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Exact moment of Nepal plane crash: Video shows plane flipping during take off

Sanjay Kumar

Chandigarh, July 24: A terrifying footage of Saurya Airlines flight crash



in Nepal's Kathmandu showing the exact moment the plane went down has gone viral online. Yemeni national among 18 killed as aircraft crashes during takeoff in Nepal's Kathmandu; pilot survives. The flight-bound for Pokhara-experienced a runway excursion, leading to the mishap. The plane

flipped during takeoff, struck the ground with a wing tip, caught fire, and ended up in a gorge between the Buddha Air hangar and the radar sta-

tion. The incident occurred around 11 am. Of the 19 on board the plane, 18 bodies have been recovered. Pilot Manish Shakya was rescued and rushed to hospital. Eyewitnesses said shortly after take-off, the plane plunged to the ground and exploded in a ball of fire.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman counters Congress on Budget face-off

Simmi Kaur Babbar

New Delhi, July 24: In first reaction to the opposition allegations of discrimination in the Union Budget, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman challenged the Congress to reveal whether it mentioned every state of the country in the several budgets its finance ministers presented. Mallikarjun Kharge hurls 'Mata ji' barb at Nirmala Sitharaman; Jagdeep Dhankhar says 'she's your daughter's age' 'This is an outrageous allegation, a deliberate attempt of the Congress-led opposition to give an impression to the people that other states (barring Andhra Pradesh and Bihar) have not got anything. I challenge the Congress to say whether they named all states in the many budgets they presented,' Nirmala said in Rajya Sabha on Wednesday. She was speaking after Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge accused the government of neglecting non-BJP states in the budget and walked out. Answering the allegations, Nirmala

said in every budget one doesn't have an opportunity to name every state of the country. 'Between vote of account in February and full



budget yesterday I have not named very many states. Between the vote on account and yesterday I have not named Maharashtra also. But the

Union Cabinet under PM Narendra Modi passed a very important decision to build a major port in Maharashtra costing Rs 76,000 crore. Does it mean we have ignored Maharashtra?" the FM asked. She said if the budget speech doesn't mention the name of a particular state, that does that mean that the particular state does not get government schemes. "These things go to states as per routine. This (discrimination allegations) is a deliberate attempt of the opposition parties to give an impression that nothing has been given to all states. I challenge the Congress whether they named all states or the country in their budget session. This is an outrageous allegation," the FM said, adding that Kharge's allegations "are not acceptable". She said while the opposition TMC has been questioning the budget, the fact is that it has refused to implement several schemes of the Centre in the state. "Several schemes given by the PM in the last 10 years have not been implemented by West Bengal and you have the audacity to ask me today that nothing has been given," Sitharaman said countering the opposition.

Thanks to Sir Ganga Ram Hospital & Dr. Anshu Rohatgi jee



I would like to inform my well wishers friends that I had brain stroke and I was admitted to Sir Gangaram Hospital Delhi, now discharged ! Very big and famous neurology specialist Dr. Anshu Rohatgi jee is treating me and by the grace of Waheguru ji I am fine now ! Many many thanks to Sir Gangaram Hospital and Dr. Anshu Rohatgi Jee !

Gurcharan Singh Babbar, Editor - In - Chief, National Daily Newspaper Group & Author

Bihar CM Nitish Kumar shouts at Opposition women members inside Assembly

Navdeep Singh Sahni

Patna, July 24: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Wednesday drew flak from the RJD for shouting at Opposition women members inside the Assembly. Kumar's outburst came as Opposition members stood in the well of the House, demanding that the state's amended reservation laws be incorporated in the 9th schedule of the Constitution to make it immune from legal scrutiny. Women legislators of the RJD were also in the well shouting slogans like "Nitish Kumar Hai Hai (down with Nitish Kumar)", besides accusing the Chief Minister of being anti-reservation. The septuagenarian Chief Minister lost his cool. Waving his fingers at the legislators, especially at Rekha Devi of RJD, Kumar shouted, "You are a woman. Do you realise that it was only after I assumed power that women started getting their dues in Bihar? You are a woman, (still) you do not know anything. If you say Hai Hai to me, then it's Hai Hai for all," said

the furious CM. "It was at my instance that you all agreed to a caste survey after which quotas for SC, ST, OBCs and the extremely backward classes were hiked," said Kumar. He told the House that after the Patna High Court set aside the reservation laws, the state moved the Supreme Court. "A formal request has also



been made to the Centre for including those in the 9th schedule," Kumar said. The Bihar Government urged the Centre to incorporate the hiked reservation for deprived castes from 50 to 65 per cent in state government jobs and educational institutions in the 9th schedule of the Constitution.

The 9th Schedule includes a list of Central and state laws that cannot be challenged in courts. In 1992, the Supreme Court capped reservations for the backward classes at 50 per cent. Outside the house, RJD members slammed the Chief Minister for his behaviour inside the House against woman legislators. Leader of the Opposition in the state legislative council, Rabri Devi, said, "This has not happened for the first time with the CM. People know that he (CM) has no respect for women. Whatever he has done today in the Assembly, is sheer insult to women. Leaders of the NDA do not respect women, the former chief minister alleged. "Only RJD and INDIA block leaders have respect for women," she claimed. Talking to PTI, RJD MLA Rekha Devi said, "Whatever Nitish Kumar ji said today in the Assembly is insulting to a woman... We are here today because of our leader and party supremo Lalu Prasad and not because of Nitish Kumar. He has insulted a Dalit legislator today in the House. It seems that he (CM) has no control over his mind."

15 roads closed in Himachal Pradesh following heavy rain

Shimla, July 24: Fifteen roads were closed for vehicular traffic in Himachal Pradesh following heavy rainfall in the past 24 hours even as the weather office issued a 'yellow' alert of heavy rain at isolated places for the next four days till July 28. A total of 15 roads—12 in Mandi, two in Kinnaur and one in Kangra district—were closed for vehicular traffic, while 62 transformers were disrupted in the state, according to the state emergency operation centre. The Met also cautioned about damage to plantations and standing crops, vulnerable structures and 'kutcha' houses in the state due to strong winds and waterlogging in low-lying areas. Intermittent rain lashed parts of the state, with Baijnath recording 85 mm of rainfall since Tuesday evening, followed by Palampur (25.2 mm), Jogindernagar (18 mm), Dharamshala (10.4 mm), Hamirpur (8mm), Poanta Sahib (7.6 mm), Sainj and Kahu (7.5 mm each), Kasauli (7.4 mm) and Shimla (5.6 mm), according to the Meteorological Centre, Shimla. So far, 49 persons have died in rain-related incidents in the state, which has suffered losses of approximately Rs 389 crore in the ongoing monsoon season since June 27, the emergency operation centre said. Kukumseri in tribal Lahaul and Spiti district was coldest on Tuesday night at 10.2 degrees Celsius, while Una was hottest during the day recording a temperature of 36.4 degrees Celsius.

Will put pressure on government to get legal guarantee for MSP: Rahul Gandhi

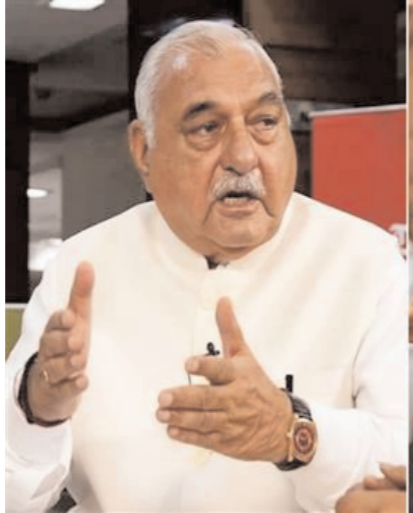
New Delhi, July 24: The INDIA bloc will put pressure on the government and ensure that the farmers get a legal guarantee for MSP, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi said on Wednesday after he met a delegation of farmer leaders in the Parliament House complex. The delegation comprised 12 farmer leaders from Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka. It apprised Gandhi of the issues being faced by the farmers. "Our manifesto promised a legal guarantee for MSP. We have done a full assessment and it is feasible. We had a meeting and it was decided that we will have a discussion with INDIA bloc leaders and will try and put pressure on the government to ensure that the farmers get a legal guarantee for MSP," Gandhi told reporters after the meeting. Later, in a post on X, the former Congress chief said, "Legal guarantee for MSP is the right of farmers. INDIA will ensure that they get this right." After meeting Gandhi, a farmer leader said, "We met Rahul Gandhi and he gave us a patient hearing. A long discussion took place on our demand for a legal guarantee for MSP. INDIA bloc partners have assured us that they will raise issues of the farmers". Congress general secretary KC Venugopal, former Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi, Punjab Congress chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring, Congress leaders Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, Gurjeet Singh Aujla, Dharamvir Gandhi, Amar Singh, Depender Singh Hooda and Jai Prakash were also present in the meeting. Rahul Gandhi with farmer leaders during a meeting. "For the crores of farmers of India, LOP Rahul Gandhi ji is the ray of hope. Snubbed by the government, beaten with sticks and welcomed with bullets, these farmers have lost all expectations from the government," Venugopal said after the meeting. "In our meeting with farm union leaders, we discussed the urgent need for a legal MSP guarantee, justice for protesting farmers who suffered at the hands of the Haryana government, and various other issues concerning the farmers today," he said on X.

Bhupinder Hooda targets Nayab Saini government over 'Non-Stop Haryana' slogan

Naresh Malhotra

Chandigarh, July 24: Congress leader Bhupinder Singh Hooda has said the Nayab Singh Saini government should change its "Non-Stop Haryana" slogan to "Full Stop Haryana" and alleged that the BJP regime has put a "full stop on investments, industrial development, job creation, crop prices" in the state. "If there is anything non-stop in the BJP government, it is unemployment, inflation, crime, drug addiction and migration of youth," the Leader of Opposition in the Haryana Assembly said in a statement issued here on Tuesday. His remarks were in reference to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government coming up with the "Mahara Haryana, Non-Stop Haryana" slogan ahead of the state Assembly polls due later in the year. Under the slogan, the Saini government has been spilling out the initiatives launched for various sections of the society and pointing towards the rapid progress the state has made in the last 10 years. Over the last few days, the state government has issued newspaper advertisements, touching upon several initiatives for various sections of the society, including the poor, farmers and

women. Saini hit back at the former chief minister on Wednesday, saying,



"Bhupinder Hoodaji, my Haryana today is non-stop Haryana." In a post in Hindi on X, the chief minister took a dig at the Congress regime (2005-2014) in the state led by Hooda, and claimed that a full stop has now been put on goondaism, atrocities against Dalits and backward classes, auction of government jobs, taking away

farmers' land and the reign of terror that prevailed when the grand old party was in



power. "If there has been a full stop, that is only on your politics," Saini further said. In his statement, Hooda said during the Congress era, big institutions like a health university, six medical colleges, an All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and a cancer institute were built in the state, besides 641 rural hospitals

and community and primary health centres. "But as soon as the BJP came to power, it put a full stop on this work being done in the health sector and did not build any major health institution in the state," he claimed. Hooda also said the Congress-led government in Haryana had built 12 government universities, a central university, 154 polytechnic colleges, 56 industrial training institutes, four engineering colleges, the Rajiv Gandhi Education City, the Babasaheb Ambedkar Law University and about 2,500 government schools. "But as soon as the BJP came to power in 2014, it put a full stop on the expanding education system in the state," he alleged. Hooda also accused the BJP of putting a full stop on the welfare scheme of free allotment of plots of 100 square yards to poor, Scheduled Caste (SC) and Other Backward classes (OBC) families started by the previous Congress regime. He said more than two lakh jobs were given in all government departments during the Congress government, "but today, more than two lakh permanent posts are lying vacant in Haryana". Hooda said during the Congress regime, six industrial model townships were built and big industries set up in Haryana.

Government to implement GNSS-based toll collection system at select national highways

New Delhi, July 24: The Road Ministry has decided to initially implement the global navigation satellite system (GNSS)-based toll collection system at select national highways on pilot basis as an added facility along with FASTag, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Wednesday. In a written reply, Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said pilot study with regard to GNSS-based user fee collection system has been done on Bengaluru-Mysore section of NH-275 in Karnataka and Panipat-Hisar section of NH-709 in Haryana. Gadkari said a stakeholder consultation through international workshop was organised on June 25, 2024 and global expression of interest (EOI) was invited for wider industrial consultation on June 7, 2024 with last date of submission as July 22, 2024. Replying to a separate question, he said the master plan for national highways to improve the logistics with provision of expressway/high speed highways has been prepared by the road ministry under PM Gatishakti Framework using transportation model with analysis of data of e-way bills (GST), toll and

traffic survey. Responding to another question, the minister said among all the national highway projects that started about 10 years ago, 697 projects have gone beyond their original completion schedule. Primary reasons for delay in NH projects are issues relating to land acquisition, statutory clearances, utility shifting, encroachment removal, law & order, financial crunch of contractor, poor performance of contractor and force majeure events like Covid-19 pandemic, heavy rainfall, floods, cyclone, landslides/avalanches etc, he added. According to Gadkari, since 2014, NHAI has availed loan and other borrowings totalling Rs 3.77 lakh crore for completion of projects / scheme entrusted with them. The minister also informed that at the beginning of the current financial year, under ongoing/awarded projects, the ministry had about 20,000 km national highways remaining for construction. Moreover, the ministry has a shelf of projects under DPR and tendering process, to further augment the construction progress during the current and next fiscal years, he said.

Three illegal structures razed

Ahmedabad. Teams from the estate and TDO department of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation's (AMC) Central zone on Tuesday demolished three illegal structures in the Shahpur area of the city. A 1,076 sq ft illegal industrial construction at Shubhlabh estate in Tavdipura, a two-storey illegal construction spread over 1,367 sq ft and another spread over 1,184 sq ft, were demolished. The AMC had issued notices to the owners of the three illegal structures to stop construction work.

Rajasthan paper leak: Illegal structures of kingpins house demolished. Learn about the crackdown on cheating rackets in Rajasthan as authorities demolish illegal structures linked to Pankaj Bhambhu, suspected of paper leaks. Bhambhu, wanted in a sub-inspector paper leak case, is being pursued by SOG officials. Stay updated on this developing story! 11943551

Razed 503 illegal religious structures in 1 month: Gujarat to HC. Find out how Gujarat government removed 503 illegally built religious structures from public places in just one month. HC and Supreme Court orders led to regularization and relocation of some structures. Learn more about the government's efforts to address this issue.

503 illegal religious structures razed in a month: Govt to HC. Discover the latest news in Gujarat as 503 illegal religious structures are removed in compliance with court orders. State govt implements guidelines and monitors progress. Stay informed on the developments!

Kerala government to kick off Onam celebrations from Sept 13

The Chief Minister has ordered chief secretary V Venu to intensify inspections to prevent hoarding and black markets. Cultural programmes will be conducted with reduced expenses.

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM.

The state government's Onam week celebrations will commence on September 13 in the capital. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan chaired a meeting on Tuesday to review the preparations. The week-long festivities will conclude on September 19 with a grand procession. Events, including Onam fairs, markets, vegetable counters and special sales promotions will be held. Supplyco has been tasked with overseeing these programmes. Horticoop will establish special vegetable markets.

Kudumbashree will run markets in all districts. Subsidised markets will be launched under Consumerfed with assistance from the Department of Co-operation. Local Onam markets and cooperative markets will be managed by primary cooperative societies. Efforts will be made to maximise vegetable production within Kerala. Supplyco will distribute free kits for the AAY (Antyodaya Anna Yojana) category, undertake special sugar



distribution, implement mid-day meal schemes for school children, and provide special kits for tribal communities before Onam.

