OPINION 6

NEET: MALICE EXTENDS

WORLD 8

ARMENIA RECOGNISES

DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR

Late City Vol.17 Issue 169 *Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH

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PRESSURE BUILDING ON TOP-ORDER AS INDIA TAKE ON B'DESH

12 SPORTS

RNI Regn. No. JHAENG/2008/22930, REGD. No. RN-145/2012

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 Sunita

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

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

considered by the trial court.

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 approach superior courts, the

World looking at Yoga as agent of global good: Modi

www.dailypioneer.com

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 Yoga

perfect harmony nature. Scores of students were Day amongst those who joined reflecting the Prime Minister in

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.



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

parties have decided to Special session of the

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.

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

more than a month.

NEW DELHI

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

sector 11. 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. 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.

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

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. The last time Jammu & Kashmir voted in Assembly elections was in 2014 when it was still a State and enjoyed special status under Article 370.

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Maharashtra

According to THE EC, July

since then.

updation of electoral rolls in Jharkhand, & Jammu & Kashmir.

1, 2024 will be the qualifying date for roll updation. For the just-held Lok Sabha polls, voters' list was updated with January 1 as the qualifying date. Qualifying date helps establish number of voters

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

The grand old party along with other Opposition right from day one of the from Monday. take on the Government Parliament which begins PATANJALI Begin each day with



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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 space that Ottawa provides to

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



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

impunity. Foreign

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 Secretary Vinay 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).

NPU OUTSOURCED **AGENCY STAFF DHARNA**

PNS DALTONGANJ

Personnel of outsource agency A S K Security Services Ranchi engaged in the Nilamber Pitamber university here today sat on dharna for few hours today demanding payment of their pending salary since January 2024.

Acting registrar Dr Mritunjay Kumar said these personnel had their demand for salary from their outsourcer A S K Security

It was a peaceful sit in which got over added Dr Mritunjay Kumar.



Personnel of the outsource agency stage sit in at the main entrance gate of the Nilamber Pitamber university today in Daltonganj

10th International Yoga day celebrated with enthusiasm by Bokaro admn

On June 21, 2024, residents of Bokaro actively participated in the 10th International Yoga Day celebrations. The district-level event was held at the Police Line Ground in Sector 12, Bokaro Steel City, organized by the District AYUSH Committee and District Ganga Committee.

Deputy Commissioner Vijaya Superintendent of Police Pujya Prakash, Deputy Development Commissioner Sandeep Kumar, DPLR Menka, Additional Collector M. Mumtaz Ansari, along with other district officials, members of Nehru Yuva Kendra, Namami Gange District Ganga Committee members, Civil Defence members, representatives from various sports associations, and students from Kasturba Gandhi Residential Girls School, Chas, participated in the yoga practice ses-

sion. DC Vijaya Jadhav empha-





of yoga, highlighting its increasing importance in today's stressful life. She noted that yoga promotes physical and mental development and urged district residents to incorporate yoga into their daily lifestyle for

sized the ancient significance

better health. SP Pujya Prakash also addressed the gathering, emphasizing the necessity of yoga for maintaining good health. He shared his personal routine of regular yoga practice and encouraged

everyone to include yoga in

their daily regimen for phys-

DDC Sandeep Kumar spoke about the numerous benefits of yoga and its vital role in mental health. He encouraged everyone to practice yoga and inspire others to do the same.

The district-level event saw a large turnout of administrative officials, school students, police personnel, senior citizens, and local residents. From 6:30 AM to 7:30 AM, participants practiced various yoga asanas under the guidance of instructor Ram Pravesh Kumar and his team.

officials Prominent including Civil Surgeon Dr. Dinesh Kumar, City DSP Alok Ranjan, District Public Relations Officer Saket Kumar Pandey, District Animal Husbandry Officer Dr. Manoj Mani, District Education Officer Jagarnath Lohra, District Sports Officer Hemlata Bun, and others participated in the yoga ses-

Yoga Day———

Adopt yoga in life, stay healthy says Lohardaga DC

the occasion International Yoga Day, a yoga camp was organized by the District Administration Lohardaga on Friday at the Badminton Court Hall (Multipurpose Building). This camp was inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner Dr. Waghmare Prasad by lighting the lamp. On this occasion, the Deputy Commissioner said that Yoga is such an activity which keeps both body and mind healthy. We all should adopt yoga. Adopt yoga and stay healthy. Divisional Forest Officer Arvind Kumar, Additional Collector Jitendra Munda and other district level officials were present in the program.

Also the Yoga Day was celebrated with grandeur at Madhusudan Lal Aggarwal College, Lohardaga. A large number of people attended Yoga Day. Yoga Day program was inaugurated by chief guest former Rajya Sabha MP Sameer Oraon, special guest AJSU Party General Secretary Shanti Niru Bhagat, president of the program and social worker Praveen Singh, healthy. Chief guest Sameer Oraon

yoga guru Dr Ashok Acharya, Aggarwal, Omprakash Singh, Rajmohan Ram and many other dignitaries. The lighting of fire and Yoga Sadhika started by blowing conch shells by the women. Dr. Ashok Acharya practiced yoga protocol while standing, Tadasana Vrikshasana, Stomach Bal Tadasana Asana, Back Bal Asana, Pranayama meditation and

resolutions. This year the theme of Yoga Day was Yoga for Empowerment, Women keeping this theme in mind, group advanced ease was done by women on music. After the yoga practice was over, special guest Neeru Shanti Bhagat gave the message of do yoga and stay

said in his message that he emphasized on how you can remain energetic throughout the day and laid special emphasis on following Yama Niyama and meditation. In the end, social worker Praveen Kumar Singh, who was presiding over the Yoga Day program, emphasized on lighting the internal lamp by doing yoga. If a person wants to live then he should do yoga and he said that yoga should not be linked to religion and caste, but yoga should be made available to everyone. The program was organized Vedic Vishwa Mangal

Yoga day celebrated at Garhwa Court

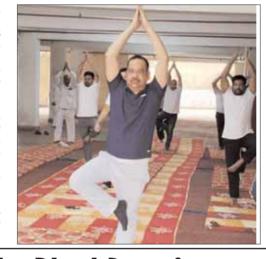
On the occasion of International Yoga Day, a mass yoga program was organized in Garhwa Civil Court premises on Friday. The Yoga programme was inaugurated by the Principal District and Sessions Judge Rajesh Sharan Singh and Principal District and Sessions Judge of Family Court Ram Vachan Singh by jointly after lighting

On this occasion, Principal District and Sessions Judge Rajesh Sharan Singh said that yoga is very useful for our life. International Yoga Day is to make the whole world aware about the importance of yoga. But its benefits will be available only when we include it in our regular routine. He said that yoga cures all types of physical and mental diseases and we live a healthy and long life. The way people are suffering from various diseases today, everyone should include yoga

wished them to stay fit and healthy.

