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NTA takes SC call on NEET result

Citywise results published

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

The National Testing Agency (NTA) on Saturday announced the centre and city-wise results for medical entrance exam NEET-UG, which is under the scanner over alleged irregularities. The results, which were initially announced on June 5, have been published in this format following an order of the Supreme Court, which is hearing several petitions about the alleged irregularities in the conduct of the exam, including paper leak. The exam was conducted on May 5 at 4,750 centres in 571 cities, including 14 cities abroad, for more than 24 lakh candidates. The court had ordered that the results be announced while masking the identities of the aspirants, saying it wanted to ascertain whether candidates appearing at allegedly tainted centres secured more marks than those writing the exam elsewhere. Candidates who appeared for the NEET UG 2024 can check their results on the official website of NTA NEET exams.nta.ac.in/NEET/ or neet.ntaonline.in. On July 18, the Supreme Court directed the NTA to announce the NEET UG results by July 20, at 12 noon. The court mandated that the Agency publish the students' marks on its website without



Representational image

revealing their identities. A bench comprising Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Chandiwala and Manoj Misra instructed that the NEET UG results be published separately by city and centre by today noon. The top court will resume hearing the arguments on Monday on a batch of pleas seeking cancellation, re-test and a court-monitored probe into the allegations of malpractice in the prestigious exam. The bench comprising of Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Chandiwala and Manoj Misra ordered for the announcement of the results separately, city and centre-wise by Saturday noon. The court had also stressed that the NEET-UG re-examination can only be done on a concrete footing that sanctity has been lost on a large scale.

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Convoy of Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi arrives at the Police headquarters for a meeting, in Jammu, on Saturday

Army Chief in Jammu to bolster anti-terror ops

MOHIT KANDHARI JAMMU

After more than 50 bravehearts have been martyred in the ongoing counter-terrorism operations in the Jammu region since October 2021, the top brass of the Indian army led by Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi on Saturday landed in Jammu to fine-tune its counter strategy aimed at flushing out well-entrenched Pakistani terrorists from the Jammu Heights. The crucial security review meeting was convened here at the Police headquarters. Director General Border Security Force, DG CRPF, DGP Jammu and Kashmir police, representatives of the Union Defence and Home Ministry, and top brass of the Intelligence agencies attended the brainstorming session over two hours. The Army Chief also interacted with the top commanders of the Northern Command headquarters to discuss possible strategic responses and measures to

counter the rising threats in the Jammu region. The high-level security review meeting assumes added significance as it comes close on the heels of the recent meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Thursday. The meeting took place amid a sudden surge in terror attacks in the Jammu region. Last month the Prime Minister had separately chaired a review meeting to assess the security situation in J&K. Sensing the gravity of the prevailing security situation and to plug the gaps, the Indian Army has already inducted more than 3,000 troops comprising three infantry battalions in the Jammu region to take on the Pakistani terrorists. In addition around 400-500 elite para commandos have been deployed at various locations to minimise the response time in case of any exigency.

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Airports function normal, full recovery awaited

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

Airport systems in India resumed operations normally from 3 am on Saturday, hours after major disruptions caused inconvenience to passengers. However, the overall system has not yet fully recovered, as confirmed by airport officials. The significant backlog of cancelled and delayed flights and yet-to-be-delivered baggage means full restoration of normalcy may take a couple of days. Additionally, the process of rebooking affected passengers or processing refunds will begin as the systems are back up. The Ministry of Civil Aviation on



Saturday issued a statement saying airline systems across airports have started "working normally" and all issues related to travel adjustments and refund processes were being taken care of. Union Civil Aviation Minister K Rammoan

Naidu said airline systems across airports, have started working normally, and all issues are likely to be resolved by noon on Saturday. The Ministry is constantly monitoring the operations at airports and airlines to ensure travel readjustments and refunds are taken care of, he added. "Since 3 am (Saturday), Airline systems across airports have started working normally. Flight operations are going smoothly now," Naidu said. At Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport's Terminal 3, passengers experienced some improvement today, but a few problems persist as the Digi Yatra system, remained non-operational.

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Monsoon health woes

ARCHANA JYOTI NEW DELHI

The monsoon season's fluctuating humidity levels, along with contaminated food, water, and environmental changes, have assured conducive conditions for various pathogens. "This has resulted in a notable increase in stomach infections, fevers, and vector-borne diseases like hepatitis A and E," medical professionals have noted, warning potential serious health risks if overlooked. Furthermore, health experts have highlighted another concern: Individuals who have previously had Covid-19 may experience compromised immunity. This makes them more vulnerable to bacterial and viral infections during this susceptible period. While attributing multiple reasons for the rise in stomach infections and fever cases during this season, Dr Ajaya Kumar, Director, Medical Services at Lucknow-based Apollomedics Hospital said "Covid-19 has left its lingering effect on its survivors by compromising their immune system, leading to 'immunomodulation'. "Because of low immunity caused by the Covid-19, the Sars Cov 2 virus survivors are catching infection more easily." He



cited research in this context. According to a study, patients who have had Covid-19 are more likely to experience digestive symptoms like constipation, diarrhoea, bloating, vomiting, and abdominal pain. The doctors advised not to ignore fever and stomach infections as they may also signal more severe underlying medical conditions. Said Dr Neha Rastogi Panda, infectious diseases expert at Fortis Hospital, Gurugram, "With monsoon season around, we are seeing a surge in stomach infections and fever, mostly due to contaminated food and humidity in the atmosphere."

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UPSC chairman Manoj resigns

PNS NEW DELHI

UPSC chairman Manoj Soni has resigned citing personal reasons before the expiry of his tenure in May 2029, official sources said on Saturday. His resignation is "not in any way connected to controversies and allegations surrounding the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) after probationary IAS officer Puja Khedkar issue came to the fore," they said. "The UPSC chairman had tendered his resignation citing personal reasons over a fortnight back. It is yet to be accepted," a source said. Eminent educationist Soni, 59, took over as a member of the Commission on June 28, 2017. He took oath as the UPSC chairman on May 16, 2023 and his term was to end on May 15, 2029. Sources said Soni was not keen on becoming the UPSC chairman and had requested to be relieved. However, his request was not accepted then, the sources said.

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RS handbook on Parliamentary etiquette for MPs

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA NEW DELHI

With a series of disruptions marking the Parliament proceedings in recent times leading to acrimonious scenes on floor of both the Houses — Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, a new set of "Handbook for Members of Rajya Sabha" has been circulated to the members drawing the attention towards Parliamentary customs and

conventions and Parliamentary etiquette. This includes improperly raising of slogans like "Vande Bharat", "Jai Hind" usage of words like "Thanks" and also abstaining from criticising rulings given by the Presiding officer and in this case Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. Sources said similar manual is to be issued for the members of the Lok Sabha which every Parliamentarian will have to abide. The Monsoon Session begins on

July 22 and is slated to conclude on August 12 and July 23 the annual Budget is scheduled to be announced. The manual has advised that MPs should not display "placards" on the floor of the House as this will tantamount to House is "not in order". "The decorum and the seriousness of the proceedings of the House require that there should be no 'thanks', 'thank you', 'Jai Hind', 'Vande Mataram' or any other slogans raised in

the House," said a bulletin by RS secretariat. The Opposition protests have been more frequent and aggressive in recent times following which Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar had engage in verbal duel with seniormost MPs as well. The bulletin issued by the Table Office of the Rajya Sabha has mentioned a total of 28 conventions and etiquette that are usually practised in Parliament.

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Security upped for Kanwar Yatra in Haridwar

PTI ■ HARIDWAR

Security has been tightened at every step here for strict surveillance of the Kanwar Yatra, which begins on Monday. The entire Kanwar fair area has been divided into 13 super zones, 31 zones and 126 sectors for better crowd management, said ADG (law and order) AP Anshuman. Anshuman said the P-level officials have been entrusted with the responsibility of managing the super zone in the fair area, adding circle officers and inspectors tasked with managing the crowd in the zones and sub-inspector level officials will man the sectors. Four dog squads have also been deployed in the fair area, he said. The entire fair area will be monitored by 22 drones and a number of CCTV cameras. Water police will be deployed at the ghats, bomb disposal squads and mounted police will also be deployed in the fair area, the ADG said.



Lakhs of Shiva devotees visit Haridwar during the Kanwar Yatra every year during 'sawan' (monsoon) to collect the waters of the Ganga. The ADG (law and order) and IG Garhwal KS Nagyal held a meeting at the police lines in Roshnabad to brief the security personnel about the arrangements and issued

necessary guidelines for the resolution of problems that may arise during the fair. The police personnel of Garhwal and Kumaon ranges, PAC and para military force personnel attended the meeting. Addressing them, Anshuman said at a time when the Chardham Yatra is

also going on, managing the Kanwar Yatra successfully is no less than a challenge. "Let us work with full commitment and dedication to ensure its successful completion," he said. Instructions were also given to prevent rumours from spreading. Traffic plan should be implemented in a systematic manner, Nagyal said. IG (telecom) Krishna Kumar VK asked the police force to keep a tab on anti-social elements and any attempt to incite religious sentiments, provocative songs being played on DJ and small issues being blown out of proportion on social media. SP City Swatantra Kumar has been made the nodal officer for the Kanwar Mela while SP Rural Swapan Kishore has been given the responsibility of police management in the rural area. To ensure the safe completion of Kanwar Mela, the services of experienced retired police personnel are also being taken in the Kanwar Mela.

External Coordinator for Kerala raises eyebrows

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Call for seceding from India has reached its peak in Kerala with the CPI(M)-led Government making it known that the State would have direct dealings with foreign countries, especially those countries in West Asia. A senior IAS officer K Vasuki, who is the labour secretary of the State, has been appointed as the officer for external coordination with other countries. The appointment of Vasuki elevates her as the de facto foreign secretary of the new republic which the Hindus in the State describe as Al-Kherala, a name in synchronisation with the CPI (M)'s new found lovers, the Arab countries. "The States do not have the power to deal directly with other countries and this move is shrouded in mystery. Already there are demands from some political outfits in the State to secede from India," said a source close to Governor Arif Mohammed Khan.

Bungalow in the capital city which saw many eye brows being raised. Another minister in the Vijayan cabinet reportedly brought dates, copies of Holy Quran etc from the Gulf nations purportedly for distributing among poor children. Grapevine is that the commodities were gold and precious metals which could not be imported to Kerala through normal routes. The repercussions of the gold smuggling scam that shook Kerala in 2019-2021 period are yet to die though no arrests have been made in the case. The "star" witnesses are living comfortably in the West Asian capital cities with round-the-clock security provided by the Royal governments. During the Covid pandemic, the Government of Kerala had made a declaration that the State would manufacture its own vaccine to fight the disease. Though it is more than three years, the vaccine manufacturing remains a non-starter. A former police chief told *The Pioneer* that he was shocked by the CPI (M) government's move to have direct dealings with foreign countries. The Kerala Government has burnt its fingers once during the 2018 flood when it went to town stating that the UAE ruler had offered it billions of rupees as relief but the Modi government did not allow the same to be transferred to the State. The UAE ruler had to issue a statement denying any such offer to the state from his government. TP Sreenivasan, former High Commissioner to Fiji, told *The Pioneer* that appointing an IAS officer to officiate as coordinator to communicate with other countries is fine so long as it happens through the ministry of external issues. "To call it secessionism may not be fair," said the former IFS officer with more than three decades of diplomatic experience behind him.

INBRIEF

NSIC SKILL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

New Delhi: In a significant stride towards fostering skill development and entrepreneurship, the Minister of MSME, Jitan Ram Manjhi, and the Minister of State, Shobha Karandlaje, inaugurated the New Skill Development Training at the NSIC Technical Service Centre (NTSC) in Okhla, New Delhi. The event witnessed the presence of SCL Das, Secretary (MSME), Mercy Epao, JS-SME, and Dr SS Acharya, CMD, NSIC.



MOBILE MEDICAL UNITS

New Delhi: REC Limited, a Maharatna CPSE under the Ministry of Power and a leading NBFC, has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Indian Red Cross Society in the presence of Vivek Kumar Dewanagan, Chairman and Managing Director; VK Singh, Director (Projects); Harsh Baweja, Director (Finance) and other senior officials of REC. The agreement includes a financial commitment of Rs 10 crore for the procurement and deployment of nine Mobile Medical Units (MMUs) and covers related operational expenditures for three years.



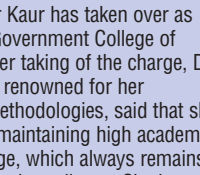
RAIGARH BEST AMONG CITIES FOR LIVELIHOODS

New Delhi: The city of Raigarh has been recognised as the best among cities with a population of one to three lakh for its outstanding work in increasing livelihood opportunities. In a ceremony held in Delhi on Thursday, Commissioner Sunil Kumar Chandravanshi, Mission Director Shubham Sharma, and Kedar Patel were honored with the Spark Award 2023-24.



DEPINDER GETS NEW POSITION

PATIALA: Dr Depinder Kaur has taken over as the new Principal of Government College of Education, Patiala. After taking of the charge, Dr Depinder Kaur who is renowned for her innovative teaching methodologies, said that she would emphasise on maintaining high academic standards in the college, which always remains a beacon of learning and excellence. She hopes that the college students and faculty will be benefitted with her rich experience in the field of education.



Form experts body to probe Ridge tree felling: Devender

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Congress president Devender Yadav on Saturday demanded that a Special Committee, consisting of environmental experts, be constituted to look into the reckless tree felling at the protected Ridge and other parts of the Capital for various projects as the erosion of the tree cover has been changing the climate profile of the Capital to extreme levels. He said that the probe should also cover how trees have been transplanted under a policy decision taken in 2018. Yadav said that the Sheila Dikshit-led Congress Government had imposed a strict policy against tree



felling, and the Government took great pains and initiative to enhance the tree cover in the Capital, which had received international

appreciation, but the Aam Aadmi Government, in collusion with the BJP, have been cutting trees without caring for the environment.

Seven wagons of freight train derail in UP's Amroha

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

At least seven wagons of a freight train derailed near Amroha in Uttar Pradesh on Saturday, an official said. The accident happened at the Amroha Yard on the Ghaziabad-Moradabad section, disrupting train movement on the route, the Northern Railway CPRO said. The official said trains are being diverted to an alternative Moradabad-Saharanpur-Meerut-Ghaziabad route.

Though the States have to follow the guidelines issued by the Centre while dealing with foreign countries, Kerala has been pursuing the CPI(M)'s line of internationalism as the Marxists do not believe in national borders. It may be remembered that Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan is more comfortable in dealing with the rulers of Sharjah, Abu Dhabi, UAE, Kuwait, Cuba and China than the BJP-led government at the Centre. Two leading business magnates from the State whose names are synonymous with the Royal Families of Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Oman act as Vijayan's eyes and ears in these countries. The ruler of Sharjah, who came to Kerala on a State visit was entertained by the chief minister at his palatial Cliff

Army Chief in Jammu to bolster anti-terror ops

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Ever since troops belonging to the Uniform Force were shifted to eastern Ladakh to tackle the threat posed by the Chinese incursions there in May 2020 the Pakistani handlers were exploiting these gaps to push small groups of heavily armed terrorists inside the Indian territory for a long time. This was the second visit of the army chief to Jammu in less than three weeks after taking charge as the 30th chief of the Indian Army on June 30. Nine army personnel, including a captain, have been 'killed in action' in two separate terror attacks in remote forest belts of Machhedri in Kathua and Dessa forest in Doda on July 8 and July 15. On July 16, the army said all formations of the Udhampur-based northern command are committed to eliminating the scourge of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. The army said it has been conducting a series of joint and coordinated operations with J-K Police to eliminate foreign terrorists who have infiltrated from across the border and are moving in the upper reaches of Udhampur, Doda, and Kishtwar districts in Jammu region and thereafter to Kashmir.

According to the assessment of the security forces, the Pakistani terrorists behind the attacks are believed to be battle-hardened in Afghanistan and belong to the Jaish-e-Mohammad terrorist outfit. These terrorists, armed with modern weapons like American M4 Assault rifles, telescopic lenses, night vision devices, steel core bullets, and highly encrypted communication equipment, executed the attacks after carefully studying the pattern of the army's movement in the area and returning to their safe hideouts with the help of their local guides. These terrorists have divided themselves into small groups of 4 to 5 members and at least over 50 Pakistani terrorists are active across the Jammu region. In November 2023 the then Northern Army Commander Lt General Upendra Dwivedi had said at least 20 to 25 terrorists were operating in twin districts of Rajouri and Poonch. He said it would take the army at least a year to root out the terrorism from the region. Similarly, over 20 terrorists are active across the Doda region, and a few groups in the upper reaches of the Kathua and Reasi districts of Jammu.

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Long queues were observed at the departure terminals as passengers struggled to check in manually. Airport authorities have deployed additional staff to assist travellers and manage the congestion. Between 6-7 am today, the system continued to experience glitches while issuing boarding passes. However, the scenario improved later in the day. In contrast to the chaos, most flights managed to stay on schedule, with the waiting period at Terminal 3 departures averaging around 3 to 5 minutes. The situation marked a significant improvement from Friday when the global outage led to widespread delays. Meanwhile, Air India said none of its flights were cancelled on Saturday on the account of the worldwide outage of travel systems. According to officials, Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport fared better than its counterparts in Delhi and Bengaluru. Although long queues were reported, operations are running more smoothly today. At Mumbai airport two flights, one to Varanasi and one to Kochi, were cancelled this morning, and several international flights were rescheduled.

At Chennai airport, nearly six to eight flights in the domestic sector were cancelled today. However, on the international sector, there were no cancellations on Saturday and certain flights plying to Doha, Kuwait were delayed for a few hours. About six flights in the domestic sector, including those airlines operating in Coimbatore, Kolkata, Kochi, Pune were cancelled by some airlines on Saturday. On the international route there were no cancellations and some airlines reported a delay in the departure and arrival," an official said. In a notification, Chennai Airport appealed to the passengers to contact their respective airlines for rebooking and refund information. IndiGo had to cancel 192 flights on Friday due to the outage. India's largest carrier said on its website that it has cancelled 93 services scheduled for Saturday. IndiGo has urged the passengers to check their flight status before heading to the airports. The domestic airline said that while their systems are "back online", they are "diligently working" to resume normal operations which could extend into the weekend. "In light of the recent global travel system outage, our team is continually putting in their

best efforts and all our services are gradually being restored, including baggage handling. Our dedicated team is working round the clock to ensure your bags are delivered to you as swiftly as possible. We deeply regret the difficulties you have experienced and thank you for your continued support and trust," IndiGo said on X. The reservation and check-in systems of most of the airlines, including IndiGo, SpiceJet, Akasa and Air India Express, are now operational, according to a source. "I am going to Ahmedabad. Online printing (Digi Yatra) is convenient, which wasn't happening yesterday. Everything's fine today. Flights are on time. What happened yesterday was a network issue. No one can do anything about that," said a passenger at Delhi Airport. Airports across the country witnessed chaotic scenes after the online passenger booking, reservation and boarding systems turned to manual mode due to the outage, resulting in higher passenger handling processing time and consequently hundreds of flights were delayed and many cancelled. There is a backlog because of disruptions on Friday, and it is getting cleared gradually, according to the statement.

