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OPINION 6

NEET: MALICE EXTENDS

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HC halts Kejriwal's release

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

AP convener and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will have to remain in jail for now as the Delhi High Court on Friday halted his anticipated release on bail after an urgent petition filed the Enforcement Directorate (ED) just hours before he was set to leave Tihar jail.

The court said it was reserving the order for 2-3 days as it wanted to go through the entire records. The High Court is expected to pronounce its verdict by June 25, with the Delhi Chief Minister remaining in judicial custody.

Keiriwal, who was arrested on March 21 by the ED could have walked out of Tihar jail on Friday had the high court not granted the interim relief to the ED.

The vacation bench of Justice Sudhir Kumar Jain said it would take two-three days to pronounce the order on ED's stay application. The court said till it heard the probe agency's petition, which could take another 2-3 days, Kejriwal would remain in jail. The High Court has asked the Kejriwal's counsel to file the written submissions by

Monday meantime the "In the petitioner and the respondent shall be at the liberty to file written submissions latest by



AAP convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal

Vacation judge Niyay Bindu on Thursday granted bail to Kejriwal and ordered his release subject to bail bond of ₹one lakh, saying the ED has failed to give any direct evidence linking Kejriwal to the proceeds of the crime and has also failed to show that another accused, Vijay Nair, was acting on Kejriwal's behalf. Kejriwal's wife

Kejriwal accused the ED of treating the Delhi CM as if he were the "most wanted terrorist in India." Her remarks came during a gathering in south Delhi's Bhogal, where Delhi Water

Sunita

Monday," court noted in the Minister Atishi commenced an indefinite hunger strike to demand more water from Haryana. AAP leader and Minister Saurabh Delhi Bharadwaj said what the ED said about the trial court judge who granted bail to Kejriwal during High Court proceedings was "shameful."
"The ED is not being able to submit any proof to the courts... the AAP has been saying this consistently — this has also been noted in the trial court order," Bharadwaj said.

Earlier, Additional solicitor General (ASG) SV Raju presented the plea to Justices Sudhir Kumar Jain and Ravinder Dudeja, who were

overseeing the matter during the court's vacation period called the trial court's decision as "perverse", lopsided, "one-sided" and 'wrong-sided" and that the findings were based on irrelevant facts. The relevant facts, he claimed, were not considered by the special

The ASG said the trial court arrived on the decision based on wrong facts. "On wrong facts, wrong dates, you come to a conclusion that mala fide. But why, the reason is missing. My note not considered, not allowed to argue. The arrest was challenged. The remanding court said the arrest was correct. It was challenged before this court. The single judge said nothing wrong with the arrest," he said. "Material facts were not

There cannot be a better case for cancellation of bail than this one. There cannot be greater perversity than this," he argued. Seeking a stay on the trial court's order, he contended that the ED was given adequate opportunity to argue its case. During the arguments, Raju said after the order was passed, when the ED lawyers urged the trial court to keep its order in abeyance for 48 hours to enable them to

considered by the trial court.

World looking at Yoga as agent of global good: Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said the number of yoga practitioners across the globe is growing every day as it is making new ways of positive change in society. Modi said the world is also looking at yoga as a powerful agent of global good.

The Prime Minister led the celebrations of the 10th International Yoga Day on the banks of Dal Lake in Srinagar and took part in the Yoga session.

The mega event was scheduled to be held in the open but early morning rain forced the event indoors.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi performs Yoga during celebration on the 10th International Day of Yoga in Srinaga

Despite the rains, Dal Lake in Srinagar provided a wonderful setting for this Day amongst those who joined reflecting the Prime Minister in Yoga

perfect harmony nature. Scores of students were

performing various asanas on the occasion. They also asked him for selfies and he happily

Congress corners Govt over NEET PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI/PATNA/GUWAHATI

workers CFriday held nationwide demonstration near the BJP headquarters across the State Capitals and elsewhere over the alleged irregularities in the NEET-UG 2024 examinations. The demonstrations were

led by State presidents and several top party leaders after senior leader Rahul Gandhi gave a clarion call to protest widely on the recent NEET and NET entrance paper leaks.

The grand old party along with other Opposition right from day one of the from Monday. approach superior courts, the



Police personnel detain a Congress worker during a protest over the alleged irregularities in NEET-UG 2024 results in Lucknow

Begin each day with

parties have decided to Special session of the take on the Government Parliament which begins

Yoga Day celebrated in Pataniali Yogneeth

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The 10th International Yoga Day was celebrated at Patanjali Yogpeeth with resolution of a healthy India and a healthy world. The solution ideological, po ideological, political, economic conflicts and challenges in the entire world is also a life of said Swami Ramdev. He urged Indians to adopted a yogic lifestyle.

PATANJALI

Rain relief for Delhiites battling heat



A resident covers himself with a scarf in rain on the Kartavya Path, in New Delhi, on Friday. Light rainfall on Friday brought some relief to the people in Delhi after a relentless heatwave in the region for over a month

SAUMYA SHUKLA **NEW DELHI**

more than a month.

Several parts of Delhi on Friday received light rains, bringing relief amidst the intense heatwave in the National Capital and surrounding areas that has been grappling the city for

Thunderstorms with light to moderate intensity rain and gusty winds with speeds of 30 to 50 kmph hit Delhi and adjoining areas of the National Capital Region after 3 pm. The city's minimum temperature settled at 28.4 degrees Celsius, normal for this time of the season, the Met ofice said.

Many areas also witnessed waterlogging and trees falling due to the rain. According to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), a total of 13 areas waterlogging witnessed situation, including Karol Bagh, Chhattarpur, Shahdara

north, Karala, Narela, Sonia Vihar, Shahdara south, Rohini, Civil line, Hari Kunj, and Mitraon and Gaushala road in Najafgarh. Tree falling was also witnessed in various areas in the city, including Karol Bagh, East of Kailash, Mangolpuri, Rajinder Nagar, Karawal nagar, south Moti bagh, Tagore Garden extension, Gulabi Bagh and Rohini

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) had earlier predicted thunderstorms with light to moderate intensity rain and gusty winds with speeds of 30 to 50 kmph in Delhi and adjoining areas of the National Capital Region for two hours.

sector 11.

The maximum temperature was recorded at 40.4 degrees Celsius, two notches above the normal marking a deviation from the soaring being temperatures witnessed in Delhi. People in Delhi can also temperature.

weekends outdoors this time as the IMD predicted some relief from the searing heatwave as the sky is likely to remain partly cloudy on Saturday and Sunday. Many children were seen on the streets playing in the rain and enjoying their summer holidays. Although, heatwave will return in 1 IMD predicts its return on Monday.

Maximum temperatures across different parts of the city dropped to below 40 degrees celsius bringing respite to the people who have been hit not only by heat but also with water crisis

and power outage. The Pusa area recorded the lowest maximum temperature of 37.9 degrees Celsius, followed by 38 degrees at Pragati Maidan and Rajghat, 38.8 degrees at Aya nagar, 39 degrees at Lodi road, Salwan Public school and Ridge, 39.3 degrees at Palam, 39.4 degrees at Jafarpur, 39.7 degrees at Pitampura and 39.9 degrees at

Najafgarh. After days of significant deviations of maximum recorded temperatures from the normal, several areas like Jafarpur, Palam and Salwan witnessed no deviation. Moreover, Aya nagar recorded two notches below the normal maximum temperature, along with Ridge which marked a 1.9 degrees deviation from normal and Pragati Maidan and Rajghat, each of the areas recording one notch below the

EC sets ball rolling for J&K, 3 States **Assembly polls**

prayer was not considered.

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

 $T_{(\text{EC})}^{\text{he Election Commission}} \\ \text{on Friday}$ Haryana,

Lok Sabha polls, voters' list was updated with January 1 Qualifying date helps establish number of voters on a given date in a State or

in the country.
The Assembly terms of Haryana, Maharashtra and Jharkhand are going to end on November 3, November 26 and January 5, 2025 respectively while polls in Jammu & Kashmir now under President rule, must be completed by September 30 deadline set by Supreme

Court. Article 370.

since then.

According to THE EC, July 1, 2024 will be the qualifying date for roll updation. For the just-held as the qualifying date.

The last time Jammu & Kashmir voted in Assembly elections was in 2014 when it was still a State and enjoyed special status under

(EC) on Friday announced that it has updation of electoral rolls in Maharashtra Jharkhand, & Jammu & Kashmir.

In 2019, Special status to the State was revoked and it was divided into two UTs -Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. The UT has been awaiting Assembly elections

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India raps Canada for honouring Nijjar PIONEER NEWS SERVICE countries came under severe strain following Trudeau's continues to be the political

NEW DELHI

India on Friday was critical of the Canadian Parliament observing "one minute silence" in the memory of Khalistan extremist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, who was gunned down in Surrey, British Columbia, in June last year.

"We naturally oppose any moves giving political space to extremism and advocacy of violence," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

In an unusual move, the



Canadian observed "one minute silence" two days ago in memory of Nijjar.

allegations in September last year of a "potential" involvement of Indian agents in Nijjar's killing. New Delhi rejected Trudeau's charges as "absurd".

India has been maintaining that the main issue between

the two countries is that of Canada giving space to pro-Khalistan elements operating from Canadian soil with

impunity. Secretary Vinay Foreign Kwatra last week said India's The relations between the two main issue with Canada

anti-India elements which advocate extremism and violence. India has repeatedly conveyed its "deep concerns" to Canada

and New Delhi expects Ottawa to take strong action against those elements, he said. Nijjar, who was declared a terrorist by India, was shot dead outside a gurdwara in British Columbia on June 18 last year. The murder is being probed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

ED FAILED TO GIVE DIRECT EVIDENCE LINKING KEJRIWAL TO PROCEEDS OF CRIME: JUDGE

vacation judge while granting bail to AAP Agranting pair to Marconvener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, has said the Enforcement Directorate (ED) failed to furnish direct evidence linking him to the proceeds of crime in the laundering case against Kejriwal. Special Judge Niyay Bindu held that prima facie his guilt was yet to be established and the ED is acting with bias against him.
"The court has to take a pause

to consider this argument which is not a potable submission that investigation is an art because if it is so, then, any person can be implicated and kept behind the bars by artistically procuring the material against him after artistically avoiding/ exculpatory withdrawing material from the record. This very scenario constrains the court to draw an inference against the investigating agency that it is not acting without bias," vacation judge Niyay Bindu said in the 25

pages order.
"On the prima facie basis, the guilt of the accused is yet to be established. In respect of the condition that he shall not involve in the offence after his release on bail, it is already undertaken so by the applicant in his application. Moreover, if bail is granted, the same shall be conditional which shall put the applicant under an obligation in this regard," the judge said.

The special judge also questioned the ED's silence on the interval about two years, the bigger portion of the alleged amount remains to be traced out," the

Keiriwal's assertion that he was arrested in the money laundering case related to the alleged excise scam without having been named in the CBI FIR or the ECIR registered by the anti-money laundering agency. Enforcement Case Informaton Report (ECIR) is ED's version of an FIR.

persons known to the having applicant are involvement offence....But ED has failed to give any direct evidence against the applicant in respect of the proceeds of crime," the judge said. The order said the ED is silent on certain issues including the fact that Kejriwal was not named by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in its first information report (FIR) or in the Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) registered by the ED.

"...the ED has not shown anything on record that Vijay Nair was acting on the directions of the applicant (Kejirwal). It has also failed to establish that even if Vinod Chauhan has relationship with Charanpreet, how come the same would establish the guilt

applicant having acquaintance with both these co-accused," the order said. "This is also noticeable that ED is silent about the facts as to how the proceeds of crime have been utilized in Assembly Elections in Goa by AAP as, admittedly, after

of applicant even if the

"It may be possible that some

Kejriwal and his Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has been accused of receiving kickbacks of Rs 100 crore from the South

Group, a cartel of politicians, businessmen and others to rig the Delhi liquor policy in favour of licencees. The present accused, she said. money was allegedly used in the 2022 Goa assembly poll campaign. The judge said the ED has failed to clarify as to how much time it required to trace the complete money

"Meaning thereby that until and unless this exercise of tracing out the remaining amount gets completed by ED, accused is supposed to remain behind bars that too without proper evidence against him. This is also not an acceptable submission of ED," the judge

The maxim of law that every person must be presumed ED acting as if Kejriwal most wanted terrorist: CM's wife on agency's objection to bail

The judge quoted Benjamin Franklin, one of the founding fathers of the US, to say "It is better that 100 guilty persons should escape than an innocent person should

suffer".

"Unfortunately, the mental and physical agony of such person cannot compensated in any manner whatsoever," she said. If an accused undergoes the atrocities of the system till his innocence is discovered, he would never be able to conceive that justice has actually been done to him, she

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's wife Sunita Kejriwal lashed out at the ED for challenging her husband's bail order in the High Court, accusing it of acting as if the AAP national convener was the "most

wanted terrorist in India". Speaking in south Delhi's Bhogal where Delhi Water Minister Atishi began an indefinite hunger strike to press on her demand for getting more water from Haryana, Sunita Kejriwal said dictatorship in the country has crossed all limits.

"It was only yesterday your chief minister got bail. In the morning, the order was supposed to be uploaded. Even before the order was uploaded, the ED approached the Delhi High Court. This happened as if Krijiwal is the happened as if Kejriwal is the most wanted terrorist in India," Sunita Kejriwal said.
"Dictatorship in the country has crossed all limits. The ED does not want to give anyone liberty and has gone to the high court against the chief minister demanding a stay (on his bail). The high court's

decision is yet to come. We hope the high court will deliver justice," she added. Before reaching Bhogal, Sunita had also accompanied Atishi and other AAP leaders to Rajghat to pay homage to



Mahatma Gandhi.

Sunita also read out a message from Kejriwal, who is currently lodged in Tihar jail, in which he expressed hope that Atishi's 'tapasya' would be successful.

The chief minister said he was immensely pained by seeing on TV the plight of the people facing water shortage amid the ongoing intense heatwave, he said.

"It's our culture to provide water to the thirsty. Delhi gets water from neighbouring states. We hoped support of neighbouring states in such intense heat. But, Haryana reduced Delhi's water share.

'Although there governments of different parties in the two states but is this time for politics over water," he said, referring to the BJP that is in power in Harvana.

AAP leader Sanjay Singh also accused Prime Minister

Narendra Modi of making a mockery of the justice system after the Delhi High Court put on hold a trial court order granting bail to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the money laundering case linked to the alleged excise

"exposed" the conspiracy of the BJP and the party should apologise to the Aam Aadmi Party and Kejriwal. Taking to X, Singh said in a post in Hindi, "Look at the hooliganism of the Modi government, the trial court's order has not yet come, even a copy of the order has not been received, so Modi's ED reached the High Court to challenge which order? What is happening in this country? "Modi ji, why are you making a mockery of the justice system? The entire country is watching you?" the AAP MP said.At a press conference, Singh termed the trial court order was "historic" and completely "exposed" the role of the BJP government and

The court order clearly shows that the Enforcement (ED) Directorate fabricating facts against us and presenting documents in its favour in the court, statements are taken from witnesses under pressure," he

ED operated by it.

Understand judicial system before commenting on judicial decisions: BJP to AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva on Friday asked the AAP leaders to "understand the judicial system before hastily commenting on judicial decisions" over the stay on Minister Arvind Chief Kejriwal's bail by the High Court.

Sachdeva stated, "After a prolonged debate on the Enforcement Directorate's petition challenging the bail granted to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the High Court, his bail has been stayed for two to three days.



Consequently, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will have to wait longer to get out of jail." He called the comments by the AAP leaders 'absurd' and said that such rhetoric and excuses are old habits of the AAP. "Their leaders excel in spreading confusion, but there is one fact that is clear to all of us, the order of the Delhi High

Court is still in operation, which found that the arrest of the Chief Minister was legally correct and that he had a personal role in receiving crores of rupees in kickbacks in the liquor policy," the Delhi BJP chief stated

"It is an old habit of the AAP to claim "Satyamev Jayate" (truth alone triumphs) when orders are in their favor, but to question the same judicial system when orders are not in their favor," he alleged hitting at the AAP leaders and adding that the country's judiciary is independent and works in an unbiased manner based on

International Yoga Day: Prominent figures participate





Union Minister JP Nadda, MoS Harsh Malhotra and Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva perform yoga at Yamuna Sports Complex and People perform yoga on the Yamuna river at Sonia Vihar at the 10th IDY Photo: Ranjan Dimri / The Pioneer

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Several prominent figures Dincluding Union Health Minister JP Nadda, Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of State Harsh Malhotra Delhi BIP MPs and Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora took part in programmes organised across the national Capital on Friday on the occasion of tenth International Yoga Day.

Nadda, who participated in an event at Yamuna sports complex, said that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made the world recognise the importance of Yoga. "This method of yoga which was limited to yoga which was limited to our country has been adopted by the whole world today. Today we are celebrating the 10th Yoga Day," he said, appealing to everyone to make the practice of yoga an integral part of their daily routine so that they can live a healthy life.

Practising alongside the Union Minister, Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva asked everyone to take a pledge to do yoga and stay healthy. "When

was seen being performed under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the United Nations, every Indian felt which saw participation of proud and we are proud that around 20,000 people. today the world is seeing India as a yoga guru." he stat Minister of State Harsh

Malhotra, North east Delhi MP Manoj Tiwari, South Delhi BIP MP Ramveer Singh Bidhuri, Northwest Delhi BJP MP Yogendra Chandolia, New Delhi BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj also participated in the Yoga Day programs. BJP MP from Chandni Chowk Praveen Khandelwal, participated in the yoga program organised by the Ministry of AYUSH at the historic Red Fort in Delhi, and said, "Yoga is an invaluable gift from India to the world, which has connected people from all walks of life for personal wellbeing as well as societal

harmony.' Delhi Lieutenant Governor Delhi Development Authority (DDA) chairman VK Saxena performed yoga at Baansera on the bank of Yamuna River. Besides

Development celebrated the yoga day at its 18 sports complexes and golf courses and nine DDA parks

These sports facilities include Yamuna Sports Com Fort Sports Complex, Saket Sports Complex, Vasant Kunj Sports Complex, Major Dhyan Chand Sports Complex, Chilla Sports Complex, Poorv Delhi Khel Parisar, and Roshanara Club. Chief Secretary Delhi Naresh Kumar, DDA vice chairman Subhasish Panda, senior officers of Delhi government, DDA employees and members of public were also present at Baansera, Delhi's first bamboo theme park spread over an area of 37 acres, the statement by DDA

New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) in coordination with the Ministry of AYUSH and 6 yoga institutions observed International Day of Yoga at eight prominent locations with around 10,000 participants who performed the common protocol of yoga on the

occasion.

Atishi begins indefinite hunger strike over water crisis

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Water Minister Atishi on Friday began her indefinite hunger strike in south Delhi's Bhogal to intensify her demand for more water from Haryana following her visit to Rajghat where she paid tribute to Mahatma Gandhi.

Minister Arvind Chief Kejriwal's wife Sunita Kejriwal, along with AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh and Delhi Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj, were present as Atishi began her fast. Sunita Kejriwal, who came into limelight after AAP supremo's arrest on March 21 in the alleged excise policy linked money laundering scam, read out a message from the chief minister, who is currently lodged in T in which he expressed hope that Atishi's 'tapasya' would be

successful. The chief minister said he was immensely pained by seeing on TV the plight of the people facing water shortage amid the ongoing intense heatwave, he said. "It's our culture to provide water to the thirsty. Delhi gets water from neighbouring states. hoped support neighbouring states in such intense heat. But, Haryana

reduced Delhi's water share,' he stated. While referring to the BJP that is in power in Haryana, he "Although there are governments of different parties in the two states but is this time for politics over water." Earlier, Sunita Kejriwal,



Photo: Pankaj Kumar / The Pioneer

Bhogal.

"Before the Water Satyagraha, paid homage to the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi by visiting his samadhi at Rai Ghat. Decades ago, Bapu had adopted the path of Satyagraha for the country and for the rights of the common people. Today, following his path, I am sitting on a hunger strike to ensure that the people of Delhi get their share of water from Haryana. This Satyagraha will continue until my people of Delhi get their rightful share of water from Haryana," she said on her visit to X (formerly Twitter).

As she began her indefinite fast, the minister, sharing stage with other AAP leaders, said, "There is such intense heat in Delhi and the water requirements of the people have increased. In such times, the people need more water, but there is a shortage. All the water in Delhi comes from its neighbouring states."

Singh, Bharadwaj and other leaders accompanied Atishi at She said her appeal to the Haryana government and a Raighat where they paid

tributes before heading to letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for help did not yield any result and Delhi was not getting adequate water. "I am left with no choice hunger strike as I am unable to watch the plight of the men, women and children of Delhi. This indefinite Jal Satyagrah will continue till Delhi people get water from Haryana," she

> Delhi gets 1005 MGD water which is supplied to people in the city. She claimed that for the last two weeks, Haryana is giving 513 MGD instead of 613 MGD water to Delhi while more than 28 lakh people face shortage when Haryana stops 100 MGD of water

"Haryana has further reduced the release of Delhi's share from 100 MGD to 120 MGD in the last two days," she alleged. In the morning, the minister said she would begin her indefinite hunger strike in Bhogal as, despite all efforts, the Haryana government was not releasing the full share of Delhi's water.

Water Minister's hunger strike a sham, claims Bansuri

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW

New Delhi BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj on Friday lashed out at the State Water Minister Atishi over her indefinite hunger fast and said that her satyagraha is a sham and an attempt to hide her inactivity amid the national capital grappling with water crisis.

In a press conference, Swaraj attacked the senior AAP leader and said, "Atishi is a completely unsuccessful from February this year that Delhi will face a long summer but she did not make any preparations.'

She claimed, "At the time when Delhi had to be prepared for the needs of the summer, she was busy making statements on the possible arrest of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and then the arrest.

The first time MP asked six simple questions to Atishi and hoped that she would answer the questions. She stated, "Why did the Delhi Jal Board not make a summer action plan in March this year and why did it not make full preparations in discussions that were held despite the information of the scorching heat from the

Meteorological Department?" Reiterating her party's stance, she said, "You keep asking for

additional water Himachal Haryana Pradesh which do not have additional water but why don't you ask for water from between Harvana Himachal Pradesh even though your own party is in ower there?'

She demanded the data over which the minister has said that 28 lakh people are facing water problems in the city. "Today three crore people of Delhi are facing water problems but I don't know what the data is on the basis of which you still say that only 28 lakh people of Delhi are suffering from water problem. Atishi, why are you rubbing salt on the wounds of the three crore water crisis affected people by declaring them to be 28 lakh?" she questioned.

She inquired about the work done in the last ten years on cleaning and increasing the storage system of water plants like Wazirabad Barrage and

Two held for making fake passports for Bangladeshis

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Two fraudsters were arrested by the Delhi Police for creating fake Indian documents for Bangladeshi nationals to give them Indian identity and arranged Indian passports on the basis of fake documents for sending them abroad.

According to the police on Friday, about 21 passports were issued in the name of different persons. Further, photocopies photocopies of several passports, blank stamp papers several of West Bengal and other documents were recovered from their tour and travel offices.

The accused have been identified as 40 years old, hailing from West Bengal and S. Dinabandhu Patra, hailing from Odisha. DCP Indira Gandhi International airport Usha Ragnani said, "In the

intervening night of 15-16 March, one pax namely Debasish Pal arrived at IGI Airport, Delhi from UAE on Indian Passport. During scrutiny of his credentials and travel documents, he was found to be a Bangladesh National who obtained Indian passport fraudulently." A case under section 420 (Cheating and dishonestly inducing delivery of property), 468 (Forgery for purpose of cheating), 471 (Using as genuine a forged document or electronic record), 120B (Punishment of criminal conspiracy), 12 PP Act & 14 Foreigners Act.

