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NTA takes SC call on NEET result

Citywise results published

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELH

National The Na Testing (NTA) 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

elsewhere. Candidates who appeared for the NEET UG 2024 can check their results on the official website of NTA N E E T

than those writing the exam

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'



Representational image

marks on its website without revealing their identities. A bench comprising Chief Iustice of India DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra

results be published separately by city and centre by today noon. The top court will resume hearing the arguments on

instructed that the NÉET UG

Monday on a batch of pleas seeking cancellation, re-test and a court-monitored probe into the allegations of malpractice in prestigious exam.

The bench comprising of Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra ordered for announcement of the results separately, city and centrewise by Saturday noon. The NEET-UG the

court had also stressed that examination can only be done on a concrete footing that sanctity has been lost on a large scale.



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



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Airports function normal, full recovery awaited

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

irport systems in India resumed Apperations 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-tobe-delivered baggage means full of days. Additionally, the process of rebooking affected passengers or "working normally" and all issues related processing refunds will begin as the to travel adjustments and refund systems are back up.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation on Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan



systems across airports have started "working normally" and all issues related

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 working normally. Flight operations are going smoothly now,"

At Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Terminal 3, passengers Airport's experienced some improvement today, but a few problems persist as the Digi Yatra system, remained non-operational.

Monsoon health woes

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The monsoon season's fluctuating humidity levels, along with contaminated food, water, 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 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 '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.

UPSC chairman Manoj resigns

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.

PNS NEW DELHI

TPSC 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

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

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 drawing members the attention towards Parliamentary customs and

conventions 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 Hind', 'Vande Mataram' or

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

Monsoon Session begins on

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

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 moni-toring Kejriwal's blood sugar

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

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 jal.
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 pre-scribed 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



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 mgl, while the CGMS reading

done before lunch at 12.30 PM was 82 mgl 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

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 AAP leaders protest felling of

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

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

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 Buddh 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 Bahlolpur 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 subinspectors, eight head constables/constables/women moven constables, along with the added.

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 Commissionerate Gautam Buddh Nagar area, it said

The Gautam Buddh 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

for upcoming Kanwar Yatra: Police 1,100 trees at Southern Ridge



STAFF REPORTER NEW

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 percent 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 its photos on social media.

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

The student claimed the

"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

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 Namo Bharat to visit RRTS project | Many clinics, hospitals employing

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs Tokhan Sahu on Saturday travelled on the Namo 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 expe-

Train.

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

Bharat train. Officials informed him that the Namo 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 pur-

Several cutting-edge tech nologies 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, Namo Bharat trains are operating on a 34 km section between Sahibabad and Modinagar North, serving passengers at 8 stations. The Namo Bharat train service is on track for expansion across the entire Delhi-Meerut RRTS corridor

unqualified medical staff: DMC

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

 $T^{
m he\ Delhi\ Medical\ Council}_{
m (DMC)}$ on Saturday said it has come to its notice that many health facilities, including hospitals and nursing homes, are employing unqual ified 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 rackets, 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 carrying 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

Vijender criticises AAP Govt for failure to address pollution crisis

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

 $F^{ormer\ Delhi\ BJP\ President}_{and\ MLA\ Vijender\ Gupta}$ 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 Gupta emphasised that the

Kejriwal government appears indifferent to the health of the eople and is jeopardising pubic 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

constables on separate charges of bribery

CBI arrests SI, two head

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 actiontaken report in a court case, the officials said. The amount was

reduced to Rs 2.5 lakh during negotiations, the CBIhas 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

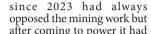


Sai govt misleading on **Hasdeo Arand: Congress**

Congress in Chhattisgarh on Saturday claimed that the Sai government was misleading on the clearance of mining work in eco sensitive Hasdeo Arand.

PCC chief Deepak Baij said that it was annoying that on one hand the Chief Minister denies permission of mining work in the tribal area of Hasdeo Arand, on the other the Rajasthan counterpart of Sai, Bhajanlal Sharma, thanks him on his social media handle for approving the mining project. Baij further said that BJP

while being in opposition





now taken a U-turn. The stand of Congress was always against the mining

"The permission granted for mining work was against the interest of local tribal population

who will face eviction" work in the forest area and it

had also passed a resolution

against it in the Chhattisgarh

state Assembly when it was in power, the Congress leader

The permission granted for mining work was against the interest of local tribal population who will face eviction, he further added.

He further charged that under the umbrella of Sai government, Adani group is felling trees in Hasdeo Arand for Rajasthan government and is acting against the local

demanded clarification from the Sai government over the issue and said that being a tribal, the Chief Minister should act in the favour of tribals of the

Top Maoist ultra gunned down in Chhattisgarh

STAFF REPORTER

A Maoist carrying a bounty of Rs 1 lakh on his head was killed in a gunfight with security forces in Sukma district of Chhattisgarh on Saturday early morning.

The gun battle ensued around 5.30 am in a forest area on a hill near Tumargatta and Singavaram villages under Jagargunda police station limits when a team of the security personnel was out on an anti-Naxalite operation, Sukma Superintendent of Police Kiran Chavan said.

Guard and Bastar Fighters launched the operation on Friday based on the inputs about the presence of Maoists.

After the skirmish ended, the body of a Maoist identified

The District Reserve



as Sodi Narsa was recovered from the spot.

Narsa was the Surpanguda Revolutionary Party Committee (RPC) militia commander of the outlawed Maoist outfit.

A muzzle-loading gun, a

walkie-talkie, 2 gelatin rods and explosive materials were recovered from the encounter

A total of 142 Maoist have been killed so far by the security forces in Chhattisgarh

Riders' meet to beware youths over ill effect of drugs

STAFF REPORTER RAIPUR

 $I_{\text{o r g a n i s a t i o n}}^{\text{n a first, a voluntary}}$ Chhattisgarh Riding Club will create awareness among the youngsters over the ill effect of drugs in a riders' meet programme to be held next month in Raipur city.

The riders will do so through the Raipur police's 'Nijaat' campaign, an anti-drug/narcotics and

de-addiction campaign against drug, narcotics and liquor

During the programme, Raipur Police will throw light on the traffic rules too.

As many as 1000 participants including more than 350 riders across the nation will participate in the event to be held at café Golden Shot on August 4.

Also, the objective behind conducting riders' meet is to beware the people towards road safety.

National 'Education Week' from tomorrow



STAFF REPORTER

To celebrate the anniversary of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, 'Education Week' will be held in schools across Chhattisgarh from Monday to convey its spirit.

There will be a variety of activities to promote culture, digital skill development, the nvironment, community

participation, and more.
Plantation drives will be held under the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke laam' campaign. Feasts will be onducted in all schools, and tudents will take an oath to participate in the Ullas

Govt issues advisory on water-borne diseases

STAFF REPORTER

With rising cases of water-borne diseases like malaria, dengue, typhoid and diarrhea, state government on Saturday issued an advisory to make people aware how to handle the diseases.

A press communiqué from the health department said: "For prevention, along with various control and preventive activities, awareness campaigns are being run in the general public to eliminate the breeding sites of mosquitoes."

As per the advisory issued, an appeal has been made to each household to empty the pot trays, coolers, fridges and water tanks. These should be then dried to destroy the mosquito eggs and larvae.
Along with it, people are



Special cleanliness drive are executed across the state to contain the contagious diseases

water collect in old tyres, pots and other structures in the premises of the houses. Dengue mosquito breeds only in clean water, it said.

Diarrhea and typhoid can be prevented with safe drinking water, sanitation, breastfeeding as well as appropriate nutrition and hand-washing, the advisory

The department had issued a circular to all the Chief Medical and Health Officers (CMHOs) and Civil Surgeons of districts and instructed to publicize the awareness against diarrhea and malaria.

Mitanins and Anganwadi vorkers would undertake distribution of ORS packets to households having under-five year children in their



Experts stress need for boosting preventive health as lifespan is set to increase will not be able to cope with

AGENCIES

There's an urgent need to boost preventive health to prevent a large burden of diseases, even as a recent study showed an increase in lifespan by 2050, said experts on Saturday.

findings from the Global Burden of Disease Study (GBD) 2021, published recently in The Lancet journal, global life expectancy is expected to increase by 4.9 years in men and 4.2 years in women by 2050. This is despite the geopolitical, metabolic, and environmental threats.