UPSC chairman Manoj resigns

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They said Soni had served three terms as Vice-Chancellor. These include two consecutive terms from August 1, 2009 to July 31, 2015 as VC of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University (BAOU), Gujarat; and one term as VC of The Maharaja Sayajirao University (MSU) of Baroda from April 2005 to April 2008. At the time of joining the MSU, Soni was the youngest ever Vice-Chancellor in India. A scholar of political science with specialisation in international relations, Soni taught international relations at Sardar Patel University (SPU), Vallabh Vidyanagar between 1991 and 2016, except for the period when he served as Vice-Chancellor of the two universities. Soni has earned a number of recognitions and awards and has significant number of publications to his credit. The UPSC is headed by a chairman and can have a maximum of ten members. At present, there are seven members in the UPSC, three less than its sanctioned strength.

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NTA takes SC call...

From Page 1

The 2024 NEET-UG — for entrance to undergraduate medical courses - can only be conducted again if the "sanctity" of the test held on May 5 was "lost on a large scale" as a result of leaked questions the Supreme Court said. Controversy over the 2024 NEET-UG exam broke last month after allegations the question paper had been leaked - subsequent inquiries indicated the leak was orchestrated by a national 'solver gang' network - on social media that also rocked the Parliament during the Special Session convened for the taking over of the third term of NDA led Narendra Modi government. Several arrests have been made by multiple probing agencies including the CBI, EoW and States police like Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Jharkhand and West Bengal.

Monsoon health woes

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She noted that the overlap of symptoms in diseases like typhoid, hepatitis A, flu, and leptospirosis is making diagnosis challenging. Leptospirosis, caused by bacteria spread through urine (pee) of infected animals. Leptospirosis risk often increases after waterlogging

or flood when people have contact with contaminated water or soil. Talking about leptospirosis, she cited a case of a 30-year-old male whose BP had dipped to a dangerously low level and had fever for 8-9 days. His creatinine level was also high and had to be admitted in the ICU. Fortunately, he is fine now, she said. Dr. Sharad Malhotra, Senior Consultant at Delhi-based Aakash Healthcare highlighted the surge in gastrointestinal infections and fever due to climatic changes induced erratic weather, contaminated

food, and water. "Prolonged humidity is also taking a toll on the health of immunocompromised individuals. "Dr Jugal Kishore, Director Professor and Former Head of Department at Vardhman Mahavir Medical College and Safdarjung Hospital, emphasised the risks associated with contaminated water and food during monsoon. He explained how humidity and erratic weather has created ideal conditions for bacteria, viruses, and fungi to proliferate in food and water. Flooding and

overflowing drains can exacerbate contamination of fresh water supplies, he said. About preventive measures, he suggested having lots of fluids, including homemade ORS or market-purchased WHO recommended solutions, to stay hydrated. "Of course, maintaining proper hygiene and sanitation to prevent infections is a key. Avoid consuming street food or any food that has been left out in the heat for too long. Also, ensure food is thoroughly cooked," he said. "If we ignore and leave ourselves dehydrated,

these symptoms can extend the span of the illness and enter other organs," said Dr Jugal Kishore. He too referenced research indicating that Covid-19 has influenced the immune system, potentially affecting its ability to respond to infections effectively. "As a result, it's crucial for individuals to take preventive measures such as maintaining hygiene, ensuring food and water safety, and seeking medical attention promptly if symptoms develop or worsen," he added. Dr Ajaya Kumar was also of the view that "the easy

availability of over-the-counter drugs has led to the development of antibiotic resistance, causing several infections to become more severe and harder to treat." Dr Jugal Kishore too agreed as he pointed out that many times excess antibiotics are more likely to get fungal infections because of disruption to the immune system in the gut. Experts have also observed how patients who have had Covid-19 are more likely to experience digestive symptoms like constipation, diarrhoea, bloating, vomiting, and abdominal pain.

RS handbook on...

From Page 1

On the issue of rulings by the Chair, the bulletin noted that rulings are given by the presiding officer according to the precedents of the House, and where there is no precedent, the usual Parliamentary practice has been followed. "Rulings given by the Chair should not be criticised directly or indirectly inside or outside the House," the bulletin said, citing the handbook. Referring to Parliamentary etiquette, it said words containing insinuations, offensive and unparliamentary expressions

should be scrupulously avoided. "When the Chair holds that a particular word or expression is unparliamentary, it should be immediately withdrawn without any attempt to raise any debate over it," the handbook underlined. It also reminded every MP as the practice should "bow to the Chair" while entering or leaving the House as also before taking or leaving the seat. Further, when any member offers a criticism of another member or a minister, the latter is entitled to expect that the critic should be present in the House to hear his or her reply.

LG's order on monitoring Kejriwal's blood sugar triggers AAP accusations

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has written to the chief secretary Naresh Kumar underscoring the health condition of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal over his dietary habits and insulin management. The Lt Governor has sought urgent action and implementation of strict protocols for monitoring Kejriwal's blood sugar levels.

Saxena has alleged that Kejriwal, who is lodged in Tihar jail under judicial custody, may deliberately not be taking medical diet and medicines prescribed to him. In a communiqué to Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar, the Raj Niwas cited a report by

Superintendent (Prison) regarding the health status of Kejriwal, to allege that there were several instances of "willful low calorie intake" by the CM, despite sufficient home cooked food being provided to him. Meanwhile, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) slammed Delhi Lieutenant Governor and his letter to the chief secretary alleging that chief minister Arvind Kejriwal is taking a "low calorie diet" while in jail. In its response letter, AAP questioned the intentions of the lieutenant governor and expressed genuine concern for Arvind Kejriwal's life. The AAP has accused the BJP and its government at the Centre of "conspiring" to cause permanent damage to Kejriwal's

health in jail and has claimed the leaders lost weight and suffered a fall in blood sugar level. The party has also claimed that Kejriwal could even have slipped into coma and have brain damage after, it alleged, he suffered a drop in his blood sugar level up to 50 mg/dL five times in a night.

The LG office said Saxena has suggested to the prison authorities that it may advise the CM to adhere to the prescribed dosage of medicine and insulin, apart from the diet specified, since he has a history of Type-II Diabetes Mellitus. According to the LG's letter to the Chief Secretary, the diet monitoring chart indicates that between June 6 and July



13, the CM did not fully consume the prescribed diet for all three meals of the day. "The report also suggests loss of weight (now 61.5 kg which earlier was 63.5 Kg on the date of surrender - June 2, 2024). Prima facie, it appears to be due to less calorie intake," the letter read.

On June 18, insulin appears to have not been administered to him or was not recorded by the prison authorities in the report, it said.

There are also significant variations between glucometer test reading and the continuous glucose monitoring system (CGMS) reading on most days, said the LG office, adding, Kejriwal's glucometer reading prior to lunch was 104 mg/l, while the CGMS reading

done before lunch at 12.30 PM was 82 mg/l on June 19. "Glaring discrepancies between glucometer test readings and CGMS readings need to be verified by appropriate medical authorities," it said.

According to the LG office, the CM did not consume the prescribed diet during all three meals on July 6. He was administered five units of insulin before breakfast, four units before lunch and two units before dinner, it said.

The prescribed diet was again not consumed on July 7 and on that day five units of insulin was administered before breakfast, four units before lunch and "insulin before dinner was refused by the CM," it said, citing the prison report.

AAP leaders, in a stern response after Delhi L-G's letter, claimed that Arvind Kejriwal is at a serious risk of suffering a brain stroke as he remains in jail after being arrested in the Delhi excise policy case. "What kind of joke are you making, LG Sir? Would a man reduce his sugar levels at night? This is very dangerous. LG Sir, if you do not know about the disease, then you should not write such a letter. God forbid such a time ever comes to you," AAP leader Sanjay Singh said in a post on X. Delhi minister Atishi said Arvind Kejriwal has been a diabetes patient for decades, and his sugar levels fluctuate constantly, claiming that he is at a risk of a serious and chronic disease.

Making extensive preparations for upcoming Kanwar Yatra: Police

STAFF REPORTER ■ NOIDA

The Gautam Buddha Nagar Police said it is making extensive preparations for the upcoming Kanwar Yatra and the festival of Shrawan Shivratri, adding that it will set up 10 temporary outposts on pilgrim routes for law and order.

The Hindu holy month of Shrawan starts on July 22, with the Shrawan Shivratri celebration on August 2, 2024. During this period, devotees perform the ritual of Jalabishek at Shiva temples every Monday, and a significant increase in the number of participants is expected this year.

According to an official statement, "This year, there is significant enthusiasm among the devotees, and a substantial increase in participants in the Kanwar Yatra is expected." To ensure the smooth conduct of the Kanwar Yatra, the Noida Police, under the direction of Commissioner Laxmi Singh, has established a dedicated "Kanwar Cell".

The police department has made extensive arrangements along the Kanwar routes and for the accommodation and easy movement of the devotees, it said. The Gautam Buddha Nagar Police Commissionerate has set up facilities along 14 routes for the Kanwar pilgrims.



These routes include Chilla Red Light to DND, Pash Vihar to Kalindi Kunj Border, Model Town Sector 62 to Sector 60, 71 via City Center, Sector 37 to Kalindi Border, Chhijarsi via Bahloipur to Sector 71. Other routes cover Ghaziabad Lal Kuan via Dadri, Kot Ka Pul, Nangla, Faizalpur, Rajpur Kaila, Khedi Hajipur, Jamgarh, Bilaspur, Bagpura to Bhayipura Shiva Temple and several others. "To ensure security and assistance, 10 temporary police outposts have been set up in the three zones of Noida, Central Noida, and Greater Noida. Each temporary outpost will have a designated team, including two sub-inspectors, eight head constables/constables/women constables, along with the

PCR/Thar/Thana Mobile of the respective police station, which will be used as needed," the police said.

In addition to these measures, detailed arrangements have been made for the canals falling within the Kanwar routes in the Commissionerate Gautam Buddha Nagar area, it said.

The Gautam Buddha Nagar Police Commissionerate, in their official statement, affirmed their commitment to ensuring the safety and convenience of the devotees during the Kanwar Yatra. "The police department is dedicated to making extensive arrangements along the Kanwar routes and for the accommodation and easy movement of the devotees," it added.

AAP leaders protest felling of 1,100 trees at Southern Ridge



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders and workers staged a protest near the BJP office on DDU Marg over the alleged cutting of 1100 trees in Delhi's Southern Ridge area. The protesters, some of whom wore face masks of Delhi LG VK Saxena also carried cut outs of saws and tree stumps and formed a human chain.

They alleged that the Lt Governor of BJP-led Centre was responsible for cutting of the trees in the protected forest area in the ridge.

The Supreme Court which is seized of the matter of cutting of 1100 trees near Satbari in

Southern Ridge has come down heavily upon both LG VK Saxena and the AAP government. The AAP has alleged that the trees were cut for a road widening project by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) on the "verbal instructions" of the LG.

Meanwhile, the BJP claimed that the trees were cut after approval of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Environment minister Gopal Rai. Addressing the protesters senior AAP leaders and Delhi minister Saurabh Bharadwaj claimed in a statement that in February 3 the LG visited Ridge along with other officers including Chief Secretary and gave "verbal orders" to cut

down 1100 trees. The Supreme Court repeatedly asked officers on whose orders trees were felled but no one told truth to the court, he said. Hundreds of trees on the Ridge could have been saved by taking 5-10 per cent of land of nearby farmhouses to widen road, he said and charged that the trees were felled to benefit farmhouse owners. The AAP workers formed a human chain during the protest and symbolically hacked green tree cutouts while wearing masks with LG Saxena's face on it. Party MLA Rajesh Gupta and senior leaders Reena Gupta and Adil Ahmad Khan were among those who protested.

JNU walls defaced with casteist slurs



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) campus walls were found to be defaced with casteist slurs and communal slogans on Saturday, the Congress students body alleged. Slogans like "...Dalit bharat chhodo" and "Brahman Baniya zindabaad" and "RSS zindabaad" were scribbled on the walls of Kaveri hostel on the campus, NSUI unit general secretary Kunal Kumar alleged sharing his photos on social media.

The student claimed the authorities painted the walls after the photos were circulated on social media. There was no immediate reaction to the allegations from Dean of Students Manuradha Chaudhary. Requests for a response on the allegations were declined by Kaveri Hostel warden Manish Kumar Barnwal.

"We, the Humans of JNU are deeply disturbed by the recent incidents at Kaveri Hostel, where alongside the casteist slur against the Dalit Bahujan community, slogans like "Brahman Baniya Jindabad" and "RSS Jindabad" have been inscribed. "These slogans starkly reveal the brahmanical and manuvadi nature of RSS and its supporters within our university community," the students body said in a statement. It also demanded action by the administration against the accused. The JNU last year formed a panel to look into the repeated incidents of "anti-national" slogans scribbled on the campus. The committee was set up after pictures of slogans like "Indian-Occupied Kashmir", "Free Kashmir" and "Bhagwa Jalega" scribbled on the School of Languages building wall went viral on the social media.

MoHUA Min travels on Nammo Bharat to visit RRTS project

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs Tokhan Sahu on Saturday travelled on the Nammo Bharat Train while visiting Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS project, the first in country. He was accompanied by NCRTC Managing Director Shalabh Goel and other senior NCRTC officials.

The visit commenced from the NCRTC headquarters, Gati Shakti Bhawan, INA Delhi. NCRTC officials briefed him on various steps being taken to ensure construction quality. He was also briefed on efforts to facilitate pilgrimages during the kanwar yatra. Following this, the Minister reached the Sahibabad RRTS



station, where he interacted with the women station controllers and other staff, learning about their contributions to a smooth passenger experience on the Nammo Bharat Train.

He then traveled from Sahibabad RRTS Station to Duhai Depot on a Nammo

Bharat train. Officials informed him that the Nammo Bharat train has transported over 17 lakh passengers. He was also briefed on passenger amenities including special premium coaches, luggage racks, mobile charging at every seat, designated wheelchair spaces, food vending machines, and stretcher space for emergencies. Sahu visited the workshop and Inspection-Bay-Line (IBL) of the Duhai depot and met the personnel working there, inquiring about their work. He also visited the Center for Innovation, 'Aparimit,' located here and saw the state-of-the-art AR-VR lab. NCRTC is using many advanced technologies like virtual reality, augmented reality, building information modeling, etc. for project

implementation, operational efficiency, and training purposes. Several cutting-edge technologies are being used in the implementation of this project, many of which are being employed for the first time globally under the Make-in-India initiative. This aligns with the vision of Make-in-India and Aatmanirbhar Bharat envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. During his visit, Sahu planted a sapling in the Duhai depot premises. Currently, Nammo Bharat trains are operating on a 34 km section between Sahibabad and Modinagar North, serving passengers at 8 stations. The Nammo Bharat train service is on track for expansion across the entire Delhi-Meerut RRTS corridor

Many clinics, hospitals employing unqualified medical staff: DMC

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Medical Council (DMC) on Saturday said it has come to its notice that many health facilities, including hospitals and nursing homes, are employing unqualified or underqualified medical staff. In a public notice, the council said, "This is against the law and a punishable act. Therefore, it is requested that all hospital owners to please check out the credentials of the employees." This comes following the Delhi Police action against 22 people, including a well-known doctor, this month in connection with kidney transplant racket, one of these involving Bangladeshi nationals. The DMC also advised visiting



doctors to "make sure that your patient is under care of qualified persons only". These doctors will be held responsible for any deficiency of services to their patients, it said. The council said that "all hospitals, nursing homes and clinical establishments are requested to check the facilities available with them and admit patients accordingly only". "It has come to the notice of the

Delhi Medical Council that many hospitals, nursing homes and other clinical establishments using modern medical sciences (allopathy) are employing doctors/medical staff who are either unqualified/underqualified or qualified in other branches for the treatment of patients," the public notice, issued by DMC president Dr Arun Gupta and Registrar Dr Girish Tyagi, read.

NDMC launches drive to clean bell mouth alongside roads

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With the aim to prevent the water-logging incidents in ongoing monsoon season in New Delhi area, New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has launched an intensive drive for three days starting Saturday to check and clean all the bell mouth alongside of roads in its jurisdiction, officials said.

NDMC have 8,704 bell mouths alongside of all the main roads under the 06 Divisions of Road Engineering Service. In this special drive all divisions are gears for checking and cleaning of every bell mouth under their jurisdiction. The drive is being carried out by a special team including 17 Assistant Engineers and 28 Junior Engineers, 1,500 field



staff and other workers force under 06 Executive Engineers. Each Executive Engineer directed to achieve the program target and assigned specific numbers of bell mouth to ensure the checking and cleaning under the set target. The superintending Engineers are directed and assigned to

conduct surprise visit to check the progress in time bound manner. The daily progress report and percentage target achieve shall be compiled by each circle and superintending Engineers shall forward for compilation to monitoring at higher level.

Vijender criticises AAP Govt for failure to address pollution crisis

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Former Delhi BJP President and MLA Vijender Gupta strongly criticised the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government for its complete failure in addressing the pollution crisis in Delhi. A recent study has revealed that more than 70% of the total funds Delhi received from the Centre as part of the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) remain unutilised, making the national capital the worst in terms of the usage of climate funds among India's states and Union territories. The report has raised concerns about the management of NCAP over its five years of operation. The report highlighted that while Delhi is among the worst polluted cities, most of the funding under NCAP has been allocated to dust control measures



rather than combating combustion-based PM2.5 pollutants, which are far more harmful. Gupta pointed out that the incompetence of the Delhi government is evident as they have continuously blamed neighbouring states rather than taking substantial steps to improve the situation within Delhi. The pollution levels have become so severe that the city is becoming unliveable. Gupta stated that if the Delhi government had utilised the given funds effectively to curb

air pollution, the central government's goal of reducing pollution by at least 40% by 2025 could have been achieved. This would have resulted in fewer diseases and healthier residents in Delhi. Gupta emphasised that the Kejriwal government appears indifferent to the health of the people and is jeopardising public health while focusing solely on politics. He further highlighted that Delhi is facing multiple crises, including a drinking water shortage, waterlogging from rains, traffic jams, the breach of the Munak canal barrage despite timely warnings, a deficit of Rs 72,000 crore in the Delhi Jal Board, corruption worth crores in DTC bus purchases, and the liquor scam in which the Chief Minister and his ministers are implicated and imprisoned.

