Uttar Pradesh had to shelve the Nazul Property (Management and Use for Public Purposes) Bill-2024 at least till the next session despite having a majority in the Legislative Council (Upper House).

However, the Yogi Adityanath Government is continuing with its preparations to amend the Bill so that it could be approved in the next session.

Sources in the government disclosed on Sunday that in the previous governments, freehold Nazul land worth billions of rupees was bought and sold at throwaway prices. From the land mafia to the

Neither the Yogi Government nor the BJP organization wants the Opposition to get a chance to mislead the public in any way before the by-elections for 10 assembly seats, the leader added.

The recommendations of the select committee will be placed in the next session of the Legislature.

According to the recommendations, the amended bill will be passed and sent to the Governor for approval. The related law will be implemented as soon as the Governor's approval is received.

There are around 75,000 acres of Nazul land in the state, the value of which is estimated at Rs 2 lakh crore. There is no dearth of disputes over the possession of Nazul land. Many valuable and big lands are also in the possession of land mafia and influential people. Chief Minister Yogi

Adityanath had already formed a four-tier anti-land mafia task force to ensure action against the land mafia.

In the last four and a quarter years, the Revenue and Police Department have taken action as part of the campaign against the land mafia.

According to the data of the Revenue Department, about 1,54,249 acres of land has been freed from encroachment. Around 2,464 encroachers were identified and 187 of land mafia were arrested and sent to jail. In these cases, 22,992 revenue cases, 857 civil cases and 4,407 FIRs were registered.

The game of taking possession of Nazul land and making it freehold on the basis of fake documents is quite old in the state by paying only 10 per cent of the circle rate and has been going on for a long time.

BJP Backward Morcha leaders assure justice to rape victim's family in Ayodhya

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE AYODHYA, 4 AUGUST



The bakery of Samajwadi Party (SP) leader Moeed Khan, the main accused in the gang rape of a minor girl, is being bulldozed by the administration after it was found to be illegal, in Ayodhya on Saturday. ■ ANI

A delegation of the Backward Morcha of the BJP visited Ayodhya on Sunday to meet the family members of the 12-year-old rape victim, who is currently under treatment at the hospital.

The delegation comprised Rajya Sabha MP Sangeeta Balwant, MP Baburam Nishad and UP Minister Narendra Kashyap.

Later, talking to the media, Baburam Nishad said, "We spoke to the victim's mother and will submit a full report to the national leadership".

He further said that the Uttar Pradesh government was not going to spare the guilty of the crime.

"Akhilesh Yadav (SP chief) talks about DNA testing and PDA but cannot see and hear the pain of this daughter. The government will take action against them (the accused) the way that will be remembered by many generations. I request

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to increase the compensation for the victim from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 25 lakh."

Recounting her meeting with the victim's mother, MP Sangeeta Balwant said, "We tried to understand their pain. The chief minister has taken action against the accused. We have assured them that they

need not fear as strict action will be taken against the accused."

Narendra Kumar Kashyap said, "All the accused will be punished as investigation is underway. We will talk to the officials."

"This is a serious incident. The Samajwadi Party has not taken this matter seriously."

Tripura CM announces relief package for Ganda Twisa area

AGENCIES AGARTALA, 4 AUGUST

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Sunday visited violence-hit Ganda Twisa area in the state's Dhalai district and announced an additional Rs 241.46 crore for relief and re-development projects for the places that were devastated by widespread ethnic violence last month.

Saha announced an additional Rs 2.30 lakh for the relief of 145 affected families and Rs 6 lakh for the kin of tribal college student, Parameshwar Reang, who succumbed to his injuries on 12 July after being assaulted on 7 July.

The state government earlier sanctioned Rs 1.14 crore for the relief of the affected families and Rs 4 lakh for the families of Reang.

After visiting the affected areas and interacting with the violence-hit people, the Chief Minister also announced Rs 239.10 crore for 17 development projects in the mountainous areas and setting up additional security camps for mixed populated areas.

He said that the government wanted peace and ethnic harmony to maintain uninterrupted development.

"Severe action would be taken against the perpetrators of the violence and rumour mongers. The state government has always been giving priority for the development of interior and tribal areas. But for undertaking the development, peace and ethnic tranquility is the foremost condition," CM Saha, told the media.