After this, all the judicial officers and court employees including the Principal District and

Sessions Judge did yoga. Yoga Guru District Coordinator of Gayatri Parivar Vinod Pathak made everyone do various types of subtle exercises, Tadasana, Shashankasana, Bhujangasana, Prajna Yoga, Anulom-Vilom, Kapalbhati, Bhramari, Nadi Shodhan etc. He also shed light on the importance of yoga in detail. On this occasion, Additional District Fifth Dinesh Kumar, ADJ First Santosh Anand Prasad, ADJ Third Shivnath Tripathi, Secretary of District Legal Services Authority Ravi Chaudhary, Judicial Magistrate Ms. Anulika, Nazir Deepak Kumar, Jyoti Prakash Srivastava, Deen Dayal Pathak, Ajay Srivastava, Mahendra Ram, Jannat Khan, Rajesh Kumar and all the



International Yoga Day Celebrated at DAV Sector 4

PNS : BOKARO

International Yoga Day was celebrated globally with the theme "Yoga for Self and Society." At DAV Sector 4, around 1,200 students showcased a spectacular yoga performance, resonating with the mantra "Yoga Bhagaaye Rog" (Yoga Dispels Disease).

Principal Sarbendu Shekhar Kar emphasized that yoga connects individual consciousness with universal consciousness, symbolizing harmony between mind and body, and between humans and nature. Addressing the students, he highlighted that yoga is an ancient heritage that offers a holistic approach to health through breathing exercises, meditation, and moral principles. He stressed the importance of integrating yoga into the lives of all age groups to manage growing stress and maintain societal balance.



bly, students expressed the significance of yoga through speeches and performances The event featured enchanting yoga demonstrations by students, including captivating performances by the youngest participants from Bal Vatika. Their unique interpretations, set to the tunes of "Adiyogi," captivat-ed the audience. The school had been conducting yoga training sessions for several days, and the well-trained students performed yoga with ease and joy, showcasing its profound benefits.

that yoga is a vital tool for preserving human life and should be embraced as an integral part of daily life. He reiterated that physical and mental well-being is crucial for everyone and that yoga is the key to achieving it.

Teachers and staff also participated in the event, reinforcing the message that schools play a crucial role in promoting yoga at an international level. The emphasis was on adopting yoga for both physical and mental health enhancement, starting from a young age.

Celebrating Wellness SAIL Commemorates the 10th International Day of Yoga

In a resounding affirmation of its commitment to employee wellness, the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) marked the 10th International Day of Yoga (IDY) with widespread enthusiasm across its plants and units. The observance was notably prominent at the SAIL Corporate Office, where a collective Yoga session took place under the guid-Chairman Amarendu Prakash, alongside directors and officers. Notably this year's cele-

bration was distinguished by the adoption of the Ybreak yoga protocol, an initiative developed by the Ministry of Ayush, Government of India. This protocol is designed to integrate short, effective yoga routines into busy work schedules, promoting physical and mental well-

being among employees.

The participation of

SAIL's top leadership in the Yoga session underscored the importance the company places on holistic practices. Åmarendu Chairman Prakash led by example, engaging actively in the exercises, which were designed to be easily performed in short breaks throughout the workday. The involvement of directors and officers highlighted a unified commitment to fostering a culture of health and wellness within the organization.

Across SAIL's various plants and units, similar sessions were held, creating a wave of synchronized movement and mindfulness that rippled through the entire company. Employees from diverse departments came together, setting aside their daily tasks to focus on breathing exercises, stretching, and meditation techniques that form the core of the Ybreak protocol. Y-break

Protocol: Yoga for the Modern Workforce

Participants at the Corporate Office shared positive reflections on the experience. expressed a renewed sense of energy and calm, attributing it to the incluand invigorating nature of the Yoga session. The collective practice also fostered a sense of camaraderie and unity among employees, reinforcing the notion that well-being is a shared responsibility.

As the world continues to navigate the challenges of modern work life, initiatives like these highlight the pivotal role of holistic health practices in fostering a resilient and productive workforce. SAIL's observance of the International Day of Yoga serves as a powerful reminder of the enduring value of Yoga in promoting harmony between mind, body and spirit.

Arpan's 9th Maha Blood Donation Camp at Red Cross Bhawan on June 23 ing the urgent blood needs of



PNS: JAMSHEDPUR

Leading social organisation 'Arpan' is set to host its 9th Maha Blood Donation Camp on Sunday, June 23rd, from 8 am to 6 pm at Sakchi Red Cross Bhawan. This annual event, driven by a deep commitment to saving lives, aims to address the critical shortage of blood in local blood banks.

A press conference was held on Friday at Sakchi, to discuss the upcoming event. Amarpreet Singh Kale, the chief patron of Arpan Sanstha, emphasized the significance of organizing such a camp, particularly during the scorching summer months when blood

banks face acute shortages and hemoglobin levels are generally lower among the population. Kale praised the unwavering dedication of the Arpan family, stating, "May God give more strength to the youth of the Arpan family; they carry out responsibilities

Over the past eight years, Arpan has collected an impressive 6,083 units of blood. The organization remains committed to its mission of ensuring that no one in the Kolhan region dies due to a lack of blood. By maintaining a robust network of donors available around the clock, Arpan has been instrumental in meetpatients throughout the

The press conference highlighted Arpan's continuous efforts to recruit firsttime blood donors, who form a significant part of the annual camp. This year, the organization has intensified its outreach efforts, leveraging social media to raise awareness and promote the importance of blood dona tion. Over the past month, Arpan has conducted eight workshops aimed at educating and motivating the youth to participate in blood donation. These initiatives have yielded positive results, with a noticeable increase in the number of first-time donors in the city.

Amarpreet Singh Kale further remarked on the event's timing and purpose: "In the scorching heat, when there is a shortage of blood in the blood banks and the hemoglobin level of a normal person is low, this event is organized by the Arpan family on the request of the blood bank. Our first goal is that no one should die due to lack of blood. Needy people come from all over Kolhan, and we are always ready to provide blood to those in

Lakra directs for setting up police \oplus picket at Women's College Scheme was reviewed and Dr. Asha Lakra said that

PNS : LOHARDAGA

A meeting regarding matters related to Scheduled Tribes and progress of other departments was held in the Collectorate Auditorium on Friday under the chairmanship of Dr. Asha Lakra, memof the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes. In the meeting, MNREGA schemes were first reviewed in which the participation of Scheduled Tribes in the schemes was discussed. Under Veer Shaheed Poto Ho Sports Development Scheme, instructions were given to identify and approve sports grounds in remote villages also. The progress of the schemes under Birsa Irrigation Well Enhancement

instructions were given. In the review of Abua Housing Scheme, it was directed to add a toilet scheme along with the houses of the beneficiaries. Deputy Development Commissioner informed that under the Swachh Bharat Mission, such beneficiaries will be provided toilet facilities and the beneficiaries will be covered. PM Awas Yojana (Rural) was reviewed and instructions were given to investigate for any complaints in the scheme. Under the Social Security Department, instructions were given to conduct door-to-door surveys by running a special campaign to add new pension beneficiaries in every village.

there are many elderly people in the villages who are unable to come to the government offices on their own. In such a situation, they cannot be deprived of the benefits of the schemes. For the distribution of blankets, instructions were given that at the level of public representatives, the number of Zilla Parishad Mukhiyas, Panchayat Samiti members and Ward members should be fixed for the distribution of blankets so that all the needy beneficiaries in the village can receive blankets.