CBI arrests SI, two head constables on separate charges of bribery

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested a sub-inspector and two head constables of the Delhi Police in two separate cases of bribery. According to the CBI, Sub-Inspector Yudhveer Singh Yadav, posted at the Hauz Khas police station, was arrested while he was allegedly receiving a bribe of Rs 2.5 lakh. In the other case, head constables Sudhakar and Rajkumar, posted at the Patparganj Industrial Area, were arrested accepting Rs 10,000 of a total bribe amount of Rs 50,000. Yadav was booked for allegedly demanding a bribe of Rs 3 lakh for a favourable action-taken report in a court case, the officials said. The amount was

reduced to Rs 2.5 lakh during negotiations, the CBI has alleged. He was caught red-handed receiving the bribe, the officials said. The case in which the head constables were arrested was registered by the CBI against Sudhakar and unidentified officials of the Delhi Police's Special Staff. "It was alleged that four persons in civil clothes came to the shop of the complainant and two of them introduced themselves as members of the Special Staff, Delhi Police, Anand Vihar. They demanded Rs 50,000 from her as bribe for not implicating her name in a case. After negotiation, accused agreed to accept Rs 11,000 as part payment from the complainant," a CBI spokesperson said.

Bangladesh violence: 778 Indian students return home

A total of 778 Indian students have returned to India through various land transit points, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Saturday...

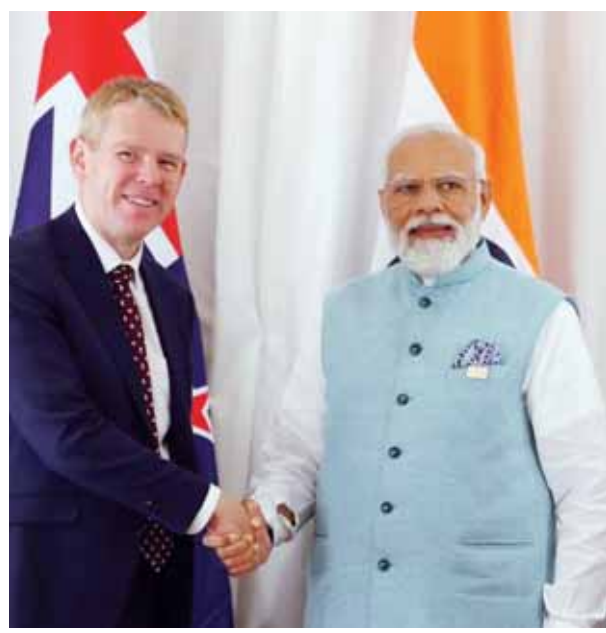
As of July 20, 2024, 778 Indian students have returned to India through various land transit points, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Saturday...



India, New Zealand to boost trade, economic ties Prime Minister Narendra Modi received a congratulatory call from his New Zealand counterpart Christopher Luxon...

India, New Zealand to boost trade, economic ties

Prime Minister Narendra Modi received a congratulatory call from his New Zealand counterpart Christopher Luxon on his re-election as the two leaders agreed to advance their bilateral ties in sectors such as trade and economic cooperation...



recent high-level contacts between the two sides, they agreed to advance the mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation in various areas, including trade and economic cooperation...

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, PWD GUWAHATI BUILDING CIRCLE-II, CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI-3 EXTENSION NOTICE

Notice of Substituted Service Under Order 5, Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908. Before the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Revision Petition No. 2597 of 2023.

Public Notice: General public is hereby informed that Mr. Munna S/o Mr. Choto is owner of Property Bearing No. 03-B area measuring 2455 sq. Feet (238.159 sq. Meters) out of Khata No. 775 & 777 situated at campwell road...

ICICI Bank SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE The Authorised ICICI Bank Officer under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notices to the borrower(s) mentioned below...

Public Notice: Notice is hereby given that my client Mrs. Maya is in process to avail the H.L. from the TCHFL against her Property No. C-446-A measuring 37.12 sq. mtrs., out of Khata No. 343, Situated in the area of Village Ghonda Gujan Khadar, in the abadi of G-Block, Gali No. 18, Bhanpura, Ilaqa Shahdara, Delhi-110053...

Public Notice: Be known to the public at large that I, Dr. Priya Ranjan Prasad Singh, Advocate - Supreme Court of India, being Honorary Legal Advisor-Delhi Commission for Safai Karamcharis, Govt. of NCT of Delhi...

ICICI Bank SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE The Authorised ICICI Bank Officer under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notices to the borrower(s) mentioned below...

CAN FIN HOMES LTD POSSESSION NOTICE [Rule 8 (1)] [For Immovable Property] The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Can Fin Homes Ltd. under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers under the said Act and Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a Demand Notice dated 09/05/2024 calling upon the borrowers Mr. Ritu Raj Thakur and (Guarantor) Mr. Suraj Pant S/o Suresh Ch. Pant to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 21,03,873/- (Rupees Twenty One Lakh Three Thousand Eight Hundred Seventy Three Only) with further interest at contractual rates, till date of realization within 60 days from the date of the said notice...

STORES E-PROCUREMENT E-procurement Tender Notice No. S/66/0724-25 Dated: 18-07-2024. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works. Tender No. KT245229A Closing/Opening date: 08-08-2024 Brief Description: PVC insulated Armored Unscreened, under ground Railway Signaling cable 12 core 1.5 sq mm copper to Spec. no. IRS-S/63/2014 (Rev-4.0) with latest. Consignee:- SSE/SIG/Kishanganj, NFR, Qty: 20 KM. Note: For full details of tender notice and tender documents, tenderer may log on to the website (www.ireps.gov.in). Prospective bidder who intend to participate in above tender are required to log on themselves with the above website and submit their offer electronically, if they are already registered with IREPS. In Case they are not registered with IREPS, they are advised to obtain class-III Digital Signature Certificate from the certifying agencies under Govt. of India IT Act 2000 and participate in the above tenders. Dy. CMM/New Jalpaiguri Khatun & Khatun

ICICI Bank SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE A Housing Loan Facility was granted, pursuant to a Loan Agreement entered into between ICICI Bank Limited ('Secured Creditor', which includes its successors and assigns) and the Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s) mentioned below ('Borrower(s)'), which includes his/ her/ their respective successors, assigns and heirs. The undersigned, being the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor ('Authorised Officer') under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 ('Act') and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(12), read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, ('Rules'), has issued Demand Notices under Section 13(2) of the Act, calling upon the Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s) mentioned below to repay the amount payable, pursuant to the Loan Agreement and as mentioned specifically in the Demand Notices, within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notices. As the Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s), has/ have failed and neglected to repay the amount as mentioned in the Demand Notices, a Notice is hereby issued to the Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s) and to the public in general, that the undersigned has taken Symbolic Possession of the properties described below, in exercise of the powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the Act, read with Rule 8 of the Rules. The details, including the date of Symbolic Possession of the properties are mentioned below:

CAN FIN HOMES LTD POSSESSION NOTICE [Rule 8 (1)] [For Immovable Property] The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Can Fin Homes Ltd. under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers under the said Act and Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a Demand Notice dated 09/05/2024 calling upon the borrowers Mr. Vipin Shishodia S/o Surender Pal Singh, Mrs. Aakasha W/o Vipin Shishodia and (Guarantor) Mr. Prahlad Singh S/o Pratap Singh to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 20,39,096/- (Rupees Twenty Lakh Thirty Nine Thousand Ninety Six Only) with further interest at contractual rates, till date of realization within 60 days from the date of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on this 18th day of JULY of the year 2024. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of CFHL for an amount of Rs. 20,39,096/- (Rupees Twenty Lakh Thirty Nine Thousand Ninety Six Only) and interest thereon.

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY E-AUCTION FOR PARKING CONTRACT AT ALIPURDUAR DIVISION E-Auction for awarding license of parking contract at various stations over Alipurduar division. Rate Unit: Annual Licensing Fee. Trips/Days: 1095. Auction Catalogue No. C-AP-Parking-28

KSOLVES INDIA LIMITED (CIN: L72900DL2014PLC269020) Regd. Office: 317/276, Second floor, Lane no.3, Mehrauli Road, Saidulajab, Saket, New Delhi, South Delhi, DL-110030, IN Corp. Office: B-4, 3rd Floor, B Block, Sector 63, Noida, Uttar Pradesh - 201301 Tel No.: 0120-4983851, E-mail: cs@ksolves.com, Website: www.ksolves.com

CAN FIN HOMES LTD POSSESSION NOTICE [Rule 8 (1)] [For Immovable Property] The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Can Fin Homes Ltd. under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers under the said Act and Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a Demand Notice dated 09/05/2024 calling upon the borrowers Mr. Vipin Shishodia S/o Surender Pal Singh, Mrs. Aakasha W/o Vipin Shishodia and (Guarantor) Mr. Prahlad Singh S/o Pratap Singh to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 20,39,096/- (Rupees Twenty Lakh Thirty Nine Thousand Ninety Six Only) with further interest at contractual rates, till date of realization within 60 days from the date of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on this 18th day of JULY of the year 2024. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of CFHL for an amount of Rs. 20,39,096/- (Rupees Twenty Lakh Thirty Nine Thousand Ninety Six Only) and interest thereon.

Auction Catalogue No. C-AP-Parking-28

Table with 7 columns: Particulars, Quarter ended on 30/06/2024, Quarter ended on 31/03/2024, Quarter ended on 30/06/2023, Year to date figures for year as on 30/06/2024, Year to date figures for year as on 30/06/2023, Year to date figures for the previous year ended 31/03/2024. Includes Revenue from operations, Profit before tax, Total comprehensive income for the period, etc.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, P.H. DIVISION, BALANGIR. NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement Invitation for Bid (IFB) 03-Dtd.19.07.2024

Auction Catalogue No. C-AP-Parking-28 (continued) with columns: Seq No., Lot No./Category, Description. Includes items like AA/1 PARKING-APDJ-APDJ-TW-21-23-2 (Parking - Two Wheeler), AA/2 PARKING-APDJ-NOQ-TW-6-23-1 (Parking - Two Wheeler), etc.

CrowdStrike failure highlights fragility of globally connected technology

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Airlines, banks, hospitals and other risk-averse organizations around the world chose cybersecurity company CrowdStrike to protect their computer systems from hackers and data breaches.

But all it took was one faulty CrowdStrike software update to cause global disruptions Friday that grounded flights, knocked banks and media outlets offline, and disrupted hospitals, retailers and other services.

"This is a function of the very homogenous technology that goes into the backbone of all of our IT infrastructure," said Gregory Falco, an assistant professor of engineering at Cornell University. "What really causes this mess is that we rely on very few companies, and everybody uses the same folks, so everyone goes down at the same time."

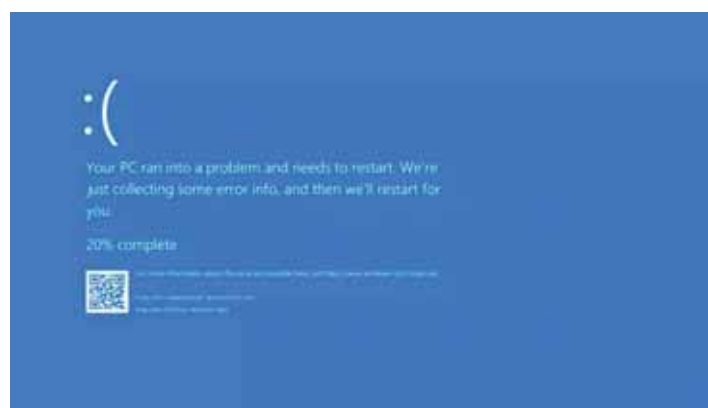
The trouble with the update issued by CrowdStrike and affecting computers running Microsoft's Windows operating system was not a hacking incident or cyberattack, according to CrowdStrike, which apologized and said a fix was on the way. But it wasn't an easy fix. It required

"boots on the ground" to remediate, said Gartner analyst Eric Grenier. "The fix is working, it's just a very manual process and there's no magic key to unlock it," Grenier said. "I think that is probably what companies are struggling with the most here."

While not everyone is a client of CrowdStrike and its platform known as Falcon, it is one of the leading cybersecurity providers, particularly in transportation, healthcare, banking and other sectors that have a lot at stake in keeping their computer systems working.

"They're usually risk-averse organizations that don't want something that's crazy innovative, but that can work and also cover their butts when something goes wrong. That's what CrowdStrike is," Falco said. "And they're looking around at their colleagues in other sectors and saying, 'Oh, you know, this company also uses that, so I'm gonna need them, too.'" Worrying about the fragility of a globally connected technology ecosystem is nothing new. It's what drove fears in the 1990s of a technical glitch that could cause chaos at the turn of the millennium.

"This is basically what we were all



worried about with Y2K, except it's actually happened this time," wrote Australian cybersecurity consultant Troy Hunt on the social platform X. Across the world Friday, affected computers were showing the "blue screen of death" — a sign that something went wrong with Microsoft's Windows operating system.

But what's different now is "that these companies are even more entrenched," Falco said. "We like to think that we have a lot of players available. But at the end of the day, the biggest companies use all the same stuff."

Founded in 2011 and publicly traded since 2019, CrowdStrike describes itself in its annual report to financial regulators as having "reinvented cybersecurity for the cloud era and transformed the way cybersecurity is delivered and experienced by customers." It emphasizes its use of artificial intelligence in helping to keep pace with adversaries. It reported having 29,000 subscribing customers at the start of the year.

The Austin, Texas-based firm is one of the more visible cybersecurity companies in the world and spends heavily on marketing, including

Super Bowl ads. At cybersecurity conferences, it's known for large booths displaying massive action-figure statues representing different state-sponsored hacking groups that CrowdStrike technology promises to defend against.

CrowdStrike CEO George Kurtz is among the most highly compensated in the world, recording more than USD 230 million in total compensation in the last three years. Kurtz is also a driver for a CrowdStrike-sponsored car racing team.

After his initial statement about the problem was criticized for lack of contrition, Kurtz apologized in a later social media post Friday and on NBC's "Today Show."

"We understand the gravity of the situation and are deeply sorry for the inconvenience and disruption," he said on X.

Richard Stiennon, a cybersecurity industry analyst, said this was a historic mistake by CrowdStrike. "This is easily the worst faux pas, technical faux pas or glitch of any security software provider ever," said Stiennon, who has tracked the cybersecurity industry for 24 years.

While the problem is an easy technical fix, he said, its impact could be

long-lasting for some organizations because of the hands-on work needed to fix each affected computer. "It's really, really difficult to touch millions of machines. And people are on vacation right now, so, you know, the CEO will be coming back from his trip to the Bahamas in a couple of weeks and he won't be able to use his computers," Stiennon said he did not think the outage revealed a bigger problem with the cybersecurity industry or CrowdStrike as a company. "The markets are going to forgive them, the customers are going to forgive them, and this will blow over," he said.

Forrester analyst Allie Mellen credited CrowdStrike for clearly telling its customers what they need to do to fix the problem. But to restore trust, she said there will need to be a deeper look at what occurred and what changes can be made to prevent it from happening again.

"A lot of this is likely to come down to the testing and software development process and the work that they've put into testing these kinds of updates before deployment," Mellen said. "But until we see the complete retrospective, we won't know for sure what the failure was."

Houthi strike another ship in Gulf of Aden

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

A Singapore-flagged vessel was damaged in an attack allegedly by Houthi militants south-east of Yemen on Friday, the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) said in a statement.

The MPA said it was informed that container vessel the LOBIVIA was hit by "unidentified projectiles" while transiting the Gulf of Aden, resulting in a fire onboard that was subsequently extinguished by the crew.

There are no Singaporeans among the crew, Channel News Asia reported, citing the authority and adding that all crew are accounted for and safe. Despite being hit, the vessel was able to set sail and arrived at Somalia's Berbera Port. Damage assessment and repairs, if needed, will be carried out, it said.

MPA said it is in contact with the vessel manager to provide any assistance that might be needed. The Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) has also alerted its security partners in the Gulf of Aden region to provide help, it added.

In a televised speech, Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Sarea said the group had launched ballistic missiles and drones towards the LOBIVIA. According to the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, the LOBIVIA was hit about 83 nautical miles southeast of the port city of Aden, Yemen, on two separate occasions by two missiles.

"The ship was transiting north-east along the Gulf of Aden when a merchant vessel in the vicinity observed 'light and blast' where the ship was located," Channel News Asia had British security firm Ambrey as saying.

Ambrey said the ship appeared to perform evasive manoeuvres immediately and switched off its automatic identification system approximately an hour later.

Since November, Houthi militants in Yemen have launched drone and missile strikes in shipping lanes in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. The group has said its actions are in solidarity with Palestinians affected by Israel's war in Gaza.

Despite curfew, deaths mount in Bangladesh student protests

AP ■ DHAKA

Police imposed a strict curfew across Bangladesh and military forces patrolled parts of the capital Saturday to quell further violence after days of clashes over the allocation of government jobs left several people dead and hundreds injured.

The curfew follows what was likely the deadliest day yet in the weeks of protests despite a ban on public gatherings. Reports vary on the number of people killed Friday, with Somoy TV reporting 43. An Associated Press reporter saw 23 bodies at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital, but it was not immediately clear whether they all died on Friday.

Another 22 people died Thursday as protesting students attempted to impose a "complete shutdown" of the country. Several people were also killed Tuesday and Wednesday.

The protests, which began weeks ago but escalated sharply when violence erupted Tuesday, repre-

sent the biggest challenge to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina since she won a fourth consecutive term in office after elections in January that were boycotted by the main opposition groups. Police and protesters clashed in the streets and at university campuses in Dhaka and other cities across the south Asian country. Authorities moved to block online communications by banning mobile and internet services. Some television news channels also went off the air, and the websites of most Bangladesh newspapers were not loading or were being updated. Authorities could not be reached immediately to confirm figures for the overall deaths, but the Daily Prothom Alo newspaper reported 103 people were killed since Tuesday. The United States Embassy in Dhaka said Friday that reports indicated "hundreds to possibly thousands" were injured across Bangladesh. It said the situation was "extremely volatile."