The Chief Minister has ordered chief secretary V Venu to intensify inspections to prevent hoarding and black markets. Cultural programmes will be

conducted with reduced expenses. The stretch from Kowdiar to Manacaud will be designated as the festival area for the Onam week celebrations. The police will make preparations to prevent any untoward incidents, and ensure necessary security arrangements for tourists. Traffic

arrangements and vehicle parking should be planned in advance. Special checks will be conducted to strictly control the possession, use, and distribution of intoxicants. Efforts will be intensified to ensure that banned plastic products are not sold in the market. Single-use

disposable products will be discouraged. Shops and Onam markets must provide cloth bags, paper bags, and similar items to its customers. Pinarayi has instructed the local self-government department to ensure the daily removal of organic and inorganic waste produced.

Capt Jerry Prem Raj: Braveheart of Kargil

It was the deadliest and largest war fought between India and Pakistan which saw 527 soldiers attaining martyrdom and 1,363 hurt.

KOCHI. Twenty-five years have passed since Capt Jerry Prem Raj, Vir Chakra, laid down his life for his beloved country on Tiger Hill in Kargil in 1999. The war — which began on May 3, 1999 and ended on July 26, 1999 — was fought in a harsh, high-altitude environment posing unique challenges. It was the deadliest and largest war fought between India and Pakistan which saw 527 soldiers attaining martyrdom and 1,363 hurt. As the nation observes another Kargil Diwas on July 26, the state reminisces about the martyrdom of one of its brave sons.

Chella Thayee, Capt Jerry Prem Raj's mother, remembers every line that her son had written in his last letter. With eyes brimming with tears, she says, "I am very proud to be known as Jerry's mother. Wherever I go, everyone gives me love and respect because of my son. So, I always feel that Jerry has achieved eternal life." She recalls that he had written about buying a satellite phone for her once he came home after his duty.

Born on April 7, 1972, Capt hailed from Venganoor village in Thiruvananthapuram. He joined defence following in the footsteps of his elder brother who served in the Indian Air Force. Jerry joined the IAF at 18, training as an instrument fitter. Later, he joined the Indian Army and was commissioned into the 158 Medium Regiment. In May 1999, he got married to Praseena but unfortunately had to cut short their honeymoon and report to duty. Taking a trip down memory lane, his elder brother Rejinald Pavithran,



says, "Jerry was stationed in the Drass sector of Jammu and Kashmir. As part of 'Operation Vijay', launched to reclaim territories infiltrated by Pakistani forces, he served as the

Forward Observation Post Officer with the 2 Naga Battalion." To keep his younger brother's memories alive, Rejinald maintains a chronicle of the life and legacy of Jerry. Within the pages of the book reside not just writings, but the essence of Jerry's indomitable spirit.

"Jerry was a born leader. From winning a baby show at six months to excelling as a cricketer and captain in school, he showed exceptional talent and determination," Rejinald says. "He had a deep passion for the Army and pursued his dream relentlessly, eventually becoming a respected officer. His warmth, storytelling ability, and love for Mohanlal films made him unforgettable to all who knew him," he says.

This year, his family is taking a pilgrimage to the Drass War Memorial, in Kargil, Ladakh. "It is the land where he died, fighting for his country 25 years ago. Our journey is a testament to Jerry's sacrifice and the legacy he left behind," says Rejinald. Baiju Sasidharan, a close friend and confidant of the Captain, vividly recalls their final journey together aboard a train bound for Ernakulam. "During the journey, Jerry spoke passionately about his responsibilities and the inherent risks he faced while defending the nation," says Baiju. Colonel Sandeep Ahlawat, a coursemate from the SS-64 course, OTA, talks of how amidst the chaos of battle, Capt Jerry exemplified that nothing divides a soldier. "He was an Indian at heart, a soldier who was unwaveringly devoted to our nation's cause."

Tamil Nadu farmers vexed over no loan waiver, MSP

THIRUCHY. Though farmers have welcomed the budget announcement that one crore farmers will be initiated into natural farming in the next two years, they however, have expressed their dissatisfaction as there is no announcement on loan waiver or guaranteed minimum support price for their produce. The farmers said that the finance minister should have at least announced interest-free crop loans.

"When corporates are getting waivers of crores of rupees, farmers are not given even assurance to get a reasonable price for their produce, commensurate with production costs. The BJP government reduced the allocation of funds to the MGNREGS," PS Masilamani, general secretary of Tamil Nadu Farmers



Association, affiliated to CPI, said. Meanwhile, N Veerasakaran, state spokesperson of Bharatiya Kisan Sangh, hailed the announcements on natural farming. Swamimalai S Vimalnathan, secretary of the Tamil Nadu Cauvery Farmers Protection Association said the farmers had expected PM Kisan's cash assistance to be doubled or increased, but there was no announcement regarding this. GS Dhanapathi, state general

secretary, Farmers Association of India said while the importance given to natural farming is welcome, grants and subsidies being given to farmers who use chemical fertilisers should also be given to those who adopt natural farming.

MSK Bakkianathan, state president of Tamil Nadu Vaigai Farmers Association, said, "We farmers hail the union government for concentrating much on the agriculture sector in the 2024 union budget. Promotion of organic cultivation with certification, introducing 109 varieties of seed for 32 crops, 10,000 need-based bio-input resource centres and other announcements in the sector will play a major role in aiding the farmers."

BMC delaying FIR in illegal cell tower collapse: Somaiya

Mumbai. BJP's Kirit Somaiya has alleged that BMC officials were aware of the existence of the illegal cell tower at Ramabai Ambedkar Nagar in Bhandup (W), which collapsed on Sunday, but did nothing about it. He further claimed that BMC is now delaying the filing of an FIR against the firm that erected the cell tower.

BMC's building permission special cell has confirmed that the cell tower was illegal. On Sunday, the wall of a structure atop the hill fell on the tower and it collapsed, damaging a few houses. No one was injured in the incident. Alleging that BMC had issued notices to about 40 houses on the hillside, including those in the immediate vicinity of the cell tower, Somaiya asked: "How did they [BMC] not notice the tower structure and the danger it posed?" He said the structure was erected in a buffer zone of a reserve forest. S ward

officials said the notices were issued because the houses were on the hillside and there was a danger of landslides during monsoon. "We are examining what action can be taken in this case. The official concerned is on leave, and an FIR may be filed after he joins duty," said a ward official.

In his police complaint, Somaiya said that the land on which the tower was erected belongs to the district collector, and hence the structure was unauthorised. He alleged that both the cellphone service provider and the infrastructure company that erected the tower were aware of this.

According to Somaiya, the infrastructure company had entered into an illegal contract with a local resident to use the land. Even the electricity company knew that it was providing power to an unauthorised tower, Somaiya claimed.

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Relative rapes four-year-old girl, kin of victim hold massive protest in Bengaluru village

Khan, the accused, often visited the child's house, and on Saturday, lured her out on the pretext of buying her ice-cream and then sexually assaulted and disposed her body.

BENGALURU. Following the arrest of a man accused of raping and killing a four-year-old girl, residents of Magadi and relatives of the victim's family held a massive protest on Tuesday, demanding capital punishment for the accused. The child was allegedly raped and

killed by a relative near Old Masjid Mohalla Road in Magadi Town police station limits in Ramana-gara, on Saturday. The accused was identified as Irfan Khan (34), a resident of Kengeri, Bengaluru, and a daily wage worker. Police said the child's parents filed a missing

complaint at the police station on Saturday. The child's semi-naked body was found near bushes on Tippagondanahalli Road.

The postmortem revealed that the child had been raped. After checking CCTV footage, police arrested Khan from Kalasipalya

in Bengaluru on Monday night. Khan often visited the child's house, and on Saturday, lured her out on the pretext of buying her ice-cream.

He sexually assaulted her and disposed of the body. When the girl's mother contacted Khan as she was last seen with him, Khan

pretended ignorance and evaded her questions. Khan then switched off his mobile phone. Police registered a Protection Of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) case, abduction and murder case based on the complaint filed by the child's father. Investigations are on.



NEWS BOX

Gurgaon: Watchman strangles brother-in-law, held

GURGAON. A watchman at an under-construction site in Sector 15 was arrested on Sunday for allegedly strangling his brother-in-law on July 18 night after offering him alcohol. The accused set the body ablaze at the site and fled, police said. According to police, on July 19 morning, police received an alert about a partially burnt body lying at an under-construction building in Sector 15 Part 1. Police shifted the body to the mortuary. On the complaint of Laxman Prasad, a worker at the site, police registered a murder case under BNS Section 103 (1) on July 19, said an officer. According to Prasad, watchman Rajesh (21) invited his brother-in-law Gorelal alias Halla (33), to the construction site on July 18 night to drink with him. The next morning, Rajesh asked Laxman to go to the construction site and check the balcony, where he found the partially burnt body. Subsequently, police



started tracking Rajesh's movements. "Rajesh confessed that his sister was suffering from some ailment and Gorelal was not providing her with medicines. Upset with his behaviour, Rajesh planned to kill him and called him to the building site at Sector 15 on July 18. When Gorelal was intoxicated, Rajesh strangled him," police spokesperson Sandeep Kumar said.

Soil caves in at bldg site, construction worker dies

GURGAON. A 50-year-old worker died when a heap of soil collapsed on him at an under-construction site in DLF-1 on Monday. Police said no case was registered as his family members didn't file any complaint so far. Dhuram (50) along with a few other labourers was working at residential construction site in A-block of DLF-1 when a heap of soil dumped at the edge of excavated part of the site slipped into the pit and fell on him. A 20-foot pit was excavated at the site. "Dhuram was buried under the soil. His fellow workers, with the help of an earthmover, removed him within half an hour and rushed him to Civil Hospital where he was declared dead on arrival," inspector Sunil Kumar of DLF-1 police station said. Police recorded the statement of Dhuram's son Ramesh, who did not allege any foul play. "We have completed the formalities under BNS section 194 (inquest report) after the autopsy. The body has been handed over to the family on Tuesday," the inspector said.

Incentive plan & internship scheme big push for job creation: Industries

GURGAON. The Budget's focus on employment creation, with subsidies to companies for first-time employees, paid internships and schemes to train youths, has drawn attention to unemployment and the lack of required skills among job seekers. With unemployment now becoming a major political issue, govt has announced several schemes which will upskill youths and encourage the private sector to hire them, experts said. "Three schemes have been announced in the Budget under employment-linked incentives. Now, govt will provide one month's wage up to Rs 15,000 to all youths newly entering the workforce in all formal sectors, while employers will be given reimbursements of up to Rs 3,000 per month for 2 years towards their EPFO contribution for each such employee. In the manufacturing sector, an incentive will be provided at specified scale directly both to the employee and the employer with respect to their EPFO contribution in the first four years of employment," said Pratap Singh, principal commissioner (income tax), Gurgaon.

He added, "Govt has also proposed internships for 1 crore youths in Top 500 companies for 1 year. For the participation of women in the workforce, the Budget talks about construction of women's hostels, creches, skill programmes and loans for women, and promotion of women-led self-help groups." The Budget also stated 20 lakh youths will be trained in the next five years and 1,000 industrial training institutes will be upgraded. The focus on increasing women's participation in the workforce and providing them with the required skills is a significant step towards addressing key barriers women face in the workforce, promoting gender equality and economic empowerment, said Rashi Agarwal, co-founder and chief business officer (CBO), Zypp Electric. Ravi Machani, Co-founder of Tresa Motors, aid the Budget's focus on upskilling programmes and industry-education collaboration is crucial in bridging the skills gap amid the growing demand for expertise in areas like battery technology and power electronics. "Govt's initiative to upskill students over the next five years will ensure a steady supply of talented professionals, driving innovation and sustainability in the EV sector," said Machani. Ankush Kaul, the CBO of Ambience Group, said initiatives such as skill development and job creation will generate employment opportunities, which in turn will boost the country's economic growth.

"The new package of schemes, aimed at facilitating employment and skilling opportunities for youths, is a laudable move," said Payal Kanodia, chairperson of Young FICCI Ladies Organisation, the women's wing of FICCI (Delhi). Moreover, empowering MSMEs through easier credit and fewer compliance burdens is a smart move, said Raaja Kanwar, chairman of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Haryana. Others in the industry also approved of the Budget. "It is a mature, forward-looking, and inclusive budget with its focus on employment and skilling, manufacturing, infrastructure, innovation, and R&D," said Abhyuday Jindal, MD of Jindal Stainless.

Illegal construction in 100 Gurgaon homes: DTCP warns of sealing drive

GURGAON. The district town planner (enforcement) has served show-cause notices to 100 house owners in DLF 5 for illegal construction and commercial activities in 60sq yard homes designated under EWS (economically weaker section) category. Despite these notices, no satisfactory response has been received from any house owner, prompting the department to prepare restoration orders, said DTCP officials. A survey carried out by DTCP in DLF-5 after a complaint was filed has revealed rampant violations in affordable houses. Notices were issued under Haryana Urban Development Act, requiring house owners to submit written responses within seven days. However, no satisfactory responses have been received. "The department will now issue restoration orders, providing a 7 to 10-day compliance period. If houses are not restored to their original form within this timeframe, a



sealing drive will be carried out," said DTP (enforcement) Manish Yadav. These EWS houses, according to

officials, have been illegally transformed into significant income sources. "The property owners have

constructed buildings with stilt parking and up to five to six floors, despite regulations permitting only three floors with stilt parking. Rooms have even been built in stilt parking areas," he added. It was found in the survey that property owners created multiple one-room sets per floor, violating building codes by making two to three sets per floor, resulting in 12 to 15 sets per building. This generates rental income of around Rs 2.5 to 3 lakh per month. Construction was also carried out in areas meant to be left vacant at the front and back, blatantly ignoring regulations.

"Originally intended for three families, these houses now accommodate numerous people, putting burden on the colony's basic amenities, including water, electricity, and sewage systems," said Yadav, adding that restoration orders will be issued, and if not complied with, the houses will be sealed.

Week after stabbing their friend to death in Faridabad, 2 land in police net

GURGAON. A 19-year-old youth and a 17-year-old juvenile were taken into custody on Tuesday for allegedly stabbing their friend to death in Palla on July 17. The deceased was a 25-year-old private company worker. According to police, the accused murdered their friend due to a personal grudge. Private company employee Sameer was from Ajay Nagar in Faridabad. He had gone missing after he left home to see a Muharram procession in Palla on July 17. In his complaint, Sameer's father Naushad Ali said his son had left home around 2.30pm on July 17 and did not return. Subsequently, on July 18, locals found his body on a road abutting the Yamuna canal and they informed the police, an official said. Based on Naushad's



complaint, police registered a murder case under BNS Section 103 (1) on July 18. Furthermore, the Crime Branch team was entrusted with the investigation, and on Tuesday, they arrested Sameer alias Sucha near the Palla bridge. During interrogation, Sucha - who has a criminal record - confessed that he along with the

juvenile stabbed Sameer multiple times in the head and killed him on the spot at a dirt road near the Yamuna canal in Palla on July 17 night. "Sucha and Sameer were close friends. Recently, their common friend, Mohit had died in a road accident. Sameer did not attend his final rites, and a few days ago, he made negative comments about Mohit in front of the accused. The accused did not like Sameer's behaviour and decided to kill him," said Faridabad police spokesperson Yashpal. "The accused took Sameer to a dirt road near the Yamuna canal and stabbed him to death. Sucha will be produced before the court for police remand to recover the murder weapon," the spokesperson added.

