

Congress slams Centre over Delhi airport roof collapse

Sanjay Kumar New Delhi, June 28: The Congress party has launched a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government following the tragic roof collapse at Terminal 1 of New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA). The incident, which was triggered by heavy rains, resulted in the death of one person and left five others injured. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge minced no words in his condemnation, attributing the collapse to "corruption and criminal negligence." "The shoddy infrastructure, falling like a deck of cards, is a glaring testament to the past ten years of PM Modi's governance," Kharge stated. He pointed to a series of infrastructure failures, including the Jabalpur airport roof col-

lapse, poor condition of new roads in Ayodhya, leaks in Ram Mandir, cracks in Mumbai Trans Harbour Link road, collapse of 13 new bridges in Bihar between 2023 and 2024, submersion of the Pragati Maidan Tunnel, and the Morbi bridge tragedy in Gujarat. "These stark instances expose the tall claims by PM Modi and the BJP of creating 'world-class infrastructure,'" Kharge added. The Congress president recalled the Prime Minister's statement during the inauguration of Delhi Airport's Terminal 1 on March 10, where PM Modi referred to himself as a "doosri mitti ka insaan" (a man of different mettle). Kharge criticised this as false bravado and accused the Prime Minister of indulging in ribbon-cutting ceremonies merely for electoral gains.

CBI arrests school principal, vice-principal in NEET paper leak case

Simmi Kaur Babbar New Delhi, June 28: The CBI on Friday arrested the principal and vice-principal of a school in Jharkhand's Hazaribagh in connection with the NEET-UG paper leak case, officials said. Ehsanul Haque, the principal of Oasis School, was made the city coordinator of Hazaribagh for the medical entrance exam conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) on May 5, they said. Vice-principal Imtiaz Alam was designated as the NTA's observer and the centre coordinator at the Oasis School, officials said, adding the CBI is also questioning five more people from the district in connection with the paper leak case. The federal probe agency arrested Haque and Alam after detailed questioning, they said. Both the accused came under scanner during a probe by the Bihar Police's Economic Offences Unit (EOU) which was investigating the case earlier. The team had found burnt question papers of NEET-UG during a raid at a hideout of the solver gang, officials said. In a statement, the EOU had claimed the "leaked"

NEET-UG question paper was allegedly obtained from the Oasis School in Hazaribagh by the notorious Sanjeev Kumar, alias Lutan Mukhiya gang. It had said the investigators had matched a partially burnt question paper found from the Patna safe house with the reference question paper provided by the NTA, confirming the leak's origin. However, it could not clearly establish who was behind the alleged paper leak, officials said. According to them, the probe had also shown that laid down guidelines for opening the question paper boxes were not properly followed by the authorities in Hazaribagh. In media interviews, Haque has maintained that the box carrying the question papers could not be opened because its digital lock, which was supposed to unlock automatically, had malfunctioned. Following this, he contacted the NTA, which asked him to use a cutter to open the box, Haque has claimed. The boxes carrying question papers have two

locks—a manual one that must be opened with a key and cutter and a digital lock that opens with a beep sound 45 minutes before the examination. The CBI has registered six FIRs in the NEET-UG paper leak case which included its own FIR on a reference from the Union Education Ministry and five from the states where it took over investigation. The probe agency has taken over one case each in Bihar and

Gujarat and three cases in Rajasthan. On Thursday, CBI made its first arrests in the NEET-UG paper leak case, taking two people in custody in Patna while three candidates in Gujarat who had allegedly solicited help to clear the exam recorded their statements with the probe agency. NEET-UG is conducted by NTA for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses in government and private institutions across the country. This year's exam was conducted on May 5 at 4,750 centres in 571 cities, including 14 abroad. Over 23 lakh candidates appeared for the test. The first CBI FIR was registered on Sunday, a day after the ministry announced it would hand over the probe into the alleged irregularities in the conduct of the exam to the central agency. The demand for a CBI probe was raised by a section of protesting students.



CSIR develops compact, low-cost tractor for small farmers to replace bullock plough

Chandigarh, June 28: A compact, affordable and easily maneuverable tractor catering for small and marginal farmers that could help them increase agricultural productivity while keeping their costs low has been developed by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). Marginal and small farmers comprise over 80 per cent of cultivators in India and a large proportion of them still depend on bullock-pulled tilling implements in which operational costs, maintenance costs and poor returns pose a challenge. Though power tillers are replacing the bullock pulled plough, they are cumbersome to operate. Commercially available tractors in the market, on the other hand, are unsuitable and unaffordable for most small farmers. In order to address these challenges, CSIR's Central Mechanical Engineering Research Institute (CMERI) developed a compact and affordable tractor of low horsepower range to meet the requirement of the marginal and small farmers, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Science and Technology today. CMERI is also discussing licensing the technology to local companies for large scale manufacturing so that the benefits can reach the local farmers and awareness is being spread about it among farmers' associations and self-help groups, the statement added.

Lok Sabha adjourned till Monday amid uproar over NEET paper leak controversy

Navdeep Singh Sahni New Delhi, June 28: The proceedings of the Lok Sabha were adjourned until Monday as the opposition demanded for a discussion on the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test controversy. The Opposition, led by the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, called for a debate on the alleged leak of the NEET-UG medical exam and other competitive tests. The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government has expressed its readiness to address any questions regarding the exam controversies. This morning, Congress MP KC Venugopal submitted an adjournment motion to discuss the unprecedented cases of paper leaks, including NEET-UG and UGC-NET. The Opposition aimed to highlight the 'failures' of the National Testing Agency

(NTA), which conducts over a dozen national competitive exams. "I have received 22 notices on the NEET paper leak case. The President has already indicated in her speech in paragraph 20 that there would be a fair investigation

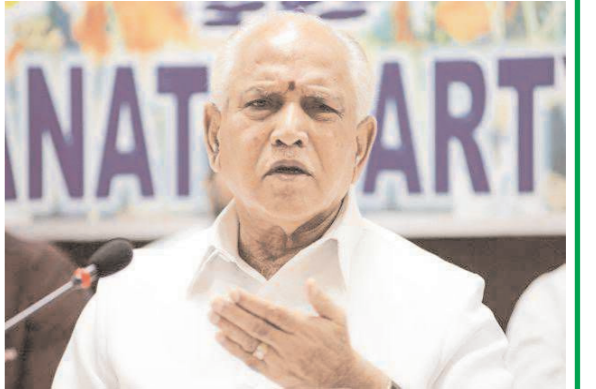
the Opposition was adamant with their demand for a discussion on NEET. When the session resumed, the Speaker adjourned the House till 11 am on July 1. Earlier, Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi had demanded that the Speaker allow the adjournment motion for discussion on the NEET issue before the President's address, calling it the most important issue. However, Speaker Om Birla rejected the demand, stating that an adjournment motion could not be permitted in the middle of the discussion on the President's address. "All the opposition parties in a meeting have decided that there is a need for a healthy and respectful discussion on NEET as this matter is related to youth. The Parliament should send a message to them that India's government and the opposition are jointly working to address their concerns," Gandhi told media persons.



into the irregularities in NEET. The members could raise any issue during the Motion of Thanks to President's address," Speaker Om Birla said before adjourning the house until 12 pm. But

Yediyurappa, aides paid money to sexual assault victim, mother to buy their silence

Bengaluru, June 28: The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) probing charges against former Karnataka chief minister BS Yediyurappa of sexually assaulting a minor girl, has alleged in the chargesheet that the BJP leader and three other accused paid money to the alleged victim and her mother to buy their silence. The 81-year-old Yediyurappa has been charged under Section 8 (punishment for sexual assault) of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and Sections 354-A (sexual harassment), 204 (destruction of document or electronic record to prevent its production as evidence) and 214 (offering gift or



restoration of property in consideration of screening offender) of the IPC. The other three co-accused - Arun YM, Rudresh M and G Mariswamy, who are aides of Yediyurappa - are charged under Sections 204 and 214 of the IPC in the chargesheet filed at the Fast Track Court 1 for POCSO Act cases here on Thursday. According to the chargesheet, on February 2 this year, at around 11.15 am, the 17-year-old alleged victim, along with her 54-year-old mother - the complainant - visited Yediyurappa at his residence in Dollar's Colony here seeking help in getting justice in a previous case of sexual assault (on the daughter) and other issues. While Yediyurappa was speaking to the mother, he was holding the victim's right wrist with his left hand, it said. Yediyurappa then called the minor into a meeting room next to the hall and locked the door. He then asked the victim whether she remembered the face of the person who had sexually assaulted her earlier to which the victim replied twice saying that she did, the chargesheet said. After this Yediyurappa asked her what her age was, then, to which she replied six-and-a-half; at this point he tried to sexually assault her, the CID alleged. It said the horrified victim pushed Yediyurappa's hand, moved away and asked him to open the door. Yediyurappa then opened the door and exited after putting some cash in the hands of the victim from his pocket. He then told the victim's mother that he couldn't help them in the case and also gave her some money from his pocket and sent them away, the chargesheet said.

Former Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren walks out of jail after High Court grants bail in money-laundering case

Tejinder Kaur Babbar Ranchi, June 28: Former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren was released from Birsa Munda Jail here on Friday after the high court granted bail to him in a money-laundering case linked to a land scam, an official said. Falsely implicated, I was forced to spend 5 months in jail. Hemant Soren As Soren stepped out of the jail, a large number of JMM supporters cheered and raised slogans in favour of him. Soren's wife Kalpana Soren, a JMM legislator, thanked the judiciary and people for their support. "Heman Soren was released from the jail after completion of legal formalities," the official said. Soren, on his release from the jail, was seen waving at people and seeking blessings from his father and JMM supremo Shibu Soren. A single bench of Justice Rongon Mukhopadhyay granted bail to the former chief minister of Jharkhand earlier in the day. "...The petitioner is direct-

ed to be released on bail on furnishing bail bond of Rs 50,000 with two sureties of the like amount each," said the order passed by Justice Mukhopadhyay. Soren, the executive president of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on January 31 in connection with its investigation into the money-laundering case. The 48-year-old politician had been lodged in Birsa Munda

jail. "The court has held that prima facie he is not guilty of the offence and there is no likelihood of the petitioner committing an offence when on bail." Soren's senior counsel Arunabh Chowdhury told PTL. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee welcomed the court's order granting bail to Soren. As the order granting bail to Soren came, JMM and Congress workers were seen here distributing sweets among themselves. During the hearing, ED's counsel SV Raju argued that if Soren is released on bail, he may commit a similar offence, referring to cases against ED officers in the SC/ST police station. "Though the conduct of the petitioner has been sought to be highlighted by the Enforcement Directorate on account of the First Information Report instituted by the petitioner against the officials of the ED but on an overall conspectus of the case, there is no likelihood of the petitioner committing a similar nature of offence," the court said.



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Woman on IndiGo's Varanasi-Mumbai flight booked for misbehaving with cabin crew

Mumbai, June 28: A woman passenger on board IndiGo flight 5292 from Varanasi to Mumbai was booked for allegedly abusing and misbehaving with cabin crew over a change in seat, police have said. The incident took place on Monday, a police official said. "The flight with 175 passengers took off from Varanasi 29 minutes late. The woman, occupying seat 9, asked for a change in seat but refused when the crew asked her to take seat 15. Some 15 minutes later, she went to the lavatory and then started abusing and misbehaving with the crew," the official said on Thursday. "Though crew members initially ignored her rants, she continued to shout at them. After the crew as well as some other passengers complained about her behaviour, she was declared an unruly passenger after following the due process for such a move," the official said. She was handed over to Sahar police after the flight landed at Mumbai airport and based on the complaint of a crew member, she was booked under provisions of the Indian Penal Code and Aircraft Rules, the official said.

Cab driver dead, 6 injured as portion of roof collapses at Delhi airport's Terminal-1

Naresh Malhotra New Delhi, June 28: A cab driver died and six people were injured after a portion of a canopy at Delhi airport's Terminal-1 collapsed on cars amid heavy rain early on Friday, leading to suspension of flight departures, according to officials. Heavy rain pounds Delhi as monsoon arrives; waterlogging, traffic snarls, power cuts add to chaos Delhi Fire Services (DFS) officials said three fire tenders were rushed to Terminal-1 (T1) of the airport after a call about the incident was received around 5:30 am. Besides the roof sheet, the support beams collapsed, damaging the cars parked in the pick-up and drop area of the terminal. A search operation was conducted to make sure no one was trapped inside the damaged vehicles, they said. The injured have been admitted to Medanta Hospital near the airport. One of them was rescued from a car on

which an iron beam had fallen. He was later identified as Ramesh Kumar, they added. Work was under way to clear the debris. Deputy Commissioner of Police (IG) Usha Rangnani said due to heavy rain, the shed outside Terminal-1 of the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), spanning from departure gate no. 1 to gate no. 2, collapsed around 5 am, damaging four vehicles. One person died and six people were injured in the incident. All the injured are stable, she said. Teams of Delhi Police, DFS, Central Industrial Security Force and National Disaster Response Force are present at the spot, the DCP said. A police official said the deceased was identified as Ramesh Kumar (45), a taxi driver and

a resident of Rohini in Delhi. The injured have been identified as Santosh Kumar Yadav (28), Subham Shah (30), Dhasrat Ahirwar (25), Arvind Goswami (34), Sahil Kundan (27) and Yogesh Dhawan (44). They are residents of Delhi, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, the official said.

Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu visited the airport Terminal-1 and took stock of the situation. "Personally monitoring the roof collapse incident at T1 Delhi Airport. First responders are working at site. Also advised the airlines to assist all affected passengers at T1," he said in a post on X. "The injured have been evacuated to hospital. Rescue operations are still ongoing," he added. The Civil Aviation Ministry said flight operations at T1 have been suspended till further notice. "Heavy rain in early morning today has resulted in the collapse of the canopy of #DelhiAirport Terminal 1. As a result of which flights to & from Terminal 1 have been closed till further notice.



Delhi Police nab man who brought shooters to outlet

New Delhi, June 28: The Delhi Police on Friday made its first arrest in connection with the recent murder of a man at a food outlet in west Delhi's Rajouri Garden, officials said. The arrested accused Bijender (27), a resident of Rohtak in Haryana, is the one who allegedly brought the two shooters in his vehicle at the spot to commit the murder, a senior police officer said. The police said three other suspects, the woman who accompanied the victim at the outlet and the two shooters, are still at large. The incident took place on June 18 around 9.30 pm at a Burger King outlet on the Najafgarh Road in Rajouri Garden, the officer said. Three people came on a motorcycle and parked outside the outlet. One person remained outside to keep surveillance and as back-up with a weapon, while two of them went inside and indiscriminately fired around 40 rounds at the victim who died on the spot, he added. The victim was later iden-

tified as Aman Joon (26), a resident of Jhajjar in Haryana. He was sitting with a woman inside the outlet when the incident happened. Later, a criminal gang based outside India took responsibility of eliminating the man, the officer said. During investigation, the shooters who were involved in the incident were identified as Ashish, Vikas, and Bijender. On Friday, the police got inputs on the whereabouts of Bijender and nabbed him from the Rohini area. A sophisticated pistol, eight live cartridges, and a motorcycle have been recovered from his possession, Special Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) R P Upadhyay said. He was previously involved in five cases of murder, attempt to murder, and cases under the Arms Act, Upadhyay said. During interrogation, Bijender disclosed that the murder of Joon was committed in a pre-planned manner allegedly on the direction of a criminal gang based abroad,

More officers for wetland reclamation regularisation in Kerala

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The revenue department will assign more officers to process applications for regularising reclamation of old wetlands and paddy fields. In a statement on Thursday, the department said the strength of officers will be increased from the present 27 to 71 from July 1. Taluk-based processing will be adopted, the statement said. The statement said as per the Kerala Conservation of Paddy Land and Wetland Act, 2008, only revenue divisional officers (RDOs) can approve regularisation applications and subsequent category change of land in revenue records. The current



strength of 27 officers has created a huge backlog of applications, and to resolve this, the assembly enacted an amendment to enhance the number of officers, said the statement. As per the amendment, an RDO means "an officer designated by the government not below the rank of deputy collector," helping the government increase the number of sanctioning officers to 71, said the statement.