However, people are expected to spend more years in poor health with cardiovascular diseases, cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and

"Unless preventive health more seriously, our health systems the huge burden of the disease," said Lancelot Pinto, Consultant Pulmonologist and Epidemiologist, P. D. Hinduja Hospital and MRC, Mahim.

"Historically, as countries prosper, nutrition gets better get robust, infectious diseases tend to decline. However, with prosperity comes the dietary and lifestyle changes that can harm," Pinto said. The study predicted that

like today, ischemic heart disease will continue to be the number one cause of mortality globally. Strokes will continue to be the number two cause of mortality, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease will be the third most common cause of mortality worldwide even in 2050.

As far as the Indian population is concerned, the study predicted an increased burden of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) a common lung disease. "India is one of the

leading producers and consumers of tobacco in the world, and COPD, often associated with smoking, is likely to manifest strongly as the population gets older," Pinto said, while adding air biomass fuels and poor lung development in childhood as added risk factors.

"Overall chest disease burden in India will be much higher than what the West because we continue to struggle with the earlier problems of infectious diseases, including tuberculosis, and we have started seeing a massive increase in the new age diseases like lung cancer," said Arvind Kumar, Chairman, Institute of Chest Surgery, Chest Onco Surgery and Lung Transplantation, Medanta

Hospital, Gurugram. He said, "COPD burden overall may be much higher than what this report has predicted".

The report also predicted the increased risk of ischemic heart disease, also known as coronary artery disease.

This leads to "obstructive blockages in the artery due to deposition of atherosclerotic supply to the heart muscle results in angina as a warning signal. A sudden blood clot formation on top of these blockages can result in a heart attack", said Atul Mathur, Executive Director, Interventional Cardiology & Chief of Cath Lab, Fortis Escorts Heart Institute, Okhla Road, New Delhi. He said that a sudden blood clot formation on top of these blockages can result in a heart attack.

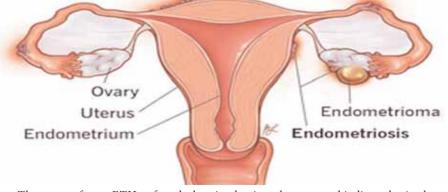
The experts thus stressed the need for increasing preventive measures including healthy eating, regular exercise, and good control of hypertension, diabetes, and cholesterol.

Swiss researchers develop a hydrogel implant to treat endometriosis

AGENCIES

Tn a first, Swiss researchers developed a hydrogel implant that will help in contraception and preventing or halting the spread

endometriosis.Approximately 10 per cent of women suffer from endometriosis, a condition whose exact cause remains unclear. Women with the condition have tissue similar to the lining of the uterus growing outside the uterus. It is believed that during menstruation, blood flows back through the fallopian tubes into the abdominal cavity, carrying uterine cells that can lead to inflammation and scar tissue.



The team from ETH Zurich and Empa in Switzerland initially focused on developing a hydrogel as a new contraceptive. Later they

found that implanting the hydrogel could occlude the fallopian tubes and help prevent endometriosis. Hydrogels, made of a

water-binding plastic, have previously been used in contact lenses, and drug delivery

The new soft gel, similar

to a jelly baby, swells from about two millimetres to over double its size upon implantation, creating a barrier against sperm and blood. It has to be a soft gel so as to "not impact native tissue and is not treated and rejected as a foreign body", said lead author Alexandre Anthis from ETH Zurich. "We wanted to ensure that the implant was compatible as well as stable, Anthis said. The gel can be easily removed using UV light or a special solution, avoiding invasive surgery.

Further research is needed to assess the longterm behaviour of the hydrogel implant during physical activities, the team

BOB donates wheelchairs to AIIMS Raipur



STAFF REPORTER

RAIPUR

Ahead of its 117th foundation day, the Bank Baroda donated wheelchairs to AIIMS Raipur on Saturday.

A press release said that

the bank made the donation

as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

Deputy General Manager and Chhattisgarh in-charge, Dr. Ramesh Kumar Mohanty, and other senior officials inaugurated the function.

E-TENDER NOTICE 11. Tender Notice No.: E-R-T-45-24-25

Name of Work:- Improvement of Road Surface & Fencing of Level Crossing Nos. DD-4, DD-5, DD-8, DD-10, DD-19, DD-24, DD-27, DD-33,

DD-46, DD-48, DD-59, DD-62 & DD-55(ROB) under the jurisdiction of Tender Value: Rs. 51,25,894/-

12. Tender Notice No.:E-R-T-46-24-25 Dated: 12.07.2024

Name of Work: Reconditioning of

worn out Point and Crossing, SEJ and Tongue Rail in under the jurisdiction of ADEN/II/Bhilai.

Tender Value: Rs. 20,68,182/-EMD: Rs. 41,400/-

Submission of Tender: Up to 11.00 Hrs. on 13.08.2024, Opening o Tender: At 11.00 Hrs. on 13.08.2024 For further details/purchase of tende document, eligibility criteria & the complete details for the above work lease contact office of the Sr.DEN Co.)/Raipur or refer/download tende document which is available on our website: www.ireps.gov.in

Divisional Engineer-II PR/R/ENGG/PC/81 S.E.C. Rly. Raipur f South East Central Railway X@ secrail

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778 Indian students return from violence-hit Bangladesh: MEA

A total of 778 Indian students have returned to India from Bangladesh through various land transit points, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Saturday as the neighbouring country contin-ued to reel under deadly clashes over a controversial jobquota system. More than 50 people have, so far, died.

Indian missions in Bangladesh are in regular touch with the authorities concerned to ensure the safety and security of Indian nationals and students, the MEA said.

"Thus far, 778 Indian students have returned to India through various land ports. In addition, around 200 students have returned home by regular flight services through Dhaka and Chittagong airports," the min-

Bangladesh is reeling under deadly clashes, with protesting students demanding that the Sheikh Hasina-led government scrap the controversial jobquota system. More than 50 people have been killed in the clashes that broke out weeks



MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal on Friday said the total number of Indian nationals in Bangladesh is estimated to be around 15,000.

The MEA said the Indian High Commission in Dhaka and the assistant high commissions in Chittagong, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Khulna have been assisting the return of Indian nationals

"In coordination with the local authorities, measures are being taken by the High Commission and the Assistant High Commissions to facilitate safe travel to the border crossing points along the IndiaBangladesh international border," it said in a statement.

"The MEA is also coordinating with civil aviation, immigration, land ports and BSF authorities to ensure a smooth passage for our citizens," it

The MEA said the Indian High Commission and assistant high commissions are in regular touch with more than 4,000 students remaining in various universities in Bangladesh and are providing necessary assistance. Students from Nepal and Bhutan have also been assisted with their crossing into India on request, it said.

India, New Zealand to boost trade, economic ties

Prime Minister Narendra Modi received a congratulatory call from his New counterpart Christopher Luxon on his reelection as the two leaders agreed to advance their bilateral ties in sectors such as trade and economic cooperation, animal husbandry, pharmaceuticals, education and space among others. Modi's office said in a statement on Saturday both leaders noted that India-New

Zealand relationship is

anchored in shared democratic values and close people-topeople ties, reiterating their firm commitment to take bilateral cooperation to new heights in the years to come. It said, "Highlighting the momentum generated by the 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, animal husbandry, pharmaceuticals, education, space among others." Modi thanked Luxon for looking after the interests of



the Indian diaspora in New Zealand and was assured of his continued efforts towards their security and well-being. He later said in a social media post, "I thank Prime Minister Christopher Luxon for his call and warm felicitations. Reiterated our firm commitment to take forward India-

rooted in shared democratic values and people-to-people ties. Appreciate his efforts towards the security and wellbeing of the Indian diaspora in New Zealand." Modi returned to power for a third straight term in the recent Lok Šabha polls.

