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Covid jab technology-based bird flu vaccine may help curb H5N1 cases

Sanjay Kumar New Delhi, May 24: Amid the global rise in H5N1 cases, US scientists have developed an experimental mRNA vaccine—based on Covid-19 jab technology—to fight avian or bird flu infections. Preclinical models, detailed in the journal Nature Communications, showed that the jab against the avian influenza virus H5N1 is highly effective in preventing severe illness and death. Researchers from the University of Pennsylvania noted that the vaccine could potentially help manage the outbreak of the H5N1 virus currently circulating in birds and cattle in the US, and also prevent human infections with the virus. According to Scott Hensley, Professor of Microbiology at the varsity's Perelman School of Medicine, mRNA technology enables the scientists "to be much more agile in developing vac-

cines". Scott added that mRNA vaccines can be created "within hours of sequencing a new viral strain with pandemic potential". mRNA vaccines are easily and quickly adapted to protect against different strains of influenza viruses, and don't require eggs for their development, as most of the current influenza vaccines. The new mRNA vaccine targets a specific subtype of the H5N1 virus and was found to elicit a strong antibody and T-cell response in mice and ferrets. Importantly, the animals maintained high levels of antibodies even a year after vaccination. Among those infected with H5N1, the vaccine helped clear the virus more rapidly and showed fewer symptoms than those unvaccinated. Compared to the vaccinated animals, all of the unvaccinated animals died following a H5N1 infection, the researchers said.

PM Modi slams INDIA bloc members at 'Vijay Sankalp' rally in Himachal Pradesh's Nahan

Simmi Kaur Babbar Nahan (Himachal Pradesh), May 24: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday hit out at the opposition INDIA bloc accusing its members of practising a politics of "communalism, caste and dynasties". Addressing a 'Vijay Sankalp' rally in Sirmour district's Nahan to garner support for BJP candidate for Shimla Lok Sabha seat Suresh Kashyap, the Prime Minister also accused the Congress of not fulfilling its promise of providing one lakh jobs to the youth of the state. The Congress never care about the deprived lot, but we have given them 10 per cent reservation, Modi said. Taking the Congress to task for "messing up" the Hattee issue, he said they did not give reservation to them, "but I've granted them the reservation to repay the debt I own to these people". Modi also accused the Congress of snatching the reservation for OBC and giving it to Muslims. The Prime Minister cautioned the voters against the INDI alliance members and

said they were "playing games" to destroy the nation. "The Congress boycotted the 'pran-pratishta' of Ram Temple at Ayodhya. Congmen are now saying that they will lock the temple if they come to power," he said. Modi said the BJP is fully committed for the development of Himachal as it has already opened institutes like IIIT, IIM and AIIMS in the state. He said Modi's guarantee of free ration to the poor would continue for the next five years. He said 3 crore women would be made lakhpati didis nationally and thousands from Himachal would also benefit from it. The PM asked the women if they had received Rs 1,500

samman nidhi as promised by the Congress. He said Modi's free power

dents faced inconvenience due to diversion of the route. Office-goers as well as schoolchildren had to walk for over 1 km after they were stopped by security men at ITI on the Nahan-Kumarhatti highway. PTI adds: Prime Minister Modi, while addressing a poll rally in Mandi, accused the state government of selectively distributing Central aid meant for victims of last year's floods and promised to find out where the money went once he returns to power. The Prime Minister also called Himachal Pradesh the "sankalp bhumi" for construction of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, referring to the pledge taken by the BJP in Palampur to build the temple.

The BJP national executive passed a resolution for construction of the Ram temple during its Palampur meeting in June 1989.



Parties trying to sacrifice state's rights over river water: Badal

Hoshiarpur, May 24: Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) president Sukhbir Singh Badal today said all Delhi-based parties were ready to sacrifice Punjab's right over its river water and its capital city of Chandigarh. He said the SAD alone stood in the way of these nefarious designs. Badal addressed massive gatherings at Mukerian, Dasuya, Tanda and Sham Churasi in favour of party candidate Sohan Singh Thandal. He alleged even right now the AAP government is trying its level best to complete a fictitious survey to show that the entire state was covered under canal water supply. "The purpose is to submit this fake survey to the Supreme Court to show the state has surplus canal water. This will pave the way for the construction of the SYL canal and transfer of Punjab's river waters to Haryana and Delhi." He said the Congress and the BJP were also one with AAP on this issue and wanted to rob Punjab of its river water. Only the SAD is standing in the way of these parties," he said. He also highlighted how the Congress-AAP joint manifesto wanted to bury Punjab's right over its capital city, Chandigarh. "Both parties have got together to demand statehood for Chandigarh on the pattern of Delhi,"

BJP moves Supreme Court against Calcutta High Court order on advertisements during Lok Sabha polls

Navdeep Singh Sahni New Delhi, May 24: The BJP on Friday moved the Supreme Court, challenging a Calcutta High Court order that refused to interfere with a single-judge verdict directing the party not to publish any advertisement violating the Model Code of Conduct during the Lok Sabha election process. The matter was mentioned for urgent listing before a Vacation Bench of Justice Bela M Trivedi and Justice Pankaj Mithal. Advocate Saurabh Mishra, who mentioned the matter, told the Bench that a division bench of the high court passed the order on May 22. "Why don't you move the next Vacation Bench?" the Bench asked. The counsel told the Bench that the high court has restrained the BJP from issuing advertisements during the Lok Sabha polls till June 4. "Kindly have

it on Monday (May 27)," the lawyer requested the Bench. "We will see," the bench said. On May 22, a Calcutta High Court Division Bench refused to interfere with a single-judge order in the matter. Observing that a "laxman rekha"

May 20 order of the single judge, the Division Bench had said the BJP could move the single judge, seeking a review or recall of its order. The BJP had moved the appeal before the Division Bench, claiming that the single judge passed the order without giving it any hearing. The party's counsel had also stated that the Constitution provided that the Election Commission was the appropriate authority for redress in case of any dispute during a poll process. The high court on May 20 issued an injunction, restraining the BJP from publishing advertisements that violated the Model Code of Conduct until June 4, the day the Lok Sabha election process ends. The court also restrained the BJP from publishing advertisements mentioned by the Trinamool Congress (TMC) in its petition, claiming unverified allegations against it and its workers.



PM Modi has accepted excise policy case is wrong, all arrested should be released: Arvind Kejriwal

Tejinder Kaur Babbar New Delhi, May 24: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has accepted that the excise policy case is wrong, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday claimed and said everyone arrested in the matter should be released. Addressing a virtual press conference, Kejriwal said the BJP has been screaming that there has been a scam. "They are screaming for two years that there is a liquor scam claiming it was to the tune of Rs 100 crore, but not even a penny has been recovered," said Kejriwal, who is out on interim bail till June 1 in the case. "Yesterday, the PM was asked in an interview that Kejriwal was saying that no evidence has been found in the case. The PM said no money was found because Kejriwal is an experienced thief. He accepted that no recovery was

made," he added. "To hide it, he said ed that the excise scam is wrong,



Kejriwal is an 'anubhavi chor'. This is just an excuse to prove the wrong arrests right. When you have accepted please release those who have been arrested," said the Aam Aadmi Party national convener.

NIA arrests one more in Bengaluru's Rameshwaram cafe blast case

New Delhi, May 24: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday arrested one more accused in Bengaluru's Rameshwaram Cafe blast case, the fifth person to be held in the matter. Thirty-five-year-old Shoaib Ahmed Mirza alias Chhotu, a resident of Hubballi city in Karnataka, was previously convicted in a Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terror conspiracy case, the agency said in a statement. "Three days after a massive crackdown across four states in the Rameshwaram Cafe blast case, the NIA on Friday arrested one more accused, identified as an ex-convict in a Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terror conspiracy case," it said. NIA investigations revealed that Mirza got involved in this fresh conspiracy after being released from jail. In 2018, he befriended and introduced accused Abdul Matheen Taahaa to an online handler suspected to be abroad, the probe agency said. Mirza further provided an e-mail ID for encrypted communication between the handler and Abdul Matheen Taahaa, who was arrested on April 12 from his hideout in Kolkata along with co-accused Mussavir Hussain Shazib, it said. During the course of its investigation into the Rameshwaram Cafe blast, which took place on March 1 this year, the NIA has conducted extensive searches at 29 locations across India.

INDIA bloc getting 'clear' mandate in Lok Sabha polls, will name PM in less than 3 days: Jairam Ramesh

Chandigarh, May 24: The Congress on Friday hit back at the BJP over its "five PMs in five years" remark against the INDIA bloc, saying the alliance which is set to get a "clear and decisive" mandate in the Lok Sabha polls will have one person as prime minister for five years. The name of the prime minister will be announced by the INDIA bloc within three days after the result of the elections is declared on June 4, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh told a press conference here ahead of the sixth round of polling on Saturday. The elections are being held in seven phases and the last is on June 1. Prime Minister Narendra Modi



has in his poll rallies repeatedly targeted the bloc, claiming that it has plans to have five prime ministers in five years if voted to power. The INDIA bloc is going to get a "clear and decisive mandate" on June 4 and, like in 2004, history will repeat itself after 20 years, Ramesh said. The BJP was unseated from power in the 2004 general election despite its 'India Shining' campaign and the Congress-led UPA came to power. "Those who repeatedly raise the question who will be PM (if the INDIA bloc comes to power), I want to remind that in 2004, after the Congress and its allies got the mandate, within three days Manmohan Singh's name was announced for (the post of) PM," the Congress leader said. "This time it will not even be three days," Ramesh asserted and added that "one person will be prime minister for five years to run the government!". He said that the prime ministerial candidate will be selected in a democratic way by members of the INDIA bloc. "Elections in our country are not a beauty contest. In our country, an election is between parties, our democracy is party-centric and not person-centric," Ramesh said. "This is why the question that is repeatedly raised who will be prime minister is a wrong question. The right question is which party and which alliance will get the mandate," the Congress leader said at the conference in the joint capital of Punjab and Haryana. While all 10 seats in Haryana are going to polls on Saturday, Punjab's 13 seats and the lone seat in the Union Territory of Chandigarh will see polling on June 1.

Sibal urges Supreme Court to direct EC to preserve EVM logs for 2-3 years

Naresh Malhotra New Delhi, May 24: Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Friday urged the Supreme Court to direct the Election Commission to keep the logs of EVMs safe for at least two to three years and declare the records of every phase of voting before counting so that no member is elected "illegally". Sibal also said if the Election Commission cannot upload Form 17-C—which gives the number of votes polled in a polling station—the state electoral officer could upload the data. "Every machine has an operating system, so do the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). This log of EVMs should be kept safely. This will tell us what time the voting ended and how many votes were invalid. It will tell us what time the votes were cast. So, this is the evidence that should be kept safely," he told a press conference. Sibal said the Election Commission usually keeps

this data for 30 days and asserted this is "crucial" data which must be preserved by the poll body. "It is their responsibility because we are making an allegation as they do not upload Form 17C, they do not tell us how many votes were polled. When the counting will take place, results would be declared and nothing can be done then as the results will be declared and government will be formed. They should keep these logs safely for two to three years," he said. Sibal, also a senior advocate, urged the Supreme Court to direct the Election Commission to keep these logs safe and the record of all phases be made public before count-

ing so that no MP is elected in an "illegal manner". "We also need to know how the voting percentage rose and how it increased when revised figures were given," he said. The Election



Commission should have no hesitation in sharing data and letting people know how the votes were cast before the counting ended, the independent Rajya Sabha MP said. "We want the Supreme Court to give a directive to this effect," he added. Sibal's remarks came two days after the Election Commission told the apex court that "indiscriminate disclosure" of polling station-wise turnout data and posting it on its website would cause chaos in the election machinery, which is already in motion for the ongoing Lok Sabha elections. The poll panel said that public posting of Form 17-C—which gives the number of votes polled in a polling station—was not provided in the statutory framework and could lead to mischief and vitiation of the entire electoral space as it increased the possibility of the images being morphed.

Over 18L voters to decide fate of candidates in Anantnag

Srinagar, May 24: As campaigning for South Kashmir's Anantnag-Rajouri seat ended today, the fate of 20 candidates will be decided by over 18.36 lakh voters on May 25. Of the total voters, 9,33,647 are male, and 9,02,902 are female in five districts of Kulgam, Anantnag, Poonch, Shopian and Rajouri. The EC has set up 2,338 polling stations across the the Anantnag-Rajouri parliamentary constituency. Four election staff, including presiding officer will be stationed in every polling station. Over 9,000 polling staff, including reserve will be deployed on duty. There are 19 border polling stations in the districts of Rajouri and Poonch. In order to facilitate the voters and also to increase voter turnout ratios, all voters have been provided with voter information slips with information like polling station name, date and time of poll, serial number of voter in the list, his full name, QR code but not the photograph of the voter. Hence, Voter Information Slips will not be allowed as proof of the identity of voters. Proof of identity will be any documents out of 12 documents, including EPIC. The BLO concerned has distributed 100% voter information slips. The citizens can also view details of the Polling Station, Parliamentary Constituency, and get the contact details of the booth-level officer, electoral registration officer among other services, through Voter Helpline App (VHA). The mobile app is available on the Google Play store and Apple Store. With the aim of spreading awareness among the voters, Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) emerged as a comprehensive programme aimed at reinforcing voter education and promoting active participation in democratic process. The need for SVEEP arises from the Election Commission of India's unwavering commitment to ensuring the participation of every voter in this monumental celebration of democracy.

Dung decay vital for elephant census

BENGALURU: As the southern states of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh started the three day long elephant census on Thursday, May 23, experts and scientists pointed that there is a need to include the dung decay rate (DDR) method for the statistics. Karnataka had started the DDR assessment from April, experts pointed that this should be done annually, in all states, instead of once in five years. Noted elephant expert R Sukumar, who is helping in the assessment, told TNIE that the DDR assessment will give a clearer picture, help understand the landscape, climate change, weather, rainfall pattern, the jumbo's health and their migratory pattern. "Since the weather and habitat will vary in each state, long-term assessment will help draw a pattern and a trend," he added. The DDR should start six months before the elephant census starts. It should be done on a regular basis, and a log should be maintained. It is a long term exercise, where the field staff should first find fresh dung, mark it, and assess it every two weeks. Explaining the need of the elephant population estimation, Sukumar said, a standard methodology and bench mark is being followed for uniform assessment in all the states. The exercise will help in better conflict management and improve co-ordination among the states. Compared to other parts of the country, elephant management is better in the southern states. The number of deaths and habitat loss is also less, he added. Experts had suggested the ministry of environment forests and climate change (MOEFCC) for inclusion of the DDR assessment technique, but any decision is yet to be taken.

Karnataka education department releases list of 17,000 authorised schools

It was observed that voters from minorities, SCs, and STs might have favoured the ruling party, while those from the middle and upper middle class might have supported the alliance.

BENGALURU: The Department of School Education and Literacy (DSEL) on Thursday released a list of over 17,000 private schools in Karnataka that have received its authorisation. However, parents are left anxious as there was no notification on how many schools did not get the department's nod and what happens to students who are already enrolled in them. The list uploaded on the DSEL's website offers names of schools district-wise under which one must select the block and look through an array of listed names to see if their child's school is authorised and verify the duration for which permission has been granted. The list also mentions the boards and classes that the school can offer. In Bengaluru alone, over 3,064 schools have received the stamp of approval with the maximum schools in Bengaluru South (1,312) followed by North (1,302) and Rural (449). When TNIE reached out to department officials to get an accurate number on how many schools were rejected, they did not have a

consolidated number yet. Rakesh Kumar Singh, Principal Secretary, DSEL said, "We are not giving the unauthorised list. Instead we are going for a positive construction so that parents can know which schools are authorised. It will be

admission in schools not on the list. The academic year is set to begin on May 28. Meanwhile, Shashi Kumar D, General Secretary, Associated Managements of Primary and Secondary Schools in Karnataka (KAMS), raised questions on the intent of the department on releasing only the list of authorised schools and said, "This is being done to protect the interest of some school owners. This is a failure of the administration."



NGO WANTS HELPLINE FOR PARENTS

NGO Child Rights Trust (CRT) suggested that the government should launch a helpline for parents and help them check if a school is authorised or not. Nagasimha Rao, Director, CRT, said, "Many parents in rural areas will not be able to access the website and check taluk-wise data. Launching a helpline for the month of June will be beneficial." He added that several parents reached out to him for direction as the school still claims they have authorisation. "Despite the list, schools are reassuring parents that they will receive the papers and that parents should not change their child's school," he said.

CM Stalin asks Pinarayi to stop check dam work on Silandhi

Stalin pointed out that the Tamil Nadu water resources secretary had already sought this information from the officials of the Kerala irrigation department.