On the basis of local intelligence, Roy was nabbed from one of his hideouts in West Bengal's Nadia and arrested in the case. "On sustained interrogation, he confessed his guilt," said the

Two rob women cash using dating

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police arrested two men for befriending women on dating apps and allegedly robbing them at their homes. According to the police on Friday, the police identified the accused as 28 year old Vijay Kumar Kamal and 35 year old Rahul, residents of Mohan Garden area in Delhi. The matter came to light on

May 31 when a 35-year-old woman filed a complaint that a man, who introduced himself as Jatin on a dating app, robbed her in her house. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) Ankit Singh said that the victim told the police that she and Jatin (alias Vijay Kumar Kamal) used to talk over messages before he and Rahul visited her house on May 30. They tied her hands,

tapped her mouth and

assaulted her. "Both robbed her gold

ornaments, mobile phone, and Rs 5,000 cash and fled. After receiving the complaint, an FIR was lodged at Dabri police station and an investigation was initiated," the DCP said. During the investigation, the police examined the CCTV footage and identified the accused. They found that the accused reached the victim's residence in a Creta car with a fake number plate, the DCP

"When we were searching for the call details of the accused, we came across another fact that the mobile phone which the accused was using was stolen from another woman in Rohini, who was also robbed in the same manner. Details of the Rohini-based victim were also obtained," Singh said. The Rohini-based victim told

the police that she met the accused via a dating app. On March 23, Vijay and Rahul met her at her house. They tied her hands and legs, tapped her mouth and robbed her. The accused took the victim's jewellery, cash and mobile

During analysis of CDR revealed that the mobile used to contact the Rohini-based victim was also snatched by them from the Sagarpur area. CCTV footage of all the crime spots was analysed by the team," DCP Singh said.

On June 18, the police arrested Rahul and interrogated him. Soon, the team also arrested the mastermind Kamal. The duo confessed to their crimes DCP said. "With the arrest of the accused, a total of four cases were worked out of 18, we received 28 bodies. On Dabri, Dwarka North, south June 19, we received 25 bodies Rohini, and north Rohini." and by the evening of June 20,

75 bodies received for autopsy in 3 days amid heatwave: Noida official **STAFF REPORTER** ■ NOIDA three doctors were

Amid a severe heatwave, the district health department here has received at least 75 bodies for post-mortem within a period of three days from June 18-20.

Senior health officials of the Gautam Buddh Nagar said usually the number of bodies received for post-mortem in a day averages around seven or eight and described the fatalities as "unexpected".

The department, however, could not conclusively say if these deaths were directly caused due to the heatwave. 'There has been an increase in the number of post-mortem cases and this increase is quite unexpected. Normally, there are 7-8 cases per day. On June we had received 22 bodies," Gautam Buddh Nagar's Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Suneel Kumar Sharma said.

Of these bodies, he said hospitals had received 20 as "brought dead" and 10 of them were "unidentified". 'We received 10 bodies in

hospitals that were brought dead on June 18, eight on June 19 and another two by evening of June 20. Three unidentified bodies were received on June 18, five on June 19 and two by evening of June 20," the CMÓ said.

In view of the "unexpected" rise in cases, the staff deployment for post-mortem duty has also been increased. "Usually, we would have six to seven cases during the day and maybe one at night. This was manageable by one doctor. But in the last three days as the

number of cases rose, services

required," Sharma said. On the heatwave impact, the CMO said there is no doubt the weather is extreme and it's "not usual heat".

"This heat is something else, the content of humidity in the weather has also risen of late. This is painful heat and chances of death increase in it. "The impact of heat is not equal on everybody. Those who are completely healthy can bear it. If you live in rural areas and spend time under trees, maybe then also you can bear the heat," he said.

"But here in cases of construction workers, security personnel, even traffic police and volunteers, they need to use a cap on their head, consume ORS and not stay in the open for long. Such measures can help save lives, the senior doctor added.











Glimpses from the International Yoga Day events held across Chhattisgarh on Friday. Yoga enthusiasts and practitioners assembled at various places in large numbers.

Embrace yoga to live a healthy lifestyle: CM

International Yoga Day observed across Chhattisgarh



STAFF REPORTER

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Friday urged people to embrace yoga for a healthy

He said this at an event at the Science College ground in Raipur in which thousands of yoga enthusiasts assembled to mark the occasion of 10th International Yoga Day.

Sai said: "Yoga connects us with a healthy lifestyle which heals our mind and brain. The process of yoga is

AXIS BANK

also linked with spirituality and higher life values.

"Yoga is essential not only for a healthy life but also for the creation of a healthy society. The whole world is now understanding and adapting

Addressing the programme, the Chief Minister said yoga enhances concentration and memory. "You will definitely reap great benefits from it as Yoga increases the ability to work and releases

Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan told a yoga

"Yoga is essential not only for a healthy life but also for the creation of a healthy society. The whole world is now understanding and adapting yoga"

camp at Raj Bhavan "Through yoga, practitioners from around the world are connecting with each other.' Deputy Chief Minister

Arun Sao participated in an event at the CSEB ground in Korba district.

healthy body.'

Sao said on the occasion: 'A healthy mind resides in a

Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sĥarma took part in the mass yoga programme at the Ravishankar Stadium in

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE FIMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

-auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under Securitisation and Reconstruction of Fin

Whereas, the Authorised Officer of Axis Bank Limited under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued demand notices dated 03.11.2015 calling upon the borrower/mortgagor/guarantors to repay the amount along with

Rules, 2002 issued demand notices dated 03.11.2015 calling upon the borrower/mortgagor/guarantors to repay the amount along win interest mentioned in the said notice.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower and Guarantors that the below described immovable assets mortgaged to Axis Bank Ltd., (secured creditor), the symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Axis Bank Ltd., will be sold on "Asis where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on 16.07.2024, for the covery of Rs. 2,06.10,534.00 (Rupees Two Crore Six Lakhs Ten Thousand Five Hundred and Thirty Four Only) being the amount due as on 21.06.2024 (this amount includes interest applied upto 30.06.2015) together with further interest thereon, costs and other consequences, damages etc. we.f. 01.07.2015 minus repayments if any, from Borrower, AV Enterprises, 1st Floor, GF Palace, Kashiram Nagar, Ring Road No 1, Raipur-492001, Chattisgarh and Guarantors (1), Shri Ram Dutta Sharma, H.W.C/109, Shailendra Nagar, Raipur-492001, Chattisgarh (2), Shri Ramkumar Sahu, House-4, Ward-1, Chichola Khowkt, Patpar, Rajnandgaon-491445, Chattisgarh, G), Omkar Chrore Vt.Ld, C-52, Ashoke Millenium, Ring Road No. 1, Raipur-492001, Chattisgarh, (3), Shri Subhash Sharma, HIG C/109A, Shailendra Nagar, Raipur-492001, Chattisgarh, (5). Shri Subhash Sharma, HIG C/109A, Shailendra Nagar, Raipur-492001, Chattisgarh (6), Shri Kamal Kishore Tiwari, Near Adiwasi Hotel, Lohara Road, balod-491226, Chattisgarh (9), Shri Sunil Kumar Maheswari, 42, Shala Marg, Choubey Coloney, Raipur-492001, Chattisgarh, (10). Sharma Vintrade Services Pvt.Ltd, 3rd Floor, Gursukh Tower, Katora Talab, Raipur-492001, Chattisgarh, (in Rs. Lakhs)

(in Rs.				
Details of the Security	Reserve Price (Rs in lacs)	Earnest Money Depot (EMD) (in Rs)		
Equitable mortgage of diverted immovable property at PH No 113, Kh. No 82/1 part, Mouza- Purena, Ward No 45, R.N.M- Raipur, Tehsil & District — Raipur, Chattisgarh, having an area of 720 sq.ft. + 540 sq.ft. owned by Shri Vidit Sharma. Encumbrances (if any) — Not known to Bank	28.00 (Rupees Twenty Eight Lakhs only)	2.80 (Rupees Two Lakhs Eighty Thousand only)		

Terms and Condition of E- auction Sale

Terms and Condition of E- auction Sale

1. The secured assets will be sold by e-auction through bank approved service provider M/s E-Procurement Technologies Ltd. (Auction Tiger) who are assisting the Authorised Officer in conducting the online e-auction.

2. The above secured assets will be sold on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS", "WHATEVER THERE IS" and "NO RECOURSE" condition.

3. Auction sale/biding would be only through "Online Electronic Bidding" process through the website https://axisbank.auctiontiger.net on 16.07.2024 between 11.30 AM to 12.30 PM with unlimited extension of 5 minutes each in the event of bids being placed in the last 5 minutes.

4.EMD is to be deposited in form of Demand Draft drawn in favour of Authorised Officer, Axis Bank Ltd, payable at par, Last date for Bid application submission with EMD amount is 15.07.2024 3:00 P.M. Full name of the bidder, Address, Contact No. & E-mail ID should be mentioned at the back of the demand draft (EMD).

5.Bid Application form can be submitted on a plain paper containing details of interested bidder (KYC documents i.e. Photo ID proof, PAN card, Address proof, E-mail ID and mobile number) in a sealed envelope & EMD to Axis Bank Ltd., Structured Assets Group-East, 4th Floor, AC Market Building, Shakespeare Sarani, Kolkata-700071.

6.Auction would not commence below Reserve Price mentioned above. Bidders shall be allowed to improve their offers in multiple of Rs. 10,000/-.

The intending bidders should hold a valid e-mail id and register their names at portal https://axisbank.auctiontiger.net and get their User ID and password free of cost from M/s e-Procurement Technologies Ltd. whereupon they would be allowed to participate in online e-auction

scheduled on 12.07.2024.

8. Prospective bidders may avail online training on E-Auction from M/s E-Procurement Technologies Ltd. (Auction Tiger). Contact Person: Mr Ram Sharma, Mobile: 079-68136880/9265562818/21 or 9978591888, Email id: ramprasad@auctiontiger.net, support@auctiontiger.net.

9. EMD amount shall be adjusted in case of the highest/successful bidder and the EMD amount of remaining bidders will be returned at the address mentioned in the bid application (within 2 working days of finalisation of sale) to unsuccessful bidders or they can collect the same personally by visiting Axis Bank Ltd, SAG (East), 4th Floor, AC Market Building, 1, Shakespeare Sarani, Kolkata-700 071. The EMD shall pot carry integer.

Interested parties can inspect the assets at site by contacting at Structured Assets Group (East) office at 033-66272035/9830959995. I.Highest/successful bidder shall deposit 25% of the amount of sale price after adjusting the EMD within next working day from acceptance of highest bid by the Authorised Officer failing which the earnest money deposit shall be forfeited. The highest bidder shall be declared to be the purchaser of the property provided hefshelf-hey is/are legally qualified to bid. The balact 75% of the sale price shall be paid by the successful bidder within 15 days of confirmation of sale by the Authorised Officer or such extended period as agreed upon in writing by and

solely at the discretion of Authorized Officer.

2 On failure of the successful bidder in paying the balance amount, the entire deposit amount paid by the bidder shall be forfeited without any notice unless time is extended further in writing by the Secured Creditor (The Bank) and the assets will be resold. Payment is to be made in the form of Demand Draft in favour of Authorised Officer, Axis Bank Limited, payable at par.

3 The EMD amount shall be liable for forfeiture without prior notice, if the successful Bidder fails to adhere to the terms and conditions of the Austica Sele.

Auction Sale.

14. The Bank shall not be held responsible/liable for any charge, lien, encumbrance, property tax or any other dues to the government or anybody in respect of the property under the sale. The Bank does not undertake any responsibility to procure any permission/license etc. in respect of the secured assets/movable properties offered for sale in respect of the said movable properties/secured assets.

15. Axis Bank Ltd. reserves their rights to accept or to reject the highest and / or all offer/sor adjourn/postpone the auction without assigning any reason thereof and also to modify any or all the terms and conditions of the sale without prior notice.

16. Acceptance of highest bid will be subject to the approval of Competent Authority of the Bank. The Bank also reserves the rights to sale the properties by any of the modes prescribed under the SARFAESI Rules, 2002.

17. The successful bidder should bear the charges/fees/tax payable for conveyance such as GST, Stamp Duty Registration Fees, other taxes, incidental expenses etc. as applicable as per law. The successful bidder shall also bear all statutory dues, if any.

18. Nothing in this notice constitutes or will be deemed to constitute any commitment or representation on the part of the Bank to sale the above properties. Bank (Authorized Officer reserves the right to cancel the sale for any reason it may deem fit or even without assigning any reason and such cancellation shall not be called in question by the bidders.

18. It is the responsibility of the Tenderers to inspect and satisfy themselves about the assets and specifications before participating in the tender.

The sale certificate/certificate of sale will be delivered only after the payment of the entire bid amount and other charges, if any including GST/TDS, wherever applicable.

In the sale certificate of sale will be delivered only alter the payment of the chart of a sale will be delivered only alter the payment of the chart of the whole of ST/TDS, wherever applicable.

It Special instruction & caution:
Bidding in the last minutes/seconds should be avoided by the bidders in their own interest. Neither Axis Bank nor the service provider will be responsible for any lapses/failure (internet failure, Power failure etc.) on the part of the vendor in such cases. In order to ward off such contingent situation bidders are requested to make all the necessary arrangements/alternatives such as back—up power supply and whatever else required so that they are able to circumvent such situation and are able to participate in the auction successfully.

It is also that they are able to circumvent such situation and are able to participate in the auction successfully.

It is also that they are able to circumvent such situation and are able to participate in the auction successfully.

It is also that they are able to circumvent such situation and are able to participate in the auction successfully.

Sd/- Authorised Officer Axis Bank Ltd

Ex-IAS Ajay Singh made C'garh Election Commissioner



STAFF REPORTER

 $R^{
m etired}$ IAS officer Ajay Singh has been appointed the Chhattisgarh Election Commissioner, it was announced on Friday.

The Governor appointed the 1983 batch officer on the recommendation of the state government. He was a former Chief Secretary in the state.

Also, the government has issued fresh posting orders for three IAS officers.

GST Commissioner Rajat Bansal (2012) has been given

Commissioner, MGNREGA. Kuldeep Sharma (2014) has been given additional charges as the Registrar, Cooperative He is the Managing

The Governor

appointed the 1983

batch officer on the

recommendation of

the state

government. He

was a former Chief

Secretary in the

state.

additional charge as

Director of Chhattisgarh State Text Book Corp.

Namrata Jain (2019) has been assigned additional charges of the Sukma District Panchavat Chief Executive Officer. She is the Director, National Rural Livelihood

Registered Office: 6th Floor, Tower A, Peninsula Business Park, Senapati Bapat Marg

DCB BANK

The undersigned being the authorized officer of the DCB Bank Ltd., under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice on below mentioned dates calling upon the borrowers (Borrower's and Co-Borrower's) to repay the amount mentioned in the notice as receipt of the said notice.

POSSESSION NOTICE

The borrower and Co-Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower, Co-Borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub-section (4) of section 13 of Act read with rule 8 also r/w section 14(1) of the Security Interest Rules 2002 on 20th June, 2024.

The borrower, Co-Borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to dea vith the property (Description of the immovable Property) and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the DCB Bank Ltd., for respective amount as mentioned here

wer's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the act, i

Demand Notice Dated :	20th April, 2022	
Name of Borrower(s) and Co-borrower(s) :	Mr. Bhabani Shankar Choudhury, Mrs. Neha Choudhury and B. S. Contract & Specialist Clearing Services.	
Loan Account Numbers	DBLARAI00458735 / DBLARAI00536187	
Total Outstanding Amount :	Rs. 18,58,742.60 (Rupees Eighteen Lakh Fifty Eight Thousand Seven Hundred Forty Two and Sixty Paisa Only) as on 20th April, 2022	

Description of the Immovable Property: Property bearing Flat No. Mig II/508, 5th Floor, Block - III, Kanchan Janga Complex, Kabir Nagar, Raipur, Pin - 49299, Chhattisgarh

Date: 22.06.2024

For DCB Bank Limited

कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियंता. लो.नि.वि.. संभाग क्र0-3. डी-1/17, सेक्टर-17, नवा रायपुर अटल नगर, जिला-रायपुर (छ.ग.)

प्रथम निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना दिनांक: 14-06-2024 NIT-02/2024-2025/व ले लि

निविदा प्राप्त क्रय करने हेतु आवेदन :-08/07/2024 अपरान्ह 5.30 बजे तक प्रस्तुत करने की अंतिम तिथि ढेकेदारों द्वारा प्रस्तुत निविदायें प्राप्त :- 15/07/2024 अपरान्ह 5.30 बजे तक करने की अंतिम तिथि

निविदा खोलने की तिथि :- 16/07/2024 पूर्वान्ह 11.30 बजे तक निविदाकारों की श्रेणी:-ई-पंजीयन के अंतर्गत श्रेणी ''द'' से ''अ'' तक

निविदा क्र.	कार्य का नाम	कार्य की अनुमानित लागत (लाख मे) अमानत राशि (रू.मे) बैंक साल्वेंसी (रु.में)
1	2	3
T0002	निर्माण उपसंभाग क्रमांक- 1 नवा रायपुर के अंतर्गत ऑफिसर्स (आई.ए.एस.) कॉलोनी देवेन्द्र नगर सेक्शन रायपुर के अंतर्गत शासकीय बंगलो आवासों में पेटिंग एवं डिस्टेम्परिंग कार्य	20.00 15000.00 300000.00
T0003	निर्माण उपसंभाग क्रमांक- 1 नवा रायपुर के अंतर्गत ऑफिसर्स (आई.ए.एस.) कॉलोनी देवेन्द्र नगर सेक्शन रायपुर के अंतर्गत शासकीय बंगलो आवासों में विशेष मरम्मत, लघुमूल गौण कार्य, वार्षिक सरम्मत एवं अन्य जमा मद के कार्य	20.00 15000,00 300000.00
T0004	निर्माण उपसंभाग क्रमांक-1 सेक्टर 17 नवा रायपुर के अंतर्गत सेक्टर 17 नवा रायपुर स्थित डी, ई एफ, जी एवं एच टाईप जी.ए.डी. बंगलो आवासों में विशेष मरम्मत, लघुमूल गौण कार्य, वार्षिक मरम्मत एवं अन्य जमा मद के कार्य	20.00 15000.00 300000.00
T0005	निर्माण उपसंभाग क्रमांक-1 नवा रायपुर के अंतर्गत मेडिकल कालेज कॉलोनी के शासकीय बंगली आवासों में विशेष मरम्मत, लघुमूल गौण कार्य, वार्षिक मरम्मत एवं अन्य जमा मद के कार्य	5.00 5000.00 75000.00
T0006	निर्माण उपसंभाग क्रमांक-1 सेक्टर 17 नवा रायपुर के अंतर्गत सेक्टर 17 नवा रायपुर स्थित एफ, जी एवं एच टाईप जी.ए.डी. बंगलो आवासो में में विशेष मरम्मत, लघुमूल गौण कार्य, वार्षिक मरम्मत एवं अन्य जमा मद के कार्य	5.00 5000.00 75000.00
T0007	उपसंभाग क्रमांक–3 रायपुर के अंतर्गत काशीराम नगर सेवशन के शासकीय बंगलो आवासों में विशेष मरम्मत, लघुमूल गौण कार्य, वार्षिक मरम्मत एवं अन्य जमा मद के कार्य	5.00 5000.00 75000.00

आवेदन के साथ Registation Copy, GST Certificate, Bank Solvency

एवं जी.एस.टी. भुगतान का 3 बी प्रस्तुत करना अनिवार्य है निवदा संबंधी शर्ते विभागीय वेबसाईट www.cg.nic.in/pwdraipur में Live Tender के अंतर्गृत निवदा प्रपत्र में उपलब्ध है। इनका अवलोकन संबंधित संभाग कार्यालय में किया जा सकता है। अन्य जानकारी हेतू संभागीय कार्यालय में संपर्क करे कार्यपालन अभियंता

> लोक निर्माण विभाग, संभाग क्र-3 रायपर

Mokshda Chandrakar removed as VC

Indira Kala Sangeet Vishwavidyalaya, Khairagarh

STAFF REPORTER

After a simmering dispute on charges of having a political inclination, the Chhattisgarh Governor on Friday removed Mokshda (Mamta) Chandrakar as the Vice Chancellor of the Khairagarh-based Indira Sangeet Vishwavidyalaya.



renowned folk artist and was elevated as Vice

Chancellor during the Bhupesh Baghel regime. She was charged with motivating the employees and officers of the university to support a political party in elections. Some people in

seeking her removal. Meanwhile, the Durg Commissioner has been assigned the job of Vice Chancellor till a new

Khairagarh took out rallies

Business groups pledge to prevent child labour

STAFF REPORTER

Organisations in Chhattisgarh's Bilaspur on Friday expressed their commitment to contribute to the administration's drive to prevent child labour.

In a meeting held by the Labour Department, Chamber of Commerce President Sanjay Mittal said all industry associations would take it a mission to eliminate child labour.

Along with this, serious issues like child begging, child marriage, child trafficking and the fundamental rights of chil-



dren were discussed. The Bilaspur administra-

tion is conducting surprise inspections of institutions and educating employers about the provisions of the Child Labour Act of 1986 and the hazards to children in work

Employing underaged workers is punishable by a minimum fine of Rs 20,000 and imprisonment for six months to two years.

BSF man found dead



STAFF REPORTER

Border Security Force A(BSF) trooper was found dead on Friday with a bullet wound to the head in Kanker district of Chhattisgarh. Police suspect he may have committed suicide.

Head Constable Madan Kumar from the BSF's 94th battalion went missing on Thursday when his unit was in Chhote Bethiya area, Kanker Superintendent of Police IK Elesela said.

Kumar was posted at the

Marbeda BSF camp.
During a search, security
personnel found Kumar's body with a bullet injury on the head in a forest on Friday morning. His service rifle was also recovered. The BSF is extensively deployed in the Kanker district for anti-Maoist operations.

Nine Maoists held in Bijapur

STAFF REPORTER ■

Nine Maoists, one of them carrying a reward of Rs 1 lakh on his head, were arrested on Friday from separate places in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh.

Five were apprehended from a forest near Pusbaka village, Superintendent of Police Jitendra Kumar Yadav said.

Among them, Raju Oyam, who carried the bounty, was a member of Usur Local Organisation Squad of the outlawed Maoist outfit.

Explosives as well as

Maoist pamphlets were

recovered from them.

Also, four lower rung cadres were nabbed elsewhere.

Cong protests over 'irregularities' in NEET exam

STAFF REPORTER

The Congress on Friday staged a sit-in protest against irreg ularities in

UGC-NET exam here. Former

NEET-UG

exam and

the cancelled

Chhattisgarh Chie

Bhupesh Baghel said that an independent inquiry should be set up under the supervision of a Supreme Court judge. He said that over the past one decade, question papers of 70 exams have been leaked, and

termed the Modi government as a "paper leak government". Baghel said the paper leaks happened because people belonging to one ideology were

holding key osts Incompetent people have been placed posts, he said.

not merely an issue of paper of a much larger scam, he said, demanding cancellation of the

NEET-UG 2024 examination. He also demanded the sacking of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, CIRCLE NO-1 RAIPUR (C.G.)