The government has also made other arrangements to clear the backlog, like creating 68 junior superintendents and 181 clerk posts to assist the RDOs. An order to appoint 123 surveyors on a temporary basis and hire 220 vehicles on rent was issued.

Malayali engineering graduates develop new tech for surgical planning

The technology is also used to teach medical students about human anatomy.

KOCHI: With proper guidance, support and determination, anyone can be innovative. This was proven true once again when a team of Malayali engineering graduates developed a software system to revolutionise medical diagnostics and surgeries. Over the past year, the team from Barton Hill College in Thiruvananthapuram have been tirelessly working to develop a 3D imaging software to enhance the accuracy and efficiency of medical care. "The idea struck us when Sree Chitra Thirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology approached our college for collaborations. We knew that our team, hailing from the electronics and communication department, had much to contribute here. So we did, by way of our final project. We connected with professor Kesavadas to understand the inadequacies and develop a solution," says Aloysius



Bejoy, a final-year BTech student at the college and the team lead.

The technology works by converting CT scan files into 3D images, which can then be projected onto a white screen or other surfaces using 3D glasses. This allows for detailed visualisation of various organs, enabling accurate identification of cancers, delicate nerves, bone fractures, and more. The technology is also used to teach medical students about human anatomy. C Kesavadas from the Department of Radiology at the Sree Chitra Thirunal

Institute has been instrumental in applying this technology to medical practices. The technical support for the project was provided by EMBEDITE, a local company. The software's potential became clear when Dr Dinesh Raja P from Sree Chitra Thirunal Institute suggested its application in cardiology. "Feedback from an actual doctor provided more insights, leading to further customisation and improvement. Now, the system can visualise the heart and associated structures with clarity," Aloysius says. The software addresses the

limitations of 2D imaging by offering detailed 3D visualisations, making minute details visible that are otherwise missed. "Initially, this initiative was aimed at neuro-anatomy teaching. Our founder, Dr M S Valiathan, envisioned a tool for visualisation in medical education and recommended collaborating with the Indian Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad. IIT Hyderabad developed the initial visualisation tool, which we used to teach brain anatomy. This was the starting point. Realising its potential for surgical planning, Barton Hill Government Engineering College took over the software development. Dr Arun Anirudhan V from the Biomedical Technology Wing also collaborated, leading to an MOU with Barton Hill," Dr Kesavadas says.

He further explains, "The software was further developed and tested with engineering students, demonstrating its utility for surgical planning and teaching cardiac anatomy. Originally a neuro-anatomy project, it expanded to clinical use, focusing on cardiac and abdominal surgeries. The software can now be used to teach surgical procedures, with plans to extend its application to other organs." The institute and Barton Hill College are considering getting a patent for the system. Efforts are also on to make the system portable for wider use.

Madras HC or SC should take suo moto cognizance on Kallakurichi hooch tragedy: Evidence NGO

MADURAI: Urging Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin to provide a compensation of Rs 25 lakh to the kin of each victim of the Kallakurichi hooch tragedy, Evidence NGO's Executive Director A Kathir also appealed to the Madras High Court or the Supreme Court to take suo moto cognizance of the matter.

Addressing media persons, Kathir said that over 60 people have died so far in Kallakurichi and many others are critical. He recalled the hooch mishap in Marakkanam, which claimed 22 lives last year, and said that despite the first incident, Chief Minister MK Stalin failed to prevent the second mishap. Evidence team members went to Kallakurichi, and met 54 family

members of the victims. As many as 28 children, including 11 girls, have lost their



parents, said Kathir. On June 18, a day before the hooch tragedy blew up, Kathir stated that one Jayamurugan and one Illayaraja had lost their lives. Another

individual, Praveen, who suffered from pain after consuming arrack, was taken to the government hospital in Kallakurichi, but doctors refused to treat him. "We found that even children were consuming liquor which was being sold for Rs 60/packet. The victims were daily wage labourers. The state government has earned a profit of Rs 45,865 crore from Tasmac sales, which comes from people belonging to the deprived communities. Government mechanisms have failed to prevent the mishap," Kathir added. "Tamil Nadu Chief Minister should take responsibility for the hooch tragedy in Kallakurichi. For a transparent inquiry, either the Madras High Court or the Supreme Court can take suo moto cognizance from a high-level

committee consisting of a Supreme Court Judge or Madras High Court Judge with DGP. A special committee must be formed to provide psychological counselling to the children and women. The government should provide a monthly assistance of Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000 for the children who have lost their parents. An additional Rs 12 lakh and a government job must be given to the SC/ST victim's families. Training must be imparted to representatives of village panchayat, town panchayat, and on how to prevent illicit liquor sales in their areas. All three accused have been booked under IPC sections 328, 302, TN Prohibition act 4(1) (1), 4(1-A). They have also been booked under the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, section 3(2)(V)," he added.

18L anganwadi kids yet to receive unisex uniform in Tamil Nadu

CHENNAI: Though it has been nearly a month since anganwadi centres in the state reopened, over 18 lakh children in these centres are yet to be given new uniforms. With the Social Welfare Department floating tenders in this regard only recently, the uniforms in all likelihood will take another three months to reach the children.

The department commenced the distribution of uniforms to anganwadi children in some districts on a pilot basis in 2014. Last year, it decided to distribute unisex uniforms to children across the state. The cost of unisex readymade colour uniforms was fixed at Rs 150 per set (each child will be provided two



sets). Anganwadi workers said the uniform

Hic! Faulty breathalyser causes 'high' drama at KSRTC bus depot in Kothamangalam

KOCHI: Who's to 'fault' when the pot calls the kettle black? 'High' drama unfolded at the Kothamangalam KSRTC bus depot on Thursday morning after two vigilance inspectors found many employees in an inebriated condition. Pushed to a corner but refusing to back down, the road transport company's staffers insisted that the duo undergo the breathalyser test. And lo and behold, one of the inspectors also tested positive! It was then that it dawned: the device is defective. It all started around 3.30 am when the team of vigilance inspectors reached the depot to conduct surprise breathalyser tests on drivers. "The first service from the depot is at 3.50 am. Vigilance inspectors Ravi and Samson went about their job swiftly, subjecting bus crew to the test. Things went smoothly for nearly four hours," said an



official in charge of the depot. It was then that they tested conductor P V Biju, a crew on the Palakkad service scheduled to depart at 8.05 am. The device showed a reading of 39%. However, Biju protested,

saying he hadn't had even a drop of alcohol. A war of words ensued and Biju's colleagues stood by him.

Station master Shaju Sebastian arrived at the scene and he too backed Biju. The irate inspectors then urged Shaju to undergo the test. The latter obliged and the machine read 40%. A few more employees also tested positive. At this point, the unimpressed depot staff demanded that the inspectors subject themselves to the test. One of the inspectors agreed, and to his shock, he too was shown 'drunk' by the machine (45%). It was only then that vigilance men realised that the device had been malfunctioning. "The device functioned normally till around 8am after which it developed a glitch. This was what resulted in the confusion," one of the officers explained.

It has also been proposed to reduce the number of JLR safari vehicles in Bandipur Tiger Reserve.

BENGALURU: The most sought after niche safari in the state, offered by Jungle Lodges and Resorts in Kabini, Antarsanthe range of Nagarhole Tiger Reserve will be soon be reduced, under the new proposed tiger reserve conservation plan. The Karnataka forest department has sent a new tiger conservation area management plan to the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), in which it has proposed to reshuffle the number of trips that department vehicles and JLR vehicles will make. The new draft proposes to increase the number of vehicles in NTR from 36 to 45, of which 29 vehicles are proposed for JLR and 16 for the forest department. At present, JLR ferries 36 vehicles and the forest department has 9. It has also been

proposed to reduce the number of JLR safari vehicles in Bandipur Tiger Reserve. After adding two more vehicles and increasing the tally of vehicles to 31, the draft proposes to allot 12 to JLR and 19 to the forest department. Earlier, the division was 14 and 17, respectively. The tiger conservation area management plan of tiger reserves expired in March 2024. To continue with eco-tourism and other works, including conservation, a dedicated plan is needed and has to be approved by NTCA.

So far, we have sent the project plan of BTR and NTR. Drafts of the other tiger reserves -- Kali, BRT and Bhadra -- are still being finalised. The carrying capacity of each tiger reserve is being

revised based on multiple factors, including footfall, number of vehicles plying, animal population, routes, areas opened for tourism, fragility of the forests and geographical area. In the new proposal, the department is keen on revising the boundaries of buffer zones based on climatic changes and instances of man-animal conflict," a senior forest department official told TNIE. The official added that Supreme Court orders, NTCA guidelines and other wildlife acts have been kept in mind while drafting the new proposal.

On whether the increase in number of vehicles adds pressure to the eco-system and stress levels of animals, the official added that the number of vehicles will be divided uniformly.



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 Corporate Office:
 5, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg,
 Press Area, ITO, New Delhi
 Editor-in-Chief
 Gurcharan Singh Babbar
 Mob : 9654077232, 9971359517
 Website : www.the-sikh-times.in
 Email : sikh-times-india@gmail.com
 RNI No. DELENG/2008/25465
Legal Advisors:
 Advocate Mohd. Sajid
 Advocate Dr. A.P. Singh
 Advocate Manish Sharma
 Advocate Pooja Bhaskar Sharma

NEWS BOX

How mute button will work at tonight's Biden-Trump debate

World. Joe Biden and Donald Trump will clash with each other at the much-awaited first presidential debate on CNN Thursday. This is the first time that there will be no live audience to cheer or boo the speakers. There will also be a mute button -- which was introduced in 2020 from the second debate after Trump and Biden talked over each other in the first debate. CNN's debate night control room will mute the microphones of candidates when it is not their turn to speak.

How will the mute button work?

Behind the podiums, there will be two green lights which are a signal that his microphones are on. When the lights are off, the microphone is mute. CNN showed how the mute button will work and how viewers see it on their screen. When a candidate speaks, the microphone of the other remains off and at that time if the second one interrupts the first one, his voice will not reach the viewers -- he will only be seen miming.

—CollinRugg (@CollinRugg)

But as they are standing at lecterns that are only 8 feet apart, they will hear each other, even if on mute.

In the demo video, CNN reiterated that both the campaign agreed to abide by these rules. "By agreeing to participate in this debate, both campaigns and candidates have also agreed to abide by these rules," CNN said. The 90-minute debate will include two commercial breaks, and campaign staff cannot interact with their candidate during the break, the network said. The second debate between Biden and Trump is slated for September on ABC.

CNN moderators Jake Tapper and Dana Bash, already accused by Trump's campaign of spreading fake news against Trump, will use "all tools at their disposal" to ensure a civilized discussion. The debate starts at 9 pm and will continue for 90 minutes -- with only two commercial breaks. This is a normal length for a presidential debate, but the commercial breaks are noteworthy: General-election debates in past cycles, sponsored by the Commission on Presidential Debates rather than an individual news organization, did not have them. The candidates will not be allowed to talk to their aides during the commercial breaks, but they will have time to take a breather and collect themselves in a way they would not have in past years.

Le Pen threatens to challenge Macron's control on military



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

The early elections are plunging France into uncharted territory, and political scientists are scrambling to interpret how exactly Prez Macron and a PM who is hostile to most of his policies will share power if Le Pen's National Rally wins majority in the National Assembly. Macron has three years to serve out his term as prez. Le Pen has repeatedly said that Jordan Bardella, her protegee, will lead France's next govt if their party wins. She suggested in an interview that Bardella, 28, will also take over at least some decisions on France's defence and its armed forces. "Serving as a commander-in-chief of the armed forces is an honorary title for the president since it's the PM who actually pulls the strings," she said. France's constitution states that "the President of the Republic is the head of the armed forces". However, the constitution also states that "the PM is responsible for national defence." Constitutional experts say the exact role of PM in foreign policy and defence appears to be subject to interpretation. Historian Jean Garrigues said "the president is the head of armed forces, (but) it's the PM who has the armed forces at his disposal". In practice, he said this means that "if the prez decided to send troops on the ground to Ukraine, the PM would be able to block this decision."

Elon Musk's SpaceX gets \$843m to help discard ISS around 2030

WASHINGTON. Nasa awarded SpaceX \$843m to build a vehicle capable of pushing the International Space Station into Earth's atmosphere for its planned destruction around 2030, it said on Wednesday, a task originally meant for Russia's thrusters.

Under its new Nasa contract, SpaceX will build what the space agency called the US Deorbit Vehicle to deorbit the ISS and avoid risks to populated areas, with Nasa taking ownership of the craft and handling the deorbiting operation. The football field-sized research lab, led primarily by the US and Russia, has been continuously staffed with govt astronauts during its some 24 years of operation, but its aging components have led Nasa and its foreign partners to set 2030 as a planned retirement date. The first segment of the ISS was launched in 1998. Weighing 430,000kg, ISS is by far the largest single structure ever built in space. Based on past observations of how other stations such as Mir and Skylab disintegrated on atmospheric re-entry, Nasa engineers expect the orbital outpost to break up in three stages. First, the massive solar arrays and the radiators that keep the orbital lab cool will come off, then individual modules will break off from the truss.

Russian satellite breaks up in Space, forces ISS astronauts to shelter

World. A Russian Earth observation satellite, RESURS-P1, which was declared dead in 2022, has disintegrated into more than 100 pieces of debris in orbit. The break-up occurred on Wednesday, near the International Space Station (ISS), causing the astronauts on board to take shelter in their spacecraft for about an hour as a precautionary measure. US Space Command stated that there was no immediate threat to other satellites.

The cause of the satellite's break-up is currently unknown, and Russia's space agency, Roscosmos, has not provided any comments on the incident. LeoLabs, a US space-tracking firm, detected the satellite releasing fragments until 6 pm Mountain Time. US Space Command confirmed that the event generated "over 100 pieces of trackable debris." Large debris-generating events in orbit are uncommon but are becoming a growing concern as space becomes increasingly crowded with vital satellite networks. In 2021,

Russia faced strong criticism from Western countries when it destroyed one of its defunct satellites using a ground-based anti-satellite (ASAT) missile, creating thousands of pieces of orbital debris. While the RESURS-P1 passed over the Plesetsk rocket site during the initial break-up window, there was no immediate indication that Russia had launched a missile to strike the satellite.

When satellites reach the end of their operational life, they either remain in orbit until they eventually descend into Earth's atmosphere and burn up, or they are moved to a "graveyard orbit" 36,000 km from Earth to minimize the risk of colliding with active satellites. Roscosmos decommissioned RESURS-P1 in 2021 due to onboard equipment failures and had been lowering its altitude for an eventual atmospheric reentry.

The incident highlights the growing need for an international mechanism to manage space traffic and address the risks



associated with satellite collisions and space warfare. Space advocates and lawyers have been calling for countries to

establish such a system, which does not currently exist, to ensure the safe and sustainable use of space for all.

Bolivians show solidarity with President Luis Arce amid self-coup allegations

La Paz, Bolivia Supporters of Bolivia's president rallied outside his palace on Thursday, giving some political breathing room to the embattled leader as authorities made more arrests in a coup that shook the economically troubled country a day earlier. Bolivia's government announced that a total of 17 people had been arrested for their alleged involvement in the attempted government takeover, including the army chief, General Juan José Zúñiga, and former navy Vice Admiral Juan Arnez Salvador, who were taken into custody the day before. The South American nation of 12 million watched in shock and



bewilderment on Wednesday as military forces appeared to turn on the government of President Luis Arce, seizing control of the capital's main square with armoured vehicles, repeatedly crashing a small tank into

the presidential palace and unleashing tear gas on protesters. Senior Cabinet member Eduardo del Castillo did not elaborate on the other 15 people who were arrested on Thursday other than to identify one civilian, An-bal Aguilar Gómez, as the "mastermind" of the thwarted coup. He said the alleged conspirators began plotting in May.

Riot police guarded the palace doors and Arce — who has struggled to manage the country's shortages of foreign currency and fuel — emerged on the presidential balcony to condemn Zúñiga and declare that "no one can take democracy away from us".