CHENNAI: Chief Minister M K Stalin on Thursday wrote a letter to his Kerala counterpart Pinarayi Vijayan, urging the Kerala government to suspend the work on construction of a check dam across the Silandhi river. To uphold the friendly relationship between Tamil Nadu and Kerala, the check dam work must be suspended until a solution can be found for the issue, the CM said in his letter. Referring to the reports about the Kerala government constructing a check dam across the Silandhi river, which is part of the Pambaru (Amaravathy) sub-basin, Stalin said



there is an apprehension among the farmers of Tamil Nadu that the proposed check dam may drastically reduce the flow of water in Amaravathy river. Stalin also urged the Kerala CM to provide the present status of the check dam at Silandhi river and the Master Plan for Bhavani and Amaravathy (Pambaru) sub-basins to Tamil Nadu since this information has not been submitted either to the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) or to the Tamil Nadu government. Stalin pointed out that the Tamil Nadu water resources secretary had already sought this information from the officials of the Kerala irrigation department. **Suspend check dam work: Stalin to vijayan** Stalin also explained that the above information should be provided to Tamil Nadu immediately as it is vital for studying the issue legally. He also urged Pinarayi Vijayan to advise the officials concerned to suspend the works on the check dam across the Silandhi river until a solution to this issue is arrived at.

15 years on, wounds of police firing still sting Beemapally

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Nizam, a native of Beemapally, was 26 when a stray bullet from a police gun altered his life forever. He lost his right leg. Fifteen years later, Nizam, now 41, drives an autorickshaw to provide for his girls Noura and Riyana, who study in Class 7 and 10, respectively. And he waits, with diminishing hope, for an artificial limb. He is placed 14th in the priority list of the Thiruvananthapuram Medical College Hospital. "Fifteen years. I'm still not a priority, they say," says Nizam with a sigh. Nizam is among the 52 people who were injured in the police firing at Beemapally on May 17, 2009. Six people died in the police action that left the state deeply disturbed. At the time, the police claimed that some people from Beemapally, which has Muslims in majority, hurled bombs at Cheriyaathura, which lies just on the other side of the narrow road by the sea and has a sizable population of Latin Catholics.

The police also said the plan was to destroy the local church. However, none were reported injured at Cheriyaathura, and no cases were registered. Immediately after the firing, the National Confederation of Human Rights Organisations (NCHRO) dismissed the police's claims. It was also found that no police officer had been injured, and that the cops fired 70 bullets without an official order. It all started on May 8 when Kombu Shibu, an alleged troublemaker hailing from Cheriyaathura, refused to pay at Peer Muhammad's shop in Beemapally. The residents allege his actions were deliberate, a plot to create tensions between the Muslim and Christian communities. On May 16, he clashed with locals, threatening to disrupt the May 25 Uroos festival at Beemapally Masjid. Soon after, then District Collector Sanjay Kaul called for a peace meeting and assured all that Shibu will be arrested by night. It did not happen. The same

night, the boats of some residents were set ablaze by unidentified persons. On May 17, Shibu and his gang returned, leading to further tensions at Beemapally and



Cheriyaathura. Between 2.30 and 3pm, the police, without an order of the executive magistrate and the collector, opened fire in Beemapally. Six persons, Ahammad Ali, Seyyadali, Abdul Hakkim, Badusha, Ahammad Khani and 17-year-old Firos, were killed. Firos was dragged through the road after being shot. How inhumane is that? We cannot forget that. The 23,000

people of Beemapally will not forget it," says a resident, not wishing to be identified. Abubakkar, vice-president of Beemapally Jamaath, says he would never claim the police intervention was unnecessary. However, it should not have been so harsh, he says. "As you can see, we share amicable relations; this is how things are at any time of the day," he says. Majida, the daughter of Ahammad Ali, who was among those killed, says a day before, on May 16, the Lok Sabha election results were announced. "Shashi Tharoor won from Thiruvananthapuram. He never visited us," she says. In fact, four of the deceased were those who had gone out to see what was happening. Many were allegedly shot in the back. Even those who rushed the injured to the hospital were reportedly targeted. "All of us initially thought that firecrackers were being burst post elections. On hearing the first shot, my father went outside.

Kerala's new dam move a conspiracy: TN parties

CHENNAI: The Congress, PMK and the AMMK on Thursday strongly opposed the Kerala government's move to get terms of reference (ToR) for an environment impact assessment study from the union environment ministry for constructing a new dam at Mullaiperiyar on its territory and demolish the existing one maintained by the Tamil Nadu government. TNCC president K Selvaperothagan, in a statement, expressed shock at the Kerala government's move and said this would snatch away the rights of Tamil Nadu. He said even after the Supreme Court had ruled that the water level of the Mullaiperiyar dam could be raised to 152 feet after completing the works to strengthen the dam, the Kerala government is attempting to demolish the existing dam and build a new

one. Further, the Kerala government has been obstructing the Tamil Nadu government's efforts to strengthen the Mullaiperiyar dam. "Since the experts' committee appointed by the SC had endorsed the stability of the Mullaiperiyar dam, the Kerala government should stop engaging itself from such moves. It is a blatant violation of the SC verdict and also contempt of the Apex court. If the Kerala government continues with its activities, Chief Minister MK Stalin should move the SC to stall Kerala's attempts. PMK president Anbumani Ramadoss said the central government should not sanction the request of the Kerala government. He said the centre should understand the Kerala government's 'conspiracy' against the interests of Tamil Nadu farmers. On the other hand, the centre



should direct Kerala to immediately axe the 15 trees which block the strengthening of the baby dam of the Mullaiperiyar. In a statement, the PMK president said during the past 10 years, at the instigation of the Kerala government, many cases were filed by individuals questioning the stability of the Mullaiperiyar dam and the need for building a new one. However, the SC had rejected all

cases. "Despite this, the Kerala government's desperation to construct a new dam has ulterior motives," the PMK president said. He alleged if the water level of the Mullaiperiyar dam is raised to 152 feet, many resorts and bungalows constructed within catchment areas of the dam will go under water and Kerala government wants to prevent that. Dhinakaran said the DMK government is refusing to condemn Kerala for its attempt and because of this, the people and farmers of the districts of Theni, Madurai, Sivaganga, Dindigul, and Ramanthapuram are fearing that their livelihood would be at stake. "Chief Minister MK Stalin should understand that the interests of Tamil Nadu and its people are paramount than the alliance dharma and come forward to nip in the bud.

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The subject committee, which has LDF members in the majority, gave nod to the government proposal with a few recommendations even as the UDF members opposed the move.

Assembly subject committee gives nod to start pubs in state IT parks

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: In a major move that could invite bouquets and brickbats alike, the assembly subject committee has given go-ahead to the government proposal for setting up pubs in IT parks. The subject committee, which has LDF members in the majority, gave nod to the government proposal with a few recommendations even as the UDF members opposed the move. The proposal is likely to be implemented after June 6 when the election Model Code of Conduct will cease to exist. As per the proposal, one pub can be allowed to function in each IT park. The responsibility of operating the pub rests with the promoter, that's the state government, or anyone permitted by the promoter. Only the employees as well as the guests of the IT firms will be served alcohol and the pubs will function from 11 am to 11 pm. The subject committee has recommended changes



in IT and Excise rules before the proposal is implemented. The licence fee for starting the pub has been fixed as Rs 20 lakh and it will be under a new excise licence, FL 4C, that the pubs

will be allowed to operate. The pubs can procure liquor from the godowns of Beverages Corporation. The UDF members in the assembly subject committee opposed the proposal saying

that allowing the promoters to choose the operators of pubs would effectively open doors for the bar owners. They also pointed out that the government in a later stage would allow pubs in each IT firm and by allowing the pubs to open from 11 am to 11 pm, the government would be ushering in the decadent aspects of western culture. UDF MLA Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan said those backing the proposal justified it saying that it will lessen the stress of IT employees. "To serve alcohol to lessen stress is a weird and dangerous idea. Serving alcohol in places such as IT parks itself is a deviation from law, and the proposal, if implemented, would have larger consequences," he said. It was the first Pinarayi Vijayan-led LDF government that proposed setting up of pubs in IT parks. It was during the second term that the rules were amended to materialise the proposal.

NEWS BOX

Fliers on turbulent Singapore Airlines plane sustained spinal, brain injuries

World Twenty people who were aboard a Singapore Airlines flight that hit severe turbulence and diverted to Bangkok for an emergency landing on Tuesday remain in intensive care, a hospital official said on Thursday.

"The number of patients in ICU remains the same," Adinun Kittiratanapaibool, Director of Bangkok's Samitivej Srinakarin Hospital told reporters, referring to the medical facility's intensive care unit.

"The meaning of those in ICU are those that need close attention," he said, and added that currently there were no life-threatening cases. Of the 40 people on the flight still under treatment, 22 patients have spinal cord injuries and six have brain and skull injuries, he said.

The oldest patient at the hospital is 83 years old and the youngest a two-year-old child who suffered a concussion, he added. Adinun had said 41 people were still under treatment, but later said one person had been discharged. Ten British, nine Australian, seven Malaysian and four Philippine citizens were among the 41 people, according to a presentation made by Adinun.

He did not provide any breakdown of passengers and crew under treatment. One passenger died of a suspected heart attack and dozens were injured after Singapore Airlines flight SQ321 encountered what the airline described as sudden, extreme turbulence while flying over Myanmar

4 killed, 16 injured as restaurant collapses in Spain's Balearic Islands

Madrid,UPDATED A two-storey restaurant building collapsed on the beach in Palma de Mallorca on Thursday, killing at least four people and injuring 16 people in the tourism hot spot in Spain's Balearic Islands, the country's national police said.

Seven people were injured "very seriously" and nine were seriously injured, emergency services said on the X social media platform. They were taken to various hospitals in Palma. Emergency crews are finalising search and rescue operations and securing the area, a spokesperson for the local police told radio station RNE around midnight, local time. That is why now we ask you silence because we need silence to see if we hear someone," he said, adding that he could not rule out that someone was still trapped.

"The terrace has come down, probably due to excessive weight," he said, adding that the causes are still being investigated. The first calls came in around 8 pm, he said. Firefighters and police forces rushed to the scene, emergency services said, adding some psychologists had been called in. "I am closely following the consequences of the terrible collapse that occurred on the beach of Palma," Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said on X.

Sanchez said he had spoken to local and regional authorities, adding the government is ready to help "with all the means and troops that are necessary." "I want to send my condolences to the families of the deceased and my wish for a speedy recovery to the injured," he said. Spanish state-owned broadcaster TVE showed firefighters working to clear areas of the Medusa Beach Club in Palma around 11.30 pm local time, and ambulances on the scene.

Indian student in New York dies in bike accident

New York In a tragic incident, an Indian student here has died after he met with a bike accident. Shri Belem Atchyuth from Andhra Pradesh was a student at The State University of New York (SUNY) and passed away in a bike accident on Wednesday evening.

"Saddened to learn about the untimely demise of Shri Belem Atchyuth, a student at SUNY who met with a bike accident and passed away yesterday evening", the Consulate General of India said in a post on X. Expressing "deepest condolences" to his family, the Consulate said they are in touch with the "bereaved family & local agencies to extend all assistance including sending the mortal remains back to India."

More than 100 people believed killed by a landslide in Papua New Guinea, Australian media report

MELBOURNE. More than 100 people are believed to have been killed Friday in a landslide in a remote part of Papua New Guinea, Australian Broadcasting Corp. reported. The landslide reportedly hit Kaokalam Village in Enga Province, about 600 kilometers (370 miles) northwest of the South Pacific island nation's capital of Port Moresby, at roughly 3 a.m. local time, ABC reported. Residents say current estimates of the death toll are above 100, although authorities have not confirmed this figure. Villagers said the number of people killed could be much higher.

Social media video shows locals pulling out buried bodies. The Papua New Guinea government and police did not immediately respond to requests for comment on Friday. Papua New Guinea is a diverse, developing nation of mostly subsistence farmers with 800 languages. There are few roads outside the larger cities.

With 10 million people, it also the most populous South Pacific nation after Australia, which is home to 27 million.

IMF, Pakistan make significant progress on new loan: IMF mission

WORLD An International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission and Pakistan have made significant advancement toward obtaining a staff-level agreement on an extended financial facility, the global lender announced on Friday. Following their arrival in Pakistan on May 13, an IMF team led by mission chief Nathan Porter concluded meetings with the Pakistan government on Thursday, according to a statement. Reuters reported. "The mission and the authorities will continue policy discussions virtually over the coming days aiming to finalise discussions, including the financial support needed to underpin the authorities' reform efforts from the IMF and Pakistan's bilateral and multilateral partners," Porter said. Pakistan is expected to seek at least \$6 billion under the new scheme, as well as more IMF assistance through the Resilience and Sustainability Trust.

Earlier, the IMF had asked Pakistani authorities to impose a tax on monthly pensions exceeding Rs 1,00,000 in a bid to garner the necessary legislative support to tax wealthy pensioners.

US political consultant fined \$6 million for AI-generated Joe Biden phone calls

New York A political consultant who sent artificial intelligence-generated robocalls mimicking President Joe Biden's voice to voters ahead of New Hampshire's presidential primary faces a \$6 million fine and more than two dozen criminal charges. The Federal Communications Commission said the fine it proposed Thursday for Steven Kramer is its first involving generative AI technology. The company accused of transmitting the calls, Lingo Telecom, faces a \$2 million fine, though in both cases the parties could settle or further negotiate, the FCC said. Kramer has admitted orchestrating a message that was sent to thousands of voters two days before the first-in-the-nation primary on Jan. 23. The message played an AI-generated voice similar to the Democratic president's that used his phrase "What a bunch of malarkey" and falsely suggested that voting in the primary would preclude voters from casting ballots in November. Kramer is facing 13 felony charges alleging he violated a New Hampshire law against attempting to deter someone from voting using misleading information. He also faces 13 misdemeanor charges accusing

him of falsely representing himself as a candidate by his own conduct or that of another person. The charges were filed in four counties and will be prosecuted by the state attorney general's office. Attorney General John Formella said New Hampshire was committed to ensuring that its elections "remain free from unlawful interference." "I am pleased to see that our federal partners are similarly committed to protecting consumers and voters from harmful robocalls and voter suppression," said Formella, who was appointed by Republican Gov. Chris Sununu. Lingo Telecom said it strongly disagrees with the FCC's action, which it called an attempt to impose new rules retroactively. "Lingo Telecom takes its regulatory obligations extremely seriously and has fully cooperated with federal and state agencies to assist with identifying the parties responsible for originating the New Hampshire robocall campaign," the company said. "Lingo Telecom was not involved whatsoever in the production of these calls and the actions it took complied with all applicable federal regulations and industry standards." The New Hampshire calls falsely showed



up to recipients as coming from the personal cellphone number of Kathy Sullivan, a former state Democratic Party chair who helped run the Biden write-in campaign. She said in an email Thursday that she hopes Kramer is learning "there is a steep price for trying to rig an election." "The swift, decisive action by the New Hampshire Department of Justice and the FCC hopefully will deter other bad and/or stupid actors who don't respect democracy," she said. Kramer, who owns a firm that specializes in get-out-the-vote projects, did not respond

to an email seeking comment Thursday. He told The Associated Press in February that he wasn't trying to influence the outcome of the election but rather wanted to send a wake-up call about the potential dangers of artificial intelligence when he paid a New Orleans magician \$150 to create the recording. "Maybe I'm a villain today, but I think in the end we get a better country and better democracy because of what I've done, deliberately," Kramer said in February. Voter suppression carries a prison sentence of 3 1/2 to 7 years in prison. Impersonating a candidate is punishable by up to a year in jail. In an interview days after he was publicly identified as the source of the calls, Kramer said he disagreed that his robocall suppressed voter turnout, noting that Biden won the Democratic primary by a wide margin as a write-in candidate. While he did some ballot access work for another former Democratic presidential hopeful, Rep. Dean Phillips of Minnesota, Kramer said he acted alone.

"I wrestled in college. I'm ready for the fight," said Kramer, who is scheduled to appear in court on June 5. "If they want to throw me in jail, good luck."

South Korea, Japan announce sanctions over alleged Russia-North Korea arms trade

World South Korea and Japan on Friday, declared a series of sanctions targeting individuals, organizations, and vessels connected to Russia's alleged procurement of weapons from North Korea, which violates UN Security Council resolutions. Sanctions were imposed on seven North Korean individuals and two Russian vessels for their involvement in weapons trade and other activities between Pyongyang and Moscow, according to South Korea's foreign ministry. The ministry stated that the Russian vessels were transporting a significant number of containers between Russia and North Korea, carrying military supplies in clear violation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The United States and South Korea have accused North Korea of supplying weapons to Russia for use in its ongoing conflict in Ukraine, although both Moscow and Pyongyang have denied these allegations while pledging to strengthen military ties last year. Japan also announced sanctions against 11 organizations and one

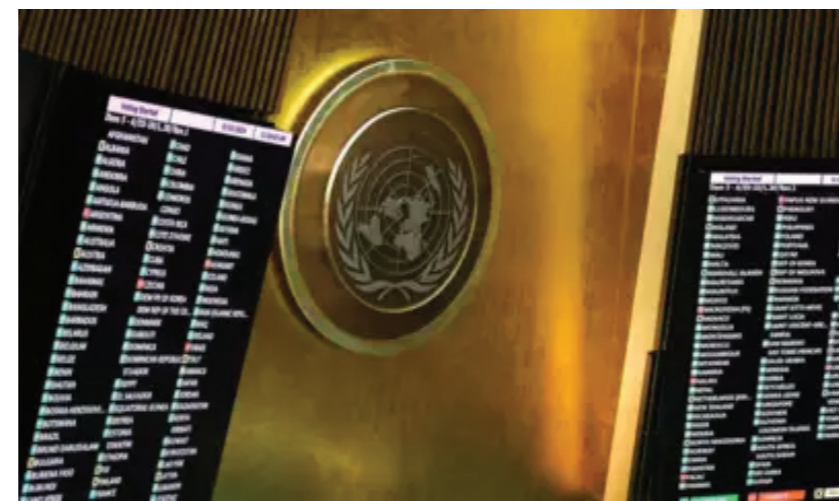


individual, including Russian groups allegedly involved in military cooperation to support Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Chief cabinet secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said, "Russia's procurement of arms from North Korea violates the relevant UN resolutions that completely prohibit the transfer of arms and related materials to and from North Korea."