Tender Notice

Contractors, Registered appropriate class in Unified Registration System [e- Registration] invited Online tenders for the following

NIT No. System Tender No.	Name of Work	Probable amount of contract
1	2	3
18/154809	White Washing Colour Washing Distempering Of Govt. Resi / Non- Resi. Building At Abhanpur Section Under Sub Division Abhanpur (1st Call)	Lakh
15/154810	White Washing Colour Washing Distempering Of Govt. Resi/Non- Resi. Building At Nawapara Section Under Sub Division Abhanpur (1st Call)	Lakh
41/155038	SR, MOW And Ordinary Maintainance Of Tribal Youth Hostel, Dwarka New Delhi. (1" Call)	
39/155039	SR, MOW And Ordinary Mantainance Of CG Niwas Dwarka Sector 13, New Delhi. (1" Call)	Rs. 100.00 Lakh
265/155009	S.R./ Mow Work Of Non Residential Building At Arang Section No2, Under Sub Division No4 (Arang), Raipur (C.G.) (2nd Call)	
261/155010	M.O.W. & Other Deposit Work For Building Work Under PT. J.N.M. Medical College & Bsc. Nursing College Section P.W.D. Nirman Sub. Division-2 Raipur (C.G.) (2nd Call)	Lakh

NIT No.18 System Tender No.154809, NIT No.15 System Tender No.154810, NIT No.41 System Tender No.155038 & NIT No.39 System Tender No.155039 Last date of tender Download Date up to 10.07.2024 Time 17:30 PM & NIT No.265 System Tender No.155009 & NIT No.261 System Tender No.155010 Last date of tender Download Date up to 05.07.2024 Time 17:30 PM

Note:- All eligible/interested contractors are mandated to get enrolled on the e Procurement portal (https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in) in order to download the tender documents and participate in the subsequent bidding process.

Superintending Engineer P.W.D. Raipur Circle No-1

G-242500484/6 Raipur (C.G.)

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisements.

Printed and Published by Vijay Budhia for and on behalf of CMYK Printech Limited, "The Pioneer Building", 11, Civil Lines, Near Raj Bhavan, Opp. Sanskriti Bhavan, Rajpur-492007 Telephone(0771) 2223260/70 and Printed at Kavya Prakashan, Express Tower, Adarsh nagar, Mowa, Rajpur-492005, Editor-in-Chief Shobori Ganguli, Resident Editor: Sujeet Kumar, Delhi Office: 100k Milap Bhawan, 8/A Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi-110 002, Phone: 011-40110455, Corporate Office:- 201-205, 208-210, 2nd Floor, Pratap Bhawan 5, B.S.Z. Marg, New Delhi-110002 Phone: 011-69342500, Lucknow Office: 4th Floor, Sahara Shopping Centre, Faizabad Road, Lucknow 226016. Telephones: 0522-2346443, 2346444, 2346445.

SC refuses to defer counselling for NEET

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

¬he Supreme Court on Friday refused to defer the counselling for the controversy-ridden NEET-UG 2024 examination scheduled to kick off on July 6, saying it is not an "open and shut" process. The Apex Court issued notices to the National Testing Agency (NTA), the Centre and others on a petition seeking cancellation of the exam over alleged irregularities in holding it on May 5. A vacation bench of Justices Vikram Nath and SVN Bhatti posted the matter for hearing on July 8 along with other pending pleas alleging irregularities in conduct of the examination.

The counsel appearing for the petitioners urged the bench that the counselling process may be paused for two days as the apex court is scheduled to hear all these pleas on July 8. "I am not seeking any stay of counselling. I am only praying that the counselling which is scheduled to be held



on July 6 may be paused for two days only. The reason being that the main matter is listed on July 8," the lawyer argued. The bench observed, "We have been hearing the same statement. Don't think otherwise for interrupting you. Counselling does not mean open and shut. It is a process. That process commences on July 6." When the bench asked about the duration of the first round of counselling, one of the lawyers appearing in the matter

said it will last around a week. The bench, which refused to defer the

counselling process, said that counsel appearing for the NTA, the Centre and other respondents may file their response to the plea within two weeks. The bench also dealt with a separate application seeking certain directions to the NTA.

The counsel appearing for the applicant raised the issue of re-test, which is to be conducted on June 23, and alleged that the NTA has withheld some material information. The bench then asked the NTA's counsel to file a response to the application and posted it for hearing on

On June 13, the Centre had told the apex court that the decision to give grace marks to 1,563 NEET-UG 2024 candidates for admission to MBBS, BDS and others courses has been cancelled and they will be given an option to take a re-test on June During the hearing on Friday, the applicant's counsel raised the issue of retest and said candidates will undergo the stress of giving the examination afresh.



(Top left clockwise): People perform yoga at Times Square, in New York, USA; in Tel Aviv, Israel; Tsukiji Hongwanji Temple premises in Tokyo, Japan and at the iconic

Yoga Day celebrated with

Indian Armed forces perform asanas

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

 $M_{\rm three\ services\ joined\ in}^{\rm ilitary\ personnel\ from\ the}$ the International Yoga day celebrations across the country on Friday performing asanas in varying weather conditions. While several army jawans stretched their limbs during sessions held on a range of terrains from Kutch to Kibithu and arid Longewala to Andaman & Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal, navy personnel showed their yoga skills onboard India's aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya and some naval ships.

In the national capital, a large number of air warriors converged at the Air Force Station to mark the International Day of Yoga. IAF Chief Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari led the event.

"The 10th International Day of Yoga (IDY) was celebrated across the IAF today. The CAS led the celebrations by performing Yoga with IAF personnel at Air Force Station New Delhi. The theme of this year's IDY is 'Yoga for Self and Society'. The CAS urged everyone to embrace Yoga and set forth on a path of serenity to discover the calmness when the mind, body and spirit unite," the IAF wrote in a post on X and shared photos.

Navy Chief Adm Dinesh K Tripathi attended a session held at Chanakya Bagh here by Navy.Indian Naval Warships mission deployed across the Indian Ocean Region and Western Pacific Ocean conducted Yoga session at sea and in foreign ports. IN Djibouti, Sunayna at Port Louis, Mauritius, Tarkash at Salalah, Oman, Kamorta at Trincomalee, Sri Lanka and



Indian Army personnel perform Yoga on the 10th International Day of Yoga, in

Glacier in Ladakh to coastal

areas of Kanyakumari in Tamil

Nadu. The occasion was also

celebrated from areas of

Longewala in Rajasthan and

Kutch in Gujarat) to the

mountainous terrain of

Kibithu in Arunachal Pradesh

and Imphal in Manipur, it said.

Defence Minister Rajnath

Singh joined all ranks and their

families for the celebrations in

the city of Mathura in Uttar

Pradesh. Army Chief Gen

performed yoga near Pangong

In Delhi, the international

yoga day was commemorated

at Cariappa Parade Ground at

the Delhi Cantonment, where

serving army personnel, defence attaches of friendly

foreign countries along with their families as well as NCC cadets participated. The yoga session here was led by Lt Gen Upendra Davwedi, the Vice

Chief of the Army Staff. Besides India, the IDY was also

observed by all Indian Army

contingents deployed in

United Nations Missions across the globe. The local

population there participated

overwhelming numbers, the

statement said

celebration

personnel also

Manoj Pande also attended it.

Several

lake in Ladakh.

Saryu at Belawan, Indonesia -conducted Yoga sessions in respective ports, spreading the spirit of yoga across the oceans, a Navy spokesperson said.

The main celebrations of the 10th International Day of Yoga were led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi who took part in an event in Srinagar, while several Union ministers participated in yoga sessions held in different parts of the national capital.

Recognising its universal appeal, in December 2014, the United Nations proclaimed June 21 as the International Day of Yoga by a resolution. The day aims to raise awareness worldwide of the many benefits of practising yoga. "Celebrating the timeless practice of oneness and harmony, the Indian Army celebrated 10th International Day of Yoga across the entire length and breadth of our nation. The event witnessed overwhelming participation by serving personnel, their families, children, veterans, NCC cadets, and civilian fraternity at various locations,"

statement. Yoga was also performed by soldiers deployed at the freezing heights of Siachen

Besides, para athletes of the Army at Army Paralympic Node, the cadets from Army Boys or Girls Sports Company also took part in the event in the country with lot of vigor and enthusiasm, it added. The local population including

students at various educational establishments including the villages border participated

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

 $Y_{\text{around from Israel to the}}^{\text{oga}} \text{ enthusiasts world} \\ \text{UAE to the UK and the US}$

celebrated International Day of

Yoga (IDY) on Friday with the

main event led by Prime

Minister Narendra Modi in

Reflecting a moment of global mindfulness and harmony, this year's theme, "Yoga for Self and Society," underscored its dual

role in fostering individual and

societal well-being.
The D-Day was held at the UN

headquarters, New York, organised by the Permanent

Mission of India to the UN in

collaboration with the UN

Secretariat, in the North Lawn

Area of UNHQ while the

Indian Embassy in New York

International Day of Yoga at

In Stockholm, the Indian Embassy participated in the

celebrations with well-known

Indian spiritual guru Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. It held a special

session with 800 participants

and diplomats from 25 nations at Konserthuset. The Israeli

Embassy in New Delhi put up

a touching video of their staff doing yoga. "Namaste! This #InternationalYogaDay, our

diplomats share why they LOVE #yoga. They might not

be yogis yet, but they sure have

Embassy in a post said "Team

fun trying!" it posted.

Likewise, the

the iconic Times Square,

the

Srinagar.

celebrated

celebrations, the ministry said. This year's IYD theme, 'Yoga for Self and Society', resonated deeply in the celebrations with all personnel reinforcing their commitment responsibilities in serving the

nation, the ministry said. From the Indian Navy's side, personnel performed various yoga asanas, including 'Surya Namaskar', on board warships INS Tarkash and INS Teg, among other ships.

"The International Yoga Day #21Jun, witnesses the Sunrise Command embracing the Sun with #yoga at sea, on the beaches, and naval stations across the Eastern Seaboard #IDY2024 #yogaeverywhere," the Eastern Naval Command posted on X and also shared photos.

In another statement, the defence ministry said eight lakh National Cadet Corps (NCC) cadets celebrated the occasion by participating in yoga sessions organised by NCC across the country.

The sessions were organised at numerous schools, colleges & iconic locations including the Sun Temple at Konark in Odisha), Red Fort in Delhi, along Dal Lake in Srinagar, Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad, Sanchi Stupa in Mumbai, Nainital Lake in Uttarakhand, Jhansi Fort in Uttar Pradesh, and Victoria Memorial in Kolkata, it added.

across the world members of the Embassy of LOVE #yoga. They might not Ukraine in India celebrations of the join ĺ0th Anniversary of the International Day of Yoga & more than 5,000 years of ancient Yoga tradition," while Philip Green, the Australian High Commissioner in India, in a post said "Over 10 lakh Australians practice yoga including here in New Delhi." In Japan, IYD was held at the Tsukiji Hongwanji Temple with the Indian Embassy in a post stating " "RAIN OR SHINE YOGA IN JAPAN."

The Indian Embassy in Kuwait also marked the IYD at the embassy, which enthusiastic participation by yoga trainers and enthusiasts, members of diplomatic corps, and members of the Indian

community. The British High Commission in New Delhi shared X photographs of some of its members performing a few yoga asanas in the morning. ..Inhale' exhale' Armed with our yoga mats, team #UKinIndia joined millions of people in India and around the world to celebrate
International #YogaDay," the UK High Commission here wrote on X.

The Israeli Embassy video, featuring envoy Naor Gilon social media, commenting, 'Namaste!

Ukrainian #InternationalYogaDay, our diplomats share why they

be yogis yet, but they sure have fun trying! Tell us in the comments why YOU love yoga.#IDY2024#YogaDay#Inte rnationalYogaDay2024#YogaD ay2024#YogaForÁll." Likewise, the US Embassy video featured little children trying their hands at different yoga asanas. "It's Yoga Day and our adorable little yogis are stealing hearts with their smiles and stretches! Watch as our tiny warriors strike adorable poses, from Virabhadrasana Bhujangasana! This #YogaDay, join us as we celebrate the flexibility, balance, cuteness overload," embassy posted on X. The first citizen of India,

President Droupadi Murmu who performed yoga at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here, said yoga is India's unique gift to humanity, and it has become far more important because of lifestyle-related problems. "Yoga is a way to physical, mental and spiritual well-being. Let us resolve to adopt yoga as an integral part of our day-to-day living," the president said in a post on X and shared pictures of her doing yoga.

In a similar spirit, as International Yoga Day entered into its tenth year and its across India, Gujarat's Chief Minister announced plans for 51 'Yoga Studios,' recognising yoga's invaluable role during

the COVID-19 pandemic, while Kerala committed to establishing 10,000 new yoga clubs. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, joined by his two deputies Kirti Vardhan Singh Pabitra Margherita, performed a few asanas, along with several members of the diplomatic community at an indoor facility in Delhi, while the UK High Commission and embassies of the United States and Israel were among the diplomatic missions in India that joined in the yoga day celebrations on Friday. Back home, several Union ministers, Chief Ministers and Governors participated in yoga sessions held in different parts of the national capital and their

respective States. Union Home Minister Amit Shah was at his home town in Gujarat's Ahmedabad, participating at a yoga event as he said, "India has enriched the world by giving the gift of Yoga. In today's world, the remedy to every problem is Yoga. Yoga is beneficial for both health and the mind." In Uttar Pradesh, State

Governor Anandiben Patel and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath performed different asanas as they were joined by hundreds of people on the lawns of the Governor's Chief Minister Eknath Shinde appealed to citizens to make yoga an integral part of their

Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina being welcomed by Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh upon her arrival on a two-day State visit to

Bangladesh PM begins two-day visit to India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

 $B_{\text{Sheikh Hasina on Friday}}^{\text{angladesh Prime Minister}}$ began a two-day State visit to India with an aim to further expand the already close ties between the two countries.

It is the first incoming bilateral State visit by a foreign leader after the formation of the new government in India following the Lok Sabha elections.

Hasina was among seven top leaders from India's neighbourhood and the Indian Ocean region who attended the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Union council of ministers at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on June 9. Modi and Hasina are scheduled to hold wide-ranging talks on Saturday during which both sides are likely to firm up a raft of agreements providing for cooperation in several sectors. Apart from holding bilateral consultations with Modi, the visiting leader is scheduled to call-on President Droupadi Murmu and Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is scheduled to call on

Hasina this evening. The talks between the two prime ministers are expected to focus on taking the bilateral ties to new heights, said a source.

The overall strategic ties between India and Bangladesh have been on an upswing in the last few

. Bangladesh is an important partner for India under its Neighbourhood First" policy and the cooperation extends to areas of security, trade, commerce, energy, connectivity, science and technology, defence and maritime affairs among others.

The achievements in the connectivity sector included the inauguration of the Maitri Setu bridge over river Feni in Tripura and the rollout of the Chilahati-Haldibari rail link.

Water available in 150 main reservoirs dips

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With scorching heat battering a large swathes of India over the past few weeks, water available in the 150 main reservoirs across the country further dipped to just 21 per cent of their total live storage capacity.

The Central Water Commission (CWC) has released the live storage status of 150 key reservoirs across India in its latest bulletin.

These reservoirs, crucial for hydroelectric projects and water supply, have a combined live storage capacity of 178.784 billion cubic meters (BĆM), which is approximately 69.35 per cent of the total live storage capacity created in the country.
As of Thursday, the live storage avail-

Swathes of northern and eastern India remained in the grip of a punishingly

cent of the normal storage for this peri-For the past two weeks, the reservoirs were at 22 per cent while it was 23 per

which is 21 per cent of their total capac-

ity. Overall, the live storage available

across the 150 reservoirs stands at

54.310 BCM against the estimated total capacity of 257.812 BCM.

This marks a significant decrease from the same period last year, when the live

storage was 46.883 BCM. The current

storage is also lower than the 10-year

average (normal) storage of 41.446

BCM. Thus, the present storage is 80

per cent of last year's levels and 91 per

cent the week before that.

able in these reservoirs is 37.662 BCM, long heat wave, causing water stress in parts of the country including in the national capital. In terms of reservoir capacity, the southern region continues to be most hit.

States like Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu, with 42 reservoirs, have a total capacity of 53.334 BCM. The available storage is 8.508 BCM (16 per cent of capacity), which is lower than last year's 21 per cent and the normal storage of 20 per cent.

Northern states including Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, and Rajasthan, have 10 monitored reservoirs with a total capacity of 19.663 BCM. The current live storage is 5.488 BCM (28 per cent of capacity), which is lower than last year's 39 per cent and the normal storage of 31 per cent.

The eastern region covering Assam, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Tripura, Nagaland, and Bihar has 23 reservoirs with a total capacity of 20.430 BCM. The available storage is 3.873 BCM (19 per cent of capacity), slightly better than last year's 18 per cent but below the normal storage of 23 per

In the western region, Gujarat and Maharashtra, with 49 reservoirs, have a total capacity of 37.130 BCM. The current storage is 7.608 BCM

(20.49 per cent of capacity), which is less than last year's 24 per cent but better than the normal storage of 19.56 per

In the central region that includes Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Madhya

Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh, there are 26 reservoirs with a total capacity of 48.227 BCM. The current live storage is 12.185 BCM (25 per cent of capacity), which is less than last year's 32 per cent and the normal storage of 26 per

The overall storage position in the country is less than that of the corresponding period last year and is also below the normal storage for this time of year.

Specifically, better-than-normal storage is observed in river basins of the Ganga, Brahmaputra, Sabarmati, Narmada, Tapi, and a few others, while significant deficiencies are noted in the Brahmani and Baitarni, Krishna, Mahanadi, Godavari, and Cauvery basins, among others.

Early management of gestational diabetes can prevent maternal, child health complications: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

Early mar management of diabetes, particularly in the first trimester, can significantly reduce complications and improve delivery outcomes, according to a new study published in The Lancet. Gestational diabetes, which affects one seven globally, pregnancies becoming more prevalent and complex due to rising obesity

Currently pregnant women are checked for diabetes post the 24th week. The researchers from an international team, including those from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi said current practices typically delay testing and treatment until later in pregnancy, but intervention could lead to better health outcomes.

Worldwide about one in 14 pregnant women develop gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM) which is characterised by blood sugar levels that are higher than normal but not as high as in people with a chronic blood sugar problem. The sugar levels usually normalise after delivery.

"Our new Series emphasises the urgent need for a major shift in how GDM is first diagnosed and managed, not only during pregnancy but throughout the lifetime of mothers and their babies," said Series lead Prof. David Simmons of Western Sydney



University, Australia. "GDM is an increasingly complex condition, and there one-size-fits-all approach to managing it. Instead, a patient's unique risk factors and metabolic profile

should be considered to help guide them through pregnancy and support them afterward to achieve the best health outcomes for women and babies everywhere.'

As obesity continues to

North Africa region. "GDM is a tremendous public effectively

health challenge. Women who experience it need support from the medical community, policymakers, and society as a whole to ensure they can access proper treatment, reduce the stigma associated with GDM, and improve their overall pregnancy experience," said

increase worldwide, along with

impaired glucose tolerance and

T2D rates in women of

reproductive age, GDM prevalence has also increased

multiple countries over the last

20 years. The current GDM

prevalence rates range from

over 7% in North America and the Caribbean region to almost 28% in the Middle East and

to threefold across

Series author Dr Yashdeep Gupta from the AIIMS. GDM has historically been considered a complication involving the treatment of high blood glucose levels late in the second trimester. The WHO's current diagnostic criteria for GDM recommends testing at 24-28 weeks gestation without prior screening

However, recent evidence suggests that GDM has foundations before pregnancy and can be present in early pregnancy. Overall, 30-70 per cent of GDM can be found early using oral glucose tolerance testing and includes those at most significant risk of requiring insulin therapy and experiencing pregnancy complications.

World embraced yoga due to Modi's efforts, says Yogi

The world has embraced yoga due to the efforts of Minister Narendra Modi, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Friday on International Day of Yoga.

Governor Anandiben Patel and Adityanath performed different asanas as they led the Yoga Day celebrations in the state. They were joined by hundreds of people on the lawns of the Governor's House

Addressing the gathering, Patel said, "International Yoga Day is actually a day for new encouragement. The day encourages us to take pride in our traditions.

Speaking before her, the chief minister said "nearly 200 countries" have embraced yoga due to Modi's efforts.

"We owe this opportunity to our esteemed prime minister whose vision and initiatives have led to nearly 200 countries embracing International Yoga

"These countries have aligned themselves with our rich heritage, honouring and enriching our culture and traditions. There can be no greater tribute to our ancestors, traditions, and heritage than this," he said.

Adityanath emphasised that yoga paves the way for the welfare of all humanity,



country, society, and time. By embracing connecting the entire human race, we show true respect for our ancestors and heritage, he

International Yoga Day has become a medium for all of us to express our respect towards this tradition of India. Yoga is a comprehensive knowledge that brings people together both physically and mentally.

"Reflecting on the sage tradition of India reveals their profound foresight connecting society, where they made an innovative attempt to integrate 'dharma' with yoga in this way," he said. He highlighted that the theme

transcending the limitations of of the International Yoga Day was 'Yoga for all' which signifies that yoga is free from any form

discrimination

transcends barriers of caste,

region, language, time, and

country. 'My appeal is to incorporate yoga into your daily routine... You will realise that the time you have dedicated to yoga has greatly contributed to your health and longevity, benefiting both your physical and mental well-being. If we continue this practice regularly, we will reap its full benefits," he said.

The event commenced with the national anthem, followed by the presentation of the Raj

A significant number of yoga

Maharashtra council polls crucial test for political parties ahead of Assembly elections

participated in the group yoga

Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya participated in a yoga

Yoga day was celebrated in

Varanasi, Ayodhya and other parts of Uttar Pradesh.

In Varanasi, state minister A K

Sharma and others performed

different asanas in the Kashi

Later, Sharma told reporters, "I thank Prime Minister

Narendra Modi for making

people across the world know

and appreciate an essential component of the country's

In the temple town of Ayodhya

senior civil and police officials, including District Magistrate

Superintendent of Police Ram

Kiran Nair, performed yoga on

Aligarh Muslim University

Khatoon joined students,

faculty members and other

yoga enthusiasts on the lawns

of the Department of Physical

Education to perform yoga. In Gorakhpur, yoga was observed by saints and citizens

in the Digvijaynath Smriti Bhawan while in Meerut, actor-

politician Arun Govil and

others performed yoga asanas

on the campus of the Chaudhary Charan Singh

the banks of the Saryu River.

Vice Chancellor

Kumar

rich tradition."

Nitish

Vishwanath temple corridor.

event in Prayagraj.

The biennial elections to 11 seats in the Maharashtra legislative council from the MLA quota will be a crucial test for the ruling Mahayuti the expecition Mahayuti and the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) ahead of the assembly elections to be held later this year. With 14 vacancies in the 288-

member house, the electoral college is 274 and the quota for the winning candidate is 23. Out of the 11 seats, the MVA can get two and the ruling alliance nine as per their numerical strength in the lower house of the state legislature. Congress can get one candidate elected as an MLC, while the Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (SP) can get one candidate. BJP can get five, leaving the rest four for allies Shiv Sena and NCP. The elections are scheduled to be held on July 12 and nominations will open from June 25. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has 103 MLAs, followed by the Ajit Pawar-led NCP's 40, Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena's 38. The Congress has 37 MLAs, Shiv Sena (UBT) 15 and Sharad Pawarled NCP 10. NCP MLAs Ashok Pawar and Nawab Malik have not given affidavits supporting either of the two factions. MLAs Sandipan Bumre Ravindra Waikar of the Shiv Sena, Nilesh Lanke of the NCP (SP), Pratibha (SP), Dhanorkar, Varsha Gaikwad, Balwant Wankhade, Praniti Shinde (all from the Congress have been elected as MPs in the recent Lok Sabha polls.



Party two, All India Majlis-ethe Shiv Sena have passed away. An NCP (SP) leader said the council polls are Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) Prahar Janshakti Party Maharashtra likely to be unopposed since Navnirman Sena (MNS), Communist political parties would not like to take the risk of a Party of India (Marxist), contest for the upper house. Swabhimani Paksh, Rashtriya Shiv Sena (UBT) has declared Samai Paksha (RSP). Jansurajya Shakti that it will approach the SC Party seeking a stay on the elections as many MLAs of the Shiv Krantikari Shetkari Paksh and PWP one each, independents Sena and NCP are facing 13. The biennial elections are disqualification proceedings. necessitated because 11 MLCs While a BJP leader said a are retiring. These legislators contest can be avoided only if are Manisha Kayande (Shiv Sena), Anil Parab (Shiv Senathere is no 12th candidate. The NCP (SP) has announced UBT), Vijay Girkar, Nilay Naik, Ramesh Patil, Ramrao its support Jayant Patil of the Peasants and Workers' Party Patil (BJP), Abdullah Durrani (PWP). The Congress will (NCP), Wajahat Mirza and Pragya Satav (Congress), Mahadev Jankar (RSP) and decide on whether to field one or two candidates in its

Javant Patil (PWP).