Under Department, paddy procure ment in the year 2023-24, number of lamps.

SER ROLLS OUT EXAM SPECIAL TRAINS FOR STRESS-FREE STUDENT TRAVEL

PNS: JAMSHEDPUR

South Eastern Railway (SER) has announced the operation of Examination Special Trains to facilitate students traveling for competitive exams. The initiative aims to provide convenient and reliable transportation for students traveling to their examination centers. Below are the details of the special train schedules:

Ranchi-Patna-Ranchi **Examination Special (Train** No. 08639/08640) Departure from Ranchi: - Train No. 08639 will depart from Ranchi on June 22, 2024, at 14:10 hrs. - Arrival at Patna is scheduled for 23:00 hrs the same day. Return from Patna: - Train No. 08640 will depart from Patna on June 23, 2024, at 21:00 hrs. -

Arrival at Ranchi is scheduled for 05:30 hrs the next day. Stoppages: - The train will halt at Muri, Kotshila, and Bokaro Steel City within SER jurisdiction.

Tatanagar-Patna-Tatanagar Examination Special (Train No. 08109/08110) Departure from Tatanagar: - Train No. 08109 will depart from Tatanagar on June 22, 2024, at 16:15 hrs. - Arrival at Patna is scheduled for 03:00 hrs the next day. Return from Patna:-

Train No. 08110 will depart from Patna on June 23, 2024, at 22:15 hrs.- Arrival at Tatanagar is scheduled for 07:15 hrs the next day.

Stoppages:- The train will halt at Chandil, Purulia, Bhojudih, and Mohuda within SER jurisdiction.



These Examination Special Trains are being introduced in response to the increasing demand from stutime without undue stress. dents who travel to major cities like Patna for various competitive and entrance examinations. By scheduling these special trains, SER

aims to ease the transporta-

tion challenges faced by students and ensure they reach their examination centers on

Students and their families have welcomed this initiative with great enthusiasm. Many students, who were previously concerned about reaching their examination centers on time due to limited train availability, expressed relief at the additional services

Priya Singh, an engineering aspirant, said, "The special train from Ranchi to Patna is a blessing. It ensures I can travel comfortably and reach my exam center without the hassle of uncertain train schedules.

SER has assured that all necessary arrangements have been made to ensure the smooth operation of these special trains. Additional staff will be deployed at key stations to assist students and ensure timely departures and arrivals. Enhanced security measures will also be in place to provide a safe travel

environment. Depending on the

response and demand, SER is considering running similar special trains during other peak examination periods. This proactive approach reflects SER's commitment to supporting the academic aspirations of students by providing reliable and convenient travel options. The introduction of these

Examination Special Trains by South Eastern Railway is a commendable initiative that addresses a critical need for student travelers. By facilitating easy access to examination centers, SER is playing a crucial role in supporting the academic endeavors of young aspirants. This move not only highlights SER's responsiveness to public demand but also underscores its commitment to community service.

Ujjwal

which all participants per-formed gracefully. Chief General Managers Shashi

Vashisht, SJ Jachuck, SK Das

and Sanjay Dhar were also present. The program was

The 10th International

Yoga Day was celebrated with lot of enthusiasm at

coordinated

Bhaskar, Communications.

INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY CELEBRATED WITH FERVOUR IN CITY



PNS: RANCHI

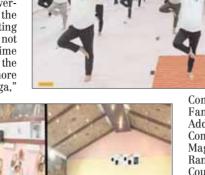
nternational Yoga Day observed on June 21 was celebrated with great fervour in the State capital. The for International Yoga Day was 'Yoga for Self and Society' and who's who of Ranchi participated at various programmes organised across the City.

Minister of State for Defence and Ranchi MP. Sanjay Seth participated in the International Yoga Day programme organised by the Indian Coast Guard at Dahanushkodi in Tamil Nadu. Seth said that voga is essential for inner peace and spiritual growth. "Yoga nourishes the mind, body and spirit and creates a sense of inner peace, self- awareness and spiritual growth. Therefore everyone must adopt yoga in their lives to lead a healthy life," said Seth.

To mark the Day, a special was organised by the Jharkhand government at Birsa Munda Fun Park, Ranchi. Organised by the Directorate of AYUSH, Health Minister Banna Gupta attended the programme as the chief guest while former minister and Ranchi MLA CP

Principal Secretary AK Singh were the chief guests for the

"After Covid, the body's immunity has reduced and that deficiency can be overcome by yoga. Today the whole world is benefitting from yoga. The issue is not that where the Prime Minister is doing yoga, the need of the hour is that more and more people do yoga,'



Swami Muktrathmade, all

judges, officers and staff

members present practiced

yoga and highlighted about

Justice Sujit Narayan Prasad,

the senior most Judge of

Jharkhand High Court said

that all of us should make

yoga a part of our regular

routine as well as lifestyle.

"We remain physically and

mentally healthy through

yoga. It also relieves stress

and purifies our thoughts." T-

shirt, batch, cap and yoga

book received from the

Directorate of AYUSH were

International Yoga Day

was celebrated in the

Multipurpose Hall, at Judge

Colony, under the guidance of

Justice-cum-Executive

Chairman, JHALSA, Sujit

Jharkhand High Court and

Judicial Commissioner-cum-

Chairman DLSA, Ranchi,

Diwakar Pandey.

Prasad

Judicial

also distributed.

importance of yoga.

said Gupta

Former minister and BJP MLA CP Singh while wishing everyone on International Yoga Day said that he has been practicing yoga for 25

the occasion of

International Yoga Day, a 'Yogabhyas Camp' (yoga practice) camp was organised in the premises of Jharkhand High Court. Justice Sujit Narayan Prasad, Justice Rongon Mukhopadhyay, Justice Ananda Sen, Justice Dr Justice Shivanand Pathak, Justice Rajesh Sankar, Justice Anil Kumar Choudhary, Justice Deepak Roshan, Justice Navneet Kumar, Justice Pradeep Kumar Srivastava, Justice Arun Kumar Rai, Registrar General Mohammad Shakir were present on the occasion along with members of the Registry Office and staff of Jharkhand High Court.

