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WILL BRITISH INDIANS BACK RISHI SUNAK ?

WORLD 8

PALESTINIANS SURROUNDED BY SEWAGE AND GARBAGE

MONEY 10

SENSEX BREACHES 79,000 LEVEL

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BUMRAH 1000 TIMES BETTER THAN ME: KAPIL DEV 12 SPORTS



In this combo photo, men arrested in the NEET-UG paper leak case being taken to custody following their medical check-up at LNJP hospital, in Patna PTI

CBI makes first arrest in NEET case

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

On a day when President Droupadi Murmu talked tough on examination papers leak during her address in Parliament on Thursday, a series of development related to the raging controversy took place including the first arrest made by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the NEET paper leak case.

under the banner of INDIA Bloc in its Parliament strategy meeting on Thursday evening decided to raise the NEET and NET paper leaks issue in both the Houses of Parliament on Friday.

President Murmu slams Emergency

PNS ■ DELHI

In the backdrop of a spate of entrance and job related examinations paper leaks, President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday said the Government was fully committed to investigating the recent incidents and ensure that the guilty are punished.

Addressing the 18th Lok Sabha for the first time, Murmu said her Government was working to create an environment to enable youth of the country to dream big and realise their dreams. As she mentioned the steps taken by the Government on the education front, some Opposition members were heard shouting "NEET".



President Droupadi Murmu addresses the joint sitting of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, in New Delhi, on Thursday. The first session of the 18th Lok Sabha began on Monday and the 264th session of the Rajya Sabha will begin on June 27 PTI

Sabha Speaker Om Birla condemned the imposition of Emergency, Murmu too described in her speech the imposition of Emergency in 1975 as the "biggest and darkest chapter" of a direct attack on the Constitution and said the country triumphed over unconstitutional forces.

being attacked under the Modi government. With the Opposition questioning the 'intentions' of the NDA Government as regards Constitution making it a poll issue in the Lok Sabha polls, Murmu stressed the Government's unwavering faith in the Constitution and efforts to make it a part of "public consciousness".

empowerment of different sections of society, and laid down its priorities in its third term, amid sporadic protests from opposition benches when she referred to issues such as paper leaks and matters related to the North East region.

today. Even when these reforms were being taken up, they were opposed and attempts were made to spread negativity," she added.

On paper leaks, she said, "If due to any reason there is obstruction in examinations it is not appropriate. Sanctity and transparency are a must in government recruitments and examinations."



File photo: PTI

LK Advani discharged from AIIMS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Veteran BJP leader Lal Krishna Advani, who was admitted to the AIIMS here last night, was discharged on Thursday, a hospital official said.

The 96-year-old former deputy prime minister was evaluated by a team of doctors from different specialties including urology and geriatric medicine and is learnt to have undergone a minor procedure.

"Advani was admitted for old age-related issues and has been discharged," the AIIMS official said. Advani was admitted to the old private ward of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) around 10.30 pm on Wednesday.

Demand for three Deputy CMs in Karnataka Govt takes new turn

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ BENGALURU/NEW DELHI

Amid growing demand to have three more Deputy Chief Ministers in Karnataka, Chandrashekhara Swami of Vishva Vokkaligara Mahasamsthana Mutt has openly asked CM Siddaramaiah to step down and hand over the position to DK Shivakumar.



Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah pays floral tribute during the 515th birth anniversary celebration of Bengaluru's founder Nadaprabhu Kemppegowda, at Kanteerava Stadium, in Bengaluru PTI

request him to fulfill this request," he said. Echoing similar remarks, Channagiri Congress MLA Basavaraju V Shivaganga urged the party to make Shivakumar the chief minister "and then they can make a dozen deputy CMs; there won't be any objections".

have seen Siddaramaiah as CM for five years (in the previous tenure) and in this tenure too we have seen him as CM for one-and-a-half years; all legislators have cooperated. It has been a practice in our party that the KPCC president becomes CM, but due to certain developments things changed this time," he said.

