



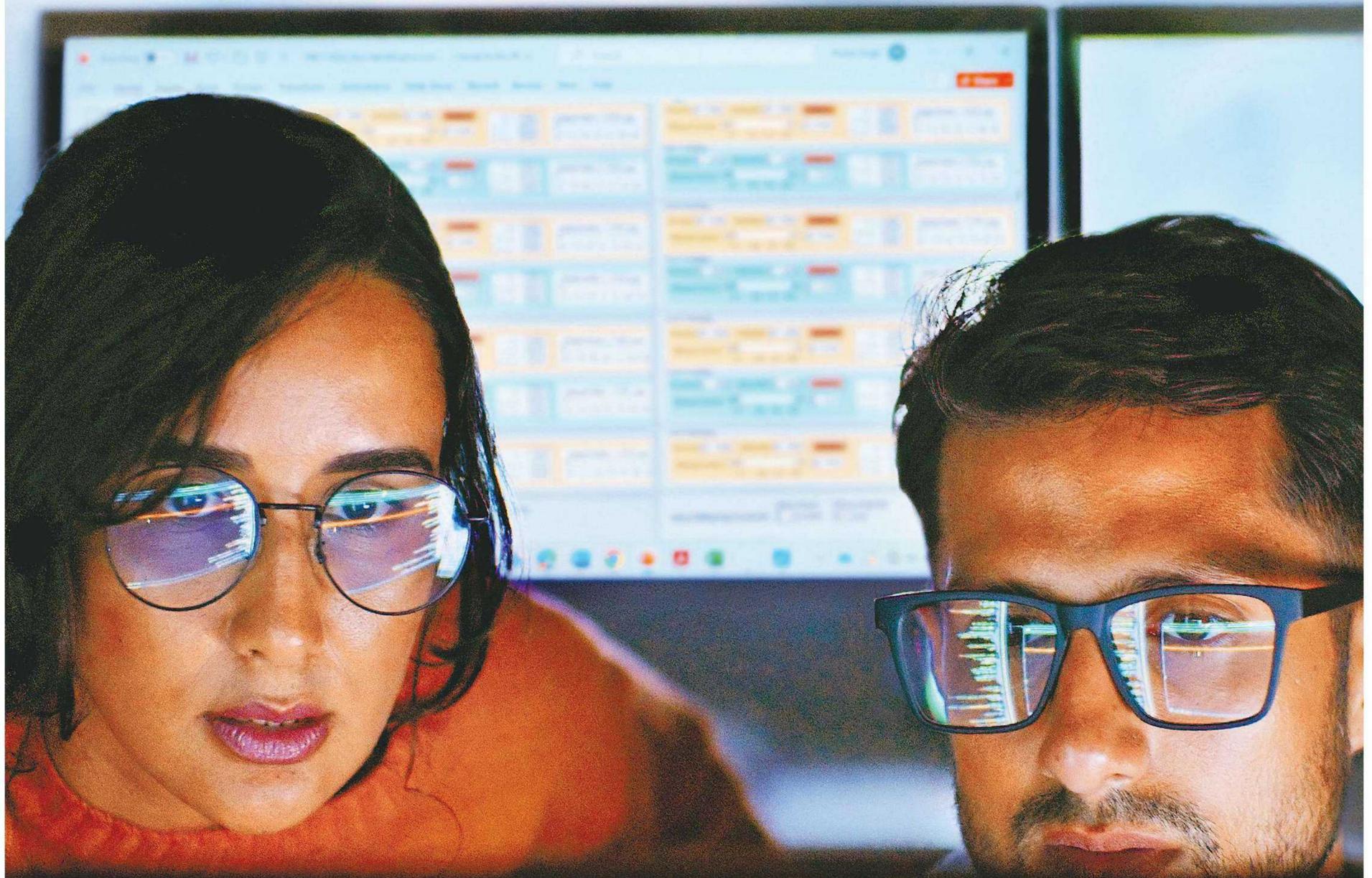
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NUMBER THEORY

Poll math: Is Cong where Jan Sangh was in '60s-'70s?

By Nishant Bajpai

India's electoral competition is witnessing a resurgence of alliances with the three pillars being the BJP-led NDA, an opposition grouping with the Congress as the biggest party, and an ideological regional party in the states of Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Punjab. To be an ally of the Congress and regional parties is not new. But what differentiates the current situation is the fact that the Congress's core strength has significantly declined. In 1967, the Congress was trying to achieve today what a bunch of ideologically different groups, including the NDA, are trying to achieve today. A comparison of the Congress's performance in the 1960s and 1970s with its current performance can help us understand the Congress's position in today's politics. Here are three charts which explain it in detail.

1 The Congress was much smaller than its prospective allies in the 2014 and 2019 elections

In the 2014 and 2019 elections, the Congress-led NDA was the largest party in the Lok Sabha. The Congress's performance was a mixed bag, with a significant loss of seats in the 2019 elections. The Congress's performance in the 2014 and 2019 elections is compared with its performance in the 1960s and 1970s. The Congress's performance in the 1960s and 1970s was much better than its performance in the 2014 and 2019 elections.

Year	Seats
1967	32
1971	34
1977	20
1980	22
2014	54
2019	44

2 The Jan Sangh was in an even weaker situation in its initial years...

The Jan Sangh was a major party in the Lok Sabha in the 1960s and 1970s. It was a major party in the Lok Sabha in the 1960s and 1970s. The Jan Sangh's performance in the 1960s and 1970s was much better than its performance in the 2014 and 2019 elections.

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3 ... but ideology-agnostic opposition alliances managed to keep the Congress out of power in many states

The Congress's performance in the 1960s and 1970s was much better than its performance in the 2014 and 2019 elections. The Congress's performance in the 1960s and 1970s was much better than its performance in the 2014 and 2019 elections.

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Read Number Theory to access unparalleled data-journalism with statistically analyzed news.

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Hindustan Times

Anantnag crossfire leaves civilian dead

Ashiq Hussain
letters@hindustantimes.com

SRINAGAR: A day after being wounded during an encounter between a group of terrorists and security forces in south Kashmir's Anantnag district on Saturday, a person succumbed to injuries on Sunday, even as forces continued their search operation around the site of the gunfight in the district's upper forest area that borders Doda.

Meanwhile, a gunfight erupted between security forces and terrorists in Udhampur district on Sunday evening.

Two army personnel were killed and another injured in the encounter that erupted in Ahlan Gagarmandu area of Kokernag in Anantnag district—the latest in a series of terror strikes in the Union territory, which is gearing up to host its first assembly elections since 2014. Two civilians suffered injuries during the exchange of fire.

"There were some people who were hit by bullets during the exchange of fire, of which



Security personnel during sanitisation operations in Anantnag district on Sunday.

one civilian has succumbed. Their presence at the place is a matter of investigation," said Kashmir inspector general of police, VK Birdi. He said the other injured civilian was "stable" in the hospital.

The police did not reveal the identity of the injured civilians. "We are also investigating their involvement in terror

activities," he said.

The surge in terror attacks has put J&K on alert and prompted the country's political and defence brass to review the security situation in the UT. This year, 29 terrorists and four defence personnel have died in separate gunfights in Kashmir. In Jammu, 28 people, including

continued on →7

INDIA'S DEFENCE EXPORTS SET TO MEET ₹50K-CR TARGET IN 5 YRS

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: India is on course to achieve its defence export target of ₹50,000 crore in the next five years, ministry officials said on Sunday, citing export data shared by the government for the first quarter of 2024-25.

India's defence exports stood at ₹6,915 crore from April to June 2024, the data shared a day earlier showed. This was 78% higher than ₹3,885 crore for the year-ago period. As was the trend last year, the share of the public and private sectors stood at 60% and 40%, respectively, the officials said, declining to be named.

In April, the defence ministry announced that India's defence exports grew 32.5% in 2023-24 and crossed ₹21,000 crore for the first time as the country remained focused on boosting the indigenous defence manufacturing ecosystem as well as military exports.

India exports military hardware to around 85 countries, with around 100 local firms involved in the effort. →P8

OUTRAGE MOUNTS OVER RAPE AND MURDER OF YOUNG DOCTOR IN KOLKATA

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

KOLKATA: Police in Kolkata are focussing on how the 31-year-old suspect in the rape and murder of a trainee doctor at one of the city's main government hospitals committed the crime and whether he had an accomplice, officials said on Sunday, as protests by medical professionals over the incident spread to other cities.

Officials are pinning their hopes on the autopsy report of the 32-year-old postgraduate trainee doctor, who was found dead on Friday. Her body bore injuries consistent with sexual assault and some of her clothes were missing, officials said, but are now unsure on whether the woman was assaulted prior to her killing.

"The nature of the multiple injuries found on the victim's upper body may prompt anyone to suspect that Roy was not alone," said an official. →P9

'GRAVE CONCERN' OVER ATTACKS ON MINORITIES: NEW B'DESH CABINET

Agence France-Presse
letters@hindustantimes.com

DHAKA: Bangladesh's new interim government said on Sunday it was working to resolve attacks on Hindus and other religious minorities reported after Sheikh Hasina's ouster.

Hindus are the largest minority faith in mostly Muslim Bangladesh and are considered a support base for Hasina's party, the Awami League.

After Hasina's abrupt resignation and flight abroad, there were numerous reports of attacks against Hindu households, temples and businesses.

"The attacks on religious minorities in some places have been noted with grave concern," the interim cabinet said in its first official statement since its Thursday appointment.

The cabinet said it would "immediately sit with the representative bodies and other concerned groups to find ways to resolve such heinous attacks". →P12

The indefatigable Sifan



The Netherlands' Sifan Hassan at the finish line of the women's marathon at the Paris Olympics on Sunday. The 31-year-old became the first person to medal at all three distance events at a single Olympics — 5,000m, 10,000m and the marathon — since Czech Emil Zatopek in 1952. Page 2 REUTERS

ED may summon Rahul in AJL case

Neeraj Chauhan
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) may soon summon leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, for questioning in connection with its money laundering probe into the affairs of Congress-run National Herald newspaper, highly placed officials familiar with the development said.

A fresh round of questioning of the Congress leader may be needed as the agency wants to conclude its probe into the irregularities, in which it has already

attached assets worth ₹751 crore, they added, asking not to be named.

The Rae Bareilly member of Parliament was earlier interrogated by ED for nearly 40 hours in four sittings in June 2022 about his role in the day-to-day functioning of Young Indian Pvt Ltd (YI), a company in which he is a majority stakeholder along with his mother Sonia Gandhi, the acquisition of Associated Journals Ltd (AJL) by YI; a loan of ₹90.21 crore given by the All India Congress Committee (AICC) to AJL; and transactions related to the development of a property in Mumbai. →P11

TRUMP CAMPAIGN WEBSITE HACKED, HE BLAMES IRAN

WASHINGTON: Republican nominee Donald Trump said he was informed by Microsoft that one of his campaign websites was hacked by the Iranian government, but said the hackers were only able to access "publicly available information" in the breach. "Nevertheless, they shouldn't be doing anything of this nature," Trump said in a post on his Truth Social network. Iran's mission to the United Nations, when asked about the claim of the Trump campaign, denied being involved. →P12

GAZA EVACUATIONS ORDERED AFTER 100 KILLED IN STRIKE ON SCHOOL-SHELTER

DEIR AL-BALAH, GAZA STRIP: The Israeli military ordered more evacuations in southern Gaza early Sunday, a day after a deadly airstrike on a school-turned-shelter in the north killed at least 80 Palestinians, according to local health authorities. Several European and West Asian countries condemned the airstrike, which was one of the deadliest attacks in the 10-month war. →P12

{ JOE BIDEN } U.S. PRESIDENT

A number of my Democratic colleagues thought I was going to hurt them in the races... I thought it'd be a real distraction.

Related story on page 12

{ FLEET AUGMENTATION }

Project Delta delayed, navy asks govt for nod to build two nuclear-powered submarines

Shishir Gupta
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: With "Project Delta", its plan to augment its submarine fleet, delayed beyond 2027 due to Russia's war with Ukraine, the Indian Navy has approached the government for approval to build two nuclear-powered conventionally armed submarines or SSNs to deter the

country's adversaries in the Indo-Pacific.

While the 30-year-old submarine plan approved by the Modi government in 2015 sanctions six SSNs in the Indo-Pacific, the first step is the acceptance of necessity (AoN) for two SSNs. The matter has been raised at the apex level and consultations are on to expedite the process. As reported by Hindustan

Times earlier, India's second nuclear powered nuclear missile armed submarine, SSBN (nuclear-powered submarines armed with ballistic missiles) INS Arighat, will be commissioned shortly with the first SSBN, INS Arihant, already patrolling the deep waters of Indo-Pacific. India's third SSBN, INS Aridaman, is also all set to be commissioned next year as

part of the country's formidable nuclear triad.

While the proposed lease of Russian Akula class SSNs (this is what was termed Project Delta) delayed due to Russian preoccupation with the Ukraine war and technological sanctions that may last at least till 2028, the Indian Navy has taken a decision to build SSNs after building three

continued on →7

NUMBER THEORY

The landscape of around 866k Waqf properties across India

howindialives.com

On Thursday, the BJP-led Union government introduced in the Lok Sabha The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, to amend key provisions in the Waqf Act, 1995. Waqf is an act by an individual under Islamic religious beliefs to transfer an acquired or inherited property for the purpose of charity. Each state has a Waqf board, set up under the Waqf Act, to administer these properties. Property disputes are settled by the Waqf tribunal of the respective state.

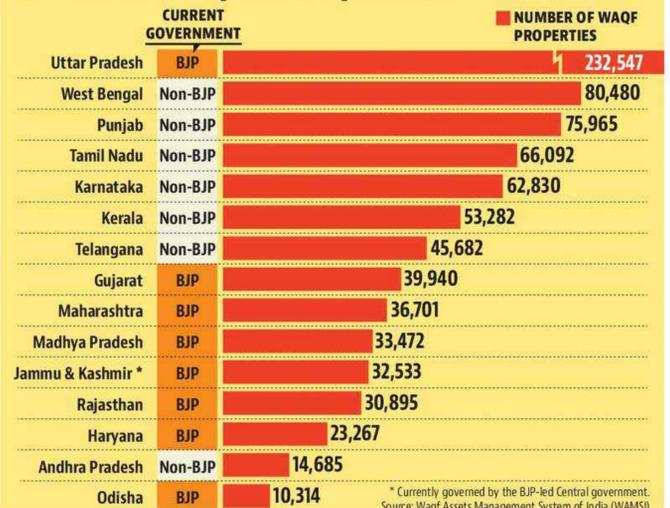
The Bill, if it becomes law, could alter this compact in certain situations. It could increase contestations of property status and hand governments (both central and state) more powers. Crucially, the power to adjudicate a dispute between the government and Waqf boards will shift from the Waqf Tribunal to district magistrates, an appointee of the state

1 Large landholding

The property that will come under the sweep of the proposed legislation is huge, both in terms of scale and value. A 2014 parliamentary standing committee report estimated that 35 Waqf boards collectively owned about 600,000 acres, with a then-estimated market value of ₹1.2 lakh crore.

In 2008, the Congress-led UPA government started collecting data of all Waqf properties. It set up the Waqf Assets Management System of India (WAMSI), an online data portal for such properties. As of August 8, WAMSI listed about 866,000 immovable properties. About a quarter of these properties were in Uttar Pradesh alone, where the BJP is currently in power. The top 15 states account for 97% of these properties. The BJP is in power in eight of these states, which account for about half of all Waqf properties.

About half the Waqf properties are in states or UTs currently ruled by the BJP



2 Potential for dispute

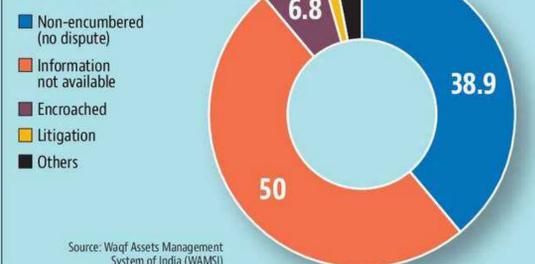
According to WAMSI, only 39% of all immovable properties are without any dispute. For the rest, there is either inadequate information or they are under dispute, and this is where the proposed legislation can influence outcomes.

Nearly 9% of properties are either encroached or under litigation, with 32,000 cases filed as on July 2024. Last year, for example, the Union ministry of housing and urban affairs took over 123 properties of the Delhi Waqf Board, including the Jama Masjid located opposite Parliament House (not to be confused with the one in Old Delhi). The case is currently in the Delhi high court.

Under the proposed law, properties declared as Waqf orally will not be accepted. The key provision is the insertion of statute of limitations. Waqf boards cannot claim properties that have been in possession of another party for 12 years. In case of a dispute with Waqf boards, the state, through the district magistrate, will have adjudication powers.

Information on ownership status for half the Waqf properties is not available

Share of immovable properties by property status (%)

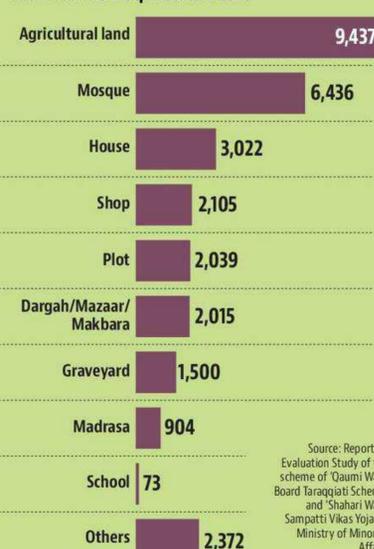


3 Diverse property types

Mosques are just one of the many forms of Waqf properties. Previously, the Union ministry of minority affairs had engaged the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi to undertake an evaluation study of two government schemes related to Waqf properties. The report, submitted in 2021, detailed properties owned by Waqf boards in 11 states. It shows diverse asset types. For example, of the 30,000 immovable Waqf properties in Maharashtra, nearly a third were agricultural land. Mosques, dargahs and graveyards accounted for another third.

Farm land makes up about one-third of Waqf properties in Maharashtra

Immovable properties owned by the Maharashtra Waqf Board in 2020



As of July 2024, according to WAMSI, only 8,419 Waqf properties — less than 1% — had filed an income return in 2020-21. They showed a total income of Rs 95 crore.

4 Property management

Waqf properties can be managed by different modes. The mode most used is "mutawalli" (trusted friend), or a manager who manages the property. Waqf boards, administrator and management committee are other modes being used to manage Waqf properties. Importantly, on the WAMSI portal, nearly half the Waqf properties don't have any information on who is managing them.

Management status of about half the Waqf properties is not known

Management-wise Waqf immovable properties



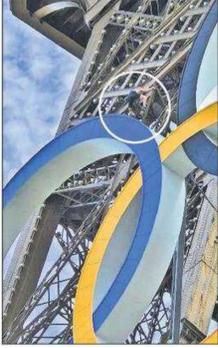
This is another area where the proposed law can make a difference in determining status of the property. For now, under attack from opposition parties and circumspection of its own allies — over provisions about the constitution of Waqf boards, among other issues — the BJP-led government has sent the proposed legislation to a joint parliamentary committee. What happens to it will be keenly watched.

PAGE ONE PLUS  PARIS OLYMPICS

CLOSING CEREMONY } PEAKING LANDMARK

Man held for climbing the Eiffel Tower; area evacuated

French police evacuated the area around the Eiffel Tower after a man was seen climbing the Paris landmark hours before the Olympics closing ceremony. The shirtless man was seen scaling the 330m tower in the afternoon. Police escorted visitors away from the area around 3pm. Some visitors who were briefly locked on the second floor were allowed to exit around 30 minutes later. The Tower is not expected to be part of the closing ceremony. The incident occurred as the Olympic competition wound down and security services in Paris and beyond were shifting their focus to the closing ceremony.



India's flagbearers

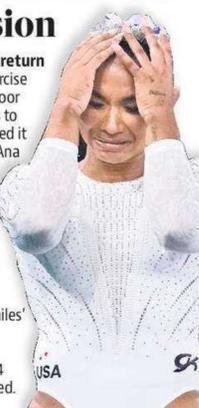


India's bronze medal-winning men's hockey team goalkeeper PR Sreejesh and double bronze medal-winning pistol shooter Manu Bhaker—India's flagbearers for the closing ceremony—get ready for the march.

GYMNASTICS } SCORING CORRECTION

Chiles must return bronze after court decision

American gymnast Jordan Chiles must return the bronze medal she won in the floor exercise after sport's highest court voided an on-floor appeal by Chiles' coach that vaulted Chiles to third, the IOC confirmed. The IOC announced it was reallocating the bronze to Romanian Ana Barbosu after the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) said it would respect the court's decision and elevate Barbosu to third. The decision came less than 24 hours after the CAS voided a scoring appeal made by USA coach Cecile Landi during the competition that placed Chiles on the podium. CAS ruled Saturday that Landi's appeal to have 0.1 added to Chiles' score came outside the 1-minute window allowed by the FIG. The ad hoc committee wrote that Landi's inquiry came 1 minute, 4 seconds after Chiles' initial score was posted.



medalstally

COUNTRY	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1 USA	40	44	42	126
2 China	40	27	24	91
3 Japan	20	12	13	45
4 Australia	18	19	16	53
5 France	16	26	22	64
6 Netherlands	15	7	12	34
7 Britain	14	22	29	65
8 Korea	13	9	10	32
9 Italy	12	13	15	40
10 Germany	12	13	8	33
11 New Zealand	10	7	3	20
12 Canada	9	7	11	27
13 Uzbekistan	8	2	3	13
14 Hungary	6	7	6	19
15 Spain	5	4	9	18
16 Sweden	4	4	3	11
17 Kenya	4	2	5	11
71 INDIA	0	1	5	6

settingthepace



Sifan Hassan of the Netherlands celebrates after winning the women's marathon on the final day of the 2024 Paris Olympics, on Sunday.

From Tokyo to Paris: Sifan Hassan does the incredible again

N Ananthanarayanan
ananthananarayanan@htlive.com

Sifan Hassan seems so frail that she often seems to flirt with a tumble while racing. Thin as a reed, she tips the scales at barely 50kg, and the Dutchwoman has a history of falls. She momentarily raised that prospect on Saturday in the finishing stages of the Paris Olympics women's marathon.

She had stuck to a bunch of around 10 lead runners, and with the final kilometre of the tough route through Paris ahead, the gold medal battle had come down to two athletes of Ethiopian origin. Tigst Assefa, the world record holder fighting for the Ethiopian flag, was going to make it as difficult as she could for a rival who sought asylum in The Netherlands as a teenager.

Sifan tried to dart past to the right of Tigst, who quickly blocked the path. As the Dutch runner tried to move past on the left at the last sharp turn before the finish line came into her sight, Tigst quickly came across. For a second, it appeared Sifan would be slammed into the barriers heaving with fans.

But Sifan proved she is all steel, slipping through to go on and win the race in an Olympic record time of two hours, 22 minutes, 55 seconds. She had beaten Tigst to the gold by three seconds. It ended a barely believable 10 days of her Olympics engagement—she had run four races, including two on the track—with the ultimate high.

The Dutchwoman yelled in delight at the finish as the Paris fans, who lined up on both sides of the route in large number till the last runner finished, applauded. The marathon gold, following Sifan's bronze in both the 5,000m and 10,000m, made her the first woman, and only the second athlete to medal in all three distance events in a single Olympics. She emulated Czech distance legend Emil Zatopek, who won all three distance events in the 1952 Helsinki Games.

Modern athletics scheduling at major meets is such that doubling up in middle- or long-distance events is next to impossible. It takes a generational talent to attempt it, but doggedness to actually go ahead and execute successfully. Norway's Jakob Ingebrigtsen did the 1,500m-5,000m double, shaking off the fourth place in the shorter event by winning the 5,000m heats 15 hours later and then the final.

Sifan's effort is on a different plane. In the Tokyo Olympics, she pulled off an even crazier schedule—eight days, five races, a golden double in the 5,000-10,000 and bronze in the 1,500m. That had made her only the second woman to complete a distance double in the Olympics—Tirunesh Dibaba was the first, at 2008 Beijing, while Kenya's Beatrice Chebet achieved the feat in Paris.

"I have no words. Every moment in the race I was regretting that I ran the 5,000m and 10,000m. I was telling myself if I hadn't done that, I would feel great today," Sifan said. "The moment I started to feel good was at 20km. I felt so good. Then I knew I wanted gold."

A steep ascent followed by a tricky descent around the 27km mark made it really tough for the runners. Ethiopia's men's marathon winner, Tamirat Tola, chose to accelerate up the 500m incline, while the women chose a steady pace.

"I've never pushed myself through to the finish line as I did today," Sifan, who still had the legs in the end to bring her track finishing prowess in, said. "So, why does Sifan maintain such a punishing schedule? At Tokyo 2021 she said: 'For me, it is crucial to follow my heart. Doing that is far more important than gold medals. That keeps me motivated and it keeps me enjoying this beautiful sport.'"