Indian Armed Forces personnel to vie for top honours at Olympics

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

wenty four (24) Armed Twenty rour (24) Annual Forces personnel are among the 117 Indian athletes who are all set to make the nation proud at the Paris Olympics beginning July 26. Among these 24 athletes, 22 are men, including star Javelin Thrower Subedar Neeraj Chopra, and two are women, which marks the maiden participation of female Service athletes at the Olympics, defence ministry said here on Saturday.

Chopra, the 2020 Tokyo Olympics Gold medalist, will again vie for top honours as his participation in the Paris Olympics comes on the back of exceptional performances which earned him a Gold medal each at the 2023 Asian Games, 2023 World Athletics Championship, Diamond League, and 2024 Paavo Nurmi Games. 2022 Commonwealth Games

Bronze medalist Havildar Jaismine Lamboria and 2023 Wrestling Championships Bronze medalist Reetika Hooda are

the two women Service personnel who are taking part in They will feature in Boxing

and Wrestling respectively.
Amit Panghal (Boxing): Tajinderpal Singh Toor (Shot-Put); Avinash Mukund Sable (3000m Steeplechase); Muhammed Anas Yahiya, Muhammed Ajmal, Santhosh Kumar Tamilarasan Mijo Chacko Kurian (4X400M Men's Relay); Abdulla Aboobacker (Triple Jump); Tarundeep Rai and Dhiraj Bommadevara (Archery) and Sandeep Singh (Shooting) are also among the Service personnel who

The participation of the Service personnel at the Paris Olympics

would aim to bring laurels to

the country.

underscores the Armed Forces' commitment to promoting sporting excellence and fostering a culture of athleticism, while enhancing the sports consciousness across the nation.

As the country gears up to witness the performances of these athletes, it stands united in extending best wishes and unwavering support to

SC stays death penalty awarded to convict in rape and murder case

The Supreme Court has stayed the execution of the death sentence awarded to a man convicted for raping and murdering a 30-year-old law student in Kerala in 2016. A bench headed by Justice B R Gavai passed the order while hearing the convict's plea challenging the Kerala High Court's May 20 verdict that upheld his conviction and confirmed the death sentence handed to him by a trial "The execution of the death

sentence shall remain stayed pending the hearing and final disposal of the present appeal," the bench, also comprising Justices Sanjay Karol and K V Viswanathan, said in its order passed on July 16. The high court had confirmed the death sentence awarded to Muhammed Ameer-Ul-Islam, a migrant



age at the time of the incident

It had noted in its verdict that the facts were deeply disturbing and "represent an egregious violation of human dignity and sanctity of life, for after committing rape in an inhumane manner, the victim has also been murdered horrendously".

According to the prosecu-

labourer who was 22 years of tion, the convict had barged into the victim's house on tion to rape her and when she resisted, he attacked her with

> The prosecution further said the convict had escaped to his home state Assam the following day and was arrested in June 2016.

April 28, 2016 with an intena knife and inflicted injuries upon her.

In its order, the apex court

said the original case record be summoned from the trial

court and the high court. The bench directed that the State shall place before it the reports of all the probation officers relating to the appellant within eight weeks. Besides passing other direc-

tions, it said the superintendent of prison, Central Prison and Correctional Home, Viyyur, shall submit within eight weeks a report regarding the nature of work performed by the appellant while in jail and a report with regard to his conduct and behaviour while in prison.

"The Government Medical College, Thrissur shall constitute a suitable team for the purpose of carrying out a psychological evaluation of the appellant," it said, adding that the report of the evaluation be submitted before it within eight weeks. The top court has posted the matter for further hearing after 12 weeks.

In its judgment, the high court had said, "Before parting with the case, it is necessary to observe that it is with a heavy heart that we uphold the ultimate penalty of death sentence to the accused in the

'We hope and fervently believe that this judgment would serve as a resolute deterrent to those who would consider perpetrating such abhorrent acts in future, so that persons similarly placed like the victim, who are innumerable in our society, would live with a sense of security and without fear," it had observed.

The trial court had convicted the man for offences punishable under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, including that of rape and murder, and sentenced him to

Plea in apex court for steps to eradicate superstition, sorcery

PTI NFW DFI HI

A plea has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking directions to the Centre and states for taking appropriate steps to eradicate the menace of superstition, sorcery and other similar practices. The plea says a strict anti-

superstition and sorcery law is urgently needed to do away with the unscientific acts prevalent in the society that adversely impact the community and also to prevent fake seers from exploiting innocent people. The petition, filed by advocate

Ashwini Kumar Úpadhyay, has also sought directions to the Centre and states for taking steps to develop a scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform among the citizens in the spirit of Article 51A of the Constitution, which deals with fundamental duties. Petitioner is filing this writ

petition as PIL under Article 32 seeking appropriate writ, order or direction to Centre and states to take appropriate steps to control superstition and sorcery in order to secure the fundamental rights guaranteed under Articles 14, 21, 25 of the Constitution," the plea, filed through advocate Ashwani Kumar Dubey, says. It has alternatively sought a direction to the Centre to constitute an expert committee for ascertaining the feasibility of criminalising super-stition, sorcery and other similar practices by adding a chapter in the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS).

"A stringent anti-superstition and sorcery law is urgently needed to deal with the problem of irrational views prevalent in society. However, all of them cannot be eradicated by the force of law only. For this, a mental change is necessary," the plea says.

It says bringing a legislation to deal with this social issue shall only mean half the battle won. "A meaningful reform will need to increase awareness among the masses through information campaigns and by roping in community/religious leaders to debunk the myths surrounding such practices, the plea says. It says some superstitious

practices, which are brutal, dehumanising and exploitative, need to be dealt with by a law specifically addressing

It is disconcerting how UPSC chief has resigned prematurely: Congress

NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday I said "multiple scandals' that have plagued the Union Commission(UPSC)is a cause of national concern and claimed that its chairman Manoj Soni, who resigned citing personal reasons, has apparently been "nudged out" given the current controversy in which the Commission is

involved.

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 UPSC after probationary IAS officer Puja Khedkar issue came to the Congress president

Mallikarjun Kharge alleged the BJP-RSS is systematically indulging in an institutional takeover of India's constitutional bodies, thereby damaging their reputation, integrity and autonomy.

"The multiple scandals that have plagued the UPSC is a cause of national concern. PM Modi and his Minister of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions must come clean. Numerous cases of unqualified individuals faking caste and medical certificates seemed to have duped a 'foolproof' system," Kharge said in a social media post.

This is a direct affront to the genuine aspirations of lakhs of aspirants, including SC, ST, OBC, EWS candidates who work hard, burning midnight

Services Examinations, he

"It is disconcerting how the UPSC Chairperson has resigned prematurely, five years before his term ends. Why was his resignation kept secret for a month? Is there any connection between the numerous scandals and the resignation?" Kharge said. This 'blue-eyed-gem' of Modi ji was brought in from Gujarat and promoted to being the Chairperson of UPSC " he said. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel had referred to the civil servants as the 'Steel frame of India', but the Modi government's desperate attempt to control every aspect of governance has punched holes in the same, Kharge alleged. "This needs to be thoroughly

level so that such cases of fraudulent malpractices in UPSC admissions don't happen in the future," he said. Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said the UPSC is the most reputed examination in the country and the people who come out of it are the most important pillars of the governance sys-



of the country and the functioning of our day-to-day governance is linked to the professional system of this institution," she said. "I have personally seen how hard the youth prepare for this exam, with lots of dreams in their eyes and passion in their

larities in the processes of the UPSC is very surprising, she Even a single irregularity in this important selection

process raises big questions and hurts the dreams and faith of lakhs of youth, Priyanka Gandhi said. "It is important that the pub-

lic and the youth preparing for the UPSC get answers to these questions. Are the people who have come to the higher posts of the UPSC through political appointments responsible for this? If yes, then when will action be taken against them?" she said.

In a system in which there is high level competition for every single mark, is it right to wash one's hands off by just conducting a superficial investigation, Priyanka Gandhi

The system of fake certificates

hurts the opportunities available to the candidates of SC, ST, OBC, handicapped and EWS category, she said. Can't a solid institutional mechanism for checking certificates be developed? she asked.