Build 20 decentralised units to process waste, panel set up by govt tells MCG in Haryana

GURGAON. The committee formed by Haryana chief secretary TVSN Prasad to oversee the city's solid waste management has recommended the establishment of 20 decentralised waste processing facilities. It also suggested that MCG go ahead with its plans to set up a waste collection and processing unit in Daultabad. The panel, however, opposed the civic body's proposal to transport the city's fresh waste to Nuh, arguing that it would violate the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules, 2016, which mandate the setup of decentralised waste processing units. These recommendations were presented during a meeting chaired by MCG commissioner Narhari Singh Banger on Monday evening. The chief secretary constituted the five-member panel to submit recommendations for resolution of issues related to solid waste management in the city

Unhappy with waste pickup Do it yourself, DC tells corpn

Gurgaon. Divisional commissioner RC Bidhan has asked MCG officials to take up sanitation work on behalf of private agencies hired by them if their performance is unsatisfactory. Bidhan said the work should be taken up at the 'risk and cost' of the agency, which means it has to bear the expenses incurred by the civic body. "In a review meeting held recently, the performance of various agencies was evaluated. The divisional commissioner expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of a particular agency. As a result, the decision has been made to assign work to other agencies at the expense and risk of the underperforming ones. The aim is to hold the agencies accountable for their performance and ensure that they deliver the expected results," an MCG official explained. The corporation had last week issued a showcause notice to an agency for not deploying sufficient vehicles for transporting waste. MCG had also terminated contracts of two agencies due to their failure to initiate secondary waste collection and transportation to Bandhwari landfill site. The responsibility was transferred to these agencies after the termination of Ecogreen's contract. The two agencies were also debarred from participating in future tenders of the corporation till further notice. State govt on June 12 declared a municipal solid waste exigency in Gurgaon while exercising powers under Section 22 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005. The decision to impose the exigency was taken in response to the Supreme Court's order on May 13, and the observations made by the National Green Tribunal (NGT). Both the Supreme Court and the NGT emphasised the urgent need for a cleaner environment, stating that it is a fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. Under the solid waste environment exigency programme (SWEEP) campaign, the corporation constituted teams headed by 19 officials from MCG, district administration and GMDA. A control room has already been set up to address complaints of C&D waste, municipal solid waste, and horticultural garbage. The committee has been tasked with conducting an analysis of gaps in the existing infrastructure, creating a GIS-based map for waste tracking, and developing an effective grievance redress mechanism. We also published the following articles recently Will this stem the rot? Waste pickup fee out of pvt hands, MCG to collect it now Discover the latest updates on waste collection in Gurgaon as MCG prepares to change user charge collection methods. Learn about the plan to integrate charges with property tax bills and involve banks for collection. Stay informed on efforts to reduce reliance on private agencies. LG tells agencies to complete desilting of drains at earliest Stay informed about Delhi's flood control measures as authorities gear up for monsoon season. Plans include desilting drains, removing debris, and monitoring critical areas 24x7.

Name Change
I, No-15485271M Rank-DFR Name-TUNJUN KUMAR S/O SUKHARI SAHANI R/O VILL-LAXMIPUR, PO-TURKI, TEH-DIST-MUZAF-FARPUR, BIHAR-844127 have changed my minor son's name from NIKHIL BINAY to NIKHIL VINAY for all future purposes vide affidavit dated 24/07/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

Name Change
I, NAJIA is legally wedded spouse of No.IC-33287H Rank- LT COL (Retd), Name- MUSHTAQ MOHAMMED KHAN R/O B-113, SIPCOT HOUSING COLONY, HOSUR-635126 (TAMILNADU), have changed my name from NAJIA to NAJIA KHAN for all future purposes. And in my husband service records my date of birth wrongly mentioned is 1960 instead of 17/06/1962. Vide affidavit dated 24/07/2024 before Notary Public New Delhi.

Name Change
I, KAISER JAHAN, W/o. SH. AZMAT HUSSAIN KHAN, R/O. DHAKA, PANDRI, JAMUA, EAST CHAMPARAN, BIHAR-845418, have changed my name from KAISER JAHAN to KAISER KHANAM for all future purpose.

Name Change
I, No-3008465X Rank-HAV Name-BHAGWAN SAHAI RAJURAJ R/O HOUSE-160 GALLI NO-69 MAHAVER ENCLAVE PART-3, UTTAM NAGAR, Dwarika, 110059, have changed my name from ROHIT to ROHIT KANONJIA for all in future purpose.

Name Change
I, ANUJ KUMAR S/O Kanihya Lal Aggarwal R/O 133, 3rd Floor, Amolik Residency, Amolik Chowk, Sector-86, Kheri Kalan(113), Faridabad, Haryana-121002, Have Changed My Name To Anuj Aggarwal For Future Purpose.

Name Change
I, IDAYACHANDRAN SELVAKUMAR S/O SELVAKUMAR PENUMAL R/O H-714, Jalvayu Towers, Sector-56, Gurgaon, Haryana-122011, Have Changed My Minor Daughter Name Kavya Prada Idayachandran To Kavyaprada Idayachandran For All Future Purpose.

Name Change
I, RAHUL SINGH S/O KISHAN SINGH, R/O KHASRA NO 444, GALLI NO 3, SHIV MANDIR PARTAP VIHAR, KHORA COLONY, KHORA GAON, GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH - 201309, have changed my name from RAHUL to RAHUL SINGH for all future purpose.

Name Change
I, JADHAO KOMAL RAVINDRA Wife of JC-708723W Rank-NB SUB (NA) Name-JADHAV RAVINDRA RAMRAO Presently residing at GAJANAN NAGAR, WARD NO-17, CHIKHILI, DISTT-BULDHANA, MAHARASHTRA-443201 have changed my name from JADHAO KOMAL RAVINDRA to KOMAL RAVINDRA JADHAV for all future purposes vide Affidavit Dated 24/07/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

Name Change
I, JADHAO KOMAL RAVINDRA Wife of JC-708723W Rank-NB SUB (NA) Name-JADHAV RAVINDRA RAMRAO Presently residing at GAJANAN NAGAR, WARD NO-17, CHIKHILI, DISTT-BULDHANA, MAHARASHTRA-443201 have changed my name from JADHAO KOMAL RAVINDRA to KOMAL RAVINDRA JADHAV for all future purposes vide Affidavit Dated 24/07/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

Name Change
I, BHIMLAL AHR S/O Shri Gurudin Yadav, E-154, pkt-3, DDA flat Bindapur Uttam nagar, New Delhi 110059, have Changed my name from BHIMLAL AHR to BHIMLAL YADAV Address E-154, pkt-3, DDA flat Bindapur Uttam nagar, New Delhi 110059.

Name Change
I, PRASHANT S/O TEK CHAND residing at 107, KRISHAN KUNJ COLONY, LAXMI NAGAR, DELHI-110092 have changed my name to PRASHANT KUMAR for all future purpose.

Name Change
I hereto known as Raveendra Swami alias R N Swami alias Dr Raveendra Swami s/o nam teerth swami r/o kiran clinic, C-1, sector-21C, Part-1, Faridabad Haryana-121012 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Ravinder Nath Swami.

Name Change
I, RAHUL SINGH S/O KISHAN SINGH, R/O KHASRA NO 444, GALLI NO 3, SHIV MANDIR PARTAP VIHAR, KHORA COLONY, KHORA GAON, GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH - 201309, have changed my name from RAHUL to RAHUL SINGH for all future purpose.

Name Change
I, JADHAO KOMAL RAVINDRA Wife of JC-708723W Rank-NB SUB (NA) Name-JADHAV RAVINDRA RAMRAO Presently residing at GAJANAN NAGAR, WARD NO-17, CHIKHILI, DISTT-BULDHANA, MAHARASHTRA-443201 have changed my name from JADHAO KOMAL RAVINDRA to KOMAL RAVINDRA JADHAV for all future purposes vide Affidavit Dated 24/07/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

Name Change
I, BHIMLAL AHR S/O Shri Gurudin Yadav, E-154, pkt-3, DDA flat Bindapur Uttam nagar, New Delhi 110059, have Changed my name from BHIMLAL AHR to BHIMLAL YADAV Address E-154, pkt-3, DDA flat Bindapur Uttam nagar, New Delhi 110059.

PUBLIC NOTICE
My client Smt. NIRMALA W/O LATE Sh. Om Prakash R/O C-417, DAKSHINPURI, Pustha Bhawan S/O, South Delhi, Delhi 110086, have disowned and debarred their daughter Neha from her movable and immovable properties and severed all the relations due to her arrogance/greediness and misdeeds and if any one deals with her in future, my clients shall not be responsible in any manner for any of her acts/deeds.

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My client Smt. NIRMALA W/O LATE Sh. Om Prakash R/O C-417, DAKSHINPURI, Pustha Bhawan S/O, South Delhi, Delhi 110086, have disowned and debarred their daughter Neha from her movable and immovable properties and severed all the relations due to her arrogance/greediness and misdeeds and if any one deals with her in future, my clients shall not be responsible in any manner for any of her acts/deeds.

Name Change
I, JADHAO KOMAL RAVINDRA Wife of JC-708723W Rank-NB SUB (NA) Name-JADHAV RAVINDRA RAMRAO Presently residing at GAJANAN NAGAR, WARD NO-17, CHIKHILI, DISTT-BULDHANA, MAHARASHTRA-443201 have changed my name from JADHAO KOMAL RAVINDRA to KOMAL RAVINDRA JADHAV for all future purposes vide Affidavit Dated 24/07/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NOTICE
Public at large is hereby informed that my client Smt. Rajni Devi W/o Sh. Manoj Kumar is the owner of Residential land area measuring 287.11 sq. yds. par of Gata No. 636/1, Situated at Village Jaoli, Pergana and Tehsil Sikandrabad, Distt. Bulandshahr, U.P. vide Regd. Gift Deed dated 11/04/2022 executed by Sh. Giriraj S/o Sh. Pitam Singh in favour of Smt. Rajni Devi W/o Sh. Manoj Kumar as vide Doc No. 3676, in Book No. 1, Vol No. 10187, SR-Sikandrabad, in respect of land area measuring 287.11 sq. yds. Initially, Sh. Pitam Singh was recorded owner of the said property, who died leaving behind legal heir (1) Sh. Giriraj. Later said property mutated in revenue record in name of Sh. Giriraj S/o Sh. Pitam Singh who executed Regd. Gift Deed dated 11/04/2022 in favour of abandonment client who will be mortgaging the said property with Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Ltd. Whosoever is having any objection to the said mortgage or anyone has claim or right or interest in the property shall contact the undersigned with the objection within 07 days failing which it shall be presumed that there stands no objections.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Information is given to general public at large that our client Smt. Sarita W/o Sh. Jagpal are the owner of Freehold Residential House of Land area measuring 0 kanal 4 Marla 1 Sarsai i.e. 127 sq. yds., out of Khewad no. 256 rect. No. 37, Killa no. 18/2/19/2(B), situated in the residential colony known as Village Fazilpur Jharsa, Gurugram, Tehsil Badshapur Distt. Gurugram Haryana. By Virtue, Sale Deed dated 30.01.2024 Duly registered as SR - Badshapur, Docs no. 16263, Book no. 1, Vol no. 603/1/172 Page no. 1, 98/47-1, Dated 30.01.2024, in the chain documents below mentioned documents not available i.e. Death Certificate & SMC of late Mr. Ranjeet Ratan Mehra now our client is declaring that that any other Person does not have any right over the said property. Same property is currently financed by ICICI Home Finance Company Limited and now same is going to be going to be refinanced by Utkarsh Small Finance Bank Limited Branch: Noida Uttar Pradesh. If any person is having objection right of claim against the said property, contact to undersigned along with supporting documents within 07 days from the date of publication of this notice and or the same to the undersigned if found by anyone. Thereafter no claim shall be entertained.

NEWS BOX

Donald Trump to meet Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu in Florida on Friday

Washington Republican presidential candidate and former US president Donald Trump on Tuesday said he would meet Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at his Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida on Friday. Netanyahu is in Washington and will on Wednesday address a joint session of the US Congress, the only foreign leader to do so for a fourth time. He would also meet with President Joe Biden at the White House on Thursday. "At the request of Bibi Netanyahu, we have switched this meeting to Friday, July 26 at Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Florida!" Trump said. "Looking forward to welcoming Bibi Netanyahu at Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Florida, on Thursday (July 25)", he had earlier said in a post of Truth Social, a social media platform. "During my first term, we had Peace and Stability in the Region, even signing the historic Abraham Accords - And we will have it again", he said. This would be his first meeting with a foreign head of state after becoming the Republican presidential nominee on July 18. On July 19, he had a phone call with the Ukrainian president. "Just as I have said in discussions with President Zelensky and other World Leaders in recent weeks, my PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH Agenda will demonstrate to the World that these horrible, deadly Wars, and violent Conflicts must end. Millions are dying, and Kamala Harris is in no way capable of stopping it", Trump said.

Kamala Harris's presidential campaign raises \$100 million in 'historic haul'

Washington Vice President Kamala Harris, who is now the presumptive presidential nominee of the Democratic Party, has raised an unprecedented \$100 million from more than 1.1 million people for her presidential campaign, reflecting the groundswell of support in her favour. "Team Harris raised more than \$100 million between Sunday afternoon and Monday evening, now boasting more than 1.1 million unique donors since Sunday, with 62 per cent of them being first-time donors. This haul reflects money raised across the campaign, Democratic National Committee, and joint fundraising committees", the Harris Campaign said on Tuesday afternoon. "On top of that, Team Harris raised \$81 million in its first 24 hours, adding to the existing near quarter-of-a-billion dollar war chest already amassed this election cycle. With this historic haul, Harris for President saw the highest 24-hour raise of any candidate in history with over 888,000 grassroots donors making donations", it said. "There is a groundswell behind Kamala Harris, and convicted felon Donald Trump knows his divisive, unpopular agenda can't stand up to the vice president's record and vision for the American people", the campaign said, according to which more than 30,000 new volunteers have signed up for the campaign.

Biden returns to White House after testing negative for Covid

Washington US President Joe Biden returned to the White House on Tuesday, after days of self-isolation at his Delaware House, with his doctors saying that his symptoms of Covid-19 have been resolved. "I am feeling well," Biden said when asked how he is feeling. The President took a Binax rapid antigen test and is negative, Dr Kevin O'Connor, Physician to the White House said in a memorandum to the White House Press Secretary. Biden's "symptoms have resolved", he said. He did not respond to shouted questions about why he dropped out of the race and whether his deputy Vice President Kamala Harris could beat the Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump. During his quarantine period, the 81-year-old President sent political shockwaves around the country on Sunday with a post on social media announcing that he was not accepting the Democratic nomination. He added that he would "focus all his energies on his duties as president for the remainder of his term" and offered his full support and endorsement to his vice president, Kamala Harris, as his choice to replace him on the ticket. The announcement came after mounting pressure about Biden's age and ability to take on Republican rival Trump. Biden tested positive for Covid-19 while campaigning in Las Vegas on Wednesday and had been isolated at his Delaware home since. "The President's symptoms have been resolved. Over the course of his infection, he never manifested a fever, and his vital signs remained normal, including pulse oximetry. His lungs remained clear," said O'Connor. "His infection is negative. He will continue to be monitored for any recurrence of illness. The President continues to perform all of his presidential duties. As always, I will continue to keep your office updated with any changes in his condition or treatment plan," he added.