Add the falls to the rising. In Tokyo, it came in the 1,500m heats, but she got up and won. At the 2023 Budapest World Championships, Sifan, coming into the home stretch in the lead, was distracted after her elbow touched Gudaf Tsegay, who was on her shoulder, lost balance and went down. She walked across the line 11th. After the Dutch sprinter-hurdler Femke Bol too crashed in the relay, a rueful Sifan said: "Maybe it's national fall down day."

Shifan, who won the 2023 London Marathon on her debut at the distance and then clocked the second-best time ever to win the Chicago Marathon in October in 2:13.44, was thrilled to bits.

"I was so happy in the London Marathon, but today I'm more happy, I can't believe I'm Olympic marathon champion! When I finished, the whole moment was a release. It is unbelievable. I have never experienced anything like that. Even the other marathons I have run were not close to this."

She made a quiet debut at the 2016 Rio Games, but rose to prominence at the 2019 Doha worlds where she won the 1,500m and 10,000m. A trainee at the Albert Salazar's Oregon centre, his suspension due to doping allegations followed. Sifan, who denied any doping, continues to train in the U.S.

On Saturday, Sifan's celebrations continued for long. With the Dutch flag draped around her shoulders, she was still with the Dutch fans when Nepal's Shantoshi Shrestha came in as the second last finisher, more than 32 minutes after her. The winner went across to hug and share a word with Shantoshi.

The 1924 Paris Olympics saw 'Flying Finn' Paavo Nurmi win an unprecedented five gold—1,500m, 5,000m, individual cross-country, team cross-country and 3000m team. A century on, Sifan can lay claim to carrying that legacy—falling, rising, logging 62-plus kms, and waving the winner's medal in the end.

INDIVIDUAL BRILLIANCE } THE MULTI-MEDALLISTS

The gold class

As curtains come down on the Paris Games, here's a look at the biggest stars to emerge from this edition of the Olympics.

Simone Biles (USA)
Gymnastics
Gold: Individual all-around
Gold: Team all-around
Gold: Vault
Silver: Floor exercise

Biles proved as popular a draw as the Eiffel Tower, standing tall on her return to the Olympics after the trauma of Tokyo. Watched by an enraptured full house including her husband, NFL player Jonathan Owens, Tom Cruise and Lady Gaga, Biles resumed the gold run she had begun at Rio 2016. She won the coveted all-around crown on her last tumble on the floor. That was book-ended by titles with the US team and vault.

Lisa Carrington (NZ)
Canoe Sprint
Gold: Women's K1 500m
Gold: Women's K2 500m
Gold: Women's K4 500m

New Zealand kayaker Lisa Carrington completed her clean sweep of gold medals in her events and joined the likes of Usain Bolt as a winner of eight career golds. The 35-year-old Kiwi despite being New Zealand's most successful Olympian of all time, said she does not allow her medals to define her. "It's not necessarily about how many I have, it's about how hard it is and the work to try to be better, to grow, to not focus on the outcomes," she said.

Leon Marchand (FRA)
Swimming
Gold: 200m breaststroke
Gold: 200m butterfly
Gold: 200m IM
Gold: 400m IM
Bronze: 4x100 medley relay

Marchand was unquestionably the star of the Paris pool, the toast of France. Every one of Marchand's victories was accompanied by deafening noise at La Defense Arena but it was last week's double victory that will live longest in the memory. First, he produced a devastating late surge to beat Hungary's Kristof Milak to the wall in the 200m butterfly. Then, less than two hours later, he led from start to finish to triumph in the 200m breaststroke.

Kim Woojin & Lim Sihyeon (South Korea)
Archery
Kim Woojin and compatriot Lim Sihyeon both won three gold medals each in Paris. Woojin won the individual men's title beating USA's Brady Ellison in one of the most thrilling men's finals ever at the Games. It was Woojin's fifth gold overall, after team golds in both Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020. It also makes him the most successful Olympic archer of all-time, surpassing Kim Soo-Nyung, with four.

Gabby Thomas (USA)
Athletics
Gold Women's 200m
Gold Women's 4x100
Gold Women's 4x400

Gabby Thomas topped the medal count in track and field by winning three gold medals in Paris. She first bagged the women's 200m gold and then played key roles to help USA win the 4x100 and 4x400 relays. After she earned her degree at Harvard in neurobiology and global health, Thomas enrolled at the University of Texas, where she got a Masters in public health for studying sleep patterns of different ethnic groups—while also making the wise choice to double down on her track training.

Neeraj Chopra lone high point of a forgettable campaign by athletes

Avishek Roy
avishek.roy@htlive.com

NEW DELHI: Neeraj Chopra entering the pantheon of greats was the only silver lining in the Indian track and field performances at the Paris Olympics. Avinash Sable was the only other athlete from the country to make the final, in the 3000m steeplechase where he finished 11th. The squad of 29 athletes had landed in Paris with fanfare, but failed to live up to the hype.

The men's 4x400m relay team (Muhammed Anas Yahiya, Muhammed Ajmal, Amoj Jacob and Rajesh Ramesh) ran their season's best of 3:00.58secs and narrowly missed out on qualification for the final.

They had produced some stunning results in the build-up, including a fifth place in the 2023 Worlds in Budapest (2:59.92s). In the qualification at the Worlds, the quartet had stitched a new Asian record (2:59.05s). However, in Paris, the Japan men's relay team whose record was broken by India, regained their Asian supremacy by finishing fifth in the final with a new continental record (2:58.33). Japan, in fact, improved on their all-time best twice—they clocked 2:59.48 in the heats.

That's how cut throat the competition is at the Olympics. Unless athletes record their personal bests, national records or at least



Jeswin Aldrin during men's long jump qualification.

season's best—Neeraj Chopra registered his best two throws of the season (89.45m-final, 89.34m-qualifying) at the Games—it becomes tough to keep pace with the rest of the world.

Since Chopra's historic gold in Tokyo, the spotlight has been on the performance of the athletes. At the 2022 CWG, there were some eye-catching performances, be it Sable's silver or triple jumpers Eldhose Paul and Abdulla Abboobacker's 1-2 podium finish, or Priyanka Goswami's silver in race walking. Impressive showing at the Asian Games where India won 29 medals (6-14-9) further shored up Indian hopes.

Most of the top track and field athletes trained abroad, competed in world events, and thus were

more on medals than planning on how to improve performance," says Karhana, who competed in the 2012 London Olympics.

Let's start with javelin—the event that the country is now known for in athletics thanks to Chopra. The performance of Kishore Jena, who surprised all with a throw of 87.54m at the Asian Games, winning silver behind Neeraj, has only gone downhill. This year Jena has struggled to touch even 80m. In Paris, he finished 18th (80.73m) and could not qualify for the final.

India could have had a third thrower at the Olympics but DP Manu, who was high in the world rankings, failed a dope test close to the Games. Two-time Asian Games shot put champion Tajinderpal Singh Toor continued to disappoint at major global meets. Toor was far off his personal best of 21.77m, which was an Asian record till Mohammed Tolo of Saudi Arabia bettered it (21.80m) in June. In Paris, Toor recorded just one legal throw of 18.05m and finished 29th overall.

Reigning Asian Games champion Annu Rani too failed to deliver in javelin. Her best throw of 55.30m was way off her PB of 63.82m (to be ratified), or Hangzhou gold medal throw of 62.92m last year. The 31-year-old was training in Germany after the Asian Games under foreign coach

Werner Daniels. If India had hopes from the jumpers, they were dashed after the injury to long jumper Murali Sreeshankar.

Jeswin Aldrin has surprisingly not been able to come anywhere close to his national record of 8.42m, achieved in March last year. Aldrin, who trains under JSW's Cuban coach Yoandri Betanzos, had competed in two world championships and Asian Games during this cycle. In Paris, his jump of 7.61m saw him finish 26th among 33 competitors.

Parul Chaudhary, Asian Games gold (5,000m) and silver (steeplechase) medallist, clocked her season's best in both the events, but she couldn't qualify. The women's relay team clocked 3:32.51 and finished eighth in the heats. Hurdler Jyothi Yarraji could not progress to the 100m hurdles semi-finals, clocking 13.16secs in the heats to come seventh and 13.17secs in the repechage for a fourth position.

Australian race walker Jemima Montag, who won gold at the Birmingham CWG ahead of Priyanka (10km race walk), won two bronze medals from Paris—in the 20km race walk (1:26:25) and in the marathon walk relay (with Rhyddian Cowley 2:51:38). Priyanka finished 41st (1:39:55) in the individual event while Priyanka and Suraj Panwar did not finish in the mixed team event.



A car breaks down on a waterlogged road near Narsinghpur village in Gurugram on Sunday. PARVEEN KUMAR/HT PHOTO

Heavy rain wreaks havoc in Ggm; key stretches inundated

Leena Dhankhar
letters@hindustantimes.com

GURUGRAM: Heavy rainfall on the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday battered Gurugram, leading to intense waterlogging on several roads, including the Delhi-Gurgaon Expressway, as well as other highways and subways, gridlocking entire localities. Residents also grappled with water flooding their houses in multiple parts of the city.

According to the district administration, Gurugram received 110mm of rainfall, which is classified as a "heavy" spell by the India Meteorological Department (IMD). Further, Gurugram recorded two "very intense" spells of rainfall, clocking 30mm of rain between 9.30am and 10.30am and another 39mm between 10.30am and 11.30am.

Weather experts shared data from multiple localities in the city, most of which recorded over 100mm of rainfall. Among those, Sector 51 clocked the highest rainfall at 124.4mm.

IMD officials attributed the torrential rain to a low-pressure zone that formed above Haryana and Delhi due to a cyclonic circulation.

As the streets got water-

logged and stormwater drains clogged, vehicles were seen crawling on the roads, leading to traffic congestion across the city. Commuters also had a harrowing time as vehicles broke down on flooded streets.

"The rainwater submerged key intersections and service lanes, leaving vehicles stranded and commuters wading through knee-deep water," said Kusum Sharma, a resident of Suncity Township in Sector 54.

Surendra Paul, director, IMD Chandigarh station, said, "We also have a monsoon trough, a low-pressure system, that brings rainfall in a normal condition. It was earlier active towards the Himalayan foothills but shifted southwards and came to the plains due to which we are observing good rainfall activity in the last 24 to 48 hours," Paul said.

IMD issued a warning of heavy rainfall in Gurugram, Faridabad, Palwal, Mewat, Rewari, Mahendragarh and Jhajjar for Monday.

Gurugram deputy commissioner Nishant Kumar Yadav said emergency teams were deployed across the city to manage the situation. "We have stationed cranes and police vans at key stretches to assist with vehicle breakdowns," he said.

Rain claims more lives with deaths of 2 minors

Karn Pratap Singh and Paras Singh
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: A 13-year-old boy was electrocuted after he touched an iron pipe carrying a live electric wire to a gashala and a seven-year-old boy drowned in a rainwater puddle after the heavy downpour on Saturday, police said, adding to the unrelenting list of fatalities caused by civic apathy this monsoon.

According to police, the 13-year-old boy was electrocuted while playing cricket with his siblings and friends in Kotla Vihar Phase 2 near Ranhola, and the seven-year-old boy drowned in a park in Rohini Sector 20, when playing with his friends.

Police identified the 13-year-old boy as Aditya Raj and registered a case of death by negligence against unknown people at the Ranhola police station. Investigators are ascertaining if waterlogging around the iron pipe, due to rains, led to an electrical leakage. Deputy commissioner of police Jimmy Chiram said they also trying to establish the ownership of the pole.

An initial probe suggested the wire between the gashala and a concrete structure was old and was exposed at multiple places. It allegedly belongs to a private cricket academy.

An official from the electricity department claimed that "the discom network, located around 100 metres from the pole, was not involved in the incident."

"Based on ground reports, the incident occurred within an enclosed private playground when the boy came in contact with a private iron pipe. It appears that the pole had an electrical leakage from an internal wire. The discom network was not involved in the incident. As per DERC regulations, discom supply is only till the metre," they said.



Vehicles wade through an inundated road at Jangpura on Sunday. AJAY AGGARWAL/HT PHOTO



Aditya, 13, and Tarun, 7.

DCP Chiram said police received a call around 1.30pm from Deen Dayal Upadhyay (DDU) hospital about the boy. "The boy was rushed to the hospital where doctors declared him dead on admission. A first information report (FIR) for death by negligence was registered under section 106(l) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)," he added.

On Sunday, the family members, relatives and neighbours of the boy held a protest in the area, demanding justice and action against those responsible. Bechan Mahto, the father of the victim, said that his three sons had gone to play cricket around 12.30pm. "Someone called and informed my wife that

Aditya suffered an electric shock. My other two sons tried to save him using a wooden stick. They also suffered shock in the process," Mahto said.

Aditya's death is the ninth electrocution in the city since the onset of monsoon. On July 24, a 26-year-old IAS aspirant was electrocuted after he tripped while crossing a flooded lane and grabbed an iron gate, which was charged after coming in contact with a live power line.

On July 25, another man, a 30-year-old labourer, was electrocuted in Karawal Nagar. On June 28, when over 200mm of rain lashed Delhi, a 39-year-old man was electrocuted in Rohini after brushing past a live wire on a waterlogged road. On July 13, a 34-year-old woman was electrocuted on a waterlogged road in Bhajanpura. Other electrocution deaths this monsoon include the a BSES employee in Dwarka on June 14 and a constable, who died after coming in contact with a high-tension wire on a roof in

Najafgarh on June 23.

7-yr-old drowns in puddle

Deputy commissioner of police (Rohini) Guriqbal Singh Sidhu said police received a call around 6.30pm on Saturday that a boy drowned in a park in Rohini Sector 20. The child was taken to a nearby hospital where he was declared dead. He was identified by his first name as Tarun.

Jaswant Singh Chaudhary, a relative of Tarun, said, "The children were playing in the park when Tarun drowned. The park belongs to DDA. The police informed the family about his death around 8pm." Chaudhary said the boy is survived by his parents and two siblings.

"The body has been preserved in a government hospital mortuary for autopsy. Necessary legal action has been taken," Sidhu said.

The incident came to light less than 24 hours after two boys, both aged 17, drowned in a puddle in Prem Nagar.

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Persistent civic apathy leads to repeated deaths

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Every monsoon, the city is thrown out of gear with recurrent flooding that upsets normal lives, where residents lose their loved ones to unprecedented episodes of electrocution and drowning. Separately, unfit buildings crippled by ill constructions, especially in unauthorised colonies, collapse on victims, who get buried under debris and suffocate to death.

Delhi's multiple administrations (the LG, the elected government, NDMC, MCD) had adequate warning. A record 153mm rainfall on July 9 last year led to massive flooding and the Yamuna breached its bunds. Authorities promised that infrastructure would be augmented but little has been done.

This year, the number of lives claimed by rain is at least 33. Between June 28 and July 28, the first month of monsoon, at least 18 deaths were reported.

Meenakshi Dhote, professor of environmental planning at the School of Planning and

Architecture, earlier said that waterlogging occurs primarily due to Delhi ignoring its natural slopes. "This has been compounded by piecemeal modifications of drainage, leading to new high areas and low areas, where water eventually collects," she said.

The city has reported numerous such structural collapses since the onset of monsoon, most of which were not captured in the pre-monsoon "dangerous building survey". However, it is also not the case that high-end infrastructure is fool-proof. One of the first monsoon-related deaths this season occurred at the Delhi airport, where a 45-year-old cab driver died in a roof collapse.

Atul Goyal, president of URJA, an umbrella body of RWAs in Delhi, said that the deaths point to a failure of governance. "The city has been caught unprepared. Tall claims of agencies have been proved false. On the one hand, we are talking about the upgrade of drainage, but we are unable to even clear our drains," he said.

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MCD seals 128 coaching units operating in violation of norms

Paras Singh letters@hindustantimes.com NEW DELHI: The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has identified 248 coaching centres operating in violation of different building rules and sealed 128 units so far...



CBI officials at Rau's IAS Study Circle on August 8. SANCHIT KHANNA/HT

According to the action taken report of the civic body, over 56% of violators did not even have sanctioned building plans. The most number of sealed units are located in Civil Lines (32), West zone (26) and Karol Bagh zones (22)...

A senior MCD official said that while basements can be used for parking, household storage and services, the space cannot be used for public gathering activities like libraries, reading rooms, and coaching centres without permission.

248 units have basement and building violations—154 coaching centres, 81 libraries and 12 schools," the official said, asking not to be named.

ing drives have been carried out in popular coaching hubs like Old Rajendra Nagar, Patel Nagar, Laxmi Nagar, and Mukherjee Nagar, among other areas. Delhi is divided into 12 administrative zones where building portions and basements were sealed in 128 coaching centres...

AAP moves into new headquarters

Alok KN Mishra letters@hindustantimes.com NEW DELHI: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Sunday shifted to its new office in the city at bungalow number 1, Ravi Shankar Shukla Lane...



Shifting underway at 1, Ravi Shankar Shukla Lane. VIPIN KUMAR/HT

Till Saturday, the AAP operated out of No. 206, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya (DDU) Marg on Rouse Avenue Road near ITO. However, this lot belongs to the Delhi judiciary, which sought to use this space to expand district services.

The new office, located at a walking distance from the Mandi House roundabout, was buzzing with activity on Sunday, as AAP signboards went up, and

final touches were being given to the building. The central government allotted the Ravi Shankar Shukla Lane bungalow to the AAP on July 25 following a Delhi high court order, dated June 5, which

said that the party was entitled to space for its office in the national capital. The court's direction came following a plea made by the AAP. On June 10, the Supreme Court asked the AAP to vacate its Rouse Avenue office in the Capital by August 10, clarifying that the earlier deadline of June 15 was being extended as the "last opportunity" for the political outfit to comply with its directive.

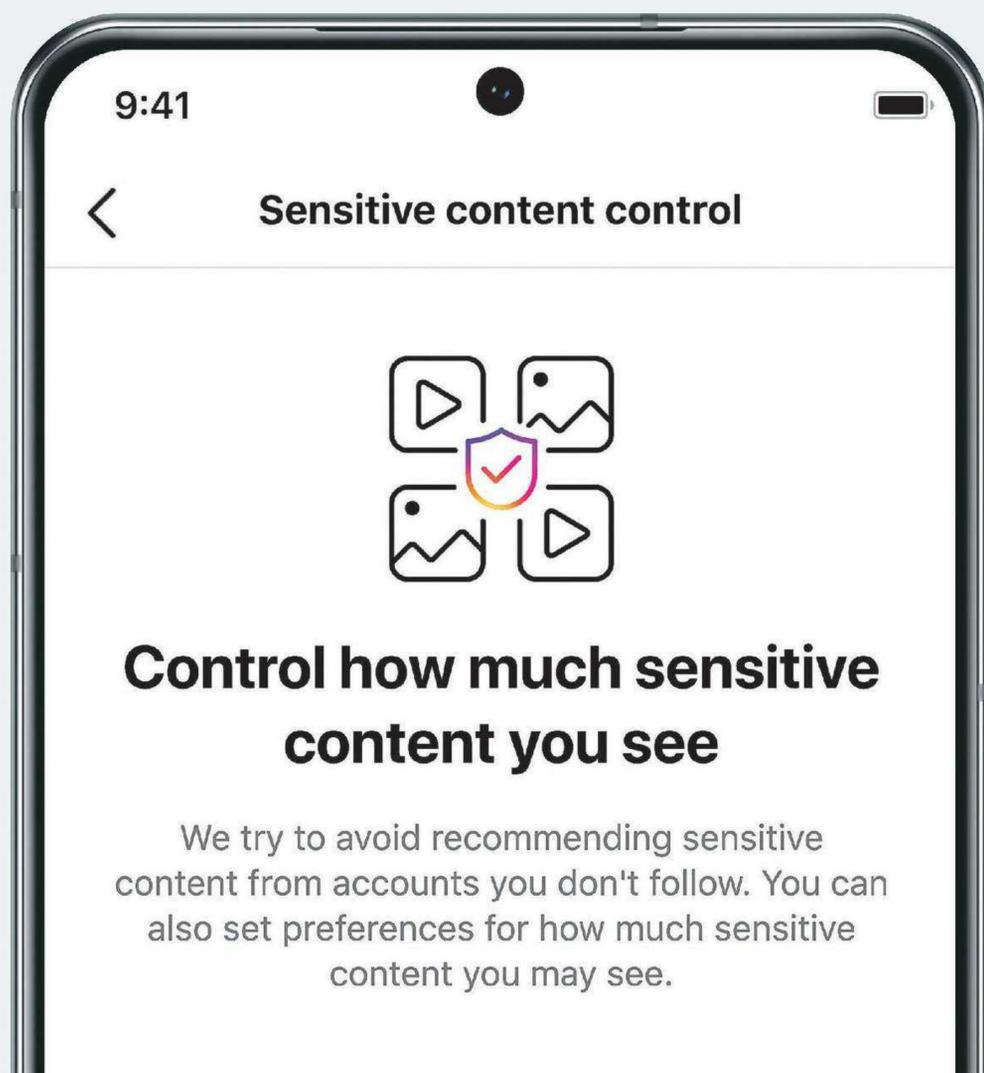
Delhi Police Traffic Advisory for Independence Day 2024. Includes map, route planning, and traffic restrictions around Red Fort and other areas.



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Sewer repair: Ashoka Road to be partially closed from today

Paras Singh

paras@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) is set to partially shut one carriageway of Ashoka Road for one month starting Monday to carry out repair work on damaged sewer lines that run underneath it.

The traffic restrictions are likely to cause widespread snarls on what is one of the most crucial arterial roads of this part of the Capital.

According to NDMC officials, a nearly 1-km stretch of Ashoka Road between the Jaswant Singh Marg roundabout to Windsor Place will be closed for traffic from August 12 to September 10. "Commuters going from C Hexagon of India Gate towards Windsor Place are advised to use Kasturba Gandhi Marg and reach Windsor Place via the Firoz Shah Road traffic signal," an official said.

The development comes after the damage to the sewer lines led to two cave-ins on Ashoka Road — on July 7 and on July 10 — people aware of the matter said. Almost half the carriageway of the stretch near 14, Ashoka Road is barricaded due to the first cave-in, while the second

cave-in, which has been sectioned off near Windsor Place roundabout, already leads to traffic snarls during peak hours.

A traffic police official said that adequate number of traffic personnel will be deployed at diversion points to ensure smooth flow of traffic, especially during peak office hours.

The NDMC official quoted above said several of the agency's sewer lines were laid down before Independence, and need to be replaced.

"The old sewer line settled and started leaking which led to soil erosion and a portion of road getting damaged. The damaged section of the pipeline will have to be replaced for permanent relief," the official said, requesting anonymity. "We are taking up the upgradation work in phases. The old brick barrel lines are also to be rehabilitated starting from Q point to Suneehri Pulla drain via Bharti Nagar and Archbishop Makarios Marg. The repair at Ashoka Road may take many days," the official added.

A second NDMC official said that Lutyens' Delhi has many sections where sewer lines are 80-90 years old. "Sewer lines in areas such as Mathura Road, Lodhi Road, and others have

already been rehabilitated, and a project is underway for areas such as CP, KG Marg, Satya Marg, Kautilya Marg, Shanti Path and C Hexagon. Some of these lines are brick-barrelled and others have been made using concrete through technology which has become obsolete," the official said.

He said that over the decades, corrosive gases from the sewers have peeled off the outer layers and bricks are getting stacked at nodes. "This leads to collapse or settlement every year during the monsoon season," he added.

Gopal Krishan, who heads the New Delhi RWA federation, blamed the lack of timely repair for the cave-in issue which has been dragging on for at least two weeks now. "Instead of treating these isolated sites, we need a comprehensive plan for increasing the capacity of the basic infrastructure as the population has gone up too," he added.

Rajesh Kushwaha, 42, who works near Patel Chowk, said during the evening peak hours, the New Delhi roundabout faces a choke-a-block situation. "This will increase load on other routes. We hope enough personnel are deployed during peak hours," he added.



The portion on Ashoka road that caved in last month. ARVIND YADAV/HT



Work on ageing drains may start in early 2025

Jasjeev Gandhiok

jasjeev.gandhiok@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Delhi is seeking to expedite work on its drainage management plan (DMP), officials aware of the matter said, citing a recent meeting in which the integrated drain management cell (IDMC) asked the Public Works Department (PWD) to prepare detailed project reports (DPRs) for the project by September 15 and commence work early next year.

Agencies were also asked to assess the quantity of silt in Delhi's 22 major drains between October 15 and November 15, officials said. These decisions were taken in the latest IDMC meeting, on July 15, they said.

A government official, who took part in the meeting, said IDMC will be taking administrative decisions on the three basin DPRs before December 31, with work to commence early next year. "The updated deadlines for commencing work on the Najafgarh basin is January 31, 2025, and it is February 28, 2025 for the remaining two basins," the official, who did not wish to be named, said.