There is a dire need for changes to make the UPSC system more transparent and authentic, Priyanka Gandhi said and asked whether this should be considered.

'Questions related to the UPSC are questions related to trust in the government and administration of this country and the dreams of crores of our youth. It is important to get an answer from the government on this," she asserted. Congress general secretary incharge communications Jairam Ramesh also slammed

sanctity and autonomy of all constitutional bodies have been badly damaged since 2014 -- the year Narendra Modi became the prime min-

Reacting to the development, Ramesh said, "The sanctity, character, autonomy, and professionalism of all constitutional bodies have been badly damaged since 2014. But at times even the self-anointed non-biological PM is forced to say enough in enough."

He said, "Mr Modi brought in one of his favourite 'academics' from Gujarat as a UPSC member in 2017 and made him chairman in 2023 with a six vear term.

But this so-called distinguished gentleman has now resigned five years before the expiry of his term.

Include Moidams of Ahom dynasty in world heritage list, UNESCO told

investigated at the highest

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

The Paris-Daseu Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOry bodies to the UNESCO has recommended 'favourably' for inscription of Moidams -- a mound-burial system of the Ahom dynasty in Assam -- be included in the World Heritage List, an official from the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) has said.

"This means it fulfils all those parameters. The ICOMOS experts had visited the nominated sites," Janhwij Sharma, Additional Director General, ASI, said, explaining that a site has to fulfil certain conditions in order to get the "world heritage" tag from the UNESCO. His statement at a press conference came a day before the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee (WHC), being held in the national capital from July 21 to July 31. It

will examine 27 nominations from across the world, including 19 cultural sites, four natural sites and two mixed sites, according to information shared by the culture min-

Of these, India's nomination -"Moidams" -- for the year

2023-24 is set to be examined under the category of cultural property.at a press conference here on Friday, Sharma, Additional Director General, ASI, said a site has to fulfil certain conditions in order to get the "world heritage" tag from the UNESCO.

"The ICOMOS has recommended favourably for inscription of Moidams, which means it fulfils all those parameters," he said.

and permanent representative

of India to the UNESCO, told

Vishal V Sharma, chairperson of the WHC and ambassador

nation is accepted, it will be the first cultural property from the northeast to get a UNESCO tag, adding that the Kaziranga National Park and the Manas National Park fall in the natural and mixed heritage categories respectively. The mound-burial system of

the reporters that if the nomi-

hearts," Priyanka Gandhi said

in a social media post in

the Ahom dynasty has been submitted as India's nomination for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List for the year 2023-24, the Centre informed Parliament in December.

The unique burial mounds, represented by pyramid-like structures known as "moidams", were used by the Tai-Ahom dynasty that ruled Assam for around 600 years. More than 2,000 international and national delegates from over 150 countries are expected to participate in the mega event in Delhi. A number of side events are also being hosted by India as well as some

other countries.

Health Ministry criticises paper on life expectancy in India during Covid

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry has strongly criticised a recent paper published in the academic journal Science Advances, which claimed to analyse life expectancy and mortality trends during the Covid-19 pandemic in India in

The Ministry pointed out critical flaws in the methodology used by the authors of the paper. It took note of the authors analysis for analysing a subset of households from the NFHS-5 conducted between January and April 2021 and extrapolating these findings to the entire country. The Ministry argued that this subset, covering only 23% of households from 14 states, cannot be considered representative of the entire nation. The ministry defended the



accuracy of India's Civil Registration System (CRS), claiming it captures over 99% of deaths. They cited data showing an increase in death registrations from 2019 to 2020, similar to previous years, attributing excess deaths not solely to Covid-19 but also to increased reporting and a growing population.

The Ministry also disputed the paper's claim of 11.9 lakh excess deaths in 2020 compared to the previous year, calling it a "gross and mis-leading overestimate." They

emphasised that excess mortality due to the pandemic does not equate to deaths directly caused by Covid-19. Pointing out inconsistencies in the paper's findings, particularly regarding the demo-graphic distribution of excess mortality, the Ministry noted that other data sources consistently show higher mortality rates in males and older age groups due to Covid-19, whereas the paper suggested higher mortality among females and younger age groups, which they found "unexplainable." The ministry concluded that

the paper is methodologically flawed and its results are deemed untenable and unacceptable. They expressed strong disagreement with the paper's conclusions and emphasised the robustness of India's data systems for mortality reporting.

CrowdStrike failure highlights fragility of globally connected technology

irlines, banks, hospitals and Anther 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

"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

Police imposed a strict curfew across Bangladesh and mili-

tary 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

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 imme-

diately clear whether they all died

Another 22 people died

Thursday as protesting students

attempted to impose a "complete

shutdown" of the country.

hundreds injured.

on Friday

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

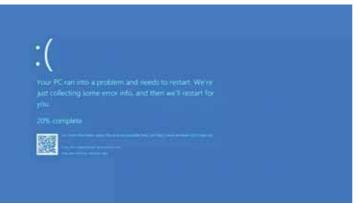
While not everyone is a client of CrowdStrike and its platform known as Falcon, it is one of the leading cybersecurity providers, particularly in transportation, healthcare, banking and other sectors that have a lot at stake in keeping their computer systems working.

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

Despite curfew, deaths mount

in Bangladesh student protests



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

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 his toric 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 tech-

nical fix, he said, it's impact could be

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

over," he said. Forrester analyst Allie Mellen credited CrowdStrike for clearly telling 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

to forgive them, and this will blow

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.

Houthis strike another ship in Gulf of Aden

PTI SINGAPORE

A Singapore-flagged vessel was damaged in an attack allegedly by Houthi militants southeast 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

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 northeast 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

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

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.

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.

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 Some 800 inmates fled from a Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina prison in Narsingdi, a district 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

north of capital Dhaka, after protesters stormed the jail facility and set it on fire Friday. Meanwhile, ome key government websites, 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

prison in Narsingdi, a district

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 government 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 affil-

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'

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 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, laying out his grievances, and riling 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 Again) extremism," Biden said. ast 10 Democrats joined the cho-Americans know exactly where rus calling on Biden to resign.

Irump 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 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.

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

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.

vote of confidence today UML, Nepal's largest commu-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 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

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

nist 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-Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) have a combined strength of 167, and two other ruling parties, Janata Samajwadi Party and Lokatantrik Samajwadi Party,

Nepal PM Oli likely to win

respectively. With this, the ruling alliance has a strength of 178 in the 275-member HoR.

have seven and four seats

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, Representatives is just 138.
The Chairman of the CPNTherefore, 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 govern-

The three Opposition parties – Prachanda's Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist Centre (CPN-MC), Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), and Communist Party of Nepal-Unified 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 coun-

try has seen 14 governments in the past 16 years after the introduction of Republican system. 13 Palestinians killed in

Iran closer to developing a nuclear bomb: US

Tran is talking more about get-**⊥**ting 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 adminis-

tration 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

move" in a way that signals it has decided to actually devel-

op 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.

not seen a decision by Iran to

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, Israel said it, the United States and other allies shot down 99% of about 300 missiles and drones launched

Israeli strike that killed two Iranian generals. "What we've seen in the past

by Iran following an alleged

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 weeks and months is Iran is material, an explosive device, and you have a nuclear weapon," he said. The United States was watch-

ing "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.

central Gaza strikes a rare moment of hope in war ravaged Gaza, after a medical

AP ■ DEIR-AL-BALAH

t least 13 people were killed Ain 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

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

said Dr. Khalil Dajran.

has been placed in an incubator,

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY

MARINE DEPARTMENT MARINE DEPARTMENT NO. MD/ACCTS/WK/R-08/2024/797 Date: 12.07.2024 <u>E-TENDER CALL NOTICE (E-TCN)</u> Name of the Work: Hiring of 01 no. Mooring

Launch along with operational crew for dai Laurich and with operation for a period of 07 (Seven) years. Total Estimated cost (including Hire Charges and Fuel Cost): Rs.12,11,88,1397-secluding GST. Estimated cost put to tender for hire charges only: Rs.5,16,20,976/-Excluding GST. Last date & time of Submission of Lander through the lander through the lander through the lander through the line highly the lander through the lan 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 dt.06/08/2024 or further details, please log on to the website https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app.