US elections: Republican leaders urge colleagues to steer clear of racist, sexist attacks on Harris

WASHINGTON Republican leaders are warning party members against using overtly racist and sexist attacks against Vice President Kamala Harris, as they and former President Donald Trump's campaign scramble to adjust to the reality of a new Democratic rival less than four months before Election Day. At a closed-door meeting of House Republicans on Tuesday, National Republican Congressional Committee chairman Richard Hudson, R-N.C., urged lawmakers to stick to criticising Harris for her role in Biden-Harris administration policies. "This election will be about policies and not personalities," House Speaker Mike Johnson told reporters after the meeting. "This is not personal with regard to Kamala Harris," he added, "and her ethnicity or her gender have nothing to do with this whatsoever." The warnings point to the new risks for Republicans in running against a Democrat who would become the first woman, first Black woman and first person of South Asian descent to win the White House. Trump, in particular, has a history of racist and misogynistic attacks that could turn off key groups of swing voters, including suburban women, as well as voters of colour and younger people. Trump's campaign has been courting. The admonitions came after some members and Trump allies began to cast Harris, a former district attorney, attorney general and senator, as a "DEI" hire—a reference to diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

US man involved in 2021 Capitol riot charged with fleeing to Ireland to avoid jail

UPDATED. A Wisconsin man fled to Ireland and sought asylum to avoid a prison sentence for joining a mob's attack on the US Capitol over three years ago, federal authorities allege in a court filing on Tuesday. The filing charges Paul Kovacik with defying a court order to surrender and serve three months behind bars for participating in the January 6, 2021, riot at the Capitol. Kovacik, 56, was arrested last month after he voluntarily returned to the US from Ireland. Kovacik is serving his sentence at a federal prison in Chicago and is scheduled to be released from prison on September 8. But a conviction on the new misdemeanor charge could lead to more time behind bars. Kovacik told authorities that he decided to withdraw his asylum claim and return to the US because he felt homesick, according to a US Marshals Service deputy's affidavit. The FBI initially arrested Kovacik in June 2022. A year later, US District Judge Reggie Walton sentenced Kovacik after he pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor



charge of parading, demonstrating or picketing in a Capitol building. Kovacik took videos of rioters' damage as he moved through the Capitol on January 6. He later uploaded his footage onto his YouTube channel, with titles such as "Treason Against the United States is about to be committed", according to prosecutors. They said Kovacik's criminal record included 24 prior convictions. Walton initially ordered Kovacik to report to prison on August 22, 2023, but the judge agreed to extend that deadline to November 1, 2023, after

Kovacik requested more time for his seasonal employment at a theme park in Georgia. The court issued a warrant for Kovacik's arrest after he fled to Dublin, Ireland, through Germany on the day that he was supposed to report to prison in Chicago. Kovacik called himself a "political prisoner" when investigators questioned him after his arrest last month at an arrival gate at Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport, according to the deputy's affidavit. Inside his luggage, authorities found documents related to his asylum request, which cited a fear of political persecution, the deputy wrote. The affidavit doesn't say whether the Irish government acted on Kovacik's request. An attorney who represented Kovacik in his Capitol riot case declined to comment on the new charge. More than 1,400 people have been charged with federal crimes related to the January 6 attack. Several other Capitol riot defendants have become fugitives at different stages of their prosecutions.

Taiwan on alert as typhoon Gaemi approaches; flights cancelled, offices shut

Yilan. Taiwan hunkered down on Wednesday ahead of the arrival of Typhoon Gaemi, with financial markets closed, people given the day off work, flights cancelled, and the military put on stand-by amid forecasts of torrential rain and strong winds. Gaemi, the first typhoon of the season to affect Taiwan, is expected to make landfall on the northeast coast early evening on Wednesday, according to the island's Central Weather Administration. Currently categorised as a medium-strength typhoon by Taiwan, it is then likely to move across the Taiwan Strait and then hit the southeastern Chinese province of Fujian late afternoon Friday. In rural Yilan county, where the typhoon will first hit land, wind and rain gathered strength, shutting breakfast eateries and roads mostly emptied. "This could be the biggest typhoon in recent years," fishing boat captain Hung Chun told Reuters, adding Yilan's Suao harbour was packed with boats seeking shelter. "It's charging directly towards the east coast and if it makes landfall here the damage would be enormous." Work and school are



suspended across Taiwan, with the streets of capital Taipei almost deserted during what is normally rush hour amid squally rain. The transport ministry said almost all domestic flights had been cancelled, along with 201 international flights. All rail operations will stop from midday (0400GMT), but the high speed rail services connecting northern and southern Taiwan will continue to operate, it added. However, TSMC (2330.TW), the world's largest contract chipmaker and a major supplier to Apple (AAPL.O), said it expected its factories to maintain normal production during the typhoon, adding it had activated routine preparation procedures. SOLDIERS

STANDING BY Some mountainous central and southern Taiwan counties are expected to see total rainfall of up to 1,800 mm (70 inches) during the typhoon, the weather administration said. More than 2,000 people have been evacuated from sparsely populated mountain areas, the government said, which are at high risk of landslides from the "extremely torrential rain". Taiwan's defence ministry said it was ready to assist with disaster relief and had put 29,000 soldiers on stand-by. While the typhoon has severely curtailed this year's annual Han Kuang war games they have not been cancelled, with live fire drills taking place as scheduled on the Penghu islands in the Taiwan Strait on Wednesday morning. The typhoon is forecast to make landfall in China's Fujian late Thursday. Gaemi, with a cloud system spanning the Western Pacific, northern Philippines and parts of the South China Sea, is expected then to turn north, bringing rain to provinces such as Hubei, Henan and even Hebei.

Officers left post to go look for Trump rally gunman before shooting, state police boss says

WASHINGTON. Two local law enforcement officers stationed in the complex of buildings where a gunman opened fire at former President Donald Trump left to go search for the man before the shooting, the head of Pennsylvania State Police said Tuesday, raising questions about whether a key post was left unattended as the shooter climbed onto a roof. Pennsylvania State Police Col. Christopher Paris told a congressional committee that two Butler County Emergency Services Unit officers were stationed at a second-floor window in the complex of buildings that form AGR International Inc. They spotted Thomas Matthew Crooks acting suspiciously on the ground and left their post to look for him along with other law enforcement officers, he said. Paris said he didn't know

whether officers would have been able to see Crooks climbing onto the roof of an adjacent building had they remained at the window. A video taken by a lawmaker who visited the shooting site on Monday shows a second-story window of the building had a clear view of the roof where Crooks opened fire; it was unclear if the video showed the window where the officers had been stationed. The Pennsylvania State Police commissioner's testimony before the House Homeland Security Committee provides new insight into security preparations for the Trump rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, on July 13, but raises further questions about law enforcement's decisions before Crooks opened fire. Butler County District Attorney Richard Goldinger, who oversees the emergency services

unit, didn't immediately respond to a text message Tuesday from The Associated Press. A Secret Service spokesperson didn't respond to questions from the AP, including who gave the command for those officers to leave their post. The revelation comes amid growing questions about a multitude of security failures that allowed the 20-year-old gunman to get onto the roof and fire eight shots with an AR-style rifle into the crowd shortly after Trump began speaking. One spectator was killed and two others were injured. Trump suffered an ear injury but was not seriously hurt. Secret Service Director Kimberly Cheatle resigned earlier Tuesday, a day after she was berated for hours by Democrats and Republicans over the agency's failure to protect the Republican presidential nominee.



people and Government of Ethiopia as rescue efforts continue to find the missing and assist the displaced," African Union chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat wrote on the social media platform X. The head of the World Health Organization Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who is Ethiopian, said he was thinking of all the families affected and that a WHO team had been sent to support immediate health needs. "As the region continues to face the harsh impacts of climate change, we urge everyone to stay vigilant and follow safety protocols to protect lives and prevent further tragedies," said Workneh Gebeyehu, executive secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, a regional bloc.

3,000 migrants travel in caravans to US border, undeterred by crackdown

About 3,000 people carrying bags, water and small children trod through intense heat along a highway in southern Mexico, travelling in two groups aiming to



presidential election. "Whoever is (in charge of the US government), we will continue the fight to be there," said Leivi Galvina, a migrant from Honduras. "We have to fight for our dream." As they walked, the group shouted phrases like "yes we can," while pushing worn-out strollers. In recent years, caravans have been a means for tens of thousands of migrants to cross Mexico, often as a safety measure amid reports that robberies, rapes and kidnappings of migrants are common. The caravans are often a lifeline for those who cannot afford to pay a smuggler or human trafficker for a "safer" journey. "I travel more safely in a caravan, I don't want to be killed in Mexico," said Yoisy, a Venezuelan migrant who tired of waiting for an appointment through the US Customs and Border Protection CBP One platform to apply for asylum. The Security Ministry in Chiapas, Mexico's southernmost state, bordering Guatemala,

told Reuters there were between 2,500 and 3,000 people in the caravan and most were Venezuelans. Another local government source said there had been a significant increase in the number of children in recent caravans. In June, when the Biden administration early in the month implemented a policy prohibiting migrants caught crossing the US-Mexico border illegally from applying for asylum, the daily average of arrests ranged between 2,500 and 3,000 migrants per day for a week, a huge decline from prior months. But thousands of migrants continue to take a shot at seeking asylum in the United States with the hope of leaving behind insecurity, poverty and other problems in their home countries. Jose Maria Garcia, director of the Juventud 2000 migrant shelter in Tijuana, said he did not know to which border town the caravans were headed, but said the uncertain outcome of the upcoming US elections could be a motivating catalyst. "The migrant community is very confused," he said, of how migrants view the future of US immigration policy.

PMLA court rejects extension of hosp stay for bizman

Mumbai. Observing that luxury under the guise of hospitalization cannot be accorded to the accused, a special PMLA court rejected the plea of 80-year-old Bhandra businessman Manoharlal Agicha, arrested in a Rs 149 crore money laundering case, who sought an extension of his stay at a private hospital.

The court had initially granted Agicha the relief of private hospitalization in March, after which he sought repeated extensions for treatment. The court has directed him to be sent to Arthur Road jail. The judge referred to the latest hospital report which stated that a surgical option was available, but a decision was not yet taken as Agicha desired a few more weeks of medical management. "This itself demonstrates that there is no urgency for the surgery of the applicant. As far as providing medicines is concerned, that can be facilitated in the jail itself by the authorities," the judge remarked.

Bombay high court grants interim stay on Indrani Mukerjea's travel permit. Bombay high court temporarily halts Indrani Mukerjea's travel to Europe in Sheena Bora murder case. CBI petition to be heard on July 29. Stay updated on the latest developments.

Russian court jails US reporter Gershkovich for 16 years after convicting him of espionage. Learn about the case of US reporter Evan Gershkovich sentenced to 16 years in a Russian prison on espionage charges. The Wall Street Journal calls it a sham trial. Governments and the EU condemn the sentence as politically motivated. Find out more here. 'How is this plea maintainable?': Supreme Court rejects convicts' petition in Bilkis Bano case. Supreme Court dismisses plea by Bilkis Bano case convicts challenging remission cancellation. Convicts' request for larger bench denied. Get the latest updates on this legal development.

Water supply to be hit due to smart road work in Thiruvananthapuram

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM. The recently tarred Althara - Thycaud smart city road will be cut open again owing to the apathy and lack of coordination between agencies including Kerala Water Authority, Kerala Road Fund Board and Smart City Thiruvananthapuram Ltd (SCTL). Hundreds of residents along the stretch are facing water supply disruption for the past one and a half months due to the ongoing smart road works in the stretch. It is learnt that due to the ongoing road construction, the 400 mm primo pipes of the KWA have burst in multiple locations disrupting water supply to many residential areas. Though the residents have been raising this issue, the authorities have failed to fix the issue and restore the water supply.

On Tuesday, representatives of five residents associations in the area staged a protest at Vellayambalam KWA office demanding immediate restoration of water supply. Several residential areas including CSM Nagar, Udara Siromani Road, Palottukonam, Althara and Mettukada areas are suffering from water supply shortage. "We have been facing water supply disruption for nearly two months now. We took it up with the authorities multiple times but the issue remains unresolved. Today we went to the KWA office and the response was disappointing. We are paying the KWA and they want us to take it up with the Uralungal Labour Contract Cooperative Society (ULCCS), the agency executing the smart road work," said joint secretary Suresh Babu, CSM Nagar Residents' Association. "When we argued, they



promised to resolve the crisis by this Saturday. They were saying there are three leaks in the pipe and only one of it has been plugged," said Suresh.

Sumesh Krishnan, who coordinated the protest by the residents' association, said that lack of coordination between departments led to the crisis.

"Power, water and network issues are rampant in the stretch due to the smart road works and there is no coordination between the agencies. If they don't fix the issue by Saturday, we will intensify the protest," he alleged. According to KWA, the issue will be resolved once the new pipelines laid as part of Smart city road works are charged. A KWA official said the water disruption happened because of the age-old pipeline burst owing to the construction activities. "It would have been better if the new pipelines were charged before tarring was done. They have laid only one layer of the tarring. We will have to cut open the road at Althara-Manaveeyam for the work. We will do the work in the next two days and by Saturday

the issue will be resolved," said the official.

Areas to be affected

The KWA has informed that drinking water supply will be disrupted in various parts of the city from 8am on Thursday to 5pm on Friday. Curbs are in place due to the smart city work on the Althara-Mettukada stretch where new lines are being charged and merged with old lines. Areas that will be affected are Palayam, Statue, MG Road, Secretariat, nearby areas of AKG Centre, General Hospital, Kunnukuzhi, Thampuranmukku, Vanchiyoor, Rishimangalam, Chirakulam, Pattoor, Moolavilakam, Palkulangara, Pettah, Anayara, Karikkakom, Oruvathilkotta, Poudkadavu, Veli, Chackai, All Saints', Vettucad, Shanghumugham, Althara, Vazhuthacaud, Cotton Hill, Edapazhanji, Mettukada, Valiyasala, Thycaud, PMG Junction, Law College, Kumarapuram, Kannanmoola, Poonthi Road, Sasthamangalam, Paipinmoodu, Jawahar Nagar, Nanthencode, Kowdiar and Vellayambalam.

City gets 5mm of rain, more likely

Ahmedabad. People of Ahmedabad rejoiced as the skies opened on Tuesday, albeit for a short spell of rain, bringing much-needed respite from heat and humidity. The city received light showers, recording 5mm cumulative rainfall. According to India Meteorological Department's (IMD) forecast, Wednesday too may bring light to moderate rain.

It started raining around noon and continued till 2 pm in most parts of western Ahmedabad. Bavla received 18mm of rain and Daskroi recorded 39mm.

The IMD forecast for Wednesday indicated chances of heavy to very heavy rain in Surat, Navesari, Valsad, Porbandar, Junagadh, and Devbhumi Dwarka, and heavy rain in Vadodara, Narmada, Bharuch, Dang, Tapi, Rajkot, Jamnagar, Gir Somnath and Kutch.

Porbandar and Dwarka flooded in heavy rain. Discover the impact of heavy rain in Dwarka, Porbandar, and Junagadh districts of Saurashtra. Schools closed and hundreds rescued as towns face flooding and infrastructure damage. Stay informed on the latest updates.

Goa orange alert: Heavy rain forecast till Saturday by IMD. IMD issues orange alert for Goa with heavy rain predicted till Saturday. Residents advised to take precautionary measures and stay updated with local authorities' alerts. Fishermen urged to avoid the sea until July 21. Stay informed with regular weather updates and follow safety guidelines. 111807908

Brace for heavy rain till weekend: IMD. Stay informed about the orange alert issued by the India meteorological department for heavy rain in Goa. Precautionary measures are advised due to the risk of water logging, lightning strikes, and potential flash floods. Fishermen should avoid the sea until July 21. Monitor weather updates for safety.

FIR as Thane woman 'fakes identity' to visit Pakistan and marry Insta pal

THANE. Sara* risked it all for love and safety—leaving behind her allegedly abusive husband and creating a whole new identity to cross over to Pakistan with her two young daughters and marry her Instagram boyfriend. An FIR has now been filed in Thane against the 23-year-old for allegedly forging documents to obtain a passport and a Pakistani visa under a fake identity.

As per a senior police official, the woman, who hailed from UP, moved to Thane last year to live with her mother to escape her allegedly abusive husband. She soon befriended a man from Pakistan on Instagram and eventually fell in love with him. After some time, the two decided to get married and live together in Abbottabad, Pakistan, where the boyfriend stayed and worked.