On the occasion Sanyasi



Ranchi, Commissioner, Family Court and all Additional Justice Commissioners and Judicial Magistrates of Civil Court, Ranchi and employees of Civil Court, Ranchi participated in the yoga practice program.
On the occasion, instruc-

tors of Satyanand Yoga Mission were present as yoga instructors. The instructors made everyone present practice yoga and said that doing yoga is beneficial, many diseases can be driven away by yoga and immunity can also be increased.

A yoga programme was also organised at the Railway Court Ranchi under the chairmanship of Judicial Magistrate Railway Vijay Kumar Yadav where employees of Railway Court participated in the programme and practiced yoga.

On the occasion of International Yoga Day, PLV of District Legal Services Authority, Ranchi organised yoga practice programs in the Legal Aid Center and Legal Literacy Club of their respective blocks and made the students and people do yoga and told them about the benefits of yoga. In the said program, yoga practice programmes were organised in all the Legal Aid Centers including Mandar, Kanke, Rinpas, C.I.P. Ramakrishna Mission, Tamar, Bedon and Kanke. Secretary District Legal Services Authority,



Ranchi.

The 10th International Yoga Day 2024 was celebrated in University Law College Vinoba Bhave University under the ageis of Principal Incharge Rashmi Pradhan. Addressing the gathering, Pradhan said that the day aims to raise awareness about the numerous benefits of yoga right from physical, mental and spiritual. "The theme 'Yoga for Self and Society' emphasises on the double benefits of yoga practice, enhancing personal well-being and improving society," said Pradhan. The chief guest for the occasion Aacharya Amit Ranjan said that yoga reflects the union of mind and body, thoughts and action, restraint and fulfillment and harmony between humans and nature.

As the year marks the 10th International Yoga Day with the theme 'Yoga for Self and Society' the members of Doctor's Wives Association assembled at IMA Hall. Chairperson Vinita Sharan President Shreela Choudhary welcomed the yoga instructor Nandu Dulal Dutta while Treasurer Monideepa Dasgupta presented the vote of thanks. The participants included Rinku Banerjee, Bindu Prasad, Rekha Mishra, Meera Gupta, Dr Ankita Verma and others.

Mecon celebrated International Yoga Day with



great zeal and enthusiasm. Yoga session was organised at Mecon Community Hall for emplyees and their families under the expert guidance of trained yoga practitioner. The session was attended by SK Verma CMD Mecon, Mukesh Kumar Director (fFinance) and other officials. The event concluded with a brief meditation session leaving the participants feeling rejuve-

nated and energised. Ranchi Units SAIL observed the International Yoga Day 2024 with all exuberance and gaiety. Ved Prakash, ED (SDTD), SK KAR, ED (RDCIS) performed Yoga along with a large number of officers, staff and families in an event organized at Samudayik Bhawan, SAIL Satellite Township, Ranchi. The Art of Living Chapter of Ranchi led by Youth Yoga Leader Manas Pulse along with Gagan, Shreya and Juhi led the SAIL employees with the Common Yoga Protocol ters, Ranchi on Friday with the theme 'Yoga for Self and Society'. The event was graced by Chief Guest, Director (Fuel),NTPC Limited and Chairman ,NTPC Mining Limited (NML), Srivastava, Regional Executive Director (Coal Mining) and CEO, Animesh Jain as Guest of Honour. Addressing the participants, Srivastava said "Yoga has now got worldwide recognition by Prime Minister Modi and has been treated as preventive medicine to avoid lifestyle diseases with regular practice". He added "Yoga is beneficial and helps us to keep us fit, it is universally accepted and practiced by all worldwide, one has to practice yoga to get the benefits".

On the occasion CGM, C and

M, Naveen Jain, HR, Heads,

Rainish Rastogi of the depart-

ment, Senior officials and

employees in large numbers

were present to celebrate the



yoga day. Jharkhand Olympic Association celebrated International Yoga Day at the celebrated Birsa Munda Stadium where Wushu Athletes demonstrated yoga. Secretary- General of the Olympic Association Dr Madhukant Pathak stated that this year's theme is 'Yoga for Self and Society' and said that yoga helps in developing self- confidence and disci pline among athletes which aids them in becoming better citizens in the future. SK Pandey, KK Singh Shivendra Dubey and others along with a large number of athletes were present on the occasion.

In a vibrant celebration of International Yoga Day, IIM Ranchi brought its students together to emphasise the importance of health, wellness, and harmony through the practice of yoga. The institute's students, faculty, and staff gathered to participate in various yoga sessions demonstrating a unified commitment to a healthier lifestyle and mental wellbeing. The celebration focused on the physical The celebration aspects of yoga and delved into its philosophical roots, emphasising on the importance of mindfulness and balance in everyday life.

Congress held protest march against NEET scam PNS: RANCHI Country's Education Minister,

As part of the Nationwide protest of Congress against corruption in NEET exam, a protest march and demonstration was called from Shahid Chowk to Raj Bhavan under the aegis of Jharkhand Pradesh Congress Committee (JPCC) in the State Capital on

In the protest march hundreds of Congress workers and leaders participated. The protest march reached Raj Bhavan via Shahid Chowk, Subhash Chowk, Kachhari Chowk, where a meeting was organized.

Addressing the meeting, JPCC Chief, Rajesh Thakur said that in the last five years. the paper has been leaked in 43 recruitment exams in the "India is the country. youngest Country in the world. The BJP Government at the Center is making these vouth weak instead of making them skilled and capable. Crores of promising students are working hard day and night. Parents are making their children study by cutting down on expenses and hope that vacancy will come, vacancy comes and it becomes a victim of corruption," he added.

Thakur said that BJP is repeatedly claiming that Narendra Modi stopped the war between Russia and Ukraine but he is not able to stop the paper leak. "Vyapam scam happened in Madhya Pradesh, Narendra Modi and his Government are spreading this scam in the whole Country. The biggest reason for paper leak is that BJP has captured the whole system. so its strings are connected to BJP ruled States. Paper leak will continue till the system is not fixed. But Congress party will not let the future of students be tampered with. In

Dharmendra Pradhan should resign immediately and NEET exam should be cancelled. Prime Minister, Modi keeps discussing the exam but does not say anything about paper leak. Rahul Gandhi has completed the fight for justice by walking 11,000 km, he will keep fighting in future. He has called that we will take this movement to its conclusion," he added.

The meeting addressed by JPCC Executive President, Jaleshwar Mahato, Health Minister, Banna Gupta, Minister, Badal Patralekh, MLA, Pradeep Yadav, Ramchandra Singh and Dr Pradeep Balmuchu.