LORDLY ARRIVAL



Devotees carry an idol of Lord Ganesha during a procession ahead of the 'Ganesh Chaturthi' festival, in Mumbai on Sunday. ■ ANI

UP govt launches major relief effort for flood victims, distributes over ₹ 3 cr in financial aid

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE LUCKNOW, 4 AUGUST

In its attempt to address the plight of individuals whose houses have been submerged by floodwaters, the Uttar Pradesh government is spearheading a major relief effort.

Understanding the lasting impact of such devastation, CM Yogi has directed immediate aid to those who have lost their homes in the recent floods.

In response, over Rs 3 crore has been allocated to assist more than 2,000 families across the state within 30 days. This funding aims to help affected individuals rebuild their homes and begin the recovery process. Relief Commissioner GS Naveen said

Understanding the lasting impact of such devastation, CM Yogi has directed immediate aid to those who have lost their homes in the recent floods.

He informed that among the worst-hit areas, Pilibhit suffered extensive damage with 867 houses affected, receiving a total of Rs 42,58,000 in financial aid.

Lakhimpur Kheri also experienced significant damage, with 593 houses affected and Rs 80,77,500 distributed to the victims of 588 damaged homes.

The Relief Commissioner said that the relief effort has addressed the needs of houses completely destroyed by the floods.

He informed that a total of 138 houses in 14 districts were completely damaged due to the flood. In total, Rs 1,62,00,000 has been allo-

ated to 135 fully damaged pukka houses at the rate of Rs 1,20,000 per house.

For 14 completely destroyed kutcha houses, Rs 49,20,000 has been provided at the same rate. A compensation amount of Rs 8,19,000 has also been given for 126 partially damaged pukka houses at the rate of Rs 6,500 per house. Besides, Rs 38,56,000 has been distributed for 964 partially damaged kutcha houses at the rate of Rs 4,000 per house.

Further support includes Rs 76,72,000 for 962 destroyed huts, with financial aid provided at Rs 8,000 per hut. Additionally, victims of 85 damaged cattle sheds have received Rs 2,52,000, with Rs 3,000 per damaged shed.

castes would not be a correct move.

Mayawati said that the Supreme Court's decision appears to be a plan to end reservation. She also questioned the criteria for the creamy layer.

She bluntly said that there should be no attempts to change the reservation system in the future and also called for its inclusion in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution.

Cautioning the Scheduled Castes, Mayawati emphasised the need for unity in this emergency situation. She warned that if they remain divided, their opponents will exploit the situation.

Threats by any Naga outfit, others will be dealt with as per law: Nagaland govt

AGENCIES KOHIMA, 3 AUGUST



Nagaland government spokesperson and Minister for Power and Parliamentary Affairs, K.C. Kenye. ■ FILE PICTURE

The Nagaland government on Saturday said that any acts of threat or coercion by any Naga outfit under ceasefire or others are criminal offences and will be dealt with according to the law.

Nagaland government spokesperson and Minister for Power and Parliamentary Affairs, K.C. Kenye said that the state government has taken notice of the "death threats and capital punishment" for K. Rulho, a contractor and trader by the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khango).

The NSCN (Khango) is

one of the several Naga outfits now under ceasefire agreement and engaged in the process of negotiation with the government.

Kenye said that an FIR was promptly registered against the NSCN (Khango) and its functionaries under appropriate sections of law.

He said that the state government had previously made clear in response to the "shut-down" agitation launched by the business community of Nagaland in April that any acts of threat or coercion, whether by factions in ceasefire or otherwise, are criminal offenses and would be dealt with according to the law.

"The state government reiterates the same and would ensure peace and tranquility in Nagaland which is essential for economic development and prosperity," the minister added.

Kenye added that the state government has also taken up the matter with the Chairman of the Ceasefire Monitoring Group/Ceasefire Supervisory Board to ensure that the NSCN (Khango) faction and other groups adhere strictly to the ground rules of the ceasefire.

BSP chief opposes change in reservation system

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE LUCKNOW, 4 AUGUST



Bahujan Samaj Party supremo Mayawati on Sunday opposed any change in the present reservation system and demanded that it be included in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution.

She also appealed to the SC/ST community to remain united to prevent others from taking advantage.

Addressing a press conference here on Sunday, Mayawati questioned the Supreme Court's decision to divide the Scheduled Castes into sub-castes. She said that her party does not agree with this decision and warned

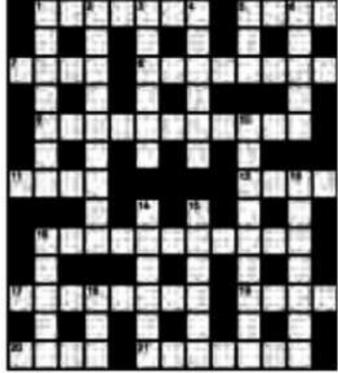
that creating a new reservation list will lead to many problems.