Worried that her marital status would come in the way of her new love and that her husband would track her down, the woman decided to create a new identity to avoid getting caught, said sources. "To make this possible, she allegedly changed her name, obtained fake Aadhaar and PAN cards and forged new birth

certificates for her daughters through a shop in Thane. She used these fake documents to apply for a passport and even got the police verification done," said a police officer. She completed the process by last Oct, went to Abbottabad on a one-month visa with her daughters and married the man. While staying there, she applied for a six-month visa extension but failed to secure it. Sources said she came under central agencies' lens after the Indian High Commission there alerted them to the bid to extend her visa. They said the agencies kept tabs on her there, but her fraud was exposed only after she returned to Thane sometime around Nov last year after her mother took ill.

The FIR was registered on July 20 against the woman and the shopkeeper who helped procure the fake documents for cheating and forgery as well as under relevant sections of Indian Passport Act. No arrest has so far been made, even as the probe is underway. An official laid the blame at police's door, saying had they been more diligent with the verification, she could have been caught earlier. (*Name changed to protect identity)



Man in coma for five years, HC makes wife his guardian

Ahmedabad. The Gujarat high court has permitted a woman to become the guardian of her husband and manage his estate as he has been in a coma for five years after suffering a head injury.

Karansinh Dodiya (51) has been in a vegetative state since 2019 when he fell and suffered head injury at a private hospital where he was being treated for dengue. Facing financial problems in continuing his treatment, his wife Anju, her two children and father-in-law approached the high court in March, asking to appoint her his guardian and let her manage his properties and business.

The family's advocate, Siddharth Kheskani, submitted that the HC's declaration was being sought because there is no provision for guardianship of a comatose person under the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, the National Trust Act for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act or the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act. He cited an order of



the Kerala high court in a similar case and asserted that this was the first case before the Gujarat HC. The declaration was sought so that the family can take proper medical care of the patient. After perusing an inquiry report by the Ahmedabad district collector, Justice Sangeeta Vishen on Monday declared Anju the guardian of her husband and the manager of his properties, authorizing her to operate his properties including land, bank accounts, firms and partnership firms for as long as he remains in a state of coma.

The HC created a monitoring system to ensure that the patient's interests are taken care of. The wife has been asked

to file a report every three months with the HC's registrar general (RG) on transactions and funds received by her and their utilization to maintain the patient. The RG has been directed to maintain a separate register for this case. If the finds there is no care and support for the patient, the RG can place the matter before the HC for revocation of the guardianship order.

In case of cancellation of the guardianship order, the HC said it could appoint another person/public authority/social welfare officer as the guardian. The wife is duty-bound to meet the obligations prescribed in the National Trust Act.

The HC ordered a social welfare officer to visit the patient's house every week and report to the registrar general. If the officer is not satisfied with the care given to the patient, he can file an application in the HC. If a family member or friend finds the wife neglecting the patient's interests, the HC can be approached immediately for removal of the guardian.

City biz chambers hail rationalisation of duties

Kolkata. The business chambers from the city hailed the budget for rationalisation of customs duty but some felt there was still lack of clarity in a few areas. Indian Chamber of Commerce president Ameya Prabhu said: "We had given recommendations on the rationalization of custom duties. The budget has been made keeping in mind the entire country, though certain states will get an impetus."

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) welcomed the budget that aims at rural development, MSMEs, public infrastructure boost and enhanced role of women in economic development with a focus on the east and the northeast. Shashwat Goenka, deputy chairman of CII eastern region, said: "The essential part of the budget is the focus on the regional sectors, be it for infrastructure, agriculture or tourism. It further builds on the foundation for a Viksit Bharat."

Investment package for the eastern region will witness proportionate allocation for all the states of the region, according to Gautam Ray, president of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The budget has had a mixed response from the Merchants' Chamber of Commerce and Industry. President Namit Bajoria said: "We had asked for an inclusion of premium medical insurance in the new regime. That has not been addressed."

N G Khaitan, president of Bharat Chamber of Commerce, thought that the decision to enhance

the limit of loans under the MUDRA scheme to Rs 20 lakh from Rs 10 lakh will boost credit access for the micro enterprises. "The drive on skill development, modernisation of industrial training institutes and employment generation through incentives for internship is admirable," he added. Budget 2024: Industry leaders share their insights on the future of the travel sector based on fund allocation, infrastructure development, and other major initiatives. Discover the key highlights of the Union Budget 2024-25 for India's travel and tourism sector. From infrastructure development to spiritual tourism initiatives, learn how the budget aims to boost growth and innovation in the industry. 111963340

Budget 2024-25: Jyotiraditya Scindia praises Union Budget for development focus. Discover the key highlights of the Union Budget 2024-25 praised by Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and UP CM Yogi Adityanath. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman allocates substantial funds for agriculture, research, and cooperative sector development. 111957043

Budget reflects govts focus on infrastructure: Bizmen. Discover the key highlights of the Union budget 2024-25, emphasizing infrastructure, inclusive growth, and support for key sectors like agriculture and employment. Learn about the measures benefiting the leather and footwear industry and the changes in tax slabs to promote economic development. 111972322

Struggles of Chennai's trans community: Harsh reality of limited opportunities

CHENNAI. Through the narrow alley beside a canal, strewn with garbage and plastics, Lily* ushered me to her house in Mylapore. She lives in a single room that is surrounded by other houses. Her place is usually frequented by her friends, and when I stepped inside, Lily introduced Arun* and Rithu*. She distinctly stressed that they are educated. There was pride in her tone when she said Arun is a graduate and Rithu has enrolled her name in a college to pursue BA Tamil.

Lily, who is now in her early twenties, also went to school, but she knows that school education cannot earn her a desired life and job. Lily was in class 8 when she realised that she was a woman — she began to see changes in her interests. She says, "I started wearing t-shirts, started growing my hair, started applying kohl, started wearing paavadai (skirt)." This transition, she says, created a lot of problems for her. People's perceptions about her also started changing, which forced to leave home and school after class 9. She then joined the trans

community where she could live a trouble-free life. But to sustain herself, she had to look for jobs. She says, "I had worked in small companies. But they would tease me, pass vulgar comments, and make me uncomfortable with their gaze, and so, I had to leave those jobs." Lack of higher education surfaced our conversation every now and then. She laments, "Government's aid benefits the educated. What do we do?"

Not just educational background, one's gender also determines if one gets a job or not. A lot of places they have sought for jobs look for a cis man or cis woman. Lily says, "I don't understand why we are driven away. The equality that is seen on papers hasn't yet seeped into the majority of human minds."

Lack of choice

A good, steady job is a rarity in the lives of many trans people. Lily says, "I earn money by seeking alms on trains and streets, and by prostitution. If there was a chance, I would have fled from this

situation." Like Lily, there are many who rely on sex work and charity.

On the fringes of Pattinapakam beach, in a house with tinned roof and faded green walls, situated in a surrounding scattered with bags of waste, lives another group of trans women. Thirty-two-year-old Reena* who lives there, says, "Unlike the trans people from the privileged strata, we do not have a safe life. We are devoid of options."

Reena, in her early twenties, had to discontinue her college after her second year of her bachelor's degree in Biochemistry, says, "A decade ago, there were only two genders, male and female. We were not allowed to pursue studies. I did not want a certificate with a man's tag in it." It was during her college days that she went to Mumbai for gender-affirmation surgery. As she says, it's the lack of choices that pushed her into sex work. She says, "I want a government job," adding that the government should reserve some positions for trans people, according to their qualification.

Chandipura virus: One dead in city

Ahmedabad. Acute encephalitis syndrome (AES) cases in the state crossed 100 on Tuesday. The state added 13 new cases in 24 hours, including two from Ahmedabad city, taking the tally to 101. The state also reported death of two patients, one each from Ahmedabad city and Gandhinagar district. Of total cases, 10 are from Sabarkantha, nine from Ahmedabad city, and six each from Aravalli, Mahisagar, Kheda and Mehsana among others. Of the 38 deaths so far, five are in Panchmahal, followed by three each in Aravalli, Rajkot, Ahmedabad city, Morbi, and

Banaskantha. The new case is a six-year-old child from Chandkheda, sources said. Two of the girls, both about 11 years of age and from Sardarnagar and Amraiwadi areas, are under treatment at private hospitals, they added. Teams of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) carried out a fumigation and sanitation drive and sprayed organophosphate insecticides in the affected areas. The teams also told the residents to report any case if the symptoms are similar to that of encephalitis. The central team began visiting the affected areas on Tuesday, the state health



department officials said. "So far, the statewide sanitation drive has covered 4.16 lakh houses with mud walls. Insecticides

have been sprayed in over 62,000 homes. We also published the following articles recently Health ministry reviews Chandipura virus, Acute Encephalitis Syndrome cases in Gujarat, Rajasthan and MP. Learn about the recent review of Chandipura virus and Acute Encephalitis Syndrome cases in Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh by health experts. Discover the importance of investigating AES cases and the known viral causes. Find out how AES affects children under 15 years of age. Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation new rule allows only 1-time corrections in

birth certificate. Learn about the recent restrictions on name corrections for birth certificates in Ahmedabad. The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation has limited changes to just one-time corrections to address the increasing number of modification requests.

MBMC to own Ghodbunder road between Gaimukh and Ahmedabad highway junction. Find out about the transfer of ownership of Ghodbunder road stretch for upgrades. The road will be widened to accommodate growing traffic and will feature an elevated metro rail route.

Hasina must learn from Rajapaksa ouster

POLITICAL street violence in Bangladesh has been a recurring event for nearly three decades. But even by these standards, the killing of over 100 people, many of them student protesters shot dead by the police, is a new low in the five-decade history of the country. With this, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who in January won a fourth consecutive term in office in an election boycotted by the Opposition, on a barely 40 per cent turnout, has entered politically hazardous territory. The Bangladesh Supreme Court's order slashing the quota of 30 per cent of government jobs for descendants of freedom fighters, and bringing down all reservation to a total of 7 per cent from the previous 56 per cent, may not end the Bangladesh leader's troubles.

The protests against the quota for freedom fighters are just one manifestation of deep anger against a Prime Minister who was once hailed as a model of democracy and secularism in the Islamic world, but who has since consolidated her hold on power in the manner of an authoritarian — describing the Opposition as 'terrorists', jailing its leaders, lashing out at critics as 'traitors' to the nation, muzzling the media, and being accused by rights activists of using enforced disappearances and extra-judicial killings to silence them. Hasina, who has survived more than one assassination attempt, would like the world to see her as the last woman standing between Islamist extremism and her fragile country. But even her supporters are finding it hard to justify her methods.

Writing in these columns recently on the 75th anniversary of the Awami League, the party of Bangladesh's liberation that Hasina led for four decades, Mahfuz Anam, editor of The Daily Star, described how it had lost its way badly. The Awami League, he wrote, "today is its own judge and jury. It is a typical example of a political party living in its own bubble. And since it has monopoly control on all the levers of power, the bubble, as fragile as it is, can also be dangerous. This is so because the reality presented by the bubble can form the basis of decisions that can fatally harm us all." Hasina has been in office continuously since January 2009. Her landslide victory in the December 2008 elections came after a tumultuous period for the country and was hailed internationally as a win for progressive forces in Bangladesh. But a mutiny by officers of the Bangladesh Rifles in February 2009, a month after she was sworn in, shook her government.

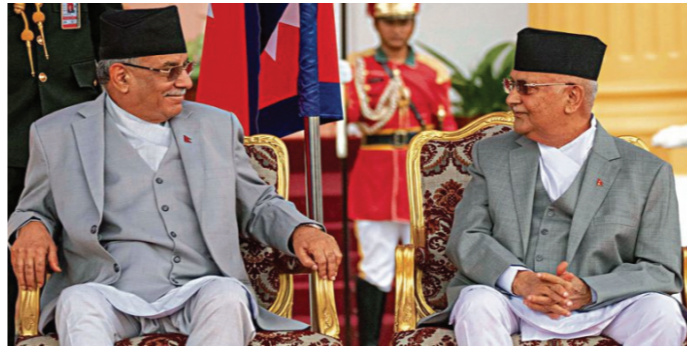
Hasina survived that crisis, with Delhi holding her hand. In the 15 years since then, Bangladesh's economic turnaround and its solid progress on human development indicators — the country is set to graduate from the Least Developed Category in 2026 — won her much international admiration, at the same time as her increasingly authoritarian political style drew criticism and made her unpopular at home. The 2012-13 fast-tracking of a process to punish Pakistan's Islamist collaborators during the 1971 Liberation War, which led to the execution of six Jamaat-e-Islami leaders and one of the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) after a quick trial and conviction by a special court, fuelled polarisation in the polity. The Jamaat-e-Islami was banned, and the BNP has since boycotted two elections — in 2013 and 2023 — over its unmet demand for a caretaker government to oversee the electoral process. The party contested the 2018 election, but its leader, Khaleda Zia, was convicted and jailed, and not allowed to run. The Hasina government's counter-terrorism response after a wave of Islamist-linked killings of secular activists culminating in the 2016 terrorist attack on a cafe in Dhaka, is seen to have been effective. But Hasina's one-party rule and the government's single-minded focus on wiping out the political opposition have led to a vacuum in the polity that is being filled by a yearning in large sections of the public for Islamic governance. This is especially so as Bangladesh's economic dream run has now run out of gas, literally. Russia's Ukraine war slowed down the country's post-pandemic recovery, with a direct impact on the citizens. Food inflation is high. An acute unemployment crisis has worsened people's lives. And a young population is demanding political accountability from an unresponsive government. This is why the quota in jobs brought students out on the streets, resulting in last week's bloodshed.

Nepal's political churn a test for its ties with India

India could do more than any other country for transit and connectivity with Nepal.

WITH a new Prime Minister at the helm, Nepal has had its 30th change in the head of government since the 1990 Jana Andolan — which instituted constitutional monarchy — and the 15th since the 2006 Loktantra Andolan, which abolished the monarchy and established a parliamentary republic. In the last nine years, the government has changed eight times, with KP Sharma Oli of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), Pushpa Kamal Dahal of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) and Sher Bahadur Deuba of the Nepali Congress successively becoming the PM. Ideology has nothing to do with political changes in Nepal. Oli has become the PM for the fourth time, with a comfortable majority. He won the floor test in the 275-member Pratinidhi Sabha (House of Representatives) on Sunday with more than two-thirds majority, with 188 votes in favour of the Vote of Confidence motion tabled by him.

Former Ambassador to India and retired Kathmandu University professor Lok Raj Baral recently described Nepali politics as being "full of absurdities" and termed the frequent changes in its government 'pantomime' or 'nautanki'. In his first tenure, Oli was annoyed with India. He made several anti-Indian moves. For example, he claimed that Thori (near Birgunj) was the real Ayodhya — the birthplace of Lord Ram, an avatar of Lord Vishnu. Some news outlets reported that Nepal's archaeological department was considering excavation in the region. He further claimed that 'Singhadeva Jayate', and not 'Satyameva Jayate', appeared to be India's national motto. He got Nepal's map and Constitution changed to extend its boundary with India north-westward and not northward, enlarging the disputed area manifold and making a resolution difficult. The general perception that Oli is pro-China is incorrect. A nationalist politician, he would want Nepal's stability and development. Having close ties with India would be a prerequisite for that. While India has no issue with Nepal maintaining good relations with China, what makes the India-Nepal relationship unique are the ties of geography, history and culture and the open border between the two countries. This could be further transformed through initiatives on electricity trade, climate change cooperation and connectivity that have already been



agreed upon. For the last two years, the Nepal Electricity Authority has been selling surplus electricity produced at its hydropower plants in Kaligandaki, Trishuli and Devighat to India through the Indian Energy Exchange at a remunerative price of over Rs 6 per unit. The India-Nepal Joint Vision Statement on Power Sector Cooperation adopted in April 2022 envisages three activities: the joint development of power sector projects in Nepal, building cross-border transmission infrastructure and bi-directional power trade. But some hostile elements in Nepal are opposed to it. It is interesting to recall that when Chandra Shekhar, arguably the most Nepal-friendly Indian PM, visited Kathmandu in February 1991, he spoke expansively about the potential of India-Nepal cooperation in the hydropower sector at a press conference, after which he asked a young Nepali journalist, Vijay Kumar, to stay and have tea with him. The first thing PM Shekhar said was, "Don't believe a word of what I just said for public consumption." Seeing that Vijay was perplexed, the then Indian premier recounted his upbringing in a hut in a Ballia village in eastern Uttar Pradesh that had no electricity. His father had told him then that India would soon be free: "Tab hamara mitra desh Nepal unnati ke path par hoga aur hamen bijli dega. Ab hamare baal safed ho gaye par Nepal se hamare ghar bijli nahin ayi. Nepali apne ko andhere mein rakhenge aur hamein bhi andhere mein rahne denge!" This anecdote illustrates how things have changed. While India has supplied electricity to Nepal over the past few decades, the power trade between the two nations is beginning to reverse its course. Nepal has started producing electricity, and India buys only the surplus, whose export will redress Nepal's trade balance and improve its public finance.