Those present in the protest march were Pradeep Tulsyan, Bhim Kumar Sultan Ahmed. Amulya Neerai Khalkho, Rakesh Sinha, Satish Paul Munjani, Rajiv Ranjan Prasad, Sanjay Lal Paswan, Jaishankar Pathak, Sinha, Gajendra Manas Singh, Abhilash Sahu, Sonal Shanti, Kamal Thakur, Rakesh Kiran Mahato, Abha Jagdish Sahu. Sinha. Rishikesh Singh, Jawahar Mahatha, Vijay Khan, Ajay Shahdev, Nath Sanjay Kumar. Santosh Singh Alam, Shamsher Jaish Ranjan Pathakf. Hundreds of Congress members including Prakash. Udav Chandrashekhar Das, Ravi Mishra, Amit Rai, Dinesh Yadav, Umesh Gupta, Munna Paswan, Bhagirath Paswan, Satish Kedia. Sukhair Bhagat, Muneshwar Oraon, Mardi, Amarendra Josai Singh, Kedar Paswan, Rajan Singh Raja, Indira Turi. Prabhat Kumar Shashibhushan Rai, Raju Ram, Vashisht Lal Paswan, Rohit Pandey, Amir Hasmi, Indrajit Singh, Aarushi



Financial constraints not to deter students from pursuing higher education: CM Speed up the construction

PNS: RANCHI

It is Government resolution that no student of the state would be deprived of higher and technical education due to financial constraints. In this direction, many schemes have been started by the state government. To ensure the benefits of these schemes to the poor and meritorious here with ease Minister Champai Soren said these things in a high-level meeting of the Higher and Technical Education Department in the Jharkhand Ministry today. On this occasion, he launched "Go Live of Student Application Module" of Guruji Student Credit Card Scheme. Under this, the students who have been selected for higher education institutions will be able to apply online. After this, they will be provided education loan up to Rs 15 lakh by the banks with which the government has signed agreement for

The Chief Minister said that the government has started many schemes like Guruji Credit Card Scheme, Chief Minister Education Promotion Scheme and Manki Munda Scholarship Scheme for the students. needy students should get the benefit of these schemes. The Chief Minister said that the government is trying to ensure that the lack of money does not become a hindrance for the children here in pursuing courses like medical engineering, fashion designing, journalism and law along with coaching for competitive exams.

Chief Minister emphasized on making higher and technical education in the state better and excellent. He said that a large number



Chief Minister Champai Soren holding a high-level review meeting with senior officials regarding the schemes of the Higher and **Technical Education Department at the** Jharkhand Ministry in Ranchi on Friday. PNS

of students from here go to other states for higher education. In such a situation, we have to make efforts to ensure that there is a strong system of campus placement along with quality education in the higher educational institutions here, so that the

students here can get good education in their own state

mm was recorded in Khunti

adjacent to the capital

Ranchi. In the capital Ranchi,

at 8:30 pm on Thursday

and also get a good job. The Chief Minister said that many building construction works are going on in various educational institutions along with many new degree colleges in the state.

work of these buildings and complete it within the stipulated time frame, so that the teachers and students here can get its benefit. He said that the government is opening many new colleges in towns, small cities and blocks, so that the students here can get better and higher education near their Minister directed the officials to make the Tribal University to be opened in Jamshedpur functional soon. He said that this university will mean a lot to this state. This will promote the tribal languages here. In such a situation, complete all the processes including appointment to start this university as soon as possible.

The Chief Minister took detailed information about the schemes related to higher and technical education in

Khiangte, Additional Chief Secretary to Chief Minister Avinash Kumar, Principal Secretary Education and Technical Department Rahul Kumar Purwar, Secretary to Chief Director Higher Education Ramniwas Yadav, Director Technical Education Sunil Kumar, Executive Director of Jharkhand State Building Construction Corporation Sanjay Kujur and General Manager Avinash Kumar HDFC Deepak, Jharkhand Zonal

Abhishek Kumar, Cluster

Head Ranchi Dharmendra

instructions to the officials

that whatever schemes are

being run, better results

Secretary

should be obtained.

Chief

Kumar, Government Banking Head Navneet Gandhi and other officers were present in the meeting. He gave clear this meeting.

ED seizes Rs 1crore, 100 live cartridges from land broker

PNS: RANCHI

In ongoing investigation in land scam, the central agency probe Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday seized Rs 1 crore in cash and around hundred rounds of live



ammunition from the premises of land businessman Kamlesh Kumar at Kanke road. The ED has also recovered land-related documents of several officials from Kamlesh Kumar's premises

The ED team raided the residence of land businessman Kamlesh Kumar in Astor Green, located at Chandni Chowk on Kanke Road

The raid was in connection with case involving Shekhar Kushwaha, who was arrested in the land scam case. On June 12, the ED had arrested Shekhar Kushwaha, a resident of Gadi

Gaon, in the Bargai land scam. Previously, in this case, a total of 21 people including Hemant Soren, former Deputy Commissioner of Ranchi Chhavi Ranjan, JMM leader Antu Tirkey have been arrested.

Shekhar Kushwaha was the 22nd accused arrested in the land scam. During the investigation of the case of the purchase and sale of land with the help of fake documents, ED found that Shekhar is involved in the purchase and sale of 4.83 acres of land of Gadi Mauja of Bargain region.

The ED has already revealed to Jharkhand High Court that former Chief Minister Hemant Soren played a vital role in illegally obtaining land in Bargain, Ranchi.

ED counsel S V Raju, has stated that Soren acquired the land in 2009-10 and constructed a boundary wall for securing its possession. Soren, also the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha's executive president, petitioned for bail on May 27 in a money-

Three died due to lightning in State the maximum rainfall of 63.5 ing from Kerala was stuck in

PNS : RANCHI

Three persons died in Jharkhand on Thursday due to lightning along with rain.

Ranchi Meteorological Center Chief informed that Abhishek Anand said that there was no heat wave in any area of Jharkhand on June 20. The maximum temperature in entire Jharkhand was below 40 degrees Celsius. Heavy rain with lightning may occur in the southern part including the north-eastern part on June

21 as well, he added. There is relief from scorching heat in Jharkhand. The rains has started before



the arrival of monsoon. The weather will remain pleasant even on Saturday. Rain with lightning is expected in many districts. The monsoon com-

National Education Policy

Bengal for many days. It gained speed during the last 24 hours. The Meteorological Department has said that the monsoon is expected to enter Santhal Pargana soon via Malda, Raxaul-Bhagalpur. Monsoon may Jharkhand on June 22-23.