US SC blocks opioid settlement that gave immunity to Purdue co's Sackler family

Washington. The US Supreme Court on Thursday blocked OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma's bankruptcy settlement that would have shielded its wealthy Sackler family owners from lawsuits over their role in the nation's deadly opioid epidemic. The 5-4 decision reversed a lower court's ruling that had upheld the plan to give Purdue's owners immunity in exchange for paying up to \$6 billion to settle thousands of lawsuits accusing the firm of unlawful misleading marketing of OxyContin, a powerful pain medication introduced in 1996.

Justice Neil Gorsuch wrote the ruling, which was joined by fellow conservative Justices Clarence Thomas, Samuel Alito and Amy Coney Barrett, as well as liberal Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson. "The

fellow conservative Chief Justice John Roberts, and liberal Justices Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan. "The decision is wrong on the law and devastating for more than 100,000 opioid victims and their families," he



said. rduce filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in 2019 to address its debts, nearly all of which stemmed from thousands of lawsuits alleging that OxyContin helped kickstart an opioid epidemic that has caused more than half a million US overdose deaths over two decades. At issue in the case was whether US bankruptcy law lets Purdue's

The ruling represented a victory for Prez Biden's administration, which had challenged the settlement as an abuse of bankruptcy protections meant for debtors in financial distress, not people like the Sacklers who have not filed for bankruptcy. Conservative

Sacklers haven't filed for bankruptcy and have not placed virtually all their assets on the table for distribution to creditors, yet they seek what essentially amounts to a discharge," he wrote. Justice Brett Kavanaugh wrote a dissenting opinion that was joined by

restructuring include legal protections for members of the Sackler family, who have not filed for personal bankruptcy. The decision has broader implications for other bankruptcy settlements involving claims of mass injury.

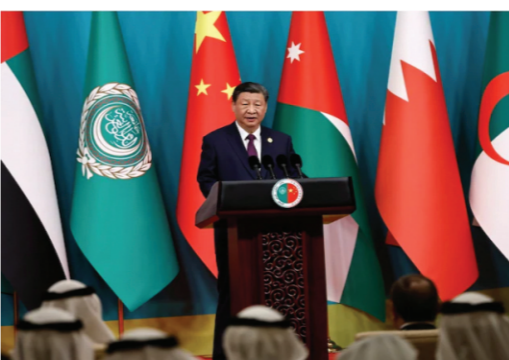


too has been suspended on Thursday. Incidentally, both Shamnaz and Rameez have worked with Muizzu as members of the Male City Council when he was serving as the city's mayor. Media reported that after Muizzu assumed office as the President in November last year, Shamnaz was appointed as a state minister first at Muliage, the official residence of the president and then transferred to the Environment Ministry. "Rameez, during his time at Male City Council, was known as a close aide of Muizzu, who was the mayor at that time," Sun.mv said further and added, "However, he has been absent from the public light in the past five months or so." Neither the Maldives government nor the President's office has made any official comment on the issue.

China: In a First, Two Former Defence Ministers to Be Tried for Corruption, Expelled from Communist Party

Beijing, China Two former Chinese defence ministers, Wei Fenghe and his successor Li Shangfu, who worked under President Xi Jinping's watch were on Thursday expelled from the ruling Communist Party and are set to be prosecuted in what was regarded as the worst scandal to hit the People's Liberation Army. The Communist Party headed by Xi, has expelled Gen. Wei, 70, and Gen. Li, 66, for alleged corruption and launched prosecution proceedings against them after investigations reportedly found both of them indulged in corruption, separate official announcements said. The year 2023 will also go down as the worst year for Chinese ministers as three of them including former Foreign Minister Qin Gang besides Wei and Li disappeared from public view. Li, who went missing last year following an investigation into alleged corrupt practices, was expelled from the party on Thursday for serious violation of Party discipline and the law, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported. A similar announcement said Wei too was expelled from the party and to be prosecuted. Wei served as Defence Minister from 2018-23 and Li barely served a few months as his successor. Li, a Chinese aerospace engineer who headed

the People's Liberation Army's all-important Rocket (Missile) Force and was personally picked up for the top defence post by Xi himself, went missing last year, sparking speculation that he was being investigated for corruption and indiscipline. Both served as State Councillors, the top post in the party and as a member of the Central Military Commission (CMC), the overall high command of the PLA headed by Xi. Both were deprived of their qualification as a delegate to the 20th CPC National Congress, according to a meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee. His sacking followed a major shakeup in the PLA Rocket (missile) Force in which its commander Li Yuchao and political commissar Xu Zhongbo along with others, were replaced without any official explanation. Their summary dismissals sent shockwaves among the Chinese officialdom besides raising questions over the process of selection of officials for key jobs by Xi. In a similar announcement, the CMC's disciplinary and supervisory agency launched an investigation against Li and Wei. The investigation found that they seriously violated political and organisational discipline. They sought



improper benefits in personnel arrangements for themselves and others, took advantage of their posts to seek benefits for others, and accepted a huge amount of money and valuables in return. Media reports here last month said Wei, whose prolonged absence from the public has sparked speculation about his fate, was reported to be politically safe after his name figured in the tributes paid to a senior Chinese legislator who passed away. But not so as the party came down heavily on him too saying that a disciplinary and supervisory probe launched against him found that he had seriously violated party discipline and indulged in corruption. The

announcement said as high-ranking officials of the Party and the military, both lost faith and loyalty. Their actions failed the trust of the Party Central Committee and the CMC, and severely contaminated the political environment of the military, bringing enormous damage to the Party's cause, the development of national defence and the armed forces, as well as the image of senior officials, Xinhua reported. Wei's violations are extremely serious, with a highly detrimental impact and tremendous harm, according to the investigation findings. The Political Bureau has decided to forward their suspected criminal case to procuratorial organs of the military for examination and prosecution. Li and Wei are just the latest senior PLA officers to be brought down in the ongoing anti-graft campaign. Nine generals, including previous and serving commanders of the PLA Rocket Force and the Air Force as well as several CMC officials with the Equipment Development Department, were dismissed from the National People's Congress in December.

Soaring vegetable prices in Andhra burden people

GUNTUR: Soaring prices of vegetables and essential commodities are burdening the common man, who are struggling hard to get things in order. With tomatoes surpassing Rs 100 per kg, other vegetables, including beans, bottle gourd, chillies, brinjal and okra, have also increased by two-fold due to a lack of supply. Similarly, the prices of mint and coriander leaves also climbed up the price chart in the last couple of weeks. The prices of vegetables, oils, pulses, dal and groceries have increased in the past few months burning a hole in the pockets of the common man. Expressing her ordeal, A Rama Lakshmi, a 34-year-old teacher, said, "Usually the monthly expenditure of our family of four on groceries is between Rs 4,000 to Rs 5,000. Now, it is exceeding Rs 6,000 to Rs 7,000. The prices of almost everything have increased, making life difficult for us". Following this, the Guntur district administration swung into action to curtail the spiralling prices by reducing the costs of basic essential commodities. Plans are on anvil to provide tomatoes at fixed prices through market intervention. As the prices of tomatoes have increased from Rs 60 to Rs 90 in Chittoor market due to less yield, the officials informed that with the Rs 5 lakh revolving funds allotted by the State government and marketing department, the vegetables will be sold in the local markets at the same price as sold at Chittoor market. Very recently, the prices monitoring committee held a review meeting and discussed the measures to be taken amid the soaring prices. They instructed the officials to take stern action against the traders for hoarding and creating artificial scarcity in the market.

Andhra to disburse Rs 4,399.89 crore in pensions door-to-door on July 1

VIJAYAWADA: The State government has made all arrangements for the disbursement of Rs 4,399.89 crore towards social security pensions (NTR Bharosa) to all the 65.18 lakh beneficiaries at their doorstep in a single day on July 1. Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad said employees of village/ward secretariats will commence the distribution of pensions at 6 am. Each employee will be allocated 50 houses. Employees of other government departments will also be deputed for the purpose if needed. Holding a video conference with all the District Collectors from the State Secretariat on Thursday, he said the enhanced pension amount of Rs 7,000 for beneficiaries under Category I (aged and widows, and 11 sub-categories) will be disbursed at their doorstep. The sum includes enhanced pension of Rs 4,000, along with three months arrears of Rs 1,000 each. Similarly, for the partially disabled beneficiaries, who come under Category II, will be given the enhanced pension of Rs 6,000 from Rs 3,000. Permanently disabled beneficiaries under Category III will be given Rs 15,000, which has been enhanced from Rs 5,000. Beneficiaries under Category IV, who are suffering from chronic diseases like renal ailments and thalassemia, will get the enhanced pension of Rs 10,000 from Rs 5,000 per month, the Chief Secretary explained. Out of the total Rs 4,399.89 crore, a sum of Rs 4,369.82 crore will be disbursed to



64.75 lakh beneficiaries in cash at their doorstep directly. The remaining Rs 30.05 crore will be credited into the bank accounts of 43,000 beneficiaries residing outside the State under the Direct Benefit Transfer mode. Directing the District Collectors to withdraw the money from banks on June 29 itself, the Chief Secretary said they should strive to complete the entire exercise on July 1 itself and issue the pension distribution certificates. If the distribution of pensions is not completed on July 1 due to any unavoidable reasons, it can be continued on July 2, he said. The pension amount will be disbursed at the doorstep of beneficiaries through Biometric Authentication or IRIS Authentication of

Aadhaar Based Face Authentication or Real Time Identification of Beneficiary System or Pensioner Facial Authentication. The Collectors should take all the precautionary measures to ensure the successful disbursement of pensions to all the beneficiaries in one day, the Chief Secretary said. Special Chief Secretary (Housing, Village and Ward Secretariats) Ajay Jain, Principal Secretary (Panchayat Raj and Rural Development) Shashi Bhushan Kumar, Secretaries (Finance) Saurabh Gaur and Satyanarayana, Director (Village, Ward Secretariats) Siva Prasad and other officials took part in the video conference.

Karnataka: LS polls verdict forces Congress to rethink civic, ZP-TP election plans

MYSURU: The BJP-JDS alliance winning a majority of seats in the recently-concluded Lok Sabha elections and delivering its best performance in the Vokkaliga-dominated Old Mysuru region, has made the Congress rethink about holding the much-awaited elections to Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike, Mysore City Corporation and zilla and taluk panchayats. Though there was pressure from within the party to hold BBMP, corporation and zilla panchayat polls, the Lok Sabha election verdict has dented the morale of Congress leaders and workers. As the BJP-JDS managed to get the lead in 146 assembly segments, BJP and JDS camps are in an upbeat mood and have further cemented their alliance, announcing they will go together in the panchayat elections.

Sources in the Congress revealed that legislators and leaders are in no hurry for elections as an internal survey does not give a favourable opinion. The BJP-JDS would do well in southern districts and wrest power in corporations and panchayats if elections are held now, with its seat-sharing arrangements. Mysuru City Congress leaders had prevailed on Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to hold the corporation election ahead of Lok Sabha elections, claiming they would win more than 35 of 65 wards. The Congress had won 24, BJP 21 and JDS 18 wards in the corporation. But BJP MP Yaduveer Krishnadutta Narashimaraaja Wadiyar's emphatic win has made Congress leaders change their tone.

A senior leader said despite putting up a good fight in the Lok Sabha election, Congress will find it difficult to win more than 12-13 wards if elections are held now. BJP has managed to improve its vote share from 53,000 to 62,000 votes in Hindu-dominated areas like NR Mohalla, Kesare, Yaraganahalli, Raghavendra Nagar and others.

Congress legislators in Mysuru, Mandya, Kolar and other districts are also not in favour of zilla and taluk panchayat polls as JDS and BJP candidates have not only won but also got the lead in a majority of assembly segments. Pleading anonymity, they said the tempo of the BJP-JDS victory would subside in a few months, and the Congress has started holding booth and ward-level meetings to introspect and organise the party.

Though zilla and taluk panchayat elections depend on local issues and local candidates, they feel it is best not to rush, as the JDS is ready to compromise to any extent with the BJP to defeat the Congress. Legislators and leaders in Bengaluru have also expressed their opinion to the CM on Congress prospects in the Palike election. Sources said JDS leaders GT Deve Gowda, Sa Ra Mahesh and others have decided on seat-sharing arrangements based on the strength of the two parties, with the only objective of winning elections and coming to power in ZPs and city corporations.

Puducherry education department orders closure of 33 more unrecognized schools

PUDUCHERRY: The Puducherry Department of School Education has ordered the closure of 33 more unrecognized private schools on June 25, while cautioning parents against admitting their children to such institutions. This decision follows an earlier

proper authorization from the Directorate of School Education, Puducherry. In total, 66 schools have now been ordered to shut down due to their illegal operations. Running a school without recognition violates the "Puducherry School Education Act, 1987" and the "Pondicherry School Education Rules, 1996," she said. Under Section 18(5) of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, individuals running schools without obtaining a recognition certificate are subject to a penalty. The responsible parties face a fine of one lakh rupees, with an additional penalty of up to ten thousand rupees for each day the school continues to operate in violation of the rules. The Department has strongly advised parents to ensure their children are admitted to schools that are properly accredited by the Directorate of School Education, Puducherry, to avoid potential issues and ensure compliance with local education regulations.

Should parents choose to ignore this advice, the school management or the parents themselves will be held fully accountable for any future lapses or discrepancies, she said.



directive on December 15, 2023, which also ordered the closure of 33 unauthorized schools operating within the Union Territory. P. Priyatarshny, Director of the Department of School Education, emphasized that these schools have been functioning without

Resistance from Jacobite faction halts church handover, Kerala govt tells High Court

KOCHI: The state government has informed the Kerala High Court that the order to hand over churches to the Orthodox faction of the Malankara Church cannot be implemented due to stiff resistance from the Jacobite faction. Jacobite faction members, including women, children and elderly, have camped in most of the churches, and are agitated and aggressive, the court was told. Some protesters have even threatened to commit suicide if the order is enforced. Officers face significant resistance from children and women, which is preventing them from carrying out the court directive.

The government pointed out that it is inappropriate to use excessive force to implement the ruling. Officers retreated without physically handing over the churches, considering the potential for serious law and order issues. Dispersing Jacobite faction members without using force was not feasible. Despite attempts by the district administration and police to implement the court order, they failed due to strong protests, the HC was informed.

Police officers are continuing their vigil, the government submitted. There is a possibility of unpleasant incidents, clashes, and even murders or suicides in the districts where the disputed churches are located.

Therefore, police must be prepared. The matter needs to be treated cautiously and diligently, and efforts to implement the court order will continue. The affidavits of the state government were in response to a contempt case filed for not implementing the order at St Thomas Orthodox Syrian Church, Cherukunnam; St Mary's Orthodox Church (Odakkali Palli), Odakkali; St John's Besage Orthodox Church, Pulinthanam, Muvattupuzha; St Mary's Orthodox Syrian Church, Mangalam Dam; St Mary's Orthodox Syrian Church, Erickinchira; and, St Thomas Orthodox Syrian Church, Mazhuvannoor.

Tiruchy's street libraries lose charm as corporation turns blind eye

TIRUCHY: Aiming to promote the habit of reading among residents, the corporation set up two street libraries in the city. While the library at Officers Colony, which opened first in December 2018, continues to offer books like those helpful in preparation for competitive examinations, local residents say it sees only a few visitors nowadays. What is more is the reading area is barricaded. The library at Burma Colony is no better as locals say the facility has been off-limits for over a year. On the library in his locality, G Ramakrishna, a resident of Officers' Colony, said, "We don't know why the corporation barricaded the reading space but who cares about it when hardly any people visit the library? All the books, however, are in good condition, and the corporation should send them to KSCs." KSCs are knowledge and study centres which offer free internet access and



reading space. Currently, there are two of them in the city. On the library at Burma Colony, T Balaji, an elderly resident, said, "As there are visitors, the corporation has ignored its maintenance and kept it under lock and key. Compared to the street library at Officers Colony, this is a small one, and it's constructed in a congested area. Therefore, it was not getting any visitors from the very beginning. Thus, the authorities ignored it and it turned

wastage of public money." When enquired, a senior corporation official told TNIE, "We will see what can be done to save the libraries. If there are no possibilities, we will explore options to put the space to use for some other purpose."

Street libraries?