Red alert issued in Karnataka's coastal districts warning of extremely heavy rain

PTI ■ BENGALURU

The Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Monitoring Centre (KSNDMC) has issued a red alert for coastal Karnataka, which is likely to receive extremely heavy rainfall on June 22.

It also said thunderstorms with lightning and gusty winds (30-40kmph) are likely at isolated places across the state. According to a KSNDMC advisory, between June 23 and June 26 isolated heavy rains are also expected in certain areas of the Krishna basin.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has also issued a weather forecast stating that coastal and adjacent districts in interior Karnataka are very likely to receive heavy to very heavy

Although the Southwest has further Monsoon advanced into some more parts of Maharashtra, the remaining parts of Vidarbha, some parts of Madhya Pradesh, some other parts of Chhattisgarh and Odisha, some parts of Gangetic West Bengal, remaining parts of Sub-Himalayan West Bengal, some parts of Jharkhand and coastal and adjacent districts of interior Karnataka are very likely to receive heavy to very heavy with isolated extreme rainfall between June 21 and June 25, it said.

Strong winds as well as possibilities of land slides are predicted too.

Pune Porsche case: Is it not confinement if juvenile is kept in custody after bail, asks HC

The Bombay High Court on Friday queried if it amounted to confinement when the juvenile accused in the Pune Porsche case was granted bail but was taken back in custody and kept in an observation home.

A division bench of Justices Bharati Dangre and Manjusha Deshpande said there was no denying that the accident was

unfortunate. Two people have lost their lives. There was trauma but the child (juvenile) was also

The bench also questioned police under what provision of law, the order granting bail to the minor accused in the Porsche accident case was amended and how he has been kept in "confinement".

In the early hours of May 19, the juvenile was allegedly driving a Porsche car at very high speed in an intoxicated state when the vehicle crashed into a bike, killing two software engineers — Äneesh Awadhiya and Ashwini Koshta – in Pune's Kalyani

The 17-year-old was granted bail the same day by the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB), which ordered that he be kept under the care and supervision of his parents and grandfather. He was also asked to write a 300-word essay on road safety.

Amid a nationwide uproar over the quick bail, the police appealed to the JJB to amend the bail order. On May 22, the board ordered the boy to be taken into custody and observation home.

Last week, the teenager's paternal aunt filed a habeas corpus (produce person) petition claiming that he was illegally detained and sought his immediate release.

The bench, while hearing the arguments in the plea on Friday, noted that till date, the police have not filed any application before a higher court seeking cancellation of the bail order passed by the



Instead, an application was the bail order, HC said, adding that based on this application, the bail order was amended, the boy was taken in custody and remanded to an observation home.

What type of remand is this? What is the power to remand? What kind of procedure is this where a person has been granted bail and then a remand is passed taking him in custody," the court said. The bench added that the minor was taken away from

the care and supervision of to an observation home. "He is a person who has been

PTI ■ KOCHI

Sabarimala

granted bail, but now he has confined to an observation home. Is this not confinement? We would like to know your source of power," HC said.

The bench said it also expected the Juvenile Justice Board to be responsible. The court questioned why the police did not move an application for cancellation of

The Kerala government has informed the High Court

here that it will withdraw the

preliminary notifications

issued by it to acquire land

for the construction of the

airport in Kottayam district.

The government has also told

the court that it will conduct

Assessment (SIA) study with

regard to the project through

The submissions were made

by it before the court on

Thursday, June 20, during the

hearing of a plea by a

charitable trust and its

managing trustee challenging

In view of the submissions by

the government, Justice Viju

Abraham closed the petition

"leaving open all other

contentions on both sides".

The court had on April 25

directed the state government

not to take any further steps

for two months in connection

notification to acquire land for

the construction of the

Sabarimala Greenfield airport.

The petitioners — Ayana

Charitable Trust and its

the

land

notification.

a different agency.

fresh Social Impact

Greenfield

acquisition

preliminary

The court reserved its order on the plea and said it would be passed on Tuesday (June

Public prosecutor Hiten Venegaonkar submitted that the remand orders passed by the board were all valid and hence no interference was

On May 19, Venegaonkar said, the JJB bail order was "rightly or wrongly" passed, and also the blood samples of the juvenile were tampered

"Action has been taken against the errant officers and Disruptive strong message to society. Just writing a 300-word essay is not enough," Venegaonkar said.

Senior counsel Aabad Ponda argued that the boy's fundamental rights were violated.

"A free citizen's personal liberty has been trampled upon. Can a child be taken in custody when he has been granted bail and the bail order

is in force," Ponda said. He added that there was no

Will withdraw notification on acquiring land

for Sabarimala airport: Kerala Govt to HC

provision under the law where such a review of a bail order can be sought and passed.

meeting on June 25. As per

You cannot turn back the clock. Had bail been refused, CCL could have been sent to an observation home. But having been granted bail how can he be sent back to an observation home," Ponda said. The senior counsel said such things are not even done in serious offences under the stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act and Terrorist and Activities

police can do this in a juvenile's case, he asked. The boy's aunt in the plea claimed that because of the public uproar coupled with political agenda", the police deviated from the right course

of investigation concerning the minor thus defeating the entire purpose of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act.

The teenager is currently in an observation home till June

Will request Bihar CM for CBI probe into links of accused in NEET case with RJD: DyCM



PTI ■ PATNA

Bihar Deputy Chief Kumar Sinha on Friday said a request will be made to CM Nitish Kumar to recommend a CBI probe into the suspected links of the arrested prime suspect in the NEET "paper leak" with officials associated with RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav. Sinha on Thursday had claimed that officials

associated with Tejashwi Yadav were in constant touch with prime suspect--Sikander Prasad Yadvendu-in the NEET "paper leak" and had demanded a 'highlevel' probe into the matter. "Recommending a probe by any independent agency like the CBI is the prerogative of the CM...we will meet him (Nitish Kumar) and urge him to do the needful in the matter pertaining to suspected links of arrested accused in the NEET 'paper leak' case with officials associated with RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav," Sinha told

The DyCM demanded a high-level probe into the matter amid the rising nationwide protests over the alleged irregularities in the NEET-UG-2024 exam and hearing before the Supreme Court in the matter on July

When specifically asked why is 'demanding' a high-level probe when there is already BJP-led government in the state and he is part of that in which a simple recommendation of a high-level probe by the state government is required, the DyCM said, "I am once again repeating it that it is the prerogative of the CM. We will apprise him (CM) and request for a high-level probe, including CBI." Talking about his Thursday's claims and the ongoing probe by the Bihar Police

explained everything before the media on Thursday...I even shared certain evidence in this regard with media persons...now these things are in public domain... I also hope that the Economic Offences Unit (EOU) of Bihar Police, which is probing the alleged NEET 'paper leak' case, will probe this aspect (accused links with the officials of RJD leader).'

into alleged NEET paper

leak case, the DyCM said, "I

The official associated with Yadav used to arrange accommodation Sikandar at guest houses in Patna and other places. I have details of messages which the official had sent to the persons concerned for arranging accommodation for Sikandar".

Sinha on Thursday claimed

The DyCM said he has the mobile number from which those messages were sent. He said, "It needs to be thoroughly probed. Why is the RJD leader (Tejashwi Prasad) maintaining a stoic

silence on this?' There are reports suggesting that the accused was also associated with RJD supremo Lalu Prasad when he was in judicial custody in Ranchi, the deputy chief

minister had alleged. The EOU of Bihar Police had last month arrested 13 people as part of its investigation into the alleged paper leak in NEET-UG

arrested accused The included examinees, their parents and mastermind Sikander Prasad Yadvendu.

"The entire sequence of events reveals how RJD leaders indulge in corrupt practices. There are reports suggesting that the accused was associated with Lalu Prasad during his judicial custody in Ranchi," the deputy CM had alleged.

Ministers meet OBC activists on behalf of Govt, urge them to end fast

SAMBHAJINAGAR

Three Maharashtra ministers and a member of the legislative council on Friday met OBC activists Laxman Hake and Navnath Waghmare and urged them to end their fast, which entered the ninth day.

The delegation comprising ministers Atul Save, Uday Samant and Girish Mahajan, MLC Gopichand Padalkar met the activists at the protest site at Wadigodri village in Jalna district. Newly-elected Shiv Sena MP Sandipan Bhumre was also

Mahajan also called up Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and CM Devendra Fadnavis from the stage and made them talk to the protesting activists.

. Later, Paďalkar said a meeting between a delegation of the OBC (Other Backward Classes) community and the government has organised in Mumbai.

Mahajan said five OBC leaders named by Hake will attend the meeting at 5 pm. "A way can be worked out only after talks. The government



will not let injustice happen to

anyone," he said. However, Hake Waghmare, who have been fasting since June 13, refused to halt their agitation and instead, demanded a written assurance from government that the OBC quota won't be diluted.

The two are opposed to activist Manoj Jarange's demand over implementation of the draft notification that recognises Kunbis as "sage soyare" (blood relatives) of Maratha community members. Kunbi, an agrarian group, falls under the OBC category, and Jarange has been demanding that Kunbi certificates be issued to all

'The government doesn't take notice of OBC agitation but gives the red carpet treatment to the protest by a specific community," he said.

He said prominent OBC Dhananjay like Munde, Pankaja Munde, Chhagan Bhujbal, Gopichand Padalkar and Wadettiwar should also be present during the meeting in Mumbai.

Waghmare also said that their protest will continue till the government gives in writing that the OBC reservation won't be disturbed.

The government says it will implement 'sage soyare' notification. But it also says OBC reservation won't be affected. Someone is telling the truth and someone is not, he said.

The government should make its stand clear and cancel the "back-door entry to reservation through 54 lakh Kunbi-Maratha records", he added.

On Thursday, Hake and Waghmare had alleged that Maratha youths were ending Marathas, thus making them their lives due to confusion eligible for quota in created by activist Jarange.



managing trustee Punnoose — had alleged that the land acquisition process was aimed at illegally taking over their property rubber plantation measuring around 2,263 acres.

The trust, represented by advocates P Haridas and Rishikesh Haridas, claimed that the government has been attempting to "grab its property" ever since it acquired the land in 2005. In its plea, the trust had also cited various Kerala High Court orders by which actions initiated by the government to allegedly grab

its land were struck down.

The state government had acquisition notification.

earlier that Sabarimala Greenfield will make convenient for pilgrims coming from other states to reach the hill top shrine of Lord Ayyappa in Pathanamthitta district of Kerala. It said that having an airport

there would also promote tourism and boost the economy. The Centre has granted the site and defence clearance for the Sabarimala Greenfield Airport project which is being developed on land in Erumeli South and Manimala villages Kottavam district.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan had told the state Assembly in February that the application for security clearance for the project is under consideration of the Ministry of Home Affairs. The petitioners, in their plea, had sought quashing of the appointment of the Centre Management Development (CMD) to carry out the SIA study, its report, c o m m i t t e e

recommendations,

sanction granted to proceed

with acquisition and the land

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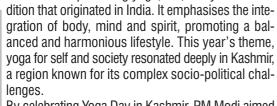
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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Yoga for self and society

PM Modi celebrates International Yoga Day in Kashmir, emphasising Yoga's role in fostering peace and unity

n June 21, 2024, International Yoga Day gave new meaning to the people of Kashmir as the Prime Minister celebrated it with them. Prime Minister Narendra Modi marked a momentous occasion by celebrating International Yoga Day in the scenic valley of Kashmir. This event was not only significant as a global celebration of yoga but also as a powerful symbol of peace, unity and cultural heritage in a region that has seen its share of strife and conflict. Kashmir, often referred to as 'Paradise on Earth' due to its breathtaking landscapes and rich cultural tapestry, was chosen by PM Modi as the venue for this year's International Yoga Day celebration. The event was held at the iconic Shalimar Bagh in Srinagar. International Yoga Day, celebrated on June 21 each year, was established in 2015 following a resolution proposed by PM Modi at the United Nations General Assembly in 2014. The day aims to raise awareness about the benefits of practising yoga, a 5,000-year-old tra-



By celebrating Yoga Day in Kashmir, PM Modi aimed to convey a message of reconciliation and the potential for a peaceful future. Indeed, Prime Minister Modi has always used the symbols very effectively and conveyed the message to the people, celebrating Yoga Day in Kashmir was no exception. The choice of Kashmir as the venue for this significant event is

laden with symbolism. The region, which has faced decades of conflict and unrest, witnessed an outpouring of support for the celebration, reflecting a desire for peace and normalcy. PM Modi's presence and the enthusiastic participation of residents is a step towards healing and bridging divides. This was PM Modi's first trip to the union territory since being re-elected for a third consecutive term. During this visit, PM Modi launched several significant developmental projects and participated in International Yoga Day 2024 activities. PM Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stones for various developmental projects valued at over Rs. 1,500 crores. The Prime Minister addressed the gathering. He underscored the importance of yoga in promoting health and unity. The Prime Minister took this occasion to send a strong message across the border that all acts of terrorism would be thwarted. Indeed, the trip did reinforce the confidence of the people as it came just weeks after the Jammu attacks. This would also be a message to the security forces also to beef up the security. PM Modi's visit underscored his commitment to the development and integration of Jammu and Kashmir. Indeed, the event was not just a display of yoga poses but a concerted effort to promote wellness and unity of the State.



People perform yoga in the Yamuna river on the 10th International Day of Yoga, in New Delhi

NEET: Malice extends beyond a flawed exam



The Supreme Court's recent directive to the Govt to meticulously address any lapses in the NEET examination underscores the critical nature of the fiasco

lans do go awry. Who could say this better than Moḋi Sarkar 3.0? Prime Minister Narendra Modi had planned a blitzkrieg of the first 100 days of good governance. It doesn't seem to be happening as of now. First the number of BJP members elected to Lok Sabha did not sufficiently pile up, forcing a toned-down deportment of the Government.

Worse has been the marks manipulation controversy generated around the results declared by National Testing Agency (NTA) of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) for admission to the undergraduate courses in the medical colleges across the country. The Supreme Court on June 18 told the Union Government and the NTA to ensure that even '0.001 per cent negligence' in conducting the NEET-UG 2024 exams be looked into with all seriousness considering the immense labour that the candidates have put in for preparing the nationwide examination. Thankfully, we have a mature leader like Dharmendra Pradhan as Union Education Minister, who is expected to steer through the crisis and not a Smriti Irani or a Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank camping at the Shastri Bhawan. the seat of the Ministry of Education. Pradhan has so far shown the patience and perseverance in handling this gargantuanlike crisis. The mess around NEET is much

deeper than just the alleged malpractice in the conduct of the examination and the manipulation of marks. It's a question of the very high financial and emotional stakes involved, given the limited number of the seats available in the medical colleges.

Over 15 lakh students appear for the NEET annually to fight over about 83,000 seats available. Less than half of these seats are available in the Government-run colleges. More than half of the seats in these colleges are allotted under various quotas. Thus, many deserving candidates are unable to secure admission to Government colleges.

colleges in India are unbelievably

expensive, often touching Rs one crore for the entire course. For middle-class families, these costs are untenable, prompting them to look for more affordable options abroad.

STAND AGAINS

Thus the medical college market in countries like China, Ukraine, Russia Kyrgyzstan. Here the cost of education at the best is less than half of what the private medical colleges charge. No wonder if there is COVID happening in China, war happening in central Asia or hooliganism in Kyrgyzstan, miserable State of the Indian students makes news.

The problems of these students don't end here. Even on the successful completion of the course, an uncertain future awaits them. The medical degrees obtained from foreign universities must be recognised by the National Medical Commission of India (NMCI). Even if the college is recognised, the medical graduates need to clear the Foreign Medical Graduates Examination (FMGE) conducted by NMCI to practice in India. The pass rate for FMGE is relatively low. This shortage of seats explains

the repeated noise of corrup-The fees in the private medical tion around the medical entrance tests for several years



THE SHORTAGE OF MEDICAL SEATS IN INDIA, COUPLED WITH HIGH

FINANCIAL AND EMOTIONAL STAKES. **FUELS CORRUPTION** IN ENTRANCE EXAMS AND DRIVES STUDENTS TO SEEK MORE AFFORDABLE **EDUCATION OPTIONS ABROAD**

now. The most prominent among the many fallouts of this situation are higher prices, long wait times and increased competition for the limited available resources.

परीक्षा

When shortage occurs, an environment is created where individuals or stakeholders may be willing to pay bribes to secure access to the limited resources.

Today, in the NEET eco-system, there aren't just the students and testing agencies who are participating. It can be safely said that the financial stakes at this examination is much higher for the horde of coaching centres and admission counsellors than the students themselves.

Then there are the people who manipulate the system to make entrance into an Indian college 'convenient' lest the candidate ends up selling family silver for an admission in a private college in India or go through the rigmarole of enrolling in a foreign medical college and face an uncertain

Dharmendra Pradhan in the current crisis would be to provide an immediate relief to the injury and pain caused to the lakhs of students by the NTA, which con-

ducted NEET 2024. The larger relief would only come by investment in the health infrastructure sector.

With The

Future Of

Lakhs Of

Increasing the number of medical seats in Government and private colleges, in the higher numbers in the former category, would lessen the need for students to seek education abroad or the manipulators having a field day. This requires substantial investment in medical infrastructure

and faculty. This would not come by the mere initiative of either Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan or the newly-appointed Health Minister JP Nadda. There has to be a Government vision and more importantly the political will to break the cartel of the private medical colleges.

The management of these colleges maintains a Octopus-like stranglehold over the medical education system through its various arms like the coaching centres and the counsellors. The 'costly' admission process is the first step towards the The expected role of Education crass commercialisation of the medical sector in this country.

> (The writer is author and president, Centre for Reforms, Development & Justice, views

About it on some other day.

India's solar industry is a goldmine for investors GAUTAM MOHANKA



The surge in global demand for renewable energy has placed solar power at the centre stage, particularly in India

ndia's solar energy sector is shining brighter than ▲ever, emerging as a goldmine for investors and entrepreneurs. The market, valued at \$38 billion in 2021, is set to grow exponentially, reaching \$238 billion by 2032, driven by an impressive 40 per cent compound annual growth rate (CAGR). The surge in global demand for renewable energy has placed solar power at the centre stage, particularly in India. With supportive Government policies, technological advancements and an increasing shift towards sustainability, the solar energy sector is witnessing unprecedented growth. Entrepreneurs and investors capitalise on this momentum, prioritising their goals to reap substantial benefits in the coming years.

Tech Advancements Technological innovations are

at the heart of the solar industry's success. Commercial solar panels have gotten way better at turning sunlight into electricity, cranking up the power they can produce per square foot. The switch from polycrystalline to more advanced bifacial solar panels, which can generate power from both sides, shows how



the industry is focused on squeezing out as much efficiency as possible.

In recent years, PERC (Passivated Emitter and Rear Cell) technology has been predominant in India's solar panel market. However, due to efficiency limitations in mass production, there is a gradual shift towards more advanced technologies like TOPCon (Tunnel Oxide Passivated Contact) and HJT (Heterojunction Technology). **Government Policies**

The Indian Government's policies have played a crucial role in transforming the solar energy landscape. The Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes, with substantial financial allocations (PLI-I with Rs. 4,500 crores and PLI-II with Rs. 19,500 crores), are designed to boost domestic manufacturing of solar

Further bolstering the "Make in India" initiative, the Approved List of Models and Manufacturers (ALMM) was reinStated on April 1, 2024, ensuring quality control and encouraging the use of domestically manufactured modules. Various projects by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), such as the CPSU Scheme Phase-II, PM-KUSUM Component B and the Gridconnected Rooftop Solar Programme Phase-II, mandate the use of Domestic Content Requirement (DCR) solar panels, providing subsidies to promote the adoption of solar energy.

Environmental Impact

The solar industry in India isn't just about fulfilling energy requirements - it's also helping the environment. By using more solar power and relying less on fossil fuels, the solar industry is assisting in

eliminating greenhouse gas emissions and fighting climate change. Shifting towards renewable energy, like solar power, is super crucial for India's climate goals and ensuring a sustainable future. Market Potential and **Investment Opportunities**

India's solar energy market presents a plethora of opportunities for investors and entrepreneurs. The sector's rapid growth and the increasing acceptance of solar power for both commercial and personal uses underscore its potential. With Government support and ongoing technological advancements, the barriers to entry are diminishing, making it an attractive proposition for new ventures. Besides, technological advancements enhance efficiency and reduce costs, increasing profitability. Entrepreneurs can explore various segments within the industry.

On a larger front, the global shift towards sustainability ensures a steady demand for solar energy solutions, providing businesses with a longterm growth trajectory. Moreover, India's solar industry's robust market potential, Government support and technological innovation make it a compelling opportunity for those looking to invest or start a venture in

renewable energy.
(The writer is the CEO, of Gautam Solar, views are

WILDLIFE FIRES IN UTTARAKHAND Madam — Apropos the news story "Forest

fires are a grim environmental reality," published on June 21, this is my response. The recent wildlife fires in Uttarakhand highlight a pressing environmental and societal issue. These fires are not just a natural calamity but a reflection of human irresponsibility and systemic failures. Environmental pollution, an unrestrained culture among youth and weak law enforcement have contributed to these destructive events. Global warming, largely driven by hydrocarbon fuel use, has exacerbated the situation, similar to patterns seen in Australia and the USA.

Local industries and vehicular pollution have significantly warmed the atmosphere, making the naturally fire-prone Chir Pine forests even more vulnerable. Additionally, reckless behaviour, such as setting fires for social media fame and illegal activities like unauthorised construction and tree felling, further fuel these disasters. The media often needs to delve more deeply into such incidents' root causes and preventive measures. A more profound understanding, perhaps through the lens of Vedic Physics, could offer comprehensive solutions by integrating ancient wisdom with modern scientific approaches.

ESSENTIALS FOR SUCCESS

Madam — Apropos the news story "Benefits of integrating offline and online channels," published on June 21, this is my response. The management of offline and online channels often operates in silos, with little intersection in their strategies. This separation ignores the fundamental fact that consumers are people whose decisionmaking spans both realms.

Consumers today engage with brands through multiple touchpoints—retail stores, social media, online reviews and influencer videos-making integrated channel management essential. The AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Decision, Action) highlights the need for a coherent strategy across channels, as purchases

UGC to revamp higher education

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

propos the news story "UGC set to revolu-Ationise higher education in India," published on June 21, this is my response. The University Grants Commission's decision to allow biannual admissions in higher education institutions is a significant move. It aims to increase student intake and introduce new programs in emerging areas, aligning Indian education with global standards. This policy mirrors the successful biannual admissions in Open and

Distance Learning and Online modes, which saw nearly half a million additional enrollments. While this decision offers flexibility and opportunities for students, especially those aspiring to study abroad, it raises concerns about infrastructure and faculty requirements. Educational experts worry about maintaining quality amid increased quantity. However, the global model of continuous education and skill upgrading, seen in countries like Germany, highlights the potential benefits. In India, there is a need to change the mindset towards vocational training and practical experience. Successful examples, like ITI graduate Mr Khatri, show that determination and expertise can lead to significant achievements. For the biannual admission system to succeed, policymakers must focus on engaging students and providing practical, hands-on learning experiences Bittu Jaat | Jind

ly spend 76.2 per cent of their time on

can occur either offline or online. Structural issues and managerial specialisations contribute to the disjointed approach, but evolving consumer behaviour demands integration. While offline channels have a long-standing command-and-control structure, online channels are rapidly gaining significance. Companies must adopt integrated thinking to enhance customer experience and ensure sustainable success.