Anand said that at this time there is a possibility of wind blowing at a speed of 40-50 kilometers at some places. "The same situation will prevail on 22 June. On 23 June, there is a possibility of heavy rain and wind along with thunderstorm in Santhal Pargana. Talking about the weather of the last 24 hours.

night. Hinoo received 28 mm rainfall while other areas received 30 to 40 mm rainfall." he added. Due to rain, the maximum temperature of Ranchi has

fallen by 4.2 degrees Celsius in 24 hours. The maximum temperature of Ranchi on 19 June was 37.6 degrees Celsius, while the maximum temperature on June 20 was recorded at 33.4 degrees Celsius. The temperature of Ranchi on June 16 was 41 degrees Celsius

CBSE principals conference

PNS: RANCHI

CBSE State-level Principals conference on the National Credit Framework (NCrF), hosted by Dr. S Sahodaya Radhakrishnan Schools Complex Ranchi in collaboration with the Central Board Secondary Education (CBSE), New Delhi, concluded successfully today Vivekananda Auditorium of Delhi Public School Ranchi. The conference, a pivotal initiative under the ambit of the

(NEP) 2020, aimed to explore the comprehensive integration of school, higher, and vocational education through the innovative NCrF. The event commenced with an inaugural address by Dr. Ram Singh, President of Dr. S Radhakrishnan Sahodaya Schools Complex Ranchi and Principal of DPS Ranchi, who emphasized the transformative potential of the NCrF in shaping the future educational landscape of India. Dr. Biswajit Saĥa, Director (Skill



across the state of Jharkhand. Interactive sessions focused on the implementation challenges, potential benefits, and on the core principles and operational aspects of the collaborative strategies for effective adoption of the NCrF. framework. The seminar witnessed active participation Key topics included lifelong from more than 150 princilearning opportunities, credit pals representing schools transfer mechanisms, and the

laundering case tied to the alleged land scam.





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.

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

Union Home Minister Amit

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**

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Friday 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 creat-

ed in the country.
As of Thursday, the live storage avail-

able in these reservoirs is 37.662 BCM, which is 21 per cent of their total capacity. 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 of the normal storage for this peri-

For the past two weeks, the reservoirs were at 22 per cent while it was 23 per cent the week before that.

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

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

increase worldwide, along with impaired glucose tolerance and T2D rates in women of reproductive age, GDM prevalence has also increased to threefold across 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 North Africa region. "GDM is a tremendous public

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

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,



transcending the limitations of of the International Yoga Day 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

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, "l

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

Minister

Vishwanath temple corridor.

Prime

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.



Patni of the BJP, P N Patil of the Congress, Anil Babar of the Shiv Sena have passed away. An NCP (SP) leader said the council polls are likely to be unopposed since political parties would not like to take the risk of a contest for the upper house. Shiv Sena (UBT) has declared that it will approach the SC seeking a stay on the elections as many MLAs of the Shiv Sena and NCP are facing disqualification proceedings. While a BJP leader said a contest can be avoided only if there is no 12th candidate. The NCP (SP) has announced its support Jayant Patil of the Peasants and Workers' Party (PWP). The Congress will Pragya Satav (Congress), Mahadev Jankar (RSP) and decide on whether to field one or two candidates in its meeting on June 25. As per Javant Patil (PWP).

the strength of the 288member House, the BJP had 105 MLAs, Congress 45, (undivided) NCP 53 and (undivided) Shiv Sena 56. The Bahujan Vikas Aghadi (BVA) has three MLAs, Samajwadi Party two, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) Prahar Janshakti Party Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), Communist Party of India (Marxist), Swabhimani Paksh, Rashtriya Samai Paksha (RSP). Jansurajya Shakti Party Krantikari Shetkari Paksh and PWP one each, independents 13. The biennial elections are necessitated because 11 MLCs are retiring. These legislators are Manisha Kayande (Shiv Sena), Anil Parab (Shiv Sena-UBT), Vijay Girkar, Nilay Naik, Ramesh Patil, Ramrao Patil (BJP), Abdullah Durrani (NCP), Wajahat Mirza and

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

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

PTI ■ KOCHI

Sabarimala

The court reserved its order provision under the law 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

where such a review of a bail order can be sought and passed.

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

into alleged NEET paper leak case, the DyCM said, "I 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

Sinha on Thursday claimed 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".

leader).'

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 and

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 claims and the ongoing probe by the Bihar Police with acquisition and the land

parents 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. www.dailypioneer.com

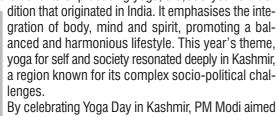
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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

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-



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



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 otner 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



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 ener-

gy 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

Madam — Apropos the news story "Forest

WILDLIFE FIRES IN UTTARAKHAND

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 Distance Learning and Online modes, which saw



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

can occur either offline or online. Structural

adopt integrated thinking to enhance cus-

tomer experience and ensure sustainable

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

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

Mitali | Noida

WOMEN AND UNPAID WORK

success.

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-

ly spend 76.2 per cent of their time on 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

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneér@gmail.com



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 merely 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. Thanks to this proactive ences. Such smart clothing approach, both users and offers temperature-regulating

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-

healthcare practitioners can textiles and dynamically 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

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

same," Noel ruled.

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

Cortina Vázquez, said his brothers were not even at the 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

 $B^{\text{ritish Prime Minister Rishi}}_{\text{Sunak has said that anyone}}$ 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 gen-

eral 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

too much into the detail of the case while an investigation is going on," Gove said. "But I can talk about the broad principle and you're absolutely right, it's reprehensible.

coastal territory.

Sunak announced on May 22 that parliamentary elections would be held on July 4. The 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 2019 terrorist attack at two

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

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

byist, that was her role," said

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

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, overlooking 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

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

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.

of yoga in fostering a healthy

The event is celebrated by the High Commission of India in Singapore in partnership with Gardens by the Bay at Waterfront Plaza, a sprawling green complex popular among tourists and local joggers.

about the deep friendship 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 bilateral ties," it said. India's Ambassador to Nepal

Naveen Srivastava underlined that the birthplace of Lord Complex, Riyadh.

Buddha is an ideal place for the timeless practice of Yoga for 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 Arabia celebrated the day at Prince Faisal Bin Fahd Olympic

editor decides not to take job 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 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

Abbasi, 65, has been appoint-

ed as head of the organising

committee, while Ismail has been initially named as his

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 fea-

tured disheartened citizens

addressing national issues such

as inflation, energy shortages,

corruption, unemployment,

and educational disparities.

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

Koreas might be the most

heavily armed place on earth.

Two million mines, barbed

wire fences, tank traps and

tens of thousands of troops

from both countries patrol a

divided swath of land 248 kilometers (154 miles) long

and 4 kilometers (2.5 miles)

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-

analysts say.

threat of retaliation.

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 draacross most heavily guarded border **Seoul (AP):** Don't believe the name: The Demilitarized the military demarcation line that divides the countries Zone between the two rival while engaging in unspecified

How did N Korean soldiers wander

Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the North Koreans retreated shortly after South Korean soldiers broadcast a warning and fired the shots Thursday morning, but didn't immediately release more details. Similar incidents took place

construction work.