Officials said consultants have been selected for all three basins, the initial report finalised for Najafgarh basin and a ground survey is underway there.

DELHI'S CURRENT DRAINAGE PLAN WAS MADE IN 1976. IT CAN HANDLE ONLY AROUND 50MM OF RAIN IN A 24-HOUR PERIOD

IDMC was established in Delhi on March 17, 2020, by the National Green Tribunal to manage and improve the city's drains, especially due to multiple agencies managing different drains. DMP will streamline flow through the three major basins, namely the Najafgarh, Barapullah and trans-Yamuna ones. Twenty-two major drains flow into the Yamuna through the three basins, for which separate drainage plans are in the works.

Large parts of Delhi have been waterlogged this monsoon, even during moderate rainfall, leading to at least 33 rain and waterlogging-related deaths, as of August 11. The deaths once again highlighted civic apathy and negligence, and raised questions about Delhi's 48-year-old drainage system.

Delhi's current drainage plan was prepared in 1976 and is capable of handling only around 50mm of rainfall in a 24-hour period. Any more and the city's

drains begin to overflow, submerging entire localities and throwing life out of gear.

On April 29, the Delhi government directed the irrigation and flood control (I&FC) department to manage all drains. However, the handover is likely to be completed only by the year-end, the official cited above said.

Of the 22, 14 drains are under the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), four under I&FC, two under PWD and two others, Khyber Pass and Sonia Vihar, have a jurisdiction overlap between MCD and I&FC.

In the meeting, IDMC was also told all drains, barring the Najafgarh one, would be de-silted by the end of the year. De-silting of Najafgarh drain will be done by June 2025. "For assessment of quantity of silt in each drain, work will commence after monsoon, around October 15. The exercise should take a month and will be finished by November 15," the official said.

Diwan Singh, an environmental activist said Delhi has been talking about new drainage plans for over a decade, but with little to no execution. "Until these timelines are met and work begins, we are likely to see similar situation next monsoon too," Singh said. Officials of PWD did not respond to requests for comment.

{ GHAZIABAD } HINDU RAKSHA DAL

Cops may invoke NSA against right-wing unit

Peeyush Khandelwal

peeyush.khandelwal@htlive.com

GHAZIABAD: The Ghaziabad Police is contemplating action under the National Security Act (NSA) against Pinky Chaudhary, the chief of right-wing outfit Hindu Raksha Dal, after he and his supporters allegedly assaulted families of Muslim workers and damaged their shanties near Guldhara railway station on Friday. The outfit had alleged that the victims were Bangladeshi nationals.

Police arrested Chaudhary and his accomplice Badal Singh on Saturday night, and they were produced before a magistrate on Sunday. Abhishek Srivastava, assistant commissioner of police (ACP), Kavi Nagar circle, said the accused have been remanded in judicial custody and sent to jail.

Chaudhary, along with 15-20 of his supporters, allegedly attacked several shanties of Muslim workers on Friday evening, and beat them up before setting their belongings afire. Chaudhary alleged that those attacked were from Bangladesh, where members of the Hindu community were allegedly being targeted following the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina amid a student-led uprising.

PINKY CHAUDHARY AND HIS OUTFIT ASSAULTED POOR MUSLIM FAMILIES AND DAMAGED THEIR SHANTIES, SAYING THEY WERE B'DESH NATIONALS

Chaudhary himself circulated the purported videos of the incident shot by his supporters, police added. The police registered a suo motu FIR against Chaudhary and 15-20 unidentified supporters on Saturday, and denied Chaudhary's claims that those targeted were Bangladeshi nationals, adding that they are natives of Shahjahanpur district.

"The act done cannot be justified at all and this calls for action under the NSA. We may initiate action under NSA..." said Dinesh Kumar P, additional police commissioner. ACP Srivastava said Chaudhary has 14 cases filed against him, including rioting, promoting enmity and extortion.

Meanwhile, several posters were pasted near the police station and the district court, showing Chaudhary's picture, claiming that he is going to contest the bypolls from the Ghaziabad seat.

MOTI BAGH SLUM DWELLERS FORCED TO EVICT, POLICE SWING INTO ACTION

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: A video clip, purportedly showing a group of men wearing saffron clothes and towels and threatening people living in shanties near a temple in Moti Bagh went viral on social media websites on Saturday, causing concerns about right-wing outfits targeting members of minority groups who allegedly fled Bangladesh for India.

HT could not independently verify the video.

However, Delhi Police refuted the allegations. "There was no communal or Bangladeshi angle to the matter. The people living in the 18-19 jhuggis were CPWD workers and they were from all communities. It's incorrect to say that they were Bangladeshis or that the residents were only Muslims," deputy commissioner of police (southwest) Rohit Meena said.

"There is a dispute among the temple, RWA and CPWD for land that is adjacent to the religious structure. Displaced and affected people have been shifted to an alternative location near Baratghar, Begum Zaidi, which is around 800 metres away, by an assistant engineer of the CPWD. Necessary legal action is being taken in the matter," Meena said.

Water overproduction hits quality: Report

Paras Singh

paras@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Water treatment plants (WTPs) in the city supply around 40 to 47 million gallons a day (mgd) of potable water above their installed capacity, which, inadvertently, may be affecting the quality of potable water supplied to residents, according to an official government report.

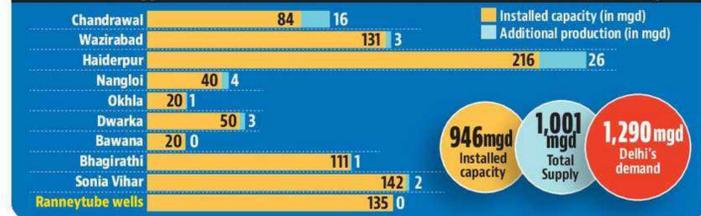
With Delhi needing around 1,290mgd of water per day and the installed capacity of Delhi Jal Board's (DJB) water plants at 950mgd, even old WTPs are being pushed beyond their capacity to meet the city's water demands, given that projects to set up two new facilities at Dwarka and Chandrawal are behind schedule.

A part of a government report submitted on July 29 by chief secretary Naresh Kumar the Delhi government underlines the urgent need to increase the capacity of water treatment plants. The report says that the installed capacity of the operational nine water treatment plants is 950mgd, but about 990mgd water is treated by these WTPs. This amounts to about 40mgd, or about 151 million litres of water per day, over and above the capacity.

"Operating WTPs above their capacity has direct bearing on the health of the plant as well as

Delhi's water struggles

Even as Delhi struggles to meet demand in monsoon, new WTPs at Chandrawal and Dwarka are delayed



quality of potable water being treated from such WTPs," the report said.

This month, DJB has maintained a daily water supply above 1,000mgd, according to the agency's daily reports. Over the past two-three months, the water supply has been impacted due to various reasons, such as a shortage of raw water, a breach in the Munak canal, high levels of industrial pollutants and ammonia, and power outages.

DJB operates nine WTPs at Chandrawal, Wazirabad, Haiderpur, Okhla, Nangloi, Bawana Dwarka, Sonia Vihar and Bhagirathi.

Delhi's oldest water treatment plant is at Chandrawal, which was set up in 1935, and the latest addition is the 50mgd plant at Dwarka, set up in 2015.

A DJB official said that setting

up a new treatment plant at Chandrawal and a second 50mgd plant at Dwarka are delayed and are likely to be completed by March 2025 and December 2024, respectively.

The official, requesting anonymity, said several tweaks have been made to existing plants to increase their water output, including a change of filters and recycling of water, among other measures, as Delhi faces a demand-supply gap of more than 290mgd.

"WTPs capacity was increased by about 40% (from 650mgd to 906mgd) during the period 2006 to 2015, however, there is only about 5% increase (from 906mgd to 950mgd) in the capacity of WTPs during the period 2015 to 2024," the report said.

Given that the units at Delhi's

oldest water treatment plant at Chandrawal—a second unit was set up here in 1955 — supplies water to parts of Old Delhi, Sadar Bazar, Paharganj, parts of Karol Bagh, Malkaganj, Rajinder Nagar, Patel Nagar, Naraina and Palam Vihar, residents have complained of contaminated supply.

Ashok Bhasin, who heads the North Delhi Residents' Federation said that they are getting contaminated water supply for at least six to seven days a month.

"The pipelines are 40-50 years old and have contamination points. We have to run water motors for 15 to 20 minutes daily to get rid of the initial phase of contaminated supply. The plant has become too old and it cannot keep running like this," Bhasin said.

Two new plants delayed

Delhi government announced the development of a second 50mgd water treatment plant at Dwarka in 2021. The second plant, abutting the existing facility, is being constructed at the cost of ₹280 crore and it is expected to supply potable water to areas of southwest and south Delhi comprising Dwarka sub-city, Daulatpur, Najafgarh, Delhi airport, Palam, Uttam Nagar, Bijwasan and Rajokri village.

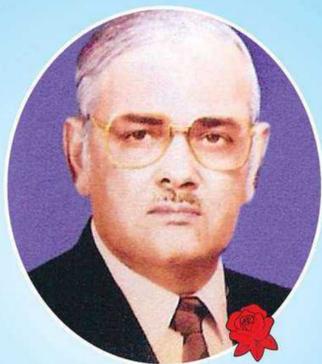
DJB announced that the project would likely be completed in a year and a half, but it is not likely to be completed by March 2025, missing its May 2023 deadline by around two years. An official said 70% of the work here is complete.

At Chandrawal, there are two treatment units, of 35mgd and 55mgd capacities, but both "have outlived their design life, many units are in dilapidated state with no automated operation and control systems," according to the report.

The DJB official cited above said the two treatment units will be phased out once the new facilities are operational and Delhi can meet its water needs.

DJB said the project of a new treatment plant, of 126mgd capacity, was awarded in August 2019. "Its completion is expected by December 2024." The Delhi government did not respond to requests for comment.

HT Homage



R.P. SIKKA
06.04.1935 - 12.08.1993

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Now showing at Mandi House

New public art in the art district

PUBLIC INTEREST

A classical dancer in a classic mudra, two tablas, and two larger-than-life faces that exude such a calm trance that they could only be of artists in the middle of their early morning sadhana.

This is among Delhi's newest art installations. No big deal in that, for many have lately come up around Bharat Mandapam. This one is unique because it sits in the very heart of the Capital's art district—the Mandi House roundabout.

Mandi House is the address of art galleries, concert halls, theatres and music schools. It has something of the Montmartre district of Paris, where at one time, bohemian artists would wander around with their paint brushes and canvases. Mandi House has its art apprentices sitting beside chai stalls, concentratedly sketching portraits of passers-by, while the roundabout is claimed by acting troupes rehearsing for their forthcoming plays.

The new installation Natya Shastra has been created by artist Nehmat Mongia—an accompanying plaque by the Union ministry of culture credits "Public Art of India", a project carried out by the Lalit Kala Akademi and the National Gallery of Modern Art; but the plaque is silent on whether the display is temporary or otherwise.

Whatever, the sculpture came up two weeks ago, according to the various folks hanging out in the area this overcast evening.

Commanding a primary real estate in the roundabout's landscaped garden, it forms the nucleus of the creative district. Five roads radiate out of the roundabout. One is named after a legendary musician—Tansen Marg. Another is named after a legendary playwright—Safdar Hashmi Marg. The roundabout also overlooks the imposing statue of Russian poet Pushkin, as well as the National School of Drama, the spiritual home of some of the film world's most acclaimed actors. While the art district already has three longtime sculptures adorning the little plazas spread around the roundabout, the new installation is far easier to grasp, even by those among the aam public who aren't tuned into the ABC of art. Truth be told, the other three sculptures, which have been gracing Mandi House for decades, are too abstract for easy comprehension. They perhaps speak more eloquently to artist-types, including these actors of Dreams Drama Theatre currently warming up in front of the new sculpture—see photo—Arshika, Sameer, Anmol, Rahul, Ritu and her son Yuvansh.

Meanwhile, cars and autos are moving around the circle as they always have, the traffic's indifference making the installation appear more at home, as if it has always been here.



READ: For more stories by Mayank Austen Soofi, scan the QR code

ASI set to restore 400-yr-old bridge

Paras Singh
paras@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Barapullah bridge in Nizamuddin, built during the reign of Mughal emperor Jahangir, will be restored and rejuvenated by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) over the next three months, officials with the lieutenant governor (LG) secretary said.

The 200-metre bridge was handed over to ASI on Sunday after an anti-encroachment drive last week, they said.

LG VK Saxena said on Sunday: "Delhi's another heritage (structure) 400-year-old Barapullah bridge with 12 piers will soon regain its lost glory. The bridge which was under heavy encroachment during my last visit on Sunday (August 4), was handed over to ASI, which will restore the structure in three months."

He said that currently, de-silting of the drain is underway. "ASI will take up the restoration work immediately after the de-silting is completed," he said.

The elevated Barapullah cor-

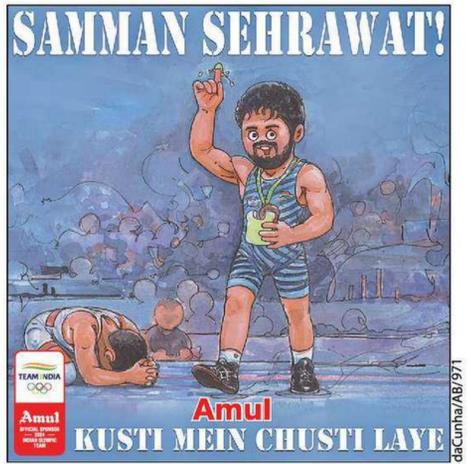
ridor and the under-construction Barapullah Phase-3 bridge over the Yamuna derive their names from the historic bridge. Currently, the structure is surrounded by the Nizamuddin Basti, with a drain passing through it. The bridge, which was built by Minar Banu Agha, under Jahangir's tutelage, was named "Barapullah" due to its 12 piers ("Barah" and "Pulla" colloquially) and 11 arches.

According to historians, the bridge was built in 1628 and the road between the bridge and Humayun's Tomb was a tree-lined path and one of the most beautiful bridges of Delhi. Mughals used the bridge to cross the Yamuna and reach the Nizamuddin dargah and the tomb, on their way from Agra.

The structure is currently in a decrepit state and was found heavily encroached upon on August 4, during an inspection by the LG.

The main carriageway of the bridge was being used as a dump yard by residents of nearby localities.

ASI officials did not comment on the restoration.



Thieves break into Gzb showroom, flee with ₹3cr watches

GHAZIABAD: A gang of nearly 12 thieves allegedly broke into a watch showroom in Indrapuram at 3.43am on Sunday and decamped with 600 luxury watches worth about ₹3 crore, police said. The incident, which was captured on CCTV cameras of the showroom, came to light when the owner's son checked the footage on his mobile phone at 9am. Police have lodged an FIR under sections of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

Delhi crime branch arrests gangster for Sonepat murder

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Police crime branch has arrested a 24-year-old Haryana-based gangster for a murder in Sonepat district a month ago, officers said. Ankit was arrested from Chhawla in southwest Delhi, police said, adding that they seized four firearms, 13 cartridges, two spare magazines, and a stolen motorcycle from him. DCP (crime) Amit Goel said last week, an information was received, following which he was arrested.

Eye on polls, Sisodia meets AAP leaders

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Manish Sisodia, the former deputy chief minister of Delhi, on Sunday held a meeting with senior party leaders and state ministers with an eye on Delhi assembly elections likely to be held early next year, AAP functionaries said.

The party has said that Sisodia will now hold meetings with AAP MLAs and councillors, following which he will start a public outreach programme.

"It has been decided that on Monday Sisodia will meet all the MLAs of the party where detailed discussions will take place. On the subsequent day, all councillors will meet Manish Sisodia. On August 14, he will

start meeting people all across Delhi through padyatras. He will directly meet people and talk to them," AAP Rajya Sabha member Sandeep Pathak said.

Pathak also alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is trying to stop projects and work being taken up by the AAP, and claimed that the BJP is trying to break up the party. "Despite facing so many challenges and adverse conditions, the AAP is still strong," he said.

Meanwhile, Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said the results of the assembly elections will mark the end of the "anarchic Arvind Kejriwal regime in Delhi". "It's strange that AAP leaders are expecting to win in Delhi even after voters' rejection...during Lok Sabha elections."

Fire breaks out at Asola building, two injured

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Two people sustained severe burn injuries in a fire that broke out in the parking area of a four-storey building in Asola village early on Sunday morning, officials said.

Twelve other residents were safely rescued from the site and the fire was doused within an hour, the officials added. The injured were currently undergoing treatment.

Police suspected that the blaze erupted due to a short-circuit.

According to Delhi Fire Services (DFS) officials, a call was received from Asola Enclave at around 5am. "Three fire tenders were rushed to the site. The fire spread so quickly that it engulfed 10 electric meters, six motorcycles, and two scooters. The blaze was brought under control in an hour resulting in burn injuries to two people

while 12 other individuals were safely rescued from the building," said Atul Garg, DFS chief.

Police said that information regarding the fire incident was received at Maidan Garhi police station. "Prima facie, it appeared that the fire initially broke out on the ground floor due to short-circuit," said Ankit Chouhan, deputy commissioner of police (south).

He further said that 14 building residents—six women, four children and four men—faced respiratory problems or received burn injuries. "Residents were immediately evacuated, and those facing respiratory issues or burn injuries were immediately transferred to AIIMS Trauma Centre and Safdarjung Hospital. Barring two people—who sustained around 60% burn injuries and are still under critical condition—the others were discharged from the hospital after preliminary treatment," he said.

Gunbattle on between terrorists, forces in J&K

Agencies
letters@hindustantimes.com

UDHAMPUR (JAMMU): An encounter broke out between terrorists and security forces in the higher reaches of Basantgarh in Udhampur district of Jammu on Sunday evening, officials said.

"Based on specific intelligence about presence of terrorist, joint search operation was launched by Security forces in higher reaches of Basantgarh under the J/D of P/S Basantgarh) of Udhampur district. Exchange of fire has taken place. Area cordoned off," Jammu and Kashmir said.

Further details are awaited. Earlier on Saturday, two army personnel were killed and another injured in the encounter that erupted in Ahlan Gagarmandu area of Kokernag in Anantnag district—the latest in a series of terror strikes in the

Union territory, which is gearing up to host its first assembly elections since 2014. Two civilians suffered injuries during the exchange of fire.

As per officials, the encounter broke out during a joint operation launched by the Indian Army, Jammu and Kashmir Police and CRPF in the general area of Kokernag in Anantnag.

Havildar Dipak Kumar Yadav and Lance Naik Praveen Sharma laid down their lives in the line of duty in Anantnag. The incident occurred at an altitude of 10,000 feet on Saturday, as security forces continued operations despite the challenging terrain. "Two Indian Army soldiers lost their lives in an encounter in Anantnag district of Kashmir," defence officials had said. They were injured in an encounter between security forces and terrorists in the Kokernag area of Anantnag, they said.

FROM PAGE 1

ANANTNAG CROSSFIRE 12 security personnel and five terrorists, have been killed in separate terror strikes and gun battles this year.

The encounter site is a hilly forest area surrounded by mountains which borders the Doda district of Chenab valley in Jammu, leading to suspicions that the militants may have crossed over from Doda where they had attacked an army team on July 15, killing an Indian Army captain and three soldiers.

"An intensive search operation is going on," he said.

A defence spokesperson had said on Saturday that encounter site is located above 10,000 feet, has thick growth, large boulders, nullahs and re-entrants that poses a serious challenge to operations. Birdi said that a group of 3-4 terrorists may have been involved in the encounter, which had erupted when the security forces were carrying out an operation to look for militants in the area.

"A search operation was going on in Gagarmandu after information was received about the movement of foreign terrorists in the upper reaches," Birdi said.

Meanwhile, Indian Army Chief Upendra Dwivedi and other officers paid their homage to three personnel - Havaldar Dipak Kumar Yadav and Lance Naik

Praveen Sharma—who died in Saturday's gunfight.

"General Upendra Dwivedi COAS and All Ranks of Indian Army salute the supreme sacrifice of bravehearts Hav Dipak Kumar Yadav & L/Nk Praveen Sharma, who laid down their lives in the line of duty, in Anantnag, J&K. Indian Army offers deepest condolences and stands firm with the bereaved families in this hour of grief," said additional directorate general of public information, Indian Army, in a post on X.

The Chinar Corps also expressed their condolences on the death of the three personnel.

People's Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti also offered her condolences to the families of the soldiers and the dead civilian. "Saddened by the killing of two soldiers & a civilian in the Kokernag encounter. Violence begets only grief & mayhem. Deepest condolences to their families in this hour of tragedy," she said in a post on X.

In a separate post, Jammu and Kashmir Police said, "We also renew our joint commitment to fight and finish the foreign marauders to keep our citizens, villagers and communities safe from the threat and terror of these mercenaries. #SaluteTheMartyrs"

PROJECT DELTA

more Kalveri (Scorpene) class diesel electric submarines at Mazagon Dockyards in Mumbai.

The principal reasons for Indian national security planners opting for SSNs is that a nuclear attack submarine's range is limited by crew endurance, supplies and waste disposal, while conventional attack submarines surface for recharging of batteries every second day. The speed of SSNs is 20 knots under water but the SSKs or diesel-electric submarines only register four to five knots even with air independent propulsion.

Given that the Chinese Navy has plans to send long range patrols to the Indian Ocean and has already equipped Pakistan with Yuan class SSKs, India needs to build deterrence against these principal adversaries and counter them. A Chinese Song class submarine participated in a naval exercise with Pakistan last year with the submarine practising bottoming at Karachi harbour as part of attack demonstration to the Pakistan Navy. Bangladesh has acquired two Ming class submarines from China.

Another reason for the focus on SSNs is that SSBNs are only for nuclear deterrence and part

of India's second strike capability. India's first four SSBNs, all Arihant class will be equipped with 750 km range K-15 ballistic missiles, while the next class will be equipped with 3000 km range K-4 ballistic missiles.

India also needs SSNs as the Chinese submarines are using Ombai-Wetar straits, off the coast of QUAD ally Australia, to enter undetected into the Indian Ocean and have been surveying the 90 degrees East Ridge as far as the west coast of Africa. While the Modi government understands the requirement for SSNs for India's deterrence, it is for the Indian Navy to convince Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh and India's national security planners to take the next step.

A CHINESE SONG CLASS SUBMARINE PARTICIPATED IN A NAVAL EXERCISE WITH PAKISTAN LAST YEAR, WITH THE SUBMARINE PRACTISING BOTTOMING AT KARACHI HARBOUR



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Tender document with all other details can be downloaded from www.etender.up.nic.in from 12.08.2024.

The last date for submission of bids is 02.09.2024 till 1500 hrs. Technical Bids will be opened on 02.09.2024 at 1630 hrs.

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General public is hereby informed that this person (depicted in the photo) Name: Ajay, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: 40 Years, Sex: Male, Height: 5'7", Complexion: Shallow, ID Mark: Mole on Right side of Chest, Wearing: Cream color Shirt and Blue color Jenas, found dead at Safdarjung Hospital, Delhi on 26.07.2024 under area of P.S. Safdarjung Enclave, Delhi.

In this regard a DD No. 18A, dated 26.07.2024 has been lodged at P.S. Safdarjung Enclave, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this person but no clue has come to light so far.

If any person having any information or clue about this person may kindly inform to the following.

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P.S. - Safdarjung Enclave, Delhi
Ph.: 011-24106346, 7065036231

DP/10661/SW/2024 (UIDB)

'Malicious, baseless': Sebi chief, Adani on Hindenburg report

mint
Ram Sahgal and Neha Joshi
letters@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: The chairperson of India's Securities and Exchange Board (Sebi), Madhabi Puri Buch, and her husband Dhaval Buch on Sunday denied allegations of conflict of interest levelled by US short-seller Hindenburg Research regarding the regulator's investigation into the Adani Group.

In a joint statement issued on Sunday, the couple termed Hindenburg's claims as "character assassination" and asserted that "all disclosures and recusals have been diligently followed, including disclosures of all securities held or subsequently transferred".

Hindenburg, citing whistleblower documents, alleged that the Buchs held stakes in "obscure offshore funds used in the Adani money siphoning scandal". The funds in question are the Bermuda-based Global Dynamic Offshore Fund and the Mauritius IPE Plus Fund I, managed by 360 One (formerly IIFL Wealth & Asset Management).

These were allegedly used by Gautam Adani's brother Vinod to invest in shares of the Adani Group in violation of Sebi's public shareholding norms.

The Buchs clarified that their investment in the Mauritius fund was made in 2015, "almost 2 years before Madhabi joined SEBI, even as a Whole Time Member". They explained that the investment decision was driven by their relationship with the fund's chief investment officer, Anil Ahuja, described as "Dhaval's childhood friend from school and IIT Delhi" and a person who they held to have "had a strong investing career".

"The fact that these were the drivers of the investment decision is borne out by the fact that when, in 2018, Mr. Ahuja, left his position as CIO of the fund, we redeemed the investment in that fund," they stated.