Mitali | Noida

WOMEN AND UNPAID WORK

Madam — Apropos the news story "The Unseen Burden of Women's Unpaid Labour," published on June 21, this is my response. The early 60s saw Canadian writer Alice Munro dismissed as a mere "housewife who finds time to write short stories." Munro's eventual Nobel Prize in 2013 underscored the absurdity of this condescension. Economist Claudia Goldin's research reveals that women's careers are often constrained by societal expectations that idealise their roles as unpaid caregivers. This has tangible impacts: women global-

unpaid care work, three times more than men. In regions like the Pacific and Asia, men contribute the least.

The burden of unpaid care work keeps 606 million working-age women out of the labour market, compared to just 41 million men. This disparity is reflected in economic metrics; for example, women's unpaid work could be worth up to 40 per cent of GDP in some countries. Additionally, the "motherhood penalty' persists, reducing women's career prospects and earnings. Conversely, men often receive a wage bonus upon becoming fathers. To bridge this gap, significant investments in childcare and care industries are crucial. Research shows that such investments could create millions of jobs and significantly boost women's employment rates. Meeting these needs is essential to achieving gender equality and fulfilling global commitments to women's economic justice.

Jitu Majumdar | Kolkata

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FIRST COLUMN

THE ART OF ANGER **MANAGEMENT**

Anger or an outburst is an emotion which invariably leads to antipathetic results



RAVI VALLURI

eons ago lived a sagacious teacher who adopted unusual techniques as part of his pedagogy while imparting knowledge to his students. One day he provided his students with an empty jar and a bagful of pebbles.

He directed them to fill the jar with as many pebbles as they could. The students fretted as they struggled to insert the pebbles in the jar, but eventually managed to insert them.

Subsequently, the teacher gave them a bag of sand and guided them to pour it into the jar. The sand filled in all the gaps between the rocks. Eventually, the teacher gave them a pitcher of water and asked the students to pour it into the jar which filled in all the remaining gaps. It was then pronounced that the jar represented our lives and the pebbles, sand and water typified what we live with.

The teacher went on to State, "If we fill our lives with anger (represented by the pebbles), there will not be any room for anything else. But if we focus on the important things (represented by the sand and water), we could discover a State of happiness and bal-

Among the students lived a boy who was disposed with a foul temper. He would get angry at every little issue. One day, the sagacious teacher gave him a bag of nails and told him, "Every time you get vexed, hammer a nail into that front wall." And thus began the activity. On the first day, the boy hammered 50 nails. The following day, he hammered 40. Each time he went up to the wall, he repented being piqued.

It was quite a challenge to hammer a nail into the bricks of the wall! Slowly, the stripling discovered that controlling his rage was easier than hammering countless nails into the wall. The strapping youth had already become a laughing stock of his batchmates performing this wasteful exercise. Over a period, the number of nails hammered began to diminish much to the amazement of the student and his friends



Eventually, came a day when he was not cross and became joyous about the fact. The perspicacious teacher assigned the student yet another task, "If you do not get provoked the entire day, remove one nail from the wall." After many days, eyebrows were raised as all the nails were extricated from the wall.

Finally, the teacher took the student near the wall and asked him what he saw. The student replied that he could view holes in the wall. "These holes are like the scars that one leave's on individuals when a person gets exasperated. No matter how many times you apologise, the scar does not vanish."

"Thus, I suggest you to do two things; realise that words once uttered linger on. Your irascibility hurts others and leaves a dampener on all." He continued, "Each time you feel outraged, 'hammer a nail' in the wall. The simplest thing you can do is to carry a pocket diary and draw a line each time you get annoyed. At night, count the number of lines drawn for that day. If you make this a habit, each time you would become waspish, you would be reminded to note it

"Once you follow this regimen, your awareness and memory muscle about the damage you were inflicting among the people with whom you interact would increase." The student had learned his lesson, through this ingenious teaching imparted by his teacher.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd.and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

India faces a severe groundwater crisis



KOTA SRIRAJ

The groundwater clock is ticking towards day zero. India needs a combination of strategy and investment to safeguard and revitalise the same



ccording to the India Water Portal, India uses 25 per cent of all groundwater extracted globally, ahead of the USA and China. Nearly 70 per cent of the water supply in Indian agriculture today is groundwater. For a resource that is under such heavy use, India still lacks a contingency plan when India still lacks a contingency plan when it comes to dealing with groundwater depletion and over-exploitation. Predictably, the writing on the wall is becoming increasingly clear. On June 19th, 2024 the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) dropped the shocking news that Delhi has already extracted 99 per cent of its available groundwater.

The latest CGWB report revealed a decline in both annual recharge and available groundwater for extraction in THE GOVERNMENT the city. According to the CGWB's findings, Delhi's net annual groundwater recharge in 2023 was measured at 0.38 billion cubic meters (bcm), with only 0.34 bcm available for extraction. Shockingly, nearly all accessible groundwater has already been extracted, totalling 99.1 per cent. The concerning aspect here is the increased rate of extraction despite reduced groundwater recharge.

These trying conditions come at a time when Delhi is already reeling under the worst heatwave in the last 120 years which has claimed 192 lives so far. Śadly the issue of water distressed cities is becoming a worrying trend across India. Bangalore hit rock bottom earlier this year with over 500 million litres of water deficit daily with over 7000 borewells running dry. Coupled with abnormally harsh summers the water scarcity conditions can not only take a toll on human lives but also bring the urban economy to a grinding halt. This trend of drying up groundwater may, unfortunately, become the norm for



INDIA'S WATER RESOURCES FACE A BLEAK FUTURE: MUST ENSURE SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH A NATIONWIDE WATER BODY CENSUS, RAINWATER HARVESTING AND INNOVATIVE **TECHNOLOGIES**

most cities in India unless urgent remedial measures are taken. But sadly, most of the action taken is at best knee-jerk and impulsive with neither long-term strategy nor investment attached to it. Consecutive Governments, both at the State and central levels have always dealt with groundwaterrelated issues on a passive basis instead of a proactive basis. As a result every year the nature of the problem not only becomes complex but also more difficult to

The future of India's water resources looks bleak and the Government must deploy a plethora of measures to ensure that the future generations have enough of this precious resource. As a first step, the central Government must conduct a nationwide satellite-assisted natural water body census along with the measurable extent of the water body. This will not only quantify the number of water bodies but will also capture any encroachment of the same. Additionally, steps have to be taken to rejuvenate and revive these water bodies.

This can be done by removing the vegetation and setting up artificial groundwater recharge points such as percolation wells. Apart from this, the roping in of local municipal authorities, especially the anti-encroachment departments can help remove unauthorised occupation from the water body

The central Government in asso-

such as metered borewells to monitor and regulate groundwater extraction. The concept of metered borewells is not new. The State of West Bengal has metered borewells for a while now and as a result, the State has been experiencing better levels of ground water. The same can be replicated across India, especially in Karnataka which is witnessing over-exploitation of groundwater. Yet another measure that needs sincere application is rain-water harvesting(RWH). Even though a much-talked-about concept, RWH has seen minimal implementation in India.

abysmal application of RWH. ter pressure sensors that maintain According to Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) data, only 1.8 lakh out of the 19 lakh eligible properties in Bengaluru baya inetalled arrivalled arri in Bengaluru have installed rainwater harvesting systems. Experts have opined that the city harvests only 10 per cent of the rainwater while the rest 90 per cent drains away wasted. Conditions such as these point towards the unfortunate reality of hyped concepts that receive very little implementation. The Government must try and understand the latent potential of RWH and ensure that not only residential but commercial properties across India implement RWH and the same must be enforceable by law.

However conventional remedial measures may still not be able to rein in the runaway groundwater scarcity problem. Since the scale ciation with State Government of the problem has risen, the

ments in innovative technologies to bolster the efforts to revive and boost the groundwater table in India. Efficient farming technologies that rely less on water for instance can make a huge difference.

Investments in precision agritechnology for the usage of groundwater for irrigation are an ideal solution for providing optimal water usage. This saves water compared to traditional flooding methods which increases output while conserving resources and reducing water wastage. Similarly, App-driven water

meters that automatically regulate Bangalore is an apt example of the extraction and smart groundwacritical and minimum water lev els can all help alleviate the burdens weighing on groundwater. With water scarcity spreading region-wise across India and with a rapidly increasing water use the structural imbalance between water supply and demand continues to widen. Therefore it is time that the Governments in association corporate under corporate social responsibility schemes (CSR) must increase capital expenditure on smart technologies that can actively provide solutions to water scarcity and water quality issues besides improving sustainability of water resources.

The groundwater clock is ticking towards day zero. India needs a combination of strategy and investment to safeguard and revitalise the same.

(The author is a policy analyst.

Generative AI revolutionises smart wearable technology

By leveraging AI for coaching and healthcare, wearables are setting new standards in user experience and functionality

decade ago, wearable technology was just taking early strides. Today, generative AI — a subset of artificial intelligence — is making its presence felt across diverse domains such as fashion, health, entertainment and

With smart wearables gaining greater popularity worldwide, the fusing of fashion and innovative technology is permitting smart devices to function as icons of personal styling, connecting every element of users' lives. As these aspects play out, generative AI is steadily showcasing several novel dimensions of personalisation and functionality.

Personalised Insights

The rising popularity of AIenabled wearables is partly because of their ability to offer



personalised insights and recommendations based on the user's data. Through sensors embedded in the wearables, data is analysed to provide real-time advice and feedback that helps users improve performance, maximise productivity and prevent injuries. In an era where most people want to stay fighting fit, generative AI goes beyond mere-

ly counting the steps taken and

monitoring their heart rate. By

advanced fitness trackers analyse the user's data to provide personalised insights and coaching. A dynamic, bespoke approach is adopted in managing the user's health and well-being as the smart device adapts to each person's preferences, goals and individual fit-

For instance, an AI-driven coaching algorithm, Zepp Coach, offers customised guidance so its users can train and recover more effectively. A user simply needs to enter his or her physical characteristics, exercise experience level and preferred number of training days each week into the app. The app then builds a personalised training regime for every user. As the days progress, the Zepp Coach app monitors tomised responses to their

employing AI algorithms, each person's fitness level, fatigue threshold and current training status. Based on this data, it recommends a reduction (or increase) in training

Wearables in Healthcare

Besides personal training, generative AI-linked wearables are deployed in healthcare with a similar model of leveraging user data to provide personalised counsel and insights. For example, the WHOOP Coach app uses a generative AI feature to offer extremely personalised, precise advice and suggestions by using GPT-4 the most advanced generative AI system of OpenAI. Thereby, WHOOP can discover patterns and connections in the data of users and then offer instant, conversational, cus-



health and overall well-being. Since they come equipped with generative AI, such smart wearables are revolutionising the field of healthcare monitoring. Instead, they deploy predictive analytics to forecast potential health problems based on historical data.

healthcare practitioners can textiles and dynamically employ preventive measures. Propelled by the power of predictive analytics, smart wearables are driving a steady shift from a purely reactive to a proactive healthcare model. Taking these capabilities one level higher, generative AI is empowering wearables with the capability to sense and react to the emotions of users. These emotion-sensing algorithms can analyse facial expressions, monitor heart rate variability and check other physiological cues to assess the emotional State of users.

Immersive Reality

Then there is smart clothing with adaptive features that respond to environmental circumstances and user prefer-Thanks to this proactive ences. Such smart clothing approach, both users and offers temperature-regulating

adjustable apparel tightness for maximum comfort, especially when users engage in physical activities. Or consider language translation earbuds that offer contextual understanding. Backed by generative AI, these language translation earbuds go way beyond mere word-for-word translations. Through advanced contextual understanding, these earbuds can comprehend the idioms, cultural references and nuances of a specific language. By eliminating language barriers, this smart innovation facilitates seamless and efficient cross-cultural communi-

Another exciting wearables category is immersive AR (augmented reality) glasses. Generative AI has allowed

these glasses to take a giant leap forward by delivering immersive experiences for users, seamlessly blending the virtual realm with real-world

surroundings. This is not all. Generative AI has even revolutionised navigation-aiding wearables for visually impaired people. Through AI algorithms, smart navigation devices can interpret the environmental data to offer real-time details about any obstacles, the surroundings or necessary directions. With these wearables, visually challenged users can enjoy enhanced mobility and a certain level of independence that is not possible otherwise. (The writer is CEO of PR

Innovations, brand custodian of Amazfit India, views are personal)

Armenia recognises Palestinian state

rmenia said it would recog-Anise a Palestinian state on Friday, prompting Israel to summon its ambassador for what the Foreign Ministry described as a "severe reprimand." Dozens of countries have recognised a Palestinian state, though none of the major Western powers has done so. Palestinians believe the recognitions confer international legitimacy on their struggle, especially as Israel's war against Hamas, now in its ninth month, faces growing international criticism over the campaign of systematic destruction in Gaza and huge cost in civilian lives.

Also Friday, the head of a major hospital in north Gaza said his staff have seen some 250 children suffering from malnutrition, with numbers rising daily due to acute food shortages.

Palestinians face widespread hunger as the war has largely cut off the flow of food, medicine and basic goods to Gaza, which is now totally dependent

Meanwhile, Israel's pledge to guard a new aid route into southern Gaza has fallen flat, as the UN and international aid organisations say a breakdown in law and order has made that route unusable

The Israeli military said that two soldiers were killed in combat in central Gaza, while three were severely injured. Israeli ground offensives and bombardments have killed more than 37,100 people, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between combatants and civilians in its count. Israel launched the war after Hamas' October 7 attack, in which militants stormed into southern Israel, killed some 1,200 people mostly civilians abducted about

250.Currently:- The fate of the latest cease-fire proposal hinges on Netanyahu and Hamas' leader in Gaza. — Israel's pledge to guard an aid route into Gaza falls flat as lawlessness blocks distribution.

- A rare public rift appears between Israel's political and military leadership over how the war in Gaza is being conducted.

The leader of Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group warns archenemy Israel against wider

Qatari foreign minister says ceasefire negotiations are making progress to some extent' Madrid: Qatar's foreign minis-

ter says some progress has been made in negotiations over a Gaza cease-fire deal but gaps remain between Israel and Hamas. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, whose country is a mediator alongside the US and Egypt, said Friday "there has been progress to some extent in the situation." Mediators have held 'successive meetings" with the Hamas leadership $\bar{i}n$ an effort to bridge the gaps, he said during a visit to Spain.

"There cannot be one party to the conflict adopting the vision of the other party," he said. The solution "must be based on compromises between the two

Two Israeli soldiers killed in central Gaza Jerusalem: Israel's army said

Friday that two Israeli soldiers were killed in combat in central Gaza. No information was given about the circumstances about the deaths of the two, both of whom were men in their 20s. Three other soldiers were severely injured, the army said. The news comes as public anger grows in Israel over the trajectory of the eight month conflict and exemptions from military service for young ultra-Orthodox men.

Last week, an explosion in southern Gaza killed eight Israeli soldiers. In January, 21 Israeli troops were killed in a single attack by Palestinian militants in Gaza.Since the October 7 Hamas attack that triggered the war, more than 660 Israeli troops have been killed, about half in the Israeli ground operation in Gaza, according to the latest figures from the military. Over 37,000 Palestinians in the enclave have been killed by Israeli fire over that same period, according to the Health Ministry in Hamasrun Gaza. The ministry does not differentiate between civilians and combatants in its figures Gaza hospital chief says hundreds of children are suffer ing from malnutritionDeir Al-Balah, Jun 21: The head of one of the largest hospitals in north Gaza says his staff has recently registered some 250 children suffering from malnutrition and the numbers are raising daily due to acute food shortages.Dr. Husam Abu Safyia, director of Kamal Adwan Hospital, urged the international community to pressure Israel to allow an increased flow of food and other products into the Gaza Strip, warning that conditions are dire in the

Court upholds Canada's no-fly list for Sikh extremists

Acanadian court has thrown out a bid by two Sikh extremists to get off the country's no-fly list, saying there are "reasonable grounds" to suspect they will threaten transportation security or travel by air to commit a terrorism offence.The Federal Court of Appeal in its ruling this week dismissed an appeal by Bhagat Singh Brar and Parvkar Singh Dulai after they lost a constitutional challenge of their no-fly designations under Canada's Secure Air Travel Act, The Canadian Press news agency reported from Vancouver on Thursday.

The two were not allowed to board planes in Vancouver in 2018. The ruling says the act empowers the public safety minister to ban people from flying if there are "reasonable grounds to suspect they will threaten transportation security or travel by air to commit a

terrorism offence." "At some point, the appellants tried to fly. They could not," the ruling says. "They were on the list and the minister had direct-

ed that they not fly." The appellate panel found that based on confidential security information, the minister "had reasonable grounds to suspect that the appellants would travel by air to commit a terrorism offence." In 2019, Brar and Dulai went to the Federal Court of Canada to have their names struck from the list. But Justice Simon Noel ruled against them both in 2022.

The limits imposed on Dulai, he ruled, "were the result of evidence-based suspicions that he could fly abroad in order to plot a terrorist attack."

The Government of Canada must enact laws that protect national security and intelligence activities in a way that respects rights and freedoms and encourages the international community to do the

same," Noel ruled. In their appeal, both Brar and Dulai argued the impairment of their rights as a result of being placed on the list was not "minimal" and therefore unjustified. However, the appellate court ruled the legislation was justified and that confidential portions of the court process

were procedurally fair. The Secure Air Travel Act deals with "national security, international relations and global co-operation to prevent terrorism" and is "not directed to past events that are tangible, certain and known," the appellate court found. "Rather, it is forward-looking, designed to act preventatively, proactively and pre-emptively to deal with perhaps imprecise but nevertheless very real risks of harm to property, public safety and human life," the ruling says. "Several of its features show careful tailoring to minimize the impairment of rights and

2 killed when police clash with locals in Mexico

PTI ■ SAN ANTONIO

Two people were killed Thursday when locals protesting alleged water contamination by a pork processing plant clashed with police in the Mexican gulf coast state of Veracruz. Residents of the community of San Antonio Limon had been blocking a road demanding government action against the operation, which they said was responsible for polluting the aquifer and using too much water.

State security forces arrived Thursday in the community, also known as Totalco, and protesters said police began beating them and opened fire. Brothers Alberto and Jorge Cortina Vázquez, aged 22 and 27 respectively, were killed, according to the Veracruz state prosecutor's office, which opened an investigation. A third brother, Carlos

roadblock.

"They were just passing by and when they (the police) started to fire everyone ran," he said. "That's when they started shooting at them like they were animals. Residents said they tried to

hide in their homes but some 400 police who arrived chased them. Some showed shell casings they said came from security forces' guns. In a statement, the Veracruz

state prosecutor's office said it had undertaken "an exhaustive investigation to clarify the unfortunate events in Totalco." The Veracruz state interior agency, which is responsible for security, said in a statement that the protesters had been holding two state police officers and had threatened to kill them. They said the protesters had not been open to

PTI ■ LONDON

 $B^{\text{ritish Prime Minister Rishi}}_{\text{Sunak has said that anyone}}$ Cortina Vázquez, said his brothers were not even at the involved in using inside information to bet on the date of Britain's July 4 national election should be expelled from his Conservative Party. Sunak said on the BBC on Thursday that he was "incredibly angry, incredibly angry" to learn of allegations that Conservative politicians betted on the election date, and that they "should face the full force of the law' if they were found to have broken the law.

> 'It's right that they are being investigated properly by the relevant law enforcement authorities," he said. "If anyone is found to have broken the rules, not only should they face the full consequences of the law, I will make sure that they are booted out of the Conservative Party.'

Two weeks ahead of the general election, it was an uncomfortable experience for Sunak,



whose Conservative Party is trailing the main opposition Labour Party — by 20 points by many polls — ahead of the

Earlier, asked about reports that the UK's Gambling Commission was investigating a second Conservative candidate for placing a bet on the timing of the election, housing minister Michael Gove told the BBC that if people used inside information to bet, it would be "deeply wrong".
"What I can't do is sort of get

and you're absolutely right, it's reprehensible. Sunak announced on May 22 that parliamentary elections would be held on July 4. The

too much into the detail of the

case while an investigation is going on," Gove said. "But I can

talk about the broad principle

coastal territory.

date had been a closely guarded secret and many, even those in Sunak's governing Conservative Party, were taken by surprise as a vote had been Sunak's expected in the fall.
Under the United Kingdom's

electoral laws, the prime minister has the power to call the date within five years of the previous election. Many members of Sunak's party have said that he called it too soon, as he had until January 2025 to call the balloting.

British media, including the PA news agency and the BBC, reported on Thursday that candidate Laura Saunders, who is married to the Conservative Party's director of campaigning, Tony Lee, is facing a commission investigation into alleged betting offences.

Saunders' attorney, Nama Zarroug, of Astraea Linskills, said she would be co-operating with the commission investigation and that she had nothing further to add.

"It is inappropriate to conduct any investigation of this kind via the media, and doing so risks jeopardising the work of the Gambling Commission and the integrity of its investigation," the statement said.

The publication of the BBC's story is premature and is a clear infringement of Ms Saunders' privacy rights. She is considering legal action against the BBC and any other publishers who infringe her privacy rights," it added. Гĥe Conservative Party said

Gambling Britain's Commission contacted it over "small number of individuals" in connection with the investigation.

party declined to immeditely comment on the fresh allegation pending the commission investigation. But it said in a statement that Lee took a leave of absence from the party on Wednesday.

The broadening scandal came after reports Wednesday that one of Sunak's police bodyguards was arrested over alleged bets on the date of Britain's national election made before it was announced.

The constable in the Royalty and Specialist Protection Command was arrested Monday on suspicion of misconduct in public office, the Metropolitan Police force said. Last week, Sunak aide Craig Williams, who is running to be reelected to Parliament, acknowledged he was being investigated by the Gambling Commission for placing a 100 pound (USD 128) bet on a July election before the date had been announced.

Betting is popular in the UK, with bookies offering odds on everything from sports to elections. Cheating by acting on inside information is a crimi-

Sudan's vice-pres expresses concern over peace talks

Juba (AP): South Sudan's vice president has said that peace talks in neighbouring Kenya have failed to acknowledge the country's peace agreement established in 2018, alleging a new draft agreement is aimed at replacing the original peace Riek Machar in a protest letter

to the talks' mediator on Thursday said the draft established alternative institutions to replace or run in parallel with those established by the previous peace agreement. He added that the current peace talks should complement and not obliterate the original deal. The former rebel leader signed an agreement with President Salva Kiir in 2018 that ended a five-year civil war that killed about 4,00,000 people. Machar and Kiir were on opposite sides in the war and Machar

was appointed vice president

Biden, Trump taking different approaches to prepare for next week's debate

AP ■ NEW YORK

 $P^{\text{resident Joe Biden begins an}}_{\text{intense period of private}}$ preparations Friday at Camp David for what may be the most consequential presidential debate Democrat's team is aware that he cannot afford an underwhelming performance when he faces Republican rival Donald Trump for 90 minutes on live television Thursday night. Biden's team is expecting aggressive attacks on his physical and mental strength, his record on the economy and immigration and even his fami-

Trump, 78 and ever confident, will stay on the campaign trail before going to his Florida estate next week for two days of private meetings as part of an informal

prep process. The former president's allies are pushing him to stay focused on his governing plans, but they're expecting him to be tested by pointed questions about his unrelenting focus on election fraud, his role in the erosion of abortion rights and his unprecedented legal baggage.

reshape the presidential race. Never before in the modern era ore have two White House contenders faced off at such advanced ages, with widespread questions about their readiness. And never before has a general election debate participant been saddled with a felony conviction. The debate-stage meeting comes just two weeks before Trump is scheduled to be sentenced on 34 felony counts in his New York

hush money trial. 'You can argue this will be the most important debate, at least in my lifetime," said Democratic strategist Jim Messina, 54, who managed former President Barack

Obama's 2012 campaign. \The ground rules for Thursday's debate, the first of two scheduled meetings, are unusual. The candidates agreed to meet at a CNN studio in Atlanta with no audience. Each candidate's microphone will be muted, except when it's his turn to speak. No props or prewritten notes will be

Thursday's debate on CNN will be allowed onstage. The candidates full of firsts, with the potential to will be given only a pen, a pad of paper and a bottle of water.