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 rial and fears it could demoralthat 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 "creatit's only natural that you will ing a prelude to a very danger-

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

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 spotted 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

standoff against the US-led South Korea, a growing arms exporter with a well-equipped military backed by the United

by aligning with Russian President Vladimir Putin in a

upping support for Ukraine in response. Seoul has already provided humanitarian aid and other support while joining US-led

States, says it is considering

economic sanctions against Moscow. But it has not directly provid-

ed 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

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.

the hospitalised people were

villagers who tried to extin-

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.

ifying if there was a risk.

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

Kaspersky denies hazard

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.

after US bans its software Washington (AP): The cybertions mean the company poses security firm Kaspersky denied an "undue or unacceptable

on Friday that it is a security threat after the US Commerce the safety and security. Department banned the use of its software in the United States. The Moscow-based company - whose CEO country, 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 vergovernment says Kaspersky's Russian connec-

risk to US national security or The company conducts much

of its business in Russia and, as a Russian citizen who lives in 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 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), commodities (0.92 per cent) realty (0.75 per cent) and auto (0.71 per cent).

On the other hand, IT, telecommunication, metal power, tech and services were the gainers. In Asian markets Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled lower. markets were European quoting in the red. US markets

ended on a mixed note on Thursday. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs

415.30 crore on Thursday

according to exchange data. 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.

Gold surges ₹800; silver rallies ₹1,400

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 year. South India, a prominent rice and spice producer, has

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

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.

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

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

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.

Zepto raises USD 665 million; valuation nearly triples to USD 3.6 billion

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, Avenir, Lightspeed, and Avra, alongside existing investors Glade Brook, Nexus, and StepStone, Goodwater, and Lachy Groom.

"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 centplus year on year. And that efficiency to get the business

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



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, 'This is largely because of the input excellence we've built across the supply chain. 'Whether it is sourcing excellence, mother hub haul efficiency, line 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

to pretty much close to full operating cash flow positive He said the overall business

is close to operating at break-even cash flow. Nearly 75 per cent of the

company's stores are fully EBITDA positive as of May 2024, he said. "Over the next 12-18 months, although it might fluctuate, but we'll still be

cash flow positive, and the idea is to keep in that direction, get the business to a place where we can list next 9-12 months," he said. Zepto co-founder and CTO Kaivalya Vohra said the firm plans to hire top talent across engineering, product, growth, finance, operations, and category management. "If you are looking for a high growth, high meritocracy and high intensity culture where you can convert hard work and ambition into disproportionate growth, Zepto is the place for you," he said.

POWERGRID team honoured



PNS GURUGRAM

POWERGRID's Team Communications has been featured in India's 30 Top Corporate Communications Teams for the fourth time by

Reputation Today. 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 Chopra, Asst. Manager (Corp. Comm.) received the award at an event held in Bengaluru. POWERGRID is the only PSU to feature in this prestigious list. POWERGRID has jumped 5

places from its last ranking.
To arrive at the list of Top 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

"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

flag bearer of the Indian

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 who are under stress, and this optimism has been the

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.

commitment gastrointestinal health by providing patients and healthcare practitioners with a novel treatment option to

Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD) is common Reflux

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

Vonoprazan was discovered and developed by Takeda. The drug is approved in India for treatment of adults with

Shares of Sun Pharma were

Hindustan Zinc, AEsir Technologies join hands for development of next-gen zinc batteries

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 with the company's efforts towards exploring emerging applications of zinc in the

The stakeholders also felt that the economic recession

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

clean energy transition, it said, adding that zinc batteries are revolutionising energy storage due to their corrosion resistance, costeffectiveness, recyclability, stability and environmental 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 Executive Officer Arun Misra

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

with Takeda to introduce gastrointestinal drug

Sun Pharma inks pact

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

partnership demonstrates the company's

manage reflux esophagitis and other acid peptic disorders, he added.

in India. November

Erosive esophagitis and combination with amoxicillin clarithromycin or pylori (H. Pylori) infection in

reflux esophagitis and other acid peptic disorders.

trading 0.69 per cent up at Rs 1,480.55 apiece on the BSE.

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



African, Asian tea producers flag concerns

over global demand-supply mismatch

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

climate change, which require concerted efforts by all the stakeholders. During the meeting, they deliberated on the impact of climate change,

quality and issues related to

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.

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

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

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

played outside the capital.

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



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.

screamer into the top corner - to take Ronaldo's record as the youngest debut

place finish in the group with a win in Dortmund and if

Georgia-Czech Republic is a

draw in Hamburg earlier

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

scorer at a European Championship.

Saturday.

Alcaraz loses in Oueen's second round

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.

But this time the Spaniard will have only two

Draper ended Alcaraz's eight-match win

Stuttgart Draper didn't drop serve against Alcaraz.

the tiebreak, where Draper shot to 4-0 then 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,

hold. Draper served out and threw his arms in the air.

"I knew I had to come out here and play really well, and luckily I did that," he said on

quarterfinals.

Ålso Thursday, Lorenzo Musetti eliminated

ahead of Wimbledon title defense **AP** ■ LONDON Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz's buildup took a hit when he lost in the

Queen's was Alcaraz's only grass-court

French Open victory. Wimbledon starts in

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

They were finally separated in the first set in

then Alcaraz saved three match points to

He faces fifth-seeded Tommy Paul in the

Brandon Nakashima 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 and will face 29-year-old British wild card Billy Harris in the quarterfinals.

Georgia, the Czech Republic desperate to get off mark

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 stoppage-time goal from Francisco Conceicao.

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.



Georgian fans were involved in a brawl in the stadium ahead of the Turkey game.

midfielder Otar Georgia 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 since its first game.

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 Championship.

Ronaldo back in action as Portugal, Turkey look for second straight win

Pristiano Ronaldo and Portugal play 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

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



pushing for a return as the anchorman in midfield. 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.

Verstappen aims for another F1 win in Barcelona

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

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.

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.

PRESSURE BUILDING ON TOP-ORDER AS INDIA TAKE ON BANGLADESH

PTI ■ NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA)

¬he ever-present tension of their over a decade-long 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 performance professional 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.

Bangladesh, who 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 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

The pacers, led by Mustafizur Rahman, have done alright but leg-spinner Rishad Hossain needs more support in the spin department.

economy rate of 3.46 runs per

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, Soumva Sarkar.

India: Rohit Sharma (captain), Hardik Pandya, Yashasvi Virat Jaiswal, Kohli, Survakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant, Sanju Samson, Shivam Dube, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Kuldeep Patel, Yuzvendra Chahal, Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Moĥammad Siraj.