South Korea's foreign ministry reported that a North Korean individual representing a state-controlled company based in Syria engaged in negotiations with a member of the Wagner Group between 2022 and 2023 to promote arms trade, citing an annual

report by the UN panel of experts monitoring the reclusive state. Additionally, an individual at a Russia-based company was involved in transporting diesel from Russia to North Korea, with both individuals accused of violating UN Security Council resolutions. The ministry also identified five other North Koreans who helped raise funds to support Pyongyang's development of nuclear and missile programs by earning foreign currency as IT workers. Last month, Russia described South Korea's sanctions on Russian individuals and entities as an "unfriendly move" and warned of an impending response. North Korea has been subject to UN sanctions for its ballistic missile and nuclear programs since 2006, with measures being strengthened over the years. Earlier this year, the UN panel of experts monitoring sanctions on North Korea failed to extend its mandate following a veto by Moscow, prompting the United States and its allies to seek alternative solutions.

Don't expect UN peacekeepers to stop wars: Chief



World Days after the Arab League called for the deployment of UN peacekeepers in Gaza and West Bank, the department chief responded saying that the world can't expect the United Nations to stop wars citing its

limitations. Calling the mission in Israeli occupied Palestinian territories "very, very, very hypothetical," under secretary-general for peace operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix told AFP that "peacekeeping has its

limits," and "imposing peace" is not part of the UN's mandate. "Imposing peace is... a synonym for waging war. Many states in the Security Council would be opposed to that," Lacroix said. Highlighting the limitations of the Blue Helmets, Lacroix stated that all of the key prerequisites to stop the war is missing -- a cease-fire, agreement from warring parties to accept UN forces, and authorization from a profoundly split UN Security Council.

France and Russia, members of the UN Security Council, are also exploring a role for UN peacekeepers in Gaza when Israel's military effort to eradicate the Hamas militant group, AFP reported. The plan is to send troops through the current UN peacekeeping force for the Middle East, known as UNTSO, which was established in 1948 and still has a tiny, unarmed contingent deployed in Lebanon.

"We agreed on the significant opportunity for the US to radically recalibrate its strategy and strengthen its support for Africa," Ruto said. Biden said he would designate Kenya as the first sub-Saharan African country to be a major non-Nato ally. Qatar, Israel and 16 other countries share that designation. Nairobi and Washington cooperate on fighting terrorism in Africa, stability in Haiti and supporting Ukraine.

The Kenyan president arrived in the United States on Monday and visited Atlanta, then spoke with business executives in the White House on Wednesday. On Friday, he will discuss digital inclusion in Africa with Vice President Kamala Harris at an event hosted by the US Chamber of Commerce. Successive US governments have said they wanted to offer African countries a more sustainable and democratic alternative to relations with China and Russia, but Washington has failed to establish deep ties. The continent's political landscape has been upended in the past year by a spate of military coups, wars and shaky elections that have given China and Russia greater influence. Biden hopes strengthening ties with Kenya, seen as a democratic stronghold, can help stabilize the continent and advance US interests. In a joint statement, the two leaders said they would work together to support the Somali government in its fight against terrorism and asked warring parties in Sudan to allow humanitarian access to aid and agree to a ceasefire.

Why protesters in Taiwan are angry with lawmakers

WORLD Demonstrations are expected across Taiwan Friday in protest against a push by opposition lawmakers to pass a bill that would expand their powers and limit new President Lai Ching-te's ability to govern in the most dangerous flashpoint in US-China ties. The changes would tighten parliament's oversight of Lai's government by expanding lawmakers' investigative abilities to summon people from a range of backgrounds, including the president, to answer their questions. Individuals could be subject to fines and criminal punishment if they are found in contempt of the legislature.

Lai's Democratic Progressive Party has vowed to fight the proposed changes, saying they aim "to undermine the constitution and disrupt government." The opposition Kuomintang, China's preferred negotiating partner in the chipmaking hub, said the ruling party is standing in the way of badly needed reforms. If the DPP is right, the amendments could become a tool for the opposition to tie Lai's government down in battles with the legislature during his four years in office. It could also impair his ability to enact policies, such as upgrading the island's military as the US has suggested. If passed, the changes to the law would likely go into effect soon given the KMT-led opposition controls

the legislature. Outmanned, the DPP has resorted to other measures to block the bill's passage, sparking tensions between lawmakers over the past week and likely leading to more pushing and shoving on the floor of the parliament once debate resumes Friday. What is the opposition doing and why? The opposition says that reform is needed to create a better balance of power between the president and the legislature. It also says the changes are in line with previous proposals by the DPP.

The KMT and its opposition partner, the Taiwan People's Party, say the bill would create more transparency and make the government more accountable. Opposition lawmakers say that in the past officials have deliberately dodged their questions during regular appearances in the legislature, falling short in their duty to explain their actions and policies.

The opposition wants the legislature to have the power to require government officials, the military, private entities and private individuals to provide witness testimony and documents to assist in probes. Individuals or entities that don't comply could be repeatedly fined as much as NT\$100,000 (\$3,100). Officials who refuse to answer questions could face penalties of as much as NT\$200,000, and people found to have lied could face fines or up to a year in prison.

The law would also require the president to

report to the chamber regularly and answer questions, something the opposition says will strengthen oversight of the island's top leader.

Why is the ruling party unhappy with that? The DPP and its supporters say the changes to the law amount to legislative overreach.



They say the bill has been rushed through committees and their feedback ignored, an accusation the opposition denies. One of the party's chief concerns is that the bill could be weaponized to disrupt Lai's government. The expansion of the legislature's investigative powers opens the possibility of a single lawmaker being able to request all manner of sensitive or confidential information about the government's operations, including military matters, according to the DPP. That, combined with the possibility of jail

time for officials found to have misled the legislature, could bog down the government in constant probes and possibly legal cases. Critics also worry it greatly increases the risk of confidential information being leaked.

Will this affect Taiwan's relations with China? Taiwan's constitution dictates that cross-strait relations and national defense are the president's responsibilities. The ability to question and request information from the president under threat of jail time for not answering could give the legislature greater oversight of relations with China. The opponents of the bill says this would infringe upon the president's ability to manage cross-strait relations and is therefore unconstitutional.

How could the president respond to the law?

He could ask the 15 justices of the Constitutional Court to rule on the constitutionality of the law. If the court declares the law unconstitutional, it would immediately become invalid. However, Lai can't ask the court to intervene until the legislation formally becomes law. The court has a history of moving slowly, meaning Lai's government would probably start facing probes in the legislature before the court is able to act.

Survey to enrol special kids in Bhavitha centres

GUNTUR : In order to identify specially-abled children and provide them with better medical care and education, Palnadu district officials are conducting door-to-door surveys from May 1 to June 9. The aim of the move is to enable the special children to be self-reliant by the age of 18 and equip with certain skills to live in the society.

The government has set up Bhavitha Kendrams across the State to provide the specially-abled children with medical facilities. There are 28 such centres in each mandal of Palnadu district. These centres are providing necessary assistance to as many as 324 specially-abled children.

During the survey, the Inclusive Education Resource Person (IERPs) have identified 75 children with special needs and enrolled them in the centres. Along with the special training, the centres will provide physiotherapy, speech therapy, and psychological therapies to the children. The resource persons will also focus on children, who are unable to come to the centres, by providing these services at children's homes. As many as six psychotherapists, 56 IERPs, speech therapists and psychologists are providing their services through these centres. Despite providing these services at free of cost, some parents are reluctant to send their wards to these centres due to lack of awareness and social stigma. To leave no student behind, the officials identify the special children and inquire whether these children are getting proper education. If not, based on the ability of the children, a decision will be made to send the child to school, college or Bhavitha.

Diet crucial to manage thyroid: Experts

However, individuals undergoing treatment for hypothyroidism with thyroid hormone replacement medication should avoid it altogether, Dr Mahesh suggested.

BENGALURU: Fruits, vegetables, and whole grains -- the key components of a diet can have an impact on thyroid and the group of disorders that affect the thyroid gland. Such disorders cause an overproduction (hyperthyroidism) or underproduction (hypothyroidism) of thyroid hormones, which can disrupt various bodily functions. Ahead of World Thyroid Day on May 25, experts emphasised the crucial role of diet in managing thyroid, saying that while some foods can improve the condition, others may worsen it and although diet alone cannot cure the disorders, it can help manage them. Experts noted that nearly 42 million people in India are affected by thyroid disorders while about 8% of households in India consume salt with



inadequate iodisation, leading to iodine deficiency disorders, goitre and hypothyroidism. Dr Mahesh DM, Consultant, Endocrinology, Aster CMI Hospital, said the thyroid gland depends on certain nutrients such as iodine, selenium and zinc. Among these, iodine and selenium play direct roles in thyroid disorders such as goitre and hypothyroidism, whereas excess iodine may contribute to thyrotoxicosis, a clinical syndrome of excess circulating thyroid hormones, irrespective of the source.

alleviate constipation, a frequent symptom of hypothyroidism, it is advisable to follow a diet rich in fibre, incorporating plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole grains, along with healthy fats such as

avocados, nuts and fatty fish, he said and recommended including iodised salt, lentils, red meat, seafood, nuts and eggs in the diet.

It is recommended to moderate the consumption of cruciferous vegetables such as cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower due to their goitrogenic properties. However, individuals undergoing treatment for hypothyroidism with thyroid hormone replacement medication should avoid it altogether, Dr Mahesh suggested.

Dr Pramila Kalra, HOD and Consultat, Department of Endocrinology, Ramaiah Memorial Hospital, also highlighted the role of a balanced diet for pregnant women as it can have an impact on the developing baby's brain health.

Candidates busy gauging voter mood in Anantapur

ANANTAPUR : It is quite normal for students to have fear of failure before the exam results. Now, the same fear is palpable among the contestants of Assembly and Lok Sabha elections in Anantapur. Though publicly, they are asserting that victory will be theirs, privately, they are worried about poll outcome.

During the election campaign, both the ruling YSRC and the Opposition TDP and its allies had used every method to lure voters. After the elections, the YSRC and the TDP-JSP-BJP combine have started claiming victory in the elections. However, neither of them is confident as to which way the voters have swung. With the majority of voters remaining silent on whom they preferred, taking the polling percentage as a basis, political analysts of both sides have taken up the assessment of outcome, but are unable to come to a conclusion. Same is the case with survey and intelligence agencies.

Even 10 days after the polling, like in other places of the State, politicians in Anantapur too are worried as they are unable to gauge the public pulse. All they have to say is that the voter's verdict will be different from the previous elections. Compared to the last elections, polling percentage has improved in both urban and rural areas of the erstwhile Anantapur district. While the YSRC is banking



on a positive vote for its welfare schemes, the TDP and its allies are relying on anti-incumbency.

Candidates of both sides in the district, unable to gauge the mood of the voter, have started contacting voters through phone calls and other methods to assess their verdict. Some have even engaged survey organisations to conduct sample surveys and opinion polls. These organisations are approaching the people claiming that they are only collecting info for academic purpose. Even those, who took a break after the hectic electioneering, started calling their men in their respective constituencies to get surveys conducted to assess the outcome. They are calling village sarpanches to know which side their respective villages have swung. What they are doing is comparing the mood of the people in the respective localities two days, one week and 10 days after the polling. It is not just politicians, who are anxious to know, which way the voter has swung, even the common man is seen discussing the same at public places of gathering. But, everyone has to wait till June 4 to know the poll outcome.

Special team formed to nab gang honey-trapping truckers on Kochi-Salem highway

COIMBATORE: KG Chavadi Police formed a special team to arrest a gang of five people who allegedly have been robbing lorry drivers on the Kochi-Salem national highway by laying honey trap. The gang allegedly dresses like women on the highway and lure drivers at night and early morning. Two drivers, who lost money to the gang on Thursday morning, complained to KG Chavadi police.

Police said, N Prabhu (38) of Mettupalayam was driving towards Walayar around 2.30 am on Thursday when he stopped the vehicle and stepped out near a temple in Navakkarai after spotting a woman standing on the roadside. The woman took him to an isolated place where a group of four people took away the Rs 30,000 he had at knife point. The gang also assaulted and threatened him, before releasing him. Within half an hour, a similar incident was reported in the same area and A Thangam (40) of Dharmapuri who was driving an empty lorry from Dharmapuri to Thrissur in Kerala was also robbed by the gang by the same modus operandi, said police. Based on their complaint, the police booked separate cases. Further, district (rural) police intensified night and highway patrol in the stretch between Walayar and Madukkarai. "Initially it was suspected that it was the handiwork of trans persons as they were men dressing like women. But the victims said that a man dressed like woman lured them. They mostly target the truck drivers in the wee hours. We will advise drivers to be aware of such issues," said a senior police officer.



Transwoman kathakali artist bags top rank in MG University exam

KOCHI: When it comes to gaining a foothold in the mainstream, those from the transgender community find the going tough. However, many of them fought and overcame immense odds to carve a place for themselves. Ranjumol Mohan joined this list of achievers when she became arguably the world's first transgender kathakali artist. Now, she has added another feather to her cap by bagging first rank in BA Kathakali Vesham examination conducted by Mahatma Gandhi University. "I took up kathakali very recently," Ranjumol told TNIE. She is no stranger to classical dance though. "When I was in Class 5, I started learning ottamthullal from Kalamandalam K Janardhanan asan. I continue to practise it even now," says said. Ranjumol said though she took a liking to kathakali, she couldn't train in it owing to financial constraints. "However, when I heard of the '60,000 fellowship being provided by the state government to those wishing learn kathakali, I decided to apply for it," she said. That was in 2021. Meanwhile, like other members of her community, the road so far for Ranjumol has been anything but easy. Like them, she too faced immense discrimination due to her identity. "However, I don't take the discrimination to heart. I know who I am, and have realised that I am not a perfect person. So, the taunts and neglect do not affect me," she said. Ranjumol said though she never gets an invite to perform, it doesn't bother her. "Kathakali is my passion," said Ranjumol, who secured a BSc in Geography in 2008. As for future plans, Ranjumol has decided to continue learning kathakali. "A senior in my college received the fellowship given by the state government to 1,000 artists and she is now taking classes. I have joined her classes.

Eucalyptus replantation: Lack of Plan B for survival of labourers a vexed issue for KFDC

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The controversial move by the Kerala Forest Development Corporation (KFDC) to replant eucalyptus, though withdrawn under pressure, has shed light on another less-discussed aspect. The KFDC had approached the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) seeking approval to replant eucalyptus for one year at its plantations by passing the forest department. The KFDC's move triggered speculations as the state government had taken a decision to phase out cultivation of eucalyptus, acacia, mangium and wattle on the basis of its eco restoration policy.

As per the 2021 policy, the cultivation of these trees is not suitable for the environment. Exotic monoculture plantations of eucalyptus, acacia and wattle, which are not suitable to the environment and habitats and

have become irrelevant will be eradicated in a phased manner to facilitate restoration of these areas as natural forests. This mammoth programme, to be implemented in an area of about 27,000 hectares, will be completed over two decades, the policy said.

However, this raises an all-important question. When the state government decided to phase out exotic and invasive species, was there any Plan B for the KFDC for the survival of hundreds of labourers, many of who are descendants of Sri Lankan migrants? The answer is no.

Established in 1975, the KFDC's main task was to supply raw materials to wood-based industries, particularly pulp and paper industries. KFDC supplied pulpwood in large quantities to industries like Western India Plywood Ltd, Punalur Paper Mills, Hindustan Newsprint Ltd

and Tamil Nadu Newsprint and Papers Ltd. Acacia and eucalyptus are the two pulpwood species cultivated and sold as pulpwood by KFDC. And there are cash crops like coffee and cardamom cultivated in its plantations in Munnar, Thrissur and Gavi. KFDC also runs eco-tourism packages in Gavi, Munnar, Thiruvananthapuram and Thrissur.