Shivakumar)... Under Shivakumar's leadership as KPCC president, we have won nine Lok Sabha seats this time, from one last time. Making Shivakumar the chief minister will further benefit the party." Reacting to Shivaganga's statement, Minister Rajanna said he is entitled to his opinion in a democracy, and ultimately it is the party that will decide if Shivakumar has to be made the chief minister.

by ministers seeking three more DyCM posts was part of a plan by Siddaramaiah's camp to keep Shivakumar in check, amid talks that he might seek the chief minister's post after two-and-a-half years of this government's tenure.

Will Students' Union polls be held this year?

Minister assures decision in students' interest PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

With the BJP government in power, will Odisha finally get to see Students' Union elections this academic year?

Campus elections have not taken place in the State since 2018. Prior to that too, college elections were stopped intermittently. While no student councils have been elected in the last six years on the pretext for maintaining peace at the campuses, higher education institutions have been nominating students' representatives to various bodies where it is required.

Speaking to the media, Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj on Thursday said discussions are on and the government would take appropriate steps in the interest of students.

In September 2023, palpable tension had prevailed in campuses as no date was set for Students' Union elections



in the common academic calendar for the academic session of 2023-24 for universities and colleges released by the Higher Education Department. Usually, the elections are held prior to Durga Puja vacations (September-October).

There were protests at the Utkal University. The Akhli Bharatiya Bidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the youth wing of BJP, also filed a petition seeking the Orissa High Court's intervention in the matter.

College elections were cancelled in 2018 due to cyclone Titli. Even in 2017 when elections were last held, five universities, including Utkal and

Ravenshaw, and eight colleges did not go to the polls due to student violence. In 2019, the elections were stalled because of campus violence and the then Principal Secretary, Higher Education, Saswat Mishra directed for cancellation of such elections till further orders while calling for nomination of students' representatives to various bodies of higher education institutions as an alternative.

In 2020 and 2021, Students' Union elections were not held due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2019 directive was neither cancelled nor modified in the subsequent two years.

Free treatment for all above 70 under Ayushman

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Addressing a longstanding gap in healthcare for the elderly, President Droupadi Murmu in her address to Parliament on Thursday, spoke about the free health services provided by the Government and reiterated the BJP's poll promise of providing Ayushman Bharat coverage to everyone.

said. The Ayushman Bharat PMJAY is the largest publicly funded health insurance scheme in the world. It provides health cover of Rs 5 lakh per family per year for hospitalisation for secondary and tertiary care. The expansion of the scheme to bring every Indian citizen aged 70 and above under the insurance cover will provide free treatment to those not covered under existing schemes like the Central Government Health Scheme and others.

healthcare coverage for the elderly with only 20 per cent of the people over the age of 60 years covered under health schemes such as CGHS, Employees State Insurance Scheme (ESIC), Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojna (RSBY), cooperative health insurance schemes, medical reimbursement from an employer or privately purchased health insurance.



the manifesto's fine print. It had also announced inclusion of all individuals from the transgender community besides senior citizens. The government's Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme already provides coverage to 55 crores of the poorest people in the country, with the scheme being extended to the grassroots-level healthcare workers — the ASHA and Anganwadi workers — in the interim budget.

Minister, during the FY19 Union Budget, under the Ayushman Bharat scheme, hospitalisation costs, supports pre- and post-hospitalisation, medication, and more than 1,929 medical procedures including major surgeries and follow-up treatments are included.

address in Parliament also spoke of another key project of the government in the healthcare sector — Jan Aushadhi Kendras, a network of generic drug stores that offer medicine sometimes costing 50 per cent to 90 per cent less than the branded versions available in the market. After completing the goal of setting up 10,000 such stores across the country, the government increased the target to 25,000. "The opening of 25,000 Jan Aushadhi Kendras in the country is also progressing at a fast pace," President Murmu said.











FIRST COLUMN

TOWARDS BETTER TIES WITH BANGLADESH

Sheikh Hasina's visit highlights Bangladesh's pivotal role as a strategic partner for India



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

The new Indian Government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi is back to its foreign policy agenda, which it has carefully curated in the past decade. Mr Modi was in Italy to attend the G7 meetings as a special invitee, within days of his swearing-in. His swearing-in ceremony was in itself a statement of the stated policy focus of Neighbourhood First.