The BSP chief said that hearing a 20-year-old case from Punjab at this moment is not appropriate.

She also noted that dividing Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes into sub-

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- Stabilising weights (7)
- Surprise attack (4)
- Rich soil (4)
- Adversary (8)
- Naval vessel (11)
- Pakistani language (4)
- Diplomacy (4)
- Vitamin-rich liquid (3-5,3)
- Disciplinarian (8)
- Destroy (4)
- Crooked (4)
- Winter sport (7)

DOWN

- Type of loaf (7)
- Sweet spread (5,4)
- Stimulate (6)
- Fur cape (6)
- Manage (3)
- Archery target ring (5)
- Miscellany (9)
- Vocation (7)
- Outdoor meal (6)
- Restrict (6)
- Fad (5)
- Young child (3)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS

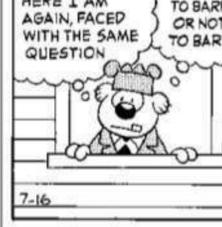
- Truss
- Tea (Trusty)
- Maestro
- Tonic
- Rash
- Overseas

DOWN

- nience
- Starve
- Morass
- Emotion
- Hazard
- Remedy
- Spare
- Ship

By arrangement with The Independent. Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required.

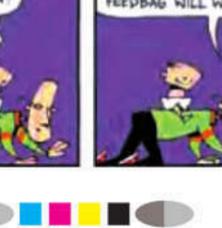
BEEBLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovalieski



NEED TO KNOW

Ambulance
FD Block Association (Amb) 9830452536, 9830181286
Happy Calculators 24400160
City Point Nurses Centre 2567-4113, 9831142623
People's Relief Committee 2280-4943/9444

24 hrs Medical Oxygen Delivery
BOC India Ltd. 9831277777

Blood Banks
Ashok Laboratory 24720333
Central Blood Bank 23510619

Life Care 2284-6940
Peoples Blood Bank 2455-5164/5557
BK Mission Seva Pratishthan 2475-3636/39

Police/Fire
Laibazar (Police Control Room) 22143230
S. P. (North 24-Pgns) 25423005
S.P. (South 24-Pgns) 2479-3333/1311
Bhawani Bhawan 24791761/9, 24791933
Fire Service Station Salt Lake: 2357-5293;

Howrah 2666-8111; Behala 2497-6285

Civic Services
Kolkata Municipal Corporation: 2286-1000
Water: 2543-1602

Calcutta Telephones
Changed Number Announcement 1951, 1952, 1953

Taxi Refusal
SMS 575756: Complaint and registration

Police Toll Free No. 1073
Transport Deptt. No. 6451-6718

CESC Fault Reporting
1912 and 4403-1912

Trains
Howrah Station Old Complex 1331/1332 (Auto Telephone Numbers), 1310, 2636-7412/3542/2681 (manual).
Sealdah: 2350-3535/3537
Shalimar Station: 2668-1121, Eastern Railway and South-Eastern Railway: 139.

SCRABBLE GRAMMS

PAR SCORE 140-150 by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN.

SCRABBLE® (TM) & GRAMMS® (TM) are registered trademarks. All rights in the game are owned in the U.S.A. by Hasbro Inc. In Canada by Hasbro Canada Inc. and elsewhere by J.B. Spear & Sons Limited, a subsidiary of Mattel, Inc.

incIcons Male & 20 letter word from the letters in each rack. Add points of each letter, using scoring directions at right. "Blank" and 0-point words are in the Official Scrabble Players Dictionary/Merriam-Webster and OJD Wordlist/Chambers. Judd's solutions are available at: www.juddsolutions.com 20-25-12

SUDOKU Concepts Sudoku

By Dave Green

			9	2				
			1				4	
		3					1	8
2	6		3	1				
3			1	6	8		9	
5							6	
	4							8
		1	5	9	4	7		
		7		6				

Difficulty Level ★★

Answers to previous puzzle

Sudoku is a number placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that no row, no column and no 3x3 box contains the same number. The difficulty level increases through the week.