There will be no opening state have two presumptive nominees ments. A coin flip determined that met on the debate stage so early Biden would stand at the podium in the general election season. to the viewer's right, while Trump statement.

The next debate won't be until September. Any stumbles Thursday will be hard to erase or

replace quickly Biden arrived at Camp David on Thursday night and is expected to hunker down with senior campaign aides until next Thursday's debate. While traveling to the mountainside retreat, he gave a thumbs up to reporters when asked how debate prep was going. The president's aides have been reluctant to share details about his specific preparations, run by former chief of staff Ron Klain. But they have signaled that he is preparing to be aggressive and would not shy away from using the term "convicted felon" to describe his opponent onstage. One adviser not authorized to speak publicly about debate strat-

egy noted that Biden has been

increasingly punchier in recent

remarks about Trump and plans to carry that theme through to the debate. That's still while trying to project himself as "the wise and steady leader" in contrast to Trump, the adviser said.

Among some political operamay have the most to lose given his struggle to generate momentum amid signs of weakness within his political coalition Trump and his allies have set an extraordinarily low bar, however by suggesting for months that Biden is contending with serious physical limitations that make it difficult for him to stand for 90 minutes or even string together two sentences. "It's like the mirror test. Put a mirror under Biden's nose, and if it fogs it up, he wins, right? That's about what the threshold is for Biden," Republican strategist and Trump ally David Urban said with a laugh. "Can Biden demonstrate that he's mentally nimble? That's the big question."Yet Trump himself sought to shift expectations in a Thursday interview with the "The All-In Podcast" in which he veered sharply away from his typical Biden taunts.

NZ's gun laws being revised by ex-gun lobbyist byist, that was her role," said

AP WELLINGTON

New Zealand's government will overhaul the tighter gun laws introduced after a deadly mass shooting by a white supremacist five years ago, because they put excessive who was shot nine times in the burdens on gun owners who attack and fears an erosion of and the public, the lawmaker

leading the changes said. 'What's happened is a massive change with massive penalties and targets on people who didn't do anything wrong," Associate Justice Minister Nicole McKee — a lobbyist for gun owners before she entered Parliament in 2020 — told The Associated Press in an

interview this week. Every part of the law will be scrutinised, including the restrictions that bar all but a few hundred New Zealanders from firing banned semiautomatic weapons, she said.

McKee's pledge of a wide-ranging review — following an earlier announcement that she would ease rules for gun clubs was applauded by groups representing the country's 250,000 license holders and decried by survivors of the

2019 terrorist attack at two Christchurch mosques where an Australian man opened fire on Muslim worshippers, killing 51 people. It makes me scared for our

futures," Temel Atacocugu the AP.

What have the past five years been for? How are they going to prevent this from happening

New Zealand drew global admiration when its then-Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said six days after the massacre that her government would outlaw all semiautomatic weapons.

The change was approved by 119 lawmakers with only one pposed, and sweeping reforms followed: bolstered licensing requirements, more rules for gun clubs, and the creation of a firearms registry.

The changes introduced "onerous regulatory compliance," said McKee, whose political party, Act, campaigned for New Zealand's 2023 election on a platform for reversing many of them. Now in government as

part of a center-right coalition, McKee pledged to update the law before the next election in Her bloc has enough lawmak-

ers to easily pass any reforms in the face of any resistance from the parliamentary opposition. "The changes we made off the tary-style semi-automatic weapons off the street and made our communities safer," said Ginny Andersen, a lawmaker for Labour - the largest opposition party, previously led by Ardern. "Making those guns more accessible will take New Zealand backwards.'

McKee's consultation was a "box ticking exercise, with a select group and a very short time for responses," Andersen said in her emailed statement. Prime Minister Christopher Luxon, whose party is in government with McKee's, did not answer AP's requests for com-

McKee said she would consult with the public before deciding specific measures and that her personal views would not direct the overhaul. Critics rejected that. "She was elected as a gun lob-

Chris Cahill, president of the Police Association, a group representing most New Zealand officers. "She's got a loyalty to the gun lobby groups."
The review was "without a

doubt, a backdoor into giving ic assault rifles again," Cahill

At the time of the ban, McKee denounced it as "knee-jerk." As a minister she is more guarded, but told the AP that New Zealand had not been entirely rid of such weapons; several hundred people have permits to use them for pest control in rural areas, while others can

own but not fire them. "If we extend the access, what are the possible controls around the use of the extension? And would society be happy with what those controls mean?" McKee said she would ask

during the review. "It's about how do we find the balance with protecting people but not going over the top with a regulatory regime," she said. Any concerns raised by opponents should be "realistic," McKee added.

Washington Post

after backlash

New York (AP): Newly-named

Washington Post editor Robert

Winnett has decided not to take

the job and remain in England

amid leadership turmoil at the

Enthusiasts worldwide mark 10th Yoga International Day

AP NEW YORK/ TEL AVIV

Thousands of yoga enthusiasts from across the world rolled out their yoga mats as they joined day-long sessions of the ancient Indian practice to commemorate the 10th International Day of Yoga on Friday. Recognising its universal appeal, in December 2014, the UN proclaimed June 21 as the International Day of Yoga. The draft UN General Assembly resolution establishing the International Day of Yoga was proposed by India and endorsed by a record 175 member states The Consulate General of India

in New York along with the Times Square Alliance hosted special yoga sessions at the iconic Times Square.

Amid heat advisories in place for the New York area, which experienced temperatures as high as 93°F (33.8°C) during the day, people from all walks of life and nationalities arrived early morning on Thursday



and rolled out their yoga mats in the heart of the popular New York City destination

Yoga instructor and breath meditation teacher Richa Dhekne, who has over two decades of experience as a volunteer and faculty member with the Art of Living Foundation, led the yoga and meditation session hosted by the Consulate General of India

Several other yoga teachers and experts led various meditation, exercises and breathing sessions throughout the day at Times Square, as thousands participated in the day-long activities.

In Washington, hundreds of

yoga enthusiasts came togeth-

er to observe the day at an event

that was addressed by India's

Deputy Ambassador to the US Sripriya Ranganathan. At the picturesque Wharf, over-

looking the Potomac River, the International Yoga Day event on Wednesday began with prayers and Indian classical dance performances. The yoga session highlighted the spirit of oneness and harmony inspired by the ancient Indian practice. Over three hundred people from across Israel rolled out yoga mats and performed asanas as they participated in International Yoga Day celebrations at the Peres Centre for Peace and Innovation in Tel Aviv.

First Lady Michal Herzog was the chief guest at the main International Yoga Day event on Thursday. A series of events were held across the country. The event was organised by the Embassy of India in Israel in association with the Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality and the Ministry of Culture and Sports

of Israel At the event, Herzog spoke

about the deep friendship between India and Israel. Singapore's Minister of State for Health Rahayu Mahzam joined more than 200 yoga enthusiasts and the Indian High Commissioner Dr Shilpak Ambule in celebrating the 10th International Yoga Day here on a rain-washed cool morning. The minister emphasised in her keynote speech the importance of yoga in fostering a healthy and balanced lifestyle. "India has certainly played a leading role in promoting the benefits of yoga to the world.

The flexible and adaptable nature of yoga also makes it inclusive for people of different ages, genders, and physical abilities. I am glad to see participants from all walks of life in today's event," she said. The event is celebrated by the High Commission of India in Singapore in partnership with

Gardens by the Bay at bilateral ties," it said. Waterfront Plaza, a sprawling India's Ambassador to Nepal green complex popular among tourists and local joggers.

The Embassy of India in Nepal on Thursday organised yoga demonstrations at three iconic landmarks of Pokhara, the tourism capital of the country. What better way to spread the message

#YogaForSelfAndSociety than to assimilate Yoga, Nature and Spirituality! @IndiaInNepal organised yoga demonstrations at 3 iconic landmarks of #Pokhara, the tourism capital of Nepal," the mission tweeted. The mission also organised a Yoga demonstration at Lumbini

The chief minister of Lumbini, various provincial leaders and more than 900 people participated in the yoga demonstration, it said. "Hon'ble CM of Lumbini, Jokh

Bahadur Mahara, thanked for organising the event at the sacred birthplace of Lord Buddha and for strengthening

Arabia celebrated the day at Prince Faisal Bin Fahd Olympic Naveen Srivastava underlined that the birthplace of Lord Complex, Riyadh.

editor decides Buddha is an ideal place for the timeless practice of Yoga for not to take job health and longevity.

India's embassy in Sri Lanka also organised several yoga sessions, including in Jaffna and Kandy ahead of the day. The Indian Embassy in Beijing

on Thursday organised a yoga class at Beijing Morning Star School led by the Embassy's Cultural Teacher (Yoga) Lokesh Sharma. More than 45 students participated in the class and practised various yoga poses to improve body flexibility and enhance concentration. In Rome, Ambassador Vani Rao spoke about "Yoga for Self and Society" at the event organised by the Italian Hindu

The High Commission of India in the Maldives organised an event that witnessed the participation of Maldivian and Indian oga enthusiasts. The Indian Embassy in Saudi

news organisation. The Post's CEO anď publisher, Will Lewis, announced Winnett's decision to withdraw in a note to staff on Thursday morning. He will stay as deputy editor of the Telegraph in London. Several published reports had raised questions about Winnett's involvement in articles where a source was paid and information gathered through deceptive means practices more commonplace in England but frowned upon by journalists in US. As part of a reorganisation that has backfired, Lewis had named Winnett, a former colleague, to take over the

Post's core newsroom functions

after the November election.

Tourist allegedly killed for Quran desecration in Pak

n enraged mob in the pic-Afteresque Pakistani town of Swat has gunned down a tourist, dragged him through the town and later hanged him in full public view for allegedly committing desecration of the Qurn. The incident happened on Thursday night when Muhammad Ismail, a resident of Sialkot in Punjab province, was visiting the northwestern Pakistan hill resort town of Swat and was accused of having burnt the pages of Islam's holy book in Madyan tehsil of Swat district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

District Police Officer (DPO) Swat, Zahidullah said that initially the police had taken Ismail in custody and locked him up in the police station when the alleged desecration incident was reported.

However, the incident was announced from mosques through loudspeakers in the market, prompting thousands of people to gather outside the police station.

Soon after, the angry mob demanded that the police hand over the suspect to them. On refusal, a fierce exchange of fire took place between the local people and the police in which eight persons were injured, The Express Tribune newspaper reported.

After that the mob torched the police station, forcing the cops on duty to flee for their lives "After that, the people entered the police station and shot and killed the suspect and dragged his body to the Madyan Ada, where they hanged him. The people also set the police station and police vehicles on fire, while the policemen on duty fled. Meanwhile, more police force was called to control the mob," the officer was quoted as

According to the police officials, the incident has caused a law and order situation in the hill town. More police force was called to restore order in the popular tourist destination.

Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province Ali Amin Gandapur has sought a report from the provincial police chief. He has directed the Inspector General of Police to take emergency steps to control the situation and urged people to remain calm.

Former Pakistan PM Abbasi launches new political party

Islamabad (PTI): Former Pakistan prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi on Friday formed a new political party named Awaam Pakistan after parting ways with the ruling PML-N due to the differences with the party's way of politics. Abbasi, who served as the prime minister from August 2017 to May 2018, was joined by former finance minister Miftah Ismail who also parted ways with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) led by former prime minister Nawaz Sharif. The slogan of the new political entity is 'badlien gaen nizam' (we will change the system). The party would be formally launched on July 6 or 7, The Express Tribune newspaper reported.

A video shared on Awaam Pakistan's official X handle featured disheartened citizens addressing national issues such as inflation, energy shortages, corruption, unemployment, and educational disparities.

Abbasi, 65, has been appointed as head of the organising committee, while Ismail has been initially named as his The organising committee also includes former Khyber-

Pakhtunkhwa governor and PML-N leader Sardar Mehtab Abbasi, former PML-N Senator Javed Abbasi and former Muttahida Qaumi Movement lawmaker Sheikh Salahuddin. The founding members include former PML-N lawmaker from Faisalabad Rana Zahid Tauseef, former PTI health minister Zafar Mirza, former PML-N provincial lawmaker Zaeem Qadri, Hazara region activist Fatima Atif, Sindhi nationalist leader Anwar Soomro, legal expert Moiz Jaferi and educationist Tariq Banuri. Abbasi served as prime minister from August 2017 to May 2018 until PML-N chief Nawaz Sharif was disqualified by the Supreme Court. He belongs to the Murree area of Rawalpindi,

which is a famous hill resorfrequented by tourists in summer to seek relief from scorching heat and in winter to enjoy snowfall. He is a businessman whose family owned the country's AirBlue airline. He entered politics in 1988 when he was elected as a member of the National Assembly for the first

He was elected at least six times on the PML-N ticket and was considered close to Nawaz Sharif and also served as a federal minister.

Abbasi and Ismail, who served as ministers in his cabinet, left the PML-N due to policy disagreements and initiated discussions nationwide in 2023 under the banner 'Reimagining Pakistan' to pay ground for a new party.He in many discussions and seminars has been insisting that only a new political party with the will to change the current system can pull the cash-strapped country

Pak PM assures PPP of addressing its concerns over budget

Islamabad (PTI): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has assured Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari that the government would take steps to address the key ally's reservations on multiple issues by forming a committee after tensions rose among ruling coalition partners over the budget.
A delegation of the PPP headed by Bilawal on

Thursday met Prime Minister Sharif to sort out differences over the budget which was presented in Parliament last week.

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb presented the federal budget on June 12 but the PPP, which is the major ally of the government, was not happy as it was not consulted when the budget was being prepared. As the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government lacks a majority, there is a genuine concern that the government may not be able to get the budget passed in Parliament if not supported by the PPP.Geo News reported that Sharif assured Bilawal Bhutto of taking steps to address the key concerns. The Dawn newspaper quoting sources said that the differences have been settled, with both sides agreeing to support each other and cooperate on issues of mutual concern.

According to Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, some "minor" reservations had been expressed by the PPP, which would be resolved by the government through talks. He said the government also formed a commit-

tee led by Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar to take up the issue with the PPP and would take the dialogue forward in light of the meeting between Sharif and Bilawal. On the other hand, PPP sources said the premier agreed with the party chairperson on most issues as the latter expressed annoyance with him for bypassing his party on budget

Bhutto complained that the PPP had joined the government under an agreement with which the PML-N did not comply.

The Prime Minister has also formed a committee to resolve the disagreement. Officials said the PPP delegation also included Chairman Senate Yusuf Raza Gilani, former premier Raja Pervaiz Ashraf and senior leaders Sved Khurshid Shah, Syed Naveed Qamar and Sherry Rehman. The discussion focused on the "national political issues" and it was agreed that further consultation would be held with the PPP regarding the budget 2024-2025, sources said.

S Korea summons Russian envoy

Zone between the two rival

So how are North Korean

soldiers continuing to wander

over the line separating North

from South, causing South

Korea to fire warning shots for

The short answer appears to

be shrubbery: Because of an

overgrowth of foliage, the

North Koreans may not have

seen the signs marking the

northern and southern sides.

But it's also just the latest entry

in the long, often violent his-

tory of the unique border set

up after the 1950-53 Korean

War. It ended with an

armistice, instead of a peace

treaty, leaving the Korean Peninsula divided, and tech-

nically still in a state of war.

On Friday, South Korea's mil-

itary said it had fired warnings

mas, and 3,000 US dollar bills

from the South Korean border

town of Paju on Thursday

Pyongyang resents such mate-

rial and fears it could demoral-

analysts say.

threat of retaliation.

it's only natural that you will

find yourself dealing with

something you didn't have to," she said, without specifying

After previous leafletting by

South Korean activists, North Korea launched more than

what the North would do.

the third time this month?

South Korea summoned the Russian ambassador to protest the country's new defense pact with North Korea on Friday, as border tensions on Friday, as border tensions continued to rise with vague threats and brief, seemingly accidental incursions by North Korean troops. Earlier Friday, the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un issued a vague threat of retaliation after South Korean ation after South Korean activists flew balloons carrying anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets across the border, and South Korea's military said it had fired warning shots the previous day to repel North Korean soldiers who briefly crossed the rivals' land border for the third time this month.

That came two days after Moscow and Pyongyang reached a pact vowing mutual defense assistance if either is attacked, and a day after Seoul responded by saying it would consider providing arms to Ukraine to fight Russia's inva-

South Korean Vice Foreign Minister Kim Hong Kyun summoned Russian Ambassador Georgy Zinoviev to protest the deal between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un and called for Moscow to immediately halt its alleged military cooperation with Pyongyang. Kim, the South Korean diplomat, stressed that any cooperation that directly or indirectly helps the North build up its military capabilities would violate UN Security Council resolutions and pose a threat to the South's security, and warned of consequences for Seoul's relations with Moscow.

Zinoviev told Korean officials that any attempts to "threaten or blackmail" Russia were unacceptable and that his country's agreement with North Korea wasn't aimed at specific third countries, Russia's embassy wrote on its X account.

The South Korean ministry said Zinoviev promised to convey Seoul's concerns to his superiors in Moscow.

Leafletting campaigns by South Korean civilian activists in recent weeks have prompted a resumption of Cold War-style psychological warfare along the inter-Korean border.

The South Korean civilian activists, led by North Korean defector Park Sang-hak, said it sent 20 balloons carrying 300,000 propaganda leaflets, 5,000 USB sticks with South Korean pop songs and TV dra**Seoul (AP):** Don't believe the name: The Demilitarized the military demarcation line that divides the countries while engaging in unspecified

across most heavily guarded border

How did N Korean soldiers wander

Koreas might be the most construction work. heavily armed place on earth. Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff Two million mines, barbed said the North Koreans wire fences, tank traps and retreated shortly after South tens of thousands of troops Korean soldiers broadcast a warning and fired the shots from both countries patrol a divided swath of land 248 kilometers (154 miles) long Thursday morning, but didn't immediately release more and 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) details. Similar incidents took place

on June 9 and June 18, each involving some 20 to 30 North Korean soldiers briefly crossing the demarcation line and retreating shortly after the South Koreans broadcast audio warnings and fired warning shots. South Korea's military says the

incursions were likely accidents, noting that the North Koreans did not return fire and withdrew immediately.

thin military demarcation line that divides the DMZ into The demarcation line, in many parts of the DMZ, is simply a sign mounted on a stick or a slice of concrete. People have stepped across it before, under very special circumstances, and usually at the border village of Panmunjom. Former U.S. President Donald Trump walked across with Kim Jong Un. Last year an American soldier facing possible military discipline dashed over the shots the previous day to repel several North Korean soldiers who briefly crossed line to the North.

> 1,000 balloons that dropped tons of trash in South Korea, smashing roof tiles and windows and causing other property damage.

Kim Yo Jong previously hinted that balloons could become ize front-line troops and resithe North's standard response to dents and eventually weaken leafletting, saying that the North Kim Jong Un's grip on power, would respond by "scattering In a statement carried by North dozens of times more rubbish Korea's official Korean Central than is being scattered on us."In News Agency, Kim Yo Jong, one response, South Korea resumed anti-North Korea propaganda of her brother's top foreign policy officials, called the broadcasts with military loudactivists "defector scum" and speakers installed at the border for the first time in years, to issued what appeared to be a which Kim Yo Jong, in anoth-'When you do something you er state media statement, were clearly warned not to do, warned that Seoul was "creat-

> ous situation. Tensions between the Koreas are at their highest in years as Kim Jong Un accelerates his nuclear weapons and missile development and attempts to strengthen his regional footing

ing a prelude to a very danger-

of the DMZ is wilderness, but it is heavily monitored on both sides. And while the demarcation line may be easily crossed, it is very difficult to do so without being spot-

ted immediately.

The southern side of the land border is protected not only by thousands of soldiers, guns and mines, but also by a dense network of cameras, motion sensors and other high-tech surveillance equipment. Breaches are very rare and are usually detected quickly. Defections from the North are also unusual along the North-South land border, though they have happened with frequency along the porous China-North Korea border and occasionally in the Yellow Sea

The North's accidental intru-sions this month may have been caused by a sudden jump in North Korean troops fortifying their side of the bor-

Because overgrown trees and plants may have been obscuring the signs marking the demarcation line, Seoul says, the North Korean troops may have stepped over the line without knowing it. Why are so many North Koreans working in the

by aligning with Russian President Vladimir Putin in a standoff against the US-led

South Korea, a growing arms exporter with a well-equipped military backed by the United States, says it is considering upping support for Ukraine in response. Seoul has already provided

humanitarian aid and other support while joining US-led economic sanctions against Moscow.

But it has not directly provided arms, citing a long-standing policy of not supplying weapons to countries actively engaged in conflict.

Putin told reporters in Hanoi, Vietnam, on Thursday that supplying weapons to Ukraine would be "a very big mistake," and said South Korea "shouldn't worry" about the agreement if it isn't planning aggression against Pyongyang.

over arms deals with Taiwan

Beijing (AP): China said Friday it has banned a number of business units of American aviation manufacturer Lockheed Martin Corp and three of its executives over arms deals the company has signed with Taiwan, the self-ruling island it claims as its own ter

The statement from China's Foreign Ministry said the company's cooperation with Taiwan had violated the country's sovereignty, standard terminology in its discussions of any outside dealings that support the island's government. The effects of the sanctions appeared largely symbolic since military cooperation between the US and China has been suspended since the People's Liberation Army's crackdown on student-led pro-democracy protests in Beijing and other cities in 1989. Named under the sanctions were

Lockheed Martin Missile System Integration Lab, Lockheed Martin Advanced Technology Laboratories and Lockheed Martin Ventures. Top executives James Donald Taiclet, Frank Andrew St John and Jesus Malave were listed as banned from travelling to China.China has been steadily growing its domestic aircraft industry, producing parts, planes and services for Airbus and producing its own commercial jets. Foreign technology has played a large part in that process, but Chinese companies have increasingly developed the means to replace their overseas suppliers. Taiwan relies heavily on US suppliers for arms, even as it works to boost its own defense industries and increase mandatory military service for men from four months to one year. That comes against the backdrop of China's rising threat to encircle or invade Taiwan to achieve what it calls a historical mission to annex the island. Taiwan was formerly a Japanese colony and separated from mainland China in 1949.

China sanctions | Fire that spread through settlements in | EU nations agree to start membership Turkey left 11 dead, village evacuated

A fire that apparently started in crop stubble spread through settlements in southeast Turkey overnight, killing 11 people and leaving dozens of others requiring medical treatment, officials and news reports said Friday. In neighbouring Greece,

authorities evacuated several villages south of Athens and in the southern Peloponnese region because of wildfires. The blaze in Turkey broke out

in an area between the provinces of Diyarbakir and Mardin. Fanned by winds, it moved quickly through the villages of Koksalan, Yazcicegi and Bagacik, Diyarbakir Gov. Ali Ihsan Su said. The fire was brought under control early

Health Minister Fahrettin Koca posted on X that 11 people were killed. Around 80 others required treatment, including



six who were in serious condi-

Justice Minister Yilmaz Tunc said that authorities have launched an investigation into the cause of the fire, which lit up the night sky.

Residents believe the blaze was caused by sparks from a power line that set crop residue ablaze, according to independent news website Gazete Duvar. Some of

the hospitalised people were

villagers who tried to extin-

guish the fire, it said. Hundreds of farm animals also perished in the fire, according to news channel HaberTurk. Across the country in northwest Turkey, meanwhile, firefighters were battling a wildfire near the town of Ayvacik in Canakkale province, the staterun Anadolu Agency said.