The labourers in cash crop plantations are Sri Lankan expatriates who came to Kerala in large numbers based on a pact signed in June 1974. The pact granted citizenship to around 3 lakh of Indian population in Sri Lanka while around 5.25 lakh returned to India. In 1975, there were thousands of people of Sri Lankan origin working in plantations on permanent and temporary basis. Now, there are over 400 permanent and temporary labourers working in cash crop plantations.

CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu government will be floating the tenders for Chennai's second airport, which would be set up in Parandur at an estimated cost of more than Rs 20,000 crore, by the end of next year, according to a Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO) official. Speaking to TNIE, the official said that the land acquisition process is on and it will take nearly one year to complete, following which the tenders would be called for. The project requires 4,563.56 acres of land spread over 13 villages. Of these, 3,246.38 acres are patta land (including 2,447 acres of nanjai (wetland) and 799 acres of punjai (rain-fed) land). The remaining 1,317.18 acres are government poramboke lands. He further said that the site clearance for the

green field airport is expected after the model code of conduct for the ongoing Lok Sabha elections is lifted. As per Greenfield Airports (GFA) Policy, 2008, site clearance

Environment Forest and Climate Change. Meanwhile, the high-level committee formed to examine the hydrogeological and other related issues concerning



by the Steering Committee is required for the development of the airport. The state is also awaiting the in-principle approval from the Centre, the official added. Necessary environmental clearance will also have to be obtained from the Union Ministry of

the construction of airport has submitted a report. "Whatever recommendation is being given, it will be acted upon," the official said. The seven-member high-level committee was constituted by the state last year. The team visited villages and waterbodies in

and around Parandur a few times over the past few months and examined the region's groundwater and flood levels and data on rainfall patterns over the last few decades. Unlike what happened in Bengaluru or Hyderabad, the operations of the old airport will not be shut down and the new airport will coexist with the old airport. The government is offering 3.5 times the market value for acquiring lands in 13 villages near Parandur in Kancheepuram district. The land is being acquired in the 'public interest' under the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013. However, the locals have been fiercely protesting against the project, citing the loss of land and livelihood.

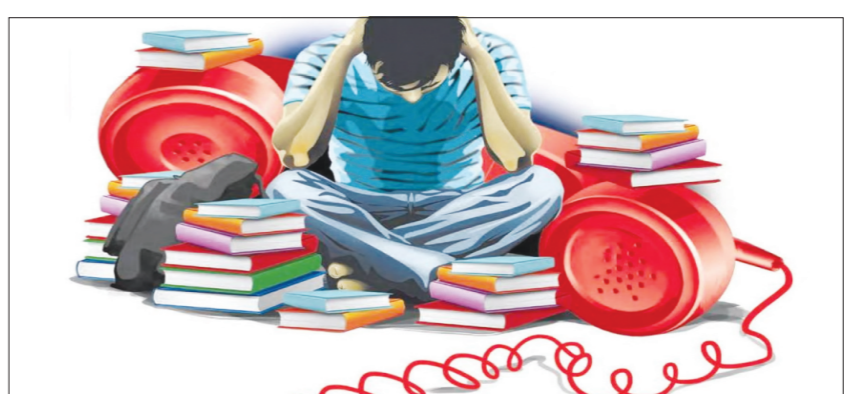
Cops send advisory to Bengaluru colleges, varsities

BENGALURU: With the number of suicide cases on the campuses of colleges and universities increasing, the city police have sent an advisory to all educational institutions in south-east division. Stressing the need for implementing safety measures and establishing support systems, CK Baba, deputy commissioner of police, south-east division, said the advisory focuses on measures to make the campuses student-friendly by providing access to mental health professionals and training to faculty members to effectively address the problems faced by students. A helpline number will also be provided to help the students in distress.

The advisory highlighted the student-counsellor ratio of 5:1 and emphasised regular mental health screenings and immediate assistance to students in distress. It outlined the establishment of 24/7 helpline and crisis intervention services apart from programmes on mental health and recognising signs of distress or suicidal tendencies among students.

The advisory proposed to develop peer support networks facilitated by trained student volunteers, aimed at offering peer-to-peer support and guiding peers. The advisory stated that institutions must prioritise student well-being through comprehensive initiatives such as

stress management and workshops on time management, study skills, and healthy lifestyles. They should offer inclusive and culturally sensitive counselling services in multiple languages and tailored assistance for minority and international students. The institutions must organise regular mental health awareness campaigns on their campuses. They should use posters and social media to reach the students in distress. They should also involve parents and communities in such events. The advisory stressed the need for organising events such as yoga, exercise, outdoor games, and extracurricular activities on the campuses.



East wind prevails over the West wind

IN the escalating contest between the West and the Rest, it is now clear that the former, while still packing the more powerful punch, is weakening. In the Asia-Pacific, the US Navy's stance has shifted from dominance to deterrence. In the economic sphere, too, Washington has switched from being on the offensive (technology bans, trade restrictions and financial sanctions) to playing defensive (putting up a tariff wall around the US market). And Western support for Ukraine has not stopped Russia. Mao Zedong had declared somewhat ahead of time that the East wind prevails over the West wind. That may now be beginning to happen. For years, Western analysts and journalists misread both China and Russia. The latter was portrayed as economically vulnerable and Vladimir Putin as politically challengeable, perhaps even terminally ill. China's collapse has been forecast for decades; more recently it has been seen as beleaguered. Yet Russia has withstood Western sanctions unexpectedly well; it has gained the upper hand in Ukraine, and Putin has been elected to a fresh term in office. China, meanwhile, remains the fastest-growing among economies with comparable income levels.

The steep tariffs that the US has announced recently on some Chinese products do not signal a full-scale trade war since they target items that China does not sell much in the US. So, the signalling may be primarily to President Biden's domestic political base. Regardless, China remains the dominant producer of many of the targeted products, and can find other markets. It is US importers who may have no alternative sources of supply for some items. China could also route supplies through factories in third countries. Meanwhile, American consumers will pay through inflation. Such defensive ploys (the flip side of a subsidy-laden policy to revive American manufacturing) contrast with the offensive thrust of earlier moves. The hope was that those aggressive moves would box in America's enemies. Without question, the sanctions have hurt, but (as almost always with sanctions) the impact has been partial. Russia has found new customers for its oil and gas, while Europe has lost a vital source of cheap energy, thereby hobbling economies like Germany's. Meanwhile, the Russian economy has continued to grow.

Both Russia and China have developed payment systems that bypass the dollar (95 per cent of the Russia-China trade is now in local currencies) and even banking communication systems like SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications). Russia now holds more renminbis in its reserve armoury than it does dollars. And China has been switching to gold, of which it has bought vast quantities over the past 18 months. The People's Bank of China's 2,250-tonne gold hoard still accounts for less than 5 per cent of the total reserves, but is the highest ever. As for technology, China moved earlier and faster than anyone else and occupies pole position in the clean-energy fields of electric mobility, solar power and lithium batteries. China also moved ahead of the pack to secure supplies of the special materials needed for these industries, and may have a lock on some of those markets. It may now be ready to break through tech barriers in electronics, life sciences and defence manufacture. Huawei, for instance, recently surprised the West by showcasing smartphones loaded with 7-nm (nanometre) chips, and is getting prepared to turn out 5-nm chips. China has set itself the target of 70 per cent self-sufficiency in chipmaking by next year. Meanwhile, Western pharmaceutical firms have acknowledged China's emerging leadership in biopharma and life sciences in places like BioBay, a mega-hub for innovation at Suzhou, near Shanghai. In defence, China is building a fourth aircraft carrier, which may be nuclear-powered, signalling the crossing of another technology threshold. The bald fact is that it is too late to shut the technology door on China.

Xi keen on consolidating bilateral ties to divide EU

China has been trying to widen differences between the US and the EU to loosen American restrictions on the sale of technology and weaponry to it.

CHINESE President Xi Jinping's recent visit to France, Serbia and Hungary came amid rising concern in Europe about the war in Ukraine and China's growing assistance to Russia. Commenting on Xi's tour, the official Zhongguo Qingnian Bao (China Youth Daily, May 6) candidly observed that the visit was "vital for China's relations with France, Serbia, Hungary and the European Union (EU) at large". High on Xi's agenda were the economy, concern about the possibility of the West imposing sanctions on China, and the issue of 'overcapacity' flagged by US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and the EU. Xi's tour was carefully crafted to first try and 'soften' France, which has a powerful voice in the EU and considerable investments in China, and then to end with a successful flourish in Serbia and Hungary — both countries with whom China has excellent commercial and diplomatic ties. Signed articles by Xi were published in major newspapers of the three countries, coinciding with his arrival.

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France was the most difficult to deal with as President Macron has changed his views over the past year and now sees the war in Ukraine as an existential threat to Europe. This has increased worries about the supply by China of dual-use goods and military material to Russia. To demonstrate — especially after German Chancellor Olaf Scholz bent his knee to Beijing — that France and the EU were equally concerned about Ukraine, Macron invited EU President Ursula von der Leyen to join the talks with Xi in Paris. Contentious issues were raised, such as the French-backed anti-subsidy investigation into electric vehicles from China; Chinese overcapacity; Beijing's indirect support to Russia's war in Ukraine; and the explosion of the Nordic pipeline.

In their 80-minute bilateral talks, Macron reportedly raised concerns about China supplying dual-use items to Russia and underscored that the war in Ukraine posed a direct threat to Europe. Xi said that in this phase of transformation and turbulence, "China and France should uphold independence and



jointly prevent a new Cold War or bloc confrontation" and "stay committed to the spirit that guided the establishment of their diplomatic ties, namely independence, mutual understanding, long-term vision and mutual benefit, and enrich it with new features of the new era". He said they should take "a long view and work together for an equal and orderly multipolar world" and "and jointly oppose decoupling and cutting off of supply chains." He offered to "deepen cooperation" in aerospace and aviation, nuclear energy, innovation and finance, and "expand cooperation in emerging areas such as green energy, smart manufacturing, biomedicine and artificial intelligence (AI)" as well as a reform of the international financial system.

Macron emphasised that France would not adopt discriminatory policies and did not want to keep China out of the French market. He said France hoped to export more agricultural products to China and was ready to enhance cooperation in areas such as aerospace and aviation, nuclear energy for civilian use, biodiversity protection and AI, and jointly uphold multilateralism, the UN Charter and international law. After their 100-minute trilateral meeting, Von der Leyen said she had pressed Xi on all contentious points and urged him to rein in Chinese subsidies and manufacturing overcapacity and give European companies more access to the Chinese market. She said she was counting "on China to use all its influence on Russia to end its war of aggression against Ukraine", and urged Beijing to

stem the supply of dual-use goods helping Russia's military. She pointed out that "given the existential nature of the threats stemming from this war for both Ukraine and Europe, this does affect the EU-China relations." Xi seemed to brush off these concerns and stressed that "China is not at the origin of this crisis, nor is it a participant". He said the crisis should not be used to tarnish China's image or start a new Cold War. Interestingly, throughout the meetings, Xi referred to the war in Ukraine as a 'crisis'.

After a quick visit to the home of Macron's grandmother in the Hautes-Pyrénées, Xi arrived in Serbia on the 25th anniversary of the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade on May

7 to a red-carpet welcome. Xi received a similar reception in Hungary. China signed 28 and 18 agreements, respectively, in Belgrade and Budapest. In Serbia, which is not a member of the EU, Xi made it clear that the country stood to gain far more from close ties with China than the EU. The trans-Serbia Railway was highlighted as an example of the Belt and Road cooperation and they agreed to build a "China-Serbia community with a shared future in the new era". Three more Confucius Centres and a Chinese Cultural Centre were opened. In Hungary, agreements were signed for two new electric vehicle-manufacturing factories.

At the joint press conference on May 9, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban announced that "China is one of the pillars of the new world order" and that Hungary would support China's peace plan for Ukraine. Xi said: "China supports Hungary in playing a bigger role in the EU and promoting greater progress in China-EU relations."

Beijing has for decades been trying to widen differences between the US and the EU to loosen American restrictions on the sale of technology and weaponry to China. Xi is consolidating relations with Serbia and Hungary to build them into potential wedges to divide the EU. Following Scholz's visit in April, Beijing could see Germany as a potential weak link. The apparent change in French President Macron's views on Russia could, however, impact China-France ties.

Mind your tongue

ECI tells politicians not to cross the red line

IN a commendable step, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has pulled up former Calcutta High Court judge and BJP candidate Abhijit Gangopadhyay for his derogatory remarks against West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and debarred him from campaigning for 24 hours. Rather than confining its order to just one contestant, the poll panel has asked the BJP to issue an advisory to all party candidates and campaigners to ensure that such lapses do not recur during the campaign period. Describing Gangopadhyay's comments as a 'low-level personal attack', the ECI said he had violated the Model Code of Conduct. The ECI's exemplary reprimand will help in blunting the Opposition's charge that the poll panel invariably favours the ruling party at the Centre.

Gangopadhyay, who joined the BJP in March after resigning as a judge, has not exactly covered himself in glory by basely targeting the CM. It does not



behave someone of his professional background to stoop so low. The ECI has rightly reminded political leaders that

their criticism of other parties should avoid 'all aspects of private life not connected with the public activities of the leaders or workers'.

Another judge of the Calcutta High Court, Justice Chitta Ranjan Dash, has caused controversy by thanking the RSS in his farewell speech. He stated that he owed a lot to the organisation and was ready to go back to it. Later, Justice Dash argued that it would have been hypocritical of him not to have mentioned his long association with the right-wing body. Both ex-judges deserve flak for having dented the reputation of the judiciary, whose independence is central to the rule of law and constitutional norms. No less significant is the autonomy of the ECI, which has done well to warn both the BJP and the Congress to desist from campaigning

along religious, communal, linguistic and caste lines.

Political parties pay lip service to women's safety

The Swati Maliwal, Brij Bhushan and Prajwal cases highlight the double standards of politicians on women's issues.

THE Swati Maliwal case underlines a horrifying reality — political parties are reluctant to walk the talk on women's issues. They may pledge their commitment to empowering women, but when it comes to taking action, they are nowhere to be seen. It is not just the Aam Aadmi Party that is at fault. The BJP has been largely evasive about the sexual harassment case against its MP, Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. The saffron party has not only ignored his condemnable acts, but it has also given the ticket to his son to fight the Lok Sabha election from the Kaiserganj constituency in Uttar Pradesh. The oft-repeated shibboleths of Nari Shakti and Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao remain empty political slogans.

In the Maliwal case, Arvind Kejriwal's former personal secretary Bibhav Kumar is accused of assaulting her at the Delhi Chief Minister's residence. Violence took place during a heated exchange between Kumar and Maliwal, a Rajya Sabha MP. She was allegedly slapped and kicked in the chest and stomach. Did it have something to do with her superior position — as an MP — to that of the man (the CM's aide)? What we do know is that violence was the result. The case of Brij Bhushan — a former chief of the Wrestling Federation of India and a six-time MP — pertains to the sexual harassment of female wrestlers. He was charged by the court for sexual harassment, stalking, outraging the modesty of women and criminal intimidation. The matter brings to the fore the menace of sexual exploitation of women by powerful individuals. Prajwal Revanna, a young MP from Karnataka, has been accused of sexually abusing several women. He belongs to an influential political family — he is the grandson of former Prime Minister and Janata Dal (Secular) chief Deve Gowda. The Karnataka State Commission for Women has stated that the parliamentarian had abused women and made objectionable videos of them without their consent. When the videos went viral and the truth could not be denied any longer, Prajwal fled to Germany. Even as he continues to evade the authorities, he has been suspended



by the party. Interpol has been contacted to locate him, but there has been no success so far. Incidentally, the JD(S) is an ally of the BJP in Karnataka in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections. These cases underscore the double standards that political leaders adopt towards women and highlight the difference in what they say and what actions they take. Maliwal's case adds yet another dimension to the violence women face, which extends from domestic abuse to murder (dowry deaths and honour killings), sexual crimes (rape, human trafficking and prostitution) and acid attacks.

The unpalatable truth about women in India, both

historically and socially, is that they are struggling for their own identity, shouting to have their voices heard and fighting for their esteem and respect. Despite the constitutional guarantee of gender equality, rampant discrimination and exploitation of women continue in India. Incidents of sexual harassment, molestation and ill-treatment of women are on the rise. It is high time that women got a respectable and dignified position in Indian society to fearlessly voice their opinions. Awareness should be spread among women and in society, and their rights should be protected. All crimes against women should be made punishable. In this era of globalisation

and revolution in the means of communication and information technology, the role of the media has become all the more crucial for women's empowerment in India. There has been much societal progress all over the world. And a number of organisations have been striving to protect the honour and freedom of women. But in our country, a deep-rooted patriarchal attitude persists. That is the reason why it is the male child that gets more attention in a family and enjoys more freedom than a girl. It is necessary to have women in India educated so that they can live with dignity and help solve their issues. Education alone would give them confidence. Every woman has a fundamental right to be safe. If she is able to protect herself and stand up against injustice, her protest becomes meaningful. Socio-economic empowerment of women can help improve their status in society.