Assam: When flood wipes out more rhinos than poaching

NAVA THAKURIA

Poaching of single-horn rhinoceros in Assam forest reserves makes international media headlines, but often it gets subdued coverage for the wiping out of many rhinos in a single wave of flood that hits the region after incessant rains for weeks across vast localities comprising upper riparian countries. Responsible officials confirm that the last wave of the Assam flood snatched away the lives of 13 one-horned rhinos, whereas it took six years to lose a similar number of precious animals to poaching inside the highly protected forest reserves like Kaziranga and Manas.

The second wave of flooding in July left a trail of devastation, killing over a hundred people, damaging more than 25,000 hectares of crop area, and devastating 10,50,000 domestic animals and poultry. The natural disaster temporarily displaced thousands of families and smashed a number of embankments, roads, bridges, buildings, and other infrastructure in the state. The swollen Brahmaputra river water inundated Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve for many days, and hundreds of wild animals lost their lives.

At its peak, the deluge hit over 2.7 million people (out of the 33 million population) in 30 districts of Assam, where more than 3,500 villages were submerged by the flood water for many weeks. Thousands of families in the districts of Dhubri, Cachar, Golaghat, Darrang, Goalpara, Lakhimpur, Barpeta, Bongaigaon, Biswanath, Charaideo, Chirang, Dhemaji, Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Kamrup & Kamrup (metropolitan), Karbi Anglong, Karimganj, Hailakandi, Kokrajhar, Majuli, Morigaon, Nagaon, Hojai, Nalbari, Sivasagar, Sonitpur, Tamulpur, Tinsukia, Udalguri, etc. had to take shelter in over 700 relief camps

run by the district administration. The muddy flood water from the Brahmaputra, Barak, Kuchiyara, Subansiri, Burhi Dihing, Dikhou, Disang, Dhansiri, Jia-Bharali, Puthimari, Kapili, Beki, Dhaleswari, Pagladiya, Burhadiya, etc. rivers inundated a large area of arable land across the state.

Kaziranga's field director, Sonali Ghosh, informed us that 215 wild animals, including 13 rhinos and 170 deer, 8 porcupines, 5 pigs, and 1 buffalo, died in the forest reserve due to drowning and other causes. The park authority could rescue 157 animals, including two rhino calves, and later 137 animals were released to the wild after necessary treatment. Ms Ghosh also added that most of the forest camps (out of 233) inside the park went under flood water.

The safe habitat for the largest population of one-horned rhinos in the world eventually experiences flooding every year. As the core 430 square kilometre area (now extended to 1,300 sq km) goes under the water, the animals take refuge in the highlands erected inside it. Many animals try to cross the Asian Highway 1 (National Highway-37) on its southern border to climb the hilly areas of Karbi Anglong.

While crossing the highway, some animals are killed by the speeding vehicles, and hence the authorities instruct the drivers to maintain a safe speed limit to avoid any unwanted incidents. Often, the vehicles are escorted by forest officials while crossing the park to prevent accidents with the fleeing animals.

The UNESCO World Heritage Site, which gives shelter to more than 2600 rhinos along with Asiatic elephants, water buffalo, royal Bengal tigers, and a variety of birds, faced a major flood in 2017, when over 350 animals, including 24 rhinos, died due to drowning and colliding with moving vehicles on the

highway. Otherwise, the number of poaching incidents in Kaziranga has been reduced in the last few years, thanks to the brutal laws against the poachers, the strengthening of ground staff inside the protected forest areas, and increasing public awareness in the fringe localities.

Statistics reveal that the highly protected Kaziranga lost two adult rhinos in January of this year to poachers, who took away the horns understandably to earn an attractive amount of money from the illegal wildlife markets. Last year, Kaziranga witnessed one rhino poaching incident (Manas National Park and Tiger Reserve also lost one rhino to poachers), and it was preceded by two incidents in 2021 and 2020, whereas three rhinos were killed in 2019 and seven in 2018. So it took six years to lose 18 rhinos to the poachers in Assam to date. Needless to mention, Assam recorded a zero rhino-poaching year in 2022 to draw the attention of world conservationists.

Rhinos are recognized as vulnerable species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and India's Wildlife Protection Act, formulated in 1972, gives enormous power to the forest rangers to protect the grass-eating pachyderm. The global population of rhinos remains around 27,000 individuals. With the decrease in rhino poaching incidents in India and Nepal (its Chitwan National Park, Parsa NP, Bardia NP, and Shuklaphanta NP cumulatively support 750 single-horn rhinos), the pressure mounts in South Africa, which gives shelter to over 15,000 two-horn rhinos. The country witnesses the killing of over 400 rhinos annually

(more than one poaching every day), seemingly to feed the demand in Asian countries.