The swearing-in ceremony was attended by leaders from almost all Southeast Asian countries and, some from the Indian Ocean region. Significantly Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, was back in India, within a month of her attending the swearing-in ceremony, to further strengthen the bilateral relations. The focus of the meeting as highlighted by Prime Minister Modi during the joint briefing with Sheikh Hasina was "Today we have prepared a futuristic vision for cooperation in new areas. Youth of both countries will benefit from the agreement reached on cooperation in a lot of areas such as Green Partnership, Digital Partnership, Blue Economy, Space. India Bangladesh "Maitri Satellite" will give new heights to our partnership. We have kept in our focus-Connectivity, Commerce and Collaboration." Bangladesh is an important strategic partner for India, not just due to the intimate geographical boundaries, and the shared culture and language, but also as an important corridor connecting India's Northeast to the Bay of Bengal. Prime Ministers of both countries Sheikh Hasina and Narendra Modi have been at the top job for more than a decade now.

They have developed a working relationship, that is hard to match, underscored by the ten meetings these leaders had in the last five years. Both Prime Ministers jointly inaugurated the India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline on 18 March in a virtual format. PM Sheikh Hasina also participated in the Inaugural Session of the Voice of the Global South Summit on 11 January 2023 and the second Virtual Voice of the Global South Summit on 17 November 2023. Bangladesh and India share nearly 4000 km of the international border, security of which is an important pillar of the relationship for keeping a check on the drug trade, smuggling, fake currency, human trafficking, and movement of criminals or terrorists.



As an upgrade to the security partnership, India and Bangladesh have over the years worked on a defence cooperation framework. The recent visit of Bangladesh's PM saw both countries put a special focus on enhancing the defence partnership. In his statement PM Modi highlighted "...on further strengthening our defence cooperation, from defence production to modernisation of armed forces. In the Indian Ocean region, we have a common perspective. We welcome Bangladesh's decision to join the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative. We will continue our cooperation in other regional and international forums, including BIMSTEC."

The strongest pillar of the India-Bangladesh relationship is economics. Bangladesh is India's biggest trade partner in South Asia and India is the biggest trade partner for Bangladesh in Asia. The bilateral trade between the two countries is nearly \$16bn. Besides the much sought-after Illich fish from Padma River, Bangladesh exports nearly \$2 billion in goods to India, which is the highest in Asia. In the past few years, an aggressive China has tried to take over some of the traditional space, reserved for India in bilateral relationships, through its opaque infrastructure projects. This has been resisted by India by upping the infrastructure partnership and bringing Bangladesh closer towards the Indo-Pacific geopolitical worldview, than a South East Asian outlook. It helps to align Bangladesh with India's multilateral partners such as Australia, Japan, South Korea and beyond in the Middle East. PM Sheikh Hasina's visit as the first state guest of India, under Modi 3.0 is an important reinforcement of the strong bonds between the two neighbours.

*(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)*

Macron's calls for snap polls to thwart ultra right



NILANTHA ILANGAMUWA

This strategic manoeuvre aims to disrupt the growing momentum of the far-right National Rally and prevent further erosion of his political standing

Macron's Election Gambit by Nilantha Ilangamuwa Emmanuel Macron, the youngest president in French history, is known for taking risks, as evidenced by his recent call for snap elections to avoid further humiliation after a significant defeat in the European Union Parliamentary Elections, where his main contender garnered over 50% of the votes. This move, the first since 1997, invokes Article 12 of the French Constitution, allowing the president to end the Assemblée Nationale's term early, thus advancing the end of the current five-year term from 2027 to 2024. The new parliamentary elections are set for June 30 and July 7, catching many of Macron's allies off guard. France is at a crossroads. As former Prime Minister Lionel Jospin once mentioned, "Politics is not about morality, it's about efficiency." Throughout French history, there have been five notable instances of snap elections.