Unfortunately, the Maliwal, Brij Bhushan and Prajwal cases have sown fear in the minds of women. Inaction or delayed action by law enforcement authorities only adds to their plight. Notably, the police initially dragged their feet on registering an FIR against Brij Bhushan; they did it only after the intervention of the Supreme Court. It is imperative that courts take these things into consideration and order a speedy trial to ensure the harshest punishment possible for the culprits. Such promptness will at least deter people from committing crimes against women. It is the perpetrators who should be afraid, not the victims. Hopefully, the judiciary will understand the gravity of the situation and ensure the swift delivery of justice in such cases.

change in mindset can make women's lives more safe and secure. The need of the hour is to create awareness about their rights to save them from exploitation. Inculcating strong social, moral and cultural values among citizens through education and making strong laws to punish perpetrators can bring about a positive change.

We've all seen Shilpa Shetty wear watches on both wrists during matches of her IPL team or heard how his blue sapphire helped Amitabh Bachchan bounce back when his career was going downhill.

Feeling unlucky? These plants Can help you

Even Lord of the Rings star, Cate Blanchett, has her elf ears stashed away safely for good luck. But why only celebs; all of us have our little good-luck secrets, don't we? And what could be better than a lucky charm that's eco-friendly as well? Yes, we are talking about lucky plants - the ones that supposedly radiate positive energy and attract good fortune, happiness and prosperity.

There was a time when most of these plants were region-specific, like the good old Tulsi adorning Indian courtyards, but of late, it has become a global trend. You will find miniature bamboo shoots in every other Indian household or office, sitting quietly in a corner and auguring good fortune for its owner.

So, here's a list of some plants and herbs considered lucky around the world. Pic your charm...

PEACE LILY

This dark green plant with gorgeous bright white flowers helps you prosper by improving the indoor air quality. It also helps prevent asthma, headaches, chronic illnesses, cancer and more. The peace lily does all that simply by sitting pretty in your home. It can clean out formaldehyde, benzene and carbon monoxide from the ambient air, apart from other fumes like cigarette smoke, paint, furniture fumes etc.

CACTUS

The Aztecs of central Mexico consider a flowering cactus auspicious. According to them, a blooming cactus flower symbolizes good luck and its owner can expect good news immediately. According to the legends, the gods of sun and war had promised Aztec priests that one day, someone would spot an

eagle perched on a cactus and holding a snake. This would mean that they had found their home. And it supposedly happened! Aztecs hurried to the swampy shore of a lake to see this wonderful sight and as they watched, the cactus grew into an island, which became their new home.

MONEY PLANT

Often used in Feng Shui, a money plant is said to produce a positive energy flow that attracts good luck and fortune. In China, the money plant is traditionally given as a New Year gift. But there's a catch: The plant's shoot must

always point upward for it to bring you wealth. Also, according to popular belief, owners get richer if the plant is propagated using stolen branches (cuttings). On the downside, the person from whom the clippings are stolen, supposedly stands to lose wealth.

HERBS

TULSIBASIL
It holds both mythical

logical and religious significance for Hindus. Believed to be Lord Krishna's wife, it's considered pure and holy, and also has medicinal properties. Tulsi leaves are often used to purify food and water. It is also offered to the gods during prayers. Supposed to ward off negative energy from your home, it is also credited with helping people achieve FINANCIAL success. And, if you grow your own basil and use it to flavour your food, it is said to awaken passion in anyone who eats it. Want to give it a try?

ROSEMARY

It's said to increase brain power, attract love and encourage lust. Rosemary relaxes your mind and keeps you youthful. It helps in healing, protection and purification.

FLOWERING PLANTS

isaias, jasmine helps keep romance alive. It is believed to attract love, MONEY and prophetic dreams.

LAVENDER

Lavender is known for its mood-elevating and calming properties. Its scent is said to bring a sense of inner peace. Applying lavender oil on your forehead and behind your ears alleviates headaches and improves sleep. Allegedly, it's also supposed to help one attract men -and see ghosts! So, all the ghostbusters out there, now you know what to do.

ORCHIDS

Orchids are meant to attract love, deepen friendships and help soothe the soul. Ancient Greeks used to associate orchids with fertility and virility.

HONEYSUCKLE

Apparently, having honeysuckle at home improves finances. Its smell is believed to sharpen one's intuition. Some also believe that placing crushed flowers next to one's forehead boosts PSYCHIC powers.

ROSES

Roses are believed to attract love and luck. Moreover, different colours exude specific energies. For instance, white roses purify and heal, while a white rose with red markings symbolizes devotion and passion. On the other hand, peach roses bring peace, spirituality and friendship, lavender ones can be used to enhance spirituality in life, pink variants attract romance while red attracts true love. Fuchsia roses are meant to express deep love and acceptance of your body - fat or slim, doesn't matter.

JASMINE

Known as one of the most powerful aphrodisiacs,



Simple cleaning techniques that never go wrong

Want to be a domestic goddess but having trouble getting that elusive crown? Not every woman is blessed with the natural gift of having amazing housekeeping skills.



But that doesn't mean you can't learn. Start by learning basic things, cleaners, detergents, powders, etc. And make sure you don't make these mistakes:

- If you have wooden flooring in any part of the house, make sure that you don't ever clean it with water. Mopping a wooden floor with water will be its death knell, it will damage the wooden flooring in no time. Use a slightly damp cloth to clean it instead. The idea is to minimize the use of water as much as you can. The same goes for laminated floors as well.
- While polishing your wooden furniture, don't go overboard with the polish. While it might make the furniture look shiny and new, it can also make smears look more noticeable, which is the last thing you want. Instead, just use a clean cloth every other day to keep your furniture clean and use the polish sparingly for special occasions.
- Whether you're the most careful person in your family or not, everyone spills things. Even the smallest and most innocuous things can cause



ghastly stains on your lovely upholstery, carpets or clothes. Instead of reaching out for some water and scrubbing the stain with your fingers, use a tissue paper or a dry towel to blot out the stain. Keep the stained item in a bucket of water and detergent and try the blotting technique again.

- Thanks to the omnipresent dust and pollution in Mumbai, windows get dirty very quickly. But the trick is to clean your windows after the sun has set or before the sun rays hit your windows. This is because the harsh rays of the sun can cause the cleaning liquid to make streaks across the glass, just the thing you don't want.

Tips to do up your pad in a creative way

Here are a few ways you can make your house look interesting...

If you are bubbling with ideas to decorate your house with quirky designs, we suggest ways you can incorporate them—

Vertical stripes:

During this time of the year, vertical stripes look the best on your upholstery. Whether its your sofa or diwan cover, cushion covers or bedsheets or bedspreads, vertical stripes make your room look pleasing.

Floral curtains:

Curtains in small floral prints with a variation of colours make your room look vibrant and lovely. Choose curtains in pink, mauve and yellow which are the



colours of the season.

Pink highlights:

To make a part of your room look trendy, colour one part of the wall in your living room in pink and let the rest be in white. On the pink wall, you can have photo frames and other accessories like wall art etc, put up to make your house look interesting.

Introduce water body if you have space:

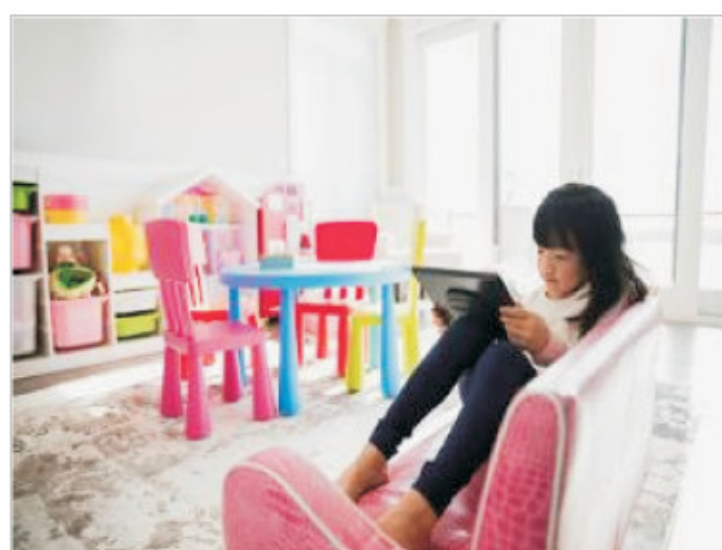
If you have a big home, you can keep water body in the form of a small water fountain or just take some clay and spread it out like a man-made lake in some part of your home. You can then pour some water in it and have small planters placed on the side.

Tips to remember while buying Furniture for kids

Consider safety first, manage space and look for style while picking furniture for your child's room, says an expert.

ashokr, director, Delhi-based children's furniture brand Alex Daisy, has shared a few tips:

- While the modern styles and innovative ideas behind most current furniture designs can be quite child-friendly, the main thing we have to look out for is that any bedroom furniture for your child should be made from sturdy material.
- Look for furniture that offers storage solutions. A headboard that contains shelves to



and storage boxes that serve as chairs, will work well if your child's non-toxic coatings and finishes.

Easy ways to decorate a blank wall

Here are some easy ways how you can turn a blank wall into the funkiest area of your house.



Do you have a blank wall staring at you every day you get up? Well, think and look at it no more! Just get down to business and decorate it with these easy ideas and make the wall your favorite part of the house -

Paint it: Select a bright, cheerful color and paint the wall with it. You can also select more than one color and let your imagination play all over the wall. Think of single shades, dual tones, horizontal or vertical stripes.

Hang paintings: Do you have a few paintings lying in your closet wrapped in a brown paper? Take them out and hang them on the wall.

3. Think wallpaper: Colorful wallpapers with funky prints are in vogue. They not only help decorate your wall in a different fashion, they can also easily hide cracks and blots on the wall.

4. Do the dishes: Use some of your old, exotic round plates and hang them in a fashionable way on the wall. Think out of the box and see how you can place them.

5. A funky clock: Go spend some cash and buy a funky, classy wall clock that speaks volumes about your personality.

6. Photo collage: This will make you want to stare at the wall till your day ends. A collage of pictures of your loved ones is one of the finest ways to decorate the wall.

7. Get creative: Picture origami, hand knitted pieces of cloth, teddy bears or simple crafts; these can lift your wall and make it very lively.

Cyclonic Storm Remal Approaches West Bengal, IMD Issues Heavy Rainfall Alert

New Delhi: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted heavy rainfall over West Bengal and Odisha as a depression which is moving towards which lies over the Bay of Bengal is likely to move northeastwards and intensify into a cyclonic storm Remal by the evening of May 25 and reach the West Bengal coasts as a severe cyclonic storm by Sunday evening. Under the influence of the cyclonic storm, the coastal districts of West Bengal and adjoining districts of North Odisha are likely to witness heavy to very heavy rainfall on May 26 and May 27.

The IMD has issued a warning for rough sea conditions as cyclonic storm Remal approaches the West Bengal coast. Weather is expected to worsen by the evening of May 24. The meteorological department advises fishermen to avoid venturing into the Bay of Bengal until the morning of May 27, 2024. This is the first cyclone in the Bay of Bengal this pre-monsoon season and will be named Remal, according to a system of naming cyclones in the Indian Ocean region. "The

system will concentrate into a depression over central Bay of Bengal by Friday morning. It will further intensify into a cyclonic storm on Saturday morning and reach Bangladesh and the adjoining West Bengal coast as a severe cyclonic storm by Sunday evening," IMD scientist Monica Sharma told PTI. According to the IMD, the cyclone could reach a wind speed of 102 kilometres per hour on Sunday. The Met office has warned of very heavy rainfall in the coastal districts of West Bengal, north Odisha, Mizoram, Tripura and south Manipur on May 26-27.

Fisherfolk out at sea have been advised to return to the coast and not venture into the Bay of Bengal until May 27. Scientists say cyclonic storms are intensifying rapidly and retaining their potency for longer periods due to warmer sea surface temperatures, a result of oceans absorbing most of the excess heat from greenhouse gas emissions. The past 30 years have witnessed the highest sea surface temperatures since records began in 1880.



According to senior IMD scientist DS Pai, warmer sea surface temperatures mean more moisture, which is favourable for the intensification of cyclones. Madhavan

Rajeevan, former secretary of the Union Ministry of Earth Sciences, said a sea surface temperature of 27 degrees Celsius and above is needed for a low-pressure

system to intensify into a cyclone. The sea surface temperature in the Bay of Bengal is around 30 degrees Celsius at present.

"The Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea are very warm at present, so a tropical cyclone can easily form," Rajeevan said. But tropical cyclones are not only controlled by the ocean; the atmosphere also plays an important role, especially in terms of vertical wind shear -- a change in wind speed and/or wind direction with altitude. "A cyclone will not intensify if the vertical wind shear is very large. It will weaken," Rajeevan said.

Models suggest the cyclone will not affect the monsoon progress, the senior meteorologist said. Pai, however, said it could affect the progress of the monsoon in some parts. He told PTI, "Initially, the system will help the monsoon progress over the Bay of Bengal. Thereafter, it will detach from the monsoon circulation and pull a lot of moisture, which could result in a slight delay in the monsoon progress in that area."

Over 80 hospitalised after gas cylinder blast in Gujarat

New Delhi: A gas cylinder exploded in a scrap shop in Gujarat's Palanpur, causing health difficulties for many. As many as 89 people were hospitalised after they developed health issues due to the gas leak. Following the explosion, the gas spread in the area, and people faced difficulty in breathing, hospital authorities said. One patient was critical and was put on a ventilator, while several others were discharged after treatment. Currently, around 30 patients are still under treatment, an official of the hospital told news agency



ANI. The Banaskantha Superintendent of Police said that all of the hospitalised people are out of danger and a probe has been launched into the incident.

"Today around 6 pm, an incident of gas leakage was reported in the area near the Malan Darwaja of Palanpur city area. As soon as information about the incident was received, the administration and police department immediately reached the spot. Around 89 people have been shifted to Palanpur Civil Hospital, and none of them are in danger right now," Makwana said.

The reason behind the gas leak is being investigated. Preliminary findings suggest that the gas leaked from a scrap shop, he added.

Severe heatwave to scorch North India, red alert for heavy rain in Kerala

New Delhi: Heatwave to severe heatwave conditions are likely to scorch parts of North India till May 27, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast. On the other hand, heavy rainfall has been predicted for Tamil Nadu and Kerala, where red and orange alerts have been issued. As the northern and central regions of India grapple with a relentless heatwave, no relief seems to be in sight. The IMD has predicted heatwave conditions in most parts of Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, and western Uttar Pradesh. Isolated pockets in Delhi are also likely to see heatwave conditions. Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and



some pockets of Jammu are also likely to reel under heatwave.

Meanwhile, heavy to very heavy rainfall has been predicted for Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal. Extremely heavy rainfall is very likely over Kerala and Mahe. In Kerala, a red alert has been issued in Ernakulam and Thrissur and an orange alert in Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Idukki, Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode and Wayanad districts of the state.

Congress MLA's 'need beef' retort to Annamalai's food offer during protest

Chennai. A war of words has erupted between the BJP and opposition parties in Tamil Nadu over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's claim that the 'missing' keys of the Ratna Bhandar (treasure trove) of Puri's Jagannath temple was in Tamil Nadu. The Congress announced that they would hold a protest in front of the BJP headquarters in Tamil Nadu, with state BJP chief Annamalai saying that the saffron party would serve food to the protesters. In retaliation, Congress's EVKS Elangovan asked the BJP chief to serve beef and non-vegetarian food.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at an election rally in Odisha, claimed that the "missing" keys of the Ratna Bhandar of Puri's famous Jagannath temple reached Tamil Nadu six years ago. It was seen as a swipe at Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's aide VK Pandian, who is from Tamil Nadu. PM Modi's comments invited

sharp criticism from the DMK and Congress in Tamil Nadu. Congress state president K Selvaperunthagai announced that they would stage a protest in front of the BJP headquarters in Chennai. In response,



Annamalai tweeted, "I heard that the Tamil Nadu state president of the Congress party has announced that they are going to lay siege to the Tamil Nadu BJP headquarters. If our office announces the date of arrival in

advance, it will be convenient to arrange meals for the ten people coming." "Also, we can give a book on the betrayals of DMK and Congress to Tamils as a gift to all those who come," the BJP leader said.

Responding to Annamalai, Elangovan said he would inform two days in advance, but demanded non-vegetarian food and beef. "If we come over there, we need non-vegetarian and beef. We will inform two days prior. You please prepare and let him do so," Elangovan said.

The DMK also protested against the PM's remarks. Chief Minister MK Stalin condemned PM Modi's speech, stating that it referred to people in Tamil Nadu as thieves. Annamalai stated that those advising MK Stalin did not present him with facts and PM Modi only stated that if the BJP came to power, the lost keys would be found.

