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Naima Khatoun appointed AMU VC, first woman to be appointed to post in over 100 years

Sanjay Kumar New Delhi, April 22: Naima Khatoun has been appointed the Vice Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), making her the first woman to hold the top post in over 100 years, sources said on Monday. Khatoun was appointed after receiving approval from President Droupadi Murmu, who is Visitor to the University, they said. Permission from the Election Commission of India (ECI) was also sought in view of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) being in place, they said. "Naima Khatoun, principal, Women's College, has been appointed the Vice Chancellor of AMU for five years. The ECI has stated that the commission has no objection from the MCC angle to the proposal related to the appointment of the AMU VC subject to the condition that no political mileage be derived from it," a source said. Khatoun, who completed her PhD in psychology from AMU, was appointed a lecturer in the same department in 1988 before being elevated to professor in 2006. She continued there before being appointed the principal of the Women's College in 2014. Founded in 1875, Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College became AMU in 1920, following the Aligarh Muslim University Act. In September 2020, AMU completed 100 years as a university, becoming one of the oldest universities in India. The university has had no woman vice chancellor so far. In 1920, Begum Sultan Jahan was appointed the AMU chancellor. She continues to be the only woman to have held the post.

Narendra Modi renews 'redistribution of wealth' attack against Congress

Simmi Kaur Babbar Aligarh/New Delhi, April 22: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday renewed his "redistribution of wealth" attack against the Congress even as the opposition party urged the Election Commission to take action against him for his alleged communal remarks made a day earlier at a poll rally. Modi while slamming the Congress manifesto at a rally in Rajasthan's Banswara on Sunday alleged that the opposition party was planning to give people's hard-earned money and valuables to "infiltrators" and "those who have more children" and referred to former PM Manmohan Singh's speech in 2006 to contend he had said that Muslims have the "first claim" on the country's resources. Rejecting the allegation that has triggered a political row, AICC general secretary in-charge of the organisation KC Venugopal said party chief Mallikarjun Kharge had sought an appointment with the prime minister to "educate him" about its poll promise document. The Congress while urging the Election Commission to take action against Modi for his "redistribution of wealth" remarks made in Rajasthan, Minister Pinarayi Vijayan also termed Modi's remarks as "anti-national" and urged the EC to take action against him. The BJP on its part said the prime minister had called a spade a spade and had echoed people's sentiments. BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia told reporters that the opposition is in pain as Modi had showed them the mirror. In Aligarh, a western Uttar Pradesh's constituency with a sizeable Muslim population, Modi on Monday again accused the Congress of planning to redistribute people's property if it is voted to power, but stopped short of saying that the wealth would go to Muslims. Modi further said he wanted to "alert" people about the "intentions" of the Congress and the opposition INDIA bloc. "The Congress 'shahzade' (prince) says if his government comes, they will investigate who earns how much and how much property they have. Not only this, he further says the government will take over the property and redistrib-

ute it. This is what their election manifesto is saying," he claimed, referring to Rahul Gandhi. "Just think, our mothers and daughters have gold. This is 'stridhan' (women's property). It is considered sacred, even the law protects it. But now they are eyeing a change in law and want to snatch the property of our mothers and sisters," he told an election rally. "These people have their eyes on their 'mangalsutras'," Modi added, accusing the opposition of trying to "steal" the gold women possessed. He claimed that the opposition planned to conduct a survey of the property owned by salaried people. "If you own two homes, it will snatch one - the Congress will go that far," he said. "This is Maoist thinking... this is communist thinking. By doing this they have ruined so many countries. Now the Congress and the INDI Alliance want to implement the same policy in India," the prime minister said. But, unlike in the Rajasthan speech that triggered the opposition charge of "hate speech", Modi stopped short of saying that the wealth will be distributed among Muslims. He also did not refer to Manmohan Singh's 2006 statement.



Hubballi student murder case to be transferred to CID: CM Siddaramaiah

Shivamogga (Karnataka), April 22: Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said his government has decided to hand over the Hubballi student murder case to the Crime Investigation Department (CID) and that a special court will be set up for its speedy disposal. Neha Hiremath (23), daughter of Congress councillor of Hubballi-Dharwad Municipal Corporation Niranjan Hiremath, was allegedly stabbed to death on the campus of BVB College on Thursday. The accused Fayaz Khondunai, who fled from the scene, was arrested by the police subsequently. Neha was a first year Master of Computer Application student and Fayaz was earlier her classmate. "We have decided to give it to the CID. We will set up a special court for it. Charge sheet has to be filed in a time-bound manner and the case has to be disposed off, so the special court," Siddaramaiah



said. Responding to a question from a reporter, he said, "I have not been able to go to her (parent's) residence. Our district in-charge minister and party workers had gone. Also H K Patil (Law Minister) is going. I will go when I go there (Hubballi)." The murder case, which sparked widespread outrage, has snowballed into a political slugfest between the ruling Congress and opposition BJP. While the ruling party has tried to project it as an incident with a personal angle, the saffron party has called it a "love jihad" case and said it's a testimony of the deterioration of law and order in the state. BJP's student wing, Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad and other organisations aligned to Hindutva outfits have staged protests demanding justice, and called for severe punishment for the accused. Similar protests have been reported in various other places. Crime cases have come down during the Congress rule, the Chief Minister claimed. "In 2023 (Congress rule) it was 1,295 (crime cases). From 2019-2022, during four years of BJP, it was 1,300, 1,318, 1,342 and 1,370 respectively." "We will give protection to everyone during our tenure. I strongly condemn Neha's murder. We are forming a special court, and we have given the matter to CID."

Harsimrat Badal to contest from Bathinda, Hardev Saini from Chandigarh

Jalandhar/Chandigarh, April 22: The Shiromani Akali Dal on Monday announced five more candidates in Punjab and one for Chandigarh in the Lok Sabha polls, fielding party chief Sukhbir Singh Badal's wife and former Union minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal from Bathinda. Former Punjab Congress chief Mohinder Singh Kaypee joins SAD. The party fielded new entrant Mohinder Singh Kaypee from the Jalandhar reserve parliamentary constituency. Sukhbir Badal announced the names of candidates in Jalandhar, where Kaypee, former Punjab Congress chief, on Monday joined the Akali Dal. Harsimrat Kaur Badal is a three-time MP from Bathinda. The party fielded former MLA Ranjit Singh Dhillon from Ludhiana, former minister Sohan Singh Thandl from Hoshiarpur reserve seat and Nardev Singh Bobby Mann from Ferozepur. Besides, the party also named Hardeep Singh Saini from Chandigarh. With this list, the SAD has so far announced its candidates for 12 parliamentary constituencies - Anandpur Sahib, Gurdaspur, Ludhiana, Ferozepur, Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Bathinda, Faridkot, Sangrur, Amritsar, Fatehgarh Sahib and Patiala.

Centre moves Supreme Court for modification of 2012 verdict on 2G spectrum

Navdeep Singh Sahni New Delhi, April 22: The Centre on Monday moved the Supreme Court seeking modification of its 2012 2G spectrum verdict requiring the Government to adopt the auction route for transferring or alienating the country's natural resources. The top court had on February 2, 2012 quashed 2G spectrum licences given to various companies in January 2008 during the UPA Government when A Raja was the Telecom Minister. Attorney General R Venkataramani mentioned the Centre's plea seeking modification of the 2012 verdict before a Bench led by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud for urgent listing as the Government wanted to grant 2G spectrum licences in some cases. The Bench asked the Attorney General to send an email - a procedural requirement for urgent listing of cases. "We will see, you please move an e-mail," the CJJI told Venkataramani. Advocate Prashant Bhushan, who represented Centre for Public Interest Litigation - one of the petitioners in the 2G Spectrum case, opposed the centre's application, saying the issue had been well-settled by the top court in its 2012 verdict that auction was the only mode for

resources like spectrum etc, it is the burden of the State to ensure that a non-discriminatory method is adopted for distribution and alienation, which would necessarily result in protection of national/public interest," the Supreme Court had ruled. "In other words, while transferring or alienating the natural resources, the State is duty bound to adopt the method of auction by giving wide publicity so that all eligible persons can participate in the process," it had said. The CBI had alleged there was a loss of Rs 30,984 crore to the exchequer in allocation of licences for 2G spectrum which were scrapped by the top court on February 2, 2012. A Delhi Special Court had on December 21, 2017 acquitted Raja, DMK MP Kanimozhi and others in the CBI and ED cases related to the 2G spectrum allocation. The CBI had on March 20, 2018 moved the Delhi High Court against the acquittals.



BJP candidate Mukesh Dalal wins Surat Lok Sabha seat unopposed

Tejinder Kaur Babbar Surat, April 22: BJP candidate Mukesh Dalal was on Monday elected unopposed from Surat Lok Sabha constituency in Gujarat after all other nominees withdrew from the fray, a poll official said. The development marks the first victory of the Bharatiya Janata Party in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections. "I declare that Mukesh kumar Chandrakant Dalal, sponsored by the BJP, has been duly elected to fill the seat in the House from Surat parliamentary constituency," district collector cum election officer Saurabh Pardhi told media persons as he handed over the Certificate of Election to Dalal. Voting for all 26 constituencies in Gujarat is scheduled for May 7, but with the result of Surat seat already out, polling will be held on 25 seats. Except

for Dalal, all 8 candidates in the fray from Surat- 4 Independents, 3 from smaller parties and Pyarelal Bharti of Bahujan Samaj Party- withdrew their nomination papers on the last day, as per the Surat district election office. Notably, the candidature of Congress' Nilesh Kumbhani from Surat seat was rejected on Sunday after the district returning officer prima

facie found discrepancies in the signature of the proposers. The nomination form of Suresh Padsala, the Congress' substitute candidate from Surat, was also invalidated. The Congress on Sunday alleged that Kumbhani's nomination form was rejected at the behest of the BJP and said it would challenge the rejection in the High Court. "Surat has presented the first Lotus to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. I congratulate our candidate for Surat Lok Sabha seat Mukesh Dalal for getting elected unopposed," Gujarat unit BJP president C R Paatil posted on X (formerly Twitter). Gujarat BJP President C R Paatil (right) with party leader Mukesh Dalal. PTI In the 2019 polls, BJP won all 26 constituencies in Gujarat, the home state of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.



Court reserves order on BRS leader K Kavitha's bail plea in corruption case

New Delhi, April 22: A Delhi court on Monday reserved its order on the bail application of Bharat Rasthra Samithi (BRS) leader K Kavitha in a corruption case linked to the alleged Delhi excise scam. Special Judge for Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Enforcement Directorate (ED) reserved the order till May 2 after hearing arguments on the application from the counsels appearing for the CBI, which is probing the case, and the accused. The judge, meanwhile, will continue hearing the arguments on a similar application filed by Kavitha in the alleged scam-related money laundering case being probed by the ED. Kavitha is in judicial custody in both the cases lodged by the ED and the CBI. The CBI had arrested the Telengana MLC and daughter of former chief minister K Chandrababhu Naidu from Tihar Jail, where she was lodged after her arrest by the ED in a money laundering case stemming from the alleged scam. The CBI is probing alleged corruption in the formulation and execution of the AAP government's excise policy, while the ED is investigating the money laundering aspect.

Congress accuses PM Modi of trying to create communal polarisation: Kharge

Naresh Malhotra Kochi, April 22: Launching a strong campaign over the Prime Minister's alleged communal remarks against its manifesto, the Congress said on Monday that party chief Mallikarjun Kharge has sought an appointment with Narendra Modi to "educate him" about its poll promise document. A day after Modi suggested in a poll rally in Rajasthan that if the Congress comes to power, it would redistribute people's wealth to Muslims, the AICC general secretary in-charge of the organisation KC Venugopal also said copies of the manifesto would be sent to the Prime Minister by its party leaders and Lok Sabha candidates. He said the Congress party will also file a petition against Modi before the election commission with the signature of one lakh people. Modi made the remarks at a rally in Rajasthan's Banswara on Sunday, citing former PM Manmohan Singh's alleged statement that the minority com-

munity had the first claim on the country's resources. Modi had also alleged the Congress plans to give people's hard-earned money and valuables to "infiltrators" and "those who have more children." "Narendra Modi made a statement that was not befitting the post of Prime Minister. How can a Prime Minister lie about everything and spread such fake news? His speech yesterday makes it clear that he is the one who lies the most in this country," Venugopal said. Attacking Modi, the Congress leader said, "AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge has sought an appointment with the PM to educate him about our manifesto. We will give him a copy of our manifesto. All our Congress workers and candidates will also send him a copy of our manifesto." The Prime Minister had said something that was not in our manifesto and

attempted to create communal polarisation in the country for electoral gains, Why is it silent on this matter," he asked. The Indian Prime Minister is trying to divide the Indian people by inciting communal sentiments for electoral gain, Venugopal alleged. "When India's Prime Minister makes the worst hate speech in the history of hate speeches, I would like to know what action they (ECI) are planning to take. This is a blatant violation of the model code of conduct. This was a public call to incite violence and divide the people of the country," Venugopal charged. He said the Prime Minister resorted to such "low-level tactics" after he understood that the first phase of the election, which got over, was not favourable to them. Venugopal alleged that the BJP and the Prime Minister were targeting communities one by one and were moving forward with one agenda: "polarisation of the community." "He used the same divisive tactics in Manipur.



Beyond nameplate, mum's the word

Mumbai: A day after the state cabinet unanimously approved the landmark women's policy, submitted by woman and child welfare minister Aditi Tatkare, making the mother's name mandatory in govt documents, CM Eknath Shinde was the first cabinet member to add his mother's name to his nameplate at Mantralaya-changing the name from Eknath Sambhaji Shinde to Eknath Gangubai Shinde.

Both deputy CMs, Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar, chief secretary Nitin Kareer, BMC chief Bhushan Gagrani and Mumbai collector Sanjay Yadav did the same. Across the state, most bureaucrats and high ranking IPS officers added their mother's name to their nameplates. But, no one changed his name on official govt records on the grounds that it is a very tedious and long drawn process. To begin with, one will have to first update the Aadhaar card. Although UIDAI officials say changes to Aadhaar card can be done online and take only a few minutes, in reality, it is difficult because of which many people keep the wrong spellings of their names or their addresses. Even making changes to the passport is a herculean task. For that, one will have to change the school records. Top politicians feel that adding the mother's name to the nameplate is a step towards empowerment of women and is not merely symbolic. In 1994-95, when Sharad Pawar was the CM, the then woman and child welfare secretary Chandra Iyengar had brought in a comprehensive women's policy, which provided for 33% reservation for women in local bodies. This policy was then followed across the country. After the firing at the residence of actor Salman Khan, it was expected that many heads would roll in Mumbai police. However, even after CM Eknath Shinde's personal visit to Khan's residence, responsibility has not been fixed.

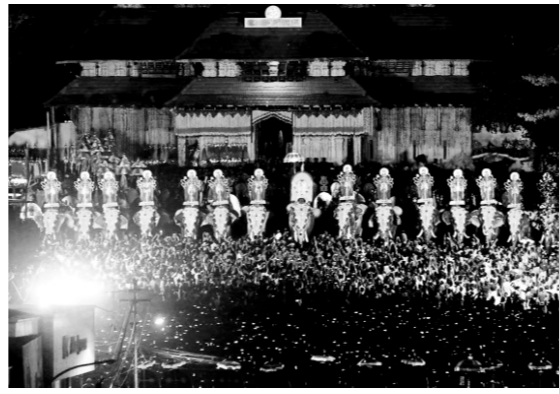
Pooram fiasco: Kerala government transfers Thrissur police commissioner, ACP

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, who is in-charge of the home portfolio, also directed the state police chief to conduct a departmental probe into the complaints and submit a report within a week.

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM : Amid mounting criticism of police "high-handedness" during the Thrissur Pooram, the state government on Sunday cracked the whip, ordering the transfer of Thrissur Police Commissioner Ankit Asokan and Assistant Commissioner (ACP) K Sudersan. The transfers will be effected after getting the consent of the Election Commission owing to the model code of conduct, a statement said. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, who is in-charge of the home portfolio, also directed the state police chief to conduct a departmental probe into the complaints and submit a report within a week.

The government's order came after the restrictions imposed by the police during the pooram invited severe criticism and gave ammunition for the UDF and the BJP to ramp up its attack against the Left front and the state government during the last phase of the election campaign.

Protesting the police restrictions, the Thiruvambady devaswom had stopped the ceremonies abruptly late on Friday. Subsequently, the fireworks display was delayed by over three hours. The



devaswom authorities had alleged that police used barricades wherever possible and restricted free movement of people. Amid complaints that the police went overboard in its security arrangements, a video has surfaced on social media that showed the police commissioner blocking the committee members and volunteers who were heading to feed elephants and taking parasols for Kudamattam inside the temple.

'Many cops on duty were unaware of rituals, timings'

An internal report of the Special Branch has held the commissioner responsible for the unexpected events, according to sources.

As per the special branch report, only superior officers were briefed about the pooram duty beforehand, while the other personnel on duty were ignorant about festival rituals and its timings.

It is learnt that many police personnel were unaware of the madathil varavu ceremony at night and hence, blocked its way around 10.30pm, creating a chaos at Pazhayanadakkavu. The report also said on several occasions, the police commissioner behaved rudely with the public and even committee members of devaswom, resulting in a discontent. About 3,500 cops were deployed on duty for ensuring safety during the 36 hours of Thrissur pooram festivities. Due to the duty allocation ahead of the election, those who were on pooram duty were mainly from other districts with no knowledge about its rituals. It is learnt that the location of the duty and timings were provided only on the eve of the pooram with no briefing about the arrangements.