Local media also reported that

some 800 inmates fled from a prison in Narsingdi, a district north of capital Dhaka, after protesters stormed the jail facility and set it on fire Friday. Meanwhile, one key government website, including that of Bangladesh's central bank and the prime minister's office, appeared to have been defaced by hackers.

The curfew began at midnight and is set to relax from noon to 2 pm to allow people to buy essentials before being put back in place until 10 a.m. Sunday. A "shoot-at-sight" order was also in place, giving security forces the authority to fire on mobs in extreme cases, said lawmaker Obaidul Quader, the general secretary of the ruling Awami League party.

The chaos highlights cracks in Bangladesh's governance and economy and the frustration of youths who lack good jobs upon graduation.

The protesters are demanding an end to a quota system that reserves up to 30% of govern-

ment jobs for relatives of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971 against Pakistan. They argue the system is discriminatory and benefits supporters of Hasina, whose Awami League party led the independence movement, and they want it replaced with a merit-based system. Hasina has defended the quota system, saying that veterans deserve the highest respect for their contributions to the war, regardless of their political affiliation.

Representatives from the both sides met late Friday to find a resolution. At least three student leaders were part of the meeting in which they demanded a reform in the quota system, an opening of student dormitories across the country and the stepping down of university officials for failing to prevent violence on the campuses.

Law Minister Anisul Huq said the government was open to discussing the student leaders' demands.



A Turkish parachuter prepares for a landing as fly over the military parade with a Turkish flag and portrait of the Kemal Ataturk, the founder of modern Turkey, during a military parade, in the Turkish occupied area of the divided capital Nicosia (Cyprus) on Saturday. The tinny howl of air raid sirens echoed across ethnically divided Cyprus at the crack of dawn on Saturday, marking 50 years from the day that changed the island nation's history. It's heard every year as the Greek Cypriot controlled south laments the date Turkish troops invaded in the wake of a coup by supporters of union with Greece. AP/PTI

Biden vows to fight on; to get back on campaign trail next week

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Joe Biden has said that he would continue his campaign for reelection and take on rival Donald Trump, as he deals with the fallout from his COVID-19 diagnosis and growing calls from Democrats for him to quit the race. Biden, who tested COVID-19 positive a few days ago, is in isolation at his Delaware residence, where he is expected to spend the rest of the week.

"Donald Trump's dark vision for the future is not who we are as Americans. Together, as a party and as a country, we can and will defeat him at the ballot box," Biden, 81, said in a statement issued by his campaign on Friday, a day after Trump, 78, formally accepted his party's presidential nomination at the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee.

"I look forward to getting back on the campaign trail next week to continue exposing the threat of Donald Trump's Project 2025 agenda while making the case



for my own record and the vision that I have for America: one where we save our democracy, protect our rights and freedoms and create opportunity for everyone," he said.

The president also criticised Trump's Thursday night keynote speech at the Republican National Convention. "For over 90 minutes, he focused on his own grievances, with no plan to unite us and no plan to make life better for working people," said the president referring to Trump's speech.

"He avoided mentioning his Project 2025 agenda, but still proudly flaunted the worst of MAGA (Make America Great Again) extremism," Biden said. Americans know exactly where

he wants to take this country, Biden said.

The Biden-Harris campaign alleged that despite promising a call for unity and toned-down rhetoric, Trump's speech was a 90-minute reel of his greatest hits: focused entirely on himself, lashing out at his enemies, and laying out his grievances, and railing up his base with inflammatory extremism.

"Trump is still the same twice-impeached, 34-time convicted felon consumed by revenge and hellbent on seeking retribution in a second term. He did not turn a new leaf; he did not usher in a new era of civility; and he certainly did not change course," the campaign said.

Biden has been sidelined since Wednesday when he was diagnosed with COVID-19 moments before delivering remarks in Las Vegas. He abruptly cut his trip short and flew to his beach home.

Democrats remain split on whether Biden can beat Trump in November and on Friday at least 10 Democrats joined the chorus calling on Biden to resign.

Trump pledges to end war during call with Zelenskyy

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Donald Trump has pledged to end Ukraine's war with Russia after its President Volodymyr Zelenskyy reached out to the former US president to congratulate him on his Republican presidential nomination.

The two leaders spoke on Friday over the phone. "President Zelenskyy of Ukraine and I had a very good and phone call earlier today. He congratulated me on a very successful Republican National Convention and becoming the Republican nominee for President of the United States," Trump said in a post on Truth Social, a social media post.

The call gains significance as this is his first conversation with a foreign leader after officially becoming the Republican Party's presidential nominee. It also reflects the growing realisation among the international community of his electoral

chances in the November 5 elections.

"I appreciate President Zelenskyy for reaching out because I, as your next President of the United States, will bring peace to the world and end the war that has cost so many lives and devastated countless innocent families. Both sides will be able to come together and negotiate a deal that ends the violence and paves a path forward to prosperity," Trump wrote.

Trump said during the call Zelenskyy condemned the heinous assassination attempt on him last Saturday and remarked about the American people coming together in the spirit of Unity during these times.

In his post on X, Zelenskyy said that he spoke with Trump to congratulate him on the Republican nomination and condemn the shocking assassination attempt in Pennsylvania.

Nepal PM Oli likely to win vote of confidence today

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal's newly appointed Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli is expected to win a vote of confidence in Parliament on Sunday, nearly a week after he was sworn in to lead another coalition government in the Himalayan nation facing frequent power struggles.

The 72-year-old veteran Communist leader was sworn in on Monday as the Himalayan nation's prime minister for the fourth time. He was administered the oath of office and secrecy along with 21 other members of the Cabinet.

According to Nepal's Constitution, Oli needs to secure a vote of confidence from Parliament within 30 days of appointment, which he is likely to secure easily.

The minimum number to form a government in the 275-strong House of Representatives is just 138. The Chairman of the CPN-

UML, Nepal's largest communist party was appointed as prime minister on Sunday by President Ram Chandra Paudel to lead the coalition government with the Nepali Congress (NC), the largest party in Parliament, apart from other smaller parties.

Nepali Congress and Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) have a combined strength of 167, and two other ruling parties, Janata Samajwadi Party and Lokatantrik Samajwadi Party, have seven and four seats, respectively.

With this, the ruling alliance has a strength of 178 in the 275-member HoR. Apart from the ruling alliance, Oli is also likely to get votes from the Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), Janata Samajwadi Party Nepal (JSP), Nagarik Unmukti Party (NUP) and Janamat Party.

The RPP has 14 seats, JSP Nepal has five, NUP has four, and Janamat has six seats. Therefore, the alliance is like-

ly to secure more than 200 votes in the floor test, according to sources close to CPN-UML.

Oli succeeds Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', who lost the vote of confidence in the HoR last week, leading to the formation of the new government.

The three Opposition parties — Prachanda's Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist Centre (CPN-MC), Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), and Communist Party of Nepal-United Socialist (CPN-US) — held a joint meeting on Friday and decided not to support Oli in the vote of confidence.

The CPN-UML Chairman now leads the new coalition government that faces the daunting challenge of providing political stability in the Himalayan nation.

Nepal has faced frequent political turmoil as the country has seen 14 governments in the past 16 years after the introduction of the Republican system.

Iran closer to developing a nuclear bomb: US

AP ■ ASPEN

Iran is talking more about getting a nuclear bomb and has made strides in developing a key aspect of a weapon since about April, when Israel and its allies overpowered a barrage of Iranian airstrikes targeting Israel, two top Biden administration officials said Friday.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken and national security adviser Jake Sullivan, speaking at separate panels during a security forum in Colorado, said the United States was watching closely for any signs that Iran had made a decision to pursue actual weaponization of its nuclear program.

However, Sullivan said, "I have

not seen a decision by Iran to move" in a way that signals it has decided to actually develop a nuclear bomb right now. "If they start moving down that road, they'll find a real problem with the United States," Sullivan said at the Aspen Security Forum, which draws US policymakers, journalists and others. Iran resumed progress on its nuclear program after the Trump administration ended US cooperation with a 2015 deal that gave Iran relief from sanctions in return for allowing tougher oversight of the program.

Iran says its nuclear program is for civilian purposes. The US and others in the international community believe Iranian

Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei long has held off from giving any final go-ahead for Iranian scientists to develop a nuclear weapon.

But Iran's poor performance with conventional weapons on April 13, when it launched its first-ever direct attack on Israel as part of a dayslong exchange of strikes, has had observers watching for any increased Iranian interest in pushing forward with a nuclear weapon.

At the time, Iran said it, the United States and other allies shot down 99% of about 300 missiles and drones launched by Iran following an alleged Israeli strike that killed two Iranian generals.

"What we've seen in the past

weeks and months is Iran is actually moving forward" on developing fissile material, Blinken said Friday. Fissile material could be used to fuel a bomb. He blamed the decision by the Trump administration to pull out of the nuclear agreement. "Trump called the deal 'defective at its core' when he ended US participation in 2019."

"Instead of being at least a year away from having breakout capacity to produce fissile material for a nuclear weapon, they're probably one or two weeks away from doing that," Blinken said, adding that "where we are now is not a good place."

"Now, they haven't produced a weapon itself, but ... you put

those things together, fissile material, an explosive device, and you have a nuclear weapon," he said.

The United States was watching "very, very carefully" for any sign that Iran was working on the weapon side of producing a bomb, he said. The US is also working on the diplomatic side to contain any further effort, Blinken said.

Meanwhile, Sullivan said, the US has noted "an uptick of public commentary from Iranian officials musing about that possibility" since the April attacks and counterattacks between Iran and Israel and its allies. "That was new. That was something that got our attention," he said.

13 Palestinians killed in central Gaza strikes

AP ■ DEIR-AL-BALAH

At least 13 people were killed in three Israeli airstrikes that hit refugee camps in central Gaza overnight into Saturday, according to Palestinians health officials, as cease-fire talks in Cairo appear to make progress.

Among the dead in Nuseirat Refugee Camp and Bureij Refugee Camp were three children and one woman, according to Palestinian ambulance teams that transported the bodies to the nearby Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital. The 13 corpses were counted by AP journalists at the hospital. The latest casualties follow

a rare moment of hope in war ravaged Gaza, after a medical teams recovered a live baby from a heavily pregnant Palestinian mother killed in an airstrike that hit her home in Nuseirat late Thursday evening.

Heavily pregnant Ola al-Kurd, 25, was killed along with six others in the blast, but was quickly rushed by emergency workers to Al-Awda Hospital in northern Gaza in the hope of saving the unborn child. Hours later, doctors told The Associated Press that a baby boy had been delivered. The still-unnamed newborn is stable but has suffered from a shortage of oxygen and

has been placed in an incubator, said Dr. Khalil Dajran.

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY MARINE DEPARTMENT
 No. MD/ACTS/WW/R-08/2024/797 Date: 12.07.2024
E-TENDER CALL NOTICE (E-TCN)
 Name of the Work: Hiring of 01 no. Mooring Launch along with operational crew for daily one shift operation for a period of 07 (Seven) years. Total Estimated cost (including Hire Charges and Fuel Cost): Rs.12,11,88,139/- excluding GST. Estimated cost put to tender for hire charges only : Rs.5,16,20,976/- Excluding GST. Last date & time of Submission of tender through on-line bidding is 17:00 Hours on 05.08.2024. Date & time for opening of Technical Bid is 15:30 hours on 06.08/08/2024. For further details, please log on to the website: <https://procure.gov.in/eprocure/app/>.
 Sd/- Deputy Commissioner, Paradip Port Authority
 PPA/P3/2024-2025 dtd.17.07.2024

India preferred destination for investors, says Goyal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Saturday appealed to the Indian diaspora of the US to help promote the country as a preferred investment destination, highlighting the vast opportunities available in various sectors. He said that the government has taken a series of measures to attract investments and those steps include promoting ease of doing business, reducing compliance burden, opening sectors like space and efface for foreign direct investments.



Goyal also asked the diaspora to participate in making India a developed nation by 2047. "Help promote brand India as a premium investment destination. Investing in India has tremendous growth potential and we saw NRI deposits (increasing to) USD 3 billion between April and May, and that is four times what it was last year. I am sure many of you would be looking at investments in the Indian stock market, bond market, banking systems, fixed deposits, depending on your appetite for risks," he said while virtually interacting with the Indian diaspora of the US. He added that though at present the US is attractive for investors because of high interest rates, going forward India provides huge opportunities for businesses. "I would invite all of you to invest in India. India's growth story will continue unfettered at a scorching pace. India would continue to lead the world economy and will continue to be the most favoured destination for investment, and

evolving dynamics, what changed, what we need to focus on. After an election, there is always a period of time when anybody who has performed better than expected does have a little more arrogance and somebody who has performed less than expected does take time to introspect and course correction. "So I think it's too early to provide the solution and talk of the solutions, but I can assure you that nobody here is resting one minute of the day, we are all focused," he added. Replying to a question on judicial reforms, the minister said that it is a delicate subject. "Everybody who becomes a judge talks of judicial reforms but resists any reforms, so it's a conundrum that we have to break. I am fairly confident that it's an idea whose time has come and we will see this sector also undergoing reform particularly to reduce the pendency of cases and the long duration to get justice," he said.

Credai wants tax sops for homebuyers to construct affordable houses

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Realtors' body Credai on Saturday urged the government to provide more tax benefits to homebuyers, offer incentives to builders to develop low-cost homes and streamline the approval process to undertake real estate projects in the upcoming Budget. Credai, in a statement, said it has given various recommendations to the government for further growth of the real estate sector. These recommendations emphasise the importance of measures like streamlined approval processes and subsidies for developers investing in affordable housing projects, the association said. "With its significant contribution to the GDP, employment generation and infrastructure development, the Indian Real Estate sector looks forward to a supportive budget that addresses certain long-standing challenges and sets the platform for sustainable and sustained



growth. "Our recommendations are aimed at sustaining demand through a slew of measures, including increasing in interest exemption for home buyers, reintroduction of CLSS (credit linked subsidy scheme), and steps required to boost Affordable housing," Credai President Boman Irani said. To stimulate homebuying, Credai said the finance ministry should consider allowing unlimited interest deductions for the first self-occupied property or increasing the deduction limit to Rs 5 lakh from Rs 2 lakh currently. Ramesh Menon, founder and Director of Delhi Consortium, said it is crucial for the real estate sector to be

estate sector is hopeful for measures to boost the sentiment. He demanded that the government should finally grant industry status to the sector and take effective steps to rejuvenate the affordable housing segment, which has been struggling since the pandemic. "Many incentives for buyers and developers of affordable housing have lapsed in the last two years, exacerbating the issue," he pointed out. High-impact measures like tax breaks are needed to revitalise this crucial segment, Romell said. PropEquity founder and CEO Samir Jasuja stressed the need for a single-window clearance system to ensure timely approvals for real estate projects. Ramesh Menon, founder and Director of Delhi Consortium, said it is crucial for the real estate sector to be granted 'industry status' in the budget 2024. The government should take proactive measures to boost demand, rationalise costs, and minimise regulatory bottlenecks, he added. Gaur Group CMD Manoj Gaur, "The real estate has pinned high hopes on the forthcoming budget. First of all, the sector is looking for the reintroduction of the interest subvention scheme to revive mass housing." Secondly, we are also seeking a redefinition of affordable housing. The present limit should be increased from 90 square metres and Rs 45 lakhs in terms of space and pricing, respectively. Sandeep Chhillar founder and Chairman of Landmark Group said, "The real estate sector expects the government to look into its long pending demands of industry status and single window clearance". Vivek Singhal, CEO of Smartworld Developers, emphasised having single-window clearance for real estate projects.

EPFO officers raise concern over inadequate IT infrastructure

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Employees' Provident Fund Officers' Association has sought the Union Labour Minister's intervention to improve the information technology infrastructure of the retirement fund body. In a letter to the minister earlier this week, the EPF Officers' Association (EPFOA) said it has been regularly submitting requests for urgent interventions to upgrade the EPF IT systems - software, hardware, IT manpower - which are causing acute strain on EPF manpower and adversely affecting EPFO services. The situation has now turned serious with officers and offices reporting significant system deficiencies on a daily basis, the association said. Severely inadequate EPFO IT systems and resultant service bottlenecks are adversely affecting EPF services, it added. The EPFO application software serves as the foundational component of its service delivery infrastructure. The body said it is the primary platform through which our regional offices process and adjudicate member claims. In recent times, the software has exhibited significant



instability, characterised by frequent outages, it stated. Over the past several weeks, the application's performance has deteriorated, manifesting in frequent system slowdowns, involuntary user logout and complete system failures, it pointed out. Previously, the EPFO management attributed the software performance issues to concurrent user logins. However, it said, the situation has escalated to a critical juncture where system crashes and slowdowns occur even in the absence of heavy user traffic. It has been observed that field offices have reported system failures during off-peak hours as well, it stated. The exigency of a comprehensive overhaul of the EPFO application software has been apparent for quite some time now, it noted. Despite this critical need, the implementation of such an overhaul has been repeatedly postponed for reasons that remain obscure, the body added. While the EPFO is a financially robust organisation independent of the government administrative funding, the delay in launching the 2.0 version of the application software stands in stark contrast to the rapid technological advancements achieved by other departments, such as the Income Tax department, it

stated. This discrepancy suggests a systemic failure to acknowledge the gravity of the situation, EPFOA pointed out. Any technological challenges have been vehemently denied, and emphasis placed on purported progress, it added. It is reasonable to speculate that the claim settlement process would be exponentially accelerated with a fully functional software system. "We respectfully urge your immediate attention to the escalating frustration experienced by EPFO officers and staff due to the persistent deficiencies of the application software and perceived unresponsiveness of upper management," EPFOA said in the letter. A comprehensive evaluation of the software by leading industry experts is imperative to diagnose the root causes of the issues and develop a contemporary software solution commensurate with the EPFO's status as the world's largest social security organisation, it suggested. "Over the past thirty months, we have consistently brought to the attention of the CPFC the ongoing critical issues affecting the EPFO's IT infrastructure," the body said.