Hindenburg in its latest document pointed out that Ahuja served three terms spanning nine years through June 2017 as a

Political slugfest erupts

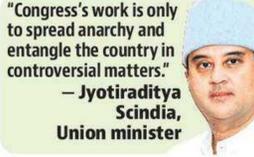
"A JPC inquiry is imperative to probe this massive scandal. Until then, concerns persist that PM Modi will continue to shield his ally, compromising India's Constitutional institutions, painstakingly built over seven decades."

— Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress president



"TMC has almost always preferred the option of a Supreme Court monitored probe... But this situation is extraordinary. BJP is on the back-foot in Parliament. Bring on a JPC as well as an SC monitored probe."

— Derek O'Brien, TMC leader



"Congress's work is only to spread anarchy and entangle the country in controversial matters."

— Jyotiraditya Scindia, Union minister



director of Adani Enterprises. The redemption in the IPE Plus Fund per the Hindenburg report was to the tune of \$8,72,000.

On Buchs' statement, Hindenburg in a tweet late on Sunday, said it includes "several important admissions and raises numerous new critical questions".

360 One stated to exchanges that "IPE-Plus Fund I made zero investments in any shares of Adani Group either directly or indirectly through any fund".

Addressing allegations about Dhaval Buch's appointment as a senior advisor to Blackstone, the couple emphasised that this role, focused on supply chain management, predated Madhabi's appointment as Sebi chairperson. They added that Blackstone was "immediately added to Madhabi's recusal list maintained with SEBI".

Buchs refuted claims about Madhabi's stake in two consultancy firms, stating that these became "immediately dormant on her appointment with Sebi".

The Adani Group, in a statement, dismissed Hindenburg's allegations as "malicious, mischievous and manipulative selections of publicly available information". The conglomerate rejected the claims as "a recycling of discredited claims that have been thoroughly investigated, proven to be

baseless, and already dismissed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in January 2024".

Sebi previously issued a show-cause notice to Hindenburg. The regulator released a statement refuting allegations of inaction in its investigation into Adani Group.

Former Sebi Whole Time Member MS Sahoo said, "If the transaction was permissible at the time of the transaction and executed in the specified manner, it cannot be illegal after (s)he occupies a public office".

Legal experts, including Sumit Agrawal, founder of Reg-street Law Advisors and former Sebi officer, outlined the procedure for addressing conflicts of interest within the regulatory body. Agrawal noted, "If the Sebi board concluded that there is a conflict of interest, the involved Member or Chairman must refrain from participating in the matter".

The Sebi board consists of WITMs as also part-time members, including officials from the ministries of finance corporate affairs, deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India and academicians.

Securities lawyer Chirag M Shah said that if the Sebi Board found any merit in the allegations, it, in consultation with the government, could form a committee to look into it. Its findings will then determine further action.

Oppn calls for JPC probe into latest claims, BJP hits back

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: A massive political row erupted on Sunday over US short-seller Hindenburg Research's allegations against Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) chairperson Madhabi Buch, with several Opposition parties demanding a joint parliamentary committee (JPC) probe into the charges against the market regulator chief even as the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) termed it a "conspiracy" and an attack intended to destabilise India's financial system.

In a blogpost on Saturday night, Hindenburg Research alleged that the market regulator was unwilling to act on its January 2023 Adani report because SEBI chairperson Buch and her husband had investments in offshore funds linked with the Adani Group. The SEBI chief and her husband Dhaval Buch have rejected the allegations.

Reacting to the allegations, the Congress said the Union government must act immediately to eliminate all conflicts of interest in the regulator's probe of the Adani Group. The party demanded resignation of the SEBI chief.

"A JPC inquiry is imperative to probe this massive scandal," Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said in a post on X. "Until then, concerns persist that PM Modi will continue to shield his ally, compromising India's Constitutional institutions, painstakingly built over seven decades."

Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi attacked the securities regulator, alleging its integrity has been "gravely compromised" by the allegations against its chairperson. "Honest investors across the

HINDENBURG HAS ALLEGED THAT SEBI CHAIRPERSON MADHABI BUCH AND HER HUSBAND HAD INVESTMENTS IN FUNDS LINKED TO ADANI GROUP

country have pressing questions for the government: Why hasn't SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch resigned yet? If investors lose their hard-earned money, who will be held accountable — the SEBI Chairperson, or Gautam Adani? In light of the new and very serious allegations that have surfaced, will the Supreme Court look into this matter suo moto once again? he posted on X. "It is now abundantly clear why Prime Minister Modi is so afraid of a JPC probe and what it might reveal."

"In the past, Trinamool Congress have almost always preferred the option of a Supreme Court monitored probe with a larger bench to unearth the truth... But this situation is extraordinary. BJP is clearly on the back-foot in Parliament. We need both. Bring on a JPC as well as an SC monitored probe. Both," TMC leader Derek O'Brien said.

Hitting out at opposition parties, the BJP rejected Hindenburg's charge against the SEBI chairperson as an attempt to discredit the financial watchdog and alleged that the Congress and other opposition parties are part of a conspiracy to create financial instability and chaos in India.

Union communications minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said, "Congress's work is only to spread anarchy and entangle the country in controversial matters."

{ STABILITY IN INDIAN OCEAN REGION }

EAM: Maldives at heart of neighbourhood 1st policy

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: External affairs minister S Jaishankar wound up a visit to the Maldives on Sunday by putting the archipelago at the heart of India's "Neighbourhood First" policy and saying the two working towards a "modern partnership", pointing to an apparent reset in bilateral ties that had dipped to a fresh low last year.

Jaishankar's visit, the first since President Mohamed Muizzu came to power in Male on the back of an "India Out" campaign last year and took a range of steps to move his country closer to China, was marked by the signing of an agreement on introducing India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) or digital payments system in the Maldives and the inauguration of several projects built with Indian grants and loans.

More signs of a thaw came from Muizzu, who described India as "one of the closest allies and invaluable partners" of the Maldives when he met Jaishankar on Saturday. He said the projects backed by India would provide significant economic benefits and boost the local economy, and are also "key milestones" in bilateral relations.

On the final leg of his three-day visit, Jaishankar travelled on Sunday to Addu city, where India has invested \$220 million in the last few years. The National College of Policing and Law Enforcement Studies in Addu was built with a



External affairs minister S Jaishankar with Maldivian foreign minister Moosa Zameer in Maldives on Sunday.

\$30-million grant from India and an \$80-million reclamation and shore protection project was completed this year, with the reclamation of 184 hectares.

Referring to the Maldives as a key partner in the Indian Ocean region, Jaishankar said: "It is very much at the heart of our 'Neighbourhood First' policy and it is therefore very natural that the cooperation between our two countries has moved beyond the traditional role and today really aspires to be a modern partnership."

He added, "We are also witnessing greater investment flows from India to the Maldives, particularly in the tourism sector, and we really appreciate that the diversification of the various sectors of cooperation is driven by the needs and priorities of the people of Maldives."

India has partnered with the Maldives on 65 small but high impact community development projects, and Jaishankar and his Maldivian counterpart Moosa Zameer virtually inaugurated water and sanitation projects for 28 islands in the presence of Muizzu on Saturday. Jaishankar had said on this occasion that India's development partnership is driven by the needs of the people and government of the Maldives and comprises a "judicious mix of grants, loans, budgetary support, capacity building and training".

It was at this event on Saturday that Muizzu said his administration is committed to strengthening the "historic and close connections" with India, which has "always been one of the closest allies and invaluable partners" that provided aid whenever Maldives needed it.

{ IN NEXT FIVE YEARS }

India's defence exports to touch ₹50K-cr: Data

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: India is on course to achieve its defence export target of ₹50,000 crore in the next five years, ministry officials said on Sunday, citing export data shared by the government for the first quarter of 2024-25.

India's defence exports stood at ₹6,915 crore during April-June 2024, the data shared a day earlier showed.

This was 78% higher than ₹3,885 crore for year-to-year period. As was the trend last year, the share of the public and private sectors stood at 60% and 40%, respectively, the officials said, declining to be named.

In April, the defence ministry announced that India's defence exports grew 32.5% in 2023-24 and crossed ₹21,000 crore for the first time as the country remained focussed on boosting the indigenous defence manufacturing ecosystem as well as military exports.

The value of exports in 2023-24 was 32.5% more than that in the preceding year,

when it was ₹15,920 crore. Defence exports have grown 31 times in the past 10 years as compared to 2013-14, as previously reported by HT.

India exports military hardware to around 85 countries, with around 100 local firms involved in the effort. The hardware includes missiles, artillery guns, rockets, armoured vehicles, offshore patrol vessels, personal protective gear, a variety of radars, surveillance systems and ammunition.

Military exports have risen sharply and imports have dropped on the back of policy initiatives and reforms during the past 10 years, the government has maintained.



Mayawati
BSP TO CONTEST ALL 10 SEATS IN UP ASSEMBLY BYPOLLS

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

LUCKNOW: Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati on Sunday announced that her party will field candidates on all 10 assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh where bypolls are going to be held.

The Election Commission is yet to declare the schedule for the by-elections to Karhal, Milkipur, Katehari, Kundarki, Ghaziabad, Khair, Meerapur, Phulpur, Majhawan and Sisamau assembly seats.

In a statement, released after a meeting of BSP leaders, the party said Mayawati reviewed the preparations for the upcoming assembly bypolls.

"Ten assembly constituencies have fallen vacant after the Lok Sabha elections. No official announcement of the date has been made so far but activities pertaining to this are increasing continuously, especially the ruling party, BJP, and its government have made it an issue of prestige, due to which the interest of the people in the bypolls has also increased," it said.

"The BSP will field its candidates in all these assembly constituencies, where by-elections will take place, and will contest the bypolls with full might," the statement said.

By-elections were necessitated for nine seats as the MLAs were elected to the Lok Sabha.

AKHILESH TARGETS 'ANTI-RESERVATION' BJP GOVT AMID ROW

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

LUCKNOW: Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday attacked the ruling BJP amid the controversy over sub-classification and creamy layer in SC-ST reservation, accusing the BJP government of weakening the fight for reservation.

Yadav wrote on X in Hindi, "The main objective of any kind of reservation should be the empowerment of the neglected society, not the division or disintegration of that society, this violates the basic principle of reservation itself."

Yadav did not mention the apex court in his post, rather trained his guns on the BJP. "The BJP government every time tries to weaken the fight for reservation through its vague statements and lawsuits... The internal thinking of the BJP has always been anti-reservation," he said.

{ HOLD MEET IN BELAGAVI }

K'taka BJP dissidents target BSY, Vijayendra

Hirekop Rajan Samuel
letters@hindustantimes.com

BELAGAVI: Internal rift within the Karnataka unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) widened on Sunday after a faction of party leaders, who are opposed to former chief minister BS Yediyurappa's clout in the party's affairs and his son and state unit chief BY Vijayendra's leadership, held a meeting in Belagavi.

The meeting, led by senior legislators Basangouda Patil Yatal and Ramesh Jarkiholi, was reportedly attended by around 10 legislators and former lawmakers, marking an escalation in the ongoing rebellion against the current state leadership.

Leaders aware of the matter said the meeting was held at a hotel owned by a former BJP parliamentarian, with discussions focusing on measures to "protect the party from corrupt individuals". They, however, did not divulge specific details of what transpired in the meeting headed by Vijayapura MLA Yatal and Gokak MLA Jarkiholi.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Yatal criticised the leadership of Vijayendra and the influence of Yediyurappa, alleg-

REBEL LEADERS DECIDED TO TAKE OUT A PROTEST MARCH FROM BAGALKOTE TO BELLARY ON SEPTEMBER 17

ing that their control over the BJP was detrimental to its future in the southern state.

"Those of us who are sincere and loyal to the BJP cannot stand by while the party is led by individuals with corruption charges hanging over them," Yatal said. "Our protest will continue until the leadership is in the hands of those with integrity."

He claimed around 15 more BJP legislators are expected to join the group soon. In the meeting, it was decided that the rebel group would take out a protest march from Bagalkote to Bellary on September 17, leaders familiar with the development said.

"The BJP's foothold in South India, established through Karnataka, has been jeopardised by the high command's decision to hand over leadership to corrupt individuals," Yatal alleged.

NEET-PG held in 2 shifts across 170 cities



Candidates leave after appearing for the NEET-PG test, in Noida on Sunday.

Odisha to launch probe into Pandian's copter visits

Debabrata Mohanty
letters@hindustantimes.com

BHUBANESWAR: Two months after the Bharatiya Janata Party swept to power in Odisha, the state government said it will soon begin investigating expenses made from the exchequer to build helipads and to pay for chopper rides of former chief minister Naveen Patnaik's aide VK Pandian.

"As ST secretary, Pandian did not have the provision to use the helicopters. How the government gave permission and facilitated the landing of the helicopter? Who

was bearing the helicopter costs for Pandian's visit? It should be clear," state law minister Prithiviraj Harichandan said on Sunday.

Pandian, a former bureaucrat, was appointed as chairman of ST (transformational initiatives) after he opted for voluntary retirement. He earlier served as private secretary to Patnaik.

On Friday, state commerce and transport minister Bibhuti Bhushan Jena said a probe into the statewide chopper tours of the 2000-batch Indian Administrative Service officer between 2020 and 2023 is going to begin soon. "The



people of Odisha are asking this question about his (Pandian's) tours... They are unable to digest it," Jena said. "The matter will be thoroughly probed and appropriate action will be taken."

Last year, Pandian visited 190 places in 30 districts on helicopter, saying that he was taking the chief minister's grievance cell to the doorstep of the people. He claimed to have collected 57,442 petitions from the people, of which 43,536 petitions were resolved.

However, the Patnaik government did not give any figures on the expenditure incurred on the meetings arranged in the 190 places although the BJP claims at least ₹500 crore was spent.

Pandian was travelling in helicopters to hold public hearings,

ate action will be taken."

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Pandian was travelling in helicopters to hold public hearings,

Maratha activists stop Pawar's car, disrupt Cong meet over quota row

Saurabha Kulshreshtha
letters@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: Maratha quota activists on Sunday stopped the vehicle of veteran leader and NCP(SP) chief Sharad Pawar in Solapur district of Maharashtra and later raised slogans and waved black flags when he was addressing a rally, asking him to clarify his stand on the reservation for the community.

In another incident, a group of Maratha activists stormed into a Congress meeting in Nanded asking the leaders, including state party chief Nana Patole and state in-charge Ramesh Chennithala to clear their stand.

Maratha quota issue has taken

MARATHA QUOTA ACTIVISTS RAISED SLOGANS AND WAVED BLACK FLAGS DURING PAWAR'S RALLY

the centre stage ahead of the crucial assembly polls.

On Sunday morning, a group of Maratha activists headed by local MNS leader Sagar Lokare stopped Pawar's car at Kurduvadi when he was on his way to Barshi for a rally. "Do you support Maratha reservation and the demand for Maratha reservation in the OBC

quota?" asked Lokare. Pawar replied he supported Maratha reservation and left the place. Later, when he was addressing the rally, an activist waved a black flag and another poured petrol on himself. Both were detained by the police.

In the afternoon, a group of protesters forced their way to the Congress divisional review meeting at Nanded and raised slogans, demanding the party to clarify its stand on quota issue. Chennithala held a brief discussion with them and said the Congress supported their demand following which the activists calmed down and left.

In Sangli, NCP leader Chhagan Bhujbal asked all parties to make their stand clear on OBC quota.

{ 'VITAL PILLAR OF ECONOMY' }

21st livestock census may be held in Sept-Dec

Zia Haq
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Union government will conduct the 21st livestock census in the country during September-December 2024, a five-yearly exercise to provide latest headcounts of domesticated animals and poultry, and breed identification through doorstep visits to households, home-based enterprises and commercial farms.

The census is crucial to framing policies, raising productivity and infrastructure development in a sector that is a "vital pillar of the Indian economy", said Alka Upadhyaya, secretary of animal husbandry and dairy.



India has one of the largest cattle populations.

India has one of the largest cattle populations globally and livestock accounts for 5.5% of the country's gross domestic product. The sector offers livelihood to millions of farmers in the world's largest milk producer. India is also the world's second-biggest egg producer.

The enumeration will be digitized and numerous training sessions with technical experts are being held across the country, the official said. Data will be captured by nearly 80,000 surveyors on hand-held devices that will be rapidly uploaded for quicker results. The census went digital in 2019, when the previous census was carried out.

The livestock economy accounts for 30% of the agricultural sector's gross value added, or GVA, a measure of growth that strips out net taxes. On an average, farmers earn far more returns from livestock than from crops alone, according to the farm ministry.

The census will help to iden-

tify breeds with high economic potential and its data are a key component of the "Sustainable Development Goals - National Indicator Framework Progress Report" brought out by the ministry of statistics and programme implementation.

The 21st livestock census in the wake of a crippling lumpy skin disease outbreak in cattle in 2022-23, which is estimated to have killed or maimed up to a million cattle. The census will help to arrive at a reliable estimate of the toll of the epidemic, a second official said. The 20th census had shown the country's cattle population to be 535.78 million, of which 192.49 million were cattle and 109.85 buffaloes.

{ KOLKATA RAPE-MURDER CASE }

Cops step up hunt for key clues, doctors' stir spreads

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

KOLKATA: Police in Kolkata are focussing on how Sanjay Roy, the 31-year-old suspect in the rape and murder of a trainee doctor at one of the city's main government hospitals committed the crime and whether he had an accomplice, officials said on Sunday, as protests by medical professionals over the incident spread to other cities. Roy, a civic volunteer in the Kolkata Police, was arrested on Saturday.

Officials are pinning their hopes on the autopsy report of the 32-year-old postgraduate trainee doctor, who was found dead on Friday. Her body bore injuries consistent with sexual assault and some of her clothes were missing, officials said, but are now unsure on whether the woman was assaulted prior to her killing. "The nature of multiple injuries found on the victim's upper body may prompt anyone to suspect that Roy was not alone," said an official, who asked not to be named.

This person added that the lack of noticeable injuries on Roy's body raised suspicions that "the sexual assault could have taken place after the murder", or that there was a third person when the incident happened.



Doctors, nurses and medical staff stage a protest in Kolkata. ANI

The August 9 incident sparked statewide anger within the doctors' community, and medical professionals from more regions, including Delhi, said on Sunday they will not take up elective surgeries for now in a mark of protest.

Kolkata Police commissioner Vineet Goyal visited the hospital on Sunday with senior officials to inspect the crime scene. The prime suspect, Roy was arrested based on security camera footage showing him entering and leaving the seminar hall where the crime took place.

Investigators are probing how Roy, who was attached to the Kolkata Police Welfare Committee, gained access to the seminar

hall late at night. Roy's sister, a Kolkata Police employee, told a news channel, "I severed all ties with him because he was an alcoholic."

In response to the incident, the West Bengal government has replaced the hospital superintendent and suspended two contractual security guards. Goyal also removed the assistant commissioner of police under whose area of jurisdiction the hospital is located. Chief minister Mamata Banerjee stated that her government would recommend the death sentence for the accused and a trial in a fast-track court.

The tragedy has led to widespread protests and strikes by trainee doctors across West Bengal

and other states. Major government hospitals in Delhi announced an indefinite halt to all elective services starting Monday, responding to a call from the Federation of Resident Doctors' Association (FORDA).

Banerjee told a Bengali news channel after the incident that her government won't object if the case is probed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), a demand raised by several medical associations and the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Several government hospitals in Kolkata released official statements on Sunday announcing the shutdown of outpatient departments (OPDs), operation theatres (OTs), and ward duties starting Monday morning.

Additional commissioner of police Murlidhar met the victim's parents and provided them with a copy of the preliminary post-mortem report. He added: "The police will do everything in its capacity to ensure that the victim gets justice. Nobody will be spared."

Trainee doctors at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital have presented a four-point demand, including a judicial inquiry, compensation for the victim, and the resignation of senior hospital officials.

2 ARRESTED AFTER NEWBORN GIRL FOUND BURIED IN PADDY FIELD: COPS

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

KOCHI: The Kerala Police on Sunday arrested two men in connection with the death of a newborn girl, whose body was found buried near a paddy field in Alappuzha district of Kerala, officers aware of the matter said.

The matter came to light on Saturday after a complaint was filed at the Poochackal police station by a doctor at a private hospital in Kochi, where a 22-year-old woman was admitted due to bleeding. Upon questioning, the woman admitted that she delivered a girl at her home on August 7. However, she handed over the baby to her boyfriend as they had decided to give her up to an *ammathottil* — the state government's cradle system that allows parents to give up their newborns anonymously.

Police later questioned the boyfriend, who revealed that the newborn had died, and he buried in a paddy field with the help of his friend. The boyfriend and his friend have since been arrested.

"We have exhumed the remains of the newborn girl... child was buried at least 2 days ago... we cannot say whether the child was murdered or not. The mother continues to be under surveillance," Alappuzha superintendent of police Chaitra Teresa John said.

He added that the newborn's autopsy would be conducted on Monday, and will reveal details.

15 killed, 4 missing as heavy rainfall wreaks havoc in Rajasthan

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

JAIPUR: Fifteen people have died while four have been reported missing in rain-related incidents across Rajasthan over the last 24 hours officials familiar with the matter said on Sunday, a week after heavy rains and flooding left 24 dead in the state.

On Sunday, heavy rainfall was recorded in parts of Rajasthan, including Dausa, Bharatpur, Savai Madhopur, Kota, Baran and Karauli districts, a MeT department spokesperson said.

In Bharatpur, seven people, including three cousins, drowned while swimming in Banganga river. "Eight friends in Bharatpur's Shri Nagar village went to bathe in the river on Saturday. However, seven of them were immediately swept away in the river when they jumped into a high stream," said Bharatpur collector Amit Yadav.

A similar incident took place in Jhunjhunu's Singhana where



People waded through a waterlogged area after heavy rainfall, in Hindaun. PTI

three drowned in a nearby pond. In Jodhpur, a 17-year-old was swept away in a stream while trekking with friends, added officials.

Karauli district collector Nilabh Saxena informed that Zakir Khan (40) and his son Ziya Khan (12) were killed on Sunday after being stuck under the debris of their collapsed house. "The incident took place when they were sleeping. Our teams recovered their bodies within hours," Saxena said.

In another mishap, nursing student Vikas Sharma (19) was killed in Banswara when he went to visit the Kadelia stream area with his friends. Banswara SP Harsh Vardhan Agrawala said, "The incident occurred when he slipped off and was washed away. Our SDRF team later recovered his body."

Similarly, 35-year-old Gajju Rajput was swept away in a pool in Sawai Madhopur on Sunday evening. "Prima facie, the man, under the influence of alcohol, went to visit the Lediya pool when he slipped off and was washed away. We have urged the people not to go near any waterbody as all of them are overflowing due to heavy rains," said Sawai Madhopur collector Dr Kunal Yadav.

Meanwhile, four people in Jaipur's Bassi were swept away in Kanota Dam. Bassi ACP Mukesh Chaudhary said, "The incident took place when five people went to visit the area. One of them was rescued safely but the SDRF is searching for the rest."

{ GREENPIECE }

Downsize the Olympics for planet

Bharati Chaturvedi
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The just-concluded Paris Olympics were undoubtedly the greenest in recent times. Yet, as per my understanding, big sport events cannot be green. Just the projections of 15 million people reaching Paris for the games proves the point. While news reports point out the dip in tourism, the fact remains that visitors leave a strong carbon footprint, wherever the games are held.

What are the options? I won't say shut the Games down and invest the money in climate

mitigation and adaptation, because as sensible as it sounds, sport should never be cast aside, only modified. But I will point out that the Olympics came to a stop once during the First World War, twice during the Second World War and postponed in 2020. The 1980 Moscow Olympics were boycotted cold war style.

Let's limit spectators to locals in both the Winter and Summer Olympics. Of course, this isn't enough. Building new sport infrastructure is also a climate red flag. Why not select countries across the continents, like in the Olympic rings, who already have the infra-

structure to host pared down games for the next 10 Games, even if we can no longer hold snow-laden Winter Olympics by then? And use meteorological data to plan it for better times of the year? If we discuss downsizing with seriousness, we will find a way ahead.

We are in a climate emergency. We can't afford an indulgence. A new way might give us less thrills, less commercialisation and less spectators. But it gives us a chance to keep our planet below 2°C.

(Bharati Chaturvedi is the founder and director of Chintan Environmental Research and Action Group)

Amarnath Yatra suspended on Baltal route due to rains

SRINAGAR: The Amarnath Yatra was suspended on the Baltal route following heavy rains on Sunday, officials said. With this, the yatra stands suspended on both routes. The Pahalgam route was closed for maintenance work on Wednesday. Divisional commissioner, Kashmir, VK Bhiduri said: "Due to the heavy rains, urgent repair and maintenance work is required to be undertaken on the Baltal axis of Amarnath Yatra."