In 1962 and 1968, Charles de Gaulle dissolved the Assemblée Nationale following a motion of no confidence and widespread protests, respectively, securing significant victories both times. François Mitterrand used snap elections in 1981 to secure a Socialist majority and again in 1988 to address political "cohabitation." Jacques Chirac's 1997 snap election gamble backfired, leading to a left-wing coalition victory. Currently, Macron faces low approval ratings and a paralyzed parliament, with the National Rally (Rassemblement National or RN) capitalizing on the situation. By calling for snap elections, Macron aims to confront the populist movement and disrupt their momentum, leveraging the more challenging two-round system of French national elections compared to the single-round European elections. Marine Le Pen and RN president Jordan Bardella, the party's candidate for PM, are gearing up for the snap elections, which will have higher stakes compared to the European elections. Macron, aiming to dramatize the choice facing the French, challenged voters in a televised address, asking if they truly want to be governed by the far right.

What exactly is the 'far right,' a term frequently echoed in European politics? Often, it's a convenient label used to obscure the significant failures of so-called neo-liberals. When individuals dare to address real societal issues on the ground, rather than fabricating crises to vilify "designated enemies" like Vladimir Putin, they are often hastily labelled as "far-right" or conservative. Instead of accurate representation, this knee-jerk reaction by warmongers, fueled by Western media, reflects bias. Recent events in France, where President Macron's centrist coalition faced electoral setbacks, highlight this skewed narrative. The term "far right" is wielded without nuance, disregarding the diverse ideological spectrum and legitimate concerns championed by these movements. The shifting landscape of French politics challenges outdated perceptions. Parties like Marine Le Pen's National Rally are not accurately depicted as "far-right"; instead, they signify a redefinition of mainstream conservatism. Their platforms, focusing on issues such as controlled migration and national defence, resonate with many voters disenchanted with traditional leadership. Understanding these complexities demands a departure from simplistic labels and a recognition of Europe's evolving political dynamics. While Marine Le Pen may not



mirror Trump's trajectory in France, it's crucial to acknowledge the significant support they garner from the public, despite mainstream media's continued misrepresentation. Blaming perceived evils is often easier than confronting one's own side's failures.



MACRON'S LEADERSHIP IN THIS MATTER HIGHLIGHTS HIS DEDICATION TO UPHOLDING NATO'S FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES AND PRESERVING ITS STRATEGIC DIRECTION IN THE FACE OF EVOLVING GLOBAL CHALLENGES

In this context, polarized politics in France are teaching a new lesson about the deceptive nature of labelling certain movements as "far right" to deflect attention from the failures of neoliberalism. Unlike the European elections with a 50% turnout, local watchdogs asserted that the national elections could see 70% voter participation, potentially mobilizing moderates and reviving the anti-populist front. Macron's team believes voters will scrutinize RN's policy proposals, particularly as the autumn session promised censure motions likely to collapse Prime Minister Gabriel Attal's government. As per the London Guardian, Macron's gamble may yield three outcomes. First, he might recover his majority, although this seems unlikely given his unpopularity and the normalization of the "far right" across Europe. Second, the National Rally could win a majority, leading to an unprecedented cohabitation with a populist right-wing parliament, which Macron might see as a chance to highlight their governance shortcomings. This scenario poses significant risks as an RN-controlled parliament would handle crucial domestic policies, potentially clashing with Macron on issues like immigration and national security, while creating tensions with Brussels due to RN's nation-first policies. The third scenario, considered most probable by analysts, is that RN increases its seats but fails to gain an absolute majority, resulting in a splintered parliament and potential deadlock. Macron may seek alliances with the mainstream centre-right or centre-left, but success is uncertain. This fragmented parliament could lead to increased political instability.

However, one cannot forget that it was Macron who stood firm against NATO's proposal to establish a liaison office in Japan, marking a significant division within the alliance on the eve of a crucial summit. Macron's decisive opposition reflects his insistence that NATO should not stray from its original North Atlantic focus, particularly amid escalating tensions with China.

His resolute stance accentuates France's commitment to maintaining the alliance's core principles, despite pressure to expand its reach into Asia.