The rhino horns, grown by both males and females after attaining six years, are believed to have medicinal values supposed to cure typhoid, headache, stomach ailment, food poisoning, snakebites, and even cancer. Taiwan, Thailand, South Korea, Vietnam and the Middle East are also known to be huge markets for rhino horns, where their use for medical purposes and scientific research is legalised. Many also unscientifically believe that one can achieve unusual sexual power with the help of rhino horns (using them as an aphrodisiac or traditional Viagra). But the veterinarians always argue that rhino horns comprise the same protein that constitutes the formation of hair and fingernails, and they do not possess any quality for sexual stimulation.

Assam's other world heritage site, Manas Forest Reserve, currently gives shelter to around 45 rhinos with a host of other inmates like water buffalo, tiger, leopard, golden langur, gaur, pygmy hog, etc. Other forest reserves, namely the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary (around 107 rhinos) and Orang National Park (125), support the rhino population and increase it to 2,650 individuals. With a drastic reduction in poaching following the deployment of heavily armed ground forces and other modern gadgets, Assam expects to increase the rhino population to 3,000 very soon. Till date, a number of poachers have been



arrested, and many have died in encounters with the security forces. The captured poachers and their associates admit that they had taken the risk of killing rhinos inside the restricted forest reserves because of enormous monetary benefits.

So it's high time to mitigate the perennial flood. Often, government schemes (mostly embankment-centric) are announced and implemented, but they only work partially. When flood mitigation becomes too difficult, discussion should focus on minimising the devastating impact with proper policies. Recently, the Union government proposed to create at least 50 large ponds in the

state, where the extra volume of Brahmaputra water will be stored temporarily to reduce the intensity of destruction. Many natural lakes on the river banks are also expected to be cleaned up to carry out additional activities like agriculture, irrigation, pisciculture, and tourism. New Delhi should continue pursuing upper-riparian countries like Bhutan and Tibet (now under China) to receive timely alerts about unusually high rainfalls and hydropower activities (including damming water resources) in their places.

The writer is a Guwahati-based special representative of The Statesman



Director Lakshmipriya Devi's Boong to premiere at Toronto International Film Festival 2024



tiff.

toronto international film festival

The film is all about a young boy, Boong, from Manipur, who intends to surprise his mother with a gift. He believed that bringing his father back home would be the most precious present. The movie shows how his hunt for his father leads to an unexpected gift—a new beginning.

Director Lakshmipriya Devi took inspiration from her real-life experi-

ences to make films. "This narrative organically developed while seeking closure from a difficult part of her childhood in Manipur, a place she calls home in the northeastern corner of India."

Devi makes her directorial debut with *Boong*, after gaining experience as First Assistant Director on films including *Luck by Chance*, *Talaash*, *PK*, and *A Suitable Boy*.

Excel Entertainment, Chalkboard Entertainment and Suitable Pictures' *Boong* will have a world premiere in the Discovery section at the 49th Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), taking place September 5-15, 2024.

The Angelina Jolie-directed war film *Without Blood*, a documentary about Bruce Springsteen and Mike Leigh's contemporary tragicomedy

Hard Truths, will have its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival, as per The Hollywood Reporter.

The Toronto Film Festival has added the latest movies from Alicia Vikander, Lupita Nyong'o, Steve Coogan, Ralph Fiennes, Jennifer Lopez, Salma Hayek, Lily James, and Riz Ahmed.

Toronto will this year feature a

mix of films that debuted at Cannes and Venice, in addition to high-profile world premieres to screen in front of mainstream audiences at Roy Thomson Hall, TIFF Bell Lightbox, the Royal Alexandra Theatre, and the Scotiabank Theatre, before jostling for position during the upcoming Hollywood awards season.

Toronto earlier announced the 2024 edition will open with Ben

Stiller's comedy *Nutcrackers*, from director David Gordon Green. And Rebel Wilson's *The Deb*, a musical comedy set in rural Australia, will close TIFF. Those film picks follow a tradition of Toronto leaning into mainstream crowd-pleasers to bookend its September event. The Toronto Film Festival is set to run from 5-15 September.

Agencies

'DECISION HAS BEEN MADE'

Federico Chiesa, one of the star players for Juventus who has spent a major part of the past two years out with injuries, has been told that he will be leaving the club this summer. "Chiesa is out for transfer reasons, the same as the others who were left behind, other than Fabio Miretti, who is injured. We have been very clear with them. They are talented, but must find other options where they will get more playing time. For Chiesa and the others, the decision has been made," Thiago Motta said to Sky Sports Italia.