Tungbhadra dam gate: Locals near Krishna river warned

AMARAVATI: The Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (APSDMA) on Sunday cautioned people living along the banks of Krishna river to keep vigil, following the washing away of a Tungbhadra dam gate in Karnataka. Due to the snapping of a chain link, APSDMA managing director R Kurmanadh said gate number 19 got washed away due to the intensity of floodwaters.

Nine die after car swept away by flooded rivulet

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Nine people have died and two others are reported missing on Sunday after their vehicle got swept away by the flooded Jajion Choe, a seasonal rivulet around 34 km from Hoshiarpur district of Punjab, police said. The rivulet was swollen due to heavy rainfall that lashed several parts of Punjab and other areas.

According to police, the deceased included eight members of a Himachal Pradesh-based family who were travelling in an SUV to attend a wedding in Punjab's SBS Nagar district.

Senior superintendent of police Surendra Lamba said efforts were on to find the missing two occupants of the vehicle.

Police said that the incident occurred around 10.30 am while the car was attempting to cross the flooded Jajion Choe. "The vehicle was swept by the rivulet's strong water current for around 200 metres. Locals had warned the SUV driver to not cross the river,

THE RIVULET WAS SWOLLEN DUE TO HEAVY RAINFALL THAT LASHED SEVERAL PARTS OF PUNJAB AND OTHER AREAS

but he didn't listen," an officer aware of the matter said. A video of the incident showed the vehicle stuck in the flooded stream.

The deceased have been identified as Surjit Bhatia, his wife Paramjit Kaur, brother Saroop Chand, sister-in-law Binder, Shinnu, her daughters Bhavna and Anu, son Harshit and driver Bindu, police said.

While efforts are on to locate the missing two, police said that locals managed to rescue one Deepak Bhatia and took him to a dispensary in Jajion.

Condoling the deaths, chief minister Sukhvir Singh Sukhu posted on X: "I am in touch with the local administration..."

RAINWATER ENTERS BIHAR ASSEMBLY, MINISTERS' HOMES

PATNA: The Bihar assembly premises, bungalows of several ministers nearby and several other places including hospitals in Patna were left water-logged following incessant rain in the state capital Patna on Sunday.

Chief minister Nitish Kumar inspected various affected areas to take stock of the situation. The city experienced 41.8 mm of rain that inundated majority of posh localities and low-lying areas, including Strand Road, Rajbansi Nagar, Boring Road, Bailey Road and Patliputra Colony, besides causing disruption of vehicular movement.

Water-logging was reported from the assembly premises, and official bungalows of several state ministers who reside a few hundred metres away.

The CM inspected pump houses in various areas and directed officials to ensure that the city does not witness water-logging during heavy downpour. Urban development and housing minister Nitin Nabin called an emergency meeting amid reports of water-logging. HTc

राज्य स्वास्थ्य समिति, बिहार

Govt. of Bihar Notice Inviting Tender for selection of agency to provide spectacles to the eligible people screened and identified at Government Healthcare Facilities, in the state of Bihar

e-tender (NIT) Reference No.: - 04 /SHSB/Spectacles/2024-25

- The State Health Society, Bihar (SHSB), Patna intends to select an agency via e-tendering for providing spectacles to the eligible people screened and identified at Government Healthcare Facilities, in the state of Bihar. The State Health Society, Bihar, invites bids from eligible business entities, in providing the services as mentioned in this tender document.
- To participate in the e-tendering process, the bidder/agency are required to get themselves registered with Bihar Government Centralized e-Procurement portal, i.e., <https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in>, shall contact the helpdesk at the following address, "Mjunction Services Limited, RJ Complex, 2nd Floor, Canara Bank Campus, Khajpura, Ashiana Road, P.S. - Shastri Nagar, Patna 800 014, Bihar, e-mail id: eproc2support@bihar.gov.in, Toll Free Number - 18005726571 (Working Hours: 8AM to 7PM, All days in week except Sunday and few selected state holidays)".
- Schedule of Events:**

Sl.No.	Event Description	Timeline
3.1	Bid Submission Start Date & Time	14/08/2024 (Wednesday) from 11:00 AM, on e-Procurement Portal (https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
3.2	Last date & time for submission (upload) of online bidding document.	05/09/2024 (Thursday) till 05:00 PM, on e-Procurement Portal (https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
3.3	Last date & time for submission of EMD (Online Mode)	05/09/2024 (Thursday) till 05:00 PM
3.4	Time, Date of opening of Technical Bid	06/09/2024 (Friday) at 1:00 PM on e-Procurement Portal (https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
3.5	Time, Date of opening of Financial Bid	To be announced later on the e-Procurement Portal (https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
3.6	Pre-bid meeting (Date & time)	21/08/2024 (Wednesday) at 11:30 AM
3.7	Pre-bid meeting venue	Conference Hall, State Health Society, Bihar, 4 th Floor, Swasthya Bhawan, Sheikhpura, Patna-800014

5. Bidder may also download the tender documents (a complete set of documents is available on website) from e-Procurement Portal (<https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in>) and submit its tender by using the downloaded document.

6. For further enquiry and information, please contact the following officers during office hours 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM to-

- Shri Pramod Kumar Ram (B.A.S.), Deputy Secretary-cum-Incharge PPP, State Health Society (SHSB), Contact No.: 9661341999
- Shri Vikash Kumar, Additional Director-PPP, State Health Society (SHSB), Contact No.: 7903367959

Executive Director
State Health Society, Bihar

PR. No. 005871 (B&C) 2024-25
This information is available on website www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar also
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CHANGE OF NAME

I, SONIYA Singh D/o Sh. Hari Kishan R/o H.No. 79, Garkhera (67), Teh. Ballabgarh, Distt. Faridabad have changed my name from Soniya to Soniya Singh for all future purposes.

I, RAMESH Singh R/o H.No. 56A, 3rd Floor, Vasant Nagar, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi - 110057 declare that my Son's name mentioned as Rakshit in Birth Certificate but his true and correct name will be Rakshit Singh.

I, RAJ Kumar S/o Ram Adhar, R/o Saraybansi, Uttarava, Allahabad, UP-221508, have changed my daughter's name from Priyanka to Neha for all future purposes.

I AM Dipak Kumar Sharma, my father's name in my army record is Shyam Sundar Sharma. Whereas the correct name is Shyam Sundar. And the date of birth in the army records is 28/03/1956. Whereas my father's date of birth is 01.01.1956. Who is a resident of Village Post, Gokha Tehsil Sardhana, Meerut 250344.

I, MADHIKA Lakshmidewamma M/o Maddikavani Reddy R/o Vill - Maddikavani, PO-Metapalli, Teh-Chakrapavet, Distt - Cuddapah (AP) have change my name from Lakshmi Devi to Madhika Lakshmidewamma vide affidavit dt 10-08-2024 executed before Public Notary Delhi

I, VIJAY Kumar W/o Sangeeta Singh and F/o Sakshi Kumari R/o 11/38L, Sunder Vihar, New Delhi-110087 inform that mother name in the Marks Statement cum Certificate issued by CBSE for the session 2023 for my daughter, Sakshi Kumari, has been mentioned as Sangeeta Kumari. Her mother's actual name is Sangeeta Singh. Sangeeta Kumari mentioned in the certificate issued by CBSE should be amended as Sangeeta Singh.

I, SHAUMYA bharti W/O, Yashwant Kumar R/o B-88 Near Gopal Dairy Punjabi Basti Baljeet Nagar New Delhi 110008 have changed my name to Soumya Bharti.

I, RAJ Kumar S/o Ram Adhar, R/o Saraybansi, Uttarava, Allahabad, UP-221508, have changed my daughter's name from Priya to Aastha for all future purposes.

I, PRAMITH Kumar R/o House No-34, Kanyesh Nagar, Okhla Industrial Area Phase-3, New Delhi 110020 have changed my minor son's name from Lijot Kumar to Nishaal P Kumar.

I AM Dipak Kumar Sharma, my mother's name in my army record is Kamlesh Devi. Whereas the correct name is Kamlesh. And the date of birth in the army records is 28/03/1959. Whereas my mother's date of birth is 01.01.1957. Who is a resident of Village Post, Gokha Tehsil Sardhana, Meerut 250344.

I, SAVITRI Devi W/o Devi Dutt Kargeti R/o House No.24, State Bank Colony, Pitampura - 110034 have changed my name from Shanti Devi to Savitri Devi for all future purposes.

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OUR TAKE

In the Maldives, a welcome reset

The island-nation seems to be realising the need to balance between China and India. Regaining its trust is imperative for India, too

In the wake of the maximalist position taken by Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu after his election last year, both Male and New Delhi have taken steps to restore relations to an even keel. Muizzu, who came to power on the back of an 'India Out' campaign, demanded the withdrawal of Indian personnel deputed to the Maldives to operate three aircraft used mainly for humanitarian missions. However, since he attended the swearing-in of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in June, several signs have pointed to a thaw in relations between the two countries. This is underlined by a visit to India in May by Maldivian foreign minister Moosa Zameer, and external affairs minister S Jaishankar's visit last week to the Maldives. At his meeting with Jaishankar, Muizzu spoke of his administration's commitment to strengthening close connections with India, which he described as one of the island nation's closest allies and invaluable partners. Jaishankar too said the Maldives is at the "heart" of India's Neighbourhood First policy and cooperation between the two countries has moved beyond the traditional role and aspires to be a modern partnership.

When the Maldives recently faced economic problems, it was India that agreed to the rollover of treasury bills worth \$50 million. New Delhi has also ensured the uninterrupted supply of critical items such as food despite the downturn in bilateral ties and Male's perceived tilt towards Beijing since last year, including measures to reduce its dependency on New Delhi. India's assistance, comprising a mix of grants, loans and budgetary support, is based completely on the developmental and infrastructure needs of the Maldives and has touched the lives of the people, with even Muizzu acknowledging that it leads to significant economic benefits and boosts the local economy.

All of this points to a realisation in the Maldives that there will always be a need to balance between India and China, and any policy to simply shut out New Delhi will not work in the long-run. For India, regaining trust will be slow but crucial, given the current situation across the neighbourhood. A new beginning has been made with India assuring it will continue to partner the Indian Ocean archipelago on development, and a perceived pro-China regime being appreciative of New Delhi's support. India too will do well to learn from its experiences in recent years by reaching out to all segments of the Maldivian political establishment.

Medals quest: Focus on a few core sports

One silver, five bronze, six fourth-place finishes and one medal lost to rules — that is the sum total of what India has achieved at the Paris Olympics. It may, at first glance, seem like a poor outcome given that India sent 117 athletes to the Games. But, if even a couple of those fourth-place finishes — the most for India at any Olympic Games — had come through, the country might have had its best-ever Games. The gold medal was missing, but very rarely can it be guaranteed, and it took a very special throw to beat Neeraj Chopra into second place. One reading of this is that Indian sportspersons are definitely performing better than before and that, in turn, suggests the focus on sport will start to pay off sooner rather than later.

That focus, now, must be on how to convert these near misses to medals. And that requires a plan and professionalism. It also requires India to concentrate on a few core sports rather than spread the net too wide. China, with 40 gold medals, is sitting atop the medals table, with 23 of those medals having come in just four sports — diving, table tennis, shooting and weightlifting. The United States has 40 golds, with 22 coming from athletics and swimming. Seven of Australia's 18 golds came in swimming. Japan's 20 gold medals got a huge boost from three sports that earned 14 of them.

The math is evident. India needs to double down on shooting, wrestling and boxing. It will take time, money and a sense of adventure to realise the country's dream but one key ingredient, the athletes, is there. That is where it all begins.

A win-win for India & Indian Americans

Between the extremes of migration and reverse migration, is a tangible space for collaboration between India and the diaspora in the US

If you have watched the movie *Swades*, you might remember a scene where NASA scientist Mohan Bhargav, Shah Rukh Khan's character, is introduced to members of the village panchayat. In this delightful exchange, Mohan struggles to explain his work in the Global Precipitation Measurement project at NASA, which helps forecast extreme weather events and assess the global climate. When his nanny manages to simplify the explanation for the village elders, Mohan is told with a laugh and scoff that one of the villagers does this regularly. At which point, the said villager looks up at the sky, sees it is clear, and lets the village know that it will likely not rain that day. An amused Mohan agrees he does the same at NASA.

Eventually, Mohan decides to use his knowledge and skills to build a hydroelectric power generation facility for the village. This is not the typical Indian American story one sees play out routinely. One is more accustomed to hearing stories of brain drain, of those who leave to pursue the American Dream and never look back. Yes, Khan's character eventually decides to move back

to India, but between the extremes of migration and reverse migration is a tangible space of impact and influence that can and should be tapped into to the benefit of both countries.

The success of the 5.1-million-strong Indian American community perhaps belies its numerical strength. Despite representing 1.5% of the population of the United States (US), this community contributes 6% to its taxes. From politics, corporate leadership, entrepreneurship, and innovation to cultural influence, the diaspora continues to impact the everyday lives of millions in the US. If you have been following the news on the US presidential elections, you would be aware of the Indian American moment it's been having recently. From Vivek Ramaswamy, Nikki Haley, Usha Vance, and now the presumptive Democratic party presidential nominee, Kamala Harris. Indian Americans are establishing themselves across administrative levels as senators, representatives, and mayors.

Indian-origin CEOs head 16 Fortune 500 companies that employ approximately 2.7 million Americans and generate more than \$1 trillion in revenue. The economic impact of Indian Americans extends beyond

big business to the startup world as well, co-founding 72 out of 648 US unicorns operating in 2024. Research, innovation, and academia in the US have provided a platform

for the community to contribute further. Between 1975 and 2019, the share of US patents with Indian-origin innovators jumped from around 2% to 10%. Through art, food and festivals, Indian Americans have also fostered a greater understanding and appreciation of Indian culture in the US.

Over time Indian Americans have gained skills and experience and built networks that can become the foundation for fostering meaningful knowledge transfer and innovation in India. Some of this is already underway in different shapes and forms. Nearly 25%, i.e., 28 of the 114 unicorns in India in 2023, have US-educated founders, with a combined valuation of \$59 billion. Philanthropic grants from the US make up nearly 35% of all donation inflow to India from the rest of the world. During Covid,

Indiaspora, a US-based nonprofit community of global Indian leaders, raised \$15 million to help fellow Indians. The US is the top source of global remittances to India, with nearly \$26 billion in remittances in 2022-23.



MR Rangaswami



Neeraj Aggarwal



Sesh Iyer



Through art, food and festivals, Indian Americans have also fostered a greater appreciation of Indian culture in the US

It is apparent that the two countries share a strategic partnership based on shared values. They can therefore build on the solid foundation of collaboration that already exists between them to further advance their mutual interests. As India looks to become a developed nation, Viksit Bharat, by 2047, the 100th year of its Independence, the diaspora can play an important role in realising India's vision. Sustained engagement between this community and India is crucial for addressing the nation's challenges and driving inclusive growth. The Indian government's recent policy measures aim to ensure that the benefits of economic growth reach all sectors and all sections of society, and the Indian American community is uniquely positioned to complement

these efforts.

Going back to *Swades* for a moment, the village elders' comical oversimplification of Mohan's job notwithstanding, throughout the movie his character tries to work with the community to make their lives better, in big and small ways. His worldview shifts from being patronising to empathetic and finally pragmatic about how he can bring about meaningful change from his vantage. The larger Indian community around the world embodies this Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam spirit.

MR Rangaswami is founder & chairman, Indiaspora. Neeraj Aggarwal is chair, Asia-Pacific, The Boston Consulting Group (BCG). Sesh Iyer is North America Regional Chair, BCG X. The views expressed are personal

GRAND STRATEGY

Happymon Jacob



Interests, not friendship, determine foreign policy

When former Bangladesh Prime Minister (PM) Sheikh Hasina fled to India last week, there was a strong sentiment in India that India must stand by its friends. Standing by our friends' meant two things here: As a humanitarian gesture towards Hasina, and as an Indian intervention in Bangladesh to set things right. The humanitarian argument stressed the importance of helping a friendly leader by giving asylum. The interventionist argument claimed that India, as the region's dominant power and an aspiring great power, must act when a key pro-India leader in the neighbourhood is ousted from power, as doing nothing would show India in poor light. The great power argument is delusional. We are simply past that age in our neighbourhood. The humanitarian argument, while sound, is not sufficient to deal with the Bangladesh problem, today and going forward. But the underlying assumption of both arguments — "We must help the India-friendly leader" — is problematic by itself. Thus, we must revisit some of our deeply-held assumptions about the utility of friendship and the friend vs foe binary in the conduct of foreign policy.

Adversarial states tend to hinder each other's foreign policy pursuits because they primarily have clashing interests, not because they dislike each other. Sometimes adversaries cooperate, especially when they think doing so helps their interests. Friendly States assist each other in their foreign policy pursuits when they perceive mutual value in each other's objectives. But even friends are unlikely to support each other if their interests clash. Cooperation among States is primarily a function of synergy in interest and not based on friendship or enmity. For sure, friendship does provide an environment of trust, but that alone is not enough for the pursuit of interests, as trust is also a function of common interests.

What forms friendship among States? Friendships are formed through common interests, threats, and priorities; however, friendship alone does not create common interests. Therefore, States that claim to be best friends with each other are primarily serving their national interests. For example, at the core, the United States (US) and India are not friends; they are States with overwhelming mutual interests. Japan and India work together because of common interests and threats, not just friendship.

There are inherent limits to the utility of friendship in the pursuit of foreign policy goals. For one, friendly countries don't do things for each other sacrificing their inter-

ests. Second, if you identify certain political leaders in another country as friendly and others as unfriendly, the adversaries of your friends in that country might see you as unfriendly. Third, friendship can also become a liability. Sometimes, friends can pressurise you to do things that might not be in your national interest. Therefore, while friendship may be a virtue in domestic politics and social settings, it could become a liability in the pursuit of foreign policy goals.

While having friendly countries, or friendly leaders in difficult countries, is useful, there is an inbuilt hierarchy that a State's decision-makers must keep in mind — interest first, and friendship later. So, if the pursuit of interest requires a State to sacrifice friendships, it must do that. We must not forget what such friendships are for — to cater to our interests. The transatlantic relationship, between the US and Europe, is often said to be one among friends — and yet, there too is an interests-driven relationship. The US needs Europe for the preservation of a US-led world order. Europe needs the US for security. They indeed share religious and cultural ties too. But, religious and cultural ties alone can't guarantee strong partnerships; geopolitics in West Asia or our region would testify to that.

In the early 2000s, the US and India started negotiating to stabilise their bilateral relationship after a difficult period not because they wanted to be friends, but because each side had/had powerful interests in developing a strong strategic partnership. India and the US may call each other friends, as would Australia and India, but at the end of the day, these relationships are based on interests. The more powerful their mutual interests, the stronger friendships among States would be.

So, what should be India's policy towards Bangladesh in the wake of Hasina's ouster? First of all, India must clearly identify its interests as opposed to getting caught in a self-defeating friends vs enemies formulation. India's interests vis-à-vis Bangladesh pertain to illegal immigration, safety of minorities in Bangladesh, security in states bordering the country, Indian businesses there, and the China factor. With these in mind, New Delhi should reach out to whoever is in power in Dhaka today and in future, and highlight how a stable relationship helps both sides. As a matter of fact, Bangladesh needs India more than India needs Bangladesh. Giving asylum to Hasina is a humanitarian gesture, but allowing the ousted PM to use India as a platform for political activity may hurt India's interests vis-à-vis Bangladesh, for States take precedence over individuals in international relations.

This logic applies to India's relationships with other states in the neighbourhood as well. This is not the age of regime change or interventions. So, focus on the pursuit of interests and not the cultivation of individuals because interests unlike friendships are transferable from one regime to another, and interests come with less baggage than friendships.

THERE ARE INHERENT LIMITS TO THE UTILITY OF FRIENDSHIP IN FOREIGN POLICY. FOR ONE, FRIENDLY COUNTRIES DON'T DO THINGS FOR EACH OTHER, SACRIFICING THEIR INTERESTS AND TARGETS

Happymon Jacob teaches India's foreign policy at JNU, and is the founder of the Council for Strategic and Defence Research. The views expressed are personal

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYI | PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

To really stop Russian terror, we need ... strong decisions from partners — decisions that will remove restrictions on our defensive actions



STRAIGHTFORWARD

Shashi Shekhar



This Independence Day, guard against radicalism

Three days from today, India will be celebrating its 78th Independence Day — the day the country was born. Birthdays, they say, are days to reflect on one's life: The gains and losses; the mistakes one has made, and the ways and means to rectify them. On August 15, what should India, and we as Indians, be reflecting upon?

To begin with, let's look at things to be proud of. We remain a largely peaceful country despite the turmoil in our neighbourhood. Take Bangladesh for instance. Violence has claimed more than 450 lives in that country. The situation deteriorated to the extent that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed had to leave her nation once again. Now an interim government is fighting to bring the situation under control.

However, those now labelling Hasina as a deluded dictator had once waited for her to return to power in Bangladesh with bated breath. These people forget that within four years of Bangladesh being liberated in 1971, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, whom that country titled "father of the nation", was assassinated at his official residence. Hasina was away from the country then; else, she would have met the same fate. Since then, fortunately, no head of government has been killed in Bangladesh, though it has seen many coups. Hasina herself returned to power in 2008 after a series of particularly violent demonstrations.

The next 15 years were hers. Though she helped strengthen the economy, she also metamorphosed into a dictator in the garb of democracy. Over time, the façade of democracy she put up has fallen apart. She won the last general election in June solely by suppression and subversion. The Bangladeshis hadn't expected this from her. They took to the streets and dethroned her.

But the chaos also emboldened the anarchists. The way chief justice Obaidul Hassan was forced to resign following a siege of the Bangladeshi supreme court is terrifying. The way Hindus are being targeted in the country over the past few days is also deeply worrying for India. I am reminded of a statement an Indian diplomat stationed in Dhaka had made two years ago: "In 10 years, Bangladesh would turn into Afghanistan." Is that fear coming true? Maybe.

There is instability elsewhere, too. In Nepal, monarchy was replaced by democracy in

2008, but a stable government has eluded that country since. Myanmar, in turn, has been under the thumb of the junta, while Sri Lanka saw a Bangladesh-like situation only a few months ago. As for the Maldives, president Mohamed Muizzu was elected democratically but has shown little inclination to uphold democratic values, evident from the fact that he removed and jailed two of his ministers on charges of "black magic".

Only India stands tall as a beacon of democracy in South Asia. We have had our share of instability. During the last seven-and-a-half decades, the country has been run by coalition governments for 30 years. Charan Singh, VP Singh, Chandrashekar, Inder Kumar Gujral, and HD Deve Gowda have all led coalitions for short stints. Still, we have held on to our belief in democracy. Is that adequate? Absolutely not. As we move towards another Independence Day, we must remain alert against subversive forces. As the events unfolded in Bangladesh, fly-by-night experts mushroomed on social media making a "killing" from doomsday predictions for India. They had done the same for Sri Lanka and Pakistan. Irresponsible statements by politicians embolden such elements. A few days ago, a former foreign minister shocked everyone when he claimed India, too, can witness violent demonstrations as in Bangladesh. We all know that India is not Pakistan, Bangladesh or Sri Lanka. Our size, diversity and tradition of co-existence stop us from going down a slippery slope. But some experts say: If our 'relative' Pakistan can lose its way, why can't we? What they forget is that on August 15, 1947, we shunned British slavery but not our legacy of Indian-ness.

Pakistan tried to create a new identity based on religion and ended up destroying itself. Bangladesh is dealing with the same malady. Even when the ambassadors of peace, the Buddhists, in Myanmar and Sri Lanka tried to conduct Bangladesh-like experiments, they fell flat. It's because we shouldn't forget religion is a part of culture and not the other way around.

Radicalism is poison for the subcontinent. Independence Day reminds us of this fact every year.

Shashi Shekhar is editor-in-chief, Hindustan. The views expressed are personal

Modi releases over 100 climate-resilient crops

Zia Haq

z.haq@htlive.com

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday released 109 high-yielding, climate-resilient varieties of 65 crops in the national capital's Pusa complex, the government's farm-research hub, asking agricultural scientists to engage with farmers once every month.

The Prime Minister released seeds and planting material at three sites in demonstration fields of the state-run Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). He was accompanied by Union agriculture minister Shriy Singh Chouhan along with ministers of state Bhagirath Choudhary and Ram Nath Thakur.

Interacting with scientists, Modi said experts from the ICAR, agricultural universities and Krishi Vigyan Kendras (district farm science centres) should "proactively interact with farmers and inform them about new varieties and technology every month".

Modi also met a group of farmers and sought their views and suggestions for the government. He asked farmers to adopt technologies for value addition and diversify their crops.