HIMALAYA FOOD INTERNATIONAL LIMITED
 Regd. Office: 118, 1st Floor, 12 Gagandeep Building, Rajendra Place, New Delhi-110008
 CIN: L70102DL1992PLC047399, Tel: +91 11 45108609
 E-mail: id: cs@himalayafoodinternational.com | Website: www.himalayafoodinternational.com
INFORMATION REGARDING NAME CHANGE OF COMPANY FROM THE DATE OF ITS INCORPORATION IN 1992
 M/s Himalaya Food International Limited was originally incorporated on 30th Day of January 1992 with the name of M/s Himalaya Cement & Calcium Carbonate Limited with No. 55-47399.
 The name of company was changed twice: First, it was changed on the 19th Day of April 1994 from M/s Himalaya Cement & Calcium Carbonate Limited to M/s Himalaya International Limited by Registrar of companies, Delhi & Haryana, Vide Letter No. 21/55-47399/226 dated 15.04.1994.
 The name of company was further changed from M/s Himalaya International Limited to the current name as "Himalaya Food International Limited" on 09th Day of February 2018 with Corporate Identification Number (CIN) as L70102DL1992PLC047399.
 For and on behalf of the Board of Directors
 Himalaya Food International Limited
 Sd/-
 Man Mohan Malik
 Managing Director
 (DIN: 00696077)
 Date: 20.07.2024
 Place: New Delhi

CAN FIN HOMES LTD
 CIN: L85110KA1987PLC008699
 Above Canara Bank Building, First Floor, Plot No C-3, Sector-1, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, Pin Code: 201301.
 E-mail: noida@canfinhomes.com, Ph No: 0120-2970164/65/67, 7625079126
POSSESSION NOTICE [Rule 8 (1)] [For Immovable Property]
 The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Can Fin Homes Ltd. under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of the powers under the said Act and Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a Demand notice dated 09/05/2024 calling upon the borrowers Mr. Barun Chandra Roy S/o Krishna Chandra Roy, Mrs. Ritu Roy W/o Mr. Barun Chandra Roy And (Guarantor) Mr. Kumar Kant Mishra S/o Ruchi Mishra to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 49,54,378/- (Rupees Forty Nine Lakh Fifty Four Thousand Three Hundred Seventy Eight Only) with further interest at contractual rates, till date of realization within 60 days from the date of the said notice.
 The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on this 18th day of July of the year 2024.
 The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.
 The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of CFHL for an amount of Rs. 49,54,378/- (Rupees Forty Nine Lakh Fifty Four Thousand Three Hundred Seventy Eight Only) and interest thereon.
Description of immovable property
 Flat No.-B, HIG Type, Ground Floor (without Roof Rights), Free-Hold Plot No. Gyan Khand-11/07, Indraprastha, Ghaziabad Bounded By: East: Plot No 108, West: Plot No 106, North: Plot No 87, South: Road 36 Ft Wide
 Place: Noida, Date: 20-07-2024
 Authorized Officer, Can Fin Homes Ltd

CAN FIN HOMES LTD.
 CIN: L85110KA1987PLC008699 Above Canara Bank Building
 First Floor, Plot No. C-3, Sector-1, Noida Pincode-201301
 E-mail: noida@canfinhomes.com Ph: 0120-2970164/65/67
 Mob: 7625079126
**APPENDIX-IV-A [See proviso to rule 8 (6)]
 Sale notice for sale of immovable properties**
E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002
 NOTICE is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged to the Secured Creditor, the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Can Fin Homes Ltd., Noida Branch, will be sold by holding e-auction on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on 27-08-2024, for recovery of Rs. 23,79,379/- (Rupees Twenty Three Lakh Seventy Nine Thousand Three Hundred Seventy Nine only) due to Can Fin Homes Ltd. from RITESH KUMAR GUPTA S/O NARENDER KUMAR GUPTA, PRERANA SHARMA W/O RITESH KUMAR GUPTA (Borrowers) and Mr. MOHIT GUPTA (Guarantor), as on 20-07-2024, together with further interest and other charges thereon. The reserve price will be Rs. 14,50,000/- (Rupees Fourteen lakh fifty thousand rupees only) and the earnest money deposit will be Rs. 1,45,000/- (Rupees One lakh forty five thousand rupees only).
(Description of the immovable property)
 Entire Second Floor With Roof Rights, House No.-D-14, Old Nagar Nigam No. 74, 51, 52 And New No. 53, Jagdish Nagar (mukund Nagar), Ghaziabad, UP. Boundaries: East- Road 30 Ft Wide West - House Of Baburam Sharma North- House Of Rakesh Bhatnagar South- Kaushal Dev Temple
Known Encumbrance- Nil
 The detailed terms and conditions of the sale are provided in the official website of Can Fin Homes Ltd., (https://www.canfinhomes.com/SearchAuction.aspx).
 Link for participating in e-auction: https://sarfaesi.auctiontiger.net
 Date: 20-07-2024
 Place: Noida
 Authorised Officer
 Can Fin Homes Ltd.

CAN FIN HOMES LTD.
 CIN: L85110KA1987PLC008699 Above Canara Bank Building
 First Floor, Plot No. C-3, Sector-1, Noida Pincode-201301
 E-mail: noida@canfinhomes.com Ph: 0120-2970164/65/67
 Mob: 7625079126
**APPENDIX-IV-A [See proviso to rule 8 (6)]
 Sale notice for sale of immovable properties**
E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002
 NOTICE is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged to the Secured Creditor, the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Can Fin Homes Ltd., Noida Branch, will be sold by holding e-auction on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on 27-08-2024, for recovery of Rs. 28,33,015/- (Rupees Twenty Eight Lakh Thirty Three Thousand Fifteen only) due to Can Fin Homes Ltd. from Late SARVJEET SINGH S/O JASRAM SINGH, SMT. SONIKA CHOUDHARY W/O Late SARVJEET SINGH (Borrower) AND Mr. PARMJEET SINGH (Guarantor) And all other legal heirs, as on 20-07-2024, together with further interest and other charges thereon. The reserve price will be Rs. 24,50,000/- (Rupees Twenty four lakh fifty thousand only) and the earnest money deposit will be Rs. 2,45,000/- (Rupees Two lakh forty five thousand rupees only).
(Description of the immovable property)
 FLAT NO. SF-1, SECOND FLOOR, MIG ON PLOT NO 212 & 213, KHASRA NO. 826, VISHNU ENCLAVE, VILLAGE, HARSAON GHAZIABAD, UP Boundaries: East- 50 FT WIDE ROAD West -10 FT WIDE ROAD North- 30 FT WIDE ROAD South- PLOT OF PRITHVI SINGH S/O LATE RAM
Known Encumbrance- Nil
 The detailed terms and conditions of the sale are provided in the official website of Can Fin Homes Ltd., (https://www.canfinhomes.com/SearchAuction.aspx).
 Link for participating in e-auction: https://sarfaesi.auctiontiger.net
 Date: 20-07-2024
 Place: Noida
 Authorised Officer
 Can Fin Homes Ltd.

Karnataka Bank Ltd.
 Your Family Bank. Across India.
Asset Recovery Management Branch
 8-B, First Floor, Rajender Park, Pusa Road, New Delhi-110 060
 Phone : 011-40591567(Ext-240)
 E-Mail : delhiarm@kbank.com
 Website : www.karnatakabank.com
 CIN : L85110KA1924PLC001128
APPENDIX IV (Rule 8(1)) POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)
 Whereas, undersigned being the Authorised Officer of KARNATAKA BANK LIMITED, under Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002(54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with [rule 3] of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued demand notice dated 26.02.2024 calling upon the borrower/mortgagor/guarantors : (1) M/s Bhagwati Enterprises, Represented by its Proprietor, Shri Sumit Kansal, Addressed at: A-40, Wazirpur Industrial Area, Delhi-110052, (2) Mrs. Sheela Devi W/o Mr. Ram Nivas, (3) Shri Ram Nivas, Both (2) & (3) are residing at: H No. 113, Block AL, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi-110088, Both (1) & (3) also residing at: AG-249, First Floor, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi-110085, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 30,72,219.30 (Rupees Thirty Lakh Seventy Two Thousand Two Hundred Nineteen and Paise Thirty only) i.e. (i) Rs. 4,37,256.00 Under PSOD A/c No.194700600034601 with future interest from 01.02.2024, (ii) Rs. 2,15,561.30 Under PSTL A/c No.1947001800021101 with future interest from 01.02.2024, (iii) Rs. 21,45,405.00 Under PSTL A/c No.1947001800022401 with future interest from 30.01.2024, (iv) Rs. 2,73,997.00 Under PSTL A/c No.1947001800022501 with future interest from 30.01.2024, Plus cost within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
 The borrowers, mortgagors and the guarantors having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers, mortgagors, guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken the Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of the powers conferred on him under Sub-Section (4) of Section 13 of Act read with Rule 8 and 9 of the Security Interest Enforcement, Rules 2002 on this 20th Day of July of the year 2024.
 The borrowers, the mortgagors and the guarantors in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property mentioned herein below and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Karnataka Bank Limited, Delhi-Laxminagar Branch for an amount of Rs. 32,82,218.30 (Rupees Thirty Two Lakh Eighty Two Thousand Two Hundred Eighteen and Paise Thirty only) i.e. (i) Rs.4,70,312.00 Under PSOD A/c No.194700600034601 with future interest from 01.07.2024, (ii) Rs. 2,25,982.30 Under PSTL A/c No.1947001800021101 with future interest from 11.07.2024, (iii) Rs.22,93,063.00 Under PSTL A/c No.1947001800022401 with future interest from 30.06.2024, (vi) Rs. 2,92,863.00 Under PSTL A/c No.1947001800022501 with future interest from 30.06.2024, Plus cost [The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.]
DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY
 All that part and parcel of Residential Property (Flat) measuring 70 sq. mtrs. At Entire First Floor (without roof rights) situated in Property No.113 & 114, AL Block, Shalimar Bagh, Residential Scheme, Delhi-110088, Belonging to Mrs. Sheela Devi. Boundaries: East: Plot No.115 West: Plot No.115 North: Service Lane South: Road
 Sd/-
 For Karnataka Bank Ltd
 Chief Manager & Authorised Officer
 Date: 20.07.2024

Karnataka Bank Ltd.
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Asset Recovery Management Branch
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 Website : www.karnatakabank.com
 CIN : L85110KA1924PLC001128
APPENDIX IV (Rule 8(1)) POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)
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 The borrowers, mortgagors and the guarantors having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers, mortgagors, guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken the Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of the powers conferred on him under Sub-Section (4) of Section 13 of Act read with Rule 8 and 9 of the Security Interest Enforcement, Rules 2002 on this 20th Day of July of the year 2024.
 The borrowers, the mortgagors and the guarantors in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property mentioned herein below and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Karnataka Bank Limited, Delhi-Laxminagar Branch for an amount of Rs. 10,20,822.00 (Rupees Ten lakhs Twenty Thousand Eight Hundred Twenty Two Only) i.e. (i) Rs. 9,28,543.00 Under PSTL A/c No.1947001800022201 with future interest from 30.06.2024, (ii) Rs.92,279.00 Under PSTL A/c No.1947001800022301 with future interest from 30.06.2024, Plus cost [The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.]
DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY
 All that part and parcel of Residential Property (Flat) measuring 70 sq. mtrs. At Entire First Floor (without roof rights) situated in Property No.113 & 114, AL Block, Shalimar Bagh, Residential Scheme, Delhi-110088, Belonging to Mrs. Sheela Devi. Boundaries: East: Plot No.115 West: Plot No.115 North: Service Lane South: Road
 Sd/-
 For Karnataka Bank Ltd
 Chief Manager & Authorised Officer
 Date: 20.07.2024

Pearl Global Industries raises ₹149.5 cr through QIP issue

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Apparel manufacturer and exporter Pearl Global Industries has raised Rs 149.50 crore from qualified institutional investors for repayment of certain debt and inorganic growth, among others. The qualified institutional placement (QIP) attracted notable investors such as HDFC Mutual Fund, HSBC Mutual Fund, ICICI as Prudential Mutual Fund and Goldman Sachs Fund," it said in a statement on Saturday. The company has successfully completed the QIP by raising Rs 149.50 crore," it said. Pearl Global said it issued 20,45,143 equity shares of the face value of Rs 5 each at a price of Rs 731.00 per equity share. "Total shares outstanding post allotment are 45,642,367," the company said. PGIL plans to use these funds for funding working capital requirements, repayment of certain outstanding borrowings, inorganic growth initiatives and general corporate purposes. "By strategically allocating these funds, we aim to strengthen our market presence, innovate our product offerings, streamline our ESG initiatives, and invest more in sustainable products and business operations," Pearl Global Industries Ltd (PGIL) Managing Director Pallab Banerjee said.

Union Bank net profit rises 13.7% to 3,679 cr; flags challenges on margins

PTI ■ MUMBAI

State-owned Union Bank of India on Saturday reported a 13.7 per cent growth in net profit to Rs 3,679 crore for the June 2024 quarter and flagged challenges on the net interest margin front. The bank's core net interest income grew 6.5 per cent to Rs 9,412 crore on the back of an 11.5 per cent growth in advances. Its net interest margin narrowed by over 0.13 per cent to 3.05 per cent. The other income increased 15.53 per cent to Rs 4,509 crore on healthy growth in the core fee income. The net interest income and other income were down when compared to the March quarter, and the bank's managing director and chief executive A Manimekhalai attributed the same to a statement on Saturday. The company has "successfully completed the QIP by raising Rs 149.50 crore," it said. Pearl Global said it issued 20,45,143 equity shares of the face value of Rs 5 each at a price of Rs 731.00 per equity share. "Total shares outstanding post allotment are 45,642,367," the company said. PGIL plans to use these funds for funding working capital requirements, repayment of certain outstanding borrowings, inorganic growth initiatives and general corporate purposes. "By strategically allocating these funds, we aim to strengthen our market presence, innovate our product offerings, streamline our ESG initiatives, and invest more in sustainable products and business operations," Pearl Global Industries Ltd (PGIL) Managing Director Pallab Banerjee said.



the deposit rates elevated. The bank is comfortable on the liquidity front and has an excess statutory liquidity ratio of Rs 65,000 crore, she said, affirming the earlier guidance of getting credit growth between 11-13 per cent and deposits to increase by 8-10 per cent. She, however, made it clear that the bank will not compromise on the margins to grow the book and added that during the June quarter alone, it had to rundown Rs 15,000 crore of advances because it did not meet its NIMs expectations. On the asset quality front, the fresh slippages came at Rs 2,318 crore, and the gross non-performing assets ratio improved to 4.54 per cent. The overall provisions increased to Rs 4,106 crore from the year-ago period's Rs 3,943 crore and were attributed to general slippages and higher money set aside in a couple of accounts, which are witnessing some stress. Its overall capital adequacy stood at 17.92 per cent, with the core tier-1 at 13.81 per cent. The bank's head said it has an enabling provision to raise up to Rs 6,000 crore in core equity from the board and may look at it depending on the growth in advances.

STORY OF INDIA'S FIRST OLYMPIC QUALIFIER IN HEAVY WEIGHT CLASS OF 76KG

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Going through the painful and energy-sucking process of weight-cutting is a nightmare for wrestlers but Reetika Hooda did not have to worry about it. Wrestlers usually have to go without food, sometimes even without water, to ensure that the weight scale does not tilt against them. But Reetika's team ensures that she takes additional small meals to gain strength, and chicken was added to the meal plan, defying the family tradition. She goes through all these because the 22-year-old wrestler from Rohtak used to compete in 72kg but last year she jumped weight class to see if she can succeed in the Olympic weight-class of 76kg. She not only succeeded, but pushed out established wrestlers like Kiran Bishnoi, whom she idolises, to qualify for the Paris Olympics after crowning herself as the U23 World Champion. Her natural body weight is around 74-75 kg. So, it was never a great struggle to bring it to 72, not even now. Her

body type is such that weight drops quickly. But the real struggle is to take the weight to 78kg. "I just munch, train, munch, train and repeat. Of course, it's healthy protein intake. I have a different struggle," she said with a hearty laugh just before a training session. "I have 3 meals in my schedule and I have to eat in between as well. Before sleeping also, I take something. My nutritionist Mitali decides what I need to eat and mother ensures that I have that. "I had to start eating chicken for protein intake. It was difficult to develop a taste for that. My mother tried a lot of combinations and now I have settled for a semi-gravy type chicken. No one eats chicken in my family," she added. Her mother Neelam is aware of the requirement and learnt a few chicken recipes from YouTube. "We don't eat chicken at home. So, I had no clue how to prepare it. I was told that she had to be given home-made food. So, I took help from YouTube to learn. I don't like washing it (chicken), I get a strange feeling. But I do it for my daughter," said Neelam, a



REETIKA'S FITNESS REGIME

school level basketball player. As she prepares for the Paris Olympics, Reetika reveals that qualifying for 2024 Games was not even the target, and

actually, they have exceeded their own expectations. "I was considered a probable for 2028 Games. Last year's U23 world title motivated me

to do well at senior level." **THE JOURNEY: SWITCH FROM HANDALL:** Reetika is a strong believer in destiny. She says she can do what is in her

hands -- working hard -- rest everything will fall in place if it had to. Her career underlines that belief. She did not even pick wrestling

as her preferred sport. She used to play handball and even made it to the state team for the junior Nationals but as fate would have it, her father suggested that she pick an individual sport instead of a team game. The journey began in 2015. "My father took me to Chhotu Ram Akhada. I was asked to perform a certain attack by my coach Mandeep and he was happy the way I did it, so they took me in. Now wrestling is everything. I eat, sleep, dream about wrestling. I can't think of anything else," said Reetika. Neelam said it was Reetika's father Jagbir who wanted her daughter to pick an individual game. "She was picked to play Nationals as goalie of the state handball team. She came home and broke the story about her selection. Her father asked if she really wants to pursue sport seriously and when Reetika nodded, he said you should play an individual game. He asked Reetika her preferred sport and she mentioned Judo and kabaddi but her father suggested to take up wrestling and she agreed. On 15 August 2015, she was

enrolled in Akhada," recalled Neelam. Talk about the Paris Olympics, Reetika gets philosophical. "I can only put in hard yards, which I am doing. If you are meant to achieve something it will fall in your lap. I did not even think of winning the Under 23 world championship. "I didn't even know that I was up against a world champion (Kennedy Blades from USA) in the final. But it was meant for me so I got it. "I have idolised Kiran di (Bishnoi) since taking up this sport and see now I beat her in the Olympic trials. "I also beat Divya Kakran in the National Games. These wins boosted my confidence and I began to believe that destiny is pushing me in a certain direction and I will play along." Reetika says a tough draw and big names do not demotivate or scare her. "I actually enjoy competing against the big wrestlers. There will be 16 wrestlers in every UWW videos and YouTube. "When the draw is made, I will know who are the four in my group but I am ready for anyone," she signed off.