A street library is a library, built by a corporation or any local body, on a vacant space beside a road to promote reading habit among residents. The books for the libraries are mostly donated by local residents. Anyone can take books from them and also donate them. The library in Officers Colony was constructed at a cost of Rs 20 lakh and can stock about 500 books. It was opened in December 2018. The Burma Colony library was constructed for Rs 14.30 lakh and can stock about 300 books. It was opened in August 2019

Free run for online taxis in Kerala as Vehicle Aggregator Policy fails to take off

KOTTAYAM: Despite two months passing since the state government issued an order formulating the State Motor Vehicle Aggregator Policy, based on the Motor Vehicle Aggregator Guidelines-2020 of the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), there is still confusion surrounding its implementation. The policy aims to streamline the operation of public transport vehicles, particularly online taxi services. While the motor vehicles department (MVD) says further clarity is needed regarding the policy, many online taxi vehicles have failed to obtain the necessary aggregator licence, which is essential for safeguarding the rights of both passengers and drivers. Despite the existence of the government order, compliance with this requirement has been lacking. It was on November 27, 2020, that MoRTH shared the Motor Vehicle Aggregators Guidelines-2020, with the state governments and Union territories so that they could use it for issuance of licences as well as regulating the business being conducted by the Cab Aggregators (CA). After four years, on April 8, Kerala rolled out its aggregator policy 'to ensure the conduct of responsible, effective and efficient conduct of business by the aggregators and urges every statutory authority to implement this policy in letter and spirit.'

MVD officials said that they would send a letter to the government seeking clarification on the implementation of the new policy. "The government order did not specify the authority responsible for issuing aggregator licences. According to the order, it will be either the government or an authority appointed by the government that will determine the licence issuing authority. We will soon send a letter to the government seeking clarification on the matter," said an official.

Meanwhile, the taxi drivers' union has approached the government and MVD seeking urgent action to ensure the strict enforcement of the aggregator policy throughout the state. "Currently, online taxi services, including Uber and Ola are operating unauthorisedly without aggregator policy. It is imperative that measures are taken promptly to address the situation and uphold the standards set forth in the State Motor Vehicle Aggregator Policy," said Manoj Pallikkunnel, chief patron, Keraleeyam Taxi Drivers Organisation. The new policy ensures various safety measures for passengers including ensuring appropriate functioning of the GPS installed in the vehicle and providing efficient resolution of any issues that may develop in its functioning.

Karnataka: After cotton candy & kebabs, lens now on pani puri

BENGALURU: Following the ban on use of artificial colours in cotton candy, gobi manchurian and recently kebabs, the state health department is now likely to regulate the sale of pani puri, suspecting that carcinogenic colouring agents are mixed with the water used in the preparations. Speaking to TNIE, officials of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) said they have collected over 200 samples of pani puris across the state and are currently awaiting the test results. A senior FSSAI official mentioned that the department collected

the samples from various spots like wedding halls and shopping malls apart from street vendors outside malls, parks, educational institutes and offices. Asked about the department's next focus in the interests of public safety, the official said there is a possibility of regulating the sale of Indian sweets.

"The department is actively picking up random food samples that are often consumed, and the next target could be sweets, particularly jalebi, laddu and jahangir, which are notable for their bright colour," the official said. As festivals are

approaching, the demand for sweets typically surge. At such times, sellers usually receive substantial orders. To proactively protect consumers from potential additives, stringent measures are being planned and will be implemented in advance, the official added. The continuous testing initiative not only aims to educate citizens about the risks associated with street food and the potential presence of harmful chemicals, but also serves as a warning to vendors and sellers to strictly adhere to food safety regulations.



Canada's provocations know no bounds

ON June 18, a year after the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Surrey, British Columbia, the Canadian authorities allowed a 'mock trial' in front of the Consulate General of India (CGI) in Vancouver. According to a report carried by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), "an effigy of Modi, dressed in prison stripes, was paraded down the street in a makeshift cage before the mock trial began". Photographs of the encaged effigy were carried in the Canadian media. This outrageous protest was organised by supporters of Nijjar, who was declared a terrorist under Indian laws a few years ago; he advocated violent secessionism. Once again, Canada ignored this while giving permission for the outrage against a foreign leader. So did the Canadian Parliament. It paid homage to Nijjar on his death anniversary. It is one matter for the Canadian Government to consider the killing of its national by proxies of foreign agents as a violation of its sovereignty and quite another for its Parliament to honour the memory of one who advocated violence. Canada simply does not get this basic fact. Canada also does not appreciate what its veteran journalist Stephen Maher has noted in his recently published book on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, *The Prince*: "The dream of an independent Khalistan in Punjab, an idea long dead in India, lives on in the minds of many Canadian Sikhs." Instead of giving its people a reality check, Canada has not discouraged violence and separatism among some of its misguided people. India's reaction to Canada's recent provocations was subdued. The Ministry of External Affairs' spokesperson said on June 21: "We naturally oppose any moves giving political space to extremists and those advocating violence." He also reiterated the government's serious concern over Khalistani and anti-Indian activities in Canada. The spokesperson should have specifically denounced Canada for allowing the highly objectionable protest in front of the CGI. And, this occurred after Prime Minister Narendra Modi shook hands with Trudeau at the G7 summit in Italy recently. While Modi merely tweeted a photograph of his interaction, Trudeau told CBC on June 17: "Now that he is through his election, I think that there is an opportunity for us to engage, including on some very serious issues around national security and keeping Canadians safe and the rule of law". These are obviously code words for the Nijjar killing. Trudeau can hardly expect that Modi will be willing to 'engage' after what he allowed on Nijjar's death anniversary. Trudeau has subordinated his India policy to his politics. Canadian Sikh votes are vital for his Liberal Party. Maher notes in *The Prince*: "The Liberals want Sikh votes. The Conservatives are after the Hindus." Besides, Trudeau is dependent on Jagmeet Singh's New Democratic Party for a majority in Parliament; his own party is in a minority. Thus, more than the claim that seeking secession is not against Canadian law, it is Trudeau's political compulsions that have consistently led him to ignore India's concerns.

Soon after returning home following the G20 summit in New Delhi in September last year, Trudeau informed the Canadian Parliament that the country's agencies were "actively pursuing credible allegations of a potential link between agents of the Government of India" and Nijjar's killing. He gave no information or evidence to back his claim. Initially, he secured the support of the Opposition parties, but later they asked Trudeau to back his claim with evidence. On its part, India dismissed Trudeau's assertion as 'absurd'. Bilateral relations hit a new low as Canada expelled an Indian diplomat and India responded in kind. Later, India asked Canada to heavily reduce the strength of its diplomatic staff. Canada reluctantly complied. An early improvement in ties is unlikely, considering India's sharp remarks on the anniversary of the Air India's Kanishka bombing of June 23, 1985.

PLA reorganisation has implications for China's neighbours

As the conflicts in Ukraine and West Asia have shown, the battle of perception has become very important in present-day warfare to win popular support.

APPARENTLY undeterred by the turbulence in the People's Liberation Army (PLA), sparked by the disappearance of China's then Defence Minister Gen Li Shangfu and the 'removal' soon thereafter of the Commander and Political Commissar of the PLA Rocket Force and at least 11 other Generals, Chinese President Xi Jinping has effected the largest reorganisation of the PLA since 2016. It demonstrated his grip on the PLA. It showed that the PLA officers have imbibed lessons from their close study of the wars in Ukraine and Gaza. One major lesson has been the importance of propaganda and the ability to craft and shape popular perceptions. In Gaza, for example, Israel found that it lost global popular support, which had suddenly and overwhelmingly shifted in favour of Palestine. This was one backdrop that possibly precipitated the dissolution of the PLA Strategic Support Force (SSF) and the establishment of the PLA Information Support Force (ISF).

ISF. He simultaneously announced the establishment of the PLA Aerospace Support Force and the PLA Cyberspace Support Force and the dissolution of the PLA SSF. The order of precedence for the new services, important for the hierarchy-conscious PLA, was indicated as thus: the PLA Aerospace Support Force, PLA Cyberspace Support Force, PLA ISF and the Joint Logistics Support Force. Each of these is now an independent entity at the Deputy Theatre Commander-level, reporting directly to the Central Military Commission (CMC). They have single missions and are focused on one aspect of warfare, which would be intended to make command and control, as well as their performance, more effective. Among the reasons for the reorganisation would be that the capital-intensive PLA SSF encompassed a range of varied aspects of modern hi-technology warfare capabilities, probably making it difficult for the PLA SSF Commander to pay adequate attention to the individual specialised forces under his command. At a time of rapid advances in technology and battlefield tactics evolving on the battlegrounds in Ukraine and West Asia, which the PLA leadership has been studying and analysing very carefully, this would be an impediment to the PLA becoming a world-class military capable of fighting and winning wars. As the conflicts in Ukraine and West Asia have also shown, the battle of perception has become very important in present-day warfare to win popular support and influence outcomes. Information warfare and shaping scenarios has been noticeably prominent and successful in both these conflict zones. Reorganisation of the SSF will ensure focused attention and better utilisation of funds for each force. Since all forces are specialised, they will establish separate training establishments so that professionally competent personnel are available.



The main functions of the PLA ISF, as presently discernible, includes communications, including satellite communications, analysis of battlefield environment and target data, and maintenance, disruption and monitoring of cyber and communications channels. Many of the entities integrated into the ISF are from the SSF. Available information shows that the agencies integrated into the PLA ISF include the headquarters of the now-disbanded SSF, the Information and Communication Base, and the Information and Communication Brigades of the Xinjiang and Tibet Military Districts. Additionally, it encompasses the Target Data Battalion, Battlefield Environment Battalion, Communications Support Battalion, Spectrum Control Battalion, and the Intelligence Analysis Centre of the Joint Staff Department of the CMC. Certain functions and capabilities from the Battlefield Situation and Strategic Early Warning Sub-Centres of the Joint Operations Command Centre of the CMC, as well as the Battlefield Situation Battalion, Information Service Battalion, and Command Operations and Maintenance Battalion of the Theatre Command Joint Operations Centres, have also been integrated. Furthermore, some forces from the 35th Base and the Satellite Communications Centre of the former SSF, along with the Battlefield Environment Research Institute and the Network Information Research Institute of the Systems Engineering Research Academy of the Academy of Military Sciences, are now part of the ISF. Most personnel of these formations and units would have been retained and moved to the ISF with their

original units. The leadership elements would largely have been left undisturbed. The Commander and Political Commissar of the Aerospace Force and Cyberspace Force could similarly have been left in place. Earlier, speaking at the National People's Congress on March 7, Xi had focused on the building of strategic capabilities in emerging fields, the need to understand developments in emerging fields, and efficient integration of new productive forces and new combat forces. Xi also underscored the importance of innovation and deepening reform of the national defence science and technology industry system. He stressed the importance of "integrating preparation for maritime military warfare, safeguarding of maritime rights and development of the maritime economy". He simultaneously highlighted the importance of a network space defence system and enhanced safeguards for national network security. The reorganisation has implications for China's neighbours. Creation of the ISF implies increased attention to signals and electronic monitoring, interception and disruption capabilities. It will probably be responsible for disinformation campaigns and will enhance its cyber warfare capabilities. The ISF will be under pressure to show results, and cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns against targets — Indian, South Asian, South East Asian, etc. — can be expected to increase. The Dalai Lama's establishment would equally be a target. An important area of focus for the new force will be the maritime domain and particularly the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea.

Rahul as LoP

Opposition banks on him to corner govt

CONGRESS leader Rahul Gandhi has taken charge as the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha. This is the first constitutional position for Rahul, who has been in politics for the past two decades or so. No less important is the fact that the Congress, the single largest Opposition party, has got this post after a gap of 10 years. This is because of the party's good performance in the recent Lok Sabha elections after the back-to-back debacles in the 2014 and 2019 polls. It was shortly after the rout in 2019 that Rahul had stepped down as the Congress president. Since then, he has been reluctant to take up any party post. Speculation that he was not keen to assume the mantle of the LoP has now finally been laid to rest.

A resurgent Opposition is banking on Rahul to spearhead its fight against the BJP-led NDA government both in Parliament and outside. In his first speech as the LoP, he said the government had



political power, but the Opposition also represented the voice of India's people. Congratulating Om Birla on being re-elected as the Lok Sabha Speaker, Rahul expressed hope that the Opposition would be allowed to speak in the House.

It will be Rahul's responsibility to walk the talk on his assurance that the entire Opposition would assist the Speaker in the functioning of the House. With the BJP no longer all-powerful in the Lower House, the scion of the Nehru-Gandhi family needs to seize every opportunity to corner the government on contentious issues such as the Citizenship Amendment Act, the National Register of Citizens and the Agnipath scheme. Much depends on him to ensure that the Opposition engages in a constructive debate with the government and resists the temptation of staging walkouts at the drop of a hat.

India losing ground on global research front

China has surged ahead of not just India but also the US and Europe on important parameters like the publication of scientific papers.

INDIA is facing its worst-ever crisis in higher education. Admission tests for entry into medical colleges and research institutions have been affected by serious questions about the credibility of the process. Among the tests hit because of the leak of question papers is the qualifying test for research fellowships in national laboratories and lectureship in sciences in Indian universities. Top institutions like the Indian Institute of Science and Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) depend on the National Eligibility Test (NET) for their intake of entry-level research students. Qualifying in NET is a prerequisite for PhD admissions and teaching jobs in universities. The timely conduct of the examination and its integrity have a direct bearing on the future of higher education and research in India.

While the Central Government and its agencies grapple with the unprecedented situation, the global research landscape is changing fast, and India is lagging badly behind its neighbour China. Two prestigious publications — the scientific journal *Nature* and the international weekly *The Economist* — have declared the emergence of China as a global research leader and a science superpower. India has long taken pride in possessing the world's third-largest pool of science and technology manpower and claimed success in sectors like atomic energy, space and vaccine development. This is changing. China has surged ahead of not just India but also the US and Europe as well in several key sectors and on important parameters like the publication of scientific papers. The science and technology prowess of any nation is determined by the expanse of its higher education and research infrastructure and its ability to produce high-quality research. The output can be measured in many ways — the publication of scientific papers, the number of patents, international awards like the Nobel Prize, technology transfer to industry and contribution to society. The annual listing of research leaders, published by *Nature*, uses research publication as its main criterion. It ranks 500 institutions based on

counts of high-quality research outputs in the last calendar year (January 1 to December 31, 2023). It is an indication of research performance at the institutional level. The list is based on the publication output in 145 natural science and health science journals selected by an independent panel of scientists. In the research output of countries, China is at the top and ahead of America, Germany, the UK, Japan, France, Canada and South Korea. India is at the ninth position on the list. It's good news that India figures among the top 10 countries in terms of high-quality research output, and its change in share from last year is marginally higher than that of China. However, the picture gets dismal for India if we look at the institutional-level output. Of the top 10 scientific institutions globally, seven are from China. The only non-China institutions in the top 10 are Harvard (at No. 2), the Max Planck Society (ranked third) and the French National Centre for Scientific Research (seventh). The MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and Stanford University are at 14th and 15th positions, respectively. The Chinese Academy of Sciences tops the chart. Among the top 500 institutions, Indian research universities are ranked much lower — Indian Institute of Science (174), IIT-Bombay (247), Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) as a whole (275), Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (283), Homi Bhabha National Institute (296), Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Kolkata (321), IIT Guwahati (355), Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science (363), IISER-Bhopal (379), IIT-Kanpur (405), IIT-Madras (407), IIT-Delhi (428), IISER Pune (439), Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (450) and the

Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research (487). Among the research subjects in which China leads the world are physical science, chemistry and earth and environment sciences, while America and Europe retain their lead in general biology and medical research. China dominates in research papers relating to applied sciences. China has invested hugely in some big science

How should India react to China being named the science superpower or a global leader in research? An easier option, which the government has exercised in the past 10 years with such indices, is to reject the research index or point holes in its methodology. But this is not going to change the situation on the ground or alter the global perception of Indian science.