High-yielding and climate tolerant crops, he said, would cut costs for farmers and offer



Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with farmers and scientists at the India Agricultural Research Institute, Pusa in New Delhi on Sunday. Union minister of agriculture and farmers' welfare Shriy Singh Chouhan is also present. HTPHOTO

enhanced nutrition to consumers. Climate-change adaptation has become urgent for the world's second-biggest grower of wheat and rice, and the largest producer of onion, sugar and banana, experts say. Intense

heatwaves and an irregular monsoon have dented output of wheat and pulses in the past two years, stoking food prices. "India is one of the most climate-vulnerable countries; there is a greater need for adaptive strategies in agriculture," the govern-

ment's Economic Survey 2023-24 states.

Chouhan said the government was focusing on a "lab to land" approach so that "science reaches the farmer directly". The new varieties, seeds of which now need to be produced on a large scale, will fully reach farmers' fields in three years, he said.

The traits unveiled on Sunday include rice that can withstand submergence or flooding, climate-resilient guava, a green gram variety especially customized for the national capital region, buckwheat, heat-tolerant durum wheat, high-calcium finger millet, cashew, pure-line ashwagandha (withania somnifera, a herb) and a superior mango variety, among a slew of other strains.

The varieties include 34 field crops and 27 horticultural traits. The field crops include millets, forage crops, oilseeds, pulses, sugarcane, cotton and a clutch of fibre plants. The ICAR continually conducts research and develops newer traits and seeds of all key crops.

"We still have one of the lowest yields per hectare in many crops. Production is high but productivity is low. Due to limitations of horizontal land expansion, agriculture can only grow vertically. This calls for vigorous research," said VK Singh, a former scientist with ICAR.

NURSERY STUDENT RAPED BY SCHOOL VAN DRIVER IN JAMSHEDPUR

Press Trust of India
letters@hindustantimes.com

JAMSHEDPUR: A 30-year-old school van driver was arrested for allegedly raping a nursery student in Jamshedpur, a senior police officer said on Sunday.

The incident took place in the city's Mango area on Friday. The accused, identified as Jaishree Tiwary from Daiguttu, was arrested by a special police team three hours after an FIR was registered by the survivor's mother on Saturday, said SP (City and Rural) Rishava Gard in a press conference.

The incident came to light when the three-and-a-half-year-old girl complained of stomach pain and narrated how Tiwary committed the crime after she came back from school on Friday.

Upon filing the complaint on Saturday, senior superintendent Kishore Kaushal formed a special police team and directed them to apprehend the culprit as per the provisions of the Pocco Act, the SP said.

Gard said that the accused has been placed in judicial custody and the school van has also been impounded.

A medical check up of the minor has also been carried out, police said, with a female police officer gathering details of the incident at the minor's house.

Police have taken the incident seriously, the SP said as he assured the girl's family that a charge sheet will be filed within a week.

{ HOW WELFARE SCHEMES FARE }

The burden of health care on India's poorest

Neelanjana Sircar
letters@hindustantimes.com

In recent years, the Indian government has made significant strides in reducing the burden of health expenditure on the common citizen. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), out-of-pocket expenditure shrank from about 74% of total health expenditure in 2001 to about 50% of total health expenditure in 2021. A particular focus of the government has been to reduce the burden of severe economic shocks due to "catastrophic" health care expenditure such as hospitalisation. In 2018, the government introduced the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY), popularly known as Ayushman Bharat, which provides ₹5 lakh cover upon admission into an empaneled hospital for about 500 million Indians. In the interim, several states such as Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal designed government schemes with similar features with different levels of cover and effectiveness in the population.

Yet, anecdotal evidence suggests some inefficiencies in the functioning of schemes such as PM-JAY. A person must be admitted into a hospital to receive the benefit, but a number of hospital procedures need not require admission and still generate exorbitant health costs. Also, the scheme design is "reactive" in that it does not encourage investment in preventive health care from the citizen or the provider. Furthermore, hospitals may be wary of encouraging patients to avail of PM-JAY or similar schemes, or may not be incentivised to provide high-quality health care, if they perceive the reimbursements under the scheme to be insufficient and lacking in promptness as compared to private insurance schemes.

Without structuring incentives properly, there is a concern that such measures may fail to properly reach the intended target population — the poor most in need of health expenditure assistance — and oblige citizens to fall back on out-of-pocket health expenditure.

In order to understand the character of catastrophic health expenditure, Artha Global's Centre for Rapid Insights (CRI) asked respondents, "The last time you or someone in your household was hospitalised/admitted in a hospital, what was your primary mode of payment?"

The sample covered 6,755 respondents across 421 of India's 543 parliamentary constituencies, and anchored to population weights calculated from the National Family and Health Survey (NFHS) conducted from 2019 to 2021, to generate estimates relatively representative of India as a whole.

Overall, we found that a little over a quarter of households in the population (29%) avail of some kind of government scheme to cover catastrophic health expenditure.

Even with significant growth

CHART 1 The medium of expenditure (In %)

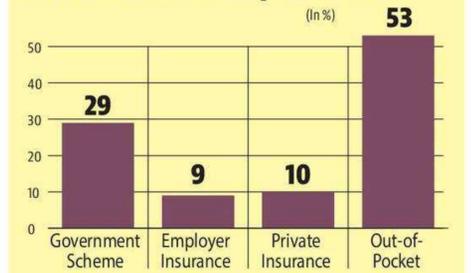
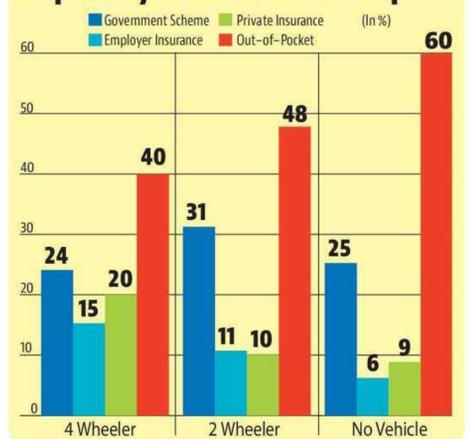


CHART 2 Impact by vehicle-ownership (In %)



THE SAMPLE COVERED 6,755 RESPONDENTS ACROSS 421 OF INDIA'S 543 PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES

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Even with significant growth

(48%) or car (40%). At the same time, the proportion of those availing of a government scheme remains relatively similar across all economic classes (the lesser out-of-pocket expenditure for more well-off populations is due to greater private and employer insurance coverage).

Two key points emerge from this analysis. First, the market inefficiencies identified above have pernicious effects in obliging citizens to pay health expenses out of pocket, and are only likely to be mitigated if citizens have access to another source (private or employer) of insurance. Second, the relatively universal nature of government schemes combined with market inefficiencies generate a regressive structure in which the target population (the poor who are most in need) are precisely those who are the least protected.

The government has taken the first steps in reducing out-of-pocket health expenditure across the population. But it is now time to structure schemes and incentives for health care providers to reach those most in need of assistance. As India seeks to boost productivity and economic growth, engineering a healthier and happier population at a lower cost will be critical.

This is the latest instalment in a new series that uses insights from rapid polling across the country on topical issues. The polls are run by the Artha Global's Centre for Rapid Insights (CRI). Neelanjana Sircar is its director.

11 B'DESH NATIONALS HELD WHILE TRYING TO ENTER INDIA

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW JALPAIGURI: Eleven Bangladesh nationals have been apprehended while trying to infiltrate into India over the last 24 hours, the Border Security Force (BSF) said in a statement on Sunday.

Of these 11 arrested, four were caught at the North Bengal and South Bengal frontiers while seven were found infiltrating at the Meghalaya border. Two other Bangladesh nationals were caught for smuggling in South Bengal.

To be sure, BSF statement did not clarify if any of the Bangladesh nationals were victims of the violence taking place across the border. "The seven men caught at the border in Meghalaya claimed their case is not connected to the unrest. They entered India to find better job opportunities. They were caught because of the high alert at the border. The other four are being questioned by the police," an official aware of the matter said.

BSF also held a meeting of all inspector generals, conducted by the additional director general of the Eastern Command on Sunday, where officers were told to ensure and continue "close collaboration with the Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB)".

On Friday, the home ministry appointed ADG Eastern Command Ravi Gandhi as the chairperson of the committee that will maintain communication with the BGB for safety of Indians and minorities in Bangladesh. "BSF has held multiple flag meetings with BGB to sort out mutual issues amicably," a BSF spokesperson said.

'Rahul may be called for ED questioning'

Neeraj Chauhan

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) may soon summon leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, for questioning in connection with its money laundering probe into the affairs of Congress-run National Herald newspaper, highly placed officials familiar with the development said.

A fresh round of questioning of the Congress leader may be needed as the agency wants to conclude its probe into the irregularities, in which it has already attached assets worth ₹751 crore, they added, asking not to be named.

The Rae Bareilly member of Parliament was earlier interrogated by ED for nearly 40 hours in four sittings in June 2022 about his role in the day-to-day functioning of Young Indian Pvt Ltd (YI), a company in which he is a majority stake-



Rahul Gandhi

holder along with his mother Sonia Gandhi, the acquisition of Associated Journals Ltd (AJL) by YI; a loan of ₹90.21 crore given by the All India Congress Committee (AICC) to AJL; and transactions related to the development of a property in Mumbai.

Sonia Gandhi, too, was questioned in the case for about 11 hours spread over three days in July 2022.

"We are looking to conclude the Associated Journals Ltd (AJL) probe and file a prosecution complaint (ED's equivalent of charge sheet) so that case

goes to trial. All connected persons including Rahul Gandhi may be called soon," said one of the people, an ED officer.

It was not clear if the financial crimes probe agency is considering calling Sonia Gandhi also for questioning one more time.

Last week, Rahul Gandhi claimed that ED was planning to raid him following his Chakravarty speech during the discussion on the Union budget in the just concluded session of Parliament. He added he would be waiting for the central probe agency with open arms as ED "insiders" told him that a raid was being planned.

Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi said on Friday: "I have always looked upon ED's role in the AJL case as bizarre, truly unfathomable. Where no property was ever transferred, where there is and could be no movement of money much less proceeds of crime, where the end shareholder is a not-for-

profit company, this is a strange case of neither money movement, nor property movement and hence the per se inapplicability of the PMLA law. If ED wants to call Rahul Gandhi for harassment or for coffee, it is their wish."

During previous rounds of questioning, both Sonia and Rahul Gandhi told ED officials that Young Indian Pvt Ltd is a not-for-profit company and that financial transactions of the National Herald's parent company Associated Journals Limited (taken over by Young Indian in 2010) were handled by the late Moti Lal Vora.

The agency, while attaching the assets of AJL and YI in November 2023, claimed that a criminal conspiracy was hatched to give control of properties worth "hundreds of crores of rupees" of Associated Journals Limited (AJL) to the "beneficial owners" of Young Indian, Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi.

Wife of former Manipur MLA dies in explosion at home

IMPHAL: The wife of former Manipur MLA Yamthong Haokip succumbed to injuries sustained in a suspected blast at their residence in the Kuki-dominated Kangpokpi district, officials said on Sunday.

The incident took place on Saturday at Yamthong's residence in E Mulam village, officials said. An explosion occurred when Charubala (59) was burning waste items, the MLA said. No other casualties were reported.

AIADMK chief slams TN govt over plans to hold F-4 race

SALEM: AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami on Sunday slammed the ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu for its plan to conduct the Formula 4 night street race in the city allegedly using taxpayers' money and batted for taking up welfare projects. It would be appropriate for government to use the funds for the welfare of the people by implementing various developmental projects instead of utilising public funds for such events, he said.

MP Supriya Sule alleges her phone, WhatsApp hacked

PUNE: MP Supriya Sule alleged on Sunday that her phone and WhatsApp were hacked. In a post on X, the Baramati legislator requested people to not call or text her.

"Urgent: My phone and WhatsApp have been hacked. Please do not call or text me. I have reached out to the police for help," Sule wrote on X. The NCP(SP) leader later filed a police complaint at the Pune Rural police station, following which the issue was fixed.

Dedicated university on the anvil to affiliate madrasas, says UP min

HTC and agencies

letters@hindustantimes.com

LUCKNOW: In a bid to overhaul the process of granting recognition to madrasas, the Uttar Pradesh government is planning to set up a "dedicated university for affiliating the madrasas for higher education", state's minority welfare minister Om Prakash Rajbhar has said.

"Madrasas are free to teach Urdu, Arabic and Persian, but the government is committed to ensuring compulsory teaching of Hindi, maths and social science. The three subjects will be made compulsory for all the madrasas across UP," he said. "The government also wishes to improve the quality of higher education at the madrasas. For that, the department proposes to have a dedicated university for affiliating the madrasas for higher education. Soon, an official proposal in this regard will be made before the government."

At present, madrasas in the state are recognised by the UP Board of Madrasa Education. Citing a letter by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) dated June 7, then Uttar Pradesh chief secretary Durga Shankar Mishra



Om Prakash Rajbhar

on June 26 issued directions to all district magistrates on children studying in madrasas.

In its letter, NCPCR directed that all non-Muslim students in government-funded madrasas be admitted to schools of the Basic Education Council to provide them formal education.

UP has nearly 25,000 madrasas, of which 16,500 are government recognised, including 560 government-aided. Around 8,500 madrasas are not recognised by the UP Board of Madrasa Education.

Chairman of UP board of madrasa education Itfikhah Ahmed Javed on Sunday said the state government is going to take such a big step regarding madrasas but the board has no information about this. "It has never been seen or heard before that any education board will be affiliated to a university," he said.

DELHI, GGM FLOODED

warning of "light to moderate rain", which the agency defines as showers between 2.5mm and 64.4mm. The agency only upgraded this alert to "orange" at 9am on Sunday. By then, though, large swathes of Gurugram and several parts of Delhi were already inundated.

IMD classifies rainfall between 2.5mm and 15.5mm as "light", between 15.6mm and 64.4mm as "moderate" and upwards of that as "heavy".

Data from Gurugram's automatic weather station (AWS) showed that the city received 20.5mm rain in the 24 hours till 8.30am on Sunday, much of it after 5.30am. The city then received another 80mm in the next nine hours, data from the same station showed, pushing the rain well past "moderate" and deep into the "heavy" zone.

The agency's prediction also missed its mark in some parts of Delhi. For instance, Najafgarh received 36.5mm of rain till 8.30am. During the same period, the Ridge and Delhi University stations in north Delhi clocked 35.6mm and 27.5mm of rain respectively.

The showers continued into the afternoon.

Between 8.30am and 5.30pm, Najafgarh received another 28.5mm, even as sharp spells battered more parts of the city, including Mayur Vihar (57mm), Aya Nagar (49.4mm), Palam (45.2mm), Lodhi Road (30.8mm)

and Safdarjung (28.8mm), which is Delhi's base weather station.

Safdarjung has now received 185mm of rain this month. Its monthly average for August is 233.1mm.

IMD did not comment on its missed predictions. The agency's predictions have been inaccurate on a string of occasions. For instance, on June 28, when the monsoon arrived in Delhi-NCR, the agency initially issued a forecast of "light to moderate rain". However, Delhi was pummelled by upwards of 200mm rain. More recently, on August 1, several stations in Delhi recorded over 100mm in rainfall, even as the initial forecast was for "light to moderate" rain.

An IMD official on Sunday evening said the rain "will continue till the early hours of Monday". Mahesh Palawat, vice-president at Skymet, a private weather forecaster, said that two cyclonic circulations — one over northeast Rajasthan and another over southeast Uttar Pradesh — fed the region moisture, apart from the monsoon trough passing over Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR).

"These factors combined to feed moisture and it remained overcast throughout the day. Intermittent rain is expected to continue on Monday, with most places recording similar moderate showers. Isolated parts may even record heavy rain," he said. The showers hobbled com-

muters yet again.

The Delhi traffic police issued advisories, asking people to avoid waterlogged stretches, which included the Mehrauli-Badarpur Road; Outer Ring Road from Chirag Dilli to Nehru Place; Anuvrat Marg; Najafgarh Phirri Road and Rohatk Road, among others.

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) said it received 25 complaints of either waterlogging or fallen trees across the city. Waterlogging was recorded at Rohini's Sector 4, Sector 19 Dwarka, Naraina Industrial Area, Rohini's sector 15, Sagarpur East, Netaji Subhash Place, Prem Nagar, Nawada, Mangolpuri and Mukherjee Nagar.

Trees were uprooted at a string of neighbourhoods, including Mandawli, Madipur, Uttar Nagar, Kamla Nagar, GK-1, Civil Lines, Kalkaji, West Punjabi Bagh, Hari Nagar, Bindapur and Rajouri Garden, among other places.

Meanwhile, the wall of a government school in New Ashok Nagar collapsed, crushing several vehicles that were parked beside it. No people were injured.

NATWAR SINGH

aries.

President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, external affairs minister S Jaishankar and Congress leader Jairam Ramesh were among those who paid tribute to Singh on Sunday, describing him as a distinguished diplomat and praising his contributions to foreign

{ FROM PAGE 1 }

policy.

Modi said on X that Singh "made rich contributions to the world of diplomacy and foreign policy" and was known for his intellect and prolific writing. "My thoughts are with his family and admirers in this hour of grief," he said. In a post on X, Jaishankar said Singh's "many contributions include a vital role in the July 2005 India-US nuclear deal. His writings, especially on China, provided valuable insights into our diplomacy."

Singh joined IFS at the age of 22 in 1953 and one of his earliest assignments abroad was in the embassy in Beijing from 1956 to 1958.

Besides serving under high commissioner Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit in the mission in London and in India's permanent mission to the UN in New York from 1961 to 1966, he was deputed to the Prime Minister's Office under then prime minister Indira Gandhi between 1966 and 1971.

His other assignments abroad include stints as ambassador to Poland (1971-73), deputy high commissioner to the UK (1973-77) and envoy to Pakistan (1980-82).

After quitting the IFS in 1984, Singh was elected to the Lok Sabha from Bharatpur constituency in Rajasthan as a representative of the Congress party. In 1985, he became a minister of state for steel, coal and mines in the government headed by Rajiv

Gandhi. In 1986, he became minister of state for external affairs.

Singh's differences with prime minister PV Narasimha Rao led to his leaving the Congress and forming the All India Indira Congress party along with fellow dissidents ND Tiwari and Arjun Singh. Singh returned to the Congress in 1998 and was re-elected to the Lok Sabha from Bharatpur.

When the Congress returned to power at the Centre in 2004, prime minister Manmohan Singh appointed him external affairs minister.

Though Singh resigned after he was named by the Paul Volcker Committee in Iraq's oil-for-food scandal, he always rejected the charges levelled against him. Singh had been accused of writing letters to officials in the Saddam Hussein regime to introduce businessman Andaleeb Sehgal, a friend of his son Jagat Singh, and recommending Sehgal for contracts under the UN-sponsored oil-for-food programme.

Singh was a prolific author and loved reading. His autobiography "One Life is Not Enough", published in 2014, was critical of Manmohan Singh's role in sealing the India-US nuclear deal. He also angered the Congress with his criticism of the party's leadership in his autobiography.

His death drew condolences across party lines.

In a post on X, President Murmu said: "Sad to learn about

the demise of former Union minister Shri K. Natwar Singh. In his long career, he wore many hats, from a distinguished diplomat to an outstanding parliamentarian. Honoured with Padma Bhushan, he was also a renowned man of letters. My heartfelt condolences to his family, friends and followers."

External affairs minister Jaishankar wrote: "His many contributions include a vital role in the July 2005 India - US nuclear deal. His writings, especially on China, provided valuable insights into our diplomacy."

Congress parliamentarian Ramesh said Singh "left behind his footprints on the sands of time."

"A hugely engaging political personality. A distinguished foreign service officer. A cultured man of letters and noted author with a few classics to his credit. A walking encyclopaedia of the worlds of Nehru and Indira Gandhi. A delightful conversationalist, storyteller and ready wit. A man whose correspondence with varied men and women are the stuff of history. A wonderful and generous friend with his hospitality and his ever-sharp memory and his deep archive. Natwar Singh was all this and much more. He has just passed away after leading a full and richly variegated life," Ramesh said on X.

Singh is survived by his wife Heminder Kumari Singh and son Jagat Singh.

Hit Hamas command centre in Gaza school, claims Israel

Turkey said the attack showed that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's govt 'intends to sabotage the negotiations for a permanent ceasefire'

Agencies

letters@hindustantimes.com

JERUSALEM: A deadly Israeli strike on Gaza City that drew international condemnation was aimed at a Hamas "command and control centre" embedded within a school and adjacent mosque, Israel's military said. Hamas authorities in Gaza estimated about 100 people were killed in Saturday's missile attack. The figures couldn't be independently verified and Hamas authorities don't distinguish between civilian and combatant casualties.

US Vice-President Kamala Harris, who's running to replace President Joe Biden in the White House in November, rebuked Israel for civilian casualties while affirming its "right to go after the terrorists that are Hamas". "Yet again, far too many civilians have been killed," she told reporters on Saturday during a campaign swing in the western US. "We need a hostage deal, and we need a ceasefire. The deal needs to get done, and it needs to get done now."

The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) said about 20 "Hamas and Islamic Jihad militants, including senior commanders", were embedded within the Al-Taba'een school. They were using the compound "to carry out terrorist attacks," IDF spokesman Nadav Shoshani said on the X social media site.

Several European and Middle Eastern countries condemned Saturday's strike along with Israel's repeated targeting of school buildings.

France condemned the strike "in the firmest of terms". The foreign ministry of Qatar, which along with the US and Egypt has been trying to get a new round of ceasefire talks going, called the bombing a "brutal crime against defenceless civilians".

The school was located adjacent to a mosque in Daraj Tuffah, which serves as a shelter for the residents of Gaza, said the IDF. Local Gaza authorities said



Shrouded bodies are laid down at the al-Maamadani hospital, following an Israeli strike that killed nearly 100 people in a school sheltering displaced Palestinians in Gaza City, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Hamas movement, on Saturday. AFP



At least 10 schools were targeted in the last [few] weeks. There's no justification for these massacres.

JOSEP BORRELL, EU's foreign policy chief

the dead included women and children.

Israel issues fresh evacuation orders

Hundreds of Gazans fled the northern neighbourhoods of Khan Younis on Sunday after Israel issued fresh evacuation orders ahead of a new operation against Palestinian militants it says have taken refuge there.

Early in the morning the army dropped leaflets and sent mobile phone messages telling residents to leave the Al-Jalaa area of Khan Younis, which was already considered a humani-

'Iran has decided to attack Israel'

WASHINGTON: The Israeli intelligence community believes Iran has decided to attack Israel directly and may do so within days, Axios reported on Sunday, citing two sources.

The attack would be in retaliation for the killing of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran in late July.

Israel has not claimed or denied responsibility for the killing. **REUTERS**

tarian safe zone. The military warned Al-Jalaa will become a "dangerous combat zone", forcing Palestinians already displaced numerous times by the Gaza war to pack up and leave looking for a new shelter. Families gathered their meagre belongings and left the area, fearing fresh missile strikes and fighting, AFP journalists reported.

{ IRAN }

Prez names Cabinet amid Israel tensions

TEHRAN: Iran's reformist President Masoud Pezeshkian has picked an architect of the 2015 nuclear deal as his foreign minister and an industry veteran for the top job in oil. Pezeshkian presented his nominee ministers to parliament on Sunday, state TV reported, as the Islamic Republic repeated its intention to retaliate against Israel after the killing of a top Hamas leader in Tehran on July 31.

Pezeshkian's proposed ministers still have to be approved by the parliament, which is dominated by hard liners opposed to reviving the 2015 nuclear agreement with world powers. Former US President Donald Trump exited the accord in 2018.

If Pezeshkian's choices for the top jobs are rejected, that will leave ministers from the administration of the late hard-

line cleric Ebrahim Raisi in charge of key portfolios, until he can name alternatives.

Abbas Araghchi, who served in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and was a nuclear negotiator under former President Hassan Rouhani, has been nominated to run Iran's foreign ministry. At the oil ministry, Pezeshkian has chosen Mohsen Paknejad for the top job. He has held several positions as the state-run National Iranian Oil Co. including a stint as acting managing director.

Pezeshkian has also nominated one woman, Farzaneh Sadegh, who would become only the second Iranian woman to hold a ministerial post since the Islamic republic was established in 1979. The 48-year-old is likely to head the ministry of roads and urban development. **AGENCIES**

Trump campaign says it was hacked, blames Iran

Reuters

letters@hindustantimes.com

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump's US presidential campaign said on Saturday some of its internal communications were hacked and blamed the Iranian government, citing past hostilities between Trump and Iran without providing direct evidence.

The Republican's campaign statement came shortly after news website Politico reported it had begun receiving emails in July from an anonymous source offering authentic documents from inside Trump's operation, including a report about running mate JD Vance's "potential vulnerabilities".

"These documents were obtained illegally from foreign sources hostile to the United States, intended to interfere with the 2024 election and sow chaos throughout our Democratic process," Trump campaign spokesperson Steven Cheung said in a statement.

Late on Saturday, Trump posted on his Truth Social app that Microsoft had just informed the campaign that Iran had hacked one of its websites. He cast blame on Iran, adding they were "only able to get publicly available information". He did not elaborate further on the hack.