For more updates www.thestatesman.com

Paris Olympics: Lakshya loses, to play for bronze

Lakshya will next face Lee Zii Jia of Malaysia in the bronze medal match today

AGENCIES
PARIS, 4 AUGUST

Lakshya Sen lost to Denmark's defending Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen 20-22, 14-21 in the men's singles semifinal on Sunday. Lakshya will next face Lee Zii Jia of Malaysia in the bronze medal match on Monday.

While Axelsen will take on Kunlavut Vitidsarn of Thailand in the final. The first game saw Lakshya gain the upper hand initially with 11-9 at the break. However, the two players engaged in long, intense rallies, with the drift in the arena playing a significant role. It occasionally disrupted Axelsen's precision, allowing Lakshya to stay competitive.

Axelsen's strategy revolved around enticing Lakshya into powerful smashes despite the Indian shuttler's smart play. Even with a five-point lead at 20-17, Axelsen bounced back



and broke three-game points to take the first game 22-20.

In the second game, Lakshya quickly surged ahead to

a 7-0 lead but true to his champion form, Axelsen clawed his way back, tying the game at 10-10. Lakshya managed to edge ahead by the break, leading 11-10.

However, Axelsen's experience and resilience came to the fore as he unleashed a series of powerful attacks in the latter half of the game. Lakshya, despite his best efforts, couldn't withstand the onslaught and the game slipped away, ending 21-14 in Axelsen's favour.

Axelsen's victory secured him a spot in the second successive Olympic singles final, where he will face Thailand's Kunlavut Vitidsarn. Notably, the Danish maestro has yet to lose a game in Paris.

For Lakshya Sen, the journey doesn't end here. On Monday, he will face Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia in the bronze medal match, a chance to end his Olympic campaign on a high note.

Shooters Anish, Maheshwari, Vijayveer miss out on finals

AGENCIES
CHATEAURoux, 4 AUGUST

Three Indian shooters fought hard on day nine of the Paris Olympics shooting competition at the French National Shooting Centre range in, but could not make the finals cut after staying in contention till the final stages of their qualification round.

Maheshwari Chauhan in the Skeet Women's event shot a 25 in round four early on Sunday morning to go into the final round in fifth position, but a 22 in round five meant she tallied 118 to finish in 14th spot overall. The sixth and final qualification spot went at 120.

Then Vijayveer Sidhu and Anish Bhanwala shot brilliantly over two stages of qualification in the 25m Rapid-Fire Pistol Men's event, staying in contention till the final 10-shots of the second rapid-fire stage, only to shoot scores of 92 and 93 to finish ninth and 13th respectively. Here too the top six make the final cut.

Both shooters shot scores of 293 in the first precision stage to go into the rapid-fire round in fifth and seventh positions.



Vijayveer then shot a 100 and 98 in the first two rapid-fire series to move up to second at one stage as Anish also shot 99 and 97 to stay in touch with the top six. The final round changed all of that.

Raiza Dhillon, the second Indian in the field also in her first Olympics as the above three, shot 113 over five rounds for a 23rd place finish. India still has one more start in the Shotgun events when Maheshwari comes back with Anant Jeet Singh Naruka for the Mixed Team Skeet, an event which will also be making an Olympic debut.

The shooting contingent has so far won three bronze medals at the Paris Games.

Liverpool cruise to 3-0 victory over Man Utd in South Carolina

AGENCIES
SOUTH CAROLINA, 4 AUGUST

Liverpool continued their dominant pre-season run with a 3-0 victory over Manchester United in South Carolina, maintaining their perfect record on their US tour.

The match at Williams-Brice Stadium saw Liverpool take control early. Fabio Carvalho opened the scoring within ten minutes, capitalizing on a defensive lapse by Casemiro to slot home from close range. This early goal set the tone for a game where United struggled defensively.

Curtis Jones added Liverpool's second goal before the break, finishing off a well-crafted move. Mohamed Salah, showcasing his skill on the wing, outmanoeuvred United's 20-year-old Toby Collyer to provide a perfect cut-back for Jones, who made no mistake from close range.

Manchester United had their chances to score in the first half but were unable to capitalize. Amad Diallo, who

had impressed against Real Betis, squandered two golden opportunities. He sent a header over the bar from Mason Mount's cross and later fired a shot into the stands.