'Many cops were not briefed'

According to an internal report of the special branch, only superior officers were briefed about the pooram duty beforehand, while the other personnel were unaware of the rituals and timings.

3,000 acres of land changed hands in financial year '24, a rise of 58%

Mumbai: Almost 3,000 acres of land changed hands in 101 separate transactions by developers and entities across the country in the financial year 2023-24, according to data compiled by ANAROCK. In terms of total area, around 58% more land was purchased in the financial year 2023-24 as compared to FY 2022-23, which recorded 88 land deals for around 1,886 acres. "Interestingly, out of the total land deals in FY24, over 83 deals for about 1,135 acres were closed in the top seven cities alone," said Anuj Puri, chairman, ANAROCK Group.

3,000 acres of land changed hands in financial year '24, a rise of 58%. The remaining 18 deals, accounting for over 1,853 acres, were sealed in various tier 2 and 3 cities like Ahmedabad, Ayodhya, Jaipur, Nagpur, Mysuru, Ludhiana, and Surat. Tier 2 & 3 cities have once again emerged as redoubtable growth engines, thanks to their rapidly improving infrastructure and growth opportunities," he said. Among land deals in the top seven cities, NCR topped with 29 deals for over 313 acres, followed by the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) with 19 deals for approximately 157-plus acres. In terms of total land area, Bengaluru saw 14 deals for over 490 acres transacted - the highest among all top seven cities.

Developers who bought land parcels for various developments in FY24 include Godrej Properties, Eldeco Group, Adani Realty, Signature Global, Oberoi Realty, DLF India, Prestige Group, K Raheja Corp, and Brigade Group, among others.

According to a report released by ANAROCK on Sunday, of the total land deals in FY-24, around 80 separate deals for about 2,252 acres are for proposed residential, plotted development & township projects. In the residential category, deals were closed in Pune, Bengaluru, MMR, Hyderabad, NCR, Chennai, Mysuru, Ayodhya, and Jaipur. Deals for proposed plotted development projects were sealed in cities like Sonapat, Nagpur, Surat and Ahmedabad, while township projects were slated in Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Thane, Ludhiana and Ghaziabad.

Commercial and retail together saw 4 separate deals for over 42 acres closed. Of these, three were for commercial developments - one each in Gurugram, Noida and Mumbai - and one retail deal was closed in Thane. At least 79 acres in four separate deals have been earmarked for mixed-use developments in cities including Pune, Mumbai and Ludhiana. The residential segment continues to drive the market, which is also reflected in the land deals it is generating. Amid all-time high residential demand, several large and listed developers and other entities continued to snap up land, said ANAROCK.

Service plan, not master plan to solve Bengaluru's issues, say experts

Bengaluru's urban planning process has been ineffective in addressing the city's water scarcity and the planning laws are outdated, said an expert.

BENGALURU: A five-element seminar on sustainable urban ecology - 'Bengaluru 2050' was conducted by Rotary International districts 3191 and 3192 in association with Sycom Global, a services marketplace and Indian Green Building Council, known for developing green buildings at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) on Sunday. During the discussion "The missing master plan," experts highlighted urban planning and development challenges, citing the lack of a comprehensive master plan, fragmented decision-making, and unsustainable growth as factors contributing to Bengaluru's transformation from a garden city to a concrete jungle. Naresh Narasimhan, architect and urbanist, said that Bengaluru's urban planning process has been ineffective in addressing the city's water scarcity and the planning laws are outdated and inadequate for its rapidly



growing population. "Not a master plan, but a service plan is required to solve environment concerns in the city's metropolitan region," he said. The plan should emphasize expanding urban development into neighbouring areas like Hoskote, Ramanagara, Kanakapura,

Nelamangala, and Anekal to expand the city's area.

Instead of adopting a strictly western-centric Central Business District (CBD) model, where a certain part is surrounded by high-rise buildings followed by suburban areas, alternative approaches

should be explored, Naresh explained. aresh mentioned that the issue arises from lack of alignment between authorities such as BBMP, BDA, and BWSSB, each pursuing their own agendas without cohesive city-wide planning. This fragmentation results in disparate projects that fail to contribute to a unified vision for the city's future.

Stressing the triple planetary crisis - climate change, biodiversity collapse, and air pollution, Dr Harini Nagendra, Director of the Research Centre at Azim Premji University highlighted the interconnectedness of ecological security, climate change, and air pollution which further impacts food security. Dr Harini, who also leads the university's centre for climate change and sustainability, emphasized the importance of considering the needs of marginalized communities in urban ecology.

Canada dreams to be distant for 50% of Gujarat students

AHMEDABAD: From May 15, international graduates of Canadian college programmes delivered through a public-private curriculum licensing arrangement will no longer qualify for post-graduation work permits (PGWP). The move, aimed at restricting the number of students staying back in Canada for work after their studies, is likely to impact about 10,000-odd students enrolling from Gujarat, mainly in major cities and populous provinces. A vast majority of Gujarat students in Canada work while studying in order to pay off their education loans.

Having recently allocated permit quotas to different provinces, the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has also put up a list of universities and institutes eligible for PGWP.

With Canada setting a cap of 3.64 lakh study permits, the September intake may see about 1.45 lakh students from India - if Indians continue to account for 40% of the total number as is usually seen - and about 22,000 from Gujarat. To put the figure in perspective, Gujarat sends about 15% of the Indian students to Canada, accounting for 35,000-40,000 students annually. Along with Punjab, it forms one of the biggest student pools in Canada. However, for the September intake, the number is likely to be halved with the chances of employment and permanent residence getting bleaker.

Upinder Singh Bedi, a Canada-based immigration lawyer, told TOI that the entire exercise by the Canadian govt since the start of the year is aimed at restricting the number of international students coming

in. "The focus will be on skilled workforce and niche educational courses. So those who opt for STEM (science, technology, engineering, maths) and medical courses are likely to stand a better chance.

Compared to about 60% success rate of visa issuance, this year we may see a reduction in the application acceptance rate especially for populous provinces," he said.

For Smita Nayak (name changed), 34, the journey to Canada started relatively late in life with a successful stint at a public sector enterprise. A better future for the kid drove Nayak to enrol in an MBA course from a mid-level university in Canada. "Right at the start of my Canadian journey, I was encountered by several students who were not proficient in English. Many here do not like the employees to talk in their native



language. You will find students everywhere - from malls to convenience stores, and eateries to restaurants. For one job, there could be more than 50 applications, and thus many are putting up with longer working hours and lesser wages," she recounts. With the year of many changes for international students, the Gujarati community has been through an

emotional roller-coaster ride with many students not finding their foothold in the foreign land. They are returning home with hopes that they might see a better day, and fear that the aura around their 'foreign return' tag may get tarnished. The community has thus reached out to many student groups and has been extending the basic help and support system. Issues are different for different groups - from those who have just arrived to those who have spent more than a year, and for those who are now about to complete their education journey. While the housing crisis is a major concern for the new students, the rising cost of living is for the mid-level students, and bleak chances at permanent residency (PR) are for those at the end of their studies.

The BJP government has no belief in the federal structure and the way it treats states and CMs in the GST Council and NITI Aayog, shows its discrimination.

Electoral bonds, PM Cares big scandals, says Parakala Prabhakar

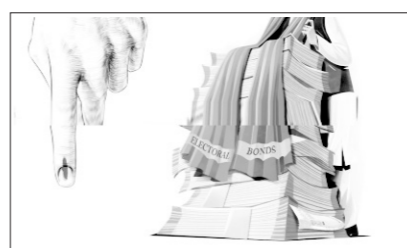
BENGALURU: Terming the Electoral Bonds issue as the "biggest scam in the world", considering the quantum of funds involved, political economist Parakala Prabhakar said the BJP government's claim of transparent political funding did not hold water. He spoke of crony capitalism as a major corruption issue, and said the PM Cares Fund is also a scam. Asked about PM Narendra Modi's explanation of the Electoral Bonds, he said, "If it is about transparency in political funding, why didn't the government tell the people about it since 2018, since when it has been in force. Why did the petitioners have to go to the highest court, the Supreme Court, to find out the truth, and why did the government ask for time till

elections were over, before presenting the details?" "Why I called it the biggest scam in the world is not just because of the money exchanged, it was a 'money dance' involving thousands of crores of rupees given in exchange for contracts, and to stop Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Income Tax raids. Had the raids been pursued, they would have unearthed hundreds and thousands of crores." "You can imagine what the country has lost in terms of contracts, and there is the issue of money laundering. Just look at the companies -- those which were not making profits and those making losses also paid up, how did they get the money? It means there was a lot of money laundering within the Electoral Bonds

scheme also, which has astonished me more."

"The institution which is supposed to be fiercely independent, the Reserve Bank of India, was also pressurised to accept and relax rules and regulations. After EBs were bought, regulations were relaxed, which means that even RBI was compromised. Also, there were Production Linked Incentives (PLI) for errant pharma companies," Parakala Prabhakar said.

On the PM Cares Fund, he said those who seek details are told it has nothing to do with the government, and doesn't fall under it. "All government employees were made to donate one day's salary, public sector undertakings were asked to give money and now the government is not



telling us where it is getting money from, how much has been collected, how much does the government spend, and on what. Nothing is known, and if this can happen in a democratic country, I have very serious apprehensions. This is probably going to be an even bigger scam," he said.

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NEWS BOX

Papua New Guinea PM reacts to Biden's 'uncle eaten by cannibals' claim

Sydney. Papua New Guinea Prime Minister James Marape says his nation does not deserve to be labelled cannibals, and urged the US to clear up the remnants of World War Two littered across the Pacific, after comments by President Joe Biden about his missing serviceman uncle den had "appeared to imply his uncle was eaten by cannibals after his plane was shot down over PNG during WWII", Marape's office said in a statement late on Sunday. President Biden's remarks may have been a slip of the tongue; however, my country does not deserve to be labelled as such," Marape said in the statement.

I urge President Biden to get the White House to look into cleaning up these remains of WWII so the truth about missing servicemen like Ambrose Finnegan can be put to rest. "The US signed a defence cooperation agreement with Papua New Guinea last year, amid competition for influence in the region with China, which has a security pact with the neighbouring Solomon Islands. China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Marape in the capital Port Moresby on Sunday to build closer economic ties, while Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese arrives this week to commemorate World War Two history. Biden has previously cited his personal connection with Papua New Guinea's wartime history on visits to Australia, telling the story of his uncle who died in a plane crash in May 1944. Biden last week raised the possibility his uncle might have fallen victim to cannibals, after visiting a missing-in-action war memorial in Pennsylvania. Historians say Papua New Guinea was crucial to the United States' drive across the Pacific to liberate the Philippines in World War Two, while Australia has said the wartime history showed the renewed strategic importance of its northern neighbour.

The impact of the war remains sensitive among Pacific Islanders, however. Marape said his nation was "needlessly dragged into a conflict that was not their doing". Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands remain littered with wartime human remains, plane wrecks, ship wrecks and tunnels, as well as leftover bombs which were still killing people, he said.

Terry Anderson, US journalist held hostage for 7 years in Lebanon, dies at 76

New York. Terry Anderson, a US journalist who was held captive by Islamist militants for almost seven years in Lebanon and came to symbolise the plight of Western hostages during the country's 1975-1990 civil war, died on Sunday at age 76, his daughter said in a statement. The former chief Middle East correspondent for The Associated Press, who was the longest held hostage of the scores of Westerners abducted in Lebanon, died at his home in Greenwood Lake, New York, said his daughter Sulome Anderson, who was born three months after he was seized. No cause of death was given, but he was mostly Shi'ite Muslim groups in what was known as The Hostage Crisis, and chained by his hands and feet and blindfolded much of the time, the former Marine later recalled that he "almost went insane" and that only his Roman Catholic faith prevented him from taking his life before he was freed in December 1991.

"Though my father's life was marked by extreme suffering during his time as a hostage in captivity, he found a quiet, comfortable peace in recent years. I know he would choose to be remembered not by his very worst experience, but through his humanitarian work with the Vietnam Children's Fund, the Committee to Protect Journalists, homeless veterans and many other incredible causes," Sulome Anderson said. The family will take some time to organise a memorial, she said.

Anderson's ordeal began in Beirut on the morning of March 16, 1985, after he played a round of tennis. A green Mercedes sedan with curtains over the rear window pulled up, three gunmen jumped out and dragged Anderson, still dressed in shorts, into the car.

The pro-Iran Islamic Jihad group claimed responsibility for the kidnapping, saying it was part of "continuing operations against Americans." The abductors demanded freedom for Shi'ite Muslims jailed in Kuwait for bomb attacks against the US and French embassies there. It was the start of a nightmare for Anderson that would last six years and nine months during which he was stuck in cells under the rubble-strewn streets of Beirut and elsewhere, often badly fed and sleeping on a thin, dirty mattress on a concrete floor. During captivity, both his father and brother would die of cancer and he would not see his daughter Sulome until she was six years old.

Race car ploughs into crowd in Sri Lanka, 7 killed, many injured

Colombo. A race car veered off the track during a competition in Sri Lanka on Sunday and rammed into a crowd of spectators and race officials, killing seven people and injuring 20 others, officials said. Thousands of spectators looked on as the mishap took place during a race in the town of Diyatalawa in the tea-growing central hills, about 180 kilometres east of the capital Colombo.

Police spokesman Nihal Thalduwa said one of the cars veered off the track and crashed into spectators and officials of the event. Seven people, including four officials, were killed and another 20 were being treated at a hospital, said Thalduwa. He said three of the injured were in critical condition. Thalduwa said police have launched an investigation into the accident, which was the 17th out of 24 events scheduled. The race was suspended after the accident. About 45,000 spectators had gathered at the race circuit at a Sri Lankan military academy. The event was organised by the Sri Lankan army and Sri Lanka Automobile Sports.



India is now second-largest source for new citizens in US: Report

Washington. A total of 65,960 Indians officially became US citizens, making India the second-largest source country for new citizens in America after Mexico, according to the latest Congressional report. An estimated 46 million foreign-born persons resided in the United States in 2022, approximately 14 per cent of the total US population of 333 million, according to American Community Survey data from the US Census Bureau.

Of these, 24.5 million, about 53 per cent, reported their status as naturalised citizens. In its latest "US Naturalisation Policy" report of April 15, the independent Congressional Research Service in the fiscal year 2022, a total of 969,380 individuals became naturalised US citizens. "Individuals born in Mexico represented the largest number of naturalisations, followed by persons from India, Philippines, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic," it said. Based on the latest available data, CRS said in 2022, as many as 128,878, Mexican nationals became American citizens. They were followed by Indians (65,960), the Philippines (53,413), Cuba (46,913), the



Dominican Republic (34,525), Vietnam (33,246) and China (27,038). According to CRS as of 2023, a total of 2,831,330 foreign-born American nationals were from India, which is the second-largest number after Mexico's 10,638,429. Mexico and India are followed by China with 2,225,447 foreign-born American nationals. However, as many as 42 per cent of the India-born foreign nationals living in the US are currently ineligible to become US citizens, the CRS report said.

As of 2023, as many as 290,000 India-born foreign nationals who were on Green Card or Legal Permanent Residency (LPR) were potentially eligible for naturalisation. CRS said in recent years, some observers have expressed concern over USCIS processing backlogs for naturalisation applications. Although there continues to be a backlog of naturalisation applications since FY2020 the agency has reduced the number of applications pending completion by more

than half. As of the end of FY2023, USCIS had approximately 408,000 pending naturalisation applications, down from 550,000 at the end of FY2022; 840,000 at the end of FY2021; and 943,000 at the end of FY2020. In FY2023, 823,702 LPRs submitted naturalisation applications. The number of individuals who have recently applied for citizenship remains well below the estimated population of 9 million LPRs who were eligible to naturalise in 2023. The percentage of foreign-born individuals who are naturalized varies by several factors, including country of origin. Immigrants from Honduras, Guatemala, Venezuela, Mexico, El Salvador, and Brazil have the lowest percentages of naturalized foreign-born, while those from Vietnam, the Philippines, Russia, Jamaica, and Pakistan have the highest. To be eligible for naturalisation, an applicant must fulfil certain eligibility requirements outlined in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA).

The requirements generally include being a lawful permanent resident (LPR) for at least five years.

Global military spending reaches all-time high, India in top 5 spenders

Stockholm. Global military expenditure saw its steepest increase in over a decade in 2023, reaching an all-time high of \$2.4 trillion as wars and rising tensions fuelled spending across the world, researchers said Monday. Military spending rose across the globe with particularly large increases in Europe, the Middle East and Asia, according to a new report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). "Total military spending is at an all-time high... and for the first time since 2009, we saw spending increase across all five geographical regions," Nan Tian, a senior researcher at SIPRI, told AFP. "It's a reflection of the deterioration of peace and security around the world. There's really not a region in the world where things have gotten better," Tian said. The United States, China, Russia, India and Saudi Arabia were the top five spenders, respectively. The continuation of the war in Ukraine led to an increase in



spending by Ukraine, Russia and "a whole host" of European countries, Tian said. Russia boosted spending by 24 per cent, reaching \$109 billion in 2023, according to SIPRI's estimates. Since 2014, when Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimea, the country's military spending has risen by 57 per cent.