No one was hurt, but authorities evacuated the small village of Camkoy as a precaution, the agency reported.

It was one of several wildfires that have erupted in the province of Canakkale in the past week amid high winds and scorching summer tempera-

Wildfires also erupted in Greece amid very windy, hot and dry conditions. Six villages or settlements were ordered evacuated as a precaution because of wildfires near Anavyssos, just south of Athens, and in the southern Peloponnese region.

There were no immediate reports of injuries or damage to property, and firefighters on the ground were assisted by waterdropping aircraft.

The greater Athens region was on the top wildfire emergency footing Friday because of the weather forecast, with bans on entering forests and parks.

negotiations with Ukraine next week

Brussels (AP): The European Union agreed Friday to start membership negotiations with embattled Ukraine and Moldova, another step in the nations' long journey to move closer to the West and mute Russia's influence.

Belgium, which currently holds the presidency of the EU, said member states have agreed that talks will start June 25 in Luxembourg. Ukraine applied to join the

the bloc less than a week after Russia invaded in February 2022, and EU leaders acted with uncharacteristic speed in making it a candidate in June of that year. But the process has moved more slowly since them — and membership, if it comes, will take years, or even decades.

Still, the opening of talks sends another strong signal of solidarity with Ukraine on

top of the huge financial support provided by the EU. Leaders from the 27-nation bloc agreed last year that accession negotiations should start with both Ukraine and Moldova. That was a necessary political agreement, and Friday's move lays the legal basis for

the talks

To join the EU, candidate countries must go through a lengthy process to align their laws and standards with those of the bloc and meet a host of economic and political conditions, including a commitment to the rule of law and other democratic principles. Ukraine, for instance, will have to curb entrenched government corruption and adopt other reformsUkraine is one of several countries that have long wanted to join the EU, seeing it as a path to wealth and stability. While the EU is

not a military alliance like NATO, membership in the bloc is also seen by some as offering protection against Russian influence.

Moldova has nervously eyed the invasion of its neighbour by Russia. It has repeatedly accused Russia of conducting a "hybrid war" against the country, including alleging Moscow meddled in local elections and is running vast disinformation campaigns to try to topple the government and derail its path to joining the EU.

Russia has denied the accusations, but the Moldovan government remains wary of Moscow's intentions.

"Today, I signed the decree on initiating Moldova's EU accession negotiations," said Maia Sandu, the president of Moldova. "Becoming an EU member is our path to peace, prosperity, and a better life for all citizens.

US Supreme Court upholds gun control law for domestic violence protection

Washington (AP): The Supreme Court on Friday upheld a federal gun control law that is intended to protect victims of domestic violence. In their first Second Amendment case since they expanded gun rights in 2022, the justices ruled in favour of a 1994 ban on firearms for people under restraining orders to stay away from their spouses or partners. The justices reversed a ruling from the federal appeals court in New Orleans that had struck down the law. Last week, the court overturned a Trump-era ban on bump stocks, the rapid-fire gun accessories used in the deadliest mass shooting in modern US history. The court ruled that the Justice Department exceeded its authority in imposing that ban. Friday's case stemmed directly from the Supreme Court's Bruen decision in June 2022. A Texas man, Zackey Rahimi, was accused of hitting his

and later threatening to shoot her. At arguments in November, some justices voiced concern that a ruling for Rahimi could

girlfriend during an argument in a parking lot

also jeopardise the background check system that the Biden administration said has stopped more than 75,000 gun sales in the past 25 years based on domestic violence protective orders. The case also had been closely watched for its potential to affect cases in which other gun ownership laws have been called into question, including in the high-profile prosecution of Hunter Biden. President Joe Biden's son was convicted of lying on a form to buy a firearm while he was addicted to drugs. His lawyers have signalled they will appeal.

A decision to strike down the domestic violence

gun law might have signalled the court's scepticism of the other laws as well. The justices could weigh in soon in one or more of those other cases. Many of the gun law cases grow out of the Bruen decision.

That high court ruling not only expanded Americans' gun rights under the Constitution but also changed the way courts are supposed to evaluate restrictions on firearms.

Kaspersky denies hazard after US bans its software Washington (AP): The cybertions mean the company poses

security firm Kaspersky denied on Friday that it is a security threat after the US Commerce Department banned the use of its software in the United States. The Moscow-based company - whose CEO Eugene Kaspersky is Russian said in a statement that the Commerce Department's decision would not affect its ability to sell and promote its cyber security products and training in the US. Kaspersky said the government had based its decision on the "geopolitical climate and theoretical concerns" rather than independently verifying if there was a risk.

government says Kaspersky's Russian connec-

an "undue or unacceptable risk to US national security or the safety and security.

The company conducts much of its business in Russia and, as a Russian citizen who lives in country, Eugene Kaspersky himself is subject to Russian law, the Commerce Department said in a decision dated June 14 that was posted on the Federal Register.

The department said it had considered Kaspersky's objections to the initial findings of its investigation into whether its products or services posed a threat and found that the decision to ban its software was "well supported." Aside from the company's obligation to

abide by Russian laws and decisions, its software can be exploited to identify sensitive US citizens' data and make it available to Russian government actors, the department said. "The risks to US

national security addressed in this Final Determination stem not from whether Kaspersky's products are effective at iden tifying viruses and other malware, but whether they can be used strategically to cause harm to the United States," it

Kaspersky boasts one of the world's most popular consumer antivirus products and a research unit widely respected for routinely exposing elite hacking groups.

GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY, AMRITSAR NOTICE Applications forms for allotment of

hostel Shops/Vehicle Stands from session 2024-25 (Extendable upto 30.06.2029) Campus, Amritsar, Campus, Gurdaspur and Regiona Campus, Jalandhar are invited till 06.07.2024. The details, terms 8 conditions and forms can be downloaded from the university

https://online.gndu.ac.in/ tenders-notice.aspx Dean Students' Welfare

NA/12/23562/2023/34840 Dated CHD :- 6/21/2024

Markets halt record-breaking rally

Halting their record-breaking rally, equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty buckled under selling pressure on Friday as investors pared exposure to oil & gas, capital goods and FMCG stocks amid a bearish trend in global markets.

However, recent foreign capital inflows and buying in index majors Bharti Airtel, Infosys and TCS helped indices restrict the losses, traders said.

Snapping its six-day rally, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 269.03 points or 0.35 per cent to settle at 77,209.90. During the day, it tanked 676.93 points or 0.87 per cent to 76,802.

The Nifty rose 100.1 points to hit a record intraday peak of 23,667.10 earlier in the day. However, it failed to maintain the momentum and slipped 65.90 points or 0.28 per cent to end at 23,501.10.



On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark climbed 217.13 points or 0.28 per cent, while the Nifty went up by 35.5 points or 0.15 per cent.

domestic market witnessed minor profitbooking amid concerns over the slow progress of monsoon, resulting in underperformance in the FMCG sector. The global markets were subdued as weak guidance from Accenture led to profit booking in US tech stocks," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial

mong the Sensex companies, UltraTech Cement, Larsen &

Unilever, Bajaj Hindustan Reliance Finance, Industries, Mahindra & Mahindra and State Bank of India were the biggest

(0.71 per cent).

European

Thursday.

On the other hand, IT,

telecommunication, metal

power, tech and services were

the gainers. In Asian markets

Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and

quoting in the red. US markets

ended on a mixed note on

Foreign Institutional Investors

(FIIs) bought equities worth Rs

415.30 crore on Thursday

Global oil benchmark Bren

crude declined 0.16 per cent to

USD 85.57 a barrel. Rallying for

the sixth straight session on Thursday, the BSE benchmark

Sensex climbed 141.34 points or 0.18 per cent to settle at a

new closing peak of 77,478.93. The Nifty rose 51 points or 0.22 per cent to settle at its fresh closing high of 23,567.

according to exchange data.

markets were

Hong Kong settled lower.

laggards. In contrast, Bharti Airtel, Infosys, JSW Steel, Tata Consultancy Services, Wipro and NTPC were among the biggest gainers.

"Nifty ended lower in a highly volatile session on Friday; however it rose for three weeks in a row to record its highest weekly close even as it fell on Friday. Asian shares were mostly lower Friday after a retreat on Wall Street," Deepak Iasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities, said.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge declined 0.26 per cent, while smallcap climbed 0.06 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, Oil & Gas went lower by 1.28 per cent, FMCG (1.08 per cent),

Gold surges ₹800; silver rallies ₹1,400 commodities (0.92 per cent) realty (0.75 per cent) and auto

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices surged Rs 800 to Rs 73,350 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday amid a rally in precious metal rates in the international markets, according HDFC Securities.

In the previous session, the yellow metal had closed at Rs 72,550 per 10 grams.

Extending gains for the fourth straight day, silver prices also rallied by Rs 1,400 to Rs 93,700 per kg. It had ended at Rs 92,300 per kg on Thursday. "In Delhi markets, spot gold prices (24 carats) are trading at Rs 73,350 per 10 grams, up by Rs 800 from the previous close," Saumil Gandhi, Research Analyst at HDFC

Rural India bright star for FMCG sales, says Kantar

 R^{ural} India remains a "bright star" for the growth of fastmoving consumer goods sales and the region is expected to maintain better pace of expansion than urban areas in the second quarter of 2024, a report said on Friday.

According to a report from data, insights and consulting firm Kantar, rural India will maintain "better growth levels" racing ahead of the urban markets for FMCG (fastmoving consumer goods) companies in the second quarter (April-June) of 2024. Terming the rural market as a "bright star", the report said it had a "resurgence" in 2024. While urban is likely to remain under stress, the rural may consolidate its position in second quarter of the year, it said. This growth in the rural areas is helped by regioncentric measures by the government in the interim

budget earlier this year, which provided stability. Moreover, populist measures are expected by some states which are going to face elections this year, said Kantar

FMCG pulse report for Q2. "We should also bear in mind that more states are heading for polls in the coming months and the second half should only see a rise in populist measures for the rural market. After COVID-19, the rural market was in distress and faced degrowth in the past successive quarters. "However, the start to 2024 from a rural perspective has been brilliant, with rural growth overtaking urban's; and the rural worm is looking upward," it said.

About the urban market, the

report said, it did not see growth for three straight

quarters, and is contending with a huge Q2 2023 base. "Therefore, Urban is likely to remain under stress, while Rural may consolidate its position in Q2," it said, adding

that falling Urban curve coupled with a strong base is likely to constrict the numbers for the next quarters. Kantar According Worldpanel Managing
Director — South Asia K Ramakrishnan, for the most part of 2023, Urban has

maintained strong growth numbers. "Rapid growth is unsustainable for a long term, and necessarily

Urban is hitting brakes now. This has also coincided with typically Urban-centric categories such as noodles and salty snacks slowing down in growth within Urban, after continuously galloping since the pandemic," he said. The rural market may also get a

boost from the rabi crop, the report said, though it was unclear about its status. "Central India, where the bulk of the rural populous resides, received excess rainfall in the year. South India, a prominent rice and spice producer, has received below-par rainfall till now. There are reports that rabi harvests are likely to be hit this year," it said.

The effect of rainfall will be felt towards the second half more, but "certain rural markets could turn on the caution switch already", the report said. Even with that, we do expect Rural to maintain better growth levels compared to Urban for the remainder of the year," it added.

Normally, contributes around 35 to 37 per cent of the FMCG sales, and value offerings in the food segment dominates.

The report also highlighted that though inflation might slowed down to have acceptable levels, its effects are not lost on the consumer. The Indian rural market is full

of potential. Yes, inflation has dampened the mood of the rural shopper for a time, but the trends are now pointing up. Rural has outpaced Urban this quarter, and is likely to hold at that level for some time in the near future, Ramakrishnan.

RAI's Budget wishlist: Lower taxes for individuals, benefits on land rates, electricity

Budget FY25.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Quick commerce company Zepto on Friday said it has raised USD

665 million (about Rs 5,560

crore) in the latest funding

round that valued the firm at USD 3.6 billion, almost

triple than its worth a year

The massive fundraise

comes less than a year after

raised USD 235 million at a

valuation of USD 1.4 billion.

The funding round saw

participation from new investors like Avenir,

Lightspeed, and Avra,

alongside existing investors Glade Brook, Nexus, and

StepStone, Goodwater, and

"We've gone from 0 to 1

billion-plus in sales, or GMV, in 29 months, that is

faster than any other internet company before

us... Even on a base of over a

billion dollars at this point,

we are growing 100 per cent-

Lachy Groom.

Avenir,

The Retailers Association of India (RAI) on Friday called for lower taxes for individuals generate and demand consumption besides seeking low-cost finance, subsidies and benefits on land rates and necessities such as electricity for retailers ahead of Union

Retailing in India accounts for about 10 per cent of the country's GDP and the sector is second only to agriculture in terms of the number of people its pre-Budget memorandum highlighting areas that need attention in order to make the industry stronger.

To ensure the growth of the sector, the Union Budget for should focus on generating demand and spurring consumption by benefits concessions in the form of lower taxes," RAI said.

It will boost the overall consumer sentiment and benefit the retail sector, it said adding, consumption equals to development and the "tax

for us is one of the big

Zepto co-founder and CEO Aadit Palicha told PTI.

Attributing the growth to

the performance of the

quick commerce firm, the

young entrepreneur said,

the input excellence we've

built across the supply chain.

'Whether it is sourcing

line

excellence, mother hub

utilisation, or our last mile,

the innovation that we've

done, or forecasting, we're in

this place where even as

we've been able to grow, we've been able to drive

efficiency,

plus year on year. And that efficiency to get the business

'This is largely because of

Zepto raises USD 665

directly employed, RAI said in benefits and relief to individual taxpayers will monthly increase the disposable income support consumption".

Further, the budget should outline supportive policies, simplified regulations, skill development and simple goods and services tax (GST) norms to aid the development of the retail industry, RAI said. Asking for low-cost finance to retailers, the industry body said,"There is a need to provide lower interest rate to the retailers through the special announcement in the

to pretty much close to full operating cash flow positive

He said the overall business

is close to operating at

idea is to keep in that

Zepto co-founder and CTO

growth, finance, operations,

"If you are looking for a high

where you can convert hard

work and ambition into

growth, Zepto is the place

disproportionate

for you," he said.

and category management.

break-even cash flow.

2024, he said.

Budget to assure easier financing for the retail businesses." It also asked the government to consider the food and beverages retail sector as an essential service and said "subsidies and benefits should be given on land rates and other necessities such as electricity".

RAI also said there is a need to expedite the formulation and implementation of 'National Retail Policy' to enable ease of doing business and "such a would provide substantial boost to the retail

Stating that benefits to retail and wholesale trade MSMEs are restricted to priority sector lending only, RAI also recommended that retail and wholesale traders should be eligible for all benefits available to other MSMEs. Further, the retailers' body

asked the Centre to encourage and incentivise states to adopt 'The Model Shops and Establishment (Regulation of Employment and Condition of Services) Act 2016 that enables states to choose to keep shops and other such establishments through the year.

POWERGRID team honoured million; valuation nearly triples to USD 3.6 billion



PNS GURUGRAM

POWERGRID's Team Nearly 75 per cent of the company's stores are fully EBITDA positive as of May Communications has been featured in India's 30 Top "Over the next 12-18 months, although it might fluctuate, but we'll still be Corporate Communications Teams for the fourth time by Reputation Today.

cash flow positive, and the Tandon, CGM Corporate C o m m u n i c a t i o n s POWERGRID, along with Shri Ravi Kumar, DGM (Corp. Comm.) and Shri Akshat direction, get the business to a place where we can list next 9-12 months," he said. Chopra, Asst. Manager (Corp. Comm.) received the award at an event held in Bengaluru. Kaivalya Vohra said the firm plans to hire top talent POWERGRID is the only PSU across engineering, product, to feature in this prestigious list. POWERGRID has jumped 5 places from its last ranking.
To arrive at the list of Top growth, high meritocracy and high intensity culture

Corporate Communication Teams, a jury independently evaluated the Top 30 teams scoring each one of them on set parameters responsibilities, and more.

More than 50 per cent Indian households downing soft drinks; to increase with intensifying heat: Report

PTI NEW DELHI

The average Indian h o u s e h o l d 's consumption of bottled soft drinks has increased in the last two years, breaching annual penetration of 50 per cent in FY24, a report said. According to the latest Kantar FMCG pulse report, this trend is expected to rise this trend is expected to rise further with intensifying summer.

It said the average household expanded consumption of bottled soft drinks by 250 ml in the last

Moreover, fabric softeners, still considered to be a premium laundry item, have now reached one in every four households in the country, the report said.

Besides, washing liquids, another premium laundry product introduced by leading FMCG majors, breached the 100,000-tonne mark in FY24. All these trends are "record breakers", the report noted.

The bottled soft drink category had a "massive 41 per cent household growth in MAT (moving annual total) March 2023" and



continued to add more households and expanded 19 per cent in MAT March

the intensifying "With summer, the category is likely to continue its growth this year too," it said.

On the consumption, the report said now consumers shop FMCG products 156 times a year, or every 56 hours from online or offline channels.

However, it also added that the average basket value has gone down as shoppers are no longer buying more packs as they were purchasing

Hindustan Zinc, AEsir Technologies join hands

for development of next-gen zinc batteries

"The frequency and the pack trends indicate that shoppers are no longer reducing their pack sizes, but holding on to the ones they are buying. In other words, we are very likely at the juncture where we see shoppers buying slightly bigger packs from now on," it said.

discretionary premium-end categories like washing liquids indulgent products such as bottled soft drinks have performed exceedingly well. Still, groceries are the biggest accounting for over 24 per cent of all quarterly expenses

in a household, it added. The report also highlighted that though inflation might have slowed to acceptable

levels, its effects are not lost on the consumer.

"The worst of inflation is behind us, however, there are pockets of the market that are still under some stress...The shopper is looking at the future with great optimism, even those who are under stress, and this optimism has been the flag bearer of the Indian

Sun Pharma inks pact with Takeda to introduce gastrointestinal drug



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Pharmaceutical has inked a licensing pact with Takeda Pharmaceutical Company to commercialise a novel gastrointestinal drug in India.

The company has entered into non-exclusive patent licensing agreement with Takeda to commercialise Vonoprazan tablets in strengths of 10 and 20 mg in India, the Mumbai-based

drug major said in a statement. Vonoprazan is a novel, orally active potassium competitive acid blocker (PCAB), used to

treat reflux esophagitis and other acid peptic disorders. "Sun Pharma is a leader in gastroenterology and we are excited to introduce excited to introduce Vonoprazan in India under

non-exclusive patent license from Takeda," Sun Pharma CEO — India Business Kirti Ganorkar said.

partnership demonstrates the company's commitment

gastrointestinal health by providing patients and healthcare practitioners with a novel treatment option to manage reflux esophagitis and other acid peptic disorders, he added.

Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD) is common Reflux in India.

In November 2023, Vonoprazan was approved by the US FDA for healing and maintenance of all grades of November Erosive esophagitis and providing relief heartburn associated with Erosive esophagitis, and in combination with amoxicillin clarithromycin or amoxicillin alone for the treatment of Helicobacter

pylori (H. Pylori) infection in Vonoprazan was discovered and developed by Takeda. The drug is approved in India for treatment of adults with

reflux esophagitis and other acid peptic disorders. Shares of Sun Pharma were trading 0.69 per cent up at Rs 1,480.55 apiece on the BSE.

African, Asian tea producers flag concerns over global demand-supply mismatch

haul

PTI ■ KOLKATA

ssociations Aproducers in Asia and Africa have flagged concerns over the global mismatch of demand and supply and called for an early restoration of equilibrium, according to a statement issued by a planters' body on Friday. In a meeting of the stakeholders of the global

tea industry, recently held in Dubai, the associations also addressed the issue of quality and long-term sustainability of the sector. Indian Tea Association (ITA) chairman Hemant

Bangur said that the global tea industry is facing a demand-supply mismatch as production continues to outpace demand. Representatives of ITA, East African Trade Association

(EATTA), independent tea producers' body of Kenya and tea associations of Malawi, Bangladesh and Uganda attended

They voiced concern over potential to become one of currently facing a decline in



demand in Europe and Asia, According to the ITA statement, EATTA chairman the ITA said in a statement. Bangur said, "Africa with its growing population and Arthur Sewe said the tea income has the sector in East Africa is

quality and issues related to climate change, which require concerted efforts by all the stakeholders.

During the meeting, they deliberated on the impact of climate change, stagnation, increasing input costs and challenges relating to fair price discovery, it

Malawi Tea Association chairman Sangwani Hara was quoted as saying that climate change is a big problem and must be addressed to sustain the level of tea productivity.

The industry is also facing a crisis in exports and falling value of the produce thereby threatening the livelihoods the millions, statement said. The stakeholders also felt

that the economic recession and geopolitical challenges due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in the traditional bulk tea export markets had affected shipments. The Russian Federation is

one of the largest importers

of tea, particularly from

PTI ■ NEW DELHI Hindustan Zinc Ltd on Friday said it has partnered with US-based

AEsir Technologies, Inc for development of r generation zinc batteries. The company has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with

AEsir Technologies, Inc., a company that specialises in next-generation zinc battery technologies, to be the preferred supplier of zinc, a key raw material, Hindustan Zinc Ltd (HZL) said in a statement. The MoU is in line with the company's efforts towards exploring emerging applications of zinc in the clean energy transition, it said, adding that zinc batteries are revolutionising energy storage due to their corrosion resistance, cost-

friendliness. This partnership with AEsir Technologies is yet another step in our ongoing developmental work in the emerging clean technology



By providing high-quality zinc for cutting-edge energy storage, we are opening sophisticated new avenues for environmentally solutions for a greener tomorrow," HZL Chief

AEsir Technologies CEO and Co-Founder, Randy Moore said energy storage is at the forefront of every major effectiveness, recyclability, stability and environmental innovation in the energy transition space and "zinc batteries are the best story

Executive Officer Arun Misra

around energy storage".
"...This collaboration with Hindustan Zinc provides us with critical raw material for the development of next-gen nickel-zinc batteries," Moore added. AESir's Nickel Zinc (NiZn) batteries

have dependable and successful in the high-end defence sector, including aerospace and marine, renewable energy and critical infrastructure for data centres and 5G telecom, the statement said. Zinc-based batteries have

emerged as a compelling alternative to other modern energy storage solutions, delivering higher power at lower costs with minimal maintenance and longer life spans of up to 20 years. This makes them ideal for largescale energy storage industrial settings, it added.



AIFF Futsal Club Championship to kick off in Gujarat

The third edition of the AIFF Futsal Club Championship is set to kick off at the Swarnim Gujarat Sports University in the Vadodara district of Gujarat on Saturday.

The tournament will be streamed live on the Indian Football YouTube Channel. Nineteen teams will battle for

16 days to make it to the final and lift the trophy on July 7. They have been divided into four groups - Group A, B and C with five teams each, and Group D with four teams. The top two teams in each group will qualify for the

quarter-finals.
The first two editions of the AIFF Futsal Club Championship were held in Delhi, marking this as the first time the tournament will be played outside the capital.

Spain beats Italy

1-0 and advances

to knockout round

Spain advanced to the round of 16 at Euro 2024 after a 1-0 win against defending champion Italy on

A 55th-minute own goal by Italy's Riccardo Calafiori handed victory to

Spain in the first clash of international

heavyweights at this European

Three-time winner Spain totally dominated the Group B game at the

Veltins Arena in Gelsenkirchen, with 16-year-old winger Lamine Yamal further enhancing his reputation as

one of soccer's most exciting young

an

Italy goalkeeper Gianluigi
Donnarumma kept the score down
with a string of fine saves until

inadvertently pushing the ball into the

legs of Calafiori, who couldn't prevent

it from ricocheting into his own goal.