A saner approach would be to welcome the fact that India figures in the top 10 countries and seek ways to improve that position further. We also need to see what China has done right and where it has faltered. In recent years, the Dragon has invested heavily in initiatives like the China Nine League or Project 211 to develop its universities and government labs into world-class research institutions. The Indian initiative to develop IISERs as research universities has paid rich dividends, but we need to do much more to nurture research in middle-ranking universities. China has gone wrong with the initiative to provide cash incentives for the publication of research papers, which led to unethical practices. India should refrain from doing so. The general stagnation on several fronts — research funding as a percentage of the GDP, funding mechanisms, creation of new research institutions, promotion of research in universities, and so on — is worrying. The institutions that are



projects as well, like the world's largest filled-aperture radio telescope and a massive underground dark-matter detector. Several Chinese laboratories have dedicated groups working on quantum computing. In space, China is at least 10 years ahead of India, having sent its first manned spaceflight in 2003. It is already building a space station. Recently, it executed a robotic sample-return mission from the Moon.

supposed to generate new ideas and public discourse — national science academies, the office of the Principal Scientific Adviser, the technology forecasting agency and others — appear to be in deep slumber or busy conducting celebratory events of the government by setting up selfie points. The reports on China's leadership in science should serve as a wake-up call.

Smart storage under Staircase

The space below the staircase can be utilised for storage or as a display area maximising space with smart ideas that are innovative and useful is what homemakers are looking for these days.

storage. Another alternative to maximise storage that will not bring in new furniture is the creation of storage in an odd space in the home, such as the area below the staircase.

ALCOVE
Many home owners are efficiently utilising the space below the staircase and some of the space abutting the staircase to create an alcove. The area beneath the staircase is quite valuable when space is at a premium. There are many ideas on how to make the most of this otherwise lost space.

TVCABINET
We could all use some extra storage space and the space under the stairs could be ideal for a variety of storage needs. This space can be used for concealed storage or for housing a TV cabinet if

need be. Both are extremely practical and good options that are seen in most homes.

BUILT-IN SHELVES
If the staircase has a high intermediate landing, then the space below can be considered for shelving. Built-in storage with shelves and drawers that will take care of the

oddest cranny is the most basic way to utilise the space. For convenience, two cupboards can be built and the one with the highest point can be used to store unwieldy long coats or sports equipment such as golf clubs and cricket bats. All other knickknacks can be stored in the various drawers and shelves in the remaining space. This idea works well when the stairwell runs behind a door or if the staircase is in a small area.

NOOK TO RELAX
Having bookcases under the staircase are a good way to use space that would otherwise be wasted. Besides, you can also consider creating a niche activity space under the stairs. If your staircase faces the living room, you could have a music area or a bar. It can be a small home office, or even a small hobby or craft room. If your staircase is located close to the utility area, it could serve as a convenient location for a small laundry room. If your staircase runs down into the front hallway, the area beneath could house a shoe rack. If it goes up to the

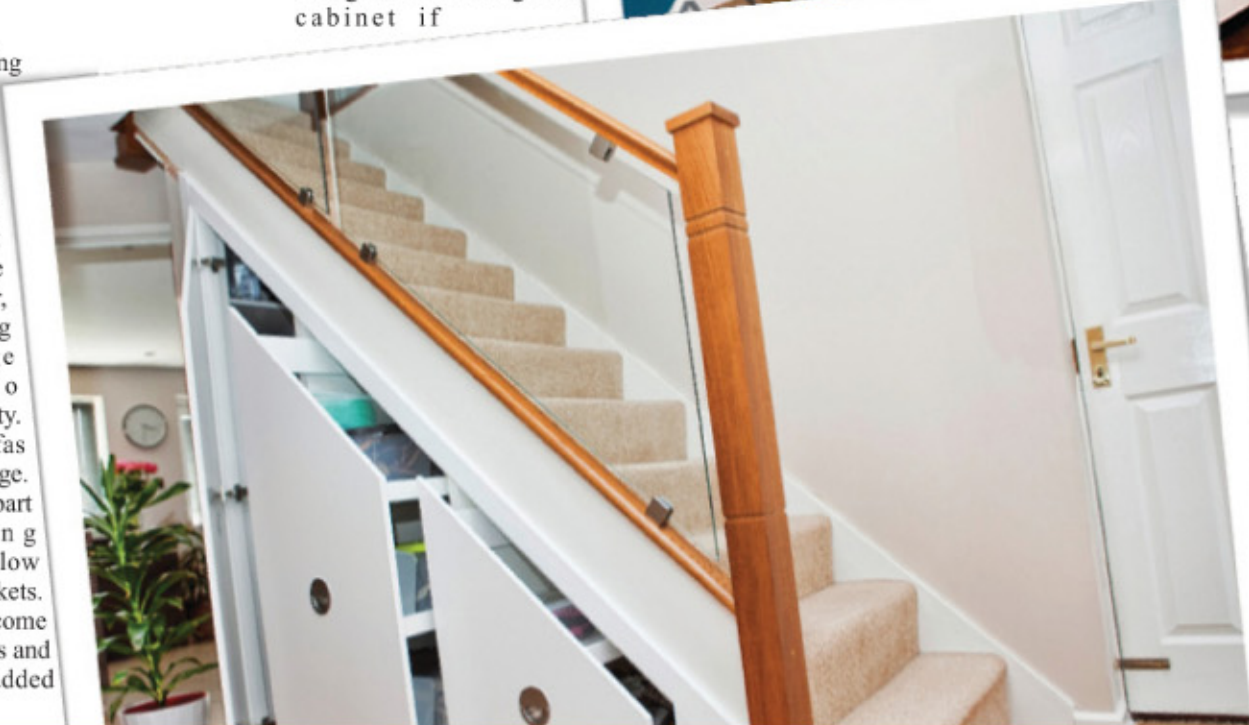
bedroom, you could have a mini cabinet or a wardrobe under the stairs.

STORAGE FOR TOYS
It could also serve as an efficient toy storage area for your children. For a toy storage area, find baskets, plastic tubs or bins of different sizes and then design shelving of different heights and widths to accommodate them. Ensure that these storage spaces are both attractive and easy to access. It can be simply shelved out and left open, or covered as a cabinet, or covered as a complete cupboard.

KITCHEN CABINETRY
If the staircase is in the dining room, consider having a superior quality wine storage cabinet below the stairs. Neat wood racks meant for wine bottles along with a temperature control mechanism will occupy little space as opposed to making a separate wine cellar. Smart shutters with glass can let you have a good view of your wine collection.



However, finding a solution that is utilitarian and attractive becomes an interesting challenge. Most furniture these days is modular, incorporating some storage facility to maximise utility. Beds and sofas come with storage. Wood chests, apart from being decorative, allow you to store trinkets. Study tables come with cubbyholes and shelves for added



Choosing the best kitchen

connected to the dining area; some may build a beautiful temple, some may have just an idol; some may like it centrally air conditioned, whereas others may decide how to place it manually.

WOMEN DECIDE
Gone are the times where everything was accepted. The women, today, customise their bedrooms, their verandah, and the kitchen. The kitchen truly is the heart of the home and social gatherings.

THE TEMPLE OF FOOD
Kitchen designs are of various types. The one wall style, which is generally opted in for service or studio apartments, offers to save as much space as possible. The galley style, which is a walk-through kitchen, is designed with two walls opposite to each other utilising every inch of space. The L-shaped kitchen, which is designed basically for medium-sized kitchens, offers as much as workspace as possible. Likewise, the horseshoe or the U-shaped kitchen has three walls and the island (platform) in a similar shape, so that more than one person can work comfortably in the kitchen at the same time.

Few housewives who either have redone and renovated their kitchen, or have designed it the way they want it in a newly-bought house, have many common and related ideologies of designing a kitchen as a bright and a well-lit space, have proper ventilation, lots of room for storage. Some of them had Indian conventional style of cooking.

Narendra Kaur Bagga, a housewife, says, "I have seen how trends change, but in my kitchen, I feel connected to the house, talking to my husband becomes easier while I cook and I can serve easily. Also, I can attend guests simultaneously, take a peep on what is going on the television. I do not have a door to my kitchen, it is open."

The present-day women choose their kitchens according to their own likes and conveniences, rather than picking what is trending in the market spaces. Interior design is the wishful thinking for a beautiful living.

People spend more than half of our lives indoors. It is said 'home is where heart is'. It definitely is a very true saying. Indoors refer to a house, which can be a bedroom kitchen flat, a studio apartment or a bungalow. The place where we stay is a major asset for us. It provides us security, a sound sleep, area to cook food, and most importantly, peace of mind.

PERCEPTION MATTERS
For every individual, the way of living is distinct, they may be living alone, in a nuclear family or a joint family. The more the number of people in the house, the more diversified is the way and need of living, some may want to apportion the drawing and living rooms, some may want to keep it as an elementary seating. Some may like their kitchens to be closed and walled well, some may like it open and

How to maximize your Space at home

When there is no room to spare, maximizing the potential of every inch becomes critical. Ajit Chellapan, of Gimi, India, shares some tips...



Small spaces can be quite cozy, but squeezing-in is often challenging. When you're pressed for space, the "pile" can be your worst enemy. When there is no room to spare, maximizing the potential of every inch becomes critical. This is typically seen in a family setting where it is challenging to find space in a small house or an apartment thus being a major cause of concern. Due to this constraint a lot of things are usually

dropped. The only solution to save space is being 'Creative'.

Most Essential: Since storage space is at a premium in smaller homes, being creative is an important part which will help in designing the minimum space at your home. You can opt for minimalism concept as well. Minimalistic design is softer, more personal and easier to live with. Generally in a minimalist design, only the most essential

elements are taken into consideration for people whose main focus is the functioning of their home. Apart from that, the clean look of modern interiors make homeowners love this type of concept which is clutter free and stress free. Untapped accommodation space under the staircase, wall mounted cabinets, can also help in storing most of the items which helps in saving space. Using of compact home utility products also provides a perfect solution for making your homes look clutter and stress free.

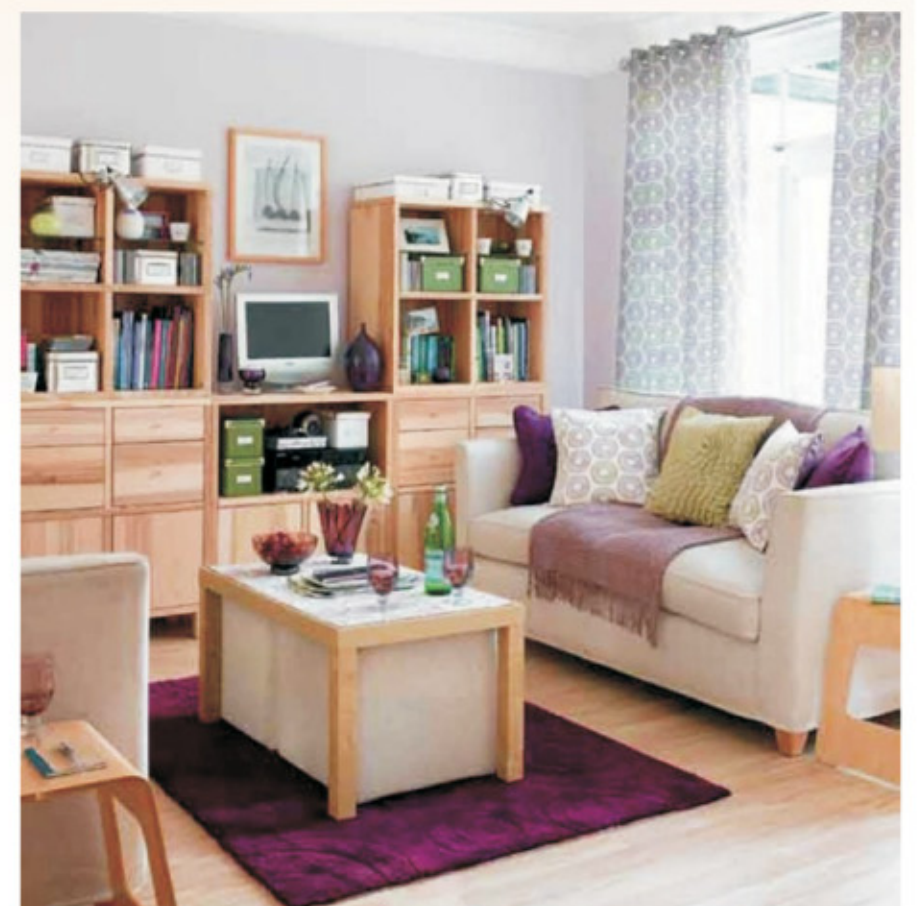
Role of Technology: Innovation and technology plays a major role. Most of the products available in the market today are driven by innovation and backed with technology. For example, with the advent of Nitrogen technology (originated in Italy) uses Nitrogen that is blown into the pipes/handles of the product at a very low temperature (-20 degrees) during the injection phase to empty the closed cavities from the inside making them exceptionally resistance to bending and twisting making the products long lasting. This type of technology is used in products such as balcony cloth dryer, ironing boards etc. This

makes the product not only strong but also makes the product sturdy.

Latest Advances: Technology has come a long way over the last several years. Keeping updated with the latest advances is a great way to save space. Today we have table top ironing boards which are portable to carry even when you're on a vacation! It's light and compact and can be kept inside your suitcase as well. This type of ironing board helps you to re-iron you're already ironed clothes sitting anywhere in your home or even your hotel rooms. Balcony cloth dryers have also become a popular choice today among homemakers for its compact user friendly design that helps in drying your cloths outside/inside your

balcony with ease. To save space, use stackable appliances where possible. New designs for home appliances, such as washers, dryers and iron boards and take up less room in your home.

Avoid Clutter: Once all the initial arrangements in a house are made, it does become difficult after some time to accommodate more items with time. Hence sleek, elegant and compact home utility products are in more demand for their innovative design module. Look for pieces that are multi-functional or adjustable, such as a dining room table with expanding leaves or for two in-one sofa cum bed sets to avoid clutter inside the house.



Lt Governor Temporarily Dissolves Delhi Government Think Tank, AAP Hits Back

In a file noting marked to the Delhi chief secretary, Mr Saxena said the entire exercise of creating the DDCD by the incumbent government was only to extend financial benefits and patronage to certain favoured political persons of partisan inclinations.

New Delhi: Lieutenant Governor (LG) V K Saxena has approved temporarily dissolving the Delhi Dialogue and Development Commission (DDCD) and the removal of its non-official members till a mechanism is developed for the screening and selection of domain experts as its vice-chairperson and members, Raj Niwas officials said on Thursday. Reacting to the development, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Delhi said it will challenge the LG's "illegal" decision in courts. In a file noting marked to the Delhi chief secretary, Mr Saxena said the entire exercise of creating the DDCD by the incumbent government was only to extend financial benefits and patronage to certain favoured political persons of partisan inclinations.

Ostensibly, the commission was created to serve as a policy think-tank manned by domain experts, on the lines of the Planning Commission/NITI Aayog, so as to provide inputs of governance that a political executive assisted by mostly generalist civil services may be deprived of. "It was not

meant to accommodate favoured individuals, unelected friends or politically partisan people," the file noting read. The LG said the positions of the vice-chairperson and non-official members were envisaged to be co-terminus with the incumbent government. "Albeit initially these positions were honorary, they were subsequently converted into highly-paid and perked positions, viz. the vice-chairperson, DDCD in the rank, pay and facilities equivalent to the minister of GNCTD and the non-official members in the rank, pay and facilities equivalent to the secretary to the Government of India," he said. Mr Saxena noted that according to the Delhi government's planning department, there is no work allocation amongst the members of the DDCD. "Therefore, the continuation of the non-official members, whose appointments were made in an arbitrary manner without following any procedure, drawing huge salaries is not only undesirable but also patently illegal. To say the least, it is a blatant and clear case of



nepotism and favouritism in utter disregard of all rules.

"Accordingly, the proposal of the service department ... for rescinding the appointment orders of the non-official members is approved," the file noting read.

"Additionally, the proposal of the services department ... regarding exploring the possibility of dissolving the DDCD as an interim measure etc. ... is also approved," it read. In the communication, Mr Saxena cited an April 29, 2016 notification that said the

non-official members are appointed by the chief minister in the rank, pay and facilities equivalent to the secretary to the Government of India or as may be determined by the chief minister.

"However, all the members were paid salaries in the rank and pay equivalent to the secretary to GoI, without exercising any option of determination of their pay by the chief minister.