We will pick a coach who can bring results, won't go by big names: AIFF president Chaubey



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) president Kalyan Chaubey said the new head coach of the national team will be picked based on the ability to bring in right results, and a high-profile candidate will not be selected blindly. The AIFF Executive Committee is due to meet soon to decide the successor of Igor Stimac, who resigned as head coach after India lost nine matches and drew two in his last 12 games in charge. "I believe the result matters a lot. We will be looking at someone who can develop Indian football. And whoever gets appointed as chief coach, we want him to add a lot of potential to the national team's performance," Chaubey told PTI in an interview. The incoming head coach will have some important assignments such as a tri-nation tournament in October that also involves hosts Vietnam and Lebanon. Chaubey hoped the new coach can bring in some desired results from these events. "We are looking to utilise all the FIFA windows which we have in the month of September, October, November and March next year," he said.

These tournaments, Chaubey said, will give Indian players more international exposure. "No matter whether we play against a lower-ranked team or higher-ranked team, the aim is to win. It will also create more match time for players. Yes, these matches will also give more international exposure to the players," he added. Chaubey said there was an overwhelming response to the advertised position of the head coach of the Indian men's football team. "We have received a total of 291 applications and we have shortlisted 17 names from them. There are Indian and foreign names. We will have a detailed discussion about them in the Executive Committee meeting," he noted. Chaubey said former Indian captain IM Vijayan, who is now the head of the technical committee, will also be consulted. "We are in touch with the technical committee. As Vijayan is overseas now, he will be consulted through a virtual meeting," he said. Chaubey said players like Lallianzuala Chhangte have the potential to step in for former skipper Sunil Chhetri, who recently retired from international football. Chhangte was adjudged the Best Men's Player during the AIFF awards on Friday. "Who is after Sunil Chhetri? This question comes to everybody's mind. I think Chhangte, who has won the player of the year award this year, has a lot of potential. He can definitely make a long career. Such awards will inspire a player to put in an even bigger effort," he said.

I will miss my daughter, but it's also about achieving Olympic medal: Archer Deepika

PTI ■ JAUX (FRANCE)

Deepika Kumari is torn between two worlds. One where the doting mother longs to be with her 19-month-old daughter Vedika, and another where the ace Indian archer craves for an elusive Olympic medal. But the resilience she showed in fusing those two different spaces in her life has taken Deepika to the Paris Games, the fourth showpiece in her career. Deepika's determination to achieve glory in the ultimate sporting event in the world was evident when she stayed away from her daughter for two months to finetune her preparation. "It's difficult to explain the pain of being away from my daughter. But it's also about achieving what we have worked for over so many years," Deepika told PTI in an exclusive interaction. Finally, Atanu Das, her husband and himself an international archer, took Vedika to Army Sports Institute in Pune just before Deepika departed to Paris. It was an achingly emotional moment for Deepika. "I miss her a lot, but that's how it is. Thankfully, she has been really supportive and has adapted well with my in-laws and Atanu," Deepika said. But Deepika's turmoil had started immediately after giving birth to her daughter in December 2022. She developed muscle stiffness and lifting the 19-kg bow was next to impossible. "We had planned for the delivery in such a way that we would be able to compete in Paris. But it was like starting from zero after the delivery. "Forget about shooting or lifting the bow, she was not able to do even simple daily chores," Atanu recalled. "Gradually, she started jogging and put in a lot of hard work at the gym to get going again." Deepika even thought that her career has come to a close. "Career lagta hai khatam ho gaya, kya main aur shooting nahin kar paonngi? (It seems my career is over... Won't I be able to shoot again?)" she would ask Das.



But then came the flicker of hope. Deepika dominated the National Games in Goa last year, returning with two gold and one silver. It led her to the big decision of training under the legendary Korean coach Kim Hyung-Tak, the first full time coach under whom the archery heavyweights made their debut at Los Angeles in 1984. "It was not just about the skill aspect but his guidance also plays a part in bringing clarity to shooting. It really set me off," said Deepika, who won a silver at the Shanghai World Cup, her first podium finish in two years. "Subsequently, the 30-year-old excelled in the three-month long selection trials, even though her husband-cum-mentor Atanu failed to make the cut. **LIM FACTOR:** Despite her phenomenal feats in other world meets, Deepika is yet to bag that coveted medal with five rings on it. She came close to it in Tokyo but lost to eventual gold winner An San in the quarterfinals.

But this time the Indian will have a 21-year-old South Korean Lim Si-hyeon to tame in Paris. Lim has defeated Deepika twice this year - at Shanghai and then at the Yecheon World Cup. Deepika is not worried. "I cannot change the past. I'm fully prepared and happy with the way I'm shooting. We will see what happens on the match day if at all we have a match-up," she added. **HAPPY PARIS MEMORIES, BUT NO PRESSURE:** Paris has been a happy-hunting ground for Deepika where she won a hattrick of gold medals in the 2021 World Cup - individual, team and mixed team along with Atanu. She had also clinched a World Cup Final silver in 2013 and a World Cup silver last year in the French capital. But she wanted to treat the Olympics as any other top-level competition. "I don't understand why there is so much hype surrounding the Olympics in our country. Everyone looks up to archery once the Olympics nears and it creates unnecessary pressure.

"We have to take it like any other competition. The pressure (on the Indians) is more mental," she said. Deepika wanted to remain under the radar. "I don't want any attention. We have done well consistently to be able to make it here. We just have to get a good rank in the qualification to get a favourable draw." **DEEPIKA - DHIRAJ COMBINATION:** The individual rankings determine the mixed team and on current form, Deepika and Dhiraj Bommadevara could be shooting together. Dhiraj has been in phenomenal form winning 10 international medals in the last 12 months including a team gold beating Korea. He also won an individual bronze at Antalya World Cup stunning Tokyo silver medalist Mauro Nespoli. "He is young and uber cool and an individual medal prospect. He doesn't falter in big moments," said India's high-performance director Sanjeeva Singh. So, will Dhiraj take some pressure off Deepika? "If they top the qualifiers, they will be India's best recurve mixed team combination," he said. Deepika remembers the controversy in Tokyo when she had to unwillingly partner Pravin Jadhav in the mixed team event as the latter had qualified ahead of Atanu. The national federation could have changed the combination but they went by the rule and the team exited in the last eight. "I don't want to talk about what happened. Dhiraj has been shooting well and we hope for the best," Deepika added. Will she miss the presence of Atanu in Paris? "He has a greater responsibility -- to take care of Vedika," she smiled clutching an empty bag, a gift from her husband. "I've told her she must win the medal and bring it back in this bag," Das said. Perhaps, she can cram in an Olympic medal and some baby clothes and toys.

Wrestlers will continue medal-winning trend in Paris: Yogeshwar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

London Olympics bronze winner Yogeshwar Dutt is confident that wrestling will yet again fetch India a medal at the Olympic Games and the number could be more than one if the grapplers get a favourable draw. India will have a six-member wrestling contingent in Paris where the mat competition will begin on August 5. Only Aman Sehrawat (57kg) could qualify in the men's section but the women put up a strong show by qualifying in five of six Olympic weight divisions. Only 62kg is missing from the list. India have not missed a wrestling medal since 2008 Beijing Games where the legendary Sushil Kumar won a bronze. "A lot will depend on the draw. If India get a favourable draw, then I am expecting three medals," Yogeshwar Dutt told PTI Videos on the sidelines of an AIFF event. "In the last four consecutive Olympics, we got medals from Wrestling. So I hope, wish & pray the fifth time in a row, wrestling will bring medal for the nation. I wish all the wrestlers all the very best. I think they are well-prepared," said Yogeshwar. "After hockey, wrestling has given India the most number of medals. It has given seven medals ahead of all other Olympic sports. Wrestling is without doubt the number one individual Olympic sport for India." The former India wrestler, who is also a BJP leader now, feels that India will return with its best ever show in Olympics. "I am expecting Indian contingent to win more than 10 medals," he said.

AP ■ PARIS

Marta can't help but be nostalgic heading into her last big tournament with the Brazilian national team. But, for the 38-year-old six-time world player of the year, the time has come to step away finally. "I contributed what I (was) supposed to give to the national team, you know? I'm feeling so comfortable to leave because when I look around me, I see really, really good players, young players, who can keep doing the work and keep representing Brazil so well," Marta said. Marta will play in her sixth Olympics in France before handing the team she captains to the next generation. "It's been so much of my life since I was 14, I left home and then I just live soccer every single day," she added. "I just feel like maybe it's time to just take a little bit away from that and let the young players shine." A tournament championship would be the perfect way to cap an international career that has spanned over 20 years, and her teammates know it. "I feel like every time you step on the field, playing with Marta by your side, it's such a great responsibility. She's a great player and we have to play for her now,"

Marta pursues soccer gold at Olympics while preparing to pass torch to Brazil's youngsters

said defender Rafaella. "She was like my biggest idol since I was growing up. So, playing with her now is such a dream for me." Better known just by her first name, Marta Vieira da Silva has scored a record 118 goals in 183 international appearances with Brazil. In addition to her six Olympics, she has also played in six women's World Cups. She has the record for most World Cup goals with 17, and she has 13 Olympic goals, one away from matching fellow Brazilian Cristiane's record. Marta grew up playing street soccer with the boys in Dois Riachos, a town in eastern Brazil some 1,250 miles (2,011 kilometres) north of Rio de Janeiro. She was just 17 when she appeared at the 2003 World Cup, held in the United States. Over time, her role has changed in Brazil. In recent years she's been more of a player coach, guiding the team's up-and-coming stars. "Of course, I bring all of the experience that I achieved in my career, like playing in big



tournaments like the Olympics and the World Cup, playing against good teams, against good players," she said. "So, I try to share the best of me and

the best of what I live in soccer with the players to make them feel comfortable, or make them feel proud to be there. Like, we expect the best of you. That's why you are

here, so this is the goal and then do your best." Marta is still a valuable asset on the field, and she's proven it this season with the Orlando Pride, her club

team in the National Women's Soccer League. She's got five goals in 12 games this year with the Pride, who are undefeated and sit atop the league standings. Marta has played with Orlando since 2017. "I still can read the game, like, really well," she said. "And, I try to put myself in a good situation to give my best to the team. "So, I'm not going to compete all the time with a player that's 10, 11 years younger than me. But, I may be able to put my brain to work a little faster and then read the situation and try to do my best." With the many accolades Marta has earned throughout her career, one thing has eluded her: A championship trophy in a major international tournament. Brazil's best finish at the World Cup was runner-up in 2007. Brazil won silver medals at the 2004 and 2008 Olympics, but a gold medal has remained out of reach. "With her saying it's her last Olympics, it just brings more responsibility to her and to us to end this tournament on a good

note with this title that the national team doesn't have and she doesn't have either," Brazilian teammate Adriana said. "So, it's more motivation for us to help her with this and to hopefully win." While the Women's World Cup will be hosted by Brazil in 2027, Marta is not thinking about sticking around for another three years. But, she's told the federation she'll help in any way possible. She's wistful as she thinks about her favourite moment with the national team. The two that stick out to her are the 2004 Olympics, her first when Brazil advanced to the final but fell 2-1 to the United States. And, the 2007 World Cup, when the Brazilians got revenge by beating the Americans 4-1 in the semi-finals. Marta scored twice in that match and won the tournament Golden Boot with seven goals despite Brazil dropping the title match against Germany. "It's the passion," she said about her love for the game. "The passion that we show when we play, the passion that we see from when the people celebrate a goal. We make people happy. "You make all the people happy and you make people dream - and it's not only about soccer - it's about what it's like to believe. Believe in yourself. Believe in your potential. So, soccer gives you a lot of things like that.



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Payment to farmers within 72 hours of crop sold

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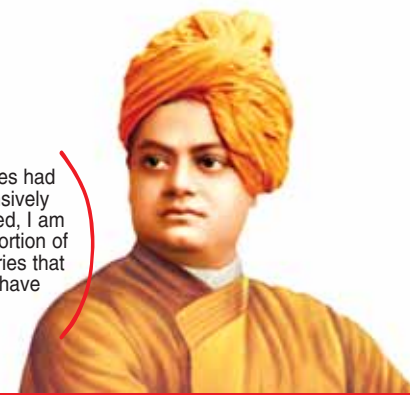
₹5693 crores transferred directly to the accounts of 19.95 lakh farmers under PM Kisan Samman Nidhi

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Increase in MSP and assured Procurement on MSP will continue...



"If faith in ourselves had been more extensively taught and practiced, I am sure a very large portion of the evils and miseries that we have would have vanished"
— Buddha



A MODEL FOR INDIA'S SMART CITY ASPIRATIONS

From integrating advanced technologies to fostering community engagement, New Taipei City offers a wealth of lessons that can guide Indian cities towards a smarter and more sustainable future, writes **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

New Taipei City, Taiwan's most populous city, has emerged as a leading example of smart city development, integrating advanced technology, sustainable practices, and citizen-centric services. As India embarks on its ambitious Smart Cities Mission, there are valuable lessons to be learned from New Taipei City's approach to urban planning and management.

One of the biggest achievements of New Taipei City is its involvement of citizens in various facets of planning and execution and participation. New Taipei City actively involves its citizens in the planning and decision-making process. "Through public consultations, digital platforms, and community programs, residents are encouraged to participate in shaping the city's future. This collaborative approach has fostered a sense of ownership and responsibility among citizens," says Dr Tih-Ju Chu, deputy mayor of New Taipei City, Government of Taiwan.

As far as the Indian smart city concept is concerned, it has been a bureaucratic exercise where citizens have had hardly any role to play. Engaging citizens in the smart city development process is crucial for ensuring that the initiatives meet the needs and aspirations of the people. Indian cities should leverage digital tools and community engagement strategies to involve residents in planning, implementation, and monitoring of projects. We embarked upon making Varanasi into Kyoto but have reached nowhere. Perhaps the biggest reason for this has been the government's top-down approach where people come last. Local people know their city better than any bureaucrat or politician and their input can go a long way in preserving the cultural heritage of the city and modernising it at the same time.

New Taipei City fosters a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, providing support for startups and encouraging technological advancements. The city has established innovation hubs, incubators, and co-working spaces

“
ONE OF THE BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENTS OF NEW TAIPEI CITY IS ITS INVOLVEMENT OF CITIZENS IN VARIOUS FACETS OF PLANNING AND EXECUTION AND PARTICIPATION. NEW TAIPEI CITY ACTIVELY INVOLVES ITS CITIZENS IN THE PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS. “THROUGH PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS, DIGITAL PLATFORMS, AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS, RESIDENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE IN SHAPING THE CITY'S FUTURE
”



that nurture talent and drive economic growth. Encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship should be a priority for Indian smart cities too. By creating supportive ecosystems for startups, providing access to funding, and facilitating collaboration between academia, industry, and government, Indian cities can become hubs of innovation and economic development. After all, no city can thrive without a robust locally sustained economy. People must find jobs and reasons to settle in a smart city, else it may end up like several ghost cities of China. Yet another initiative that makes New Taipei City a model is sustainability. "The city mayor places a strong emphasis on sustainability, incorporating green building practices, renewable energy, and

efficient waste management systems. The city has extensive green spaces, promotes the use of public transportation, and encourages eco-friendly practices among residents," says Dr Tih-Ju Chu. Indeed, sustainable urban development should be at the core of India's smart cities initiative. By prioritising green infrastructure, renewable energy projects, and comprehensive waste management systems, Indian cities can reduce their environmental footprint and enhance the quality of life for their residents. New Taipei City has implemented intelligent transportation systems (ITS) to enhance mobility and reduce traffic congestion. These systems include smart traffic signals, real-time traffic monitoring, and integrated public transportation

networks. The city's focus on multimodal transportation options has made commuting more efficient and accessible. Unfortunately, traffic and commuting are one of the biggest challenges. In a city like Bengaluru, India's IT hub, commuting is a nightmare. To address urban mobility challenges, Indian smart cities should invest in ITS, including smart traffic management, real-time public transport information, and infrastructure for non-motorized transport. Developing a comprehensive and efficient transportation network can alleviate congestion and improve the overall commuting experience. One of the cornerstones of New Taipei City's success is its adoption of cutting-edge technology to

streamline governance. The city has implemented an integrated digital platform that connects various departments, enabling real-time data sharing and decision-making. This has resulted in efficient public service delivery, reduced administrative costs, and improved transparency. Indian smart cities can benefit from creating unified digital platforms that foster inter-departmental collaboration, enhance service delivery, and promote transparency. Investing in robust ICT infrastructure and data analytics can drive more informed policy decisions and optimize resource allocation. Situated in a region prone to natural disasters, New Taipei City has prioritised building resilient infrastructure and robust disaster management systems. The city employs advanced monitoring and early warning systems, conducts regular drills, and has developed comprehensive emergency response plans. Implementing early warning systems, conducting regular drills, and involving communities in disaster management plans can significantly reduce the impact of disasters.

Let us face it, India's smart city project faces several significant challenges that hinder its progress. Foremost among these is the bureaucratic approach that often sidelines citizen participation and local insights, resulting in top-down planning that lacks community buy-in. Additionally, there is a persistent lack of robust infrastructure and technological integration, impeding the development of effective digital platforms and smart solutions. Moreover, coordination between various government departments and private stakeholders is often fragmented, leading to inefficiencies and delays. Without addressing these fundamental issues, the ambitious vision of India's smart cities may remain unfulfilled. We must be open to such initiatives outside of India and there would be no harm in trying the best practices from around the world. The lessons from New Taipei City serve as a blueprint for India's smart cities to follow, ensuring that they meet the needs of their residents while addressing the challenges of the 21st century.

A TALE OF TWO COUNTRIES INDIA AND CHINA BEYOND BINARIES

There is more to India and China relations that meets the eye and a lot goes behind the curtain in the people's republic of China writes **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

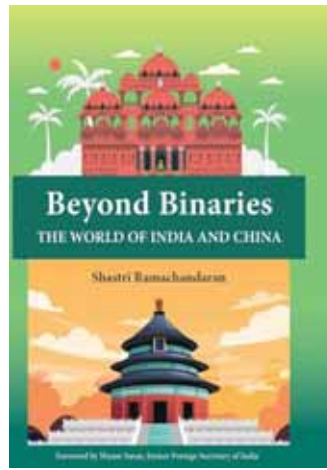
The book "Two Binaries: The World of India and China" by Shastri Ramachandran has generated significant interest. It explores several issues confronting the two countries and their bilateral relations. The author has ostensibly analysed why they behave as they do and what prevents the two countries from coming closer. Shastri Ramachandran is a journalist and well-versed in Chinese culture, having spent considerable time there, which makes him an authority on the subject. Indeed, he knows more about China than many so-called experts here. Although I haven't read the book, I recently participated in a discussion organised by the publishers to promote the book and initiate an informed debate. The discussion was chaired by Professor Madhu Bhalla, with veteran journalist Paranjay Guha Thakurta and Professor Arvind Yelery as other panelists.