England drew 1-1 with Denmark in

Group C after Harry Kane scored and

then made a mistake that led to the Danes' leveller. Kane struck a record-

extending 64th goal for his country to

fire England ahead in Frankfurt. But

his loose pass then allowed Morten

Hjulmand to equalise from long

range. In the other Group C game, Luka Jovic

scored in stoppage time to salvage a 1-

points and is likely to advance to the

1 for Serbia against Slovenia. England leads the group on four

outstanding

AP GELSENKIRCHEN

Championship.

performance.

with

For hosts Gujarat, Baroda Football Academy will hope to do better than their group stage exit in the inaugural edition in 2021-22.

They are placed in Group C alongside Speed Force FC (Telangana), who narrowly missed out on the semi-finals last year. The other three teams in the group will make their tournament debut - FC Thyristor, Ramhlun Vengai (Mizoram), Guwahati City FC (Assam) and Ambelim Sports Club (Goa).

Group A also consists of three teams making their AIFF Futsal Club Championship debut -- MUM - Millat FC (Maharashtra), Corbett FC (Uttarakhand) and Nyenshen FC (Nagaland)

The latter will be the third different team to represent Nagaland in three years after Telongjem FC and Aphuyemi FC, while Maharashtra and



represented for the first time.
Among the clubs with previous national experience in the group are Manipur's Classic Football Academy (2021-22) and Odisha's Sports Odisha (2022-23).

Group B comprises defending champions Minerya Academy

champions Minerva Academy FC, who won last year's edition. Standing in the way of the Punjab side's title defence in the group stage are Electric Veng Futsal Club (Mizoram), Bangalore Arrows FC (Karnataka), Satvir FC (Haryana) and Goal Hunterz FC (Delhi).

The rematch of last season's semi-final between Minerva Academy and Electric Veng, which the former triumphed 13-8 in a high-scoring thriller, is one of the most anticipated fixtures of the group stage. fixtures of the group stage. Bangalore Arrows will be making their debut, while

team to represent Haryana in the tournament. Goal Hunterz, who exited in the group stage last year, will hope to go one step better.

Group D, the fourth and final group, consists of four teams, including Delhi FC, the champions of the inaugural edition.

They failed to defend their title last year after losing to Mohammedan Sporting 6-7 in the semi-finals. The other three teams in the group will make their first appearance at the AIFF Futsal Club Championship - Casa Barwani Soccer Club (Madhya Pradesh), Golazo FC (Himachal Pradesh) and JCT Football Academy (Punjab). The group stage will last from June 22 to July 1. The quarterfinals will be played on July 3, followed by the semi-finals on July 5 and the final on July 7.

England fails to convince in 1-1 draw with Denmark

AP FRANKFURT

Where England stands after two European Championship games is the envy of most teams. Just not good enough yet to have title

A 1-1 draw Thursday with Denmark - a semifinalist last time, don't forget means England is unbeaten and allbut certain to advance to the round of

It also was a slack, mistake-filled display that left coach Gareth Southgate angrily gesturing at his players for gifting a slew of scoring change late in the game. chances late in the game.

"The team didn't function today, that is my responsibility," said Southgate, who heard jeers from fans behind the England goal in a ragged second half. Harry Kane gave England another fast start at Euro 2024, scoring it the 18th minute, but the captain was substituted off in the second half as the team faded.

Denmark leveled in the 34th when

eorgia and the Czech

Georgia and the Care Republic are desperately

seeking a win as they meet in

their second game of Euro 2024

local time (1300 GMT) on

Turkey and Portugal are the

other two teams in Group F and play later Saturday. Here's

what to know about the match: Georgia and the Czech Republic were praised for fighting hard in their opening games but didn't get any points

as Turkey beat Georgia 3-1 and

Portugal beat the Czechs 2-1 on

A win for either team would

boost their chances of qualifying for the knockout

rounds. The losing team wouldn't be eliminated for sure

just yet because of the rule that

some third-place teams can qualify. A draw would leave

Georgia needing an upset win

over Portugal in its last game,

and the Czech team needing

the same against Turkey.

Francisco Conceicao.

stoppage-time goal from

Georgia, the Czech Republic

desperate to get off mark



Morten Hjulmand fired in a powerful

final of Euro 2020 - after beating England has never won back-to-back Denmark in the last four - and a games to begin a Euros and a pattern semifinal and a quarterfinal at the of second-game syndrome has

past two World Cups.

we ie in the environment of winning on the biggest stage," the coach acknowledged, adding "you have to accept what (criticism) comes our way."

three straight tournaments.

Opening wins in the past three years have been following by tepid 0-0 draws with Scotland and the United States, now a 1-1 with the Danes who deserved more.

"I can't say we are disappointed but it's a shame," Denmark coach Kasper Hjulmand said. "There is a result we

could have gotten."
Still, England started Euro 2024 by beating Serbia 1-0 and now sits top of Group C with four points. That tally always has been enough to advance in the 24-team Euros format where four third-place teams from the six groups

go forward to the round of 16. England can finish in any position from first to third in the Group C standings after playing unbeaten Slovenia next Tuesday.

Slovenia drew 1-1 with Serbia earlier Thursday, four days after getting the same result against Denmark. Serbia meets Denmark in their final games also on Tuesday evening.



Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz's buildup took a hit when he lost in the

Queen's was Alcaraz's only grass-court

But this time the Spaniard will have only two

Draper ended Alcaraz's eight-match win

streak while extending his own to seven after winning his first ATP title last week in Stuttgart

They were finally separated in the first set in the tiebreak, where Draper shot to 4-0 then

then Alcaraz saved three match points to hold. Draper served out and threw his arms

quarterfinals.

Ålso Thursday, Lorenzo Musetti eliminated Brandon Nakashima 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 and will face 29-year-old British wild card Billy

screamer into the top corner - to take Ronaldo's record as the youngest debut Pristiano Ronaldo and Portugal play scorer at a European Championship. Turkey in their second group game at Turkey is playing a second straight game at the European Championship. Both Dortmund's Westfalenstadion. Its fans countries opened Group F play with a win. with Portugal beating the Czech Republic 2-1 and Turkey defeating Georgia 3-1. Kickoff is at 6 pm local (1600 GMT) in Dortmund. Here's what to Georgia and look sure to outnumber the Portuguese support on Saturday. Portugal or Turkey will guarantee a first-place finish in the group with a place finish in the group with a win in Dortmund and if

know about the match: The 39-year-old Ronaldo lost his place in the Portugal team at the World Cup in 2022 but he looks to be as guaranteed a starter as ever under Roberto Martinez, who took over as coach after the tournament in Qatar. Ronaldo is captain and played the full game against the Czechs, though

didn't score. Portugal encountered a Czech Republic team which sat back and defended in numbers in Leipzig. Turkey is unlikely to do that, given its strength in attack, so expect Ronaldo and company to have more space going forward.

Arda Guler is the one to watch for Turkey. The 19-year-old attacking midfielder from Real Madrid scored one of the goals of the tournament against Georgia - a long-range



Ronaldo back in action as Portugal,

Turkey look for second straight win

Georgia-Czech Republic is a draw in Hamburg earlier Saturday. Portugal's entire 26-man squad has been in training so Martinez again has some tough decisions to make, given the strength in depth of the Joao Palhinha is

anchorman in midfield.

pushing for a return as the

Irfan Can Kahveci missed the win over Georgia because of injury and has yet to return to full training with Turkey. Ronaldo will look to add to his record 14

goals in European Championships. That is five more than his nearest rival - Michel Platini, whose nine goals all came in the same tournament (1984). It will also be record-extending Ronaldo's appearance at the Euros.

Alcaraz loses in Oueen's second round ahead of Wimbledon title defense **AP** ■ LONDON

second round of Queen's Club. Alcaraz, the defending Queen's champion and top seed, lost to Jack Draper 7-6 (3), 6-

For Draper, the British No. 1, it was the biggest win of his career. He was impressively composed in front of his home

preparation last year en route to winning Wimbledon for the first time.

French Open victory. Wimbledon starts in

Draper didn't drop serve against Alcaraz.

6-1. Alcaraz netted a return to concede the set. Alcaraz suffered the only break in the sixth game of the second set, after Draper's backhand return serve down the line. Draper saved a break point to hold for 5-2,

in the air. "I knew I had to come out here and play really well, and luckily I did that," he said on

He faces fifth-seeded Tommy Paul in the

Harris in the quarterfinals.

Verstappen aims for another F1 win in Barcelona

Georgian fans were involved in

a brawl in the stadium ahead of

Kiteishvili has been on an

individual training program separate from the rest of the

squad. He was an unused

substitute in the loss to Turkey.

The Czech Republic has not

reported any injury concerns

Czech striker Patrik Schick is

set to play his 40th game for his

country and his next goal will

be his 20th. Five of his

international goals to date

came at the last European

midfielder Otar

the Turkey game.

since its first game.

Championship.

Georgia

AP MONTMELO (SPAIN)

 $M_{\mathrm{out}}^{\mathrm{ax}}$ Verstappen will be out to quash any hopes that his Red Bull could be beatable at the Spanish Grand Prix this weekend, where the three-time world champion enjoyed his breakout as a teenager and has won for the past two years.

The race just north of Barcelona kicks off a run of three grand prix in as many weeks and five in six weeks. Given that tight schedule, teams will have less time to tweak their cars. So, the upgrades they bring to Spain could be key to determining who has the edge as the

summer heats up. Verstappen has won six of the nine races this season and recorded his 60th career win in Montreal two weeks ago. Overall, the 26-year-old Dutchman has won 50 of the last 75 events and holds a 56point over Ferrari's Charles



Leclerc going into Sunday's race. While some races have

practically been over once Verstappen sped off the starting line, there have been signs that his chasers could at least make this season a bit more interesting. Both Mercedes and McLaren

led the pace during stretches of the Canadian GP before Verstappen steered clear. And, two of the last four races

have gone to other drivers: McLaren's Lando Norris won in Miami after Verstappen clipped a chicane and had to pit, while Leclerc won in his home race in Monaco.

Spain, however, usually lets flat-out fastest cars dominate. Twenty-four of 33 races here have been won by pole sitters, and no driver has won from starting further back than fifth. It is also well known to drivers because preseason testing used to be held

The 4.6-kilometre Barcelona-Catalunya Circuit was made even fitter for speed last year when a chicane that was unpopular among drivers was replaced by two fast turns head of the main straightaway.
"I think it's always very tricky,

in a way of course exciting, Verstappen said about the state of the competition before practice started for the race on Friday. "This is normally a track that

is a bit more straightforward. People have a bit more information about a track like this, it's been on the calendar for a while. Of course, from our side, we are hoping to have a good weekend here.'

Verstappen has fond memories of a track where he showed the stuff of a future champion by winning the 2016 Spanish GP on his Red Bull debut. That made him F1's youngest race winner at

here in the last two seasons. Norris lamented not having taken his chance to get a second win in Canada. Now, he hopes McLaren can match the Red Bulls for pure speed. 'The whole season we've been strong, at every race," Norris continued. "If we can get the car performing like it has done in the past on highspeed circuits, then I'll be confident that we can. We should be able to fight."
For Mercedes' George Russell, who finished third in

Montreal, a good result here should translate into better things to come.

"I think this is going to be a real test and if we can be fast this weekend, that bodes really well for the season," Russell said.

Ferrari is looking to bounce back from a frustrating weekend in Canada when both Leclerc and Carlos Sainz F1's youngest race winner at struggled in qualifying and age 18. He also scored wins neither could finish the race. Alexandrova 7-6 (6), 6-2,

Wimbledon champion Vondrousova retires

BERLIN, JUN 21 (AP)

Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova retired from her match in because of apparent leg injury less than two weeks before play begins at the All England Club.

Vondrousova was leading 5 3 in her second-round match against Anna Kalinskava at the grass-court Ladies Open when she slipped behind the baseline and clutched her

right leg.
The 24-year-old Czech player got up holding her right hip area and returned after a medical timeout with the upper part of her leg heavily strapped. She played two more games, losing both,

and then stopped. First-round play begins at Wimbledon on July 1. Also Thursday, top-seeded Coco Gauff beat Ekaterina



Sabalenka defeated Daria Kasatkina 6-1, 6-4. Elena Rybakina reached the quarterfinals with a 6-4, 7-5 victory over Kudermetova.

Ons Jabeur shook off a slow start to beat Linda Noskova 6-7 (5), 6-3, 6-4.

the pioneer

PRESSURE BUILDING ON TOP-ORDER AS INDIA TAKE ON BANGLADESH

PTI ■ NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA)

¬he ever-present tension of their over a decadelong big-stage rivalry would make for an engrossing sub-plot when an undefeated India takes on a faltering Bangladesh, both teams desperately hoping for their batting stars to strike form in the Super Eights clash of the T20 World Cup here on Saturday.

The overall head-to-head record is overwhelmingly in India's favour but Bangladesh have been known to be plucky and Rohit Sharma and his men would be wary of that.

The two South Asian neighbours have also been locked in some off-field drama in the past with Bangladesh often expressing its misgivings with India's financial might in

the sport.
At the ongoing World Cup though, there is no doubt that India are as mighty a cricketing power to be a serious title contender.

The Men in Blue produced a professional performance against Afghanistan in their opening Super Eights match. With only a travel day separating their remaining two games, they would be hoping that the players, who have not

performed as per expectations so far, deliver the goods. Top of that list would be the opening pair of Virat Kohli and

Rohit Sharma, both of whom have got starts but have not been able to turn them into defining knocks. They have made a conscious effort to force the pace but have ended with minimal returns.

Another under-pressure team member is left-hander Shivam Dube, who was picked in the World Cup squad to hammer sixes in the middle and death

However, the IPL form that helped him seal a World Cup berth has deserted him and he is yet to come to the party. The southpaw did make an

unbeaten 31 against the USA in a group league game but it was Suryakumar Yadav's effort that made the difference ultimately. Another failure force the team management to consider Sanju Samson in the middle order.

The biggest positive in the batting department in the Afghanistan game was Hardik Pandya's cameo. The all-rounder is known for his brutal hitting and that was on display on Thursday

On the bowling front, India are expected to retain the combination having given the first opportunity of the tournament to crafty left-arm

spinner Kuldeep Yadav. The wickets in the Caribbean have provided enough help for the spinners, prompting India to play three at the Kensington Oval.



The combination is likely to continue here with Kuldeep retaining his place at the expense of Mohammed Siraj. left-arm three spinners, I feel there is an advantage. There are three leftarm spinners out of which we have two finger spinners and

one wrist spinner," said Axar Patel after the Afghanistan

The combination of the three of us is very good. We have a good team. We communicate well. Like whoever comes to bowl first, we communicate what is working and what is

not. I think that is very important when you bowl as a unit," he added.

India's sole aim in the Caribbean is to win the trophy and a solid performance against Bangladesh will be another step forward in that context. A tougher battle awaits against Australia on June 24.

who Bangladesh, have struggled with their batting throughout the tournament, find themselves in a must win situation after the loss to Australia. The lack of power-hitters is hurting them and there is no quick fix to that problem. The under-performance of opener Litton Das and Tanzid Khan also compounded Bangladesh's woes.

"It's very important for the top order to get runs like we did today, that's a big boost,

continue their form. Looking for a good show against India in our next match," Bangladesh captain Najmul Shanto said after the loss to Australia here on Friday.

Both Shanto (41) and Towhid Hridoy (40) did well but the rest of the line-up was not quite up to it.

They will need to find a way to tackle Bumrah, who has been sensational thus far, taking eight wickets at an unparalleled economy rate of 3.46 runs per

The pacers, led by Mustafizur Rahman, have done alright but leg-spinner Rishad Hossain needs more support in the spin department.

SQUADS:

Bangladesh: Tanzid Hasan, Litton Das, Najmul Hossain Shanto (captain), Shakib Al Hasan, Towhid Hridoy, Mahmudullah, Mahedi Hasan, Rishad Hossain, Taskin Ahmed, Tanzim Hasan Sakib, Mustafizur Rahman, Jaker Ali, Tanvir Islam, Shoriful Islam, Soumya Sarkar.

India: Rohit Sharma (captain), Hardik Pandya, Yashasvi Virat Jaiswal, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant, Sanju Samson, Shivam Dube, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Kuldeep Patel, Yuzvendra Chahal, Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Mohammad Siraj Jasprit

pitch, Rashid Khan on song

and again you saw the value

that Suryakumar Yadav brings

"And again the thing to like

about him which is not really

highlighted much is the

to any team.

India to tour South Africa for 4match T201 series in November

PTI JOHANNESBURG

India will tour South Africa for a short four-match T20I series in November this year, CSA and the BCCI announced in a joint statement on Friday. As per the itinerary released by Cricket South Africa (CSA), the series will begin on November 8 at Hollywoodbets Kingsmead Stadium in Durban, followed by matches in Gqeberha on November 10, Cenution on December Johannesburg on November

"I would like to thank the BCCI for their continued support to South Africa's cricket, and world cricket in general," CSA chairperson Lawson Naidoo said in the statement.

"Any tour by the Indian cricket team to our shores is filled with amazing camaraderie and exciting cricket, and I know ns will awaiting this series which will showcase the exceptional talent from both teams," he added. secretary Jay Shah BCCI

added: "India and South Africa have always shared a deep and



strong bond, one that both nations take great pride in. The Indian Cricket Team has consistently received immense appreciation and love from South African fans, and this sentiment is equally strong among Indian fans towards the South African side.

"I am confident that the upcoming series will once again highlight the on-field cricketing excellence and thralling intensity contests."

India's short tour has been accommodated between their home Test series against New Zealand and their tour of Australia for the Border-Gavaskar series.

India are fortunate to have a Lowler of the calibre of 20 overs.

Jasprit Bumrah, who is head and shoulders above the rest in international cricket, feels former batter Sanjay Manirekar.

PTI ■ BRIDGETOWN

Bumrah bowled an incisive spell (3/7) to guide India to a convincing 47-run victory over Afghanistan in their opening Super Eights fixture of the T20 World Cup here.

With the bat, Suryakumar Yadav was the star performer as he slammed a 28-ball 53 to power India to 181 for eight in "There were many matches

when we had not conceded the boundary and look at the difference between him and the couple of other seamers,

Manjrekar told ESPNcricinfo. "They were also international standard, but quite rightly I mean, he's looking even better and when you look at all the

top-class bowlers around the

Big margin between Bumrah and rest, India fortunate: Manjrekar

There's a big margin between them and Bumrah and India is so fortunate to have him in your playing 11," Manjrekar added.

Former India captain Anil Kumble also lauded Bumrah's performance.

The kind of understanding of his own bowling you can make out, even when he got Rahmanullah Gurbaz out on a slower ball and wide line. He

gets the execution perfect. For each batsman he would

have figured that out and then doing it right in a big game. This doesn't come easy and I think he has given limited boundaries in the entire tournament," Kumble said. Regarding Suryakumar,

Manjrekar said his presence puts India at an advantageous position. This is the advantage India have for having one of the best

T20 batters in the world. Tricky

amount of ground shots that he plays. He chips the balls over the infield in the gaps. 'So, he's not somebody who's always looking for sixes which means sometimes there can be miss-execution trying to extract power," Manjrekar said.

Cummins takes first hat-

PTI ■ NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA)

Australia pacer Pat Cummins grabbed the first hat-trick of the ongoing T20 World Cup during the team's Super Eights match against

The 31-year-old removed experienced Mahmudullah and Mahedi Hasan off the last two deliveries of the 18th over and then returned to dismiss Towhid Hridoy with the first ball of the last over to claim the seventh hat-trick in T20I World Cups.

trick. I did the previous over, l saw it come up on the screen and by the time my next over came around I totally forgot about it," Cummins said at the post-match press conference. So, I think Štoinis ran in from the deep, was cheering and I was like, oh yeah, forgot about

trick at T20 World Cup 2024

Bangladesh here.

"I didn't know I was on a hat-

Cummins' career for Australia "I had a few (hat-tricks) in iuniors but never for Australia I think I got one in grade cricket, maybe fourth grade. And I think I got one in second 11 when I was 17.

campaigner that. So, yeah, nice one," he added.

WEST INDIES CRUNCH USA

PTI ■ BRIDGETOWN (BARBADOS

West Indies cannot afford another misstep as they take on a tenacious USA outfit in the Super Eights of the T20 World Cup here, seeking to renew their quest for an unprecedented third

After remaining unbeaten in the group stage, the West Indies slumped to an eightwicket loss to defending champions England in their opening Super Eight fixture, paying the price for playing out as many as 51 dot balls



and failing to rotate strike. The heavy defeat to England has not only pushed Ravman Powell and his men to the bottom of the group but they now have -1.343 net run rate

and need to win big to keep their hopes of lifting the title at home alive.

USA, on the other hand, haven't won any game since their victory against Pakistan earlier this month. But they gave a good account of themselves against India and almost shocked South Africa. falling just 18 runs short of the Proteas' 194/4 against a high-quality bowling attack. The co hosts of the tournament have shown that they are not here just to make up numbers and are not to be played an aggressive brand of cricket so far and ir likelihood will continue to do

so in the coming matches. "Of course, I would say we're playing good cricket and the team is gelling well together and at the end of the day we know that we're going to be the underdogs for all teams that we played against in the

Super 8s. "So, we're just here to play good cricket and if we go in we win - if we lose, we lose, USA batter Steven Taylor said at the pre-match press conference.

taken lightly. They have AU SMALL FINANCE BANK LIMITED (A Scheduled Commercial Bank) Regd. Office: 19-A, Dhuleshwar Garden, Ajmer Road, Jaipur - 302001 (CIN:L36911RJ1996PLC011381) APPENDIX IV [SEE RULE 8(I)] POSSESSION NOTICE Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the AU Small Finance Bank Limited (A Scheduled Commercial Bank) under the "Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest [Act, 2002 (54 of 2002)] and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with rule 3 of

the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued demand notice on the date as mentioned below calling upon the borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the said notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice as per the details given in below table: Name of Borrower/Co-Borrower/ 13(2) Notice Date of **Description of Mortgaged Property** Mortgagor/Guarantor/Loan A/c No Date & Amount

(Loan A/C No.) L9001070526681804 & L9001070626256803Diwakar Sahare (Borrower) , Panchafoolabai Sahare (Co-Borrower), Devendra Diwakar Sahare (Co-Borrower)	16-Nov-23 ₹ 2,36,116/- Rs. Two Lac Thirty-Six Thousand One Hundred Sixteen Only & 5,54,275/- Rs. Five Lac Fifty-Four Thousand Two Hundred Seventy-Five Only as on 15-Nov-23	All That Part And Parcel Of Residential/Commercial Property Land / Building / Structure And Fixtures Property Situated At Nagar Palika House No - Lig 1/718 Ward No 16 Mouja, Dist- Durg, Chhattisgarh Admeasuring 541 Sqft	18-Jun-24		
(Loan A/C No.) L9001070127860020, Arman Khan (Borrower), Kadir Khan (Co-Borrower), Anjumara Khatun (Co- Borrower)	12-Jan-24 ₹ 35,60,707/- Rs. Thirty-Five Lac Sixty Thousand Seven Hundred Seven Only as on 10-Jan-24	All That Part And Parcel Of Residential/Commercial Property Land / Building / Structure And Fixtures Property Situated At Khno (Part Of)1574/39, Old Ph60, New Kh No1574/457, New Ph No 50, Vill-Kurud, Tehsil And Dist - Durg, Chhattisgarh Admeasuring 1200 Sqft East: Land Of Brijlal, West: Road, North: Land Of Baba Prasad, South: Land Parshasingh	18-Jun-24		
The borrower having failed to repay the amount, therefore notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken					

said [Act 2002] read with Rule 8 of the said rule on the date mentioned in the above table "The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be

subject to the charge of the AU Small Finance Bank Limited (A Scheduled Commercial Bank) for the amount and interest thereon mentioned in the

above table.

Date : 21/06/2024 Place : Chhattisgarh Authorised Officer AU Small Finance Bank Limited