Macron's leadership in this matter highlights his dedication to upholding NATO's foundational principles and preserving its strategic direction in the face of evolving global challenges. Macron's recent interview with Le Parisien sheds light on evolving European attitudes towards Ukraine, acknowledging the potential necessity for ground operations in the future. This represents a significant policy shift amidst rising tensions between NATO and Russia. Macron's acknowledgement of the need to prepare for all scenarios, including ground interventions, signals a departure from previous official denials and underscores the increasing seriousness of the situation in Ukraine. Additionally, France's plan to send Mirage 2000-5 fighter jets adds a tangible dimension to the discussion, indicating a more assertive stance from France and its European allies in response to the ongoing conflict.

This regional tension exacerbated France's already unstable domestic political situation, leading to a humiliating defeat for Macron and bolstering Le Pen's populist narrative. According to local media outlets, the political parties in France held emergency talks to explore potential alliances at the beginning of this week following the announcement of a snap legislative election. The unexpected and risky decision to hold elections soon could potentially shift major polit-

ical power, undermining Macron's presidency three years before its scheduled end. Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire emphasized the high stakes, calling it the most consequential parliamentary election in decades.

This could potentially impact on warmongering President of the European Commission, and France would sooner lose its interest in involving in the Ukraine War, while more focus on domestic issues. RN leaders, including Jordan Bardella, the party's candidate for prime minister, and Marine Le Pen, the party's parliamentary leader, are strategizing to capitalize on their recent success. Bardella expressed his readiness to build a large majority, while the divided French left, comprising hard-left LFI, Communists, Socialists, and Greens, also held talks to forge a united front against the populist right.

Despite the populist right's strong performance in the European elections, analysts suggest that an outright RN majority in the parliamentary elections is unlikely, as voters often use European elections to express dissatisfaction with the incumbent government. The president aims to rally these voters in response to the populist right surge, despite concerns from within his party and criticisms from other political figures. Macron described his decision as an act of confidence in the French people's ability to make the best choice for the country, emphasizing the need for a clear majority to govern effectively.

His previous successes in presidential elections were aided by a "Republican front" that unified various political groups against the populist right, a strategy that was not extended to parliamentary elections, costing him a majority. The upcoming elections will test whether he can restore this principle and rally other political groups to prevent the Le Pen clan from gaining control.

*(The writer is a Sri Lankan journalist and author; Views are personal)*

India-Arab green strategic partnership: Pioneering sustainable development

This initiative highlights the shared commitment of the two countries to foster a greener and more resilient future

The India-Arab Green Strategic Partnership represents a collaborative initiative aimed at enhancing sustainable development and combating climate change. In today's world, where environmental concerns hold significant global importance, the Green Strategic Partnership between India and Arab countries stands out as a beacon of collaboration and innovation.



PADMALOCHAN DASH

Green Strategic Partnership builds on this foundation by integrating environmental sustainability into the bilateral agenda, reflecting a modern approach to diplomacy in our changing world.

**Objectives and Strategic Imperatives:** At its core, the partnership seeks to harness the strengths of both India and Arab countries in advancing green technologies, renewable energy solutions, water man-

agement practices, and climate resilience strategies. India, as a rising global player in renewable energy deployment and innovation, offers practical solutions to the challenges faced:

**Renewable Energy Leadership:** India excels in renewable energy technologies like solar photovoltaic and wind power. This aligns well with Arab countries' goals to diversify their energy mix away from fossil fuels. For example, India's collaboration with the UAE has seen investments in solar parks and wind energy projects, demonstrating tangible outcomes of this partnership.

**Water Security and Management:** Water scarcity poses a critical challenge for both regions, exacerbated by

climate change and rapid urbanisation. India contributes practical solutions through its expertise in sustainable water management practices. Initiatives like community-driven water conservation and wastewater treatment can be adapted and shared with Arab countries facing similar challenges.

**Climate Change Mitigation:** The impacts of climate change require urgent mitigation efforts. India has committed to ambitious targets under the Paris Agreement, focusing on renewable energy deployment and emissions reduction. Collaborative projects with Arab countries aim to implement climate-resilient infrastructure.