Limited room Ukraine's military spending rose by 51 per cent, reaching \$64.8 billion, but the country also received \$35 billion in military aid, of which the majority

came from the US, meaning the combined aid and spending equalled over nine-tenths of Russia's spending.

Tian noted that while Moscow's and Kyiv's overall budgets were relatively close in 2023, Ukraine's military spending equalled 37 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP) and 58 per cent of all government spending. By contrast, in Russia, which has a larger economy, military spending amounted to just 5.9 per cent of its GDP. "So the room for Ukraine to increase its spending is now very limited," Tian said. In Europe, Poland saw the largest increase in military spending by far, up by 75 per cent to \$31.6 billion. Spending also rose across the Middle East, where Israel -- the region's second-largest spender -- saw a 24-per cent increase, to \$27.5 billion in 2023 -- mainly driven by the country's offensive in Gaza in response to the October 7 attack by Hamas.

Five rockets fired from Iraq towards US military base in Syria: Officials

Mosul. At least five rockets were launched from Iraq's town of Zummar towards a US military base in northeastern Syria on Sunday, two Iraqi security sources told Reuters. The attack against US forces is the first since early February when Iranian-backed groups in Iraq stopped their attacks against US troops. The attack comes one day after Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani returned from a visit to the United States and met with President Joe Biden at the White House. Two security sources and a senior army officer said a rocket launcher fixed on the back of a small truck had been parked in Zummar border town with Syria. The military official said the truck caught fire with



an explosion from unfired rockets at the same time as warplanes were in the sky. "We can't confirm that the truck was bombed by US warplanes unless we investigate it," said a military official on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the incident. Iraqi security forces were deployed in the area and launched a

hunt for the perpetrators who fled the area using another vehicle, said a security official who is based in the town of Zummar. An army officer said the truck was seized for further investigation and initial investigation shows that it was destroyed by an air strike. "We are communicating with the coalition forces in Iraq to share information on this attack," the officer added. The attacks came one day after a huge blast at a military base in Iraq early on Saturday killed a member of an Iraqi security force that includes Iran-backed groups. The force commander said it was an attack while the army said it was investigating and there were no warplanes in the sky at the time.

Biden slams 'dangerous' anti-Israel protests amid Columbia University chaos

US President Joe Biden has condemned the anti-Israel protests on college campuses amid tension at Columbia University, saying that such antisemitism is "reprehensible and dangerous".

World. US President Joe Biden has slammed anti-Israel protests at universities, saying such "blatant antisemitism" is "reprehensible and dangerous". His statement came amid continued pro-Palestine stir at Columbia University, where the crisis triggered a rabbi to urge Jewish students to stay home

until the tense environment at the Ivy League school subsides. Though Biden didn't mention Columbia University in his statement released by the White House, he stressed that antisemitism has "absolutely no place on college campuses, or anywhere in our country". The demonstrations, underway for days, coincide with the Jewish Passover holiday, which is a 7-day observance commemorating the mass exodus of Jews from Egypt. The US President said that Jews around the world are still coping with the horrors of Hamas's attack on Israel on October 7, 2023. "This Passover falls particularly hard on hostage families trying to honour the spirit of the holiday -- a story centered on freedom -- while their loved ones remain in captivity. Our hearts are with all the victims, survivors, families, and friends whose loved ones have been killed, taken hostage, wounded, displaced, or are in harm's way," his statement added. He said that his administration would continue to speak out and "aggressively implement the first-ever National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism" to provide the Jewish community with the complete backing of the federal



government. Joe Biden's statement came hours after the White House released one independently, condemning the "violence and physical intimidation targeting Jewish students and the Jewish community". White House deputy press secretary Andrew Bates called such acts "antisemitic, unconscionable, and dangerous", after videos reportedly appeared to show pro-Palestinian activists telling Jewish students that October 7th is "going to be every day for you". The Columbia University crisis escalated recently after university officials testified before the US Congress about antisemitism on campus, causing pro-Palestinian demonstrations on and

Baby in Gaza delivered after mother killed in Israeli strike

Rafah. A baby girl was delivered from the womb of a Palestinian killed along with her husband and daughter by an Israeli attack in the Gaza city of Rafah, where 19 people died overnight in intensified strikes, Palestinian health officials said.

The dead, killed in hits on two houses, included 13 children from one family, they said. The baby, weighing 1.4 kg and delivered in an emergency C-section, was stable and improving gradually, said Mohammed Salama, a doctor caring for her.

Her mother, Sabreen Al-Sakani, had been 30 weeks pregnant. The baby was placed in an incubator in a Rafah hospital alongside another infant, with the words "The baby of the martyr Sabreen Al-Sakani" written on tape across her chest. Sakani's young daughter Malak, who was killed in the strike, had wanted to name her new sister Rouh, meaning spirit in Arabic, said her uncle Rami Al-Sheikh. "The little girl Malak was happy that her sister was coming to the world," he said. The baby would stay in hospital for three to four weeks, said Salama, the doctor. "After that we will see about her leaving, and where this child will go, to the family, to the aunt or uncle or grandparents. Here is the biggest tragedy. Even if this child survives, she was born an orphan," he said. The 13 children were killed in a strike on the second home, belonging to the Abdel Aal family, according to Palestinian health officials. Two women were also killed in that strike. Asked about the casualties in Rafah, an Israeli military spokesperson said various militant targets were struck in Gaza including military compounds, launch posts and armed people. "Did you see one man in all of those killed?" said Saqr Abdel Aal, a Palestinian man whose family were among the dead, grieving over the body of a child in a white shroud. "All are women and children," he said. "My entire identity has been wiped out, with my wife, children and everyone." Mohammad al-Behairi said his daughter and grandchild were still under the rubble. "It's a feeling of sadness, depression, we have nothing left in this life to cry for, what feeling shall we have? When you lose your children, when you lose the closest of your loved ones, how will your feeling be?" he said.

'WE ARE TRAPPED'

Over half of Gaza's 2.3 million people have crowded into Rafah, seeking shelter from the Israeli offensive that has laid waste to much of the Gaza Strip over the last six months. Israel is threatening a ground offensive into the area, where Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said fighters from the militant group Hamas must be eliminated to ensure Israel's victory in the war.

near campus to surge. On April 19, the varsity's President Nemat Minouche Shafik authorised the New York Police Department (NYPD) to raid an encampment of pro-Palestinian protesters, which led to the arrest of 108 protesters. The university has also suspended the daughter of controversial US Congress member Ilhan Omar over the protest. Even then, the protests raged on over the weekend, with protesters putting up tents to participate in the stir. Some 200 protesters protested on Saturday, according to The New York Post. The tension caused Rabbi Elie Buechler, associated with the Ivy League school's Orthodox Union Jewish Learning Initiative on Campus, to "strongly" recommend about 300 - mostly orthodox Jewish students - to go home and stay there. He sent a WhatsApp message to these students, CNN reported. "It deeply pains me to say that I would strongly recommend you return home as soon as possible and remain home until the reality in and around campus has dramatically improved," the message read, according to the CNN report.

Unions to petition BEST demanding 3,337 undertaking-owned buses in fleet

MUMBAI: Various unions, big and small, of BEST undertaking have come together to take up the issue of BEST owned buses dropping to one third of its original fleet a few years back, and this has affected the operations majorly, union leaders said on Monday.

There is not only a shortage of buses, but a lack of well trained drivers to run the existing fleet. The contractual buses, which form two-third of the fleet, are run by private and



"mostly less experienced" drivers hired by contractors, they alleged. The group of unions, which met at Dadar for a day recently, will petition BEST management this week as they feel "cheated" regarding a MoU which was signed a few years back to maintain a minimum 3,337 BEST owned buses in the fleet. While workers threaten protest, they also seek to approach politicians, especially candidates standing for Lok Sabha elections in Mumbai constituencies, to take up their cause at rallies starting soon.

Will 'imported' sugar barons sweeten BJP's Maharashtra tally?

Mumbai: Nothing sweetens a politician's chances in Maharashtra like sugar. Former CMs Vasantada Patil, S B Chavan, Vilasrao Deshmukh and Ashok Chavan were all sugar barons. So were the bulk of cabinet ministers. For a long time, the state's cooperative sugar sector, which dominates the rural economy in western Maharashtra and parts of Marathwada, leaned towards Congress and NCP. The late Gopinath Munde was one of the few BJP leaders to set up sugar factories in Marathwada, until the party went on a drive to mop up sugar barons from rival camps in 2019.

Among the top 'imports' were former Congress leaders Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil and Harshvardhan Patil, as well as the family of Vijaysinh Mohite Patil, who is now on his way back to NCP (Sharad Pawar). Vikhe Patil's son Sujay is a BJP MP while Mohite Patil's son Ranjitsinh is a BJP MLC. Later entrants include Hasan Mushrif, who joined Ajit Pawar's faction of NCP, and Ashok Chavan, who left Congress for BJP.

Centre also set up a Union Cooperation ministry under Amit Shah in 2021 although cooperatives are a state subject. But will these imports help BJP in Lok Sabha polls? Steady Gains In State's West Consider the numbers. The cooperative network has an influence on at least 16 of Maharashtra's 48 Lok Sabha seats. Western Maharashtra's sugar bowl has 10 of these. In 2009, Congress-NCP won six seats, but in the Modi wave of 2014, BJP won three and its alliance partner Shiv Sena won two, while NCP took four. By 2019, BJP had four seats, Shiv Sena three and NCP was down to three. However, observers say this sugar



high has its limits. "There is now a disconnect between sugar barons who have gained financially and politically, and farmers who are the voters," says Ajit Navale from Kisan Sabha. For the farmer-voter, the sugar export ban that caused domestic prices to slide, and low prices for the local soya bean crop are more important, says farmer leader Raju Shetti, who rose politically by taking on sugar barons. He is contesting as an Independent candidate from Hat-kanagle in the sugar belt. Shetti says BJP might also have to worry about the fallout from splitting NCP and Shiv Sena, and the Maratha quota agitation: "The sympathy wave towards Sharad Pawar and Uddhav Thackeray will also be a factor in this election, especially in western Maharashtra." Growing Disconnect With Farmers Maharashtra is India's second biggest sugar producer after UP, and many of its cooperative sugar factories were set up in the 1960s. These spawned a larger web of cooperative banks, dairies and educational institutions, giving their masters enormous political clout. However, the influence of sugar barons over farmers waned as the feeling that they were self-serving and had run cooperative institutions to the ground grew. Several cooperative sugar factories

were auctioned at throwaway prices, often to be run by the same politicians. Currently, there are more private sugar mills (105) than cooperatives (95) in the state.

Political Chameleons All For all their political and financial clout, these barons have been ideologically fluid, siding with the winning side. Both Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil and Harshvardhan Patil left Congress and joined Shiv Sena-BJP govt in 1995. They later returned to Congress but are with BJP now. Originally with NCP, Vijaysinh Mohite Patil's family aligned with BJP in 2019 and Ranjitsinh Mohite Patil became a party MLC. The family was expecting a BJP ticket for Vijaysinh's nephew Dhairysheel Mohite Patil, but after BJP nominated the family's local rival and sitting MP Ranjeetsinh Nimbalkar from Madha, Dhairysheel joined NCP (Sharad Pawar) and got the party's Madha ticket. Cane made them able Ajit Pawar | The dy CM is linked to several pvt and cooperative sugar mills in the state. He was also on board of Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank. A former Congressman, he joined uncle Sharad Pawar's NCP, only to split it years later and join the incumbent Shinde govt. Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil | Comes from family of coop movement pioneers that runs sugar factories, banks and edu institutions. In Cong, had many stints as minister. Switched to Shiv Sena and became minister in Sena-BJP govt of 1995-2000. Returned to Cong, then switched to BJP in 2019. Son Sujay is a BJP MP. Harshvardhan Patil | His uncle, Congress leader Shankarrao Patil, started a cooperative sugar mill at Indapur in Pune.

YSRC & TDP fight dissidence to win big in Kadapa

KADAPA: With elections fast approaching, campaigning has intensified in Kadapa district. However, it seems that the TDP has fallen behind in electioneering as the party leadership is busy pacifying disgruntled seniors, who are ready to quit over not being considered for contesting the elections. Following in their footsteps are the second-rung leaders, giving a new headache for the TDP high command. Though the TDP had issued press statements claiming that members of the YS family would join the party, there has been no such development so far. However, the YSRC has succeeded in poaching prominent leaders from the yellow party such as SV Satish Reddy, former deputy chairman of AP Legislative Council and rival of YS Rajasekhara Reddy, and former MLAR Ramesh Kumar Reddy. Additionally, second-rung leadership too has joined the ruling party. Talks are on with former Kamalapuram MLA G Veera Shiva Reddy and in all likelihood, he will be shifting to YSRC from TDP. In 2019, YSRC made a clean sweep as it emerged victorious in the Kadapa Parliamentary constituency and the seven Assembly segments—Kadapa, Mydukur, Badvel, Proddatur, Kamalapuram, Pulivendula and Jammalamadugu. Incumbent MP and YSRC's candidate for Kadapa LS seat, YS Avinash Reddy, along with the Parliamentary coordinator K Suresh Babu, is pulling out all stops to ensure that there is no change in the status quo. On the other hand, TDP politburo member R Srinivasulu Reddy is the only visible leader across the district, while all others are limited to their respective constituencies. Six of YSRC's candidates for the seven Assembly constituencies are vying for a hat-trick win. They are: Party president and Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy (Pulivendula), Deputy Chief Minister SB Amzath Basha (Kadapa), S Raghurami Reddy (Mydukur), Dr Dasari Sudha (Badvel), Rachamalla Sivaprasad Reddy (Proddatur) and P Ravindranath Reddy (Kamalapuram).

Congress is fielding Afzal Khan for the Kadapa Assembly seat. He was YSRC party secretary and joined the grand old party recently. Meanwhile, the TDP has fielded R Madhavi Reddy, wife of politburo member R Srinivasulu Reddy. Though the couple are actively campaigning, they are not getting adequate support from party leaders VS Amir Babu, who aspired for the ticket, and Lakshmi Reddy, who sought a ticket for his daughter-in-law Uma. Srinivasulu Reddy is reportedly not making much effort to pacify the miffed leaders. YSRC's Raghurami Reddy, though an elderly legislator, is actively canvassing in Mydukur. He is not getting the needed support from Mydukur municipal chairman M Chandra. Putta Sudhakar Yadav, contesting for the third time on the TDP ticket is also making every effort to wrest the seat from the YSRC. He is focusing on wooing YSRC activists into the TDP fold. In Badvel, YSRC's Dr Sudha has support of former MLC DC Govinda Reddy and others. The NDA has fielded BJP's Bojja Roshanna, a close aide of TDP constituency in-charge K Vijayamma. Vijayamma and her son Ritesh Reddy are making every effort for Roshanna's victory. YSRC candidate in Proddatur, Sivaprasad Reddy is not getting the support of MLC Ramesh Yadav. Hence, Rachamalla is making every effort to get the support of the Yadav community. However, dissidents in the YSRC like K Shiva Chandra Reddy and K Babu have joined the TDP. TDP candidate and veteran leader N Varadharajulu Reddy is facing a similar trouble as former MLAM Linga Reddy and constituency in-charge G Praveen Kumar Reddy are not supporting him.

Man remarries for male heir, abandons wives for live-in partner

AHMEDABAD: A 58-year-old govt school teacher from Kheda's Kathlal town in Gujarat is now facing the wrath of his two wives who he assaulted and abandoned for a live-in partner. The two betrayed, beaten and angry wives approached police on Saturday to complain against him, his latest paramour and her parents.

While the first wife is the complainant, the second has been made witness in the FIR lodged with Kathlal police. According to the FIR, the man was 18 when his first marriage to a 15-year-old girl was formalized in Kathlal village. Within six years of marriage, the couple had two girls. This caused the man so much displeasure that he persistently tried to make his wife agree to let him remarry, just for a male heir. After her consent, the man remarried in the year 2000 without a divorce. He had a daughter and son from the second wife. All seemed to be going well, until four months ago when the second wife suspected trouble. With a new woman in his life, with whom he had entered a formal live-in contract, he abandoned both his wives. Both the women pleaded with him to return home, but were allegedly assaulted by the husband, his partner and her family members on Friday. They were booked for domestic violence, criminal intimidation and abetment.



Van driver attacked on Civil Hospital campus

Ahmedabad: A van driver was attacked by another driver on the Civil Hospital campus in Asarwa on Saturday evening, allegedly over business. The injured driver, Lakshman Rabari, 44, a resident of Jahangirpura in Shahibaug, who ferries patients and dead bodies from the hospital, filed a police complaint against Pintu Darbar, who too offers the same services. According to the complaint with Shahibaug police, the accused saw Rabari as a potential threat to his earnings. Rabari said he drives the ambulance-cum-dead body van for his employer named Suresh Kumawat. At the time of the incident, Rabari was near UN Mehta Hospital on the Civil Hospital campus when he was hired to transport the body of a patient.

Rabari said he agreed for Rs 9.50 per kilometre. An aggressive Darbar approached Rabari outside the postmortem room and allegedly threatened him against taking the body in his van. When Rabari told him his services had already been hired, Darbar abused him and attacked him with a metal pipe. Rabari, who was saved by people around, called the city police control room and later approached Shahibaug police who have booked Darbar for causing hurt and using abusive words.