The discussion certainly achieved its purpose and initiated a debate on Indo-China relations and our skewed understanding of China as a country beyond TV news and newspaper articles, often superficial in nature. China is always on the minds of most Indians. We have a love-hate relationship with it: we love it when we use its cheap products and buy them to profit in the domestic market. As Paranjay Guha Thakurta pointed out, most businesses would struggle without Chinese imports. Most pharmaceutical companies use raw materials from China, as do many car companies which import Chinese spares.



Indeed, India and China represent 40 percent of humanity and wield enormous power by sheer population size. However, coming together requires overcoming many obstacles. Shastri has the benign notion of making this the Asian century, which is not possible without India and China burying their hatchet. But that is easier said than done. They have historical and geographical factors that keep them apart. Shastri sees Western influence, amplified by our media, as a root cause of strained relations. He praises the Chinese people and believes it is possible to bridge the divide between the two peoples, as we are more than two countries – two

civilizations. However, there is a problem with perception. He sees China as a country painted by the West as evil, and we are expected to accept that view. We do so happily, gulping down Western propaganda as the gospel truth. There is some truth in that. The West has a powerful media with unparalleled reach, capable of making or breaking anyone's image. But that is only part of the truth. Giving China a clean chit is definitely oversimplifying the situation. Let's put it this way: China and the Chinese government are two separate entities often at cross purposes. When you interact with Chinese



people, you encounter individuals who are nice, like people anywhere else. However, when you deal with China as a nation, you deal with its government, which is reactionary and dictatorial. Shastri makes a distinction between Chinese and Arab dictatorships in their construct, but the end result is the same: an oppressive, intolerant, and regressive structure focused on self-preservation. Simply assuming a communist facade does not make one truly communist. Let's face it: Stalin was a dictator, Nicolae Ceaușescu was a dictator, Kim Jong Un is a dictator, and so is Xi Jinping. Having a party like Hitler's doesn't

qualify one to be called a Communist (a much-abused term, but I would think of Lenin as one). A fun fact here: Hitler's party was officially called the National Socialist German Workers' Party! On October 22, 2022, Hu Jintao, former General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, was escorted out of the hall at the closing ceremony of the 20th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party. He was pulled from his seat by two men while Xi maintained a stoic face. Was it a Western construct? When Shastri says, and I quote, "Nancy Pelosi leads a delegation to Dharamshala with business stakes in Taiwan, and the Dalai Lama

receives treatment in the US, making clear what is happening," he trivializes the Tibetan struggle and casts aspersions on the Dalai Lama's credentials. The human rights violations and systemic cleansing in Tibet are beyond the scope of this piece. It is not just about Tibet; the Uyghur province, dominated by Muslims, has seen enough misery. The Uyghur province of China has witnessed a series of human rights violations. It includes mass arbitrary detention, torture, enforced disappearances, mass surveillance, cultural and religious persecution, separation of families, forced labour, sexual violence, and violations of reproductive rights. Many of the cases are well documented. And by the way, there is nothing capitalist about the students' protest in Hong Kong. I wish someone on the panel had spoken about these issues too. Most of them were fixated on Doklam and Galwan and relished Chinese cuisine and the great economic strides China made and how everyone wants to have a piece of the Chinese pie. Interestingly, after taking advantage of Chinese largesse, many African and Asian countries are now waiting their turn to go bankrupt. China's Belt and Road Initiative is turning out to be a noose around hapless economies. China is doing in the 21st century what the West did in the 19th. Do we have a locus standi in criticising China's human rights violations when we have skeletons in our cupboard? Sure, we do. Martin Luther King Jr. said, and I quote, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere!"

INSPIRATIONS BEHIND ZAIRA AND AUTHORSHIP JOURNEY

Professor **VINITA DHONDIYAL BHATNAGAR** shares the personal inspirations behind her novel **ZAIRA** and reflects on her journey from literature scholar to published author

What inspired you to write Zaira? Were there any personal experiences or specific events that sparked the idea for this novel?

Zaira was inspired by many events and incidents. I saw a terrible accident on a flyover near my office. The young man was hurled across the parapet and crashed onto the road below. The blood was trickling from his head like a rivulet. This scene has stayed with me and informs one of the most pivotal moments in the plot.

The awareness as a mother and as a college teacher about the vulnerability of our young population also played a part. This is the age of experimentation and exploration, which is fantastic. But they should not fall prey to addictions or to habits that endanger their lives and their futures. This inspired me to write about the cynical, profiteering men who might make a fortune by luring people into consuming drugs.

Can you share your journey as a writer? What were some of the key moments or turning points that led you to become a published author?

I have been studying literature since 1985 and have a PhD in literary studies. So I have a long history of reading. It took guts to jump into writing especially because in my mind I kept comparing myself to the literary greats I had studied. I kept writing and kept getting rejected. Part of the problem was that my characters were not gripping enough. My father passed away in 2010 and his last words to me were not to give up. I am going to keep to that. The publishing industry has changed drastically in the last few years. Maybe my time was now. My editor friend, Kaneez, told me of Book Bakers, my literary agent and they helped place my book.

How do you balance your roles as a professor and a writer? Do you find that your



academic work and storytelling complement each other?

In my fantasies I would have been a full time writer, locked up in a room with my thoughts for company. In reality I am juggling a home, and a job in which I have seventy young people in a classroom and they come from far off places and with distinctive personalities and life stories of their own. I now recognise this as strength. It may give me less time to write but it gives me deeper compassion and understanding. I teach communication skills and my purpose in writing is primarily to communicate rather than impress. My book has been written primarily for the type of people I teach.

The characters in Zaira are richly detailed and complex. Can you share your process for developing characters like Zaira, Rajyawardhan and Jai? Did any of them change significantly from your initial concept?

Thank you! As you know characterization is what I struggle with the most. So your words are a healing balm to my soul. Frankly, Zaira is based on a friend of mine who is like a daughter to me. The story is not hers. The

character is. I asked her at points "What would you wear to this?" or "What would you eat?" "Since I understood her well I could imagine what her responses might be in certain circumstances. Rajyawardhan is based partially on my favorite film star. I saw him on VIP road in Bhopal and I said to myself, "This man will be a legend." I think he is on his way to becoming one. I won't say more or I might be sued! With Jai I was thinking of the migration of the Sindhis to Bairagarh near Bhopal after partition. A character carries the history of his people and I hope some of that is reflected in Jai's story. What changed significantly throughout the course of the writing was the relationship outcome of Jai and Zaira's story. I was so keen to write a romance. Alas!

Zaira is filled with unexpected twists and suspenseful moments. How do you approach plotting a story to maintain tension and keep readers engaged?

My professor Malashri Lal suggested I start storytelling to live audiences. It's a very difficult art. Listeners get restless and children are bound to say "I am bored" when they are bored. That gives my writing urgency. I don't want to bore you. I don't want to waste your precious

time and attention.

The book touches on serious issues like drug trafficking and personal trauma. What kind of research did you conduct to ensure these aspects were portrayed accurately and sensitively?

I didn't do specific research on these topics but I have always stayed aware of these issues in society. I listened to ex-drug addicts speak about the fear of slipping back into the habit and of the humiliating lives they had led when they were in the grip of addiction. I knew a fantastic young man who just slipped away. It makes me sad. It makes me angry. We are letting our younger generations down if we don't do enough to protect and inform them. I was in the process of losing my mother as I wrote the book. I didn't know it then at a conscious level. But at a subconscious level, something inside me was preparing to let go. That rawness, that vulnerability and ache found itself on to the pages.

Fyodor Dostoevsky works often explore deep psychological and moral issues. How has Dostoevsky influenced your writing, particularly in Zaira? Are there specific aspects of his work that resonate with you?

During my MPhil days at Delhi University, I attended a seminar course of Russian Literature. (I must tell you the first four years of my life were spent in Russia. They believed then that the only privileged class should be children and I was treated accordingly.) I think I am obsessed with him because my uncle once dismissed somebody else's writing as "He is no Dostoevsky" Since then he has become my standard of good writing!

As a storyteller, are there any elements of Fyodor Dostoevsky's work that have influenced your writing, particularly in Zaira?

Ha Ha! I am arrogant enough

to really crave that comparison. Dostoevsky doesn't bother with facts as much as with states of mind. I find it difficult to add irrelevant details just to enhance the literariness of the language or story. He explores the two radically opposing sides of a character or situation. When I read his morally ambiguous characters I feel "This could be me, I could respond like this in this situation." I am hoping readers will feel the same way about my work.

You've mentioned that no change is possible unless the story touches the hearts of its readers. How do you ensure your stories have this emotional impact?

Even as a teacher I am aware miracles can happen and mountains can move if you can touch the hearts of your students. I do have a worldview, an urgent sense of how I think things should be. If I wrote them in a pamphlet it would be thrown away. So I weave a story. One of my favourite writers just revealed that he cried through the writing of his book. He knew the reader could feel the emotion because he felt it first. That is my greatest challenge. Years of struggling with literacy issues of theme, character, plot and conflict means I have a head first approach. I have to get in touch with my own heart to write. When we communicate heart to heart, we understand each other better. That's all I am hoping for.

What do you hope readers will feel or think about after finishing Zaira? Is there a particular message or feeling you want to leave them with?

I am hoping they will feel energised and empowered. Mistakes happen. So what? Why be afraid of heartbreak and betrayal to an extent where we forget to live? There are possibilities and opportunities all around us. We have a story to live. Let's make it grand!

BOOK REVIEW

A GRIPPING TALE OF AMBITION, THRILLER AND SELF-DISCOVERY

Zaira is a gripping thriller that blends suspense with societal critique, following a young woman's perilous journey through Bollywood and drug trafficking to uncover the truth behind her idol's death, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

ZAIRA by Prof. Vinita Dhondiyal Bhatnagar is a compelling young adult thriller that masterfully blends suspense with social commentary. Set against the glamorous backdrop of Bollywood and the dangerous world of drug trafficking, the novel follows the journey of Zaira, an ambitious college student from Bhopal, as she navigates the complex intersection between her dreams of fame and the traditional expectations of her family.

The book introduces key characters like Jai, who provides stability and support to Zaira and Rajyawardhan Singh, Layla's charismatic lover whom Zaira admires. Rajyawardhan's presence adds complexity to the story, intertwining with Zaira's ambitions and the dangers she faces. Bhatnagar skillfully portrays Zaira's internal conflict as she navigates her relationship with Jai, initially a source of joy and comfort, which becomes a lens for her own desires and aspirations. Jai plays pivotal roles in shaping Zaira's journey, enriching her character development. Rajyawardhan also influences Zaira's decisions, adding depth to the narrative dynamics.

One of the most striking aspects of the book is its exploration of societal pressures and their impact on individuals, especially women. Zaira, initially portrayed as a somewhat naive and idealistic young woman, faces judgment and ridicule from her peers for her choices. The dialogue between Shikma and Deepa, who mock Zaira for her slipping grades and newfound relationship, highlights the harsh scrutiny that women often face. This criticism is not merely about academic performance or personal relationships but is deeply rooted in societal expectations and the pressure to conform to traditional roles.

The book grips you from the first page to the last, urging you to finish it in one sitting as you delve into every character and their stories. Author beautifully portrays Zaira's journey, creating a remarkable reading experience. The subplot involving

Rajyawardhan Singh adds suspense and danger, Zaira's involvement in a dangerous drug trafficking investigation and the subsequent threats to her life bring a sense of urgency and tension. Her time in isolation, grappling with fear and turmoil, showcases her inner strength, particularly in her struggle to maintain sanity and self-awareness.

Bhatnagar's writing is engaging and evocative, drawing readers into Zaira's world from the first page. The pacing is well-managed, balancing the thriller elements of the drug trafficking investigation with moments of introspection and character development. The author's ability to weave together personal growth, suspenseful plot

twists and broader societal issues is commendable. The novel's exploration of the complexities of human relationships and emotions adds depth to the narrative. Zaira's evolving relationships with her family members, her romantic entanglements and her changing perception of Layla (whom she initially idolizes) all contribute to a human connection and growth.

ZAIRA is more than just a thrilling page-turner; it's a profound exploration of personal growth, societal pressure and the quest for justice. Bhatnagar's nuanced

characters, engaging plot and evocative writing create a story that resonates long after the final page is turned. Once you start reading, you'll be eager to finish it in one go, drawn to explore every character and their stories. The book is highly recommended for readers who enjoy emotionally rich narratives combined with cultural authenticity and suspenseful elements. ZAIRA stands out as a remarkable contribution to contemporary Indian literature. It offers a thought-provoking experience that prompts readers to reflect on their own life choices and the societal forces that shape them. Vinita Dhondiyal Bhatnagar has crafted a novel that is both a gripping thriller and a sensitive portrayal of a young woman's journey to self-discovery, making it a must-read for fans of the genre and beyond.



LOBSTER LOVE

PAWAN SONI discovers how Delhi is experiencing a culinary renaissance with new venues offering world class ingredients



PAWAN SONI
Food critic and founder of the Big F Awards



Getting high-quality lobster in Delhi can be quite a challenge. This is why I make it a point to attend most crab and lobster festivals in the city, where the freshness and quality of these exquisite sea creatures are guaranteed.

I have enjoyed several memorable meals at Shang Palace, Shangri-La Eros Delhi, and the ongoing 'Clawsome Chobster' meal was no exception. This special menu features dishes made with both chicken and lobster, likely to appeal even to those who don't typically enjoy shellfish.

We began with a lobster and mango salad, a perfect summer dish. The sweetness of the lobster meat and fresh mangoes, combined with the coconut sauce, was perfectly complemented by the texture of lettuce and the acidity of lemon. For those who enjoy Chongqing chicken with its bullet chili heat, the lobster version is a must-try. The lobster, with its meat still clinging to the shell, is truly a palate pleaser. After tasting this, I wonder if I'll ever enjoy the chicken version as much. The only chicken dish we tried in starters was the bang bang chicken. Coated with panko/breadcrumbs for the extra crunch for this juicy chicken breast filling, it surely had the bang. Though for the sauce, I missed the mayonnaise in the dip which is normally

mixed with sweet chilly sauce. In the dim sum selection, we tried the kaffir lime lobster dumplings served with oscietra caviar. Though the kaffir lime flavor was somewhat subdued, these beautifully crafted dumplings were delightful. The lobster and chicken siu mai were expertly made with thin skins and juicy fillings. Feeling quite full after the starters, we decided to skip the carbohydrate dishes, which

included fried rice with lobster, chicken, and egg. Another intriguing option was the Chobster, a whole grilled chicken served with lobster rice. This dish, as our server mentioned, requires about 45 minutes to prepare, so we opted for the chili pepper lobster tail instead. During our meal, Mr. Abhishek Sadhoo, General Manager of the hotel, stopped by, and we exchanged pleasantries. When

asked about the sourcing of their lobsters, he proudly shared that they are flown in from Canada. I am eagerly anticipating their new festival offerings, which will feature an abundance of lobster, reflecting their commitment to bringing top-quality seafood to India. Shhh... keep this secret between us. Delhi is experiencing a culinary renaissance, with new venues offering world-class

ingredients. If you love seafood as much as I do, don't miss this special menu, available only until July 21, 2024.
(Author is a food critic and founder of the Big F Awards. He can be reached at Pawan.Soni@indianfoodfreak.com)
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Phone: 011-41191919



A CULINARY COACH

Introducing Capital Diner, a unique restaurant located in a refurbished railway coach, providing travelers and locals with a nostalgic and immersive dining experience at the New Delhi Railway Station

Nestled within the bustling confines of New Delhi Railway Station lies Capital Diner, an enchanting escape that seamlessly blends the nostalgia of old-world train journeys with the flair of contemporary dining. This innovative restaurant, housed within a meticulously refurbished railway coach, promises an unforgettable culinary experience for travelers and locals alike. Stepping into Capital Diner is equivalent to embarking on a journey through time.

Capital Diner offers a unique blend of history, ambiance and exquisite cuisine, making it an ideal spot for travelers and locals alike. Upon entering Capital Diner, guests are transported back in time, as the restaurant's design combines the charm of American diners with the luxury of old-world train journeys. The interior, fashioned from a retired Indian Railways coach, exudes an air of elegance and charm reminiscent of the bygone era of train travel. Rich brown vertical stripe wallpaper, evoking memories of the legendary Orient Express, complements plush mallard shade suede booth seating and tasteful mosaic tiling. Soft beige LED lighting strips cast a gentle, starlit glow, enhancing the ambiance with a touch of luxurious warmth. Beyond its captivating aesthetics, Capital Diner delights diners with a diverse menu that celebrates both traditional Indian flavors and international cuisines. From hearty kadhai paneer paired with freshly baked naan to creamy penne tomato pasta with succulent chicken, every dish is crafted with meticulous attention to detail and premium ingredients. Each bite is a witnessed to the culinary expertise of the restaurant's dedicated chefs, ensuring a gastronomic journey that satisfies even the most discerning palate.



railway travel meets the sophistication of modern dining," shares Mr. Harish Kumar Arora, Founder of Capital Diner. "Our aim is to create a dining experience that not only tantalises the taste buds but also evokes cherished memories of train journeys past."

Capital Diner stands as a testament to innovation in the culinary landscape of New Delhi, offering more than just a meal but an immersive experience that celebrates the cultural heritage of India's railway history. Whether seeking a quick bite before catching a train or a leisurely dining experience amidst the station's vibrant atmosphere, Capital Diner promises an unparalleled fusion of nostalgia and culinary excellence.

So, next time you find yourself at New Delhi Railway Station, don't just pass through - immerse yourself in the allure of Capital Diner. Indulge in the ambiance, savor the flavours and rediscover the magic of train travel through a dining experience like no other.