Another way for Nepal to balance its trade would be to stop importing petroleum products from India and import them from elsewhere.

India is the sole supplier of oil to Nepal. PM Narendra Modi and Oli had jointly inaugurated South Asia's first cross-border petroleum products pipeline from Motihari in India to Amlekhgunj in Nepal in September 2019. This was built by the Indian Oil Corporation ahead of schedule to ensure regular and affordable petroleum supplies to Nepal.

Not only is India now importing Nepalese electricity, but it is also on the verge of agreeing to the wheeling of Nepalese electricity to Bangladesh, the first such trilateral arrangement among any three countries in South Asia. India could do more than any other country for transit and connectivity with Nepal. Under the Belt and Road Initiative, China had promised the construction of a Trans-Himalayan Multi-dimensional Connectivity Network, but there is no evidence of it on the ground. India has offered to effectively end Nepal's landlocked situation by building a rail link to Kathmandu and providing Nepal access to the Bay of Bengal through waterways. The Final Location Survey report of the Raxaul-Kathmandu rail link has been with the Government of Nepal since June last year.

China's 2016 Transit and Transport Agreement with Nepal gives the latter access to several Chinese ports. But in the past eight years, the routes have remained unutilised because of long and uneconomic distances. Nepal's third-country trade continues through the Indian ports of Kolkata and Visakhapatnam. Should Nepal require ports on India's western coastline, such as Kandla, for its exports to the Gulf, West Asia, Africa or Europe, India would facilitate it. Under an India-Bangladesh arrangement, the two countries have agreed to give Nepal transit facilities through Kakarvitta-Fulbari (Phulbari)-Banglabandha to the ports of Chittagong and Mongla. The frequent change of leadership in Nepal leads to endemic political instability. India is slowly learning to shield its bilateral relationship from the vicissitudes of Nepal's domestic politics. With their cultural closeness, Indians and Nepalese are guilty of a degree of complacency towards one another. They should, instead, invest more in each other.

Reaching out to RSS

BJP lifts ban in a bid to placate Sangh

THE BJP-led Centre's decision to lift the ban on government employees from participating in activities of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is an attempt by the ruling party to reach out to the Hindutva organisation and convey the impression that everything is hunky-dory within the Sangh Parivar. Asserting that the move would strengthen the country's democratic system, the RSS has accused erstwhile (read Congress) governments of furthering their political interests by imposing the ban. Attacking the Centre, the Congress has said that the new order would test the neutrality of public servants.

Relations between the BJP and the RSS are going through a rough patch, particularly after the saffron party fell short of a majority in the Lok Sabha. The BJP's below-par performance in the parliamentary elections has given ample fodder to the Sangh top brass to fire no-holds-barred salvos. RSS leader Indresh Kumar said Lord Ram had stopped an



'arrogant' party that claimed to be 'Ram Bhakt' from attaining a majority, while Sangh mouthpiece Organiser

observed that the electoral outcome was a 'reality check' for overconfident BJP workers. Last week, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat apparently alluded to Prime Minister Narendra Modi when he talked about the human ambition to become a superman and a god. Moreover, Sangh leaders have sent out a message that their organisation will not play second fiddle to the BJP.

Dependent on allies for the first time in a decade, the BJP seems keen to make concessions for the sake of staying in power. With the RSS centenary coming up next year, the ruling party is expected to go all out to appease Bhagwat and Co. Lifting of the ban will help in ironing out some of the differences, even as the onus is on the government to address concerns and allay fears over the contentious decision's impact on governance.

Education is the antidote to deras and babas

Babas demand unquestioning faith and politicians prefer to keep the masses ignorant — neither wants or encourages the spirit of enquiry.

I had just joined the police service and was posted as the Kapurthala SSP in 1971. I happened to visit my village over a weekend, expecting a lazy morning and day. However, I was woken up well before sunrise by an old family helper, who informed me that one Jeetu Jatt from a neighbouring village wanted to see me. I recalled that Jeetu was a minor-league soothsayer who helped people locate their lost/stolen cattle. Jeetu seemed visibly embarrassed as he told me that a pair of his oxen had been stolen from his haveli. I asked him to report it to the police; he very hesitatingly told me that it would be bad for his business as a soothsayer if he sought the help of the police. Anyway, his cattle were found and his reputation remained intact. Now, it is generally believed that such activities remain confined to the poor and uneducated — let me dispel you of any such delusion. After many years and many experiences in the police service, let me cut to the chase. This is a story of our country and its various soothsayers, shamans, babas and how, from being harmless petty manipulators, they rise to control the very levers of power. I was posted in Delhi as the head of a premier force at the turn of the century. After a couple of days, a retired senior officer came to me and virtually ordered me to accompany him to a very well-known baba. I told him that I knew the gentleman and that I would not go to him. One had observed his progress from the tehsil level to the district and onto the state capital, where he was known to be a small-timer, peddling falsehoods to novices (most locals knew of him and in Punjabi style had given him a comical moniker). His move to Delhi was a masterstroke and he literally struck gold by being this novel, bold godman. My former boss was taken aback by my refusal and further impressed on me that my presence had been especially requested by the man himself. I

stuck to my guns, but let me briefly describe first-hand accounts from these satsangs of the baba (our agencies kept us abreast). Virtually a galaxy of VIPs, including secretaries to the Government of India and their wives, Union ministers and other top-ranking persons were in attendance. What were they doing? Some of these otherwise snooty memsahibs were massaging the master's feet, and others were doing 'champi' on his head, etc. One had to blink one's eyes and pinch oneself to believe that this was happening in real time. These godmen exercised influence in national-level policymaking, both economic and political. There were godmen who operated many rungs higher than the Delhi master and their bejewelled fingers wrought many a miracle — to name a few, Dharendra Brahmachari, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and Chandraswami come to mind. Moving back again to the present, the landscape is dotted with deras and babas of various hues and sizes. There are ordinary village-level babas, besides those at the city, state, regional and national levels. Most of them are part miracle men, part politicians, part businessmen, part real estate holders and, above all, great influence peddlers. The poor go to them for minor daily needs, the rich to get richer, the politicians to get votes and thus power. Trust me, the bigger the dera, the greater the vote bank and bigger the number of politicians in attendance at election time. Please do not think I'm exaggerating. State intelligence departments have carried out a census of these deras and their approximate following and financial holdings. This



information is used to woo them or blackmail them. Security details are attached to them. And depending on the scale, the weightage of the baba goes up or down. Today, they have started going a step further by fighting elections themselves — the politician himself is threatened. Remember the disco baba and the havoc he caused in Haryana? He appeared to alternate between the jail and his ashrams as per his whims and fancies. Then there are the various babas confined on charges of rape and murder, for whom the jail is also an ashram.

Lest the reader get the mistaken belief that this is happening only now in India, let me disabuse you of that. There are many such cases in the history of the world where superstition, fear and poverty have been manipulated by godmen to pursue their goals. They went by many names — shamans to the Mongols,

with doctors to the Red Indians, Druids in England, soothsayers in ancient Greece — but the evil they sowed has been the same through history. In Russia, Rasputin cast an evil shadow on the rule of the Tzars. When one Rasputin or godman reaches the top, other minions mushroom across the land. In the early part of the 20th century, the Sikhs had to launch a full-fledged movement to free their shrines from the mahants, who had been propped up by the British and had converted the historic gurdwaras into personal fiefdoms shorn of their religious and historic presence. And so the great game continues — charlatans, godmen, politicians pitted against the common man. The men of science and an even temperament are in a hopeless minority. Such is the scourge of these

babas that the poor especially are held by them in a vice-like grip of ignorance and hope. The only remedy for most of our problems, including this one, is education of the highest quality made available to all. Education removes all these cobwebs and develops a scientific temperament. Above all, it teaches us to question everything and everyone in order to come to rational answers, and that is why these babas demand unquestioning faith and politicians prefer to keep the masses ignorant — neither wants or encourages the spirit of enquiry. In conclusion, I can only turn back to Rabindranath Tagore and his timeless wisdom: "Where the mind is without fear... where knowledge is free... into that heaven of freedom, my father, let my country awake."

Severe obesity alone can increase

Heart failure risk



Morbid obesity appears to stand alone as a risk for heart failure, but not for other major types of heart disease, new research has found.

The study involving more than 13,000 people found that morbidly obese individuals were more than two times more likely to have heart failure than comparable people with a healthy body mass index, after accounting for high blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels.

The findings suggest that even if a patient has normal blood sugar, cholesterol and blood pressure levels, they may still be at higher risk of developing heart failure if they are severely obese. "Obesity in our study has emerged as one of the least explained and likely most challenging risk factors for heart failure because there is no magic pill to treat it," said Chiadi Ndumele, Assistant Professor at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore, Maryland, US. Although it is not completely clear why obesity alone is linked to heart failure independent of risk factors and not to stroke or coronary heart disease, Ndumele said that there is evidence to suggest that



extra body weight exerts a higher metabolic demand on the heart and that fat cells in the abdomen may even release molecules toxic to heart cells. Obesity has long been known to increase the likelihood of high blood pressure, elevated blood cholesterol and diabetes -- all established risk factors for heart and blood vessel diseases. Treating and controlling these conditions have formed the bedrock strategies for reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease, Ndumele said. To learn if this was truly the case for all types of cardiovascular disease, Ndumele and his colleagues

looked at the medical records of 13,730 people who were followed for approximately 23 years to assess links between body mass index and heart failure, coronary heart disease or stroke.

After the final participant follow-up in 2012, there were 2,235 recorded cases of heart failure, 1,653 cases of coronary heart disease and 986 strokes.

In their final assessment, the researchers found no increase in risk for coronary heart disease or stroke in people with obesity. However, they found an increased risk for heart failure in obese people.



For every five-unit higher body mass index, there was an almost 30 percent higher risk of developing heart failure across all participants, showed the study published in the Journal of the American Heart Association.



Are you eating adulterated spices?



Scientists and researchers at the Indian Institute of Spices Research Kozhikode (IISR) have detected adulteration in spices available in the domestic market using DNA barcoding. After a series of studies since 2010, IISR scientists found that black pepper, chilli powder, turmeric powder, cinnamon bark and mace were adulterated using plant-based adulterants.

"Of the five samples of nutmeg mace collected from the local market in Kozhikode, three were adulterated with Bombay mace which is yellow in colour, lacks aroma and is of inferior quality and mainly used as a natural dye source. Morphological differentiation may be possible between the genuine and adulterant commodity in fresh or whole form. But discrimination becomes difficult if the sample dries, ages and is powdered as they lose their characteristic morphological and diagnostic features. Nutmeg mace also turns yellow on ageing, fetching a premium price and thus it becomes handy for unscrupulous elements to adulterate the genuine commodity with the spurious one," said Dr B Sasikumar, head of crop improvement and biotechnology division, ICARIISR, Kozhikode.

When tested, three out of 10 turmeric samples analysed were found to be adulterated with wild turmeric ('manja koova') or fillers like cassava starch, wheat or barley powder. A similar analysis of nine branded market samples of black pepper powder has found out that two were adulterated with chilli powder. At the same time, chilli powder sold in Kerala markets were adulterated with powdered fruits of choti ber. Regarding cinnamon bark, adulteration of cassia was found in seven out of 10 market samples.

Compared to other conventional analytical tools, DNA barcoding is a reliable technology that can accurately detect adulteration in spices. The technology uses very short sequences of DNA of any given species to detect the purity of the sample. "Other techniques used for adulterant detection of food and agricultural commodities include physical methods, chemical or biochemical methods and immunoassay. Although they are of considerable value in certain instances, they are not suitable for routine analyses," he said.

Standing desks may help reduce weight in kids

Struggling to shed those extra kilos in your kids? Standing desks in schools may prove beneficial as they cut down on sedentary time in classrooms as well as help reduce body mass index (BMI) -- a key indicator of obesity -- by an average of 5.24 percentile points, new research has found. The findings showed that the students who had the stand-biased desks for two years averaged a three per cent drop in BMI, while those in traditional desks showed the two per cent increase typically associated with getting older.

However, even those students who spent just one year in classrooms with stand-biased desks had lower mean BMIs than those who had traditional seated classrooms in their third and fourth grade years.

In addition, there weren't major differences between boys and girls, or between students of different races, suggesting that this intervention works across demographic groups.

"These types of standing desks encourage the students to move instead of being forced to sit in poorly fitting, hard plastic chairs for six or seven hours of their day," said Mark Benden, Associate Professor at the Texas A&M School of Public Health, US.

Moreover, these standing desks might also help students who aren't overweight maintain their BMI, while at the same time help those who are overweight or obese get to a healthier weight, said the paper published in the American Journal of Public Health.

The mysterious condition of burning tongue, and how you can ease the pain

For close to four months, 42-year-old Andheri resident Roma Patel felt like a fire-eater. The homemaker was battling a mouth-on-fire feeling, marked by a sudden burning sensation on the tip of her tongue and the roof of the mouth that she'd get in the evenings, and experience a dull metallic taste through the day.

Patel, a tea lover, put it down to the piping hot black tea she'd sip each evening. But a medical examination pointed to her severe vitamin B12 deficiency coupled with a nerve injury due to a nasty ear infection that she had suffered a few months ago.

Bandra-based pain specialist Dr Raashi Khatri-Panjabi diagnosed it as the Burning Mouth Syndrome (BMS), medically also termed glossodynia. Medical journals describe it as a scalding painful sensation in the tongue, lips, palate, or throughout the mouth where no underlying dental or medical cause can be identified.

Although it can be a primary illness by itself, sometimes, says the doctor who specialises in oro-facial pain, it can point to an underlying condition. Dr Ashok Dhole, orthodontist, who practises at Opera House, confirmed that he sees 25 patients with BMS every month.

The symptoms Moderate to severe burning in the mouth is the main symptom of BMS and can persist for months or years. "For most patients, the sensation begins late morning, peaks towards evening, and often subsides by night," says Khatri-Panjabi. "While some battle constant pain, for others, it's intermittent. It's also linked to anxiety and depression, which could be the result of their chronic condition," she adds.

Other signs include tingling or numbness on the tip of the tongue or in the mouth, bitter or metallic changes in taste, and dry mouth (medically termed xerostomia) even though the salivary glands are functioning fine.