Patient found sharing bed with corpse at civil hospital. Ludhiana civil hospital faces scrutiny for negligence as patient shares bed with a corpse. Doctors neglected treatments, failed to conduct tests, and lacked proper documentation. SMO denies allegations, while actions are recommended against medical staff.

Police book two prisoners for allegedly raping their inmate women in prisoners van. Two Jind prisoners raped their inmate woman in Rohtak, leading to a zero FIR under section 376. The victim, undergoing treatment at PGIMS, Rohtak, had previously attempted suicide due to alleged stress.

MBCs bar SC villagers from using local salon near Alangulam in Tamil Nadu

TENKASI: People belonging to a Scheduled Caste (SC) community in Ayyanarkulam village near Alangulam alleged that the members of a Most Backward Class (MBC) community are preventing hairdressers from giving them haircuts.



According to the SC residents, over 1,000 BC, MBC and SC families reside in Ayyanarkulam. "Of these, at least 50 families belong to the SC community. Since we are denied haircuts at the salon in our village, we visit the neighbouring Nallur village or Alangulam town.

This has been happening for many years. Recently, an eight-year-old boy hailing from an SC family went to the salon in our village.

After making him wait for more than an hour, the hairdresser refused to cut his hair, stating that he was abiding by the instructions of the MBCs," residents said on the condition of anonymity.

"People from the MBC community also asked us not to visit the salon and told us to get a separate hairdresser. The district administration must intervene and end this discrimination towards us," they said. Recently, the SC residents verbally highlighted this

denied services at the salon. "The SC residents always visit the neighbouring villages to get haircuts. These days, the youth of the SC community visit the salon in Ayyanarkulam itself, which has raked up the issue," he added. We need a written police complaint to act against the discriminators," a police official said. Despite repeated phone calls, Alangulam tahsildar Krishnavel did not respond.

Rain, gale flatten 10k banana trees in TN's Thalavadi; survey on

ERODE: Survey of banana trees damaged due to gale and heavy rain in Thalavadi and adjoining hill villages of Erode district began on Sunday. Horticulture department officials said the work will be completed by Monday evening. The farmers have claimed around 10,000 banana trees were damaged. Erode district has been experiencing intense heat for the past one month. In fact, the district recorded temperature of 43 °C on April 19, the polling day. Bringing respite from the searing heat, it has been raining since Friday in Thalavadi and surrounding hill villages. The rain, however, has left farmers worried because banana trees have been damaged by the gale which accompanied



the rain. According to farmers, about 10,000 banana trees were damaged in Panahalli, Thalavadi and few other villages on Saturday evening. Kumar (name changed) an affected farmer

in Panahalli, said, "Gale and heavy rain lashed the area for about an hour on Saturday evening, felling several banana trees. More than 1,500 harvest-ready banana trees were damaged in my land. The state government

should provide appropriate compensation."

"We have received information that around 10,000 banana trees have been damaged in Thalavadi block. A formal survey of the damaged trees began on Sunday. The task will be completed by Monday evening. Officials from revenue and horticulture are jointly involved in this. Generally, compensation is given by the state government to banana trees which are affected during monsoon. Now, banana trees have been damaged by the gale," said an official from the Horticulture and Plantation Crops of Erode district. "Our report will be sent to the government through the collector. Government will take appropriate action," he added.

Tamil Nadu: 'Water the wildlife' aims to prevent human-animal conflict

KRISHNAGIRI: The Hosur forest division has launched "Water the wildlife", an initiative aimed at preventing human-animal conflict by ensuring availability of water in troughs built inside forest areas during summer. It has received good response from people within two days of the launch, said sources. Recently, Hosur wildlife warden K Karthikeyani invited people to donate to the department to celebrate special occasions in their families. The funds will be used to fill water in forest areas for wild animals. "There are about 70 water troughs in seven

forest ranges in Hosur forest division. During monsoon, most of the check dams and troughs will be filled. But during summer, animals come out in search of water and enter villages, which will lead to conflicts. At times, deers that cross the road in search of water get killed by speeding vehicles.

To avoid such issues, we appealed to the people to donate money to fill the water troughs. A trough can hold up to 10,000 litres of water. One tanker with 5,000 litres will cost Rs 1,500. Since Saturday, five people

have donated for the cause," wildlife warden told TNIE.

"The forest department sanctions funds to construct troughs and check dams. To fill water in them, especially during summer, is a challenge. People can support by sponsoring to fill water trough on their birthdays or special occasions. On Sunday, a Bengaluru based NGO donated ₹30,000. Last year, they renovated two water bodies in the forest," Karthikeyani said. Those who wish to support the initiative can contact 9047832156 or 1800 425 5135.



Memories that food triggers

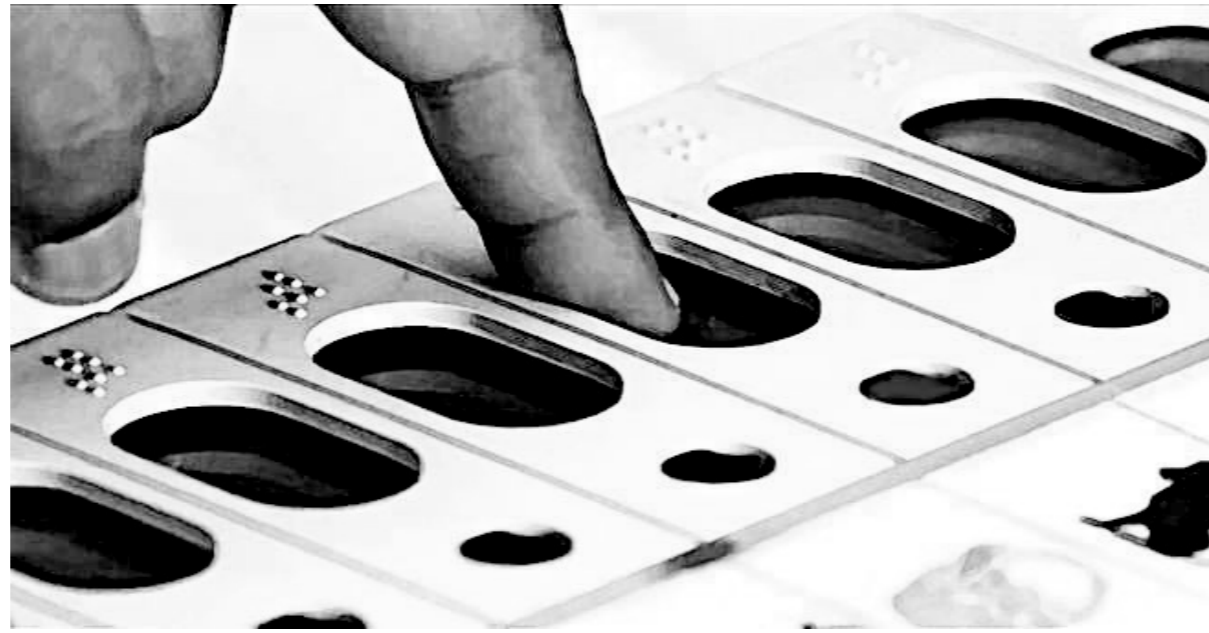
Travelling around, one has had good food, terrible food, excellent food and strange food. Also, 'food' that should not be called food. Years ago, when Hong Kong had just gone back to China, tired after travel, we searched high and we searched low for a vegetarian meal. None seemed to be forthcoming and we settled for bread and jam. At least that was available. That was a minor adventure. That was a far-off place. Let's come closer home and to some other minor forays into uncharted gastronomic territory. Places that are relatively free of the 'edible menace'. At a small dhaba in Spiti, one asked for thupka, which was something that one was familiar with and fond of. The soup was a generous dose of red chilli powder stirred in tepid water with an afterthought of noodles. At another time, in the village of Janjheli, tucked in the inner hills around Mandi, another dhaba offered meat in rajma. The thought of mutton cooked in kidney beans sounded deliciously exotic, but the result that arrived in a steel bowl was a disappointment — the flavour of both had been lost. This was no fusion, this was more like culinary fission. Janjheli, home of that rare meal of rajma-meat, like other parts of the Mandi parliamentary constituency, is going to see a fair bit of activity in the coming weeks. There is another place in another district that also witnesses its share of action, and is one where election hopefuls go to seek blessings of the divine. The temple of Baglamata lies near the little village of Bankhandi in the district of Kangra. It is nestled in a dip by an ancient peepal tree and the highway takes a long sweeping bend around it. Symbolic of the colour associated with the goddess, this is painted a bright yellow. Enshrined at various places around India, Baglamukhi is considered the eighth of the 10 Mahavidhyas, the 'Great Goddesses of Wisdom'. In belief, she holds the cudgel that dispels and destroys a believer's illusions — this great power can also destroy enmity. It is widely believed that Baglamata's blessings bring victory in elections and without them, there is no mandate. It was three decades ago in an old Ambassador car that a driver, who seemed to know every cow and goat in every village, took us to Bankhandi. My sister and I were taking what would perhaps be the last trip of just the two of us. After this, there would be spouses, children, the roll call of responsibility and a separation of several thousand miles. We would be lucky if we met once a year and talked about the weather and compared the noses and teeth of children who were now cousins; discussed whose jaw had originated with which grandfather. As we knew then, our parents would soon be gone and the bonds of the time when we were inseparable could loosen. We knew and did not speak of it, but this trip was to be the last chapter of what remained of childhood.

We rattled past the earth and stone walls covered with bright bracts of bougainvillea; we walked by banyans that proclaimed sacred domains. Karam Singh, the driver, had worked everything out for us; we were friends now. Ten days of companionship had taken care of that. He was the older one and he decided whom we would meet and where we would eat. Apart from a brief and passing delusion, one has had no plans of entering politics. Going to the temple of Baglamata was simply for darshan and lunch at this temple, that lies on the road between the village of Dehra and the town of Dharamsala.

In belief, Baglamata, the goddess at Bankhandi, is a Vaishnavi who shuns meat and animal sacrifices. We had been to the main temple and to the smaller one that enshrined a large Shivalinga. By the side is the temple's bhandara or storeroom. Smoke was wafting out of the windows and in the darkened haze of the room, a wood fire burned. We took our shoes off outside and were given our places on low wooden stools. Partly squatting and partly sitting, we watched in silence as the fresh corn flour was kneaded and the ball flattened by hand to make a small roti, which was then whirled into position to join the other half a dozen over the large griddle.

Magic moments of India's first election

Have we frittered away the wealth of civilised innocence of a nation for the mockery of hustings as they have come to pass



I was at home on winter vacation in a mofussil town of Punjab, where my father was posted as the Deputy Commissioner, and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was scheduled to address an election rally in the last week of December 1951. Here I was to witness the diligent administrator, criss-crossing his district from dawn to dusk, ensuring that all his subordinate revenue functionaries down to the patwari and the police constabulary at each thana understood the import of the historic change-in-the-making, and their onerous responsibility to maintain peace for free and fair polling. The PM's motor cavalcade was late by an hour and the crowd of several thousand peasants was becoming restive. However, the moment Nehru, in a brown woollen achkan and white churidar, mounted the podium, the audience fell into instant reverential silence. Though I was privileged to sit on one of the few chairs upon the rostrum, I too was so mesmerised in the shadow of the great man that I registered not a word of his speech.

He concluded, asking the audience to arise and join him in a full-throated chorus of 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai Ho', three times over! And that chant persisted for at least the next half hour, till the last of the gathering had dispersed!

Perhaps an unparalleled episode which captures the magic moments of India's first election comes from the book 'The Vanishing Indian Tiger: Diary of a Forest Officer', edited and gifted to us by the late Vice Admiral MP Awati. A Divisional Forest Officer posted in the interiors of Madhya Pradesh had set out on a 106-

km-long bumpy ride over a dirt track to establish a polling booth in Pathera village, along with one clerk,

two unarmed police constables and a sealed ballot box.

The district revenue authorities had alerted the headman of the village to expect the DFO's party. So, all the 20 huts had been given a fresh coat of mud and lime-wash for the big day. At the weekly market in their vicinity, the villagers had even acquired three national flags which were already aflutter, one each atop the hut of the headman and over the two huts vacated for the election party and the election booth! By 10 am the next morning, the entire village of about 60 persons of all ages had gathered outside the election booth. With utter humility and solemnity, the womenfolk first applied kum-kum on the ballot box and then garlanded it! The DFO then called out the 12 eligible listed voters and explained the object of the election, who the candidates were, what they stood for and the significance of their vote. Of course, we shall never know what passed through their minds but when the last ballot was cast by 11.30 am, they all arose in unison and led by the headman returned to their huts, cheerfully chrousing aloud, 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai Ho'.

Two days later, the sealed ballot box was matter-of-factly deposited at the district headquarters' treasury.

Fear of the other

As democracy begins its dance, xenophobia begins to peak — as do various other phobias of distrust of the 'other'. The fear of the stranger can be explained in evolutionary terms. In his book 'Snakes, Sunsets, and Shakespeare', evolutionary biologist Gordon Orians says: "Throughout human history, we have distrusted people outside our clan, our tribe... We believe strangers will do us harm. Why? In deep time, hominids outside the family group were likely to be a raiding party."

We're not living in ancient times now, of course, and wars and raids across the borders are very, very rare; we now know meetings with strangers often go very well — in foreign lands, two persons, each a stranger to the other, are often at their best behaviour because they believe themselves to be representatives of their tribe/country. We also know that danger often lurks at home, in the shape of predators who may sexually exploit the young, or relatives who may covet property or other possessions. It's not the stranger

who's the biggest danger when you're seemingly safe. Sport, the celebration of extreme athleticism and teamwork, chips at xenophobia and racism of an athlete, reducing it to dust; but the fans, roused by tribal feelings for their team, often turn despicable bigots. This writer has heard chants of 'go back to your country' — peppered with unprintable expletives — spat by home team fans at Indian and Pakistani fans in cricket grounds of England and Australia; or horrible exchanges between Brazilian and Argentinean football fans in Rio de Janeiro; West Indian players called 'kalu' by fans in Indian grounds — and a black England player called 'kaliya' in an England ground! During the IPL, Indian teammates of Daren Sammy, the former West Indies captain, used to call him 'kalu', and he believed it to be a term of endearment. Indian sports persons have spoken about racism — colourism, rather — in sport. Abhinav Mukund, the Tamil Nadu cricketer who has played for India, spoke of being stigmatised for his dark skin:

West Asia on the boil

Iran-Israel conflict impacts crude oil prices

ISRAEL launched a tit-for-tat attack on Iran on Friday, days after Tehran unleashed drones and missiles on Israeli territory. The development has raised the spectre of a wider West Asian conflict amid the prevailing hostilities between Israel and the Iran-backed militant group Hamas. The reverberations of the Iran-Israel confrontation are already being felt beyond the region, with the benchmark Brent crude price rising to above \$90 a barrel before falling a bit. This is a matter of concern for India, which imports over 85 per cent of its crude oil requirements. A steep hike in global oil prices could significantly raise the country's oil import bill and make the rupee depreciate due to the larger outgo of foreign exchange. It's the purchase of cheaper oil from sanctions-hit Russia that helped India reduce its import expenditure over the past year or so. Supply disruptions caused by geopolitical turbulence have prompted India, the world's third biggest



oil consumer and importer, to firm up plans to build its first commercial crude oil strategic reserve. Indian

Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd, a special purpose vehicle created by the government, has invited bids for constructing an underground storage facility in Karnataka. However, the project is expected to be completed only by 2029-30. In the immediate future, India will continue to be heavily dependent on oil imports. The resilience demonstrated by the country in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Ukraine war is now being put to the test by the shocks originating from West Asia.

India has been quick to express concern over the 'new emerging realities' and has noted that any escalation of hostilities between Israel and Iran will threaten peace and security in the region. A global economic upheaval can be avoided if neutral countries like India impress upon both sides the vital importance of exercising restraint.

Rollercoaster journey of India's political economy

Rahul Gandhi's image of being anti-business and pro-poor made him suspect in the eyes of the capitalist class. In contrast, Modi successfully projected a pro-business image.

When this column celebrates birth anniversaries of famous writers, how can April go by without a column on William Shakespeare (April 23, 1564 — April 23, 1616), on his 460th birth anniversary. It is true that Shakespeare came to us with colonialism, may even have been introduced to India as part of a 'civilising mission', may have been seen as a good foundation for an education meant to turn out officials working for the white rulers, but Shakespeare came to occupy a different place in the theatrical (and later cinematic) world and was also seen as a playwright who could be approached and read from various Indian points of view. It is very often said that after the blackout of Shakespeare during the high nationalistic phase, we got back to his plays only after Independence with a new confidence, beginning with translations and productions by Utpal Dutt in Bengali.

While this may be true, early productions and translations of Shakespeare constantly Indianised his plays. While visiting troupes performed Shakespeare in Bombay (Mumbai) and Calcutta (Kolkata) from the second half of the 18th century, his plays began to be performed by Indians in the 19th century. In Mysore, the Maharaja was the patron of the Palace Company which was formed in 1881. They performed Shakespeare's plays in Kannada and the translations changed the settings and the names of characters so as to not alienate the audiences. This resulted in interesting changes. Ananda Rao, who translated 'Romeo and Juliet', writes that many parts of the play would appeal to only an English audience and had to be changed. Most significantly, he changes the ending of 'Ramavarma-Lilavati' (1889) by adding a short scene where the friar prays to God that the lovers be saved, and God obliges. The lovers come back alive and live happily ever after. Ananda



Rao felt that according to Indian conventions, plays should have a happy ending. You can see such changes in many Indian languages.