FAST FACTS

Circulating Area, New Delhi Railway Station, Near Ajmeri Gate, Connaught Place, New Delhi. Hours: 11 AM to 11 PM
Price for Two: INR 600 Instagram: @capital.diner

EMBRACING VEGANISM IN ZURICH

When considering a trip to Switzerland, famous for its chocolate and cheese, you may question if it suits vegans. Yet, surprisingly, Switzerland is an exciting destination for vegans, offering unexpected delights. In Zurich, there are chances to explore innovative sustainable dining options

BY AKANKSHA DEAN

Switzerland pleasantly surprised me with its vegan options. Local supermarkets carry a variety of vegan products such as plant milk, tofu, lentils, and Swiss vegan brands like New Roots Cheeses and Planted Vegan Meats. The cities like Zurich, Geneva, Lugano, Bern, and Lucerne offer many vegan-friendly restaurants listed on Happy Cow. Zurich and Geneva stand out in the vegan scene, but other cities also provide for vegans. Be sure to check food labels for hidden dairy ingredients. Swiss cities feature diverse vegan eateries like Tibits and Hiltl serving global cuisine. Do try the traditional Swiss dish Rösti. During my month-long stay in Zurich following a vegan diet, I discovered the city's vibrant vegan scene, surprising given its reputation for banking and luxury shopping. Haus Hiltl, the world's oldest vegetarian restaurant on Sihlstrasse 28, 8001 Zurich, offers classic dishes like house-made meatballs and rich Bolognese bowls. Guests can enjoy a la carte options or the vegetarian buffet, allowing them to savour various flavours. Hiltl Sihlpost near the main train station offers buffet options for breakfast and other meals. One remarkable aspect of Haus Hiltl is its carefully curated menu, making it a top choice for those with specific dietary needs like gluten-free, nut-free, or soy-free preferences. Discover and savour these top dining destinations in the city.

REDEFINING GASTRONOMY

Zizi Hatab, a Moroccan immigrant raised in a multicultural setting near the Mediterranean coast of Spain, is redefining gastronomy with plants. Despite starting with a background in Spanish fishing gastronomy, Zizi's journey led her to Barcelona for engineering studies, where she balanced hosting dinners in her student dorm with exploring tapas venues. Transitioning to a corporate engineering role in Switzerland, Zizi's passion for cooking persisted. Without professional culinary experience, she boldly approached top Swiss chef Andreas Caminada, securing an internship at his renowned restaurant, Schloss Schauenstein. Returning to Zurich in 2019 to prepare for the launch of her debut restaurant, KLE, Zizi made a bold decision to offer an exclusively plant-based menu and lifestyle. Despite scepticism from various quarters, Zizi remained steadfast in aligning her values with her culinary vision, believing in the transformative power of a plant-based diet and food's ability to connect people. Through KLE, Zizi aims to inspire a change in consumer habits by offering a culinary experience based on love, innovation in plant-based cuisine, and sustainability. Emphasizing locally sourced ingredients and sustainability, Zizi creates a welcoming atmosphere for both her teams and guests, fostering memorable dining encounters. Her pioneering work in plant-based



fine dining at KLE has garnered recognition both locally and internationally, solidifying her influence in the gastronomic realm. Her second establishment, DAR, swiftly became recognized and was highlighted as a top spot by The 50 Best. Particularly noteworthy is DAR being awarded a distinguished Green Michelin Star in 2022. This accolade marks Zizi as the first Swiss vegan chef to attain such an honour, affirming her status among the global culinary leaders. In the same year, Zizi was honoured as one of the 10 emerging chefs influencing the evolution of gastronomy in the 50 Next prestigious list.



ELEGANT YET APPROACHABLE FINE DINING AT KLE

Located in the vibrant District 3 of Zurich, KLE's diverse team brings a multicultural flair to Zurich's dining landscape, creating an intimate and welcoming ambiance. An inviting outdoor terrace provides a charming setting for open-air dining when the weather is pleasant. Recently awarded both a green and red Michelin star, KLE stands out as Switzerland's first plant-based restaurant to receive such recognition, a testament to the chef's dedication to culinary excellence. Each dish emphasizes quality ingredients, such as the 'black pearl mushroom' with a

sauce crafted from 25 locally sourced elements like Weggis lemongrass. The house bread, reminiscent of Moroccan buns, served with egg-free aioli made from 'aqua-faba' and Moroccan hummus, along with unique pickled vegetables, showcases the chef's inventive twists on traditional flavours. Sauerklee, a cherished ingredient in various cuisines, highlights KLE's blend of local and global culinary influences, inviting diners to savour a sensory exploration of the chef's culinary heritage.

DAR & ITS COCKTAIL BAR

My visit was truly eye-opening. DAR, meaning 'to give' in Spanish, fuses Moroccan and Spanish influences to create a remarkable plant-based dining experience. The menu showcases fresh seasonal vegetables, artisanal bread, and delectable desserts, inviting diners to explore global flavours like salted lemon mustard buns and turmeric-infused roasted beets. Opting for the chef's selection treats guests to a well-curated array of snacks, entrees, and sweets that leave a lasting impression. Reserving ahead is essential for a table at DAR, especially for the popular weekend vegan brunch featuring delightful honeycomb-shaped pancakes. Adjacent, the Cocktail Bar offers sustainably crafted vegan drinks that embody the vibrant tastes of Spain and Morocco. This 'slow fast food' concept extends to enjoying homemade vegan burgers while respecting the environment.

DAR's atmosphere celebrates guilt-free pleasures that blend taste, tradition, and ethical dining, offering a truly gratifying experience.

PINXTOS AND WINE AT COR

Cor on Weststrasse is a hidden treasure in the heart of Zurich, offering a cosy atmosphere where wine and tapas are the stars. Zineb and Bernd Vogel's love for Catalan cuisine is evident in the carefully crafted plant-based tapas and pinxtos. The wine selection, featuring mainly Spanish and French wines, adds elegance to the experience, promising a diverse culinary journey with each bottle. Savouring delights like stuffed peppers and 'pa amb tomaquet' reveals Cor's dedication to organic, local ingredients. What distinguishes Cor is its innovative wine menu, constantly evolving to complement the diverse menu offerings. Whether for an impromptu aperitif or a relaxed dinner, Cor's charming ambiance and delicious offerings make it a top choice in Zurich's dining scene. A visit to Cor promises a delightful blend of flavours, setting, and warmth that truly elevates the dining experience in Zurich.

AKANKSHA DEAN is an independent food & travel writer, a chef and a catalyst and is the first Indian to have trained at Osteria Francescana, in Modena, Italy, rated as the world's best restaurant in the World's 50 Best Restaurants, in 2016 and 2018 and currently in the Best of The Best Category.

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

This week, you possess significant physical and mental strength. Utilize your willpower to overcome challenges. Here are some tips: focus entirely on your goals, seize opportunities, and actively participate to succeed. A journey or trip may be on the horizon. Pay attention to all details before making decisions. Your actions are usually quick, but this week calls for patience and strength. Firm decisions will lead to a more meaningful and stable life. Midweek, domestic issues may require your attention, with discussions around travel, marriage, or property matters. Towards the end of the week, you may receive marriage proposals. Those already in relationships will find their bonds strengthening, with increased intensity bringing you closer. Emotional moments may arise; keep them in check.

Lucky number 3 | **Lucky colour** Coral
Lucky day Wednesday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

Now is the time to engage in discussions and seek equilibrium. Refreshing your energies is essential for achieving mental clarity and tranquility. Challenges may surface, such as relationship strains, financial worries, or minor health concerns. You may experience confusion and uncertainty, leading to a feeling of bewilderment. It's important to address emotional, domestic, and health issues with renewed focus, especially in matters such as reconciling estranged relationships or navigating separations. Liberating your mind from entrenched beliefs and barriers is crucial for embracing new opportunities. During unfavorable periods, it's wise to allow time to unfold naturally while preparing for future opportunities to maximize benefits. This approach will help you navigate through difficult phases with resilience and lay a solid foundation for success in more promising times.

Lucky number 14 | **Lucky colour** Peach
Lucky day Saturday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

This week presents a notable period of achievement both at home and in your professional life, as favorable circumstances align to support your endeavors. Any project you undertake is likely to succeed effortlessly. Consider making significant decisions related to family or real estate during this time. You'll find yourself in a position of influence and leadership, recognized for your ability to manage and inspire. Your natural charisma ensures that others are receptive to your ideas. Engagements in meetings, networking, and partnerships are particularly advantageous, leading to positive outcomes. Your ability to leverage the strengths of those around you shines, driven by your insight and magnanimity. As the week concludes, you'll experience a sense of substantial personal and business growth. A thoughtful discussion with elders could be beneficial, enhancing family dynamics.

Lucky number 1 | **Lucky colour** Grey
Lucky day Monday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week begins on a high note with a clear understanding of both personal and professional landscapes, allowing for efficient and effective action. You exhibit strong leadership and a robust self-confidence, positioning yourself as a source of inspiration and a driving force for many. As the week progresses, you'll find yourself at the heart of familial warmth and affection, playing a pivotal role in deepening bonds among loved ones. A long-held wish may see fruition during this time, bringing your efforts into the spotlight and garnering appreciation. However, as the week closes, be prepared for some internal conflicts as cherished beliefs and established methods may need reevaluation. This could pertain to personal habits or professional approaches. Embrace flexibility and consider thoughtful changes to ensure continued progress.

Lucky number 7 | **Lucky colour** Pink
Lucky day Sunday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

This week promises a rich sense of emotional fulfillment. You may find yourself reconnecting with loved ones from your past, nurturing bonds that have stood the test of time. Expect a dynamic period ahead, with the possibility of embarking on an international journey related to a fresh professional role. Harness your creative energies this week, as they are peaking and could lead to significant achievements. Midweek brings recognition for your recent efforts, enhancing your sense of accomplishment. You'll notice an expansive outlook positively impacting your decisions. As the week closes, a new employment opportunity may arise, alongside a burst of inspiration to launch a new project. This could set the stage for future success. Overall, the week holds promise for professional growth, fulfilling travel, and joyful connections.

Lucky number 11 | **Lucky colour** Blue
Lucky day Wednesday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This week promises a significant shift in your daily routine, possibly affecting either your professional environment or personal life. You may find yourself moving to a favored location or adapting to a new role. As you anticipate these changes, you'll find your thoughts deeply engaged in planning for what lies ahead. By midweek, take a moment to appreciate the abundance life offers, as your well-being and satisfaction contribute to your allure and positive demeanor. Achieving a balance between a joyful home and fulfilling work life reflects your resilience and determination. Your steadfastness in facing challenges has set the stage for you to enjoy the rewards of your efforts. Embrace this period as an opportunity for growth and self-reflection, leading to deeper insights and personal development.

Lucky number 4 | **Lucky colour** Brown
Lucky day Saturday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

Your persistent efforts are about to pay off, manifesting as tangible successes. You have a profound sense of stability and security, which reflects in your demeanor, professional endeavors, and interpersonal relationships. Your innovative spirit and enthusiasm for your work empower you to master your environment. Those around you, including peers and team members, appreciate your sincerity and commitment to collective well-being. You radiate positivity and skillfully navigate challenges through informed decisions, leaning on historical precedents and strategic negotiation. Professionals in advisory roles excel during this time, harnessing their strength, discipline, and accumulated wisdom. With your dedication, self-assurance, and solid foundation, you are well-positioned to succeed. This is an excellent time to maximize your capabilities and achieve.

Lucky number 10 | **Lucky colour** Lemon
Lucky day Monday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

Currently, you're encountering a challenging phase where vital aspects of your existence demand urgent attention and a balanced approach. As the week progresses, you might find yourself feeling disengaged and desiring a break from the hustle, prioritizing personal needs over others. It's important to value your current blessings and concentrate on savoring the here and now. Your progress in various areas might seem stalled, potentially leading to a sense of confusion. Beware of negative influences from those around you, and be proactive to counteract their effects. Be cautious with new romantic or professional offers this week as they could lead to complications. Though times seem tough, it's not the end. Strive for equilibrium and unity in your actions and relationships.

Lucky number 6 | **Lucky colour** Orange
Lucky day Tuesday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

This week heralds a burst of inspiration and the potential for a spiritual renaissance. Harnessing this dynamic surge creatively could yield significant achievements. However, prudence is advised as your actions will come under scrutiny, potentially leading to complications. It's wise to monitor your actions closely. The outcomes of your recent and past efforts are shaping your future prospects, aligning with the principles of karma. A significant triumph may be on the horizon, rewarding your justified endeavors. Should you encounter any legal challenges, they are likely to resolve favorably. A deep sense of thankfulness for the blessings in your life will pervade, culminating in celebratory gatherings with loved ones towards the week's end. You'll find yourself invigorated and exuberantly connected with those around you.

Lucky number 12 | **Lucky colour** Magenta
Lucky day Wednesday



CANCER June 21-July 22

This week, there is a notable surge in impulsive behavior and a tendency to rush decisions, which could lead to chaos and loss of control. It's essential to manage your emotions and reflect deeply on your challenges. You might feel compelled to distance yourself from your current environment, possibly through a quickly organized trip. Be prepared for unexpected disagreements that could arise. Now is not the optimum period to initiate new ventures. You will overcome various challenges, whether they are mental, physical, emotional, or spiritual. As the week closes, you'll likely turn towards spiritual growth, finding answers and peace through reflective practices. Engaging in spiritual rituals and acts of kindness will provide you with great comfort and grounding.

Lucky number 20 | **Lucky colour** Lavender
Lucky day Thursday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

This week heralds a period of fruitful outcomes and vibrant energy. You may find yourself yearning for advanced learning opportunities, with prospects from abroad presenting themselves enticingly. Despite the fierce competition, your perseverance and tenacity will see you through successfully. Your professional life might require relocation or travel, but this shift promises to align with your broader ambitions and prove beneficial. Exercise caution in interactions with colleagues to avoid unnecessary disputes. Overall, this week is exceptionally favorable for both your career and personal relationships. Your innate potential and creativity are at a peak—harness these qualities to maximize every opportunity. Additionally, your personal life could see significant growth or a joyful addition. A sense of renewed purpose may invigorate your pursuits, leading you toward exciting and innovative ventures.

Lucky number 2 | **Lucky colour** Mint
Lucky day Friday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

This week promises to be enjoyable with a positive start and finish. Expect harmony and joy within the family sphere. Relationships, both romantic and platonic, are likely to thrive alongside comfortable living conditions. Children will experience success, and longstanding matters, particularly those related to family assets, are poised to reach favorable resolutions. However, potential disagreements with colleagues might arise. Facing these challenges with constructive strategies will be key. Your patience and wise handling of differing viewpoints will help navigate any tensions smoothly. As the week concludes, you'll discover effective solutions to your concerns, paving the way for new opportunities. With confidence in your capabilities and a persistent positive outlook, you're set to triumph over the week's challenges. Enjoy the week!

Lucky number 9 | **Lucky colour** Teal
Lucky day Sunday

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Om – The Shabda Brahman

Today is Guru Purnima, dedicated to the torch bearer in one's life - the Guru - in the annular Hindu calendar. Heartfelt salutation to my revered Guru on this solemn occasion. For, he in his own ingenious ways helped me rise over the limitations of mind and emotion, expand my vision, making me worth serving as guiding spirit to many. Also, I greet other Gurus who have been enlightening their disciples. The importance of the word: 'Guru' is hidden in its very construct. Guru is made of two syllables - 'Gu' meaning darkness/ignorance and 'Ru' implies light. Guru, thus, is the one who enlightens to remove darkness/ignorance. Here, it is important to understand the difference between a teacher and a Guru. Teacher is academically aware of a particular subject or discipline, which he carries forward to the students. Guru, on the other hand, who through his intense sadhana, gets over the limitations of mind and emotions, whence he has access to the whole landscape of mind, which knows no limits. He then explores and realises the truths of life - both eternal, which includes even subtle

realities operative at unseen level, and living realities of life. Only such realised masters could intuitively comprehend the soundless sound Om.

Now coming back to the subject matter under discussion since the previous issue, we have seen why the sound note Om is also termed as Shabda-Brahman. Shabda in Sanskrit means word - both written and as heard. The word Brahman here means the primal-source and effective cause of all creations.

The Shabda-Brahman concept is laid down in the Vedas as:
Prajapatirvai idam-asit
Tasya Vagdwitiya asit
Vagvai paramam Brahman

In the beginning was Prajapati which is another name assigned to the source and effective cause of all creations. The word Prajapati is made of two words: Praja and Pati, respectively meaning the subjects and their lord, the two when combined means lord of all creations. The word came second - spoken of as second because it was first potentially in and then emerged as the evident power from Him. The word is that ultimate Brahman.



This finds resonance even in the Biblical scripture, the fourth Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word; and the Word was with God; and the Word was God". The 'Om?' symbol, as we see, is written as the Hindi letter 'ॐ' (Om) towards its main body. On top of it is placed a crescent having a dot within, which is spoken of as Hindi letter 'm?'. The

crescent sign with the dot within symbolises particular action or the stirring at the primal source. The main body - 'ॐ' (Om) reflects what followed thereafter, which eventually culminated in the manifest plural of name and form. Supposedly following Pranava (causal stress) at the primal source, arose Nada

(sound). The crescent here symbolises the arousal of causal stress. When the causal-stress gathered up and gravitated further, energy streams got released with a bang. Here, the dot within the crescent has two-fold implications. First, it symbolises the dense singular source where from the world process took off. Second, it symbolises centralisation of causal stress and issuance of energy streams there from. The second part, 'A' (U) symbolises the manifest energy as the world experience. A question will naturally arise in curious human mind: "Why and how the scope for causal-stress at the primal-source, believed to be originally in equilibrated state?" The dictionary meaning describes 'stress', as a system of forces applied to a body. Evidently, when two things attract or distract each other, will lead to stress (the resulting force arising thereof). It is therefore possible that mutual attraction/distract amongst energy particles constituting the primal source, hitherto in equilibrated state, would be subject to stress. This phenomenon being the self-activated cause of all

further actions in the world process is termed as causal stress. This, when gathered momentum, and got centralised, found issuance of forces with a roaring 'Hum' sound. Here, a mention about the state of atom, seemingly inactive, becomes imperative to make things clear. At the centre of an atom lies the positively charged nucleus, which apparently remains in an inactive state. Negatively charged electrons circle around the nucleus. The bonding energy between the two provides stability to the atom. If the bonding energy gets any way disturbed, the atom releases enormous energy. Similarly, it is very well possible that stress arising out of mutual attraction amongst the energy particles constituting the primal source would have disturbed the bonding energy, which had earlier held these particles in equilibrated state.

The issue continues.....

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