Bangladesh MP Murdered By Illegal Immigrant, Who Peeled Skin, Chopped Body: Sources

New Delhi: A Bangladesh MP, believed to have been murdered in Kolkata, was skinned, chopped up in an apartment and disposed of in several plastic packets across the city, investigations have revealed. The MP, Anwarul Azim Anar, had been missing since May 14, two days after he arrived in Kolkata.

The West Bengal CID (Criminal Investigation Department) has made a significant breakthrough in the investigation after the arrest of Jihad Hawladar, an illegal immigrant from Bangladesh, who lived in Mumbai. According to CID sources, Jihad Hawladar has confessed to his involvement in the murder and dismemberment of the Bangladesh MP's body in an apartment in New Town, Kolkata. Shocking details have emerged of how the crime was meticulously planned and executed. Hawladar has reportedly disclosed that



the mastermind was Akhtaruzzaman, a US citizen of Bangladeshi origin. On Akhtaruzzaman's orders, Hawladar, along with four other Bangladeshi nationals, smothered and killed the MP in the New Town apartment.

On Wednesday, Bangladesh Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said Anwarul Azim Anar had been found murdered and three people had been arrested. The Bengal CID found bloodstains inside the New Town apartment and also recovered several plastic bags, which they believe were used to dump the body parts. Circumstantial evidence indicates that the MP was first strangled and then his body was cut up into several pieces, police claimed. The revelations are nothing short of chilling. Hawladar allegedly told cops that after killing Anar, the group proceeded to skin the body, remove all the flesh, and mince it to obliterate any possibility of identification. The remains were then packed into plastic bags, with the bones cut into small pieces. These packets were transported and disposed of across Kolkata, the suspect allegedly said.

Lok Sabha Elections 2024: Campaigning Ends For Sixth Phase, Polling On 58 Seats Today

New Delhi: The sixth phase of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections is scheduled for Saturday for 58 parliamentary constituencies spread across eight states and a UT. The campaigning for the sixth phase of general elections concluded on Thursday and now the fate of 889 candidates lies in the hands of the voters across 58 Lok Sabha seats.

In the sixth phase of polls, Lok Sabha seats of Delhi and Haryana which BJP clean-swept in the 2019 polls are in the fray. The sixth phase also includes eight seats in Bihar, all 10 seats in Haryana, one seat in Jammu and Kashmir, four in Jharkhand, all seven seats in Delhi, six in Odisha, 14 in Uttar Pradesh and eight in West Bengal.

Along with the Lok Sabha Elections on May 25, Forty-two assembly constituencies in Odisha are also going



for polls in the third phase of Assembly elections. Some of the key seats in this phase include New Delhi, North-East Delhi, North-West Delhi and Chandni Chowk in the national capital and Sultanpur and Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh.

Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag-Rajouri, West Bengal's Tamruk, Medinipur, Haryana's Karnal, Kurukshetra, Gurgaon, Rohtak and Odisha's Bhubaneswar, Puri and Sambalpur are some of the other key

seats. Some of the prominent candidates in the fray include BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra, union minister Dharmendra Pradhan, PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti and former union minister Maneka Gandhi and former Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar.

Bansuri Swaraj, Somnath Bharti, Manoj Tiwari, Kanhaiya Kumar, Dinesh Lal Yadav alias 'Nirahua', Dharmendra Yadav, Abhijit Gangopadhyay, Agnimitra Paul, Naveen Jindal, Raj Babbar, Deepender Singh Hooda, Kumari Selja and Aparajita Sarangia are among other prominent candidates in the fray. Stakes are high for BJP as also for Congress, Aam Aadmi Party and other constituents of INDIA bloc in this phase of election.

Lok Sabha Election Phase 6: When Are Dry Days In Delhi, Gurugram, Faridabad? Check Dates, Time

Dry Days in Delhi: This precaution is aimed at preventing any potential disturbances or misuse of alcohol during the election process.

New Delhi: Ahead of the Phase 6 of the 2024 Lok Sabha Elections, the excise department has announced that all liquor stores and licensed premises in Delhi, Faridabad, and Gurgaon will be closed from 6 PM on May 23 to 6 PM on May 25.

Why Dry Days Are Imposed? This step is taken to maintain law and order during this critical polling period. Additionally, there will be a complete ban on liquor sales on June 4, the day the Lok Sabha Election results will be declared. The shutdown of liquor outlets will begin 48 hours before the end of the



poll, starting at 6 PM on May 23 and lasting until 6 PM on May 25. This precaution is aimed at preventing any potential disturbances or misuse of alcohol during the election process.

Counting Day On June 4, no liquor will be sold to ensure a peaceful environment on the vote-counting day. This measure



highlights the importance of maintaining public order and ensuring a smooth electoral process. By enforcing these regulations, authorities aim to uphold the integrity and security of the Lok Sabha Elections 2024, promoting a fair and transparent democratic exercise.

Dry Days List for Delhi, Gurugram, and Faridabad:

- May 23, Thursday: Buddha Purnima, Pre-polling day
- May 24, Friday: Pre-polling day
- May 25, Saturday: Polling day (Until the end of voting hours)
- June 4, Tuesday: Counting day
- June 17, Monday: Bakrid Lok Sabha Elections 2024 Phase 6:

A total of 58 constituencies across eight states and union territories will vote on Saturday, May 25. The voting will start at 7 AM and conclude at 6 PM. Vote counting will occur on June 4, followed by the announcement of the results. In the sixth phase of voting, elections will be held in:-

- Eight seats in Bihar
- Ten seats in Haryana
- One seat in Jammu and Kashmir
- Four seats in Jharkhand
- Seven seats in Delhi
- Six seats in Odisha
- Fourteen seats in Uttar Pradesh
- Eight seats in West Bengal



It's World Environment Day today . And even if you are someone who is principally against celebrating special days, this is one of those commemorations that can do with your help.

And no, you do not need to go on a planting drive or install a compactor in your home to go eco-friendly. Here's listing 10 ways you can do your bit for the environment. Apart from them being hassle-free and cool, you can start doing them right from your home. So, chop chop.

1. CARPOOL:

You must have noticed the unimaginable jump in the number of personal vehicles in the city in the last five years? Well, according to a Barclays report - Megatrends: Accelerating urbanization in India -the country's transportation infrastructure is unable to keep

10 cool ways to go

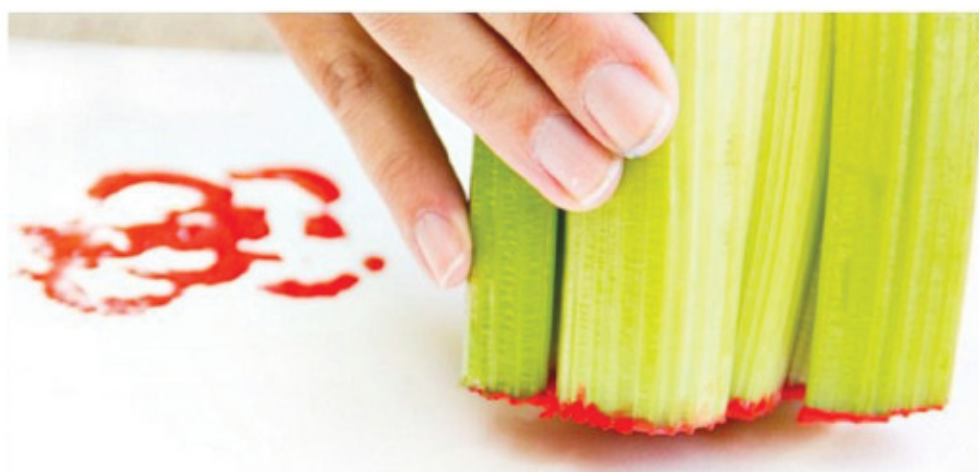
Green



Plastic Spoons



Upcycled Birdfeeder



up with its rapid urbanization rates. Result: 8 hours and 15 km-long traffic jam on Delhi-Gurgaon expressway on May 22, this year. Even if you weren't stuck in the jam, you must be tasting this bitter pill every day on your way to work. Solution? Carpool.

WHY IS IT COOL?

Because, you get a break from driving every day and you get to drive on roads that do not feel like Gariahat during Chaitra sale!

2. RECYCLE AND GET CRAFTY:

If you have an artiste inside you who hasn't had an outlet yet, this is your chance. Recycle your alcohol, sauce, jelly and soft drink bottles. Paint on them to turn . these into centrepieces or vases. You can even use them as unusual planters for your money plants. Youtube papermache and start using up the unending piles of newspapers you have hoarded in between. Instead of throwing away takeaway containers and pizza boxes, use them to store your trinkets and accessories like hair bands or tie-pins. Use your old CDs as coasters. Yes, there's no end to the stuff you can DIY while recycling. cling

WHY IS IT COOL?

Because doing it yourself is the latest thing, but mostly because it has got an acronym.

3. UNPLUG:

No, we aren't talking metaphorically not about suddenly. It's walking up to your boss and going bam, "I need a break" one day. No, we mean literally. Stop leaving your mobile

chargers hanging from the plug point even when not in use or even when not in use or putting your computers and televisions on sleep-mode at night. Simply unplug. Because you might think that the appliances are not plugged into the chargers to consume electricity, but simply leaving them plugged keeps the electricity running through them. through them.

WHY IS IT COOL?

Because wires are a nuisance. They are

does that anymore!

9. PEE IN YOUR GARDEN:

Stop laughing. Stop smirking. Stop hawking! It's an easy and natural way of going green. The average flush drains at least three litres of water everytime you flush after peeing. That's a lot of water if you consider the fact that India is facing a drought. Plus, urine is a natural fertilizer, containing nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium and urea. So, apart from saving

water, you are also helping grow save plants! Statutory Warning: Since it's still not a well-regarded practice in this country , we suggest you do not do it in public. It might be construed as a public nuisance. a public nuisance.

WHY IS IT COOL?

Did you not read the header? Because, it will save the planet!

10. KEEP A COFFEE MUG IN YOUR LOCKER:

Stop using paper or polystyrene cups that your workplace provides. Instead, invest in a coffee mug. It is always cooler to sip coffee from a mug that boasts of a quirky message, preferably one that defines you.

WHY IS IT COOL?

Because this is the best excuse to get your significant other to buy you that cup you had been lusting after.

messy and knotty . Who wants them hanging around even when there's no need?

4. DONATE TO FOOD BANKS:

Mummy was right. The recent pictures of hungry kids from quake-hit Nepal reinforced that belief in us all over again. So what to do with the excess food products that we simply can't stop buying from the supermarkets all the while knowing they are of no use? Donate them to food banks. Never heard of these banks? Well, they are organizations that collect leftover food from big restaurants to distribute amongst the underprivileged. Look for one in your vicinity and get in touch.

WHY IS IT COOL?

You will be starting a trend that most of your cool friends are still unaware of.

5. GO FOR JUTE AND THE KHADI:

From inter national runways to Esplanade pavement, natural fabric is the haute trend this season.

These natural fabrics are massively helping designers to merchants, consumers to weavers.

And, we aren't only talking about clothes. Everything from bags to lampshades, curtains to doormats come in these natural fabrics.

WHY IS IT COOL?

Because even Stella McCartney has pledged her commitment to sustainable green fashion.

6. MOVE IN: Think about it. It saves the entire daily utilities of another home. Save on the rent, electricity, cooking gas, water... should we go on? For the commitment phobic people out there, this is one leap of faith you can take. one leap of faith you can take.

WHY IS IT COOL?

Do we have to spell it out, dumbos? Wink, wink.

7. INVEST IN A KHUS KHUS MAT INSTEAD OF RENTING A COOLER:

Renting coolers during summers is a common thing for students staying in hostels or PGs. But a khus khus mat is so much cheaper! Just invest in one and douse it in water regularly after hanging it from the window.

WHY IS IT COOL?

Apart from the fact that it makes the living area much cooler, it also lends the room a retro look. If you can pair that up with a khus khus floormat too, well you are almost on your way to being an interior designer. Ok, not that.

8. GO DIGITAL:

If you haven't already, it's high time you shift your banking and billing to the online and phone-banking portals. Seriously, when you have the option of sitting in the comfort of your home and pay your phone and electricity bills through the internet, why would you want to go out (or make

someone else go out on your behalf) in this heat? It saves energy, fuel, trees and mostly, time.

WHY IS IT COOL?

Because, c'mon, it's the digital age and you cannot afford to be left behind. Do you seriously want people to stare at you when you tell them that you have to leave early because you need to pay the phone bill? Who

Sensex, Nifty trade flat amid profit booking; volatility rises

NEW DELHI. Benchmark stock market indices opened Friday's trading session on a flat note as investors rushed to book profits. The S&P BSE Sensex was trading 5.01 points higher at 75,423.05 at 10:26 am, while the NSE Nifty50 was down 6.15 points to 22,961.50. Most of the broader market indices were trading in positive territory, but gains were capped by rising volatility. Nifty Metal was the top gainer among sectoral indices, followed by Nifty Media. Most other sectoral indices were trading marginally positive or in red. The top five gainers on the Nifty50 were L&T, Hindalco, Ultratech Cement, Adani Enterprises and SBI. On the other hand, the top losers were Adani Ports, Apollo Hospitals, Shriram Finance, Hero MotoCorp and M&M. "Nifty can find support at 22,900 followed by 22,850 and 22,800. On the higher side, 23,025 can be an immediate resistance, followed by 23,100 and 23,200," said Deven Mehata, research analyst at Choice Broking. "Traders should buy on dips near 22,800 levels with a strict stop loss of 22,700 levels on a closing basis," he added.

Gold, silver price : Yellow metal records dip, silver trades higher on MCX

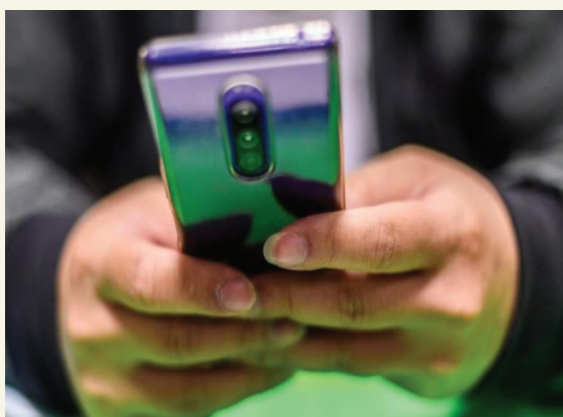
New Delhi. Precious metals showed mixed trends in the Indian markets today. Gold is trading on the lower side of the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) while silver prices have recorded a hike on Friday, May 24. Gold futures, maturing on June 5, 2024, stood at Rs 71,461 per 10 grams, after recording a marginal dip of Rs 116 or 0.16 per cent. The previous close was recorded at Rs 71,577. The price of gold varies for different regions in the country based on certain parameters such as the excise duty, making charges and the state taxes. **GOLD, SILVER RATE IN INTERNATIONAL MARKET** Gold prices hit a two-week low on Friday, set for their biggest weekly loss in nearly eight months, as interest rate cut expectations started to dwindle after a hawkish tone in the U.S. Federal Reserve minutes, news agency Reuters reported. According to the latest metal report, spot gold stood at \$2,330.19 per ounce, as of 0341 GMT. US gold futures eased 0.3 per cent at \$2,330.80.

Forces for Good: Cartier celebrates 2024 impact entrepreneurship awardees

NEW DELHI. Cartier has honoured the 2024 recipients of its prestigious impact entrepreneurship program, the Cartier Women's Initiative, while also revealing exciting plans for the 2025 edition. The 2024 edition celebrated the achievements of 33 global women entrepreneurs, recognised for their innovative and socially impactful businesses. The announcements were made on Wednesday, May 22, during the annual awards ceremony held in Shenzhen, China. Empowering women entrepreneurs. The Cartier Women's Initiative recognised outstanding women entrepreneurs from various regions for their significant contributions to society. Salma Bougarrani from Morocco won first place for Green Watech, a company offering soil-based filter systems to treat domestic wastewater for agricultural irrigation in rural areas. Rania Gaafar, founder of ADVA in Egypt, secured second place for connecting self-employed and unbanked individuals with low-interest loan opportunities. Shahira Yahia, founder of Chitosan in Egypt, earned third place for empowering smallholder farmers to participate in the organic market and increase their incomes through new agricultural practices. Among Indians, Ira Guha, founder of Asan, was honored for addressing "period poverty" with a reusable menstrual cup. Mansi Jain, founder of DigitalPaani, was awarded for creating digital management tools to protect water resources and support clean city initiatives. Akshita Sachdeva, founder of Trestle Labs, was recognised for providing visually impaired individuals with access to education and employment through the Kibo device and app. Sophie Doireau, CEO of Cartier Middle East, India, Africa, and T/Arkiye, said, "Our region is home to an incredible wealth of diverse entrepreneurial talent, and the applications we receive from dynamic women-founded small businesses are always impressive."