**Sustainable Urbanisation and Biodiversity Conservation:**

As urban populations grow, sustainable urban planning becomes crucial to reduce environmental footprints and improve quality of life. India promotes green building standards, urban green spaces, and effective waste management practices through initiatives like the Smart Cities Mission. Collaborative projects with the UAE in sustainable urban development integrate renewable energy solutions and eco-friendly infrastructure.

**Energy Efficiency:** Improving energy efficiency is key to reducing carbon footprints and enhancing energy security. India's initiatives like the Perform, Achieve, and Trade (PAT) scheme for industrial energy efficiency offer practical models for collaboration.

Through knowledge exchange and technology transfer, India supports efforts to optimise energy consumption and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

**Green Finance and Investment:** India's experience in issuing green bonds and establishing green funds, alongside initiatives like the National Clean Energy Fund (NCEF), provides pathways for financing renewable energy, energy storage, and sustainable infrastructure projects.

**Technological Innovation:** Collaboration in research and development (R&D) is crucial for advancing green technologies. India's vibrant start-up ecosystem and research institutions contribute to innovations in areas such as green hydrogen production and bat-

tery storage technologies. Joint innovation hubs and technology parks facilitate technology transfer and accelerate the adoption of sustainable innovations. Despite its potential, the Green Strategic Partnership faces several challenges:

**Geopolitical Dynamics:** Diverse geopolitical interests and regional conflicts among Arab countries and India may impact the partnership's cohesion and operational effectiveness. India's role as a neutral mediator and advocate for collaborative solutions helps navigate geopolitical complexities and build trust among partner countries.

**Technological and Financial Barriers:** Scaling up renewable energy projects and adopting advanced environmental tech-

nologies demand substantial investments and technological advancements.

**Policy Alignment:** Harmonising national policies, regulatory frameworks, and institutional capacities is crucial for seamless collaboration and effective implementation of joint initiatives across borders.

India advocates for policy coherence through dialogue platforms such as the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and bilateral strategic dialogues, facilitating alignment on climate goals and regulatory standards.

*(The author is an ICSSR-Post Doctoral Fellow, School of National Security Studies, Central University of Gujarat. The views expressed are personal)*





# Zelenskyy urges EU leaders to fulfill arms commitments

AP ■ BRUSSELS



Ukraine's president called on Thursday to make good on their pledges to provide military equipment to his war-ravaged country, just days after the bloc launched membership talks with his government.

The EU launched membership talks with Ukraine on Tuesday, a decade after Russian troops seized the Crimean Peninsula to deter the country from moving closer to the West, part of a chain of events that set the two neighbors on the path to war.

# Court denies Imran's appeal to suspend sentence in illegal marriage case

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD



A Pakistani court on Thursday rejected the appeals of Imran Khan and his spouse Bushra Bibi to suspend their sentences in the illegal marriage case, in a major setback to the former prime minister who has been in jail since August last year.

While Khan is slapped with several cases, his wife Bushra is facing a couple of cases. Reacting to the verdict, National Assembly opposition leader Omar Ayub said Khan's party would challenge the order in the Islamabad High Court.

# 'Foolproof arrangements for Chinese citizens security'

New York/Islamabad (PTI):

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday said Pakistan is "proud" of its friendship with all-weather ally China, as he asserted that "foolproof arrangements" have been made for the security of Chinese nationals working on major infrastructure projects in some restive provinces.

# China's former defence minister expelled from Communist Party

PTI ■ BEIJING



China's ruling Communist Party headed by President Xi Jinping on Thursday expelled the former defence minister Gen. Li Shangfu for alleged corruption and launched prosecution proceedings against him, months after he was dramatically sacked from the post.

discipline. He sought improper benefits in personnel arrangements for himself and others, took advantage of his posts to seek benefits for others, and accepted a huge amount of money and valuables in return, the Xinhua report said.

defence and the armed forces, and the image of senior officials, it said. Li is a Chinese aerospace engineer and headed China's powerful missile force, officially called Rocket Force as the General of the PLA before he was elevated as minister.