Sd/- Deputy Conservator, Paradip Port Authority

from a shortage of oxygen and PPA/PR/23/2024-2025

India preferred destination for investors, says Goyal

Commerce and Industry
Minister Piyush Goyal on
Saturday appealed to the Indian diaspora of the US to help promote the country as a 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 foreign direct investments.

Goyal also asked the diaspora to participate in making India a developed nation by 2047. "Help promote brand India as

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



fixed deposits, depending on your appetite for risks," he 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 provides 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,

market, banking systems, manufacturing," Goyal said. On clean energy, he said that India has the world's largest renewable energy programme of 500 GW.

> We already have 200 GW and we are ramping it up and may be on Tuesday's budget, let us wait and watch what further initiatives in these directions of sustainability are brought," he said.

Replying to a question about media confusion during the general election, the union minister said "we have" lessons to learn as every election teaches a lot of new things.

"I can assure you that we are all working to understand

changed, what we need to focus on. After an election there is always a period of time when anybody who has performed better expected does have a little arrogance who 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

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,"

Credai wants tax sops for homebuyers to construct affordable houses

 $R^{ ext{ealtors' body Credai}}$ 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 given various recommendations to the government for further growth of the real estate

recommendations emphasise the importance of measures like streamlined approval processes and developers subsidies investing in affordable housing projects, association said.

significant "With 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 platform for sustainable and sustained



Our recommendations are aimed at sustaining demand through a slew of measures, including increasing 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 selfoccupied increasing the deduction limit to Rs 5 lakh from Rs 2 lakh currently. Domnic Romell, President of

CREDAI-MCHI, said the real

measures the sentiment.

He demanded government should finally grant industry status to the sector and take effective steps to

the affordable rejuvenate 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 this revitalise 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

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.

Gaurs 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 expects government to look into its long pending demands of industry status and single window clearance".

Vivek Singhal, CEO of Developers, Smartworld emphasised having singlewindow clearance for real

EPFO officers raise concern over inadequate IT infrastructure

PTI NEW DELHI

 $E_{\text{Officers'}}^{\text{mployees'}} \underset{\text{Association}}{\text{Provident}} \underset{\text{has}}{\text{Fund}}$ Provident Fund sought the Union Labour Minister's intervention to improve the information technology infrastructure of the retirement

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 over the past several weeks, reporting significant system the application's performance 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

has deteriorated, manifesting

frequent 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



well, it stated. The exigency of a comprehensive failures during off-peak hours as overhaul of the EPFO application the apparent for quite some time now, it noted. Despite this critical need,

the implementation of such an overhaul has repeatedly postponed for reasons that remain obscure, the body added.

While the EPFO is a financially robust organisation independent of the g o v e r n m e n t administrative funding, the delay in launching

the 2.0 version of the application software stands in stark contrast to technological

advancements achieved by other the persistent deficiencies of the departments, such as the Income application software and perceived 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

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

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.

unresponsiveness of

management," EPFOA said in the

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

Pearl Global Industries raises ₹149.5 cr through QIP issue

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 HDFC Mutual Fund, HSBC Mutual Fund, ICICI as Prudential Mutual Fund and Goldman Sachs Fund," it said in a statement on Saturday. company

"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

"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.

PGIL is primarily engaged in designing, manufacturing, sourcing, distribution and export of ready to wear apparel for men, women and kids through its domestic and global manufacturing facilities and supply chains. company

manufacturing facilities in India and four PGIL shares closed at Rs

819.50 on BSE on Friday.

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

Ctate-owned Union Bank of SIndia on Saturday reported a 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. 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 general tendency for a softer first quarter in the industry.



Additionally, the reporting quarter also witnessed the general elections, which led to some slack, she added.

On the NIMs front, the CEO said that while the number is higher than the guidance of 2.8-3 per cent, it is a challenge to maintain the number above 3 per cent.

There are pressures from the higher cost funds, she said, pointing to the continuing wedge between deposit and credit growth in the industry, which is keeping the deposit

affirming the earlier guidance of getting credit growth between 11-13 per cent and deposits to increase by 8-10 per

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. It has a pipeline of Rs 54,000 crore of large corporate advances, she said, adding that much of the demand continues to be from state-owned

vet to be witnessed. The large corporate book grew at over 7 per cent during the quarter, while the growth in

companies and private capex is

education and gold loans was The bank is comfortable on the liquidity front and has an the highest at over 40 per cent each, she said, adding that retail excess statutory liquidity ratio now constitutes 56 per cent of

wholesale. On the asset quality front, the fresh slippages came at Rs 2,318 crore, and the gross nonperforming 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-I 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

Oberoi Realty net profit jumps 82% to ₹584.51 cr

PTI NEW DELHI

Oreported an 82 per cent increase in its consolidated net profit to Rs 584.51 crore for the first quarter of the current fiscal on higher income.

Its net profit stood at Rs 321.64 crore in the year-ago period. The total income also rose to

Rs 1,441.95 crore in the April-June period of 2024-25 from Rs 933.56 crore in the corresponding period of the previous year, according to a regulatory filing on Friday. Vikas Oberoi, Chairman and Managing Director, Oberoi Realty, said, "India continues to be the fastest growing

major economy, effectively managing global challenges

by leveraging its solid

Tea industry seeks higher RoDTEP



economic foundations and proactive policymaking for growth".

The Indian real estate market has witnessed strong demand across various segments, solidifying its position as the preferred investment avenue, he added.

"We are pleased to announce another successful quarter,

driven by healthy demand in the luxury real estate market looking to elevate their lifestyles," Oberoi said.

Oberoi Realty is gearing up for new project and tower launches, scaling up its annuity assets and strategic land acquisitions, he noted. 'We are committed to achieving sustainable growth with a focus on creating

lasting value for all our stakeholders," Oberoi said. Mumbai-based Oberoi Realty, one of the leading real estate developers in the country, is into the development of residential, office, retail and

hospitality projects. During the last 2023-24 fiscal, the company posted a net profit of Rs 1,926.60 crore over a total income of Rs 4,818.77 crore.

RBL Bank Q1 net profit grows 29% to ₹372 cr

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Private sector lender RBL Bank on Saturday reported a 29 per cent jump in net profit to Rs 372 crore for the June quarter.

The bank's core net interest income grew 20 per cent to 1,700 crore on the back of a 19 per cent rise in advances. Its net interest margin was 5.67 per cent. The other income grew 18 per cent to Rs 805 crore.The bank's deposit growth came at 18 per cent during the quarter and was attributed differentiated offerings by its

managing director and chief executive Subramaniakumar. The

incremental deposit growth will be able to meet the incremental advance growth for the bank going forward, he said. On the advances front, the bank will focus on secured retail products like business loans and housing loans going



the two cumulatively grew by 19 per cent, while housing rose 52 per cent and rural vehicle surged 74 per cent.