"This clearly demonstrates that the chief minister did not exercise any prudence in determining the salaries payable to the non-official members, which should have been commensurate with their job description.

The payment of such a huge salary without such determination is a clear violation of the said notification dated 29.04.2016 and is a clear case of favouritism only on political considerations," the file noting read. He LG has also asked the finance department to humanly explore the possibility of recovering the salaries paid to the non-official members of the DDCD.

Delhi records 228.1 mm rain in 24 hours, capital comes to a halt

New Delhi: Delhi has recorded 228.1 mm of rain in the past 24 hours in one of the wettest spells the capital has recorded in June, causing waterlogging in several parts of the national capital. In the three hours between 2.30 am and 5.30 am, Delhi saw over 150 mm of rainfall. The highest ever rainfall recorded in 24 hours at Safdarjung, the primary observatory of Delhi, during the month of June was 235.5 mm on June 28, 1936. The IMD is verifying the data to see if Friday's rain is the second highest ever.

Visuals shared by people on social media showed roads inundated and long traffic snarls in parts of Delhi.

Severe waterlogging on Delhi's Minto road led to vehicles being submerged. Trucks were also submerged in water at the Azad Market underpass. Visuals from Connaught Place and areas outside several metro stations showed inundated roads.

The Delhi Traffic Police said the crucial Ring Road has been impacted in both directions from Naraina to Moti Bagh due to waterlogging under Dhaula Kuan flyover. Waterlogged roads due to incessant rainfall in Noida and Ghaziabad also inconvenienced office goers. A portion of the roof of Delhi airport's Terminal 1 fell on cars during heavy rainfall in the early hours of Friday, killing one and injuring two others. As a safety measure, all departures from Terminal 1 have been temporarily halted, and check-in counters closed. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted cloudy skies with moderate to heavy rain and gusty winds for the next seven days in Delhi.

"Can't Even Write...": Supreme Court Raps Bihar Teachers Over 'Skip Test' Request

New Delhi: Panchayat teachers from Bihar government schools who went to the Supreme Court seeking exemption from a competency test introduced by the state government in 2023 - if they want to continue working - returned home empty-handed.

The Supreme Court in strong remarks criticised the teachers for even thinking they can skip the competency test, and upheld the state law. "Is this the level of education in the country? A postgraduate who gets a job and cannot even write an application for leave? When a state like Bihar tries to improve this system and conducts a qualifying examination for this, it is opposed," Justice BV Nagarathna said on the petition filed by the non-profit Parivartankari Prarambhik Sikshak Sangh.

The Supreme Court said teachers help build the nation, and "if you can't face these (competency) tests, then you should resign." Justice Nagarathna then upheld a



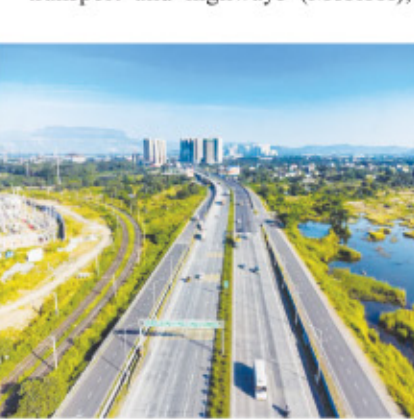
decision of the Patna High Court and dismissed the petitions against the state law. The state Education Department in 2023, using powers under Article 309 of the Constitution, had made rules for teachers employed by panchayats and local bodies and made them equivalent to school teachers recruited under the Bihar State School Teachers (Appointment, Transfer, Disciplinary Action and Service Conditions) Rules, 2023. Listen to the latest songs, only on JioSaavn.com

However, the state also made another rule for the qualifying examination - a computer-based one conducted by the Bihar School Examination Board. Some four lakh panchayat teachers were involved in the case. The high court had also said that unless the contract teachers pass the eligibility test, no teacher can continue working. It was against the decision of the high court that the teachers filed the petition.

MoRTH's Dedicated Cell to Review Detailed Project Reports for Timely Completion of National Highways

New Delhi: To ensure the highest construction standards, cost-effectiveness, and timely completion of national highway projects, the NHA has set up a detailed project report (DPR) cell at its headquarters in New Delhi, an official statement said on Thursday. The DPR is an essential component for the successful implementation of a national highway project and includes various surveys, investigations, and designs related to it. The cell will help prepare accurate reports that will enable the development of world-class national highways, further contributing towards the growth of the nation. The dedicated cell will also help finalise various parameters for all highway components - Highway & Structures - as per IRC specifications and

standards. The cell, as per the ministry of road transport and highways (MoRTH),



will provide expert inputs and enable end-to-end monitoring of the DPR for the national highway projects. It will also help bring uniformity in the review mechanism of the DPR and

will ensure that quality reports are prepared and reviewed before the implementation of the projects. "The

DPR cell will have a dedicated team of around 40 professionals consisting of Principal DPR Experts and various domain experts for road safety, traffic, land acquisition, bridges, tunnels, geotechnical experts, senior highway experts and forest specialists," the statement added. These experts will help develop mechanisms and monitoring systems that will ensure uniform implementation of the DPR project lifecycle. In addition, the team will also study bid documents and technical schedules related to national highway projects and provide cost estimates based on design features.

Delhi Rains: Train Movement Affected at Some Stations Due to Waterlogging, Metro Services Disrupted in Dwarka

New Delhi: As Delhi struggled with traffic jams and air traffic due to heavy rains overnight, trains and metro services were affected as well on Friday. With waterlogging on railway tracks and inside some metro stations, the movement of trains was affected. The movement of trains was stopped at the Hazrat Nizamuddin in the morning hours because of waterlogging. Similarly, train movement was also stopped at Safdarjung railway station was also stopped due to waterlogging. Meanwhile, speed restrictions on trains were imposed at the Tilak Bridge station and Old Delhi Railway Station. While rail traffic was affected at Old Delhi, it was restored later. Meanwhile, metro services were also disrupted due to rain and waterlogging. The entry and exit at Yashobhoimi Dwarka Sector-25 metro station were closed.



The shuttle service from Delhi Aerocity Metro station to Terminal 1, Indira Gandhi International Airport was also suspended after the portion of a canopy at the terminal collapsed on cars, killing one person and leaving five injured. However, Delhi Metro passengers also complained of waterlogging at other

stations. "Kashmiri Gate is also flooded, how did the puddles of water enter the station," questioned a passenger on X (previously Twitter). Delhi also reported traffic snarls at Ring Road and Minto Road as roads were waterlogged due to overnight rains on Thursday-Friday.

Konark Sun Temple: Religious or Scientific?

The Sun Temple in Konark, Odisha, is considered one of the finest examples of advanced architecture from 1250 AD. Its design, based on the time cycle and the concept of day and night, highlights the technological expertise of that era.

New Delhi: The Konark Sun Temple, located in Puri, Odisha, is an incredible ancient monument built over 12 decades ago. This remarkable temple, constructed in 1250 AD by King Narasimhadeva I of the Ganga Dynasty, is made of sandstone and granite. It is designed so that the first rays of the sun illuminate its sanctum sanctorum. Recognized for its historical



and architectural significance, the Konark Sun Temple was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984. At over 772 years old, it attracts tourists from around the world. The Konark Sun Temple is a marvel of Eastern Indian architecture and a symbol of India's heritage. This famous tourist spot features a massive temple dedicated to the Sun God. The name 'Konark' combines two words: 'Kona' meaning 'Corner' and 'Arka' meaning 'Sun', translating to 'Sun of the Corner'. Positioned on the northeastern corner of

Puri, the Konark Sun Temple is also known as Arka Khetra. It stands as a significant cultural and historical site, attracting visitors from around the world. Many people would consider the wheel structure carved on the walls of the temple a mere representation of decorative architecture, but the fact is it is way more scientific than on may think. There is a story relating it, an old yogi was seen calculating the time using the essence of the wheels. This revealed that the wheel is a sundial and it depicts the time according to the movement of

sunlight throughout the day. The large sundial consists of 8 major spokes and similar 8 thin and minor spokes. The major ones divide the time of 24 hours into 8 parts, of 3 hours each and the minor spokes divide this 3 hours into 1.5 hours or 90 minutes each. Beads between the spokes divide the time further by 3 minutes each. But the question is when the sunlight crosses the temple? There is another similar sundial structure on the other side wall of the temple which is for another half of the day.

What after the day? The Temple also has 24 similar dials considered to be time calculating in the night and hence said as the moonials. The temple was built in the shape of a massive chariot with 7 horses tied to it, depicting the 7 days of a week. The Konark sun temple faced the turbulence of time and some big invaders trying to destroy the architectural site. It is said that the present-day structure of the temple is only the front half part. The major part has been destroyed which was the Garbhagrih structure according to the architectural plan.



Ideas for perfect home Decoration

Rearrange the furniture: Pull your furniture away from the walls. Try positioning it at intriguing angles. Arranging the sofa diagonally across the narrow living room will make the room look wider and provide a warm, inviting layout.

- Paint, paint, and clean: You will be surprised by what a coat of new paint or cleaning your existing mouldings and doors will do to any room, or to your entire house. Don't forget baseboards, mouldings and doors. Find new colours and useful utensils at your local home improvement store.

-Paint a wall: Paint one wall with your

favourite colour and make it the focal point. Hang interesting art on that wall and move a nice piece of furniture there.

- Bring in plants : Greenery always adds a breath of fresh air to a room. If you don't have a green thumb, try silk plants and trees. The quality is so good that it's hard to distinguish them from the real thing.

- Toss in colour : Bright colours and good lighting work together produces instant cheerfulness.

- Ladle on the light : One of the most important things is to have all the natural light you possibly can. People respond very well to

light.

- Dress up : Creative use of mouldings, fabrics, even paint will do magic around your doors and windows. You will find them in wood or synthetic at your home improvement store.

- Hang pictures or a mirror : Hang pictures that reflect your personality. Try frames that are more ornate. When hanging a mirror, try and position it so that it reflects and nice view or an interesting architectural element.

- Do not clutter : Clutter always works against you. Keep it simple. Add vertical space with shelves or bookcases in closets or other areas to minimise cluttering as much as possible.

- Lay an area rug :** An area rug is a wonderful way of defining a conversation area. Try one that complements the room. Lay it at an angle beneath your coffee table.
- Group figurines :** Pull out your favourite collectibles. Show off your personality. Find a display area and group related objects together, in sets of three or five. Try and vary the shapes.
- Add a throw or Afghan :** Similar to decorative pillows, throws and Afghans add texture to your furniture. They come in all kinds of natural and man made fabrics. Find a pattern and style that you like.
- Replace lamps :** Lamps are probably the one thing in your home that will give others a clue that your room is outdated. Seek out new and fresh lamps that make a statement.
- Add decorative pillows :** The good news about decorative pillows is that they are an easy way to add textures and patterns to a room. Still better, they can be changed to jazz up a sofa or chair before your room is ready for a major makeover.
- Add candles/candle holders :** This is

Not all home decorating ideas require a heavy investment of time and money. If you're looking for a few affordable home interior decorating ideas to freshen up a room over a weekend, Make your home distinct with these little accent



always a winner. If you have some intriguing candle holders, try those. Use at least two candle holders for balance.

- Display a figurine or sculpture : Any eye-catching sculpture or figurine will make a wonderful statement as well as a conversation piece.

- Display books : Display a few hardcover books that are interesting and have covers which tie into your decor colour scheme. Preferably, the books should be the larger versions, but should not be too thick.

- Display pottery : Earthy and warm, pottery makes a great addition to your interior decor.

- Display straw baskets : Similar to pottery, straw baskets add charm and warmth to your home.

- Use a decorative screen : A decorative screen makes an excellent backdrop in any room. It adds dimension and texture.

If your room is decoratively challenged, try some of these ideas to add life to your interiors.

Use old scrap for chic Interiors

Interiors

There's more you can do with your interiors; use old scrap to make pretty home decor items. ashok kumar mudetiya tells you how...

We have moved into an era where all people can think is about going green. Recycling is passe. The trend that has made a buzz now is upcycling, that is, reusing vintage products such that you can make it into something of a higher value.

Basically, it is about using products for a little more time before there is place in the landfill so it can be discarded. Though greentailing is not all that hyped up in India as it is abroad, it sure has grabbed many an eyeball. Gone are the days, when all that youth could think of is draining their brains. A lot of our youngsters are making a business out of recycling and well, what's better when you can both make money and tell mother nature that you care.

Upcycling, like mentioned earlier, is quite a rage in the West, especially when it comes to home decor. But fret not! For all of you who like trying out and customising goods at home, here are some fun ideas for you to try out



yourself at home:

1. Bind your old hard cover books together (side by side), such that it looks like a plank. You can use this as a book shelf and place them on your wall. This is a funky way of upcycling.
2. To get that rustic look, you can use cane sieves (the ones with which your moms and mom-in-laws sieve rice in) to make it into a photo-frame. How? Well, just paint them in funkyways, give them different strokes with different hues and you can paste your photographs on them before placing them on the wall. You could also make a photo wall, by placing many sieves in different angles (like if you place one horizontally, place the other vertically and otherwise).
3. Use your old coasters as a wall hanging. Use colourful ribbons or threads to tie up the coasters after they're painted in your style, and then place them on your wall. You could do the same with your tea sieves, by painting them up and hanging them on the wall.
4. Radhika Khaitan, who is an upcycler herself, says you can use old baked beans tins, or beer bottle tins in many ways. Clean the tins up and paint it to use it as a flower vase. She also says that you can stack many a newspaper together, glue them up together and cut them such that they make a pretty coaster.
5. Take small boxes, glue up your favourite magazine articles on them, and also sequence the edges to use it as a showpiece for your desk.
6. Another upcycler, Suren Vikhash U says, "You can use tetra pack containers to make pen stands by cutting them partially in the middle. This is a good and easy way to upcycle."
7. Use your old cartons and boxes, paint them or cover them up with colourful paper, place sequins on them, and use the end-product as a magazine or newspaper holder. These are just some simple methods you can use to make your home decor look both classy and eco-friendly. Well, there are a lot more ways to do the same and customise your home decor according to your personal style. After all, your home should reflect your personality and what better way to do up your interiors your way.

How to style your old lampshade

You love your lampshade but it's been in your room for too long. You don't want to part with it or replace it. But you also want something new. What do you do? Change the colour of the shade into striking neon. Print your favourite quote or song lyrics on a cloth and make it into a shade. Reinventing the lampshade is the quickest way to preserve the old, yet get a new look. Be it shape, colour, texture - lamps can add aesthetics to any room. These days, people are joining lampshade-making classes, where they are encouraged to create pieces of artwork on paper, and then convert it into a shade. Making a lampshade requires a suitable fabric, a wire frame and panels. Says lamp designer Natasha Wadhwa, "Look for unusual Japanese or Chinese silk patterns, paisleys, funky tassles, new material to give your shades your signature style. I use buttons, vintage zari, and floral pins on my lamps. If you want to be eco-friendly, go for paper lanterns, or edgy bamboo lamps."



Bharti Airtel announces 10-21 per cent hike in mobile tariffs from July 3

New Delhi. Bharti Airtel on Friday announced between 10 and 21 per cent hike in mobile tariffs, a day after larger rival Reliance Jio announced an increase in rates. Airtel, in a release, said that the revision in mobile tariffs will be effective from July 3.

"We have ensured that there is a very modest price increase (less than 70 paise per day) on entry-level plans, in order to eliminate any burden on budget challenged consumers," the Sunil Mittal-led telecom firm said announcing the revision in mobile tariffs.

Bharti Airtel said it has maintained that the mobile Average Revenue Per User (ARPU) needs to be upwards of Rs 300, to enable a financially healthy business model for telecoms in India. "We believe that this level of ARPU will enable the substantial investments required in network technology and spectrum and offer a modest return on capital," the telco said. Among the unlimited voice plans, Airtel has raised tariffs in the ballpark range of about 11 per cent. Accordingly, rates are revised from Rs 179 to Rs 199; from Rs 455 to Rs 509; and from Rs 1,799 to Rs 1,999. In the daily data plan category, the Rs 479 plan has been increased to Rs 579 (20.8 per cent increase).