The Trump campaign referred to a Friday report from Microsoft researchers that said Iranian government-tied hackers tried breaking into the account of a "high-ranking official" on a US presidential campaign in June. The hackers had taken over an account belonging to a former political adviser and then used it to target the official, the report said. That report did not provide further details on the targets' identities.



Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump attends a rally in Bozeman, Montana, on Friday. AFP

A Microsoft spokesperson declined to name the targeted officials or provide additional details after the report was published.

Iran's permanent mission to the United Nations in New York said in an email that "the Iranian government neither possesses nor harbours any intent or motive to interfere in the United States presidential election". "We do not accord any credence to such reports," it added in response to the Trump campaign's allegations.

On Friday, in response to Microsoft's findings, Iran's UN mission told Reuters its cyber capabilities were "defensive and proportionate to the threats it faces", and that it had no plans to launch cyberattacks.

The former president had tense relations with Iran while in office.

Under Trump, the United States killed Iranian military commander Qassem Soleimani in 2020 and withdrew from a multilateral Iran nuclear deal.

CELINE DION JABS TRUMP FOR PLAYING 'TITANIC' SONG AT RALLY

MONTREAL: Celine Dion took a jab at Donald Trump on Saturday for using at an election rally the song she wrote and sang for the disaster movie *Titanic*, about the ocean liner's sinking.

The Republican presidential candidate has been lampooned on social media after playing the 1997 track *My Heart Will Go On* at a rally in the US state of Montana on Friday, as a video of Dion performing the song was shown on a big screen.

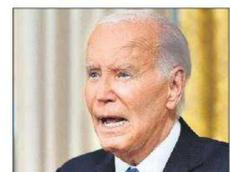
Users on social media have made analogies between Trump's campaign and the sinking ship at the heart of the James Cameron film.

Trump has appeared on the back foot since Kamala Harris replaced President Joe Biden in the US election race for the White House. **AFP**

Biden brands Trump a 'danger' to US; says dropped out to avoid 'distraction'

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden, speaking in his first televised interview since dropping out of the 2024 White House race, warned that Republican candidate Donald Trump was "a genuine danger to American security". "Mark my words, if he wins... this election, watch what happens," Biden told CBS News in an interview broadcast on Sunday. "It's a danger, he's a genuine danger to American security."

Biden also said he ended his re-election bid after hearing from congressional Democrats



Joe Biden **REUTERS**

that he'd harm their chances in November, and concluding that he'd be "a real distraction" if he stayed in the race.

"Polls we had showed that it

was a neck-and-neck race; it would have been down to wire," Biden said. "But what happened was a number of my Democratic colleagues in the House and Senate thought that I was going to hurt them in their races. And I was concerned if I stayed in the race that would be the topic."

Biden, who endorsed Vice-President Kamala Harris for the Democratic nomination after bowing out, said he thought "it would be a real distraction" if he continued to pursue his second-term bid. **AGENCIES**

Working to 'resolve attacks' on minorities: B'desh govt

Agencies

letters@hindustantimes.com

DHAKA: Bangladesh's new interim government said on Sunday it was working to "resolve attacks" on Hindus and other religious minorities reported after the dramatic ouster of autocratic premier Sheikh Hasina.

Hindus are the largest minority faith in mostly Muslim Bangladesh and are considered a steadfast support base for Hasina's party, the Awami League.

After Hasina's abrupt resignation and flight abroad on August 5 brought an end to her 15 years of autocratic rule, there were numerous reports of attacks against Hindu households, temples and businesses.

"The attacks on religious minorities in some places have been noted with grave concern," the interim Cabinet said in its first official statement since its Thursday appointment.

The Cabinet said it would "immediately sit with the representative bodies and other concerned groups to find ways to resolve such heinous attacks".

The government, led by Nobel peace laureate Muhammad Yunus, ordered "support" for the families of protesters who were killed in the weeks of demonstrations culminating in Hasina's departure.

It directed public funds to pay for those injured in the unrest, which began in July and killed more than 450 people.

Institutional purge

Earlier in the day, a new chief justice was sworn in to office the day after his predecessor, another Hasina ally accused of sublimating the Supreme Court to her government's will, quit



Rickshaw drivers pass army personnel standing guard in front of the Shahbagh Police Station in Dhaka, on Saturday. **REUTERS**

Son of ousted leader warns of 'chaos' without swift polls

NEW DELHI: The son of Bangladesh's toppled autocratic leader thanked New Delhi on Sunday for "saving her life", accused caretaker authorities of allowing "mob rule" and warned of chaos ahead without swift elections. Sheikh Hasina, 76, quit as prime minister on August 5 after a student-led uprising and fled by helicopter to longtime ally India.

Hasina's son and former government adviser, US-based Sajeb Wazed Joy, 53, criticised the interim government as "completely

powerless" and composed of "figureheads". "Right now in Bangladesh, you have mob rule," he told AFP in an interview from Washington.

Interim leader Muhammad Yunus has said he wants elections "within a few months", but Wazed warned of risks if they were delayed. "It's in their best interest to hold elections... to have a return to a legitimate government that has the legitimacy of the people and true authority," he said.

"Otherwise, it's just going to devolve into chaos." **AFP**

following protester demands. New top justice Syed Reza Ahmed studied at the University of Dhaka, Oxford and Tufts University in the United States.

Ahmed replaced Obaidul Hassan after hundreds of protesters gathered outside the

court to demand the latter step-down. Appointed last year, Hassan earlier oversaw a much-criticised war crimes tribunal that ordered the execution of Hasina's opponents, and his brother was her long-time secretary.

Zelensky says Ukraine's shock Kursk attack to pressure Russia

Reuters

letters@hindustantimes.com

KYIV: President Volodymyr Zelensky said Ukraine had launched an incursion into Russian territory to "restore justice" and pressure Moscow's forces, in his first acknowledgement of Kyiv's surprise offensive into the western Kursk region.

Moscow's forces on Sunday were in their sixth day of intense battle against Kyiv's largest incursion into Russian territory since the start of the war, which left southwestern parts of Russia vulnerable before reinforcement started arriving.

Russian authorities rushed to evacuate residents and imposed a sweeping security regime in



Russian Army trucks damaged by shelling by the Ukrainian Armed Forces in the Kursk region of Russia. **AP**

three border regions on Saturday, while Belarus, a staunch ally of Moscow, sent more troops to its border with Ukraine, accusing Kyiv of violating its air space.

In his nightly video address, Zelensky said he had discussed

Chief Syrskiy regarding the front lines and our actions to push the war onto the aggressor's territory," he said late on Saturday. "Ukraine is proving that it can indeed restore justice and is ensuring the exact kind of pressure that is needed—pressure on the aggressor."

Russia's defence ministry said on Sunday it had destroyed 14 Ukrainian drones and four Tochka-U tactical ballistic missiles overnight over the Kursk region, and 18 drones over other Russian regions that Ukraine frequently attacks.

In a statement, it called the ground incursion, which military analysts say caught the Kremlin off-guard, "barbaric" and said it made no military sense.

{ BRITISH STREET ARTIST }

Banksy unveils animal-themed work in London

Agence France-Presse

letters@hindustantimes.com

LONDON: Banksy on Sunday unveiled a new artwork in London, depicting a shoal of fish on a police sentry box, his seventh animal-themed piece to surface in the British capital over the last week.

The series created by the elusive street artist has sparked a frenzy of media interest and questions over its meaning.

Banksy — whose identity is publicly unknown and the subject of feverish speculation — confirmed on Instagram that the latest to appear overnight, in the City of London financial district, was his own.

Prior to Sunday, they had all been dark silhouette images, of a goat, elephants, monkeys, a wolf, pelicans and a cat.

But the newest offering appears to have been made using translucent spray paint on the sentry box's glass windows, turning it into what looks like a giant fish tank.

Two police officers could be seen examining the design and taking pictures of it on Sunday.

"We are aware of criminal damage to a City of London Police box in Ludgate Hill," detective chief inspector Andy Spooner said. He noted the police force were "liaising" with the local authority who own the sentry box.



A person looks at the new artwork of a cat, by the British artist Banksy, on Edgware Road, in London, on Saturday. **REUTERS**

Philippines says actions of China's air force 'reckless'

MANILA: Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Sunday condemned Chinese air force actions in waters of the South China Sea claimed by both countries, calling the actions "unjustified, illegal and reckless".

Manila and Beijing accused each other on Saturday of disrupting their militaries' operations around the Scarborough Shoal in the first incident since Marcos took office in 2022. **REUTERS**

Rwanda's Kagame sworn in for fourth term

KIGALI: Rwanda's all-powerful President Paul Kagame was sworn in on Sunday for a fourth term after sweeping to victory in elections last month with more than 99% of the vote. On Sunday, several dozen heads of state and other dignitaries from African nations joined the inauguration ceremony at a packed 45,000-seat stadium in Kigali. **AFP**

Landfill site collapses in Uganda, 18 dead

KAMPALA: A vast landfill site in the Ugandan capital has collapsed, killing at least 18 people, the Red Cross said. The collapse in Kampala is believed to have been triggered by heavy rainfall over the last few days. **AGENCIES**

CreditAccess looks to sell off India business

Deal may value India's largest microfinancier at around \$2.7 billion

Anirudh Laskar
anirudh.l@htlive.com

MUMBAI: India's largest micro-lender Credit Access Grameen Ltd may soon have a new owner, with its Dutch promoter looking to exit, two people aware of the development said.

The Netherlands-based CreditAccess India B.V., which holds a 66.56% stake, is seeking a valuation of around \$2.7 billion for the microfinancier, the people said, in what would be the biggest deal in India's \$51 billion microfinance industry.

The promoters have already hired investment bankers Jefferies, Barclays Investment Bank and Bank of America to shortlist buyers, said one of the people cited above, both of whom spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The investment bankers have already reached out to some privately held banks and large financial institutions, the people cited above said. If the deal talks go through, the takeover will entail an open offer, since CreditAccess Grameen is a listed firm. It will also require approvals from the Reserve Bank of India and the Securities and Exchange Board of India.

Promoters and investment bankers are contemplating a valuation of ₹23,000-24,000 crore for CreditAccess Grameen, said



The investment bankers have already reached out to some privately held banks and large financial institutions. AFP

the two persons. According to its Friday closing price, the company has a market value of ₹20,000 crore. "Given its unique positioning and low cost to asset supporting sustained interest income margin growth, the business of CreditAccess Grameen should command 15-20% premium on the current market value, and preliminary talks for the potential takeover have attracted several banks," said the first person.

CreditAccess India B.V. is backed by US-based private equity firm Olympus Capital Asia, Asian Development Bank, a clutch of family offices and high net-worth individuals. With gross loan assets of ₹26,700 crore at the end of FY24, CreditAccess Grameen is the country's largest among 87 microfinance firms.

In the promoter group entity—CreditAccess India B.V.—Olympus Capital Asia, a fund

that focuses on mid-cap Asian firms, alone holds 15%.

Emails sent to CreditAccess India B.V., ADB, Olympus Capital, CreditAccess Grameen, Paolo Brichetti (founder of CreditAccess India), as well as to Daniel Mintz and Frederick Long (founders of Olympus) remained unanswered. Barclays Investment Bank declined to comment. Spokespersons from Jefferies and Bank of America declined to comment on the story.

Asian Development Bank owns 9% in the promoter entity, while around 50% is held collectively by a bunch of family offices and HNIs. To be sure, CreditAccess India B.V. has been reducing stake in the lender over the past year. In June 2023, it sold 5.8% of its stake worth about ₹1,100 crore through a block deal.

Founded in 1999 in south Bengaluru as a non-government

organization by T. Muniswamappa Trust (TMT) to support bottom-of-the-pyramid women and their entrepreneurial activities, CreditAccess Grameen survived multiple crises in the microfinance space over the past decade to become a non-banking finance company in microfinance (NBFC-MFI) business under the supervision of Reserve Bank of India in 2007. It was taken over by the Amsterdam based promoters in 2014. The company lends in 16 states via 1,976 branches.

In its early years, The Grameen Trust, Bangladesh had provided \$35,000 in seed capital funding to TMT for replicating the Grameen Bank Bangladesh microfinance model that was inspired by Bangladesh's Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus.

In FY24, total income touched ₹5,172.65 crore, from ₹3,550.8 crore in FY23 and just ₹147.8 crore in 2014 when the Amsterdam-based promoter took over. Since listing in August 2018, its stock has gone up from ₹422 to ₹1,253.

According to a 12 April 2024 report by Goldman Sachs, CreditAccess may continue to grow faster than its rivals in the coming days. It said CreditAccess's district-based expansion strategy has enabled "lower credit costs and higher operating leverage".

"This approach is expected to drive major growth, with a projected loan book of approximately ₹51,900 crore by financial year 2028 estimate (FY28E)," said Goldman Sachs.

Misleading ads: Unified system to fix complaints

Dhirendra Kumar
dhirendra.kumar@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: India plans to roll out a unified system to address consumer complaints against misleading advertisements, days after the Supreme Court pulled up the government citing inadequate action.

While completely overhauling the mechanism, the government will also establish a central data repository of consumer complaints, two people aware of the matter said on the condition of anonymity, as details are not public yet.

Currently, complaints against misleading ads are registered with Broadcast Seva, Press Council of India and the National Consumer Helpline. The government aims to streamline the process as multiple platforms often lead to delays and inconsistencies in addressing grievances, the first of the two persons quoted earlier said.

Consumer goods companies, including Patanjali, have drawn rebuke from the top court as misleading advertisements have triggered concerns about violation of consumer rights.



Centre also plans to establish a central data repository of consumer complaints. MINT

The government's plan for a unified mechanism is likely to be presented to the Supreme Court this week by information & broadcasting, and consumer affairs ministries. It's expected to be part of their response after the apex court last month censured the government for not registering enough complaints related to misleading health claims made by companies.

According to the top court's 30 July order, from April 2022 to May 2024, 132 consumer complaints related to the health sector were received, and of these 116 were resolved. How-

ever, over 2,500 complaints were registered between April 2018 and 2022 before the National Consumer Helpline (NCH) portal was established.

Queries emailed to the ministries of consumer affairs, and information & broadcasting remained unanswered till press time.

Misleading ads are false or exaggerated claims about products or services, omission of critical details or deceptive imagery.

These can mislead consumers, affecting their decisions and leading to unfair practices. A single data centre to collect and manage all complaints against misleading advertisements will ensure that the issues are handled more efficiently and seamlessly, the second person quoted earlier said.

"So far, three meetings have been conducted with stakeholders and we have summarized all the suggestions and are submitting only those that are feasible," this person said. "Neither the stakeholders, nor the government will need to engage repeatedly with each other to take action against any violator."

DCGI FRAMES PRODUCT TRACEABILITY GUIDELINES

Priyanka Sharma
priyanka.sharma@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI), the country's top drug regulator, has framed standard operating procedure and guidelines to ensure product traceability throughout the supply chain, as the menace of fake and spurious medicines grows.

The DCGI has circulated this good-distribution practice as traceability is a big challenge due to a lack of proper documentation throughout the distribution channel.

In case of adulteration, a seamless product traceability will likely help authorities identify the exact stage in the supply chain where the medicine was contaminated or spurious drugs introduced.

The development assumes significance as the Indian pharmaceutical industry has come under global glare following allegations that spurious cough syrups from the country were linked to children's deaths in Gambia, Cameroon, and Uzbekistan.

In the recent DCGI's drugs consultative committee meeting held in June, it was decided to incorporate good distribution practice as a Schedule in the Drugs and Cosmetic Rule, 1945.

It was discussed that due to non-mandatory nature of guidelines, the maintenance of storage condition of drugs during the transit till wholesale and retail level was not ensured by the manufacturers.

These draft guidelines on good distribution practice have been framed at par with World Health Organization standards and stakeholders can send in their comments and suggestions over the next 30 days, before the rules are finalized.

Queries sent to the health ministry spokesperson remained unanswered till press time.

Drugs & Cosmetics Act 1940 and Drugs & Cosmetic Rules 1945 specify the conditions to be fulfilled to sell, stock, exhibit or offer for sale or distribute the drugs across the country.

How to tackle EPF transfer or withdrawal

Many employees across the country are grappling with issues in transferring or withdrawing their hard-earned PF money as a lack of clarity and transparency, cumbersome processes, and administrative errors complicate what should be straightforward transactions. Despite multiple complaints, vague responses come in from EPFO leaving employees clueless about what to do next. Experts advise consistent follow-ups and raising the matter with higher authorities are the only options.

Compiled by Aprijita Sharma
aprijita.sharma@livemint.com



DEEPA DESAI (47)
Issue: Not eligible for EPS contributions, but employer did it anyway



ABHISHEK KULKARNI (39)
Issue: Transfer of PF from exempt employer to another



How to resolve EPF issues

- ▶ Submit a joint declaration form with EPFO
 - ▶ Lodge a complaint with CPGRAMS or DPG
- CPGRAMS: Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System
DPG: Directorate of Public Grievance

Prevention better than cure

- ▶ Activate UAN everytime you join a new organization
 - ▶ Get UAN linked with Aadhaar number
 - ▶ Be careful about EPS contribution*
 - ▶ Consolidate PF/EPF accounts as soon as possible
- * (I) Don't contribute in EPS if basic salary > ₹15K unless already an EPS member
(II) Withdrawing funds from previous employer makes you a new employee in EPFO records

EPFO - Employee Provident Fund Organization
UAN - Universal Account Number
EPS - Employee Pension Scheme

Graphic: Pranay Bhardwaj/Mint

FOCUSED MF'S ASSET BASE RISES 31% IN JUNE QTR

Press Trust of India
feedback@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: Focused mutual funds, which invest in a concentrated portfolio of stocks, are gaining traction among investors with the asset base of the category growing to ₹1.43 lakh crore in three months ended June 2024, marking an increase of 31% from a year ago.

Interestingly, some of the focused funds offered by the mutual fund houses such as Invesco India Focused Fund, Mahindra Manulife Focused Fund, JM Focused Fund and HDFC Focused 30 Fund delivered a remarkable return of 40-60% in the past year, industry data showed. Focused funds are a type of mutual fund where the fund manager selects a concentrated portfolio of stocks, typically limited to a maximum of 30 due to regulatory constraints.

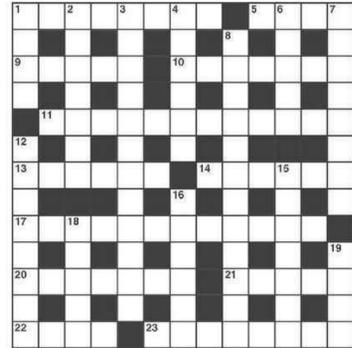
This requires the fund manager to be highly skilled in stock selection, as they need to identify the best investment opportunities across the market without bias toward any specific market cap or sector.

{ THE CROSSWORDS }

CRYPTIC CLUES

- ACROSS**
- 1 Man of action? (8)
 - 5 A sticky appointment? (4)
 - 9 Little girl all round the house (5)
 - 10 Rushing madly in great confusion (7)
 - 11 One in favour of the classics (7/5)
 - 13 Deter or defer (3,3)
 - 14 Squirm and turn whiter (6)
 - 17 Maybe a paper is torn making them (12)
 - 20 Beg for an adjustment in net rate (7)
 - 21 One of the family on the French Riviera we hear (5)
 - 22 Toy that gives you endless repetition (2-2)
 - 23 Dilatory sort of hero-worship (8)
- DOWN**
- 1 It counts for nothing on the tennis court (4)
 - 2 Higher than everyone in the exam? (7)
 - 3 Lower gas fast making a drink (5,2,5)
 - 4 Observing the absence of a ring? (6)
 - 6 Tina comes up with a new name (5)
 - 7 In the end the tomb inscription may be (8)
 - 8 It cannot safely be ignored (6,6)
 - 12 A stroke of the worst misfortune? (8)
 - 15 Most suspenseful points witnessed in the trial (7)
 - 16 Left divided (6)
 - 18 A record number of contestants in the field (5)
 - 19 Extremely important part of everything (4)

PUZZLE 16936 © Gemini Crosswords 2018 All rights reserved



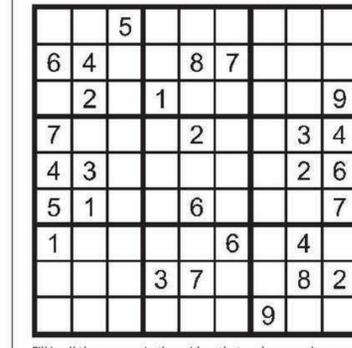
QUICK CLUES

- ACROSS**
- 1 Severe setback (4,4)
 - 5 Balance of probability (4)
 - 9 Obstacle in steeplechasing (7)
 - 10 Wildly excited (7)
 - 11 Social hierarchy (7,5)
 - 13 Pattern of recurrence (6)
 - 14 Bear witness to (6)
 - 17 Insubordination (12)
 - 20 News (7)
 - 21 From end to end (5)
 - 22 A row (4)
 - 23 Night (8)
- DOWN**
- 1 Enthusiast (4)
 - 2 Thickly (7)
 - 3 Cost more than one can afford (5,3,4)
 - 4 Commit illegal act (6)
 - 6 No longer fashionable (5)
 - 7 Protection from espionage (8)
 - 8 Gesture of congratulation (3,2,3,4)
 - 12 Person to whom debt is owed (8)
 - 15 Surround (7)
 - 16 Black Sea port (6)
 - 18 Country of northeast Africa (5)
 - 19 A long time (4)

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS (16935)



{ SUDOKU } DIFFICULTY LEVEL ★★★



Fill in all the squares in the grid so that each row, column and each of the 9x9 squares contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

Smartphone market gears up for festival revival

Shouvik Das
shouvik.das@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: For the first time in four years, India's 700 million-plus smartphone market is expecting a mid-single digit uptick in the volume of devices sold in India during the festival season. For this, in stock for buyers could be instant discounts, bank-linked cashback offers, easy financing schemes, as well as device upgrade bonuses that will be offered across physical and online stores over the next three months.

This is crucial, since the September quarter marks the festival season in the domestic market—which accounts for nearly 40% of the entire year's gadget sales in what is one of the world's largest consumer markets.

Five industry analysts and retailers that *Mint* spoke with said that this year's festive



The September quarter marks the festival season—which accounts for nearly 40% of the entire year's gadget sales. ISTOCKPHOTO

period expects to see a mid-single digit uptick in sales of smartphones. This is in stark contrast to the past three years, where quarterly shipments of smartphones registered double-digit declines in the festival quarters of 2021 and 2022—and remained flat last year.

Nilesh Gupta, director of national multi-brand electronics retailer Vijay Sales, said that

sales and shipments of devices in the first half of the year is a key indicator of a revival of fortunes in this festive season.

"Coupled with a strong first half, we'll also be ramping up Diwali sales and promotions, and brands will be driving better deals and discounts to grab more buyer attention. Given how this year has gone so far, we expect this festive season to

be better than the last three years," Gupta said.

Gupta's assessment is in line with how brands are looking to align themselves in this industry. A senior industry executive with direct knowledge of the matter said that between August and November, the likes of Samsung, Xiaomi and Vivo are expected to host multiple new launches of smartphones—right in time for the festival period.

Manish Khatri, partner at Mumbai-based electronics retailer Mahesh Telecom, added that a number of brands are already rolling out a wider range of offers in anticipation of festival season demand.

"Samsung, for instance, is introducing cashback offers and instant discounts, along with zero-interest financing options. All of these can be clubbed together. There are also many instances of freebies such as power banks or smartwatches

being bundled with certain categories of smartphones, all of which gives us hope for a better festive quarter than the previous two or three years," Khatri said.

To be sure, brands have struggled to draw in new smartphone buyers organically, thereby hurting festival season sales since smartphones are the biggest contributors to the consumer electronics industry. However, the rising average price of smartphones sold has kept the industry afloat—from ₹12,600 in the 2021 festival quarter to around ₹22,400 today, a near-80% rise in the average price has boosted quarterly revenue.

For the smartphone industry, this meant \$12.5 billion in potential quarterly smartphone revenue this year against \$8.1 billion in 2020—despite an 18% overall drop in quarterly shipments. It is this that brands are desperate to change.

{ WEATHER }

TEMPERATURE HIGH • LOW

MONDAY Generally cloudy sky with light rain 33°C 25°C	TUESDAY Generally cloudy sky with light rain 34°C 25°C	WEDNESDAY Generally cloudy sky with light rain 34°C 27°C
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ALMANAC

Today is
12th August 2024
• 6 Saffrins, 1445
• 22 Shravana, Shukla
Paksha,
• Sarnat 2081
Sunset: Monday
at 07:02 p.m.
Sunrise: Tuesday
at 05:49 a.m.
Moonset: Tuesday
at 11:33 p.m.
Moonset: Tuesday
at 11:16 p.m.