While changing names and settings is almost to be expected, it is this imposition of Indian theatrical conventions that make late 19th century

translations/performance interesting. Girish Chandra Ghosh, one of the major figures in Bengali theatre, translated 'Macbeth' in 1893. The changes he effects in the play start right at the beginning! While he kept close to Shakespeare otherwise, the structure he adopts is of Sanskrit plays. Sanskrit plays begin

with naandi, a prayer or benedictory verse, followed by a prologue that speaks about the play to be performed. Ghosh says here that this play of his is his token of appreciation to the great playwright Shakespeare. There are other ways in which Ghosh Indianises the play, making it speak to the Bengali audience. All this is to point out that we have a history of appropriating Shakespeare's plays, enriching our theatres, while our conventions and worldview had an impact on the plays. So, while it is true that Utpal Dutt brought insouciance to the translation and performance of Shakespeare, which could be seen later in Habib Tanvir's versions as well, it is only a renewed attempt by a resurgent Independent India. So Shakespeare was performed not just in different languages, but also in different performance traditions like Kathakali. Shakespeare has had such an impact that we see echoes of his plays in many of our movies made in India. However, I want to highlight the adaptations of Shakespeare by Hindi cinema which I have seen and liked. Gulzar's 'Angoor' (1982), which is based on 'Comedy of Errors', is a brilliant adaptation. I recommend that you should watch it if you haven't or even if you did a long time ago! Jumping to this century, I will recommend Vishal Bhardwaj's trilogy — 'Maqbool' (2003), 'Omkaara' (2006) and 'Haider' (2014). They are based on 'Macbeth', 'Othello' and 'Hamlet', respectively. 'Macbeth' becomes a gangster film set in the Bombay underworld, 'Omkaara' about the political system in Uttar Pradesh, and 'Haider' about the Kashmir conflict in the mid-1990s. Thus, the colonial imposition Shakespeare still inspires and entertains us, nor have his plays lost their political edge under a different sky! He can speak to us about us!



Ayurvedic

tips to keep skin problems away!

How to keep skin problems away!

Avoid spicy and oily food:

To keep your skin healthy in the monsoon season, avoid spicy, oily and sour foods. The high humidity levels cause the digestive system to weaken and heavy food can lead to an upset stomach. These types of food also aggravate pitta which is responsible for a variety of skin breakouts and eruptions in this season. Eat light and easily digestible foods, cooked or steamed vegetables, zucchini, squash, pumpkin, steamed salad, fruits, moong dal, khichree, corn, chickpea flour, and oatmeal etc.

Say no to pitta aggravating beverages:

We understand that you can't begin your day without a cuppa but try to reduce your daily intake. Coffee and alcohol is a strict no because it is notoriously known for aggravating pitta and acidity. Replace them with pitta pacifying herbal teas.

Keep your skin dry:

Getting a little wet or sometimes getting drenched is not uncommon when you are outdoors during the rainy season. However,

don't let your skin remain wet for a long time while enjoying the monsoon showers. It is important to keep your skin folds and feet dry and clean at all times. Damp skin is a breeding ground for fungal infections.

Wheat grass, a tonic for your skin:

Wheatgrass is a tonic for your skin. It is helpful in boosting the immune system and helping you in warding off or controlling skin disorders in monsoon. A healthy immune system is reflected in a healthy and glowing skin. Wheatgrass is rich in antioxidants and is instrumental in detoxifying the blood.

Drink a lot of fluids:

No, we are not talking about the one that gets you tipsy! Drink at least 8-10 glasses of clean water daily. Though you need to keep dry outside in this season to prevent skin problems it is important to consume adequate quantities of water to keep your skin hydrated.

Eat fresh: Eat fresh and unprocessed food to keep your body and your skin functioning at an optimum level. Don't rely on packed, refrigerated and processed food. Instead of ordering pizzas, burgers or feasting on chips, relish some fresh homemade food. Eat a lot of fruits and green vegetables.

Avoid alcohol-based skin cleansers:

You should avoid alcohol-based skin cleansers because it irritates and dries your skin. Instead use a herbal soap or cleanser regularly to get rid of excess oil, grime and dust, and of course to keep you skin free of bacterial infections.

Use cooling herbs:

It is beneficial to use the herbs that have cooling effects on the body (pitta pacifying) such as fennel, coriander seeds and Indian gooseberry (amla) for a glowing skin in monsoon. Amla helps to detoxify the liver and aids digestion - and is also a good source of Vitamin C and other minerals. One of the benefits of taking it regularly is a flawless complexion.



Three office Makeup looks for the season



Boardroom presentation

Highlight one of your features, either the lips or eyes. For instance, colour your lips in a bright shade and let your eyes have the bare minimum of colour. If red is too bright for you, pick lip colours like plum or burgundy.

Dinner party

An office party or post-work hangout allow you to bring a little drama to your look. Do a winged cat-eye and keep the liner thick on the lower inner rims as well. Use a pink lip gloss to finish off.

Corporate lunch

A hint of peachy blush will add some freshness to a dull afternoon. Outline your lips with a lip pencil in a corresponding shade and fill it in with a creamy matte lipstick in the same shade. You can choose

from colours like light pink, peach, nude or even a lighter shade of brown. Make a thin outline around your eyes, and don't make it too high.

Dos and don'ts

Stick to neutral colours for a corporate office environment

Don't overdo the colours and compact Opt for blushers in colours like rose and apricot. Indigo blue, browns and grey are great options for eye shadows and liners.

Don't wear yellow-tinged colours like coral and fuchsia, since they could make your teeth appear yellow

Keep the foundation to a minimum

For an alert look, don't forget the mascara and curl your lashes with an eyelash curler before stepping out Air-conditioned environment dehydrates the skin. So, keep lip balm and hand lotion handy in your bag



Why coconut oil is good for

Your Skin

However, coconut oil according to Ayurvedic experts is also considered to be one of the best ways to treat any skin-related disorders. Here are a few problems that can be healed using coconut oil.

Acne and acne scars

The application of coconut oil can help reduce the occurrence of acne. Mostly acne happens

Coconut oil is considered one of the best oils that is mostly used for treating any kind of hair problems — be it dandruff, itchy scalp etc.

when the pores of your skin gets blocked. Coconut oil not only helps clear the pores but also reduce the swelling around the area. Further, acne scars can also be treated using coconut oil. Regular application of this oil will lessen the scar and also clear your complexion.

Itchy skin

Another advantage of using coconut oil on your skin is that it helps treat itchy skin. It soothes the skin and also hydrates it so there is no way you can develop dry skin.

Cures skin rashes

Skin rashes are common during this season. Thus, the application of coconut oil will make your skin super soft and will reduce the occurrence of rashes.

2,018 Criminal Cases Against MPs, MLAs Decided In 2023, Supreme Court Told

New Delhi: Special courts for trial of criminal cases related to Members of Parliament and Members of Legislative Assembly decided more than 2,000 cases in 2023, the Supreme Court has been informed.

In an affidavit filed by senior advocate Vijay Hansaria, who has been appointed amicus curiae in a PIL seeking expeditious disposal of criminal cases against MPs/MLAs, said that more directions are needed for speedy adjudication of pending trials and their investigation under strict monitoring by the respective high courts, as there are around 501 candidates with criminal cases who are contesting the Lok Sabha elections in the first two phases. Referring to a report of NGO 'Association of Democratic Reforms for the Lok Sabha elections 2024 Phase I and Phase II', Mr Hansaria, assisted by advocate Sneha Kalita, said that out of 2,810 candidates (Phase I - 1,618 candidates and Phase II - 1,192 candidates), 501 (18 per cent) candidates have criminal cases against them, out of which, 327 (12 per cent) are serious criminal cases

(punishable with imprisonment of 5 years and more).

The same was the position in 2019 Lok Sabha elections in which out of 7,928 candidates, 1,500 candidates (19%) had criminal cases, out of which 1,070 candidates (13%) were serious criminal cases. However, out of 514 elected members of 17th Lok Sabha (2019-2024), 225 members (44%) had criminal cases against them. "Thus, the candidates with criminal cases have won more seats than candidates without criminal cases. In this context, it is necessary that this court may pass further orders for expeditious disposal of pending trials and investigation under strict monitoring by the respective high courts," the affidavit said. Mr Hansaria, who is assisting the court in the PIL filed by Ashwini Upadhyay for speedy disposal of cases against the lawmakers, said, "It may be noted that in view of the direction issued by this court in the present proceedings, the steps taken by the respective high courts, and expeditious hearing by the special court MP/MLA, more than 2000 cases have been decided in

the year 2023. However, a large number of cases are pending, and many of them are for a long period." He gave a tabular chart based on the information received from different high courts, under which as on January 1, 2023, there were 4,697 criminal cases against the lawmakers and 2,018 cases were decided last year. The affidavit said 1,746 fresh criminal cases were filed in 2023 against the MPs/MLAs and therefore total of 4,474 cases remain pending as on January 1, 2024. The maximum, 766 cases out of 1,300, as on January 1, 2023, were adjudicated by the special courts in Uttar Pradesh. Delhi, which had 105 cases at the start of last year, disposed of 103 cases by December 31, 2023. Some of the big states, like Maharashtra, decided 232 cases out of 476 cases against MPs/MLAs as on January 1, 2023, West Bengal 13 out of 26, Gujarat 30 out of 48, Karnataka 150 out of 226, Kerala 132 out of 370, and Bihar decided 171 cases out of 525 cases.

It is thus necessary that the High Court may call for a report from the presiding officers of the Special Court MP/MLA of all those



cases which are pending for 3 or more years with reason for long pendency along with a copy of the order sheet of last one year.

"It may be clarified that only a copy of the order sheet is to be sent and not the entire case file so that the trial is not affected. The High Court may thereafter, pass appropriate orders on micro examination of each case with a positive direction that a trial may be completed within one year," he said. He sought direction from the top court for creating a model website on the pattern of National Judicial Data Grid for uploading real-time information on the

progress of the trial of cases against lawmakers. "For this purpose, this court may constitute a committee under the chairmanship of a sitting Judge of this court. The committee may comprise of Chief Justice/ Judges of some of the high courts, a member of e-Committee, a nominee National Informatics Centre (NIC) and such other persons as this court may think appropriate," the affidavit said.

On micro monitoring of cases pending for more than three years, Mr Hansaria said that the high courts (Allahabad, Delhi, Punjab & Haryana, Telangana and Tripura) have monitored the progress of the trial of the cases by passing effective detailed orders, while other high courts have only sought information of the pending cases. "This court may consider passing appropriate directions so that the high courts in the Suo Motu writ petitions registered in terms of the judgment and order dated November 9, 2023 to closely monitor the progress and pass suitable directions wherever necessary," the affidavit said.

Anti-terror agency NIA raids 9 places in Jammu and Kashmir in terror case

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) conducted raids in at least nine locations in Jammu and Kashmir in connection with a terror funding case on Monday. According to sources, the NIA teams conducted the raids along with the police and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel. The NIA



team raided the house of one Muzamil Shafi Khan, 25, from Qalamdan Pora in Srinagar. Muzamil works at a cosmetics company, Revlon India.

The agency also raided the house of one Mushtaq Ahmed Dar, a retired government bus employee. Recently, the NIA arrested two people from Chennai in connection with a terror funding case. The anti-terror agency had conducted searches at multiple locations across seven states in a case related to the radicalisation of prisoners by a Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist in a Bengaluru prison. A total of 17 places across seven states, including Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka, were searched by the NIA.

Chief of Defence Staff Anil Chauhan embarks on official visit to France

CDS General Anil Chauhan is also scheduled to interact with the senior civil and military leadership of France during his visit, which is aimed at further boosting robust defence ties between the two nations.

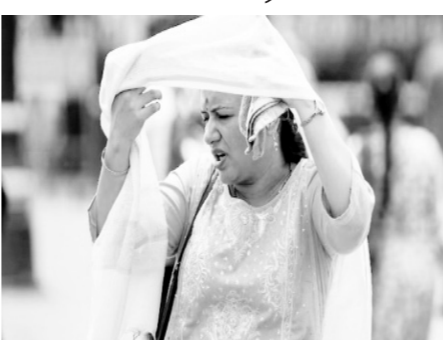
New Delhi: Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan on Sunday embarked on an official visit to France. The visit is aimed to further reinforce the "robust defence ties" between the two nations, which have gained considerable momentum in the last few years. During his visit, General Anil Chauhan is scheduled to interact with the senior civil and military leadership of France, including his counterpart, the French CDS (CEMA), General Thierry Burkhard, Director IHEDN (National Institute for Higher



Defence Studies), and Director General Armament. Gen Anil Chauhan will visit the French Space Command, the Land Forces Command and address student officers of the Army and Joint Staff Course at Ecole Militaire (School of Military). The CDS is scheduled to visit and interact with a few reputed defence industries in France, including Safran Group, Naval Group, and Dassault Aviation. General Chauhan is also scheduled to visit the Neuve-Chappelle Memorial and the Indian Memorial at Villers-Guislain and lay a wreath in honour of the brave Indian soldiers who perished during the First World War.

Odisha, Bengal, Jharkhand reel under severe heatwave, rain on cards

New Delhi: Parts of India, especially the eastern states, continue to swelter in heatwave conditions even as the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast no immediate respite. In its latest bulletin, the weather department predicted heatwave conditions in Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh till April 26. Day temperatures in Odisha and Gangetic West Bengal are expected to surpass 40 degrees Celsius today. Besides these states, hot and humid weather is very likely in parts of several southern states and Union Territories, such as coastal Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Puducherry and Tamil Nadu, among others. The latest IMD forecast came even as the maximum temperature settled at between 42 and 45 degrees Celsius on Sunday in parts of Odisha, Rayalaseema, Gangetic West Bengal, Jharkhand, Vidarbha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, and



Andhra Pradesh.

Odisha, Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand experienced severe heatwave conditions. The highest temperature in the country was recorded at 46 degrees Celsius in Bahargora district in East Singhum in Jharkhand. There is, however, a possibility for light rainfall in some of the eastern states as predicted by the IMD. Its latest bulletin has forecast light to moderate rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning in Sub-

Himalayan Bengal from April 22 to April 24, Gangetic Bengal and Jharkhand on April 23, and in Odisha from April 22 to April 23. The ongoing heatwave is the second such spell this month. The first one impacted parts of Odisha, Jharkhand, Gangetic West Bengal, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat. The Odisha government on Sunday declared summer vacations in all schools in the state from April 25 due to the heatwave conditions. Additionally, the school timings for three days between April 22 and April 24 were changed and will now run from 6.30 am to 10.30 am. Jharkhand has also announced a change in school timings starting April 22 until further notice. Under the new schedule, students from kindergarten to Class 8 will attend schools from 7 am to 11.30 am, while seniors from Class 9 to 12 will continue classes till noon, an order by the education department said.

"Forced To Suffer Everyday": Ghazipur Residents After Landfill Fire

New Delhi: Toxic fumes from the Ghazipur landfill on Monday sent residents gasping for breath and cursing politicians over the garbage mountain that still blights the city. Thick plumes of smoke still rose skywards from the Ghazipur landfill on Monday, hours after a major fire broke out there. According to the Delhi Fire Service, the landfill witnessed a big fire Sunday evening due to the gases produced in the massive mountain of waste. It's been 15 hours since the fire broke out. This smoke is not any common smoke, it is very poisonous. We are unable to keep our eyes open due to irritation and are breathing with difficulty," Ram Kumar from Gharoli village, close to the landfill, said. Several residents told PTI Videos that due to smoke they were not able to send their children to



school. They accused the MCD and the city government of not taking any action to give a better life to them. "It's been 15 years. Ministers visit us only during elections. But after that, not a single one returns to our door to know if we are facing any problem. This landfill is a curse for us. We are forced to suffer foul smells every day. And now this fire has caused several health problems for us. Why do they

(ministers) want us to die?" Ilayas Khan said. Rakesh Kumar, a heart patient, said he had to move to his relative's place because he could not bear the suffocation any longer. "And this is not only my condition, several people are leaving their house due to the same reason," he said. Bilkis, another resident, said the landfill still sits where it does because politicians never made good on their promises. "Now they will be here again, showing their concern just to take votes. Nothing will happen," she said. Mehruz said when he purchased a house in the area around 20 years ago, the landfill wasn't this big. "There was nothing such as this huge landfill now. Why is the government not able to find any proper solution? We are even unable to send our children to school due to smoke," he said.

Jammu & Kashmir Boy Secures AIR-388 After Cracking NEET And JKAS Exams

Ghulam Maya Din from Bharot village, Rajouri, Jammu & Kashmir, ranked 388 in UPSC CSE 2023 after a medical background and clearing JKAS. He credits his family for support and highlights the educational challenges in remote areas while encouraging others to pursue civil services.