6.80 lakh mobile connections taken using forged documents

NEW DELHI: The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has flagged 6.80 lakh mobile connections suspected of being obtained using forged documents. The DoT has directed telecom service providers (TSPs) to re-verify these connections immediately. "Directive for Re-verification - DoT has issued directives to the TSP to carry out immediate re-verification of these identified mobile numbers. All TSPs are mandated to re-verify the flagged connections within 60 days. Failure to complete re-verification will result in the



disconnection of the concerned mobile numbers," said DoT, in a press note. The DoT said that advanced AI analysis identified these potentially fraudulent

Paytm layoffs: Digital payment firm may cut workforce by 20%, says report

The Paytm CEO had hinted at reducing operational costs, which included leveraging AI for a more efficient organisational structure.

NEW DELHI. One97 communications, the parent company of Paytm, is expected to reduce its workforce by 15-20% for the financial year 2024-25 after the digital firm's losses widened for its March quarter, reported Financial Express. The Paytm CEO had hinted at reducing operational costs, which included leveraging AI for a more efficient organisational structure. Vijay Shekhar Sharma, in an exchange filing on May 22, said, "Led by capabilities of AI and focusing on core business, we are also working on significant cost efficiencies including leaner organisation structure." In the financial year 2023, the

company had an average of 32,798 on-roll employees, with 29,503 active on-roll. The average cost per employee stood at Rs 7.87 lakh. However, in FY24, the total cost rose by 34% year-on-year to Rs 3,124 crore, with the average employee cost estimated to have increased to Rs 10.6 lakh. In response to its increasing losses, the company aims to save Rs 400-500 crore in employee costs, which could potentially lead to a reduction of 5,000-6,300 employees. The process of downsizing is already underway, with over 1,000 employees reportedly terminated in December to streamline operations and cut costs. "In recent years, our employee costs have increased due to investments, primarily in technology, merchant sales, and financial services. For the coming year, while we continue to invest in the merchant sales team, as well as risk and compliance functions, we expect reductions in other employee costs," said the company in its exchange filing. Paytm highlighted its optimisation of cost structure, utilisation of AI capabilities, and focus on core business to



achieve cost efficiencies. It mentioned creating a leaner organisational structure and pruning non-core businesses. The company assured that recent changes align with pre-approved succession plans discussed with the Board in previous financial years. "This includes creating a leaner organization structure and pruning non-core businesses. All recent changes are aligned with pre-approved succession plans discussed with the Board in previous financial years. We will continue to reward our high-performing talent by promoting them into leadership roles and welcome new senior executives

who will contribute to the next wave of growth," said Paytm. The net loss for Paytm widened to Rs 550 crore in Q4 FY24 from Rs 168 crore a year ago, attributed to a decline in revenue. Revenue from operations fell 3% year-on-year to Rs 2,267 crore in the March quarter. Trouble for the fintech company began on January 31 when the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) imposed restrictions on Paytm Payments Bank, barring it from accepting additional deposits and conducting credit transactions in customer accounts, among other restrictions. The fourth-quarter results were impacted by RBI's curbs on the payments bank. In the post-earnings analyst call, Paytm's management expressed optimism about turning profitable soon. It plans to recruit more sales executives to bolster its focus on the merchant ecosystem. Brokerage firm Motilal Oswal Financial Services has revised its earnings estimates and forecasts Paytm to achieve EBITDA breakeven in FY26.

Sebi proposes to relax AIFs valuation methodology

Go Digit shares opened at Rs 286, marking a premium of just 5.15%, falling short of expectations suggested by its GMP ahead of the listing.



MUMBAI: Capital markets regulator Sebi has proposed to relax the framework for valuing the investment portfolio of alternative investment funds (AIF) along with changes in the valuation methodology regarding 'material changes' eligibility criteria of independent valuers to be appointed by AIFs and timeline for reporting valuation of investment portfolio by them to performance benchmarking agencies. Securities and Exchange

Board (Sebi) on Thursday issued a consultation paper mooting these changes and sought comments from the public by June 13.

The consultation paper suggests that for valuation of unlisted, non-traded, thinly-traded and those below investment grade securities, valuation norms under mutual fund regulations shall not apply and these securities be valued as per the international PE and VC valuation norms or valuation of

securities, other than unlisted securities, it has been proposed that valuation norms be carried out according to the norms prescribed under mutual fund regulations. It further said the valuation norms under the MF regulations cannot be applied to private instruments held by AIFs, since the MF valuation process is a rule-based network that follows a series of processes around pricing for investments in open-ended vehicles. AIFs mostly hold private investments where one needs to delve into and present a fundamental valuation based on cash flows pertinent to the underwriting thesis, which mutual fund guidelines do not cover.

Lok Sabha elections: BJP's seat wins may dictate mood on D-Street. Check details

NEW DELHI. The significant dividend of Rs 2.11 lakh crore from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is expected to provide the government with more fiscal flexibility and better rating moving forward, according to experts. Experts feel the record dividend may help the government bring down its fiscal deficit by a few percentage points. DK Srivastava, chief policy advisor, EY India, feels the additional resources may help the government narrow down the fiscal deficit to 5% of GDP from the budgeted 5.1%. Gaura Sengupta, chief economist, IDFC First Bank, feels FY25 fiscal deficit could undershoot budget estimate by 0.2% of GDP. "With a firm resolve to trim avoidable expenditures, the likelihood of ramping up Centre's revenue



expenditure growth remains limited, reflecting the government's determination to streamline subsidies and other current expenses. Following the election outcomes, there would be reduced pressure to escalate subsidies and revenue expenditures," Srivastava added. The government may contemplate unveiling a definitive medium-term growth path coupled

with a roadmap for fiscal consolidation. In the context of global economic challenges persisting, the government will continue to provide domestic policy support to growth, according to Srivastava. As per Union Bank of India, amid expectations of further fiscal consolidation from FY25 fiscal deficit budgeted at 5.1% of GDP in the interim budget vis-à-vis 5.8% in FY24, the government may favour higher capex push in the final Budget due in July. "In our view, it is better to wait and watch to assess the trends in other revenue sources," the bank said. S&P Global Rating analyst has said that India can get 'rating support' over time if it utilises the highest-ever dividend of over Rs 2.11 lakh crore received from the Reserve Bank to reduce fiscal deficit.

Share Market Skyrockets: Is It An Indication Of A Bumper Mandate for Modi 3.0

NEW DELHI. The Indian share market hit new benchmarks on Thursday as the Sensex and the Nifty 50 hit their fresh record high levels. The Nifty50 jumped 1.8 per cent to hit its fresh record high of 22,993.60, while the Sensex jumped 1.7 per cent to hit its fresh record high of 75,499.91 during the session. What's more? The market witnessed buying in mid and small caps as well while as many as 222 stocks including Mahindra and Mahindra, Ashok Leyland, Eicher Motors, and Tata Steel hit their fresh 52-week highs in intraday trade on BSE.

In layman's terms, the market behaved assuredly and relaxed even though there are two phases of Lok Sabha elections 2024 pending. This market behaviour apart from technical factors is predominately credited to the market's confidence of a Modi 3.0 with a bigger and better mandate than in 2019 when it swept back to power with a massive 303 seats in spite of the ongoing Rafale controversy at that time.

This market behaviour was seen as PM Modi exuded confidence about the stock market's performance and outlined his vision for India's development. Prime

Minister Narendra Modi said the Bharatiya Janata Party has already won a majority of the seats contested in the parliamentary elections due to end next week, with the votes in the remaining two phases as a bonus. Earlier, after the fourth phase, while addressing a rally in West Bengal's Bongaon, Union Home Minister Amit Shah had said, "4 phases of polling have been completed. Elections for 380 seats have been completed. Elections for 18 seats in Bengal have been completed. Today I tell you, that out of 380, PM Modi has achieved absolute majority by winning 270 seats. The fight ahead is to cross 400."

This confidence from the top two of the government seems to have injected a much-needed sense of assurance of stability in the market that made it skyrocket on Thursday, a behaviour generally seen only after the exit polls start coming. Just days before this jump, PM Modi in an interview reminded how under his rule markets have gone from 25,000 to 75,000. He also urged citizen to have the "risk-taking capacity" that was followed by Thursday's mega



performance at the share market. While factors like the windfall RBI infusion of funds also contributed to how the Indian share market went into a gravity-defying mode on Thursday, analysts at foreign brokerage Bernstein, also see a higher probability of the BJP government winning around 330-350 seats, thus, driving some rally in the markets post-election results. They expect the Nifty50 index to scale past the 23,000 mark. Already bullish on a bigger and better Modi 3.0 mandate, Bernstein said, "We expect a short-term rally either

leading into elections or the week after results potentially breach our 23K Nifty target and then a profit booking as the reality of execution and valuations emerge. In our view, sectors that will lead are Infra, manufacturing, domestic cyclical, a bit of financials, and state-owned enterprises (PSUs) in general."

PM Modi gave the clarion call of 'Ab ki bar 400 par' for the NDA while setting a target of 370 seats for the BJP. While the Congress shrugged it off, if Bernstein's prediction is anything to go by, the BJP is going to be very close to the target set by the Prime Minister.

Even on Tuesday, PM reiterated his '400 par' target in an election rally in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar where he reasoned, "Modi wants 400 seats so that Congress won't bring back Article 370 to spoil the game". While the markets rallied behind this Modi sentiment on Thursday, political strategist Prashant Kishor, who earlier claimed BJP will fare better than its 2019 mandate, said, "Those who are rattled with my assessment of outcome of this election must keep plenty of water handy on June 4th."

IndiGo profit doubles on higher traffic, increased capacity

After flying for nearly 18 years, the airline will introduce business class in select routes this year as it seeks to provide more options for passengers amid rising economic growth.

NEW DELHI. The country's largest airline IndiGo on Thursday reported more than doubling of its net profit to Rs 1,894.8 crore for the quarter ending March 2024 and announced introduction of business class in select routes this year. The strong performance in the quarter, which also marks six consecutive quarters of profitability, was fuelled by higher traffic, increased capacity and a favourable external environment. For the year ended March 2024, the airline posted the highest annual net profit of Rs 8,172.5 crore on



record total income of Rs 18,505.1 crore. After flying for nearly 18 years, the airline will introduce business class in select routes this year as it seeks to provide more options for passengers amid rising economic growth.

The airline will launch a "tailor-made business product", the details of which will be unveiled around August that will also mark the 18th anniversary of the carrier. The latest announcement also comes less than a month after the profitable carrier said it would buy 30 wide-body aircraft. In the first quarter of the current financial year, the airline has projected the capacity in terms of ASK to rise by 10-12 per cent compared to the year-ago period.

Available Seat Kilometre (ASK) is an indicator of capacity. IndiGo Aviation, the parent of IndiGo, recorded a profit after tax of Rs 1,894.8 crore for the fourth quarter of 2023-24 compared to Rs 919.2 crore in the same period a year ago, a release said.

NEWS BOX

WI vs SA: Reeza Hendricks' 87 in vain as Brandon King, bowlers give hosts 1-0 lead

New Delhi . West Indies (WI) started their T20 World Cup 2024 preparation right as they beat South Africa (RSA) by 28 runs in the first game of the three-match series on Thursday, May 23 at Sabina Park, Kingston, Jamaica. After being put in to bat first, WI posted a good score of 175/8 riding on a brilliant knock of 79 (45) by captain Brandon King. In reply, South Africa were bundled out for 147 in 19.5 overs as Reeza Hendricks (87 off 51) failed to get support from the other end.

Earlier in the day, after being put in to bat first, the hosts got off to a brisk start with King making full use of the power play by smashing boundaries. However, his opening partner Johnson Charles (1 off 5) failed to get going and finally fell prey to Ottiel Baartman in the fourth over. Kyle Mayers walked in at number three and stitched a crucial 79-run stand off 44 balls with Brandon King as the duo bailed their team out of early trouble.

Phehlukwayo and Baartman pull things back. West Indies were cruising at 115/2 after 10.5 overs and had their eyes set on a 200-plus total. However, Andile Phehlukwayo (3/28) came to South Africa's rescue by getting the big scalp of King and broke the dangerous partnership. The all-rounder further accounted for Andre Fletcher (1 off 2) and Fabian Allen (1 off 2), triggering a collapse in the middle overs. Baartman (3/26) also kept the run flow in check by adding two more wickets to his tally as the hosts were reduced to 165/7 in 19 overs. Some late flourish from Roston Chase (32* off 30) guided WI to 175/8 in 20 overs.

RSA's miserable start

In reply, RSA got off to a horrible start losing their star opener Quinton de Kock (4 off 2) on just the second ball of the inning against Matthew Forde. To add to their misery, Roston Chase got Ryan Rickelton (6 off 7) stumped in the second over to leave RSA reeling at 11/2 after 1.4 overs. However, Reeza Hendricks was unfazed at the other end and continued to bat positively as he completed his half-century off 32 balls.

Hendricks fights alone

The right-handed batter was the lone warrior in South Africa's chase with wickets continuing to tumble at the other end. Hendricks' heroic knock of 87 (51) ended in the last over with him falling prey to Mathew Forde (3/27 in 2.5 overs). As a result, RSA were bundled out for 147 in 19.5 overs with WI bowlers hunting in packs.

PV Sindhu stuns top seed Han Yue to enter Malaysia Masters semi-final

New Delhi . Ace Indian shuttler PV Sindhu put up a stunning show against top seed Han Yue from China to qualify for the semi-final of the Malaysia Masters 2024. On Friday, May 24, Sindhu won the quarterfinal 21-13, 14-21, 21-12 and made her way to her maiden semis on the BWF tour this year. Sindhu will now face the winner of the other quarterfinal between Singapore's Putri Kusuma Wardani and Thailand's Busanan Ongbammrunphan. Sindhu went into the match after beating Republic of Korea's Sim Yu Jin 21-13, 12-21, 21-14 in 59 minutes and managed to carry her form against her Chinese opponent in the quarters.

IPL 2024 Full Coverage | IPL 2024 Points Table and Standings | 2024 IPL Full Schedule
"Losing 4 out of 4 and then having the game in Guwahati definitely raised a lot of questions, a lot of doubts were coming up in the dressing room, but I am proud of the way we responded. We wanted to show some character. Each and every one in the team stepped up and I am very happy for them," he added. Against RCB, the Royals chased down a challenging target of 173 with 6 balls left in their innings. Ashwin won the Player of the Match award after he finished with figures of 4-0-19-2. Avesh Khan, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Samson, Rivan Parag and Shimron Hetmyer also chipped in with useful contributions. Ranked No.15 in the world, Sindhu is looking to win her maiden BWF title since winning the Singapore Open back in 2022. Having already skipped the Thailand Open and Uber Cup this year, Sindhu has had her fair share of ups and downs. Back in February, she made a return to the court after an injury layoff.

Brett Lee and Tillakaratne Dilshan confident of 'consistent' KKR winning IPL 2024

New Delhi . Former Australia fast bowler Brett Lee feels that KKR are firm favourites to win the Indian Premier League 2024 on current form. Notably, the two-time champions finished on the top of the points table after the league stage for the first time in their history in the competition. The Shreyas Iyer-led side further beat the formidable SRH by eight wickets in Qualifier 1 to storm into the finals. Speaking about Kolkata's chances in the ongoing season, Lee said that he had high hopes from RCB but they got knocked out after a loss against RR in Qualifier 2. However, he stated that Kolkata are a force to reckon with both on paper and on their current form. The 2012 IPL Champion also called them the deserving winners of the competition. "I picked RCB right from the top and I was disappointed when they got knocked out last night. But if you look on paper and in its current form, it will be tough to beat KKR. I think they're probably the team that deserves to finish at the number one position. They're straight through the finals on Sunday, so they'll be pretty hard to beat," Lee told ANI. Former Sri Lanka cricketer Tillakaratne Dilshan also echoed Lee's statement and said.

Dipika Pallikal inspired by Dinesh Karthik's career: If I was him, I would have given up

- ↳ **Dipika Pallikal said that she was inspired by Dinesh Karthik's grit and determination**
- ↳ **Karthik moved away from his IPL career after playing 257 matches**
- ↳ **Dipika said that Karthik kept re-inventing himself**

New Delhi . 4-time Commonwealth Games medallist Dipika Pallikal lauded her husband Dinesh Karthik for not giving up during tough times in his career. Back in 2015, the athletes married each other and have flourished since then in their respective areas of expertise. Even as Dipika won medals at the CWG, Asian Games and World Championships, Karthik faced quite a lot of

ups and downs in his career. Making his international debut back in 2004, Karthik could never cement his place in the Indian team with MS Dhoni being India's first-choice wicketkeeper. However, instead of throwing in the towel, Karthik made a comeback and last played in the T20 World Cup 2022 on Australian soil.