TEMPERATURE IN FOUR METROS

Delhi 33°C 25°C	Mumbai 30°C 26°C	Kolkata 33°C 28°C	Chennai 36°C 25°C
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Indian medal winners at Paris Olympics

India's overall tally of six medals is its second-best show at an Olympic Games, behind Tokyo 2020's seven medals. India also won six medals in London in 2012. The Games also saw India continue its medal-winning streak in wrestling



6 Total medals India won

1 Silver

5 Bronze

MANU BHAKER, MANU BHAKER AND SARABJOT SINGH, SWARNIL KUSALE, NEERAJ CHOPRA, AMAN SEHRAWAT, INDIA HOCKEY TEAM

India at the Games ● Gold ● Silver ● Bronze

EVENT	SHOOTING	WEIGHTLIFTING	BOXING	WRESTLING	HOCKEY	ATHLETICS	BADMINTON
2000 Sydney, Australia		●					
2004 Athens, Greece	●						
2008 Beijing, China	●		●	●			
2012 London, Great Britain	●		●	●			●
2016 Rio, Brazil				●			●
2020 Tokyo, Japan		●	●	●	●	●	●
2024 Paris, France	●	●		●			●

Dip at present, but future holds promise

In Paris, India fell a touch short of what was thought was probable. Yet it wasn't all pale by any measure

Through the lens of cold numbers and bare facts, India's Paris Olympics campaign was a dip from the Tokyo Games crest. From seven medals and one gold, India went to six medals with none right at the top. From finishing 48th in the medals tally, India went down to 71st. Neeraj Chopra, who became India's most decorated individual Olympian at these Games, wishes to put some perspective into that outlook. "We tend to compare the number of medals with the previous Olympics," Chopra said. "But this time, we have to look at the fourth-place finishes also, as well as the quality of performances."

India had as many fourth-place finishes as the number of medals won, and a confirmed medalist disqualified and demoted to last—as things stand—for not meeting the weight on the day of her bout, a prerequisite in wrestling.

It's those fourth-place finishes that could be particularly looked at, which had the potential to swing these Games to a dash of cheer from its current underwhelming feeling for India. But it didn't. And that's where the cold fact, again, of India not achieving their target from this Olympics stands, as an Indian Olympic Association official put it.

That the seven-medal high at Tokyo (came without shooting) was down to the spread of sports that delivered in the pandemic Games. A couple from that did not in Paris, affecting the dent and increasing the scrutiny on them. Boxing and badminton had come up with a medal each in Tokyo.

They carried similar expectations heading into Paris, but fired

blanks. Boxing, especially. Badminton had a PV Sindhu stamp writ large over the last two Olympics and in this one, the Lakshya Sen near-miss left a sour taste.

Looking at it from where he started in a tough group, the young shuttler making it that far was a creditable job.

But the way it finished, with him crumbling under pressure the moment it was time to keep his composure, left many unimpressed. Including his mentor Prakash Padukone.

"We can provide everything we can. But ultimately players also have to take responsibility and go and deliver when it matters the most," the badminton legend said. "We need to introspect, the players also need to introspect. You cannot keep asking for more and more and more."

As per figures by the Sports Authority of India, close to around ₹470 crore was spent on India's preparation for Paris Olympics. There are two ways perhaps of looking at this flush of money. One, that only consistently and adding to it can keep India on the chasing continued path of progress. Two, athletes have been aided enough, and, as Padukone alluded to, it cannot be infinite without definite results to show in return.

Athletes got ₹96.08 crore from the fund pool. Chopra was the lone medalist, steeplechaser Avinash Sable the only other finalist and the men's 4x400m relay team clocked its season's best time in its heats. Most others in the largest field among the Indian contingent punched well below their weight.

In athletics, though, the gap between India and the rest of the world is already wide, and it needs exceptional individuals like Chopra to leap across and make a mark at that level.

At these Games and in events like track and field and swimming, strong Olympic nations have only gotten stronger, reckoned Gagan Narang, the Chef-de-Mission of the



contingent and a former Olympian shooter. The gap, therefore, is only widening between India and the rest of the world in these key Olympic sports.

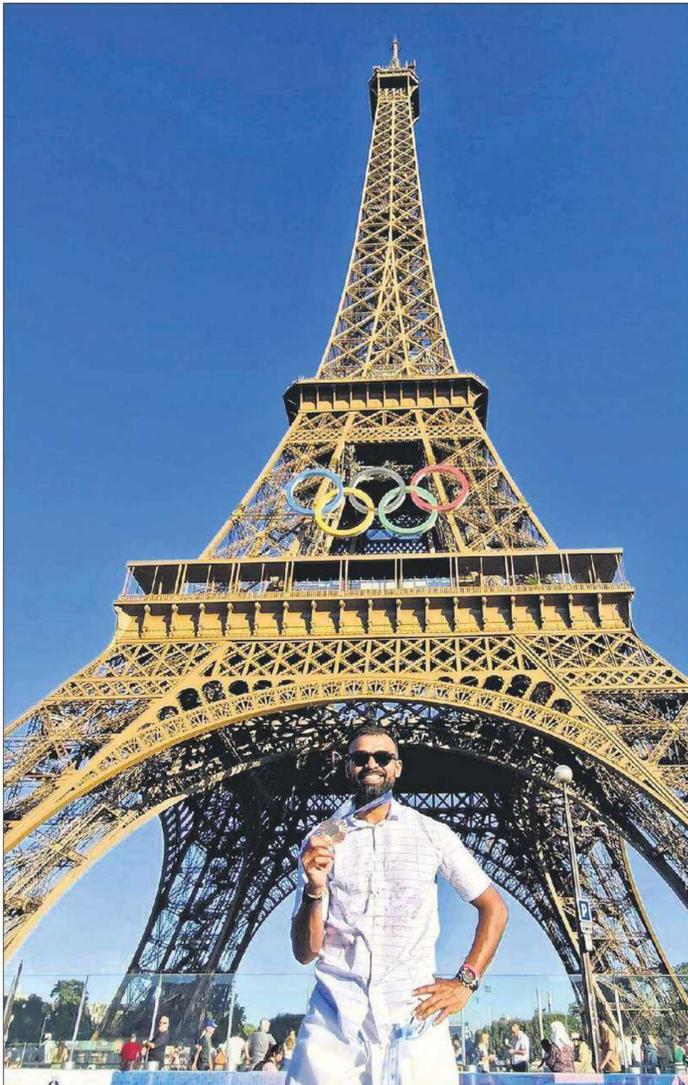
"In events like the World Championships and Olympics, we can't really put a number on the medals that can or should be won," Chopra said. "We have seen some big names, big champions not even make the finals here. Such things happen at an event like this where everyone is top class."

That is where having effective structures, programmes and plans becomes essential. Shooting was an example, having taken the learnings from Tokyo and turning it into a three-medal performance three years on. It had three fourth-place finishes as well — Manu Bhaker, Arjuna Babuta and the mixed skeet team — for further promise.

That is also what hockey, which medalled in two consecutive Olympics after more than five decades, seeks to do to moving forward in the next four-year cycle while targeting a better finish.

"We'll have to link it with the U-21 programme, and the academy programmes," India head coach Craig Fulton, who took charge of the men's team last year, said. "There's a plan. It just takes time. As long as we sit around the table and put the right priorities in place, then anything is possible."

That is in four years' time in Los Angeles. For now, in Paris, India fell a touch shy of what was thought was probable. Yet it wasn't all pale by any yardstick. Especially taking into account, as Chopra put it, those who almost made it. It will indeed pinch. Perhaps, though, showing the potential to build.



Paris Olympics bronze medal-winning Indian hockey team's goalkeeper PR Sreejesh poses for photos near the Eiffel Tower in Paris on Sunday. PTI

Manu, Sree anna and tales from Paris campaign

Rutvik Mehta
rutvik.mehta@htlive.com

PARIS: You see the medals, you see the near-misses. You see the smiles, you see the tears. You see the rise, you see the fall.

What you perhaps don't see is these athletes as humans. The people that they are away from the confines of their sporting arena that defines them. At the Paris Olympics, there came glimpses of that, through English, show of hands, and chants of "Sree anna".

'Hindi mein chalega na?' Neeraj Chopra is among the most articulate athletes out there. And when he is at his rawest self, like he was moments after the javelin final, it can be a listeners' treat. There is one little rider though: "Hindi mein chalega na?"

Of course chalega, for the Indian journalists who had flocked the basement of the Stade de France to speak to him. When the Indian arrived for the official medal winners' press conference and the questions began, the coordinator insisted the questions and answers to be in English. That's when Chopra—who, by the way, speaks more than decent English—stuttered slightly. "Oh...English...little problem."

Yet he answered every question, and even translated them to English after speaking in Hindi first up. Until another one came from an Indian. Chopra began his reply thus: "English mein kar do dena aap translate? Nahi agar mujhe karna padega toh thodi dikhat ho jayegi (you'll be able to translate it to English, right?)" Then the thoughts flowed. In Hindi.

Manu, the star attraction Manu Bhaker was a bit of a star attraction on the shooting ranges of Chateauroux, a quiet town about 300km from Paris where the look, feel and noise of an Olympics was hardly the same. After her third and final event ended and Manu finished as a two-time medalist who fell one spot short of her third, she was stopped at various points on her way to stepping outside.

A group of American coaches stopped Manu in her tracks to congratulate her and tell her what they thought about her at these Games: "You were the most consistent shooter". Manu bowed and thanked them. Seconds later, she bumped into a German female coach who also returned similar compliments, and whom Manu was elated at meeting after long. "I think the last time I met you was in 2021. It's so good to finally see you again!" said Manu.

PV Sindhu and Manu Bhaker don't have too much in common, except that one big standout over-

lap—they are two-time medalists at the Olympics.

Sindhu, Manu and a show of hands

Both also had something unique on their hands—one an effect of natural wear and tear and the other an artificial art. And both spent considerable time showing it, and letting it be captured, to whoever was interested.

Sindhu had painted her Paris Olympics journey on the nails of both her hands. She had the five Olympic rings, the Eiffel Tower and "2024" polished and painted on each separate nail. Manu's right hand had visible red marks of bruises, from holding that pistol and taking aim day after day for hours. She pulled up her sleeve and placed the arm in front for a better view of her hardwork. "Yeh toh kabhi nah jayega (this might never go)," she said.

Not just India and Pakistan

Everything in the aftermath of the men's javelin final had become about India, Pakistan and India versus Pakistan. So much so that in the press conference that features the top three athletes of each event, not one question from reporters was directed towards Grenadian Anderson Peters, the bronze medalist, across the 32 minutes.

Chopra, though, made it a point to ensure it wasn't all about the Indian and the Pakistani. To a question directed to him on what his gold in Tokyo and Arshad Nadeem's gold in Paris does to their respective countries, Chopra also pulled in Peters into the discussion and the impact of his rise in javelin to Grenada. Peters nodded along.

Then about those big 90m throws that have eluded Chopra and turned the night around for Nadeem, Chopra also brought up Peters's two 90m-plus throws within a month in the 2022 season. Peters nodded along again.

'Sree anna' and his following

Everyone wanted a piece of the Indian hockey team at the Yves-du-Manoir Stadium on a Thursday afternoon. Moments after India sealed the bronze, players walked towards a section of the crowd that had their families and celebrated with them and the fans around.

There was particularly special love reserved for PR Sreejesh around the stadium, though. The goalkeeper was by far the fan favourite, responding to cries of "Sree anna", "Sree anna" from all quarters and waving his arms around. The four-time Olympian was soaking all of it in, shouting along and celebrating with his fans. In his last match for India, Sree anna was sure having a ball.

{ NINE-YEAR REIGN } END OF AN ERA

Jamaica's sprint dominance comes to a sudden end in Paris



Kishane Thompson and Jehlani Gordon of Jamaica. REUTERS

Agencies
sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com

PARIS: Jamaica's dominance in the women's 100 and 200 metres came to an abrupt end in Paris with sprint queens Elaine Thompson-Herah, Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce and Shericka Jackson absent or injured.

Jamaica took 10 of the 12 women's 100 medals available in the four Olympics before Paris, including a clean sweep in Tokyo, and won four of the previous five 200s as they came out on top in their continuing duel with the United States.

Jamaica's "big three", who have 19 Olympic medals between them, filled the podium three years ago, but Thompson-Herah missed the

Paris Games through injury and the campaigns of Fraser-Pryce and Jackson were cut short by injury and neither made the start line of either individual final or the relay.

The 100 final had only one Jamaican, Tia Clayton, in a race won by St Lucia's Julien Alfred, with Americans taking the silver and bronze, making it the first time since 1988 that no Jamaicans were on the podium. Jamaica did not even manage a finalist in the 200—the first time since 1976 that they did not medal. In total Jamaica walked away from Paris with six medals, down from nine in Tokyo and 11 in Rio.

"It's somewhat disappointing in terms of the number of medals," said Maurice Wilson, technical director at Jamaica's track and

field team. "The world has caught up with us," he added, pointing to the US successes on the track. "We dominated them for about nine years, non-stop, and they started to do their homework... and since then they have continued to move forward," Wilson said.

"We need to go back to the drawing board."

Double sprint champion Thompson-Herah missed the Jamaican trials in June due to an Achilles injury, while Jackson initially dropped out of the 100 before the Games, and then later pulled out of the 200 days before she was due to run.

Fraser-Pryce did compete in the 100 qualifiers but dropped out moments before the semi-finals, due to an injury in the warm-up

after security officials delayed her getting into the stadium.

Neither of them took part in the sprint relay, where Jamaica finished fifth, having won it in Tokyo and taken silver in the previous two Games. They then dropped the baton in the 4x400 final having medalled in the previous six.

On the men's side Kishane Thompson missed 100 gold by a whisker, finishing five thousandths of a second behind American Noah Lyles and Rasheed Broadbell won bronze in the 110 hurdles, but Jamaica did not even qualify for the 4x100 relay final.

"The track gets a lot of attention but the field events have been on the rise and we should get more support," Paris Olympics discus champion Roje Stona said.



Played with all our heart.
Shone with all our might.
Here's celebrating our amazing athletes at the Paris Olympics.



SPORT  PARIS OLYMPICS

JULY 26 TO AUGUST 11



SAMMAAN CAPITAL

Jiyo Sammaan Se

Ab hoga desh ka sapna poora,
Sammaan Se!

Formerly known as **Indiabulls HOME LOANS**
Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited

Chopra just ran into someone who was extraordinary: Coe

Rutvik Mehta
rutvik.mehta@htlive.com

PARIS: As the men's javelin final unfolded on a dazzling mid-week evening inside the massive Stade de France arena, World Athletics president Sebastian Coe had a rather tricky seat in the house. Seated alongside officials of the Indian athletics association, those from the Pakistan federation were not too far away either.

"There was some, as we could say in America, bragging rights," Coe said.

Pakistan and Arshad Nadeem won it on that particular night, hurling a massive throw of 92.97m to grab the gold as the defending Tokyo champion of India took the silver with 89.45m. We're too used to seeing Chopra finish among the top two over the last three years, but a 1-2 podium finish for Pakistan and India in an athletics event at the Olympics is as rare as it comes.

"Having Indian heritage, I know what that means in both those countries and that wasn't lost on me the other night. And I think it's fantastic. It's absolutely fantastic, also because it was a sumptuous competition," Coe said.

One that not only shattered the Olympic record but also massively sailed past the mark that was enough to win gold in Tokyo. Chopra did it with a throw of 87.58m. Coe, who



Neeraj Chopra with his silver medal against the backdrop of the Eiffel Tower.

comes from the same university — Loughborough University — in which Chopra spent a few months training in this Olympic cycle, recalled a conversation he had not too long ago with the Indian.

"He (Chopra) gave me a dis-

ance that he thought he could win with (in Paris). He just met somebody on the night who was just, well, extraordinary," Coe said.

"And, look, if you'd said to Chopra that you will throw 89 metres in an Olympic final, I think he probably would've

taken it."

Chopra was happy for Nadeem, who delivered a first athletics gold for Pakistan at the Olympics. The Indian had done the same three years ago for India in Tokyo, changing the perception of athletics in the

country and raising its popularity. An Indian and a Pakistani taking gold in two consecutive Olympics and finishing 1-2 in the same final is just the kind of global presence World Athletics believes it is increasingly heading towards.

SEB COE, World Athletics prez

"I hope it exemplifies what I've been saying about the sport moving more global in both track and in field, at pretty much the same pace. And it's very, very good for athletics. And in South Asia," Coe said.

Coe, the cricket fan, reiterated World Athletics' big ambitions for India to tap into as a market and as a talent hub.

"India is an important market for us. It really is. In trying to help the sport at a regional level as well," Coe said. "I'm a big cricket fan. So, it's great to know that young people are talking about athletics now as well. And recognising that cricket is not the only game in town. That too has been very important."

Women players cheer hockey bronze but with tinge of regret

Susan Ninan
susan.ninan@hindustantimes.com

BENGALURU: When the final hooter went off in the men's hockey bronze medal match and the team piled on top of 'keeper PR Sreejesh in a celebratory heap, a wave of joy ran through the women's hostel at SAI Bengaluru. Accompanied perhaps by a tinge of regret. Orders for cake and takeaway food were frantically placed.

The Indian men's hockey team had won their second successive medal for the first time in 52 years. "We all sat together and watched the matches, and celebrated every goal," says Salima Tete, captain of the national women's hockey team. "Bahut khushi hui... hume laga ki kaash hum bhi jaa paate (We were overjoyed...we wished we could have gone too)."

The women's team did not qualify for the Paris Olympics. Their 0-1 loss to Japan in the third-place playoff of the FIH Olympic qualifiers in January shut out all hope. They've since had a change of coach — Harendra Singh has replaced Janneke Schopman — and are now toiling away in the national camp.

"We came very close but didn't qualify. It hurts a lot," says Tete. "We spend months together in camp, away from family, working hard, so it's tough to come to terms with missing out on an Olympics." In their match against Japan, they had nine penalty corners, but couldn't convert any of them. "We are working on our PCs and conversion," said the 22-year-old. "For us the World Cup and Asian Games is where we want to



Indian players at the Golden Temple in Amritsar on Sunday.

do well next. Then of course, the Olympics in 2028."

For Savita Punia, the World Cup and Asian Games are as far as she wants to plan for now. The 34-year-old who got married last year says she doesn't want to think too far ahead. "For women, once we get married, family becomes a priority. I'm happy my husband and in-laws encourage me to pursue my career. They live in Canada so time zones are different. Long phone calls happen only during the weekend. They know I have morning training sessions, so they insist I sleep on time. They know how much the sport means to me. Had we qualified for Paris, maybe things would have been different for me. Now, I just want us to win the Asian Games. A career in sport is short-lived. For women, it's even tougher. I want to leave without much regret."

Savita, Salima and the rest of the team have spent the past fortnight or so following the Olympi-

pics. Watching the live action when they could or catching the highlights. "I watched Vinesh's semifinal bout highlights the next day and then heard she was disqualified...it was just so painful," says Savita. "I had no idea weight cutting was more tough than the bout itself. It might sound like empty words but I've been praying for her every day since. I can't imagine what she's going through. Our men's hockey team looked so good this time. We were almost certain they would go to the final. But just what they've done...winning two Olympic medals back-to-back is great. It deserves a lot of credit."

In Tokyo, the women's team came agonisingly close to a historic, first-ever medal. Their 3-4 loss to Great Britain in the bronze medal playoff saw them finish fourth. At this Olympics, India has had six fourth-place finishes, in shooting, archery, weightlifting and badminton.

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Hamish Kerr. REUTERS

AFTER A DRAMATIC JUMP-OFF, NZ'S KERR WINS GOLD

Agence France-Presse
sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com

PARIS: Hamish Kerr said he was "in shock" after winning the Olympic men's high jump on Saturday to take a rare athletics gold for New Zealand.

Kerr tasted glory after a dramatic jump-off with American Shelby McEwen.

Both men managed bests of 2.36 metres in regular competition, but could not be separated on countback of missed jumps.

They opted for a jump-off, Kerr clearing 2.34m when the American failed after the bar was lowered from 2.38m to 2.36m.

"I was just in shock. Both me and Shelby were getting a little bit tired after all the jumps we took," said Kerr.

"I knew I had a good one in me, and I knew that if I could get it up sooner rather than later, then I could just finish the comp and start recovering."

There was a hint of deja vu at the Stade de France as Qatar's Mutaz Essa Barshim, who finished third this time, had shared Olympic gold with Italian Gianmarco Tamberi in the Covid-hit Tokyo Games three years ago.

"That has such a special place in history for high jumps," Kerr said. "To have an exact same scenario this time around, but to choose to do the jump-off, was putting at peace some of those people who wanted to jump-off, so we're both really happy to add to that history."

The discussion Kerr and McEwen shared with officials was short and to the point: both athletes wanted to continue, there was to be no shared gold. "He said he wanted to face off, and I was all for it," McEwen said. "We faced off until the last battle and he came out on top, so salute, congratulations to him."



United States women's basketball players celebrate after beating France in the final at Bercy Arena in Paris on Sunday. GETTY IMAGES

United States pip China in Olympic medal table race

Agence France-Presse
sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com

PARIS: The United States pipped China for top spot in the battle of medals on Sunday as Paris prepared to bring the curtain down on one of the most successful Olympic Games in history.

In a thrilling finale that capped 17 days of spellbinding action, the United States women's basketball team squeezed past France 67-66 to clinch the last gold of the Games.

The win — the eighth consecutive Olympic women's basketball won by the USA — ensured the Americans finished level with China on 40 golds each as the games drew to a close.

The discussion Kerr and McEwen shared with officials was short and to the point: both athletes wanted to continue, there was to be no shared gold. "He said he wanted to face off, and I was all for it," McEwen said. "We faced off until the last battle and he came out on top, so salute, congratulations to him."

The USA, however, finished on top of the overall medal table with a total of 126 medals, with China in second place on 91.

A'ja Wilson scored a game-high 21 points for the Americans who won the title for the 10th time overall, surviving a buzzer-beating shot from France's

Gabby Williams.

The hosts needed a three to force overtime in Paris but Williams' foot was on the three-point line as she let go of the ball, so her shot counted for just two points in a dramatic finale.

"It's all a blur right now," said Wilson, who also registered 13 rebounds and four blocks. "We were just resilient and when we needed to we just kept going."

Kelsey Plum and Kahleah Copper both scored 12 points off the bench for the US. Williams led France with 19.

For the 42-year-old Diana Taurasi it was a record sixth Olympic gold, moving her one ahead of Sue Bird.

The US women got support from LeBron James, who sat court-side wearing his gold medal and was joined by teammates Bam Adebayo and Derrick White, after they won the men's gold by beating France 98-87 in Saturday's final.

It was the first time in Games history the men's and women's

finals featured identical matchups.

Wrestling, weightlifting, water polo, volleyball, modern pentathlon, handball, and track cycling were the other sports to crown Olympic champions on the last day.

Hungary's Michelle Gulyas ran and shot to Olympic gold in the modern pentathlon, with home favourite Elodie Clouvel roared on to clinch silver.

In weightlifting, China's jubilant Li Wenwen lifted her coach into the air instead of the bar, having already secured gold.

At the velodrome, Dutch star Harrie Lavreysen surged to the men's keirin for his third gold of the event, ending British dominance of the event they had won at every Olympics since 2008.

New Zealand's Ellesse Andrews blasted to the women's sprint title to add to her keirin gold, while American cyclist Jennifer Valente won the women's omnium.

As the Olympics end, atten-

tion turns to the next edition in Los Angeles in four years.

LA is expected to play heavily on its Hollywood star power and will roll out its big guns, with pop star Billie Eilish, rapper Snoop Dogg, and the Red Hot Chili Peppers all confirmed.

The worst-kept secret in Paris is that "Top Gun" star Cruise will close the ceremony with a spectacular stunt sequence.

Cruise is filming the latest episode of the "Mission Impossible" franchise in Europe and has been a regular feature at Olympic events in Paris.

"On August 11, the Olympic Games will be over, and the Olympic flame will be extinguished," said Thomas Jolly, who masterminded the unique opening ceremony along the River Seine. "That moment will remind us just how precious are these Olympic Games," added Jolly, whose opening ceremony sparked outrage in some quarters with a scene that appeared to parody the Last Supper.

Serbia win gold again in water polo

NANTERRE: It happened in Rio de Janeiro, Tokyo and Paris. The men's water polo tournament at the Olympics ended the same way each time.

With a Serbian flag hanging over a goal.

Milos Cuk scored three times, Radoslav Filipovic made 10 saves and Serbia beat Croatia

13-11 on Sunday for its third consecutive gold medal.

Nikola Dedovic and captain Nikola Jaksic each had two goals as Serbia used a balanced attack to earn its third consecutive win since its shaky start in the preliminary round of the Paris Games. "We played better every single game," Jaksic said.

"It was the idea that we wanted to do in the first place. We won the game deservedly so."

Serbia joined Britain (1908-1920) and Hungary (2000-2008) as the only countries to win three straight Olympic titles in men's water polo.

It also took home bronze in 2008 and 2012. AP

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