Caoimhin Kelleher, Liverpool's goalkeeper, made crucial saves to deny both Mount and Marcus Rashford, who looked lively in the No.10 role.

Liverpool sealed their victory just after the hour mark. Kostas Tsimikas reacted quickest to a rebound after Andre Onana parried Diogo Jota's shot, firing home to make it 3-0.

The match also saw Manchester United suffer several injury setbacks. Young defender Will Fish was stretchered off following a challenge on Harvey Blair, adding to United's injury woes with just two weeks until the start of the Premier League season.

Aaron Wan-Bissaka, Victor Lindelof, and Jonny Evans also left the pitch with knocks, raising concerns for manager Erik ten Hag.

India's Olympics campaign in boxing ends with Lovlina's quarterfinal loss

TRIDIB BAPARNASH
NEW DELHI, 4 AUGUST

Blame the tough draws or performance but the harsh reality is India's boxers' campaign at the ongoing Paris Olympics came to a disappointing end after Tokyo bronze medalist Lovlina Borgohain went down fighting against her old nemesis Li Qian of China in the 75kg women's quarterfinal bout on Sunday.

The eighth-seed Lovlina lost the bout by a 4:1 split decision to Li Qian, the reigning Asian Games champion. Lovlina would have assured a medal by winning this fight. In Olympic boxing, two bronze medals are awarded, one each to the losing semi-finalists.

In the quarterfinal, Li Qian started well with some strong punches but Lovlina, who took her time to get going, too returned some crucial jabs. As the bout progressed, the 26-year-old Indian boxer was pushed further on the backfoot by Li Qian, whose strong attack helped her land enough blows to edge out the reigning middleweight world champion.

In the opening round earlier this week, Lovlina had registered a convincing 5-0 victo-



ry against Sunniva Hofstad of Norway.

Lovlina had booked her Paris 2024 berth by reaching the women's 75kg final at the Asian Games last year. Once again, it was Li Qian who defeated her in the final in Hangzhou.

Earlier, late on Saturday night, world Championship bronze medalist Nishant Dev also suffered a close 1:4 split decision defeat to second-seeded Mexican Marco Alvarez Verde in the men's 71kg quarter-final, despite having a relatively favourable draw.

The decision of the judges left several Indian boxing greats disappointed. Former world champion Laishram Sarita Devi lashed out at the judges, terming

it as an "unfair" decision. "Nishant was much better than the Mexican in all three rounds. It boils my blood seeing unfair decisions in sports. It finishes your hard work for so many years in a few seconds," Devi said in a social media post.

In what turned out to be an underwhelming campaign for Indian boxers, four of the six pugilists at the Paris Games even failed to reach the quarterfinals.

Two-time world champion Nikhat Zareen made a Rd-16 exit after losing to reigning Asian Games gold medalist Wu Yu of China in the women's 50kg. Both Zareen and Borgohain, India's best medal prospects, faced tough draws. Zareen was

unseeded, while Borgohain, the only seeded Indian, had switched her weight category from 69kg in Tokyo to 75kg for Paris.

Earlier on Tuesday, half of India's boxing contingent were shown the door after losing their respective bouts. Jasmine Lamboria faced a first-round exit against Tokyo Olympics silver medalist Nesthy Petecio of the Philippines in the women's 57kg Round of 32.

Reigning Commonwealth Games champion Amit Panghal, who secured a late qualification in the last qualifiers in Bangkok, faced a 1:4 split decision loss to the 2019 World Championships silver medalist Patrick Chinyemba of Zambia in the men's 51kg Round of 16.

Asian Games bronze medalist Preeti Pawar lost to World Championship silver medalist Yeni Arias of Colombia in the women's 54kg Round of 16.

India has previously secured three bronze medals in Olympic boxing: Vijender Singh in Beijing 2008, Mary Kom in London 2012, and Lovlina Borgohain in Tokyo 2020, and the tally will continue at least for the next four years, when the Summer Games will be held in Los Angeles.

'Wall of Hockey': PT Usha lauds Sreejesh after brilliant performance in Olympics quarterfinal

AGENCIES
PARIS, 4 AUGUST

International Olympic Committee (IOC) President PT Usha applauded Indian Men's Hockey Team goalkeeper PR Sreejesh following his brilliant performance in the quarterfinal of the ongoing Paris Olympics on Sunday.