Cause and effect While BMS can affect anyone, medical experts point out that diabetics and post-menopausal women are more prone to developing the condition. Mahim-based

Tips to soothe your Burning tongue



diabetologist Dr Sonali Patange says, "Poor functioning of the thyroid gland (hypothyroidism) and diabetes is commonly associated with dry mouth, due to which when patients consume antibiotics, they get a burning sensation in their mouth. The mouth from the inside looks red and they are unable to eat anything, thus resulting in weakness, fatigue and weight loss." Nerve damage due to an ear infection, like in Patel's case, is also a common cause. "Chorda tympani, the nerve that provides sensation to the inner ear also carries sensation to the tongue. Therefore, infection in the ear may lead to neuropathy and

resultant alteration of taste sensation as well as burning," shares Khatri-Panjabi. Reflux of stomach acid (gastroesophageal reflux disease or GERD) cannot be ruled out either, say experts. Consultant gastroenterologist at Fortis Hospital in Mulund, Dr Purushottam Vashistha, says, "The reflux of acid occurs first in the food pipe, travelling to the throat and then to the oral cavity. People with this condition experience burning wherever the reflux has travelled. Due to reflux of acid in the throat and oral cavity, patients experience bitterness and dental caries (cavities) along with burning sensations."

Other factors Poor oral hygiene is also a trigger. Poorly-fitted dentures or allergies to denture material, oral candidiasis (a fungal infection in the mouth) as well as, oral herpes (caused by the herpes simplex virus) can cause the problem, too. Anxiety, depression, and its correlated parafunctional activities like nocturnal bruxism (grinding of teeth in sleep), or a tongue thrusting habit can set the mouth ablaze. "Nutritional deficiencies like lack of iron, folic acid or various B vitamins (predominant among vegetarians) is another key factor, as are hormonal changes among women undergoing menopause," says Khatri-Panjabi.

The diagnosis tests may include - Blood tests to look for infection, nutritional deficiencies and disorders associated with BMS, such as diabetes or thyroid problems

- Nerve testing (quantitative sensory testing) to assess nerve damage in the tongue

- Oral swab to check for oral candidiasis

- Allergy testing for materials used in fitting dentures (some suggest there is a link between BMS and metals like nickel and mercury) or certain foods

Classification based on symptoms **Type 1:** Symptoms manifest progressively throughout the day. Night time symptoms vary. Nutritional deficiency and diabetes could produce this pattern

Type 2: Intermittent symptoms through the day and some people may even have symptom-free days. Food allergy is suggested as potential cause

Type 3: Patients face continuous symptoms and are frequently asymptomatic at night. This could be linked to nerve damage.

New UK Foreign Secretary arrives in Delhi on 1st visit, free trade deal in focus

UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy has arrived in Delhi for a two-day visit to India. His visit marks the first high-level discussion between the two nations after Keir Starmer's Labour government came to power in the UK general elections.

New Delhi. UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy has arrived in New Delhi for a two-day visit to India in the first high-level discussion between the two sides after Keir Starmer's Labour government came to power in the general elections. "Warm welcome to UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy as he arrives in New Delhi on his first official visit since the assumption of office. The visit will strengthen the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the two countries and will make the 'living bridge' between India and the UK stronger," the External Affairs Ministry tweeted. During David Lammy's visit, he will highlight the importance of the new partnership with India with a focus on economic, domestic and global security. "I am travelling to India in my first month as Foreign Secretary because resetting our relationship with the Global South is a key part of how this government will reconnect Britain for our security and prosperity at home," David Lammy said. The long-pending India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA) will feature in the talks between David



Lammy and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. "India is the emerging superpower of the 21st century, the largest country in the world with 1.4 billion people and one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Our Free Trade Agreement negotiations are the floor, not the ceiling of our ambitions to unlock our shared potential and deliver growth, from Bengaluru to

Birmingham. We have shared interests in the green transition, new technologies, economic security and global security," David Lammy said. The UK Foreign Secretary will also hold high level meetings with climate and business leaders. It has been learnt that David Lammy will galvanise support for accelerated action on the climate crisis with India as an indispensable partner -

driving forward the clean energy transition and creating opportunities for British and Indian businesses.

He will discuss partnering on Indian-led global initiatives to build clean power access, climate resilience in the global south and small island states. The UK Foreign Secretary is also expected to underscore the importance of the 'Living Bridge' between the UK and India. It represents the 1.7 million people with Indian heritage that have made their home in the UK and make an exceptional contribution to British life. David Lammy will meet business leaders to highlight how the UK and India are working together on shared ambitions such as cutting-edge science to encourage innovation, boost trade, and improve the livelihoods of working people in both countries. After the India trip, the UK Foreign Secretary will travel to the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' meeting in Laos where he will advance UK economic partnerships and unveil new cooperation on climate and health.

Kanwar Yatra pilgrim dies as speeding bike hits sleeping devotees in UP

New Delhi. One Kanwar Yatra pilgrim was killed and another injured in a hit-and-run accident in Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar on Tuesday night, police said. According to police, a speeding two-wheeler hit the devotees while a group of pilgrims were sleeping on the roadside. "It was found that 3 Kanwar devotees who were carrying Kanwar were tired and lay down on the side of the road and a Kanwar devotee was sitting there.



A speeding bike hit the sleeping devotee and went away," police officer Ramkishan Yadav told news agency ANI.

In this accident, one pilgrim died and one was injured and is undergoing treatment in a hospital, he added.

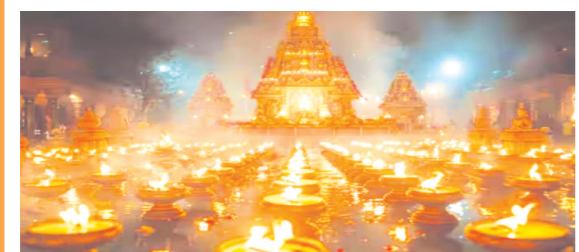
Sacred Spaces: Understanding the 5 Roles of Indian Temples in the Spiritual Landscape

New Delhi: For ages, temples have formed an integral part of India's cultural and spiritual landscape. These hallowed locations fulfill several functions in the spiritual and social lives of millions of people, making them more than merely sites of worship. These are the five main functions that temples fulfill in the spiritual life of India.

Fundamentally, temples are locations where believers congregate to worship and ask for divine favors. They offer a hallowed setting for rites, prayers, and celebrations that deepen the devotee's relationship with God. While providing comfort and hope to those who attend, the everyday rites and festivals observed in temples contribute to the care for.

Guardians of Customs and Culture

An essential role of temples is to preserve India's rich



cultural legacy. They conserve art, music, dancing, architecture, and old customs that have been handed down through the ages. India's artistic ability and historical history are attested to by the elaborate designs, artwork, and paintings discovered in its temples. Temples are frequently used as locations for cultural gatherings and performances, which preserves old artistic forms.

Spiritual Learning Centers

In India, there are a lot of temples connected to spiritual learning and education. They offer spiritual assistance to seekers by hosting talks, seminars, and lectures on religious literature, philosophy, and ethics. To mold the moral and spiritual principles of education and mold the next generations of educators, temples also manage educational institutions.

Social Services and Community Hubs

Temples frequently serve as communal hubs, bringing individuals together for events both social and altruistic. They offer locations for social events like festivals and celebrations, which promote a feeling of togetherness and community. Numerous temples engage in charitable endeavors, providing the underprivileged with shelter, food, and medical attention to uphold the values of compassion and service.

What Is LBSNAA? 10 Things To Know About IAS Training That Drives India's Bureaucracy

New Delhi. The Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) is once again at the center of attention, this time due to its newly implemented social media guidelines. These rules come in the wake of a controversy involving trainee IAS officer Pooja Khedkar, who recently found herself under scrutiny for her social media activities. Located in the picturesque town of Mussoorie, Uttarakhand, LBSNAA is where the future bureaucrats of India are groomed. As debates rage on about privacy, transparency, and professional conduct, it is crucial to delve into the significance of LBSNAA and the extensive training it provides to India's top civil servants. Here are ten essential aspects of LBSNAA and the

IAS training process that underline its pivotal role in shaping India's bureaucracy.

Established in 1959, LBSNAA is named after Lal Bahadur Shastri, the second Prime Minister of India, and serves as the premier training institution for Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers. The academy's mission is to train civil servants in public policy and administration, instilling values of integrity, commitment, and service.

Purpose and Mission

LBSNAA's primary objective is to equip IAS officers with the necessary skills and knowledge to manage public administration effectively. The academy focuses on fostering a deep understanding of governance, policy implementation, and public

service ethics. It aims to produce officers who are not only efficient administrators but also empathetic leaders committed to public welfare.

Training Phases

The training at LBSNAA is divided into two rigorous phases designed to prepare officers comprehensively for their roles: Phase I: This foundational phase introduces officers to public administration, law, economics, and Indian polity.

Through a blend of classroom sessions, field visits, and hands-on training, officers are taught to navigate the complexities of governance and public service. This phase emphasizes the development of core administrative skills and a thorough understanding of the country's socio-political landscape.

NEET-UG Row: BJP, Opposition Spar After SC Verdict; NTA Faces Heat

New Delhi: The Supreme Court's verdict about the NEET-UG paper leak has put an end to the controversy officially but the opposition is not ready to accept the verdict in its current form. The opposition said that the National Testing Agency needs to be revamped as it is not capable of conducting national-level exams in the current format. The Supreme Court, in its verdict yesterday, concluded that the paper leak took place at local level in Bihar while maintaining absence of any systemic breach. The apex court rejected the demand for holding a re-examination for over 24 lakhs students who took the NEET-UG 2024 exam.

Former Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal said that the National Testing Agency (NTA) needs to be completely revamped, adding that the government cannot hold an All-India exam of this magnitude

under the present system. "The Supreme Court has asked the IIT Delhi to look into the matter as to how to deal with these issues (paper leaks)... Why in every examination during this government there are leaks in every exam? The question is who is involved and for whose benefit are the leaks happening? Who are the people without merit who got jobs? The National Testing Agency (NTA) needs to be completely revamped. You cannot hold an all-India exam of this magnitude under a present NTA system," Sibal said. He said, "The government is for everyone and it should think for every section of our youth who is sitting for this exam." Shiv Sena-UBT Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut said, "Supreme Court should know what is going on in the country. Supreme Court was one last ray of hope. If that ray too is not

showing us any direction, then where will we go? Is there a pressure on the government?" VCK MP Thol. Thirumavalavan termed the verdict shocking. "Supreme Court direction is not in favour of the students who are affected by this NEET scam... The victims have to go for appeal. That is the only solution," he said.

What Government Said

BJP leader and Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said that the government is committed towards a 'zero-error' exam. Dharmendra Pradhan said, "For us, zero tolerance of any kind of breach is our priority when it comes to exams for students, be it for higher education or jobs. So, the Modi government has brought into effect a strict law like the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act... Presenting our side before the Supreme.

Heavy rain lashes Delhi-NCR, more showers predicted

New Delhi. Heavy rainfall lashed Delhi-NCR areas on Wednesday morning, bringing much-needed relief from the humid weather. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a 'yellow alert' for the national capital and its adjoining areas, indicating the possibility of more showers later in the day. A yellow alert means heavy rainfall between 6 cm and 11 cm. The maximum and minimum temperatures will likely hover around 36 and 27 degrees Celsius.

The forecast shared by IMD in a post X (formerly Twitter) includes regions such as Delhi University, Civil Lines, Kashmiri Gate, Seelampur, Shahadra, Vivek Vihar, Patel Nagar, Red Fort, Preet Vihar, Budha Jayanti Park, and President House. The Air Quality Index (AQI) of the national capital was recorded in the "good" category with a reading of 40, according to the Central Pollution Control



Board. The weather body has also predicted heavy rainfall over parts of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra on July 24. The northwestern state of Rajasthan is likely to experience hot, humid weather until tomorrow. In northeastern India, "fairly widespread light to moderate rainfall" is predicted over the next five days, the IMD said in its weather bulletin.

A 'yellow' warning of heavy rains at isolated places has also been issued throughout Himachal Pradesh for the next four days till July 27. Meanwhile, in Chandigarh and Punjab, the IMD has predicted "above normal" temperatures with high humidity in the next two days. The weather bulletin predicted light to moderate rainfall in other parts of north and south Odisha over the next two days, with similar conditions expected on July 25 and 26. The weather body has also predicted heavy to very heavy rainfall in the North Goa and South Goa districts from July 24 to 25.

"Will March To Delhi," Say Farmers After Meeting Rahul Gandhi At Parliament

Sources said the farmer leaders have asked Rahul Gandhi to introduce a private member's bill to fulfill a long-standing demand - recalculation of MSP.

New Delhi: Farmers pushing the government to revamp the MSP, or minimum support price, policy met Congress MP Rahul Gandhi inside the Parliament complex Wednesday morning. Mr Gandhi, who is also Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, met a delegation of 12 farmer leaders from Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh,

Telangana, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka. Senior Congress leaders KC Venugopal and Deepender Singh Hooda were also part of the meeting, as were MPs Amarinder Singh Raja Warring and Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa. There was confusion before the meeting as the farmers were not allowed inside. "We invited them... but they are not allowing them inside Parliament. They are farmers, maybe this is why..." Mr Gandhi said. "...you will have to ask the Prime Minister the reason for this..."

Rahul Gandhi will raise the voice of farmers inside Parliament..." Mr Warring told NDTV after the meeting.

On reports the farmers are planning another march on Delhi, he said, "They have all rights to come to Delhi and protest (and) if a private member's bill is required then we will bring that too." One of the farmers, Jagjit Singh Dallewal, said the government had failed, so far, to fulfill assurances. "Swaminathan report implementation is a must. We will

continue march towards Delhi..." he told. Earlier, sources said the farmers spoke to Mr Gandhi about issues in their respective states, and also asked him to



introduce a private member's bill to fulfill long-standing demands - to revise MSP and ensure legal backing. These demands have been at the core of their protests since it began in 2020. Farmer unions across the country want the MSP - a purchase guarantee set by the government to protect agriculturists from

steep fall in crop prices - to be based on the Swaminathan Commission's C2+50 formula, which factors in cost of capital and land rent when calculating support prices.

The government, however, is reluctant to drop the existing A2+FL+50 per cent method. Apart from changing the formula, farmers also want legal backing for this purchase price; at present the government is not obliged to buy, for example, 10 per cent of a paddy crop at the floor price. In 2020/21 lakhs of farmers gathered to march on Delhi, prompting the government to set up war-zone like defence measures around the national capital. The 'farmer army' - complete with tractors and supplies for a months-long siege - was held to makeshift camps blocking key roads into the city. The furor over the protests also made international headlines and sparked bitter fights between the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and the opposition, led by Mr Gandhi's Congress.

How to overcome

Stress effectively



the chemical or hormone created in them is different. The situation is the same. The action is the same. What changes it is perception. And one needs to understand this perception because that is our appraisal," she said.

She gave the example of a chair, which is stationary in a room, but if seen from out of space it is moving 1000 miles per hour. "The perception," she insisted, "is not a chemical, neither it is automatic. It is taught and learnt."

For instance, a snake to a layperson might create fear, but to a snake charmer, it is something that it works with every day. "The moment I experience fear, which is an intangible feeling, I am immediately creating something extremely real that is a real molecule called adrenaline because where thought goes, hormone goes. Your mind and body are one," said Anju. Your feeling changes according to what you have learnt and experienced and how many times you have experienced it. This is termed as the appraisal of a situation. If stress is there, action of the body is there. What is in-between is how your body is perceiving it.

WHAT CREATES STRESS?

LACK OF PREDICTABILITY:

For instance, bad traffic, a sudden tough conversation with your spouse or the maid not showing up are unpredictable situations. This unpredictable process will make your body move into excitation because your response is being triggered by that appraisal of the experience.

LACK OF CONTROL:

Lack of control in a process means your body is in continuous excitation.

LACK OF OUTLET:

The lack of feeling that when I am in a stressful situation, I have something to release it causes stress.