The mobile tariff hike from mobile operators comes immediately after the 10th spectrum auction, which ended in just two days with muted response from the industry.

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

NEW DELHI . After retailing on the lower side for two consecutive days, 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, June 28.

Gold futures, maturing on August 5, 2024, stood at Rs 71,530 per 10 grams, after recording a marginal dip of Rs 47 or 0.07 per cent. The previous close was recorded at Rs 71,572. Meanwhile, silver futures, due on September 5, 2024, witnessed a hike of Rs 266 or 0.30 per cent and were retailing at Rs 89,434 per kg on the MCX against the previous close of Rs 89,156.

GOLD AND SILVER PRICES IN MAJOR CITIES
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 eased on Friday, but were set for a third straight quarterly rise, while investors look forward to US inflation data due later in the day for more clarity on the Federal Reserve's interest rate-cut timeline, news agency Reuters reported. According to the latest metal report, spot gold was down 0.3% at \$2,321.18 per ounce, as of 0354 GMT. Prices have gained about 4% for the quarter.

US gold futures fell 0.2% to \$2,331.90.

"Gold is up on the quarter, largely as the scope for monetary easing in the U.S. has increased... China also bought large amounts of gold for their reserves, which helped offer support in the second quarter," said Ilya Spivak, head of global macro at TastyLive.

Bandhan Bank Customers Can Now Pay Direct Taxes Online - All You Want To Know



New Delhi. Bandhan Bank on Friday announced that it has launched the facility to collect direct taxes, online from its customers, as well as non-customers across India. "The Bank is now live for collection of Direct Taxes through TIN 2.0 platform of Income Tax. As an Agency Bank appointed by the RBI, Bandhan Bank under this licence, Bandhan Bank customers can now pay their Direct Taxes in a fast, seamless and convenient manner through the Bank's Retail Internet Banking, Corporate Internet Banking and Payment Gateway (Debit Card, Credit Card and Internet Banking). They can also pay taxes at any of the Bank branches using Cash, Cheque or Demand Draft. This service will facilitate hassle-free payment of Direct Taxes for Bandhan Bank customers and non-customers across the country. Under this licence, Bandhan Bank customers can now pay their Direct Taxes in a fast, seamless and convenient manner through the Bank's Retail Internet Banking, Corporate Internet Banking and Payment Gateway (Debit Card, Credit Card and Internet Banking), the bank said. They can also pay taxes at any of the Bank branches using Cash, Cheque or Demand Draft. This service will facilitate hassle-free payment of Direct Taxes for Bandhan Bank customers and non-customers across the country, it added.

"We take immense pride in commencing operations as an Agency Bank for the Central Board of Direct Taxes. This is yet another addition to our Bank's product suite comprising solutions powered by cutting edge digital capabilities. As the digital ecosystem is proliferating across the country to bring forward a hassle-free superior convenience, we as a Bank are aligned with the Government's initiative of e-Governance plan," Debraj Saha, Head - Government Business Group, Bandhan Bank said.

Reliance's market capitalisation crosses Rs 21 lakh crore for first time

The market cap of the oil-to-telecom conglomerate crossed Rs 21 lakh after shares hit a record high of Rs 3,129 in early trade. RIL's stock has surged more than 20% this year so far.

New Delhi. Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) has become the first Indian company to surpass a market capitalization of Rs 21 lakh crore. The market cap of the oil-to-telecom



conglomerate crossed Rs 21 lakh after shares hit a record high of Rs 3,129 in early trade. RIL's stock has surged more than 20% this year so far. At 12:12 pm, RIL's stock price rose by 1.69%, reaching a record Rs 3,112.85 per share.

Today's rise in RIL's stock was propelled by Reliance Jio's tariff hikes. These new tariffs range from Rs 189 for 2 GB/month

to Rs 3,599 for a 2.5 GB/day annual plan, with unlimited 5G data for plans of 2 GB/day and above.

Brokerage firm Jefferies increased its price target for RIL to Rs 3,580 from Rs 3,380, indicating a potential 17 percent upside from Thursday's close. The brokerage maintained a 'Buy' rating, predicting Jio's revenue and profit to grow at annual rates

of 18% and 26%, respectively, from FY24 to FY27. Morgan Stanley also maintained an 'Overweight' rating with a Rs 3,046 target price. The firm noted that the tariff hikes are in line with expectations and anticipates new energy cash flow streams by year-end.

While no further tariff hikes are expected until FY27, Morgan Stanley suggested that a 20% increase next year could boost earnings by 10-15 percent. Kotak Securities viewed the tariff hike positively, expecting competitors Bharti and Vi to follow suit, and set a target price of Rs 3,300 for RIL.

Centrum Broking reiterated that industry ARPU is likely to grow at a 10-12% CAGR to Rs 300 over the next 3-4 years, considering the consolidated industry structure and higher ARPU requirements for Jio to justify significant 5G investments and a potential IPO.

Among the 35 analysts covering Reliance, 28 recommend a 'Buy,' five advise 'Hold,' and two suggest 'Sell.'

Indian govt bonds are now part of JP Morgan's index. What it means

NEW DELHI . Indian government bonds have been included in JP Morgan's emerging markets index, which will benefit the economy. This inclusion is set to bring billions of dollars in investments, opening up a Rs 1.3 trillion market to a broader range of global investors.

Since JP Morgan's announcement in September, nearly Rs 11 billion has already flowed into eligible bonds. The bank anticipates an additional Rs 20-25 billion in the next ten months, potentially increasing foreign ownership of Indian bonds from 2.5% to 4.4%. India's debt market is gaining popularity among investors, with both sovereign and corporate bonds set for a

sixth straight quarter of foreign investments, a streak not seen in over a



decade, according to Bloomberg.

The JP Morgan Emerging Market Bond Index, established in the early 1990s, is the most widely referenced index for

emerging market bonds. It started with the issuance of the first Brady bond and has since expanded to include the Government Bond Index-Emerging Markets and the Corporate Emerging Markets Bond Index.

Only Indian Government Bonds issued under the Reserve Bank of India's 'Fully Accessible Route' (FAR) are eligible for inclusion in the indices.

These bonds must have a minimum outstanding amount of over Rs 1 billion and at least 2.5 years of residual maturity, making all FAR-designated IGBs maturing after December 31, 2026, eligible.

UltraTech Cement acquires 23 per cent stake in India Cements

NEW DELHI. In a bid to remain ahead of the growing competition, Aditya Birla Group-led UltraTech Cement has acquired a 23% stake in Chennai-based India Cements Ltd (ICL). The country's top cement manufacturer on Thursday announced purchasing 70.6 million shares of India Cements at a price of up to Rs 267 per share, with a total deal value of Rs 1,885 crore. UltraTech said it is a non-controlling financial investment and the indicative time period for the completion of the deal is one month. Following this announcement, billionaire investor Radhakrishnan Damani and his associates sold 23% equity in ICL to UltraTech for Rs 1,889 crore. The deal took place at an average price of Rs 267.74 per share, showed the BSE data. With this, UltraTech has become the second-largest investor in ICL. Promoters led by N. Srinivasan currently own 28.42% of India Cements.

The deal between UltraTech and ICL comes two weeks after Adani Group's

Ambuja Cement announced the acquisition of Hyderabad-based Penna Cement at an enterprise value of Rs 10,422 crore. Consolidation in the cement sector has escalated ever since the Adanis entered this sector by acquiring Ambuja Cements and ACC

in 2022. UltraTech has a 150.3 million tonnes (MT) capacity and aims to expand the same to 200 MT by FY27, excluding any future acquisitions. If UltraTech decides to become the majority stakeholder in India Cement, it has to add 15.5 MT to its capacity. It would increase its presence in Southern India, where it has a smaller market share.

An industry analyst said there is a high possibility that Birlas may launch an open offer for ICL soon given it needs only 2% more shares to do so. "It would

be positive for the shareholders of ICL as the company has high operating costs and struggling to compete with the big names," the analyst said requesting anonymity. India Cements shares rose 11.5%. For the fiscal ended March 31, 2024, ICL's consolidated net



loss was at Rs 215.76 crore and revenue came at Rs 5,112 crore.

UltraTech had earlier acquired about 1 MT of capacity from ICL in Maharashtra besides buying large cement companies such as Jaypee Cement, Binani Cement and Kesoram.

RBI warns of faster private credit growth, says it risks financial stability

In the report, Governor Shaktikanta Das said balance of risks for global financial stability has improved since the past issue of the report in December 2023.

NEW DELHI. The Reserve Bank has warned of the rapid growth of private credit, which has jumped over four-fold in the past 10 years, due to their growing interconnectedness with banks and non-banking lenders, which can create vulnerabilities. Private credit is provided by non-bank lenders to corporates on a bilateral basis and the same growth four-folds over the past ten years, the RBI said in the financial stability report Thursday. "The rapid growth of private credit and increasing interconnectedness with banks and non-banks and their opacity can



create vulnerabilities that can become systemic." The report said private credit is essentially provided by non-bank lenders to businesses on a bilateral basis, has grown four-folds over the past 10 years, emerging as a major source of corporate financing among middle-market firms that have low or negative earnings, high leverage, and lack of high quality collateral. In the report, Governor Shaktikanta Das said balance of risks for

global financial stability has improved since the past issue of the report in December 2023. The risks of a hard landing for the global economy have also abated, even though progress in disinflation has been slow and world trade continues to face fragmentation and realignment of supply chains. The global financial system, however, faces major risks which include alarming levels of public debt, stretched asset valuations,

increasing economic and financial fragmentation, frequent geopolitical conflicts, and risks associated with financial technologies and climate change, Das said. Despite these headwinds, the domestic economy is exhibiting strength and resilience, with strong macroeconomic fundamentals and buffers. Economic activity is expanding at a steady pace, with the financial system being stronger and more vibrant than what it was before the onset of the recent period of crises. He credited the same for the approach of balancing growth and stability, with willingness to take proactive and prudent actions to prevent accumulation of risks, is promoting long-term resilience and stability of the financial system. "It is vital that we consolidate these gains and nurture a financial system that is future ready and supports the needs of our growing economy. Furthermore, as our contribution to global growth rises which was 18.5 percent in 2023, our financial system must also modernise and deepen as it prepares to go more global.

NEWS BOX

IND vs ENG: RCB poke fun at Jofra Archer on old tweet after India seal T20 WC final berth

New Delhi. RCB poked fun at England fast bowler Jofra Archer after India made their way through to the final of the T20 World Cup 2024. On Thursday, June 27, India beat the Three Lions by 68 runs in the semi-final at the Providence Stadium in Guyana. With the win, India also qualified for their third final in the history of the mega event after the ones in 2007 and 2014. When the Men in Blue were closing in on victory, RCB took it as a chance to troll Archer.

IND v ENG, T20 World Cup Semifinal: Highlights

The IPL team dug out an old tweet from the English speedster from March 2013 that read, "Run Out". England suffered 2 run outs of Liam Livingstone and Adil Rashid in the semis. Referring to the same, RCB replied to Archer and wrote, "Run Outs". Archer had a decent day with the ball after he got the wicket of Suryakumar Yadav to finish with figures of 4-0-33-1. Thereafter, he scored 21 off 15 balls with 1 four and 2 sixes, but his effort went in vain. Chasing 172, England were bowled out for 103 in 16.4 overs. After the game, Rohit said that the victory over England was "satisfying". The Indian skipper said that his team has adapted well to the playing conditions in the West Indies and the USA. "Very satisfying to win. Worked very hard as a unit and it was a great effort from all. We adapted really well, conditions were challenging. That's been the success story for us so far. If bowlers and batters adapt, things fall in place," Rohit said in the post-match presentation ceremony. India's final against South Africa is on Saturday, June 29 at the Kensington Oval in Bridgetown, Barbados. Both teams are unbeaten until now in the tournament.

Well-played boys, goodnight in-laws: Yuvraj Singh's cheeky tweet after IND's win vs ENG

New Delhi. Former India cricketer and ambassador of the T20 World Cup 2024 Yuvraj Singh put up a cheeky tweet on 'X' after India's win in the semi-final match over England. The 2007 T20 World Cup winner Yuvraj took to 'X' to congratulate the Indian team and took a sly dig at England as he said "goodnight in-laws". Yuvraj is married to Hazel Keech, who is an actress and model who was born and brought up in Britain and hence, Yuvraj has connections with England. However, Yuvraj was elated with India's win as they knocked England out to storm into the final of the T20 World Cup 2024.

India managed to avenge the loss of the T20 World Cup 2022 semi-final as they beat England by 68 runs at the Providence Stadium in Guyana on June 27, Thursday. It was payback time and the Indian team delivered and how? It was a one-sided affair in the semi-final as India put up a dominating show with the bat as well as the ball.

Yuvraj Singh's tweet

After putting to bat first, India's batting stepped up as a unit as they scored 171 runs on the board. The batting was led by Indian captain Rohit Sharma, who scored 57 runs from 39 balls and Suryakumar Yadav steadied the ship with a 47-run knock. Hardik Pandya, Ravindra Jadeja alongside Axar Patel provided India with a strong finish. England's batting succumbed to the Indian spinners as Axar Patel and Kuldeep Yadav picked three wickets each to bundle England out for 103 runs. Rohit found the semi-final win to be really pleasing and mentioned that the Indian team really put in a lot of hard work.

Scheduling of T20 World Cup under scanner

GEORGETOWN. The wait kept getting longer. The world's eyes were on the weather radar and as the clouds seemed to keep moving away, the smiles were back on the faces of the fans who have been trooping into Guyana from across the United States and other parts of the world. The toss got delayed, the super-soppers were on, but nothing mattered more than the hot sun that was burning in full glory after morning showers.

But as the teams got on to the field and started to prepare themselves for a long day, quite a few questions about how the tournament has been scheduled surfaced.

To start with, there is no reserve day between games in the knock-out stage, which is beyond belief for anybody who is associated with cricket in this part of the world. To compensate for that, the rule of the tournament was amended at the 11th hour, with two days to go for the match, allowing four hours of extra time.

Pakistan, who had been knocked out in Lauderdale because their game could not be started despite a hot sun blazing through the day, are justified to ask a few questions after rules got amended before the semis.

While that's one issue, the fact that India knew way before the World Cup started that their semifinal would be played in Guyana has also come up for discussion. India captain Rohit Sharma tried to shut it down saying that "it's the same for all teams" and that "England have enough experience of playing in these conditions", the theory that India got a bit of unfair advantage cannot be disputed.

Former England captain Michael Vaughan didn't mince his words when he said that the T20 World Cup is "purely set up for India" and ICC should have been a bit more "fairer" to other countries because this is not a bilateral event. "Well, it's this tournament isn't it? Literally it's that. You know that. They get to play whenever they want, they know where their semifinal is, they play every single game in the morning so people can watch them at night, obviously in India on TV," Vaughan said during a podcast with Australian great Adam Gilchrist on the YouTube channel Club Prairie Fire.

Guyana pitch his best friend, Axar Patel slows things down to decimate hapless England

← T20 World Cup 2024: India decimated England in the semi-final of the T20 World Cup 2024. Axar Patel was key to India's success as the spinner ran circles around the England batters, helping India beat the opposition by a massive margin of 68 runs.

New Delhi. India all-rounder Axar Patel was the star of the show on Thursday, 27 June, as India decimated England in the semi-final of the T20 World Cup 2024. India exacted revenge on the English side with a stunning 68-run win over the defending champions. It was England who had knocked India out in a show of domination back in the semi-final of the ICC tournament. On Thursday, India paid that back with some interest as the bowlers ran riot against the famed England line-up at Providence Stadium in Guyana. Axar Patel, the third-choice spinner in the side behind Ravindra Jadeja and Kuldeep Yadav, showed his worth in the slow and low pitch in Guyana, bowling a sensational 3-wicket spell. Coming into the tournament, many believed that Axar was the best all-rounder that India had, due to his



proven with the new ball and his range-hitting capabilities. However, after he did not bowl in the powerplay in the first two matches of the tournament, many questioned the rationale behind him playing in the XI. Axar was handed the new ball today and he showed his cricketing intelligence to eke out three wickets on the track. Against a strong opening partnership of Phil Salt and Jos Buttler, Axar used the angles in his crease to get the wicket of Jos Buttler. Trying to sweep

Axar, Buttler top-edged the ball into the hands of Rishabh Pant, which turned out to be a massive psychological boost for the Indian team. Axar then picked up the wickets of Moeen Ali and Jonny Bairstow to break the back of the England batting line-up.