Harmanpreet Singh-led Indian men's hockey team defeated Great Britain in a thrilling quarter-final match at the Paris Olympics and advanced into the semi-final. As the scores were level at 1-1 after the end of regulation time, India won the shootout 4-2 and made the semi-finals.

"Shaking the hand that showed nerves of steel today! A well-earned victory for Team India and Sreejesh, the 'Wall of Hockey' for a great game! All our best wishes and blessings to the entire team for the next match," PT Usha wrote on X.

In the second quarter of the quarter-final match, India



took a 1-0 lead after skipper Harmanpreet Singh converted a penalty corner. India had four penalty corner opportunities while Great Britain had five in the second quarter.

Earlier in the second quarter, India's Amit Rohidas was given a red card after he raised his stick and caught opponent William Calnan's head. India

played the rest of the match one-man down.

Before halftime, Great Britain's Lee Morton scored the equaliser and gave his side a moment to breathe. In the second half, Great Britain failed to score, despite multiple opportunities.

Meanwhile, in the shootout, India scored all four of their

attempts. While Indian goalkeeper PR Sreejesh saved one, helping India move into the semis of the tournament.

Earlier in the previous match, the Indian men's hockey team bounced back in the men's competition with a 3-2 win over Australia in their Pool B match at the ongoing Summer Games.

Rohit overtakes Dravid, Tendulkar, rewrites record books

AGENCIES
COLOMBO, 4 AUGUST

Indian skipper Rohit Sharma continued his dominant run in ODI cricket with yet another half-century during the second game against Sri Lanka, overtaking Rahul Dravid to become the country's fourth-highest run-getter in the format.

After a half-century in the first ODI, Rohit continued

firing all cylinders in the second ODI, scoring 66 in just 44 balls, with five fours and four sixes. His runs came at a strike rate of over 145.

Now in 264 matches, Rohit has scored 10,831 runs at an average of 49.23, with a strike rate of 92.29, with 31 centuries and 57 fifties. His best score is 264.

Also, as an opener, Rohit has overtaken Sachin Tendulkar to register the most fifty-

plus scores for India in international cricket. With 43 centuries and 78 fifties, he has got 121 fifty-plus scores as an opener in all of cricket, just one more than Sachin's 120, who had 45 centuries and 75 fifties as an opener.

This was Rohit Sharma's fourth fifty in ODIs within the first 10 overs of a match. He is chasing the record of legendary opener Virender Sehwag, who had seven fifties

within the first 10 overs of ODI matches.

Rohit has been a six-hitting machine as of late, having smashed 54 sixes in the first 10 overs of an ODI since January 2023, with Australia's David Warner being a distant rival with 24 sixes. In this time frame, he has scored 1,377 runs in 28 innings at an average of 52.96, with two centuries and 11 fifties. His best score is 131.

THE STATESMAN AWARDS FOR RURAL REPORTING

In 1973, The Statesman instituted three prizes for excellence in rural reporting to encourage a better awareness of the social, political and economic challenges taking place in our villages

Three prizes are now ₹ 15,000 ; ₹ 10,000 and ₹ 7,500

We invite journalists to send in their investigative articles and reports concerning rural India, in English or any regional language (with or without translations into English), and published during 2023 in any newspaper or periodical in the country. Entries will be evaluated on the criteria of social relevance, factual accuracy, professional dedication and stylistic merit.

The competition is open to Indian journalists. All entries should be marked "Rural Reporting" and sent in the form of original clippings (photocopies will not be accepted) clearly showing the date and name of the publication to the address given below.

THE CUSHROW IRANI PRIZE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING

The C R Irani Foundation, a not-for-profit body involved in improvement of journalistic standards, in 2011 set up an annual prize of ₹ 25,000 for environmental reporting. We invite journalists to send in their investigative articles and reports concerning the environment in English or any regional language (with or without translations in English), and published during 2023 in any newspaper or periodical in the country. Entries will be on the basis of content, accuracy, professional standards and quality of research. The competition is open to Indian journalists. All entries should be marked "Environmental Reporting" and sent in the form of original clippings (photocopies will not be accepted) clearly showing the date and name of the publication to the address given below.

THE AWARDS COMMITTEE

THE STATESMAN LIMITED
STATESMAN HOUSE,
4 CHOWRINGHEE SQUARE,
KOLKATA 700 001.

IMPORTANT
Journalists wishing to submit the same report(s) for both prizes are requested to send separate entries. Last Date for the 2023 awards is 10 August 2024

For any query please write to prasantob57@gmail.com