Big margin between Bumrah and rest, India fortunate: Manjrekar

PTI ■ BRIDGETOWN

India are fortunate to have a bowler of the calibre of Jasprit Bumrah, who is head and shoulders above the rest in international cricket, feels former batter Sanjay Manjrekar. 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 28ball 53 to power India to 181 for eight in 20 overs. "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

"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 pitch, Rashid Khan on song and again you saw the value that Suryakumar Yadav brings to any

"And again the thing to like about him which is not really highlighted much is



the 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 missexecution trying to extract power, Manirekar said. KUMBLE HAILS SKY IMPACT IN SUPER 8S: Kumble said Suryakumar

regaining form in the Super Eights is a good sign for India. 'It (Suryakumar's presence) gives India

the kind of power and stroke play that you need from someone who's batting at number four," said Kumble. "It certainly puts pressure on the

opposition bowlers because it's not easy to control a Surya in this kind of a form.

"You don't know where to bowl, wherever you bowl, you find it hard to stop him from scoring boundaries. "So, yeah, it certainly augurs well. First game of the Super 8s and you have Surya coming back into this kind of form," Kumble said.

The country's Test and ODI

captain thus joined Brett Lee,

the only other Australian to take a T20 World Cup hat-trick, which also came against

Bangladesh. Lee was the first to claim a hat-

trick in the marquee event way back in 2007 and the Australian

remained the only one to achieve the feat until the 2021

edition when Ireland pacer Curtis Campher (2021), Sri

Lankan spinner Wanindu Hasaranga (2021) and South African quick Kagisa Rabada joined the elusive list. Other

bowlers to claim a hat-trick in the T20 World Cup include

UAE's Karthik Meiyappan (2022) and Joshua Little (2022)

India to tour South Africa for 4-match T201 series in November

PTI JOHANNESBURG

India will tour South Africa for a short four-Imatch 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 the Hollywoodbets Kingsmead Stadium in Durban, followed by matches in Gqeberha on November 10, Cenution on December 13 and Johannesburg on November 15.

"I would like to thank the BCCI for their 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 our fans will be eagerly awaiting this series which will showcase the exceptional talent from both

teams," he added. BCCI secretary Jay Shah 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

once again highlight the on-field cricketing excellence and deliver enthralling, highintensity contests."

between their home Test series against New Zealand and their tour of Australia for the Border-Gavaskar series.

sentiment is equally strong among Indian fans towards the South African side. "I am confident that the upcoming series will

India's short tour has been accommodated

Cummins takes first hat-trick at T20 World Cup was similar. It was the first ball $\,$ the club. Good club to be part of the last day when it was Joe $\,$ of," he added.

PTI ■ NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA)

Australia pacer Pau Cummins grabbed the first hat-trick of the ongoing T20 World Cup during the team's Super Eights match against Bangladesh here. The 31-year-old removed

experienced experienced campaigner 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. "I didn't know I was on a hat-

trick. I did the previous over, I 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

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 title.

After remaining unbeaten in

the group stage, the West

Indies slumped to an eight-wicket loss to defending

champions England in their

opening Super Eight fixture, paying the price for playing out

now have -1.343 net run rate

and need to win big to keep



post-match press conference. 'So, I think Stoinis ran in from

the deep, was cheering and I was like, oh yeah, forgot about that. So, yeah, nice one," he

their hopes of lifting the title at

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-

The co hosts of the tournament

have shown that they are not

here just to make up numbers

and are not to be taken lightly.

team is gelling well together

quality bowling attack.

home alive.

West Indies face crunch L

added.

know that we're going to be the

underdogs for all teams that we

played against in the Super 8s.

attack that sometimes lacks

and at the end of the day we discipline, and the West Indies,

So, we're just here to play good

It was also the first hat-trick of Cummins' career for Australia. "I had a few (hat-tricks) in juniors 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.

"And I think the hat-trick ball

Even though they have their backs against the walls, West Indies coach Darren Sammy

asserted their "spirits are not

"In a tournament, there's a

game where the opposition will get the better of you. But

that doesn't mean you're out of

it. Now, in order to win, we've

got to win all our matches. And

that's what we'll focus on,"

Brandon King, who suffered a

side strain and was forced to

retire hurt against England,

their game against Pakistan.

dampened".

Sammy said.

Pretty awesome to tick that off. Boys are welcoming me in

'And I went to bowl a slower

ball and he ducked underneath

it and it hit the bail on the full.

So yeah, not too dissimilar to

The fast bowler, who has been

enjoying a purple patch in

international cricket over the

past year, finished with figures

of 3/29, as Australia defeated

Bangladesh by 28 runs via the

Duckworth Lewis method at

the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium. "(Ashton) Agar and

(Nathan) Ellis on the bench

have T20 hat-tricks so good to join that club," Cummins, who

was adjudged the player of the

today's," he recalled.

match said.

of Ireland.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER JHARKHAND POLICE HOUSING CORPORATION LIMITED (Jharkhand Govt. Undertaking) Line Tank Road, Ranchi, Contact Tel. No. 0651-2214712 (CIN: U45200JH2002SGC012154)

Notice Inviting Tender No. 02/ 2024-25

Date: 21.06.2024

Letter No.- CE/3637/578 Chief Engineer, Jharkhand Police Housing Corporation Limited invites percentage rate bids on approved Bill of Quantities from contractors registered with JPHCL in appropriate class for the works mentioned below: Approximate | Cost of | Earnest Money | Period of Tender

No.	Reference No.	Name of Work	(in Rs.)	(in Rs.)	(in Rs.)	Completion
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	01/ NIT02/	Minor Repair work in one L.S. flat (302) at L.S. Tower, Police Line, Ranchi.		1250.00	10000.00	30 days
2.	Bid docum	ent with detailed terms a	and conditions	will be	available on	our Website

http://jphcl.jhpolice.gov.in from 22.06.2024 at 11:00 AM to 27.06.2024 up to 5:00 PM. Bids must be submitted before 3:00 PM on 28.06.2024 in the office of Chief Engineer , JPHCL, Line Tank Road, Ranchi. Technical Bids received will be opened at 3:30 PM on 28.06.2024.

contact Tel. No. 0651-2214712 also for any help, if required.

Corrigendum/Addendum, if any, will be published only on the above mentioned Website Sd/- Chief Engineer, JPHCL, Ranchi

capitalise on that.
"We did lack discipline in the as many as 51 dot balls and They have played an aggressive cricket and if we go in, we win - if we lose, we lose," USA remains a doubtful starter for the hosts. If he doesn't recover, Shimron Hetmyer brand of cricket so far and in bowling at times. Once we play failing to rotate strike. good cricket we can beat any The heavy defeat to England likelihood will continue to do batter Steven Taylor said at the so in the coming matches. "Of course, I would say we're could take King's place in the has not only pushed Ravman team in the world. But we need pre-match press conference. Further details can be seen on Website http://jphcl.jhpolice.gov.in Prospective bidders may Powell and his men to the However, their weakness is to be a lot more disciplined," playing XI. USA have been without skipper Monank Patel since playing good cricket and the their inexperienced bowling vice-captain Aaron Jones had bottom of the group but they

who are blessed with big hitters

like Nicholas Pooran, Andre Rusell, Powel, will like to

said after the game against

South Africa.

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