From an asset quality perspective, it witnessed higher stress with the net slippages in the credit card portfolio coming at Rs 400 crore.The MD said over Rs 60 crore of it came from a transition in the management of the portfolio to within the bank from a co-brand partner, and added that the bank expects a part of it to reverse to become wellperforming in a couple of

The overall gross nonperforming assets ratio improved to 2.69 per cent from 3.22 per cent in the yearago period. It had to halt microfinance

disbursals during the first two months of the quarter due to the elections, but the same is now normalised. Its collection efficiencies have

also slipped in some pockets, and it expects to come back on the same going ahead. A senior bank official said that the NIMs will be flat for

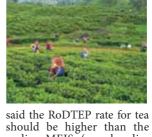
the first two quarters, and it expects an increase in the number in the second half of the fiscal. The overall capital adequacy stood at 15.56 per cent, of which the core buffer was 13.85 per cent. The MD said that while it is approaching the shareholders with an enabling provision to raise money, there are no immediate plans to raise capital in the current fiscal.

rates to make exports competitive PTI KOLKATA The tea industry has sought higher rates under the

RoDTEP scheme to make exports more competitive in the overseas markets. Leading industry body Indian Tea Association (ITA), in its pre-budget memorandum,

said that the present RoDTEP rate for bulk tea is 1.7 per cent (free on board) subject to a cap of Rs 6.70 per kilogram. The association urged the government to increase the reward base rate under the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) for black tea in bulk to remain competitive in the international markets. The RoDTEP scheme ensures

that exporters receive refunds on embedded taxes and duties that were previously non-recoverable. Another industry body Tea



earlier MEIS (merchandise exports incentive scheme) of five per cent to enable Indian retain competitiveness in the global market.Since its inception in January 2021, the RoDTEP scheme has already provided support amounting to Rs 42,000 crores to more than 10,500 export items, an official statement said in March.The association has also sought for imposition of an anti-dumping duty on Association of India (TAI), in imports of Nepal tea. The TAI said that this pre-budget proposal

a concessional import tariff on specified tea machinery submitted to the government, measure would prevent the items, the industry body said.

dumping of cheap and duty-free tea from Nepal and boost exports of genuine Darjeeling tea.Such a measure would also thwart the passing off of Nepalese tea as a geographical indication (GI) tag product.

government should exempt tea from levy on TDS on cash withdrawals due to a lack of banking infrastructure in the tea-growing areas in the country. The association has sought

The ITA said that the

concessional customs duty on imports of specified machinery required for tea production. pre-budget

memorandum, ITA said that the modernisation of the plantation sector dependent on the upgradation of machinery which is not available within the country.

The government should grant

The association also said in the memorandum that the government should increase fund allocation for tea development and promotion scheme for the period 2021 According to ITA, the Tea

Board's new promotion and development scheme for the 2021-26 period discontinued pla discontinued plantation development and factory upgradation incentives for big growers. The "lack of financial support" from

government incapacitated the producers' ability to bring about improvement in quality and productivity leading to long-term impact on viability", the association said. The ITA also sought that the fund allocation for the period 2021-26 be enhanced to enable restoration and implementation of the erstwhile incentive schemes

for big growers.

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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, whesters like Khair Bishioi, 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.

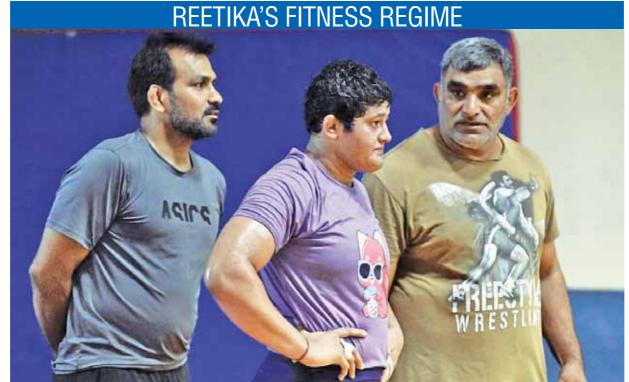
"I just munch, train, munch, train and repeat. Of course, it's healthy protein intake. I have a different struggle," she said with a hearty laugh just before a training session.
"I have 3 meals in my schedule

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



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

hands -- working hard -- rest everything will fall in place if it had to. Her career underlines 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 that belief.

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 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.

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 Reetka nodded, he said you should play an individual

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

wrestlers' game style through 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.

Wrestlers will continue

medal-winning trend in

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.

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 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 videos in an interview.

The incoming head coach will important some assignments such as a trination tournament in October that also involves 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 analyst believe to the players.

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

'We are in touch with the technical committee. As 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

Definitely make a long career. Such awards will inspire a player to put in an even bigger

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

PTI ■ JAUX (FRANCE)

 $D_{
m worlds.}^{
m eepika}$ Kumari is torn between two worlds. One where the doting mother longs to be with her 19-monthold 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," added Deepika. 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 "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 paoongi? (It seems my career is over...Won't I be able to shoot again?" she would ask



But then came the flicker of hope.

Deepika dominated the National Games in Goa last year, returning with two gold and one silver.

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 "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

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

year-old South Korean Lim Si-hyeon to tame in Paris. Lim has defeated Deepika twice this year - at Shanghai on 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

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.

Indians) is more mental," she said. Deepika wanted to remain under the "I don't want any attention. We have done well consistently to be able to make it here.

"We have to take it like any other competition. The pressure (on the

We just have to get a good rank in the qualification to get a favourable draw."

D E E P I K A - D H I R A J 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 medallist 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

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.

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

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 it an Olympic medal and some baby clothes and toys.

against the big wrestlers. There will be 16 wrestlers in Paris. I have studied each and every

Paris: Yogeshwar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

ondon Olympics bronze Lwinner 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 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.



I, Anil Lalwani S/o Ramesh Lalwani R/O Dolphins Plaza,

Residency Blok a Flat No. 101 Daldal Shioni Road, Near

HDFC Bank, Mowa Raipur, Raipur, Raipur, Chhattisgarh-492001, have changed my name to Anil Singh Rajput.

PD(609)C

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

AP PARIS

Marta can't help but be nos-talgic 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.

Olympics in France before handing the team she captains to the next generation. "It's been so much of my life

Marta will play in her sixth

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 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

er and we have to play for her now," said defender Rafaelle. "She was like my biggest idol since I was growing up. So, playing with her now is such a dream for me.

on the field, playing with Marta

by your side, it's such a great

responsibility. She's a great play-

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 career, like playing in big tour-naments like the Olympics and Riachos, a town in eastern Brazil some 1,250 miles (2,011 kilometres) north of Rio de the World Cup, playing against

Janeiro. She was just 17 when she appeared at the 2003 World Cup, held in the United States. been more of a player coach,

Over time, her role has changed in Brazil. In recent years she's guiding the team's up-and-comng stars. "Of course, I bring all of the experience that I achieved in my 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

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 tourna-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

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BALRAM PATEL, SONAM PATEL (A/c No.) LNDHM02922-230286731	13 May 24 Rs. 548455/- 7 May 24	PROPERTY OF SHEET NO47, SURVEY NO 1261/2 PLOT NO42(PART) AREA-253 SQ.FT. PLOT NO41 AREA-275 SQ.FT., SITUATED AT MAUJA-DHAMTARI, P.H.NO33, R.N.M DHAMTARI, TEH.& DISTDHAMTARI (C.G.).CHHATIGARH Admeasuring 528 SQ.FT.	Symbolic Possession Taken on 19 Jul 24
POKHAN LAL SAHU, TOMESHWAR KUMAR, GITESH KUMAR SAHU, SARITA SAHU (A/c No.) LNDHM02122-230273407 & LNDHM09422-230282359	13 May 24 Rs. 1085757/- Rs. 2109289.5/- 7 May 24	Property of Kh.noOLD -1074/2 NEW -1074/3, Sitauted at Mauja-Deori, P.H.No07, R.N.M Khertha, TehDonilohara, Dist Balod (C.G.). CHHATTISGARH Admeasuring 0.02 HEC	Symbolic Possession Taken on 19 Jul 24
RUPESH DHANKAR, TILAKLAL DHANKAR (A/c No.) LNBIL02920-210159781	13 May 24 Rs. 634419/- 7 May 24	House bearing No EWS- 276 P. H. NO. 19, KHASRA NO. 267/1,317/3,318 situated at housing board colony chilhati, bilaspur (C.G) CHHATISGARH Admeasuring 65.70 sq.mt	Symbolic Possession Taken on 20 Jul 24

INDIA EYE UAE SCALP, WOMEN'S ASIA CUP SEMIFINAL BERTH

ominant India will be eager to perfect their tactics further while warding off United Arab Emirates which also can push them firmly towards the semifinals of the women's Asia Cup here on Sunday.

Defending champions India's supremacy was evident in their facile seven-wicket victory over arch-rivals Pakistan on Saturday, and the UAE will require a giant-sized miracle to stop Harmanpreet Kaur's side. India currently have two points and a Net Run Rate of +2.29, and a win over the Emirates will take them to four points, which will also have a positive reflection on their NRR.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that India will look more inwards in their match against the UAE, than fretting over the rivals.