New Delhi: Hailing from the quaint village of Bharot nestled within the remote and rugged terrain of the Pirpanjal mountains,

Ghulam Maya Din emerges as a beacon of inspiration with his remarkable achievement of securing an impressive All India Rank (AIR) 388 in the prestigious UPSC Civil Services Examination 2023. His journey, originating from the tranquil backdrop of Thanamandi tehsil, Rajouri district in Jammu & Kashmir, embodies resilience, determination, and unwavering dedication. Prior to this illustrious feat, Ghulam had already exhibited his mettle by conquering the challenges of the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) and pursuing his medical education at the esteemed Government Medical College in Jammu. Subsequently, he triumphed in the rigorous Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service (JKAS) examinations, showcasing his multifaceted capabilities and tenacity.

In an exclusive interaction with ANI, Ghulam Maya Din humbly attributes his triumph to the unwavering support and encouragement bestowed upon him by his cherished family, particularly his parents and sisters. He reverently acknowledges



their invaluable contributions, underscoring that his journey, though arduous, was made smoother by their unwavering presence and guidance.

Reflecting on the challenges faced by aspirants from similar backgrounds, Ghulam underscores the evolving landscape of educational opportunities, propelled by the burgeoning accessibility to information. He poignantly observes the diminishing barriers between regions like Rajouri and Jammu, foreseeing a promising trajectory where remote aspirants are empowered to pursue their aspirations with greater ease and resources at their disposal. Moreover,

Ghulam seeks to dismantle prevalent misconceptions and barriers surrounding prestigious examinations, affirming that success knows no geographical boundaries. His groundbreaking achievement serves as a testament to the potential harbored within every individual, regardless of their background or circumstances. With humility and foresight, he envisions his triumph as a catalyst for inspiring a new generation of aspirants to dare to dream and strive for excellence in the realm of civil services.

In imparting wisdom to aspiring candidates, Ghulam espouses the virtues of diligence, resilience, and strategic utilization of resources. Emphasizing the need to shun distractions and harness the power of social media as a tool for learning and networking, he advocates for maintaining an insatiable curiosity and unwavering focus not only towards UPSC examinations but also towards other esteemed government competitions. His sage advice serves as a guiding light for those embarking on a similar path, illuminating.

"Government Has Increased Karnataka's Funding By 4 Times": BJP Chief

Dharwad, Karnataka: BJP national president JP Nadda on Sunday highlighted the significant increase in funding for Karnataka by the Government of India, which was ₹ 80,000 crore previously and has now been increased to ₹ 2.93 lakh crores. JP Nadda said, "Today, the Congress released an advertisement on how much (funds) they used to give (to Karnataka). Today, the Government of India has increased Karnataka's funding by 4 times. How is the Congress able to make allegations against the Central Government? They forgot that they used to give ₹ 80,000 crore to Karnataka. And today, PM Modi gives ₹ 2.93 lakh crores." JP Nadda pointed out Congress' long-standing failures, emphasizing their inability to alleviate poverty over six decades.

When Jawaharlal Nehru gave the slogan of 'Gareebi Hatao', there was 50% poverty. When Indira Gandhi said 'Gareebi Hatao', there was 60% poverty. Rajiv Gandhi admitted that only 15 paise reached the poor out of 1 rupee. Now, Rahul Gandhi says that he will finish poverty in one blow,



which they could not do in 60 years. This happened because of their 'Drawing room' politics." JP Nadda further emphasized the efficacy of current poverty alleviation schemes under the Modi government, particularly the 'Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Anna Yojana', which he described as the world's largest scheme for the poor. He noted, "80 crore people are getting a free ration every month. Out of 80 crore, 4 crore are from Karnataka." "As a result of the scheme, 25 crore people who were Below Poverty Line are now Above Poverty Line, according to IMF and NITI Aayog," he said.

Earlier, BJP President JP Nadda attacked the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, saying that they indulged in corruption, promoted nepotism, enjoyed the cream, had fun and forgot the public. Hitting out at the UPA government, JP Nadda said, "What happened during the UPA government? They did corruption, promoted nepotism, enjoyed the cream, had fun, and forgot the public."

Go skintastic This summer!



Are skin woes dampening your summer spirit? Fret not, here's addressing a host of skin-related queries so that you can make the most of that gorgeous summer shift dress.

Sweltering weather is synonymous with rising hems and plunging necklines. So don't let problem-ridden skin come in the way of daring summer dressing. "Eat for beauty," advises nutritionist and food consultant, Naini Setalvad. Paying a little attention to the changing needs of your body this summer can go a long way.

What are the diet essentials for the summer months?

Setalvad recommends a heavy breakfast, a light lunch and a medium dinner. "Fried food, red meat and dry fruits (except raisins) should be avoided. Eggs are heat producing and should be kept to a minimum; fish is a good option. Light grains like rice and wheat are okay for the diet but millets should be avoided," she states. "Yoghurt cools down the digestive system. So try to include raitas in your meals or use yoghurt as a salad dressing," she adds. Dr. Apratim Goel, dermatologist, says that antioxidants

helps to counter the damage caused by over exposure to the sun. "Raw tomatoes are an excellent source of antioxidants. The bottom line for great summer skin, however, is maximum hydration," she explains.

What does one drink in summer for optimum hydration?

Setalvad strongly recommends raw mango drinks (popularly known as aam panna in most parts of India). Avoid alcohol and sugary fluids like sherbets and aerated drinks. Salted lemon water, buttermilk, jal jeera and caffeine-free herbal infusions like peppermint or coriander drinks are ideal.

Does a predominantly fruit and vegetable diet ensure great skin?

Not all veggies are ideal for summer. Pumpkins, snake gourds, cucumbers, tomatoes and lettuce are good for light summer meals. Setalvad suggests incorporating slices of raw mango into salads or snacks. "Mango pickle is an excellent option since it helps to replenish the essential salts lost due to perspiration," she explains. Melons and mangoes are well known 'summer fruits'. However, the innocuous mango is often thought to be

responsible for pimples. "Don't blend mangoes with milk or sugar," warns Setalvad. Mango is alkaline while milk is acidic, resulting in a disrupted pH. This causes indigestion and skin break outs when the body tries to eliminate the accumulated toxins. Setalvad also suggests sprinkling dry ginger powder dry ginger powder on mango in order to reduce the risk of flatulence.

What is the basic skin care regimen that one should follow during summer?

Your skin needs moisturising even in summer. Dr Goel recommends making an emulsion of your regular moisturiser by mixing it with a little water and applying this to the face and neck. She suggests a natural remedy to rejuvenate tired, summer

skin. "Pack grated cucumber in a piece of muslin cloth and place this on the face for 20 minutes," she suggests. Fungal infections proliferate in summer due to dampness induced by excessive perspiration. Using a light anti-fungal dusting powder can help nix rashes and infections.

How does one choose the right sunscreen?

'Sunscreen' is a golden word in summer.

But it is a fact that it doesn't agree with all skin types. In such cases, make the most of physical protection in the form of broad-rimmed hats, sunglasses, full-sleeved cotton clothing, etc. "If sunscreen is too greasy for you, use aloe vera and calamine. This is especially good for acne-prone skin," says Dr Goel. He explains that over-the-counter sunscreens are of two kinds chemical and physical.

"The chemical ones need to be applied 20 minutes prior to sun exposure

whereas the physical ones (that contain titanium or zinc oxides and benzones) act instantly," she says.

Handy tips

- As inviting as they are, avoid pack aged facial wipes as most of them contain alcohol that could eventually harm your skin.
- Mineral water sprays are a good alternative when there is no provision for a face wash.
- Use a cold compress after long periods of sun exposure. It helps to instantly cool down the skin. Applying tomato juice or buttermilk relieves minor sunburn.

How mommyhood

Changes a woman

Becoming a mother is one of those experiences that changes a woman forever — and not just physically. These alterations are subtly visible in the way her personality undergoes a makeover once she gives birth and becomes engrossed in rearing her child. There are psychological, physiological and emotional changes, most of which are for the better — thereby elevating this phase in a woman's life to be one of the epitomes of her existence.

The deeply satisfying phase enriches her

Motherhood is demanding, however, at the same time, it is deeply satisfying too and this contentment enriches the mother to a large extent. Weight management and Ayurveda professional Dr Amrapali Patil says, "A mother instinctively knows that she is a special creation because she alone has been given the power to bring forth another human life and this builds up her resilience, character, strength, happiness, confidence, faith, love — all these characteristics reflect externally, making the mother look more charming and charismatic."

Hormones play their magic and enhances her beauty

A new mom -to-be's body is flooded with pregnancy-related hormones,



say doctors. These tend to add a lovely glow to the skin, which make her appear radiant and fresh. The quality of her hair also improves, and hair fall reduces due to these hormones, say experts. The body develops soft curves and the breasts look fuller. Cosmetologist Dr Jaishree Manchanda says, "A woman's blood flow changes during pregnancy. This increased blood flow happens in order to help nourish the growing baby, but by a happy accident, it can make a woman look gorgeous and radiant too. So, once a woman is pregnant, her skin glows with an unmistakable radiance."

Motherhood becomes a source of strength

Being a mother requires strength and the

process of going into labour and delivering a baby requires a woman to have faith and vanquish fear. Patil says, "This enhances her confidence further (a concept referred to as the Aishwarya Bhava in Maharishi Patanjali and Ashthanga Yoga). This adds to her internal stamina to take on life and manifests externally as enhanced body confidence." And one of the best things that a woman can wear is her confidence.

The immense power of pure love becomes a reality

Becoming a mother increases a woman's ability to love by many folds. Patil adds, "Love is a very powerful emotion and tends to make the facial features become tender, soft and less fierce. Such a face is more joyful, appealing and attractive."

Tips a mother can follow to enhance her beauty

Though one day in the year is not enough to celebrate motherhood, at least on Mother's Day, many acknowledge the mother who is invariably taken for granted on all other days. Mothers need to take care of themselves — their hair, skin etc and Dr Manchanda gives us tips...

Hair:

Have a healthy diet that is rich in antioxidants to strengthen the roots of your hair.

Acne:

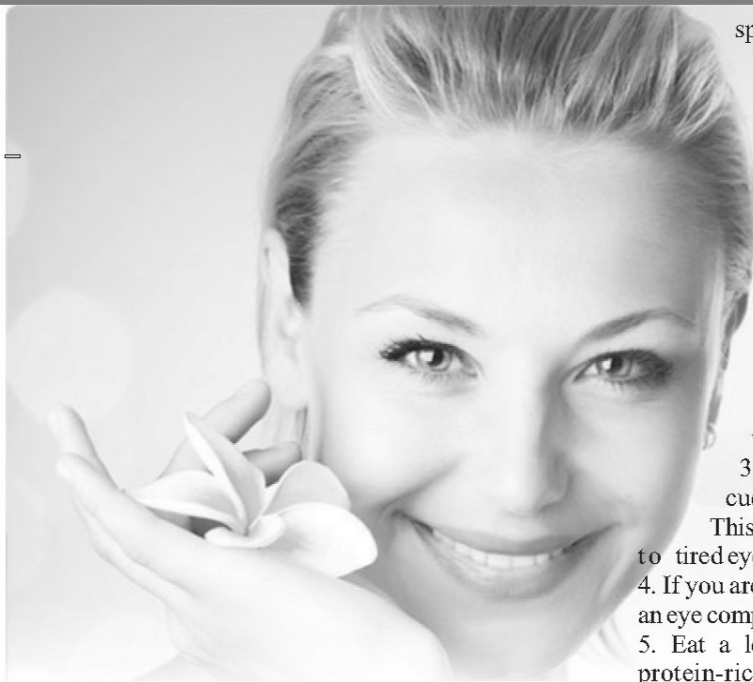
The best natural ingredients to deal with this are aloe vera and eucalyptus.

Dark circles and puffy eyes:

Sleep for seven to eight hours, eat healthy and stay hydrated.

Skin:

Eat a lot of green leafy vegetables. Use cocoa butter, almond or olive oil on skin to avoid stretch marks.



10 Tips to rejuvenate your eyes this summer

You might have already started wearing your sunglasses and slathering on sunscreen thanks to the summer heat. In spite of taking all these precautions, there are still high chances that you may end up catching an eye allergy because of the rising temperature. Here are some simple yet effective tips that you can try to rejuvenate your eyes...



1. If you get conjunctivitis, ensure that you consult a doctor and use your eye drops regularly. Maintain hygiene so that it doesn't spread to people around you. Conjunctivitis is highly contagious so try to wash your hands as much as possible.
2. Do simple eye exercises every morning. This is especially essential for those who spend hours in front of the computer screen everyday. Wash your eyes with a splash of cold water at least twice a day.
3. To relax, place cucumbers on your eyes. This will provide a lot of relief to tired eyes.
4. If you are prone to dust allergy, use an eye compress.
5. Eat a lot of green veggies and protein-rich foods — these are excellent for eye health.
6. Don't expose your eyes directly to air conditioner. This may cause your eyes to get dry and sensitive.
7. Don't share your makeup products, especially the ones that are applied on your eyes. This may also result in spreading infection.
8. Give yourself an eye massage. Use your thumb and index finger to give your eyes a soothing massage. Much needed this summer!
9. If you are a swimmer, make sure to wear water goggles.
10. Sleep for at least six to eight hours a day. That in itself is a good way to rejuvenate your eyes. If you suffer from dry eyes, use soothing eye drops to get some relief. Don't forget to blink your eyes often.

India's direct tax collections jump 18% to Rs 19.58 lakh crore in FY24

NEW DELHI: India's net direct tax collections rose by 17.7% to reach Rs 19.58 lakh crore in FY24 on account of significant growth in personal income tax. The collections slightly exceeded the revised estimates of Rs 19.45 lakh crore by 0.7%, as per the government data. The original direct tax collection target was Rs 18.23 lakh crore, which was later revised to Rs 19.45 lakh crore. Presently, collections have surpassed both the initial and revised estimates by 7.7% and 0.7% respectively, despite a significant increase in refunds.

The surge in Personal Income Taxes elevated its share to 53.3% from 50.06% previously, while Corporate Taxes' contribution decreased to 46.5% from 49.6%. Direct taxes consist of personal income tax (including securities transaction tax) and corporate income tax (CIT). An increase in direct taxes signals growth in both personal income and business profitability. The Net Personal Income Tax collection (including securities transaction tax or STT) in FY 24 stood at Rs 10.44 lakh crore with a growth of 25.23% year-on-year. Meanwhile, the provisional net corporate tax collection in FY24 stood at Rs 9.11 lakh crore, indicating a 10.26% growth compared to the previous year's collection of Rs 8.26 lakh crore. Refunds of Rs 3.79 lakh crore have been issued in the FY 2023-24 showing an increase of 22.74% over the refunds of Rs 3.09 lakh crore issued in FY 2022-23," the government said in a statement.

India Needs Rate Cuts to Reach Potential Growth, Say MPC Members

NEW DELHI: India needs to cut interest rates to help its economy reach its potential growth but the members of the South Asian nation's monetary policy committee (MPC) are divided on the timing of such cuts, interviews with two external members suggest. "We are in a catch-up growth phase. Growth has to go up in order to create employment and jobs for young people, for the investment cycle to take off, and so on," Ashima Goyal, one of three external members on the six-member MPC, told Reuters. "To the extent inflation is within our tolerance band and is approaching target, we have not yet reached potential. That means we can afford to grow at higher rates." Growth currently being robust — at an estimated 7.6% for 2023/24 — and several uncertainties on the inflation front, it was better to maintain stability and thus, a status quo on rates. Earlier this month, the MPC kept the lending rate steady at 6.5% for the seventh meeting in a row after having raised it by a total of 250 basis points between May 2022 and February 2023. The market expects rate cuts only in early 2025, with Morgan Stanley ruling out any cuts this fiscal year. India's success in the disinflation process should not distract the MPC from the inflation trajectory's vulnerability to frequent supply-side shocks, Governor Shaktikanta Das wrote in the minutes of that meeting released on Friday.

Jayanth Varma, another external MPC member, was the only member to vote for a rate cut for a second straight meeting. "My vote for a rate cut in nominal terms is actually a vote against rising real rates when growth is slackening," Varma told Reuters in an interview after the minutes were released. "High real rates could also hinder private sector capital investment, which is critical in an environment of fiscal consolidation."

While Goyal agreed the real neutral rate would stay above 1% if rates were cut, and keep monetary policy contractionary, she was wary about the 2000s, when an overheated capex cycle in the private sector led to large borrowings and a surge in defaults. "So, we don't want that kind of capex cycle. We want a slow and sustainable cycle and that seems to be happening," Goyal said, also in an interview after the minutes were released.

Tesla cuts the price of its "Full Self Driving" system by a third to 8,000

NEW DELHI: Tesla knocked roughly a third off the price of its "Full Self Driving" system — which can't drive itself and so drivers must remain alert and be ready to intervene — to \$8,000 from \$12,000, according to the company website. Tesla CEO and billionaire Elon Musk promised in 2019 that there would be a fleet of robotaxis on the road in 2020, but the promise has yet to materialize, and the system still has to be supervised by humans. The cuts, which occurred on Saturday, follow Tesla's moves to slash \$2,000 off the prices of three of its five models in the United States late Friday. That's the latest evidence of the challenges facing the electric vehicle maker. Tesla knocked \$2,000 off the prices of three of its five models in the United States late Friday. The company cut the prices of the Model Y, a small SUV which is Tesla's most popular model and the top-selling electric vehicle in the U.S., and also of the Models X and S, its older and more expensive models. Prices for the Model 3 sedan and the Cybertruck stayed the same. The cuts reduced the starting price for a Model Y to \$42,990 and to \$72,990 for a Model S and \$77,990 for a Model X. The move came the day after Tesla's stock tumbled below \$150 per share, eliminating all gains made over the past year. The Austin, Texas, company's stock price has dropped about 40% so far this year amid falling sales and increased competition. Discounted sticker prices are a way to try to entice more car buyers.