The 32-year-old Dipika said that had he been in Karthik's place, she would have succumbed to the pressure. "Never-give-up attitude"

"I think when things are meant to be, they happen. When we met in 2013, it was very fast we knew that we wanted to spend our lives with each other and I am guessing everything clicked," Dipika said in a video on RCB's social media. "One of the things I have really learned from him is that if he doesn't do well, he is dropped from the team, it's just two or three days when he is in a lull, and then he is back on his feet, thinking about what to do next. I feel that if anyone else was in that position, a lot of people would have given up long back. Even me, I am an athlete, seeing him in different positions in his career, if I was him, I would definitely have given up. But I think the do-



or-die or never-give-up attitude has always been there," Dipika said. Abhishek Nayar played a big role. Dipika said that Karthik tried to add new dimensions to his game over the years to keep up with the rigours of the fast-moving game. She also thanked former cricketer Abhishek Nayar for helping Karthik storm through the tumultuous times in his career. There's been different DK's. I feel over the last 10 years that we've been together. I think every two years, he tries to re-invent himself. And I feel like, as a wife also, I see that difference in him. Over the last four to five years, he has really enjoyed the sport, the time when he met Abhishek Nayar. Nayar played a big role, not just in his career, but building him as a person as well. "Karthik

Shakib Al Hasan analyses series loss against USA: No small or big teams in T20 cricket

New Delhi . Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan said that there are no small or big teams in T20 cricket following a shocking series loss against the USA ahead of the T20 World Cup 2024. Notably, Bangladesh faced a six-run defeat against the USA in the second T20I on Thursday, May 23 in Houston. As a result, the hosts registered a historic first series win over a full-member team. Earlier, the Bangla Tigers lost the first game by five wickets at the same venue with USA chasing down the target of 154 in 19.3 overs. Reflecting on the embarrassing series loss, Shakib called it unexpected and termed it as a "wake up" call for the side ahead of the World Cup.

"Certainly it is disappointing and we didn't expect it but we must give credit to the US team for the way they have played. I think no one expected that we would lose two games. Any match you lose as a team is disappointing and you don't want to lose a game and obviously it is very disappointing.



But having said that we have to play the World Cup and this series might be a wake-up call for us as we haven't played the way we want to play," Shakib said in the post-match press conference.

Further speaking ahead, the Bangladesh all-rounder spoke about the unpredictability of the T20 format and mentioned that there are no small or big teams in it which makes it way more exciting than other formats. Shakib's comments come after he had earlier called the series against Zimbabwe

and USA not an 'ideal preparation' for the T20 World Cup.

No small or big teams in T20 cricket: Shakib
"It's a team game and everyone has to take the responsibility - you win as a team and you lose as a team. I don't want to blame any particular person or any particular department. It's just that T20 is such a format you have to play very good cricket in all three departments to win against any team. There are no small or big teams in T20 cricket and that's why it is more exciting than any other format. And the proof of that is in the last two games the way US played," he added. The southpaw hasn't had a memorable time in the series so far having scored just 36 runs from two innings and is also wicket-less with the ball having an economy of 7.28. The 37-year-old will be eager to inspire his side to make a comeback in the third T20I on Saturday, May 25 and help them avoid an embarrassing whitewash.

BCCI have not approached any Australian cricketer for India head coach job: Jay Shah

New Delhi . BCCI secretary Jay Shah said that he did not approach any Australian for the role of the head coach of the Indian national team. The Indian board recently put out an application for the job as Rahul Dravid's tenure at the helm is set to end after the T20 World Cup 2024 to be held in the West Indies and the United States of America (USA). The deadline for applying for the role has been set on May 27 at 6PM in the evening. Recently, it was reported that the BCCI approached 2-time World Cup-winning Australian skipper Ricky Ponting for the role. However, Jay Shah denied the media reports, saying that a "meticulous" process needs to be followed for finding the right candidate for the job. Neither I nor the BCCI have approached any former Australian cricketer with a coaching offer. The reports circulating in certain media sections are completely incorrect. Finding the right coach for our national team is a meticulous and thorough process. We are focused on identifying individuals who possess a deep understanding of the Indian cricket structure and have risen through the ranks. It's crucial that our coach has an in-depth knowledge of our domestic cricket framework to truly elevate Team India to the next level."

Role demands a high level of professionalism:



Jay Shah Dravid took charge as the head coach after Ravi Shastri stepped down following the T20 World Cup 2021 in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Dravid's term had ended after the ODI World Cup last year where India finished as the runners-up after which the BCCI extended his contract. When we talk about international cricket, no role is more prestigious than that of the head coach of the Indian Cricket Team. Team India

commands the largest fan base globally, enjoying support that is truly unrivalled. Our rich history, passion for the game make this one of the most lucrative jobs in the world. The role demands a high level of professionalism as one gets to nurture some of the best cricketers in the world and an assembly line of talented cricketers to follow. Catering to the aspirations of a billion fans is a huge honour and.

Virat Kohli thanks Dinesh Karthik for motivating him: I was struggling for confidence

- ↳ **Former RCB skipper Virat Kohli expressed his gratitude to Dinesh Karthik for motivating him when he was low on confidence during the IPL 2022.**

New Delhi . Virat Kohli recalled his happy times with Dinesh Karthik both at the international and franchise level. Karthik recently bowed out of the Indian Premier League (IPL), silently, after a decent run for RCB where he scored 326 runs from 15 games at an average of 36.22 with 2 half-centuries and a top score of 83. Although he is yet to make an official announcement, it's understood that he would not be making a return to the IPL. Kohli, in the meantime, talked about his first impression of Karthik

when the duo first played together for India in the 2009 Champions Trophy on South African soil. The former RCB skipper said that Karthik grew wiser and calmer as his career progressed. First time I met DK, I remember we were playing in South Africa if I am not wrong in the Champions Trophy 2009. It was the first time I shared the change-room with Dinesh and I found him to be very amusing. I would say hyper-active, confused person, most of the times he was moving all over the place, never stopping. That was my first impression of Dinesh," Kohli said in a video on RCB's social media. "Outstanding talent, brilliant batter to watch and my first impression and present day impression are not far apart. Just that he has become wiser and calmed down a lot." Kohli also went down the memory lane to IPL 2022 when he was struggling for runs. He bagged 3 ducks and scored only 341 runs from 16 matches with 2 half-centuries and a strike-rate of



115.98. The 35-year-old said that during the tough times, Karthik sat down with him and boosted his confidence. "Honesty and courage" "Off the field, I have had some really nice and interesting conversations with him. He is wise man, has great knowledge about a lot of things, not just cricket. I have thoroughly

enjoyed my conversations with him. Even in that phase in 2022 when I did not have a great IPL season, I was really struggling for confidence, he sat me down a couple of times and gave me a very honest explanation of how he is seeing things and maybe I am not able to see them myself," Kohli said. So, I just like his honesty and courage to go and speak to anyone about things that he dearly feels about. And that I think is the most special thing for me when it comes to Dinesh and that's one thing I have always cherished about him. That's why we get along really really well," Kohli added.

The first year with RCB opened up a lot of doors for him, the role he had got. This is his happy place. He has got all the right people around him," Dipika said. At the stage where DK is now, he is very content with what he has done, what he has achieved. That's the most important thing about any athlete. It's not going to be easy moving away from the game because this is all he has done all his life. But he is a person that, as long as he is content, he is ready to move on in life. So, he has done well for himself and his family, and he just has to be proud of it," Dipika added. In his international career, Karthik played 26 Tests, 94 ODIs and 60 T20Is from 2004 to 2022. He also moved away from the IPL, being in the top 10 of the leading run-scorers. In 257 matches, the wicketkeeper scored 4842 runs at an average of 26.31 with 22 half-centuries to his name.

Determined SRH hit the nets in Chennai's heat to prepare for RR challenge in Qualifier 2

New Delhi . The entire SRH squad was seen practicing hard in the nets ahead of their all-important Qualifier 2 clash against RR in the Indian Premier League 2024 on Friday, May 24 at MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai. Notably, SRH are coming into the fixture having lost against KKR by eight wickets in Qualifier 1 while RR are coming fresh from a four-wicket win over RCB in Eliminator. The loser of the upcoming game will be knocked out of the tournament. Hence with the high stakes riding on the game, SRH are leaving no stone unturned in their preparation for the all-important fixture. In a video released by the team's X handle, several star players were seen



sweating it hard in the nets in the scorching heat of Chennai to get ready for the game. IPL 2024 Full Coverage | IPL 2024 Points Table and Standings | 2024 IPL Full Schedule In the video, captain Pat Cummins, Travis Head, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, T. Natarajan, Aiden Markram, and Heinrich Klaasen among others were seen being involved in an intense net session.

SRH have been a formidable side in the ongoing season courtesy of the breathtaking strokeplay of their batters. The team boasts of arguably the best opening pair of the season so far in Abhishek Sharma and Travis Head as the duo has given many sleepless nights to the opposition bowlers.

Head and Abhishek key to SRH's success
Both Head and Sharma are the top two run-scorers for their team having a strike rate of 200. The Pat Cummins-led side has been heavily dependent on their openers to set up the game with their fiery start as the duo's failure in Qualifier 1 led to their eight-wicket loss against KKR. Hence, Hyderabad will once again hope for them to go berserk at the top of the order and power them to a humongous score in Chennai. However, the destructive openers will face their most difficult challenge so far on the spin-friendly surface of Chennai where they failed in their last game. Hence, the 2016 champions will hope to turn things around this time and qualify for their third final in their history.



Triptii Dimri

Is A Complete Beach Baby And THIS Clip Is A Proof

Triptii Dimri has become a national sensation ever since the release of Animal. Her chemistry with Ranbir Kapoor in Sandeep Reddy Vanga directorial was widely loved by all. The actress who made her debut with Laila Majnu and then proceeded to do films like Qala and Bulbul often takes the internet by storm whenever she shares sizzling posts of herself. Following that trajectory, Triptii stunned her fans once again with her latest reel. On Thursday, Triptii Dimri took to her Instagram handle and shared a reel from her beach vacation. The clip featured the actress enjoying at a scenic beach. She looked stunning in a white top and yellow cotton trousers. The video captured the radiant actress striking several poses under the overcast skies. She wrote, "As easy as it comes... as easy it goes."

Meanwhile, if recent reports are to be believed, Triptii will now be seen in Allu Arjun's most-awaited movie, Pushpa 2: The Rule. As reported by Bollywood Now, Triptii has been roped in by the makers of Pushpa 2 for a spicy dance number. Reportedly, the actress will be seen setting the stage on fire with Allu Arjun in this new track. However, there is no official confirmation regarding this as of now. Directed by Sukumar, the last leg of shooting for Pushpa 2 is currently underway. Besides Allu Arjun, the film also stars Rashmika Mandanna in the lead. Earlier this year, the makers of Pushpa 2 released the teaser of the film on Allu Arjun's birthday. In the teaser, Allu Arjun was seen dressed in a saree with his face painted in shades of blue and red. He also sported makeup with heavy traditional gold and flower jewellery. He was seen beating up goons. Later, Rashmika also talked about the much-awaited film when she promised that it would be "bigger" than ever. "I can promise you that Pushpa 2 is going to be so much bigger. We gave some madness in the first film, in part 2, we know we have a responsibility because people have so much expectation from the film. We are constantly and consciously trying to deliver that," she told Pinkvilla.

On the professional front, Triptii Dimri is all set to star alongside Vicky Kaushal and Ammy Virk in Bad Newz. Directed by Anand Tiwari and produced by Karan Johar, the film is all set to release on July 19, 2024.



Jacqueline Fernandez

Reveals The 'Worst Advice' She Has Received From A Fellow Actor: 'Get A Nose Job'

Jacqueline Fernandez has come a long way in showbiz. With almost 15 years in Bollywood, the actress has created a niche for herself with some commercially hit films and music. As she looked back at her journey during her Cannes appearance, the actress revealed that she had gotten some bad advice from fellow actors in the industry.

In an interview with Brut, Jacqueline talked about her initial days and said, "Very very early on in my career, I was at the gym, and I was explaining to this actor that I have to go for this course and I have to go for this class. And I am training in diction for this, and then I'm working out here, and he was like, 'Listen, just focus on looking good, and you'll be fine.' And I actually think that it was one of the worst pieces of advice I ever got, being someone who was trying to make it in the industry." She further added, "I think a lot of people pile in mainly about your physical appearance. Like I was told many times to get a nose job. And it was crazy because I really came here loving my nose and not really ever thinking about doing anything ever to it. And so quite a few people earlier on actually told me that it should be, you know, 'you should consider getting that done.' And it's mainly physical, and that's the sad thing."

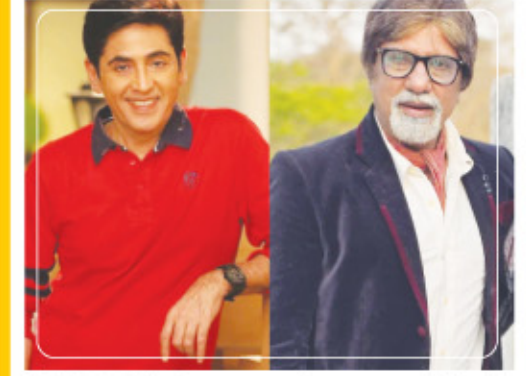


Jacqueline Fernandez's dazzling appearance at the 77th Cannes Film Festival was nothing short of a fashion extravaganza. The diva cast a golden spell on the French Riviera with her stunning ensemble as she

elegantly glided on the red carpet like a fashionista. The Bollywood diva marked her presence at the prestigious event in association with the automotive brand BMW and even attended the premiere of Demi Moore's The Substance. Meanwhile, Jacqueline has a series of films in her kitty. On the acting front, she is preparing for her role in Welcome to the Jungle. Directed by Ahmed Khan, Welcome 3 boasts a star-studded cast including Akshay Kumar, Disha Patani, Suniel Shetty, Paresh Rawal, Raveena Tandon, Sanjay Dutt, Rajpal Yadav, Shreyas Talpade, Kiku Sharda, Daler Mehndi, Mika Singh, Rahul Dev, Mukesh Tiwari, Sharib Hashmi, Inaamulhaq, Zakir Hussain, and Yashpal Sharma.



Bhabiji Ghar Par Hain's Aasif Sheikh BREAKS Silence on Firoz Khan's Death: 'He Was Not in Good Space...'



Bhabiji Ghar Par Hain actor Aasif Sheikh has reacted to mimic artist and his co-star Firoz Khan's death. Firoz, known for imitating Amitabh Bachchan, reportedly died of a heart attack. The actor passed away in Uttar Pradesh's Badaun on Thursday (May 23). Aasif has revealed that Firoz was not in a good space "mentally". "Firoz was facing some family disputes owing to which, he relocated outside Mumbai," Aasif told Pinkvilla. "I also came to know that he was not in a good space mentally. He was a great guy who used to make everybody laugh. He was a foodie. Since he was great at mimicry, we would request him to mimic different actors, and he would act for us. I hope he is at a better place." Recalling a recent incident, Aasif said, "Around 4-5 days ago, after I packed up, a random guy came to me and asked for a picture, and I clicked a picture with him. He told me that he was Firoz's friend and lived a few blocks from him in Badaun. I asked him about Firoz, and he mentioned that Firoz wasn't doing very well, given the family dispute. I took Firoz's number from him and decided to give him a call later."

Aasif continued, "After a few days, I received a call from his number, but I was in a shot, and I missed the call. I thought to myself that I'd call him after pack-up. We couldn't talk. I couldn't call him, and that is the regret and guilt that I am facing right now. I wished I would have called him and spoken to him. Maybe he needed some help, emotionally or financially. I could've helped him." Aasif further revealed that when he spoke to Bhabiji Ghar Par Hain director about Firoz, she told him that the late actor had quit acting and "wouldn't return to the sets." "This is the second untimely death of an actor from the popular sitcom Bhabiji Ghar Par Hain. Before this, Deepesh Bahn, who played the character of Malkhan in the show, passed away due to a brain haemorrhage."

When Parineeti Chopra Revealed Ranveer Singh Comes 'Without Pants, Sit Next To You': 'He's Just Shameless'



Parineeti Chopra and Ranveer Singh have known each other for a long time. They have worked together on films like Ladies vs Ricky Bahl and Kill/Dill. Even when Ranveer was making his debut in Band Baja Baarat, Parineeti was in the production team. In an old interview, Parineeti recalled what it is like working with Ranveer and how "shameless" he can be.

Parineeti Chopra told a publication, "I am used to anything. You guys see only those things which come out in the paper, we guys see what is going on live. He walks in with his bald look and it is like 'Acha aaj ka yeh look hai'. With Ranveer, it can be anything. He can come without pants and sit next to you and you will be like please wear something. That happens every two days."

The actress said, "I normally enter anybody's make-up van saying 'Hello it is me!' But only Ranveer's van I never enter without his permission. Because with Ranveer it isn't that he is sleeping or he is in washroom, it has to be whether he has worn clothes or no. There have been cases where he is like come in and when you just enter you see him standing without clothes. So you have to ask before entering his room."

She concluded, "He doesn't mind, but you have to ask because otherwise your life changes when you see him. It has been happening since Band Baja Baarat. When I used to enter his room that time, he used to be sitting without clothes, so it is ok! He takes off his pants in public. I was doing an emotional-romantic scene and getting my make-up done and all. When I turned back, I see him without pants. Then I told him 'Ranveer I am in the script's zone and please help me out' so then he will be like ok and then wears his pants. He is just shameless!"