There were excellent spells from Deepti Sharma, Renuka Singh and Pooja Vastrakar, who though was slightly on the expensive side, against Pakistan, and their effort would have pleased the management to no limit.

They will hope that left-arm spinner Radha Yadav, who returned to the India fold during the home series against South Africa recently, too can join the wicket-takers' list on

"It was a good spell and there was some assistance from the weather as well. Of course, I could execute all the plans that



nets," said Renuka in the postmatch press meet.

To top it, the Indian batters were ruthless in hunting down a non-challenging target with

35 balls to spare. Openers Shafali Verma and Smriti Mandhana gave the team a flying start adding 85 runs in just 9.3 overs and the loss of three wickets from that position was a minor aberration

Hence, India would hope that there would be a matching effort from the middle-order batters in the upcoming I have been working on at matches, starting with the

The Asia Cup also presents India with a wonderful opportunity to prepare for the T20 World Cup to be held in Bangladesh later this year. Renuka said India are treating

this event as a preparatory ground for the ICC showpiece. The Asia Cup is important for us because after this we don't have many matches (ahead of T20 WC) and we will have to rely on practice.

'So, this is a learning experience for us, and the conditions (in Bangladesh)

good chance for us to get ready for the World Cup," she said. That said, India would do well not to lose focus on the present assignment and the UAE have the ability to give some tight moments as they showed against Nepal on Friday despite a six-wicket defeat.

In the day's second match, Pakistan will look to bounce back with a win when they face a tricky Nepal.

TEAMS (FROM): INDIA: Harmanpreet Kaur (C), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues,

Richa Ghosh (wk), Uma Chetry (wk), Pooja Vastrakar, Deepti Sharma, Arundhati Renuka Singh, D Hemalatha, Asha Sobhana, Radha Yadav, Shreyanka Patil, Sajana Sajeevan.

UAE: Esha Rohit Oza (C), Kavisha Kumari Egodage, Rajith, Rithika Samaira Dharnidharka, Lavanya Keny, Emily Thomas, Heena Harish Hotchandani, Mehak Thakur, Indhuja Nandakumar, Rinitha Rajith, Khushi Mohan Sharma, Rishitha Rajith, Suraksha Kotte, Theertha



Abhishek Nayar, Doeschate likely to join India in SL as assistant coaches

first attitude of the Dutchman.

While there was no clear view

on the appointment of the

Gambhir had suggested to the

BCCI the names of former

India seamers R Vinay Kumar

and L Balaji and former South

for the role of bowling coach.

Abhishek Nayar and Ryan ten Doeschate are set to join the support staff of newly-appointed head coach Gautam Gambhir during India's white ball tour to Sri Lanka, starting from July 27. Nayar, who has played three ODIs for India, and Doeschate, who was a hardall-rounder for hitting Netherlands, have worked closely with Gambhir at the Kolkata Knight Riders and are likely to come in as assistant coaches, the PTI has learned. Nayar comes with a high reputation as a sharp cricket and

lifestyle/motivational coach who have worked with the

While Vinay and Balaji have associated with Gambhir at the KKR, Morkel worked Doeschate is currently working with LA Knight Riders in the ongoing Major League Cricket (MLC) and alongside him at the Lucknow Super Giants. If indeed Morkel gets the nod, Gambhir has openly expressed his admiration for the team-

he could be the first foreign bowling coach Australian Joe Dawes, who did the duty under Duncan Fletcher until the tour of England in 2014. Morkel was bowling coach, it seems that T Dilip, who was part of Rahul Dravid's regime, will continue in the role of the fielding also the bowling coach of Pakistan until the 50-over World Cup in India.

The Indian team is scheduled to travel to Colombo from Mumbai in a chartered flight on July 22.

African pacer Morne Morkel Nayar and Dilip could also be travelling with the team while The PTI had reported on July it's not yet clear when 10 that Morkel could get the Doeschate would link up with role ahead of Vinay and Balaji.



ICC keep watch on security situation in Bangladesh, venue of women's T20 WC

PTI NEW DELHI

The International Cricket 2023.
Council (ICC) said it has England and the West Indies security situation in Bangladesh, the venue of the women's T20 World Cup later this October. The Bangladesh Police imposed curfew and military forces patrolled Dhaka on Saturday after violence escalated in the capital and elsewhere over protests by students, demanding reforms of the quota system for

government jobs.
"We have independent security monitoring across the world. So, yes, we are keeping a watch on it (the situation in Bangladesh)," an ICC Board member told PTI on conditions of anonymity. Australia are the most success-

ful team in the women's T20 World Cup winning the tourna-

ment a record six times in 2010, 2012, 2014, 2018, 2020 and

India under Harmanpreet Kaur will look to grab their maiden India are currently playing in the

Women's Asia Cup in Dambulla, Sri Lanka, and pacer Renuka Singh had said the team was using the tournament as a preparation for the ICC showpiece.
"The Asia Cup is important for us because after this we don't have many matches (ahead of T20 WC) and we will have to

T20 WC) and we will have to rely on practice.

"So, this is a learning experience for us, and the conditions (in Bangladesh) could be similar. So. this is a good chance for us to get ready for the World Cup," she

Indian archery, rowing teams first to check in at Paris Games Village

India's chef-de-mission for Paris Olympics, Gagan Narang on Saturday informed that archery and rowing contingents are first from the country to check in at the Games village and said the athletes are eager to begin their campaign at the sporting extravaganza.

While archery and rowing contingents checked in at Paris Games village on Friday, the Indian men's hockey team will arrive on Saturday from the Netherlands, where it was undergoing its

^{*}I arrived in Paris on Thursday night and have taken stock of the arrangements inside the Games Village for the Indian contingent. Archery and rowing were the first Indian teams to arrive on Friday and have comfortably checked-in. The athletes are slowly settling in and are exploring the Village," said Narang, the 2012 London Olympics bronze medallist shooter.

He further stated the mood among the athletes is that of excitement and anticipation. The mood is certainly upbeat.

We have the Indian men's hockey team arriving on Surely,



"While there is a lot of excitement, athletes will also want to get some game time in the competition arenas. We want to make sure the athletes' have everything they need ahead of the start of their respective events," added Narang, a four-time Olympian. The decorated Indian shooter, who is also the recipient of the prestigious Khel Ratna and the Padma Shri awards, expressed his gratitude to the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) for appointing him as the chef-demission for the Paris Games. "It is a matter of great honour for me to travel with the Indian

contingent as the Chef-de-

reminded of my hay days at the Mission for Paris Olympics. I Games and will ensure a for considering me for the role, and giving me a chance to once again serve my country on the sports' biggest stage," Narang

> "As an athlete myself, I fully understand the requirements of elite athletes at the world's $greatest\ sporting\ extravaganza.$ will work strenuously to motivate and inspire the Indian contingent, while also safeguarding their priorities to perform their optimum.
> "I am delighted to have the

opportunity to play the role of the primary liaison between our athletes, the organising committee, and other relevant stakeholders during

he said.

India will be represented by 117 athletes across 20 disciplines at the Paris Olympics.

"It is a matter of great pride for me to see the growing number of medal contenders in the Indian contingent. Each and every athlete in our contingent is capable of not only being onpar against the best athletes of the world but can also surpass them and bring laurels to the nation," Narang said.

"Having a strong contingent puts India on the hot seat as we gear up for Paris." The Paris Games will be held

from July 26 to August 11.



Mayank, Devdutt, Vyshak among retained players ahead of KSCA T20 auction

ome of the top state cricketers Ssuch as Mayank Agarwal, Devdutt Padikkal and Vyshak Vijaykumar have been retained Maharaja Trophy KSCA T20 auction later this month.

The third edition of the tournament will be held from August 15 to September 1 at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium here. Defending champions Hubli Tigers, runners-up Mysore Warriors, Gulbarga Mystics, Bengaluru Blasters, Mangaluru Dragons and Shivamogga Lions retained four players each from their previous season's squad. The Hubli outfit retained the services of skipper Manish Pandey, wicketkeeper Shrijith KL and young all-rounder Manvanth Kumar and ace medium pacer Vidwath Kaverappa.