Industry analysts have been waiting for Tesla to introduce a small electric vehicle that would cost around \$25,000, the Model 2. Media reports this month that Musk planned to scrap the project created more uncertainty over the company's direction, although Musk called them untrue. The price cuts ended a long workweek at Tesla, which announced Monday that it was cutting 10% of its staff globally, about 14,000 jobs. The company also said it was recalling nearly 4,000 of its 2024 Cybertrucks after discovering the accelerator pedal can get stuck, potentially causing the vehicle to accelerate unintentionally and increase the risk of a crash. On Saturday, Musk confirmed he had postponed a planned weekend trip to India to meet with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, citing "very heavy Tesla obligations." He said on X that he looked forward.

Filing ITR On Your Own? Salaried Taxpayers Need To Know These Things

NEW DELHI: Even as the income tax department has enabled online ITR filing for the assessment year 2024-25 (or financial year 2023-24), taxpayers can now file their returns. Though salaried individuals wait for their Form 16 to come to file their ITR as it contains income tax data for the entire fiscal, they can do it without the Form. A large number of individuals file ITR themselves, without the help of accountant. Here's what you need to know if you are filing ITR on your own. The income tax department has enabled online filing of income tax returns (ITRs) 1, 2 and 4, filed by individuals, professionals and small businesses, for the financial year 2023-24 (or assessment year 2024-25).

Who Is Eligible To File ITR Under 'Salaries' Head?

It is only in the case of the employer-employee relationship that the individual is taxed under the head "salaries". In the case of a consultant, contractors and freelance or gig workers, the income may not be subject to tax as salary. The Income Tax Act, 1961, provides an option of presumptive taxation for specified professionals (such as medical, legal or accountancy professionals and

engineers). Here, in the case of eligible taxpayer with gross receipts up to Rs 75 lakh, only 50 per cent of the gross receipts is considered as income of the taxpayer.

Choose Correct ITR Form

Tax return filers need to choose the correct ITR. ITR 1 is the simplest form for tax filers not having a business income, whereas ITR 4 is the simpler form applicable for tax filers opting for presumptive tax. There are several restrictive conditions for the simplified forms and you may be required to submit ITR-2 (no business income) or ITR-3 (business income), if ITR-1 is not applicable due to violation of such conditions.

Know Due Date of Tax Return

An annual income tax return (ITR) is required to be filed by an individual in India by July 31 immediately following the end of the tax year i.e., July 31, 2024, for financial year (FY) 2023-24 and 31 July 2025 for FY 2024-25.

Rebate or Tax-Free Income Limit

Taxpayers have the option to choose either the old tax regime or the new tax regime. The default scheme would be the new tax



regime. Under the new tax regime, a resident individual (whose net income does not exceed Rs 7 lakh) can avail rebate under section 87A. The amount of rebate is 100 per cent of income tax or Rs 25,000, whichever is lower. Under the old tax regime, a resident individual taxpayer (whose net income is up to Rs 5 lakh) can avail rebate under section 87A. The amount of rebate is 100 per cent of income tax or Rs 12,500, whichever is lower. Moreover, a marginal relief may be available to taxpayers under the default regime in case their total income exceeds Rs 7 lakh and the income tax payable on

the total income exceeds the total income over Rs 7 lakh. Such marginal relief would be computed as the difference between the income tax liability on the total income (before rebate u/s 87A) and the total income over Rs 7 lakhs.

Section 80C- Deduction for Specified Investments

Section 80C provides a host of tax-saving investment options to individuals such as life insurance premiums, contribution to PPF, investment in Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, principal repayment for housing loan, tuition fees paid for children's education in India, etc. However, the maximum amount of deduction available under this section is Rs 1,50,000 for a particular financial year.

Deduction under Section 80TTA/TTB

Interest on Bank Deposits: These sections allow individuals to claim deductions against interest accrued in their bank accounts during the year. Section 80TTA allows a deduction up to Rs. 10,000 on savings accounts maintained with a bank or a post office. In the case of senior citizens, section 80TTB enhances the maximum limit to Rs. 50,000 and also allows interest received on time/fixed deposits.

Hybrid Mutual Funds See inflows Of Rs 1.45 Lakh Crore In FY24, AMFI Data Shows

NEW DELHI: Hybrid Mutual Funds made a comeback in the financial year 2023-24. As per the data of the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI), it has garnered Rs 1.45 lakh crore in investments due to substantial inflows into the arbitrage category compared to an outflow of Rs 18,813 crore in FY23. The increase in assets was due to an increase in the number of investors. The number of investors in this segment reached 1.35 crore in March 2024, which was 1.21 crore a year before, marking an inclination of the investors towards hybrid funds. These are the mutual fund schemes that invest in a combination of equity and debt securities along with gold and other assets. Due to investing

in multiple asset classes simultaneously, they are considered low-risk balanced funds. This category has been attracting regular investments since the change in taxation for debt funds at the onset of the financial year 2023-24 in April. Earlier, this segment had seen a net withdrawal of Rs 12,372 crore in March. In the inflow of Rs 1.45 lakh crore, a massive amount of Rs 90,846 crore inflow was seen in the arbitrage category followed by Rs 33,000 crore in multi-asset allocation, Rs 10,765 crore in balanced advantage fund and Rs 10,327 crore in equity saving fund. The increased inflow can be due to the anticipation of a reversal in the interest rate hike cycle in FY24 which led market participants to

allocate funds to capitalise on higher rates while continuing the investment in equities, real estate and gold, said Gopal Kavalireddi, Vice President - Research at Fyers as quoted in Zee Business report. The equity-oriented category has seen an investment of Rs 1.84 lakh crore in FY24. It marked a 25.4 per cent increase in this category. Siddharth Khemka, Retail Research Head, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Limited, said that this week, along with global indicators, the quarterly results of the companies will be monitored. He said that investors will also keep an eye on US manufacturing and service PMI data, US first-quarter GDP and Japan's monetary policy.

IPOs This Week: JNK, Varyaa Creations, Shivam Chemicals, Emmforce To Launch Public Offerings

NEW DELHI: Following the ongoing trend, the week starting April 22 will be full of SME IPOs, with a total of 4 initial public offerings hitting the markets. The SME IPO segment has witnessed higher activities recently and their returns have also been overwhelming. Here are the 4 IPOs that are going to hit markets this week.

JNK India IPO

The JNK India IPO, whose price band has been fixed at Rs 395-415 per share, will remain open for public subscription between April 23 and April 25. Anchor investors will have the opportunity to place their bids on April 22. The IPO comprises fresh shares worth Rs 300 crore and an offer-for-sale of up to 8.42 million shares by its existing shareholders and promoters. At the upper price band, the issue size is estimated to be Rs 650 crore, with a post-issue market capitalization expected to reach Rs 2,300 crore.

among the anchor investors. The country's third-largest telecom operator has offered 1,260 crore shares in the Rs 18,000-crore FPO, the largest such offering in the country. This move is part of a larger strategy to gather Rs 45,000 crore through a combination of debt and equity. Vodafone Idea will spend Rs 12,750 crore of the net issue proceeds for the expansion of the network infrastructure by setting up new 4G and 5G sites and expanding the capacity of existing 4G sites. Shares of Vodafone rallied 2.17 per cent on Thursday to Rs 13.20 on the BSE. The share price has more than doubled in the past year. Most analysts recommended subscribing to the FPO, saying that the operator's prospects stand to improve with the fresh infusion of money after the share sale.

Vodafone Idea FPO Sails Through On Final Day, Fully Subscribed Riding On NII Demand

NEW DELHI: Vodafone

Idea's follow-on public offer (FPO) was fully subscribed by the afternoon of April 22, the final day of bidding, with investors picking 1,289.8 crore equity shares, subscription data from exchanges showed. The qualified institutional buyers (QIBs) portion was subscribed 1.23 times, while the non-institutional investors (NIIs) portion and the retail segment were subscribed 1.93 times and 42 per cent respectively. Rajiv Jain's GQG Partners, which had invested nearly Rs 1,350 crore in Vi's anchor book, continued to invest in the FPO. Additionally, several other foreign institutional investors, such as Capital Group and Fidelity Investments, subscribed to the issue, according to banking sources. Vi's FPO began on a positive note on Thursday, with the issue subscribed 26% on the first day of bidding, largely driven by strong demand from QIBs. The telecom giant



raised Rs 5,400 crore from institutional investors via the anchor book in the upper price band of Rs 11. The price band for the offer has been fixed at Rs 10-11 apiece. Citigroup, Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, GQG Partners, Fidelity, UBS Fund Management, Redwheel Funds, HDFC Mutual Fund, Government Pension Fund Global, Carmelian Capital, Copthall Mauritius Investment, and Societe Generale were

among the anchor investors. The country's third-largest telecom operator has offered 1,260 crore shares in the Rs 18,000-crore FPO, the largest such offering in the country. This move is part of a larger strategy to gather Rs 45,000 crore through a combination of debt and equity. Vodafone Idea will spend Rs 12,750 crore of the net issue proceeds for the expansion of the network infrastructure by setting up new 4G and 5G sites and expanding the capacity of existing 4G sites. Shares of Vodafone rallied 2.17 per cent on Thursday to Rs 13.20 on the BSE. The share price has more than doubled in the past year. Most analysts recommended subscribing to the FPO, saying that the operator's prospects stand to improve with the fresh infusion of money after the share sale.



Varyaa Creations IPO

This SME IPO will remain open for public subscription between April 22 and April 25. The Varyaa Creations IPO, valued at Rs 20.10 crore, consists of fresh shares amounting to 13.4 lakh shares.

Shivam Chemicals IPO

Another IPO to be launched this week, the Shivam Chemicals IPO will be opened on April 22. The initial public offering will be closed on April 25. It is a fixed price issue of Rs 20.18 crore. The issue is entirely a fresh issue of 45.87 lakh shares, with an IPO price of Rs 44 per share.

Emmforce Autotech IPO

The Emmforce Autotech IPO, valued at Rs 53.90 crore, comprises entirely of a fresh issue of 55 lakh shares. It will remain open for public subscription between April 23, 2024, and April 25, 2024. The IPO allotment will likely be finalised on April 26, 2024. The price band for the Emmforce Autotech IPO is set at Rs 93 to Rs 98 per share.

Wipro Shares Gain Over 2% As Q4 Earnings Beat Expectations; Should You Buy, Sell Or Hold?

NEW DELHI: Wipro shares gained over 2 per cent on Monday as investors reacted to the IT services firm's fourth-quarter results, which was better than what market analysts expected. At around 10.50 am, shares of the company were up 2.46 per cent to Rs 464 on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE). Wipro has beaten the Street estimates with a 5 per cent rise in net profit for the January-March quarter, but persisting cost-cutting measures, decline in headcount and a sluggish guidance for the next quarter fuelled concern among brokerages that a recovery for the IT major may still be some time away. The company's net profit rose 5 per cent on-quarter to Rs 2,835 crore in January-March, surpassing the market projection of Rs 2,748 crore, while its revenue too exceeded expectations, despite staying largely flat on-quarter at Rs 22,208.3 crore as against the Street estimate of Rs 22,117 crore. Operational efficiencies helped the company expand its EBIT margins by 40 basis points sequentially to 16.4 per cent. Going ahead, the management has kept its revenue guidance unchanged for Q1 FY25 to -1.5



percent to 0.5 percent.

It is this sluggish growth guidance from Wipro that left brokerages like JP Morgan, Nomura, HSBC and UBS in a state of discomfiture. While Nomura believes the Q1 FY25 guidance reflects discretionary weakness, UBS sees it as a sign of revival still being afar. Both Nomura and HSBC have maintained reduced ratings on Wipro with target prices of Rs 410 and Rs 385, respectively.

"Wipro cautioned that the revival in BFSI (+2.1% q-q) is partly due to the reversal of furloughs seen in 3Q and discretionary demand remains challenging. Despite healthy order booking, Wipro's 1Q FY25F revenue growth guidance of -1.5% to +0.5% q-q in cc reflects our view," Nomura said. On the other hand, HSBC highlighted the continued market share loss of Wipro as it feels that signs of operational improvement are still not

imminent. According to the brokerage, growth acceleration for Wipro also doesn't look imminent as cost-cutting measures continue. Regardless, the brokerage is still positive over the elevation of an internal veteran to lead the company. HSBC also has a 'reduce' call on Wipro with a price target of Rs 385.

Morgan Stanley reduced the target price to Rs 421 saying that although the commentary suggests stabilization in the BFSI vertical, there is limited clarity on pace of recovery. UBS also has a sell rating with a target price of Rs 430. "Management optimism in last quarter around revival in consulting on basis of Capco order book did translate into soft growth but not enough to drive overall revenue growth. Further, a weak Q1FY25 guidance indicates revival still some time away," it said. Based on the sluggish growth guidance, Nuvama Institutional Equities also expects Wipro to underperform peers, however, it feels its inexpensive valuation and high dividend yield limit the downside potential. Nuvama has a 'hold' call with a price target of Rs 460.

NEWS BOX

R Sai Kishore's mentality shift behind success vs PBKS: Approaching game as captain

New Delhi. GT beat PBKS to bag a crucial win in the Indian Premier League 2024 on Sunday. Spinner R Sai Kishore set up the win for GT at the Mullanpur Stadium with his four-wicket-haul. Sai Kishore won the player of the match award, his first one of the season. The POTM award was an important one for the player who had been in and out of the team this season. The GT game was Sai Kishore's third one this season and the bowler seemed to be in his element in the sluggish pitch of Mullanpur. The Tamil Nadu Ranji Trophy captain flung up the ball and beat the batters in flight. On the important wickets of the game came against Jitesh Sharma, who failed to read Kishore's delivery after stepping down against him.

The spinner spoke about shifting his mentality from player to captain in the match and said that he was rewarded for his way of thinking. "What I try to do is think for the team, what the team wants, approach the game as a captain as a captain what you would do in that situation," R Sai Kishore said in an interaction with the Indian Premier League. "I think when you think as a team, the pressure is off, the targets are more achievable and then it is just playing for your wickets," he further added. Kishore lauded GT for their hard-fought win and said that it will build the character of the team. "There are a lot of positives to take. It was a hard-fought win, I won't say that it came in a platter," concluded the spinner.

IPL 2024: PBKS captain Sam Curran fined for dissent, Faf du Plessis penalised

New Delhi. PBKS captain Sam Curran was fined 50 percent of his match fee for showing dissent to an umpire's decision during their defeat to Gujarat in an IPL 2024 match in Mullanpur. Curran was penalised for his act during PBKS's defeat to GT, their fourth successive defeat at the newly-built stadium in Mullanpur. Curran admitted to the offence for a Level 1 Breach of IPL's Code of Conduct, the IPL said in a statement. "Curran committed a Level 1 offence under Article 2.8 of the IPL's Code of Conduct. He admitted to the offence and accepted the Match Referee's sanction. For Level 1 breaches of the Code of Conduct, the Match Referee's decision is final and binding," the statement read.

Sam Curran was given out LBW after he opened the batting to bolster their batting line-up. However, Curran managed just 20 runs as PBKS's batting crumbled again, managing just 142 on the board in 20 overs. Despite a disciplined effort with the ball, PBKS ended up losing the contest after Rahul Tewatia came up with a handy late cameo from Gujarat.

DU PLESSIS FINED Rs 12 LAKH

Meanwhile, earlier in the day, RCB captain Faf du Plessis was fined Rs 12 lakh for the team's first over-rate offence of IPL 2024 during their heartbreaking 1-run defeat to KKR at Eden Gardens in Kolkata. Du Plessis joins the likes of Rishabh Pant, Shubman Gill and Hardik Pandya in copping over-rate fines. RCB gave away 222 runs in 20 overs to KKR despite a much-improved bowling show from the likes of Mohammed Siraj and Lockie Ferguson. Despite losing Du Plessis and Virat Kohli early, RCB managed to come up with a stiff fight. Despite Karn Sharma hitting Mitchell Starc for 3 sixes in the last over, RCB lost by a run, falling to a crushing defeat in a last-ball thriller. It was the 7th defeat for RCB in IPL 2024 as their chances of reaching the playoffs look all but over.

D Gukesh dissects Candidates triumph: Proving Magnus Carlsen wrong and more

New Delhi. 17-year-old D Gukesh said he had come to know about legendary Magnus Carlsen's pre-tournament prediction before the Candidates and the noise around it did not affect his confidence. Battling against the odds, Grandmaster Gukesh stunned the 8-man field, winning the Candidates to become the youngest-ever challenge for the World Championship crown. Gukesh finished with 9 points out of a total of 14 to leave the likes of seasoned pros in Hikaru Nakamura, Fabiano Caruana and Ian Nepomniachtchi behind.