# Le Pen questions President's role as army chief ahead of election

AP ■ NICE

With just three days to go until France's landmark legislative election, the country's far-right leader on Thursday raised the question of who would be in charge of the military if her party takes over the government after the two-round balloting.

to serve out his final term as president. Serving as a commander-in-chief of the armed forces "is an honorary title for the president since it's the prime minister who actually pulls the strings," Le Pen said in an interview with Le Télégramme newspaper published Thursday.

ties, they broadly agreed on strategic matters of defence and foreign policy. But this time the power sharing concept known in France as "cohabitation" could be very different given the animosity between the far-right and the far-left politicians.

# China urges global scientists to study lunar samples, cites obstacle with US

AP ■ BANGKOK

China's space officials said Thursday they welcomed scientists from around the world to apply to study the lunar rock samples that the Chang'e 6 probe brought back to Earth in a historic mission, but noted there were limits to that cooperation, specifically with the United States.

work. Still, China could cooperate with scientists of other countries. It worked with the European Space Agency, France, Italy and Pakistan in the Chang'e 6 mission.

what is seen from Earth, and the far side faces outer space. The far side is also known to have mountains and impact craters and is much more difficult to reach.

# Rajapaksa to meet Chinese Premier

Colombo (PTI):

Former Sri Lankan president Mahinda Rajapaksa on Thursday left on an official visit to Beijing where he will meet Premier Li Qiang and Foreign Minister Wang Yi to discuss the island nation's debt restructuring agreement with China.

# 'Women's rights to be discussed at meeting attended by Taliban'

United Nations (AP):

The UN political chief who will chair the first meeting between Afghanistan's Taliban rulers and envoys from about 25 countries answered sharp criticism that Afghan women have been excluded, saying Wednesday that women's rights will be raised at every session.

States and NATO forces withdrew following two decades of war. No country officially recognises them as Afghanistan's government, and the UN has said that recognition is almost impossible while bans on female education and employment remain in place and women can't go out without a male guardian.

cially for women and girls, and the need to combat terrorism and the narcotics trade. "The issue of inclusive governance, women's rights, human rights will large, will be a part of every single session," she said.

# List of threatened species grows by 1,000

Abuja (Nigeria) (AP): Over 45,000 species are now threatened with extinction — 1,000 more than last year — according to an international conservation organization that blames pressures from climate change, invasive species and human activity such as illicit trade and infrastructural expansion.



cess stories such as the Iberian lynx.

cacti, native to Chile's Atacama coastal desert, the Bornean elephant and the Gran Canaria giant lizard are among the threatened species, IUCN revealed.

as ornamental species. The smugglers and poachers facilitating the trade, the organization said, have gained increased accessibility to the plants' habitat due to roads and housing expansion in the Atacama area.

The 2024 update also highlights the Asian elephant in Borneo as an endangered species. It is estimated that only about 1,000 Bornean elephants remain in the wild, according to IUCN analysis.

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**Admission to M.Tech. and M. Sc. Programmes for the Academic Year 2024-25**  
 National Institute of Technology Kurukshetra invites online applications through Google Form for admissions in M.Tech (Left over seats of CCMT-2024, Self-Financed, Sponsored) and M.Sc. (Left over regular and Self-Financed seats of CCMMN-2024) for the Academic Year 2024-25.  
 The Last date for submission of online applications is **25th July 2024**. Application submitted without fee, incomplete or late will not be considered.  
 For more information kindly visit the Institute website: **www.nitkkr.ac.in** under Admissions 2024.

**Registrar Ic**

**Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot (Admission Branch)**

**Admission Notice**  
**MDS Courses under NEET PG-2024.**  
 Online Registration/applications are invited through University website from eligible candidates on the basis of NEET-MDS-2024 for admission to MDS courses in Govt./ Private Colleges, Private Universities and Minority Institute in the State of Punjab w.e.f 01-07-2024 to 05-07-2024 upto 12:00 Noon. Last date for deposition of Registration fee through online payment gateway is 05-07-2024. Counseling will be conducted as per schedule published in prospectus/University website.  
 For Prospectus/Schedule/Fee/ details & updates visit us at **www.bfhu.ac.in**.  
 Note: Any notification/amendment by Govt. of Punjab/ Govt. of India/DCI/MCC regarding PG admissions, Session 2024, shall be applicable.  
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