Mysore Warriors, the last year's

runners up, chose to stay with captain Karun Nair, CA Karthik, SÜ Karthik and the hard-hitting all-rounder Manoj Bhandage. The Mystics have retained Devdutt Paddikal even though he missed the previous seas campaign due to an injury. Vyshak Vijaykumar has also

been retained by the Gulbarga side along with Smaran Ravi and Aneesh KV. The Shivamogga Lions retained Abhinav Manohar, the most

expensive player in last year's auction with a price tag of Rs 15 lakh. Nihal Ullal, Shivraj and pacer Vasuki Koushik have also been retained by the Lions. The Mangaluru Dragons handed retention to Nikin Jose,

Rohan Patil, Siddharth KV and Paras Gurbax Arva.

The Bengaluru Blasters' retentions include Agarwal, Suraj Ahuja, Shubhang Hegde and Mohsin Khan.

Katie excited about swimming after all these years

AP INDIANAPOLIS

Por Katie Ledecky, there is seemingly no such thing as burnout.

Sure, there are times when it all gets a bit monotonous, staring at that black line at the bottom of the pool, turning lap after interminable lap with nothing on the line.

Yet, a dozen years after she burst on the scene with a surprising gold medal at the London Olympics, Ledecky keeps finding ways to enjoy swimming as much as ever. The times may not be quite as fast. But the ultimate payoff is staying on top year after year, Olympics after Olympics, even as other swimmers struggle to deal with the mental and physical demands of a grueling sport that only provides once-every-four-years gratification.

Ledecky is one of the most consistent swimmers in history.
"I pride myself on that consistency," the 27-year-old

Ledecky said. "I challenge myself to stay consistent. Yeah, I mean consistent. I mean sometimes it can be tough feeling

like you're not having a breakthrough. But to be really

consistent is something I'm really

happy with. I've learned to just really enjoy each day of training and take in every moment and just appreciate the fact that I've been able to have this long of a career, stay injury free, stay pretty healthy, be able to do this for this many vears."

Perhaps the greatest freestyle swimmer history, Ledecky heads to her fourth Olympics in a familiar role. A gold-medal favourite. The focus of so much attention. The template

for sustained excellence. 'Such a big influence," said fellow American swimmer Erin Gemmell, who has looked up to Ledecky much of her life and will be joining her as an Olympic

teammate. "I don't think I would really be here if it weren't for her."

Gemmell's father used to coach Ledecky. Young Erin once dressed up as Ledecky for Halloween. They've spent so much time together at the pool, Gemmell has had a unique perspective on Ledecky's tedious brilliance.

"It's really special to be able to be that close to someone who is so inspirational, getting to see the day-to-day work that they put in," Gemmell said.

"It makes it seem more achievable, 800 and 1,500 metres. She already



in a way, being so close. It makes them seem a lot more human." Ledecky isn't as dominant as she once was, but she'll definitely be

longest freestyle events, covering

has six individual gold medals, the most of any female swimmer in Olympic history. Every athlete, as they get older, the swimmer to beat in the two

has to learn new ways to set goals, learn new ways to evaluate the results," Ledecky said.

In many ways, she's still driven by her very first Summer Games, where she burst on the scene at 15 with a gold medal in the 800 freestyle. She provides further perspective on that experience in her new book, "Just Add Water, My Swimming Life."

"I wanted to get back to that level, prove that I wasn't just a one-hit wonder," Ledecky said.

"At the same time, I reminded myself that anything more than that is just like icing on the cake, the cherry on top, because, I just never thought I'd make it to that one Olympics.

All these years later, after all those trips to the top of the medal podium, she feels much the same

way.
"That's the perspective that I've be able to maintain and that keeps me focused and keeps me enjoying the sport so much, enjoying the teammates and the people that are around me," Ledecky said. She's an old soul, for sure.

Even in her teens, Ledecky had young swimmers looking up to

"I was definitely an annoying child," Gemmell said, grinning.
"But I think she was just so welcoming to a little 7-year-old fan. When I think about it, she was only a sophomore in high school at the time. I think if someone had acted like that towards me when I was a sophomore in high school, would have been really weirded out. But she was kind and welcoming with all of it." Eight years ago in Rio de Janeiro, Ledecky turned in one of the greatest performance swimming history.

She took gold in the 200, 400 and 800 freestyle with a pair of world records (the 1,500 was not yet an Olympic event for women, or she undoubtedly would've won that, too). For good measure, she anchored the US to a gold in the 4x200 free relay with a time that was more than a second faster than anyone else in the final.

Five years later in Tokyo, the rest of the world began to catch up in the shorter races. For the first time, she was beaten in an individual race when Australia's Ariarne Titmus took gold in the 400. Ledecky didn't even reach the podium in the 200, settling for Ledecky doesn't plan to swim the

200 free in Paris even though she won that event at the US Olympic trials. She's a definite underdog in the 400 free, where Titmus and Canadian phenom Summer McIntosh would appear to have the upper hand. McIntosh might even give Ledecky a run for the gold in the 800 free a an event gold in the 800 free - an event Ledecky has won at the last three Olympics - after beating her at a low-level meet this year. July 21, 2024

a Common the pioneer of the pioneer

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

— Ruddha





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**

ew Taipei City,
Taiwan's most
populous city, has
emerged as a leading
example of smart city
development,
integrating advanced technology,
sustainable practices, and citizencentric 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

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 BIGGES **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 ecofriendly 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, realtime traffic monitoring, and

integrated public transportation

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 interdepartmental collaboration, enhance service delivery, and promote transparency. İnvesting 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 buyin. 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 DIA 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

he book "Two Binaries: The World of India and China" by Shastri Ramachandran 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 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 Paranjoy Guha Thakurta and Professor Arvind

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 Paranjoy Guha Thakurta pointed out, most businesses would struggle without Chinese imports. pharmaceutical companies use raw materials from China, as do many car companies which import

Chinese spares.



Yelary as other panelists.

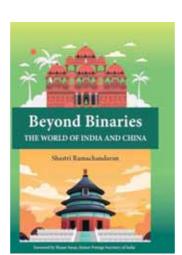
The discussion certainly achieved its purpose and initiated a debate

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

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.

civilizations.

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 Chinese and Arab between 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 Ceau?escu 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

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 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

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! Ās you know characterization is what I have struggled 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 l 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

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

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 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 going 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

AIRA by Prof. Vinita Dhondiyal Bhatnagar is a compelling young adult 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 selfawareness.

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

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

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

etting 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 sauce, I missed the mayonnaise starters, we decided to skip the 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. 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 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

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 Pawan.Soni@indianfoodfreak.com)

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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

estled 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 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

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

"We are delighted to introduce Capital Diner, where the romance of



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.

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 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**

witzerland 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 veganfriendly 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 Zürich, 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 soyfree preferences. Discover and savour these top dining destinations in the city.

REDIFINING 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 plantbased 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 & IT'S 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 pintxos. 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 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.







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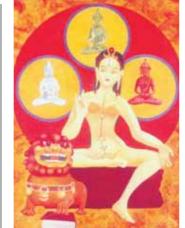




ARIES March 21-April 19

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

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 wellpositioned to succeed. This is an excellent time to maximize vour capabilities and achieve

Lucky number 10 | Lucky colour Lemon



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.

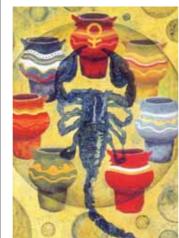
Lucky number 12 | Lucky colour Magenta Lucky day Wednesday



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 you 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 groundina.

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.

ucky 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!

ucky number 9 | Lucky colour Teal

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dedicated oday 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.

Om – The Shabda 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 'জঁ ' (\bar{U}) 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 - 'জুঁ' (\bar{U}) reflects what followed thereafter, which eventually culminated in the manifest plural world 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, 'Å' (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 primalsource, 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/distraction 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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