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Speaking exclusively to India Today, D Gukesh said he was confident about his winning ability despite having qualified for the Candidates as the last amongst the three Indian contenders. While R Praggnanandhaa qualified for the Candidates after finishing as runner-up at the World Cup, Vidit Gujrathi made it to the Candidates via Grand Swiss. Gukesh came up with impressive performances at the World Cup and Grand Swiss, but it was not enough for him to seal a place in the Candidates. The Chennai man worked his way through to the 8-man field as the second-placed player in the FIDE Circuit after Caruana, the winner, booked his place via the World Cup. "I actually came to know about that a couple of days before the Candidates. Honestly, I didn't care much about it. I think he gave an honest opinion. Obviously, I was not the favourite there. There were far more experienced players," Gukesh said on Monday, April 22 from Toronto. Deep down, I already knew that if I was in my absolute best shape, and if I managed to stay calm and focused, I could win the tournament. Yeah, Magnus sharing his opinion did not really affect that belief in myself," he added.

Virender Sehwag slams Sam Curran after PBKS vs GT: Wouldn't have him in my team

Virender Sehwag slammed Sam Curran's performances so far in the IPL 2024 season and claimed he wouldn't have the all-rounder in his side. Curran hasn't had the best of times this season as he has failed to inspire Punjab with both bat and ball.

New Delhi. Virender Sehwag has slammed PBKS stand-in skipper Sam Curran, saying that he wouldn't have him in the team as a batting or a bowling all-rounder as Punjab slumped to their 6th loss of the season.



Curran scored 20 off 19 balls and picked up one wicket from his two overs as he conceded 18 runs. GT would end up winning the match as PBKS' Mullanpur struggles continued. Speaking to Cricbuzz, Sehwag was very critical of Curran's performances with both bat and ball, saying

that a person who is doing some batting and bowling isn't helping the side. The former India cricketer said that he needs to help the side with either the bat or with the ball, which he feels the England all-rounder has struggled to do all season. "I wouldn't keep Sam Curran as a batting all-rounder or a

Absolute disaster: Tom Moody tears into 'reckless' PBKS batters after 'meltdown' vs GT

New Delhi. Tom Moody lashed out at the PBKS batters for their 'reckless' approach while facing spinners against GT in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 match on Sunday in Mullanpur. Punjab slumped to their sixth loss after losing to Gujarat by 3 wickets and are struggling at the ninth position in the table with 4 points and a net run rate of -0.292. Moody was critical of the PBKS batters, saying that they faltered against the spin trio of Noor Ahmed, Rashid Khan and Sai Kishore. After Sam Curran and Prabhsimran Singh put on 52 runs off 5.3 overs, PBKS completely lost their way and were bowled out for 142 in 20 overs.

Very poor, extremely poor with their spin management. 7/68 off spin was an absolute disaster. It was the way the players got out against spin that would be frustrating me the



most. It looked reckless. I get the fact that you need to be proactive and busy," Moody told ESPNcricinfo. "Yes, GT have a good spin attack, but they would have gone into this contest knowing that would have been the challenge. It looked like a complete

meltdown," he added. "Prabhsimran should have taken responsibility"

Former Indian batter Wasim Jaffer also sounded critical of the Punjab batters for throwing their wickets away. Prabhsimran scored 35 runs off 21 balls before Mohit Sharma accounted for his wicket. Jaffer reckoned that the youngster should have carried on to get a big score. "Punjab have themselves to blame. Prabhsimran gave them a decent start, but he should have kicked on and got a much bigger score. I thought he should have taken a lot of responsibility," Jaffer said. "When you have got so many players who are out of form and not scoring runs, you get days like these," Jaffer added. PBKS are next set to face Shreyas Iyer's KKR on Friday, April 26 at the iconic Eden Gardens in Kolkata.

RCB Star SLAPPED With Rs 12 Lakh Fine By IPL Due To This Reason

New Delhi. Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) captain Faf du Plessis was fined Rs 12 lakh for IPL's Code of Conduct breach after his team maintained a slow over-rate in their match against Kolkata Knight Riders at the Eden Gardens on Sunday. The Indian Premier League (IPL) on Monday announced that Du Plessis was fined for maintaining a slow-over rate in the match against KKR and it was RCB's first over-rate offence of the season. A statement from IPL read, "Faf du Plessis, Captain, Royal Challengers Bengaluru has been fined after his team maintained a slow over-rate during Match 36 of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 against Kolkata Knight Riders at the Eden Gardens, Kolkata on April 21, 2024." "As it was his team's first offence of the season under the IPL's Code of Conduct relating to minimum over-rate offences, Faf du Plessis was fined INR 12 Lac," the statement further read. Meanwhile, on a sweltering Sunday, KKR and RCB played out another memorable game in Kolkata with the home team winning the match



with just one run. In the end, RCB lost their sixth consecutive game of the season and are placed rock-bottom on the points table. Meanwhile, now Bengaluru will look to turn its fortune around when the team take on Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium on Thursday.

IPL 2024: Sam Curran fined 50 per cent of match fees for breaching Code of Conduct

Punjab Kings (PBKS) stand-in skipper Sam Curran has been handed a hefty 50 per cent of his match fees fine for breaching the Indian Premier League (IPL) Code of Conduct. Curran was fined 50 per cent of

his match fees for a Level 1 offence under Article 2.8, during PBKS' flop performance against Gujarat Titans, which handed Punjab a 3 wickets defeat. According to a statement issued by the IPL, "Sam Curran, the Punjab Kings captain, has been fined 50 per cent of his match fees for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct during his team's Indian Premier League 2024 match against the Gujarat Titans at the PCA New International Cricket Stadium, Mullanpur on April 21." "Curran committed a Level 1 offence under Article 2.8 of the IPL's Code of Conduct. He admitted to the offence and accepted the Match Referee's sanction. For Level 1 breaches of the Code of Conduct, the Match Referee's decision is final and binding," the statement further read. Talking about the match, Sai Kishore's four-wicket haul and yet another clutch finish by Rahul Tewatia were the highlights as GT beat PBKS by three wickets at Mullanpur Stadium. After Sunday's match, PBKS remained second last in the points.

bowling all-rounder. Because such a player is of no use, who does some batting and some bowling. Either you win the game with your batting or win the game with your bowling. Either you hit the bullseye or you don't perform at all," said Sehwag.

How well has Curran fared this season?

Curran started things off with a fine performance with the bat against DC as he scored 63 to get PBKS off to a winning start. However, since then, the England all-rounder has struggled to make any impact with the ball or bat. In 8 matches so far, Curran has just 153 runs to his name with an average of 19. Curran had scored 276 runs last season in the IPL at an average of 27.60.

In terms of bowling, while he has picked up 11 wickets, the economy rate has been 8.79 and he decided to only use himself twice against GT. Curran and Punjab will next be in action against KKR at the Eden Gardens on Friday, April 26 as they look to end their losing streak and return back to winning ways. The defeat to Gujarat means that PBKS are 9th on the table.

Shubman Gill will lead Indian team in near future, says Robin Uthappa

New Delhi. Robin Uthappa feels that Shubman Gill will lead the Indian team in the near future after the Indian star helped GT secure a win against PBKS on Sunday, April 21. Gill scored a crucial 35 as GT got over the finishing line in the end in Mullanpur. This was Gill's 4th win as captain of Gujarat, since taking over as skipper before the start of the season. Speaking to JioCinema after GT's 3-wicket win, Uthappa hailed Gill as a gift for Indian cricket and claimed that star batter is slowly maturing into an all-time great. The former cricketer also said that Gill is slowly becoming a very prolific leader and could lead the national team as well. "Yeah, I think he's a gift for Indian cricket. I think he's some who's maturing into an all time great within the Indian cricket fraternity. And I think, we've seen him thrive, and we're seeing him grow into a very prolific leader who is going to lead not just his IPL side, but I also think the Indian team in the near future," said Gill.

Gill needed someone to play aggressive:



Uthappa

While talking about his innings of 35, Uthappa said that the GT skipper went about it in the right way. However, the former cricketer feels that Gill needs someone to play aggressively at the other end.

Uthappa said that Gill got out trying to up the ante and felt Sai Sudharsan would soon transition into an aggressive batter to help the GT skipper. "Great innings. I thought he went about his innings the right way because it's important for him to bat through the course of the innings for GT to get success, so he approached it in that fashion. He needed someone to play a little bit more aggressively at the end and take off pressure from him so that he could play that." "So, when he went to up the ante is when he got out. He didn't need to do that. Sai Sudharsan could have done it. But you know, I think that Sai Sudharsan transition into upping his strike rate also will happen in due time. And when that happens, I think that combination will be great," said Uthappa.

Candidates: Koneru Humpy runner-up, Vaishali finishes 4th after terrific run

Toronto. Indian grandmaster Koneru Humpy delivered the goods when it mattered, defeating erstwhile joint leader Tingjie Lei of China to finish second on a superior tiebreak in the women's candidates tournament in Toronto. Zhongyi Tan of China expectedly topped the tables after settling for a draw with Anna Muzychuk of Ukraine. The real story of the day was R Vaishali who scored her fifth victory on the trot at the expense of Kateryna Lagno of Russia to tie for the second spot before finishing fourth on tiebreak. Tan finished with 9 points in all, 1.5 points clear of the nearest rivals Humpy, Lei and Vaishali who all finished second to fourth respectively. Aleksandra Goryachkina finished fifth on seven

points, a full point ahead of Lagno, while Nurgul Salimova of Bulgaria and Muzychuk ended in the last two spots in the eight-player double round-robin contest.

LATE COMEBACKS FOR HUMPY, VAISHALI

At the halfway stage, Humpy was languishing at 2.5 points out of seven games but came up with a splendid effort to score five points from the last seven games – a score matched by Vaishali who was even worse at 2.5 out of nine. Playing black against Lei, Humpy got a complicated middle game out of a Nimzo Indian defense and Lei came up with a spectacular queen sacrifice that needed perfect follow-up.



Humpy cashed in when the Chinese erred in her calculation and reached a winning endgame with her two rooks against white's rook and Bishop. The complexities were far from over but on this day Humpy could do no wrong and squeezed out a

victory after 62 hard-fought moves. Vaishali faced the Ruy Lopez as black against Lagno who sacrificed a piece early in the middle game to initiate an attack against the black king. The Indian was however up to the task in defense and returned the extra material back to maintain the dynamics. Lagno blundered on her 31st turn, handing the initiative to Vaishali who did not look back thereafter and coasted home after 45 moves.

Results final round (Indians unless stated): Tingjie Lei (Chn, 7.5) lost to Koneru Humpy (7.5); Kateryna Lagno (Fid, 6) lost to R Vaishali (7.5); Aleksandra Goryachkina (Fid, 7) drew with Nurgul Salimova (5.5); Anna Muzychuk (Ukr, 5.5) drew with Zhongyi Tan (Chn, 9).

Manushi Chhillar

Says She 'Loves' Sandeep Reddy Vanga, Would've Loved To Play THIS Part In Animal

Miss World 2017 and actor Manushi Chhillar recently praised Sandeep Reddy Vanga and said she admired Rashmika Mandanna's performance in Animal (2023). In an interview with Zoom, when asked about rumours of her being offered a role in the film, she said she wasn't aware of them but wished she had known. When asked which character she would have chosen between Rashmika Mandanna's and Triptii Dimri's roles if the rumours were true, Manushi replied, "I love him (Sandeep Reddy Vanga). See, both are really interesting roles (Rashmika Mandanna's and Triptii Dimri's characters). But I loved Rashmika's character because, in this wole world where men were fighting each other, she really stood her ground." In Animal, Rashmika's character Geetanjali is married to Vijay, played by Ranbir, while Triptii's character Zoya has an affair with him. "She really confronted a man. She held him accountable. She said I don't care about who you are, what you are doing outside, and how dangerous you might be. But you're my husband, and I will hold you accountable. Her character had an arch. I



felt that was such a good opportunity, and she did a great job. So, that's a role I would have loved to do," Manushi said. After the massive success of Animal, Ranbir Kapoor fans are eagerly waiting for the film's sequel Animal Park. However, looks like they will have to wait a little longer for the movie. Animal director Sandeep Reddy Vanga recently attended an award show in Mumbai when he shared an exciting update about the film's sequel but revealed that the shooting will begin only in 2026. "This is going to be bigger and wilder than Animal," Vanga said as quoted by E-Times and then added, "The shooting of the film will begin by 2026." Reportedly, Vicky Kaushal is being considered for a negative role in Animal Park.



Aisha Sharma Flaunts Her Curves In Black Cut-Out Dress, Hot Photos Go Viral; See Here



Aisha Sharma never fails to impress all with her hot looks. Whenever she drops a photo or video of herself on social media, she leaves everyone completely stunned. Recently too, Aisha took to her Instagram handle and shared a bunch of photos which are now setting fire online. In the latest photos, Aisha Sharma was seen flaunting her perfectly toned body in a black cutout dress. She ditched accessories and flaunted her smile as she posed for the camera. Needless to say, the actress looked breathtakingly gorgeous as ever. In the caption of her post, Aisha wrote, "I own too much BLACK – said no one ever." Check out the post here:

Aisha Sharma made her Bollywood debut in 2018 alongside John Abraham and Manoj Bajpayee in the film Satyameva Jayate. She also went on to star in several music videos, which garnered her immense popularity. Aisha Sharma is now known for her dedication to maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Her fitness and skincare regimes are carefully curated, inspiring her fans to prioritize self-care and well-being. Through her social media platforms, she shares valuable insights and tips, empowering her followers to embark on their wellness journeys.

Earlier this year, Aisha turned 32 and celebrated her birthday with her sister Neha Sharma in Sri Lanka. Neha Sharma penned a sweet note for her. "Happy birthday baby sister..thank you for always inspiring and forging a path less travelled always making you the unicorn we all need... May you forever be this rare, crazy, mad, fun, child woman who is sensitive yet so strong. I'm not the one with words but you know what you mean to me and I love you no matter how many disagreements we may have. I will always come to you ?? @aishasharma25 #sunshinegirl #myaquababy #siblinglove," Neha wrote, sharing pictures of Aisha from their trip.

Do Aur Do Pyaar Box Office Day 2: Vidya Balan-Pratik Gandhi Film Shows Potential, Earns Rs 1.4 Cr



On the second day, the box office collection of Do Aur Do Pyaar starring Vidya Balan, Pratik Gandhi, Ileana D'Cruz, and Sendhil Ramamurthy, directed by Shirsha Guha Thakurta, amounted to around Rs 85 lakh nett in India, as reported by Sacnilk.com. According to the website, Do Aur Do Pyaar collected around Rs 55 lakh nett on its first day in India. Now, the film has garnered a total of approximately Rs 1.4 crore nett in India over two days. On Saturday, Do Aur Do Pyaar recorded a Hindi occupancy rate of 13.72%, with the highest occupancy seen in Chennai at 40%.

The trailer teased Vidya and Pratik has a few intimate scenes in the film. Vidya recently opened up about the scenes and said that her laughter doubled up as a relief in 'uncomfortable or intimate scenes.' Speaking with Free Press Journal, she said, "As actors, we are trained to portray characters but most of the times, my laughter on the sets gave enough breather to the discomforting or intimate scenes. The way this film is written is pleasing, there is a light touch to a subject like infidelity. The writing is very fun and nuanced at the same time which is a very fine balance. The film could have become very serious or frivolous else." Meanwhile, News18 gave the film a four star-rating. It read, "Do Aur Do Pyaar will make you want to fall in love despite all its chaotic messiness. It's a warm and fuzzy ode to love in all its glory and grime. In this generation of swipe right and left and open romantic choices, it is companionship and communication that has become the foundation of relationships. And who doesn't want to feel and be loved? Films like this don't get made very often and it is this novelty that makes it a cut above the rest. It also reinforces the fact that simplicity is bliss and in most times, simplicity is more than enough to hold your undivided attention and it is the need for the same that keeps you going."

Aditi Roy Hydari

Waves At The Paparazzi As She Gets Snapped Post Salon Session



Aditi Roy Hydari has been making headlines following her engagement with Sidharth. The couple got engaged last month. Well, today the actress was spotted in the city post her salon session. Aditi was seen waving at the paparazzi as she tried to make her way towards her car. In the video, shared by Snehzala, we can see Aditi wearing a cool casual wear. She opted for a brown tee and flared pants. She kept her hair in a bun style and looked very chic. As soon as she came out of the salon, she was clicked by a camera. The actress also waved at them and sat inside her car. The video went viral on social media.

Aditi Rao Hydari and Siddharth made their first joint appearance on April 18 evening ever since they exchanged rings. The couple was snapped by the paparazzi as they arrived for an event in Mumbai. In a video that surfaced on social media, Aditi and Siddharth were seen holding hands as they posed for the cameras and flaunted their million-dollar smiles. Aditi sported a black trouser and paired it with matching off-shoulder body-hugging top. She opted for golden hoop earrings, kept her tresses open and looked breathtakingly gorgeous as ever. On the other hand, Siddharth looked dapper in his casual attire. He wore a blue t-shirt with matching jeans and a denim jacket.



Aditi Rao Hydari and Siddharth's love story is not secret. Their romance blossomed during the filming of the 2021 movie Maha Samudram. Since then, they have been together. Last month, reports of their secret wedding also made headlines after Great Andhra claimed that the two took wedding vows at the Sri Ranganayakaswamy temple in Srirangapuram, Wanaparthy District, Telangana. However, later, Aditi revealed that they are not married but engaged. On March 28, 2024, she dropped an engagement photo with Siddharth. In the picture, they held each other close as Aditi flaunted a diamond ring whereas Siddharth sported a gold band on his ring finger with magenta detailing. Captioning the photo, Aditi wrote, "He said yes! E. N. G. A. G. E. D."