Speaking at the post-match presentation ceremony, Axar said that he knew that he needed to bring the pitch into play get wickets. "I have bowled in the powerplay in the past, so I had to bowl in the powerplay.

That was the plan. The wicket was stopping and keeping low, so tried to bowl in the right areas. The wicket was slow, so I tried to bowl slower in this match, it worked for me. Wouldn't have worked had I bowled quicker, would have been easier for their batters," Axar Patel said in the post match presentation ceremony.

"Our batters told us that the wicket wasn't easy, so I 160 was a good total according to us. That partnership (between Rohit and SKY) was magnificent, they scored the occasional boundaries and rotated the strike. Not thinking about Barbados at the moment, will celebrate this player of the match award first," Axar concluded. If India are to win the T20 World Cup 2024, Axar Patel has to fire, just like he did in the semi-final of the tournament. Bowling in the powerplay and the ability to float throughout the batting order, Axar Patel has acted like a crisis man for Rohit Sharma in this tournament. Whenever India have been put in trouble - be it the top-order collapse against Pakistan, or today in a high pressure situation against England, Axar has not only taken the job, but has also tried his best to level the game. On Thursday, what India saw from Axar would give the team a lot of confidence, not only for the final on Saturday, but also in the near future as the Indian team transitions into a new era.

England bowled without luck: Jos Buttler reflects on defeat to India in semi-final



New Delhi. Skipper Jos Buttler said that England did not have luck going in their favour while bowling in the powerplay during the T20 World Cup semi-final against India. Buttler suggested that had some 'close calls' gone in favour of the Three Lions, it could have been a different story altogether. After opting to bowl first at the Providence Stadium in Guyana, England's bowlers bowled their hearts out,

but India put up a formidable score of 171 for 7. Thereafter, the Brits could only manage to score 103 in 16.4 overs and lost the match by 68 runs. Buttler also said that England could have used Moeen Ali early in the match when the pitch showed signs of indifferent bounce.

"A little bit of both. I thought they played well as well. I thought we bowled a little bit without luck in the power play, a few close

calls there. But, yes, I think the benefit of hindsight and reflecting, I would have got Moeen [Ali] in the game of course. So, yes, bits and pieces here and there," Buttler said in the post-match press conference. Lots of challenges and adversity!

Buttler said that he was proud of England making their way through to the semis. In the Group stage, England were in danger of getting knocked out, but they showed grit to advance in the tournament. The captain praised his team for showing a lot of character through "adversity and challenges". "Yes, I think reaching a semi-final of a World Cup is an achievement. We wanted to obviously go all the way. That was what we came here for. We faced lots of challenges and adversity throughout the whole tournament and we've stuck together well and played well enough to get to this stage. But unfortunately, at this stage, we've fallen short," Buttler added.

After their exit from the T20 World Cup, England will lock horns with the West Indies in a 3-match Test series, starting July 10 at the iconic Lord's Cricket Ground in London.

T20 World Cup: Captain Rohit Sharma scales new peak, gifts himself redemption chance

New Delhi. Unbeaten India are back in a men's T20 World Cup final after a 68-run mauling of defending champions England in a lop-sided semi-final in Guyana. India's pursuit of an ICC title appears on track after Rohit Sharma and his men bowled England out for 103 after first posting 171 for 7 in Providence, Guyana. The mismatch from Adelaide 2022 was turned on its head and the title clash against a formidable South African team presents an opportunity for India to break their ICC trophy drought.

India faced a daunting challenge batting first in the semifinals, having previously lost all five ICC tournament encounters under similar circumstances since 2021. However, crucial contributions from Rohit Sharma (57), Suryakumar Yadav (47), and a stellar

performance by Axar Patel with three early wickets ensured India's comprehensive victory over England by 68 runs. Rohit-led India also achieved a remarkable hat-trick, reaching the final of all three major ICC tournaments in one year: the World Test Championship, the ODI World Cup, and the T20 World Cup. With this achievement, Rohit Sharma also tags along with former New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson in the elite club of captains, who have led their national cricket teams to ICC Finals across all formats—Tests, ODIs, and T20s.

CAN ROHIT ACHIEVE REDEMPTION? The Indian fans had to suffer twin heartbreaks at the hands of Australia, first in the WTC final in England and then the 2023 World Cup final at home. But now, the unbeaten

run presents Rohit an opportunity to finally redeem himself after losing two ICC finals albeit in different formats. When asked about the title drought, Rohit has vowed to bring the trophy home, expressing confidence in his team's ability to deliver a strong performance in the upcoming final. "It is a very satisfying win. Everybody worked incredibly hard, and we adapted well to the conditions, which has been our recipe for success. When you play according to the conditions, everything falls into place. Initially, we aimed for 140-150 runs, but as partnerships developed, we pushed for 20-30 runs more. Our bowlers were exceptional, executing their plans effectively, particularly our spinners who capitalized on the conditions by targeting the stumps."

'Talk logic, not nonsense': Harbhajan Singh slams Michael Vaughan over Guyana pitch claim

T20 World Cup 2024: Harbhajan Singh slammed Michael Vaughan over his claims regarding Guyana pitch favouring India. The former India cricketer asked Vaughan to talk logically and accept England's defeat over India.

NEW DELHI. Former India cricketer Harbhajan Singh has slammed Michael Vaughan for his constant remarks regarding pitch bias towards India. India thrashed England in a one-sided affair by 68 runs at the Providence Stadium in Guyana on June 27, Thursday. The men in blue stormed into the final of the T20 World Cup 2024 as they had a perfect payback against England. Vaughan took to 'X' to yet again call out the venue bias for India after they beat England. He claimed that the Guyana pitch was the most suitable for the Indian team. Harbhajan gave a befitting reply by retweeting his post



and asked Vaughan to talk logic and not nonsense. In a fiery remark, he asked Vaughan to accept that England were outplayed by India and move on. Vaughan made headlines for claiming that the ICC has a bias towards the Indian team and wrote after semi-final 1 that "Surely this Semi



should have been the Guyana one... but because the whole event is geared towards India it's so unfair on others." This remark came after Afghanistan suffered a 9-wicket loss against South Africa in Trinidad. Vaughan's complaint regarding India bias



could not win the World Cup as they should not have lost it because they deserved to win," Akhtar said on his official YouTube channel.

Rohit Sharma has repeatedly said he wants to make an impact and win the trophy and so, deserves to win the cup. He is a big player, and it should end on a big note. He is a selfless captain, plays for the team and is a complete batter," Akhtar added.

T20 World Cup Coverage | Points Table | T20 World Cup 2024 Schedule | Player Stats

Apart from being a successful skipper, Rohit has also been India's standout batter in the tournament. In 7 games, he has scored 248 runs at an average of 41.33 and a strike-rate of 155.97 with 3 half-centuries and a top score of 92 against Australia to his name.

Rohit will be looking to carry his form when India face South Africa in the final on Saturday at the Kensington Oval in Bridgetown, Barbados.

He continued taking indirect digs at the Indian team and tweeted, "India thoroughly deserve to be in the final... The best team in tournament so far... Was always going to hard for England on this pitch... India just so much better on lower slower spinning pitches... A user on 'X' was unhappy with Vaughan's comments and tweeted that "Now you won't cry about the ICC giving semis to India in Guyana." However, Vaughan remained firm on his stance and mentioned that England would have won the semi-final had they played at the Brian Lara Stadium in Trinidad and that Guyana was a "lovely venue pick for India."

Harbhajan throws fire-ball at Vaughan

The Providence Stadium is known to be a slow track and despite winning the toss, England captain Jos Buttler opted to bowl first. Meanwhile, Indian captain Rohit Sharma had mentioned at the toss that they wanted to bat first only. Despite the multiple rain delays, there was nothing on offer for the spinners and slowly it became clear that the pitch was suiting the spinners. The Indian spinners gave England a run for their money as they exploited the conditions really well and helped India win the match.



Ibrahim Ali Khan Is Gasping For Breath As

Palak Tiwari

Drops Gorgeous Photos, Fans Say 'Rishta Pakka'

Palak Tiwari's latest photos have left her rumoured boyfriend, Ibrahim Ali Khan, gasping for breath. On Thursday, Palak took to her Instagram handle and shared a series of pictures in which she was seen enjoying the monsoon season. The actress sported a green sweatshirt with grey pants, left her hair open and looked gorgeous. Sharing the pictures online, Palak wrote, "MY USPA MONSOON." However, soon after the pictures were shared, Palak's rumoured boyfriend, Ibrahim Ali Khan liked the post and dropped a fire heart sticker in the comments section which had "Looking Good" written on it. Palak also reacted to his comment with an emotional face emoji. Check it out here:

This has once again left netizens wondering if Shweta Tiwari's daughter is dating Saif Ali Khan and Amrita Singh's son. Reacting to their comments, one of the fans wrote, "rishta pakka".

Another social media user called them the "perfect couple". This is not the first time that Ibrahim Ali Khan and Palak Tiwari have sparked dating rumours. Their alleged romantic relationship first made headlines in 2022 when they were snapped together by the paparazzi. Back then, Shweta Tiwari's daughter ended up hiding her face as the paparazzi photographed her with Ibrahim. However, later, in an interview with Siddharth Kannan, the Bijlee Bijlee fame clarified that they are just 'nice friends'. "We were just out, and we got papped. It ends there. It's just that. In fact, we were with a group of people. It wasn't just us, but it got papped like that. It was the narrative that people liked the most, but that's it. We are nice friends. He is a very sweet guy. That's all there is to it. We talk sometimes and that's all," she said.

Not just this, but the actress also revealed that she hid her face because she had lied to Shweta about her whereabouts. "Then these pictures come out. And the second the paps came I was like 's**t s**t s**t my mom will see me,' and the second she sent me that picture and said 'you bl**y liar.' I am like 'I'm sorry.' I had hidden my face from Shweta Tiwari, not anyone else," the actress added. Previously, Palak and Ibrahim also attended American rapper Post Malone's concert at Mumbai's Mahalaxmi Race Course.



Malaika Arora

IGNORES Paps In First Appearance After Skipping Arjun Kapoor's Birthday

Malaika Arora made her first public appearance on Thursday afternoon ever since she skipped Arjun Kapoor's birthday celebration. In a video that surfaced on social media, the Bollywood diva was seen travelling in her car when she was followed by the shutterbugs. However, the actress ignored the cameras and chose not to respond to them. This comes a day after Malaika Arora skipped Arjun Kapoor's birthday which left everyone wondering if the two have broken up. Malaika did not even wish Arjun on Instagram. Instead, she shared a cryptic note which read, "I like people that I can trust with my eyes closed & my back turned."

Several insider videos from Arjun Kapoor's birthday bash also went viral on social media but had no sign of Malaika in attendance. While Varun Dhawan, Sanjay Kapoor, Maheep Kapoor and Janhvi Kapoor were seen cheering for the birthday boy, Malaika was nowhere to be seen. Arjun and Malaika's breakup rumours first made headlines earlier this year after a source informed Pinkvilla that their relationship has "run its course." "Malaika and Arjun had a very special relationship and both of them will continue to hold a special place in each other's hearts. They have chosen to part ways and will maintain a dignified silence in this matter. They won't allow anyone to drag and dissect their relationship," the source claimed. They had a long, loving, fruitful relationship that has unfortunately run its course now. That doesn't mean there is any bad blood between them. They respect each other hugely and have been a pillar of strength for each other. Over the years, they have given their relationship a lot of respect. They will continue to give each other the same respect despite them deciding to part ways. Both of them were in a serious relationship for years, and they expect people to be gracious enough to give them space at this emotional time," it added. However, Malaika's manager denied breakup rumours and assured that they were very much together. "No no. All rumours," the manager told India Today.



Karan Kundrra, Tejasswi Prakash Share Romantic Photos From London Vacation Amid Breakup Rumours

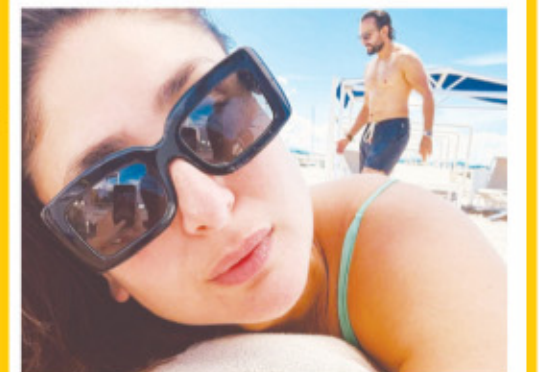


Karan Kundrra and Tejasswi Prakash shared a series of romantic photos with their fans via social media on Thursday. The couple dropped a joint post on Instagram, which featured glimpses of their London vacation. In one of the pictures, Tejasswi was seen resting her head on Karan's shoulder. Another click featured the two posing with the London Bridge in the backdrop. Sharing the pictures, Tejasswi wrote that Karan wanted the caption to be, "I click her the best". On the other hand, she wanted "Love is feeling known ???" as the caption of their romantic photos. Check it out here:

The pictures come days after News18 Showsha reported that the couple, who fell in love inside the Bigg Boss 15 house in 2021, are no longer together. "Karan and Tejasswi are not dating each other any longer. It's been more than a month since they broke up. Even though the reason for their breakup isn't known, all I know is that they have been getting into minor fights with each other for quite some time now," a source close to Karan and Tejasswi told us. Another source close to the actors informed us that they were still making public appearances together because "they were a power couple for the last three years, and therefore, it might not be easy for their fans to accept this heartbreaking news so suddenly." "They are not going to announce their breakup anytime soon," the source added. However, when we reached out to Karan and Tejasswi's respective teams, they refused to comment on their split.

Karan Kundrra and Tejasswi Prakash's love story was no secret. The two met inside the Bigg Boss 15 house and fell in love with each other. Previously, in an exclusive interview with News18 Showsha, Karan shared that he and Tejasswi were going very strong and were unfazed by the questions about their marriage. "To be honest, if I start taking pressure, then I won't be able to outperform. I am an artist and I am somebody who has to make some very critical decisions in my life," he told us and then added, "I have to worry about so many other things rather than the pressure. No offense but I cannot live my life if I take this pressure."

Shirtless Saif Ali Khan Photobombs Kareena Kapoor's Sun-Kissed Selfies From London; See Viral Photos



Currently on a family vacation, Kareena Kapoor Khan shared a charming snapshot from her break, capturing an inadvertent photo bomb by husband Saif Ali Khan in the background. Kareena, known for keeping her fans in the loop with snippets of her life, continues to offer delightful glimpses of her getaway with Taimur and Jeh. On Thursday, Kareena Kapoor took to her Instagram handle and shared a bunch of sun-kissed selfies from a sandy beach in London. The actress can be seen donning a blue outfit, along with black sunglasses that gels seamlessly with the clear blue skies. However, in one of the pictures, we can see a shirtless Saif Ali Khan, walking unbeknownst to Kareena's cellphone camera. Kareena humorously wrote the caption, "For me it's the one with the photobomber."

Kareena Kapoor Khan is currently vacationing in London. She was joined by her husband Saif Ali Khan and their kids, Taimur and Jeh. The picture-perfect family and their vacation diaries have all of us hooked to our Instagram handles. Just recently, the Crew actress delighted her fans with a sneak peek of her day out with her adorable son, Taimur. While enjoying a sunny day on a London beach, the doting mother Kareena Kapoor Khan made sure to capture the precious moments. On her Instagram handle, she shared a picture of Taimur as he indulged in some playful moments. Dressed in orange shorts, the elder son of Kareena and Saif looked too cute in the snapshot. Along with the picture, she wrote, "Run baby Run," followed by a red heart and a rainbow emoji. Previously, Kareena Kapoor Khan left us in awe with a captivating picture from her hotel room. The photograph captured the Jaane Jaan actress looking away from the camera as she enjoyed the outside view from her room's window while sitting on a couch. The Bollywood diva sported.