COPING WITH STRESS

Anju laid great emphasis on the food we consume. When we eat foods that are cheesy, for instance, we are blocking our gut. "So in that case, you are not allowing serotonin (happy hormone) to be activated. Therefore, the serotonin cannot go to the cell and say do not degenerate me," she explained. "If it is a blocker, your body has already produced C Reactive protein to make your blood thicker to cope with that onslaught. Instead, what you are putting is more thickening agents. Are you then not going to move into an embolism or blood clot? Of course, you will."

The moment you intake aerated drinks and caffeine, you are stimulating the adrenaline further. And what needs to be short lived becomes long-term. "So it will take that body much longer to move back to an inhibitory state/resting state," she said.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Know your signals/triggers whether it is palpitation, sweaty palms, or the need to pick up coffee

- Use your triggers (mental, emotional, physical, financial) because what you have at that time is more energy, more muscle power, oxygen and functioning capabilities. If used, from distress it will become eustress. This changes your memory, your perception on what you see as stress.

- All your senses are taking in and leaving an imprint on your cells. As human beings, we hold on to our imprints and emotions. Your body communicates stress through your individual mechanism (hair fall, eyes dilating, sleeplessness, irritability), understand it.

A leading wellness centre in the city organised an open house to make sense of what has become an urban epidemic and suggested ways to overcome it.

Last Thursday, three experts at The Health Awareness Centre in Worli, Navina Venkat, Shilpa Chawla and Anju Venkat organised a rather pertinent seminar. They addressed the subject of stress - its cause and effect, and offered possible solutions. The talk was attended by a myriad set of people. They learnt what happens to the body when we are 'stressed'. While some of us are motivated by it, some experience butterflies in the stomach. Some lose sleep, get anxious, jittery, experience a sensation in the gut, feel insecure, get cranky or get so demotivated that they almost give up. "However," Navina said, "to all these responses, there is one thing common. We have all been given a capacity to take action when required and that is known as the stress response. It's called eustress, distress or stress."

UNDERSTANDING STRESS

They defined the word 'Stress' as 'Stimulus Triggered Response, which is Excitatory, Systemic and Short Lived'. The rest of the open house was precisely about understanding this acronym.

"Activity and rest," Navina explained, "is a fundamental device that has been carried along for millions of years, and stays, and plays out in our system through two basic networks - our biological pathways and our nervous systems."

In the biological pathways, this response is expressed through catabolic action (when we use energy and when are tissues break down)

and anabolic action (when our energy is stored, tissues are built and repaired). "For the anabolic and catabolic action to take place, the stimulus of a nervous system is required. This is handled by the autonomic nervous system. This autonomic nervous system is nothing but involuntary actions that is triggered again by the sympathetic and the parasympathetic nervous system," Navina said. "The point where the sympathetic nervous system gets aroused the most is in typical situations where it has to choose between pleasure or pain, a threat or an opportunity, preventing or promoting, what is called fleeing or fighting. Any perceived or real threat will always trigger the same sympathetic nervous system and the same catabolic response that is the fight-or-flight response. If this system wasn't there, we wouldn't be able to survive."

THREE STATES OF THE BODY

It is learnt that the body moves between three states: rest-activity-rest. Though being in the 'resting state' is what our body is constantly striving to do. "Every cell, tissue, organ, at any given point is working hard to create a stable environment inside, so that cells can function to their optimum. This is called homeostatis (stability or balance) in the body," said Navina. "But in reality, at every given point, the body has to respond to physiological symptoms at the micro-cellular level. It has to keep adjusting our behaviour at the macro level. And along with making the physiological and behavioural adjustments at the micro and macro level, it has to keep a balance with the dance that is happening in our environment."

In the activity state, the body is thrown out of

balance because of an external stimuli - physical, physiological, environmental, social and economic in nature. For instance, bad traffic, lack of sleep, loss of a loved one, pressure at work, junk food, and disagreements. "And we think we have no control in what way our body is responding to these external stimulus. But the point is, the physiological response is always the same. Both at the micro and macro level, our body is producing the same fight-or-flight chemicals, hormones and behaviour each time we feel stressed or our stressor is out there," Navina pointed out.

IS STRESS BAD?

Stress is nothing but our body's response to the brain perceiving a threat. So, it is useful. "The reason it has become such a killer disease today is because most of us lay suspended in the second stage," she asserted. "And the stress doesn't finish inside there. It has to move to the third stage which is resting stage." So between a situation that is causing anxiety and your system dealing with it, your body comes back to a period of rest, which is a period of balance.

HOW DOES THE BODY RESPOND?

In order to understand how stress affects us, we have to understand what happens within our body when we feel an emotion. "So when we experience an emotion whether it is sight, sound, smell, taste or touch, it produces a chemical inside which moves all over the body, goes cell to cell and says, 'listen, this is what is happening and this is what we need to respond to'," shared Shilpa. Each time we experience as emotion, we

have a chemical that is released in the body. When we are in love, we release oxytocin, when we are happy, we release endorphins. So, what happens to the body when we are stressed?

INTERNALLY

- Our body recognises a stressor

- A rapid relay of messages across the nervous system, alerts the body of the stressor

- The first message goes to the adrenal (the little cap like organs sitting on top of the kidneys). The adrenal releases adrenaline and cortisol. These are chemicals that diffuse into our blood, gearing the rest of the body in a stress response

- Adrenaline and cortisol tag the lung, heart and liver, which means oxygen, triglycerides and glucose get pumped into the blood

- Muscles contract to action

- The second message moves to the gut. It alerts the microflora of possible danger. The gut microbes move into the blood to support the immune system, slowing down the process of digestion.

EXTERNALLY

Our muscles tense and contract, pupils dilate, heart beats faster, blood pressure rises, sweat glands get activated all over the body, mouth runs dry, breathing becomes rapid and shallow, brain gets hyper alert, senses get sharpened, cholesterol and blood sugar appear elevated.

APPRAISING THE SITUATION

According to Anju, the second stage is nothing but appraisal - How will I respond to a situation or event? "Every response creates a feeling, which is different, and therefore,

Viral infections more dangerous during morning: Study

Our body clock accelerates the ability of viruses to replicate and spread between cells ten times faster during the morning than by the end of the day, placing people at a higher risk of catching infection, a study involving an Indian-origin scientist has revealed.

Disruptions in body clock lead to increased virus replication and dissemination, indicating that severity of acute infections is influenced by circadian time-keeping.

"The time of day of infection can have a major influence on how susceptible we are to the disease, or at least on the viral replication, meaning that infection at the wrong time of day could cause a much more severe acute infection," said Akhilesh Reddy, Professor at University of Cambridge.

For the study, the team compared normal 'wild type' mice infected with herpes virus and influenza A virus at different times of the day, measuring levels of virus infection and spread. The mice lived in a controlled environment where 12 hours were in the daylight and the other 12 hours were dark.

The results showed that virus replication in those mice infected at the very start of the day, when these nocturnal animals start their resting



phase, the risk of infection was shown to be ten times greater than those infected by the end of the day while they were transitioning to their active phase.

Abolishing cellular circadian rhythms increased both herpes and influenza A virus infection in the mice, the researchers said.

"Our results suggest that the clock in every cell determines how successfully a virus replicates. When we disrupted the body clock in either cells or mice, we found that the timing of infection no longer mattered -- viral replication was always

high," added Rachel Edgar from University of Cambridge.

"This indicates that shift workers, who work for some nights and rest for other nights and have a disrupted body clock, will be more susceptible to viral diseases. If so, then they could be prime candidates for receiving the annual flu vaccines," Rachel noted.

In addition, Bmal1 -- a gene that controls the circadian rhythm -- also undergoes seasonal variations. It remains less active during winter,



while it increases activity in summer, thus explaining the reason why diseases, such as influenza, are more likely to spread throughout populations during winter, said the paper published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS).

Beneficial bacteria

in nose can suppress pathogenic bacteria

When two bacteria interact, they inhibit the virulence of Staphylococcus Aureus, claims a study.

According to the study conducted by senior author Dr. Katherine P. Lemon, first-author Dr. Matthew M. Ramsey and Dr. Marcelo Freire at the Forsyth Institute, besides Rebecca Gabriliska and Dr. Kendra Rumbaugh of the Texas Tech University, a further understanding of this interaction will help researchers to develop new treatments for preventing Staphylococcus Aureus infections.

They also believe that their research on interactions between benign members of the human microbiome and bacteria that exhibit similar dual characteristics, could lead to the development of novel treatments for other diseases.

"Our research helps set the stage for the development of small molecules and, potentially, probiotic therapies for promoting health by actively managing nasal microbiome composition," said Dr. Lemon.

"This research identifies a role for Corynebacterium species in suppressing Staphylococcus Aureus virulence, and is an exciting early stage in our exploration of the molecular mechanisms that sculpt the composition of the nasal microbiome and influence colonization by pathogens," she said.

"We look forward to an increase in research on commensal-pathobiont interactions within the human microbiome and an ever-increasing understanding of the significance of our beneficial bacteria partners," she added.

The full paper, titled "Staphylococcus aureus shifts towards commensalism in response to Corynebacterium species" is available in the Frontiers in Microbiology website.



Gold, silver price : Precious metals record hike on MCX

NEW DELHI. Both gold and silver prices recorded a hike on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) on Wednesday, July 24, 2024. Gold futures, maturing on August 5, 2024, stood at Rs 68,865 per 10 grams on the MCX, after recording a jump of Rs 355 or 0.52 per cent. The previous close was recorded at Rs 68,510. Meanwhile, silver futures, maturing on September 5, 2024, witnessed a marginal hike of Rs 287 or 0.34 per cent and were retailing at Rs 85,206 per kg on the MCX against the previous close of Rs 84,919.

GOLD, SILVER PRICES IN MAJOR CITIES

The gold and silver prices in India depend on several factors, including the value of the rupee against the dollar. Global demand also plays a key role in determining the trends observed in the rate of precious metals.

GOLD, SILVER PRICES IN INTERNATIONAL MARKET

Gold prices inched higher on Wednesday, with investors awaiting U.S. economic data that could influence the Federal Reserve's rate-cut timeline, news agency Reuters reported. According to the latest metal report, spot gold rose 0.3 per cent to \$2,416.62 per ounce by 0402 GMT, while, U.S. gold futures gained 0.4 per cent to \$2,417.10. Among other precious metals, spot silver gained 0.2 per cent to \$29.28 per ounce.

Another 'jumla': P Chidambaram on job creation promises in Budget 2024

New Delhi. Congress's Rajya Sabha MP and former Union Finance Minister P Chidambaram has questioned the employment-linked incentives (ELIs) announced by the government in Budget 2024, saying the projected figures of beneficiaries are "highly exaggerated".

Speaking to India Today TV, Chidambaram said he doesn't believe that the government will be able to create two crore jobs in a year as mentioned in the Budget. "I don't believe the numbers. 210 lakh, 30 lakh, 50 lakh, adding up to 290 lakh. I think this is another jumla. Like they said that they will create two crore jobs a year. I don't believe this," he said. In her Budget speech, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced three employment-linked schemes. One of the schemes is aimed at first-time employees registered with the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) and offers up to Rs 15,000. The Finance Minister said the scheme would support young professionals earning up to Rs 1 lakh per month and would benefit 210 lakh youths.

Chidambaram said it would be important to see how many industrial units, enterprises, and businesses are brought under the scheme. "I want to see the actual recruitment, and only then I'll believe these numbers. These are highly exaggerated numbers. Suddenly, how do they hit upon 290 lakh jobs?" he asked. The former Finance Minister further said the government, in this Budget, finally acknowledged that unemployment and inflation were points of concern, something he said were mentioned prominently in the Congress's election manifesto.

"We have been saying that for the last several years. Unemployment is the number one challenge and inflation is number two. I am glad the government has finally, although belatedly, acknowledged it after they learnt a lesson in the (Lok Sabha) election," he said.

Electronics sector gets biggest PLI allocation

NEW DELHI. In the Budget, the finance minister has allocated Rs 12,493.02 crore for the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme across different



sectors for this financial year.

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has received the largest share, with Rs 6,200 crore earmarked for electronics manufacturing. For large-scale electronics manufacturing, the government has earmarked Rs 6,125 crore, while the incentive for IT Hardware is Rs 75 crore. Over and above, for the development of Semiconductors and Display Manufacturing Ecosystem in India, Rs 6,903 crore has been allocated in this Budget. Another significant chunk has gone to the automobile sector. The scheme for the automobiles and its components has been increased to Rs 3,500 crore, a 624% jump from Rs 484 crore in the revised estimates of 2023-24. The reason being, as per the economic survey released on July 22, 2024, the PLI scheme for automobiles and auto components has attracted investments of Rs 14,043 crore till March 2024, accounting for 20% of the total committed amount of Rs 67,690 crore.

The PLI scheme was introduced to promote domestic manufacturing and has achieved success in mobile manufacturing. India's mobile phone production has grown from 5.8 crore units in 2014-15 to 33 crore units in 2023-24, with exports increasing to nearly 5 crore units. Subsequently, the government has expanded the PLI scheme to 14 sectors, including telecommunications, white goods, textiles, medical devices, automobiles, specialty steel, food products, solar PV modules, advanced chemistry cell batteries, drones, and drug manufacturing industries.

This year, the government has allocated Rs 2,143 crore for PLI in the pharmaceutical industry, Rs 57 crore for drones and drone components, and Rs 298.02 crore for ACs and LED lights. However, no allocation has been made for PLI scheme to promote telecom manufacturing.

Mobile manufacturing

Mobile phone exports have risen significantly, from Rs 1,556 crore in 2014-15 to Rs 1,28,982 crore in 2023-24, while imports have decreased from Rs 48,609 crore to Rs 7,665 crore during the period

Education loans up via e-vouchers, UGC budget cut

The Budget introduced significant financial support for higher education loans while imposing a substantial cut on the University Grants Commission (UGC) budget by over 60%.

NEW DELHI. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced an allocation of Rs 1.20 lakh crore for education in the Union Budget for 2024-25. The salient point of the proposals is that loans up to Rs 10 lakh for higher education in domestic institutions will

be facilitated through e-vouchers, directly benefiting one lakh students annually with an interest subvention of 3%. The Budget introduced significant financial support for higher education loans while imposing a substantial cut on the University Grants Commission (UGC) budget by over 60%.

Despite significant budgetary reductions in some areas, the overall allocation for the Ministry of Education has been pegged at over Rs 1.20 lakh crore, down from the revised estimate of Rs 1.29 lakh crore in the previous financial year.

The UGC funding has been dramatically reduced from the previous year's revised estimate of Rs 6,409 crore to Rs 2,500 crore, marking a 60.99% cut. The budget for Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) too has been cut for the second consecutive year, dropping from Rs 331 crore to Rs 212 crore. Indian Institutes of



Technology (IITs) have also experienced a marginal budget cut from Rs 10,384.21 crore to Rs 10,324.50 crore.

The budget for Central universities has seen a significant increase by over 28%, rising to Rs 15,472 crore from the previous revised estimate of Rs

12,000.08 crore. Additionally, the budget for school education has increased by over Rs 535 crore, benefiting Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Vidyalayas, NCERT, PM Shri schools, and state governments.

UGC chairman M. Jagadesh Kumar said an allocation of Rs 47,619 crore to higher education marked an 8% increase over last year's budget. He said the UGC budget includes three components: UGC, Central universities, and deemed universities. From 2024-25, funding for colleges affiliated with Central universities will shift from UGC to Central universities budget line.

Significant financial aid

Budget introduced significant financial support for higher education loans while imposing a substantial cut on the University Grants Commission (UGC) budget by over 60%.

Explained: How will Budget 2024 impact your mutual fund investments

Budget 2024: Radhika Gupta, MD and CEO of Edelweiss

Mutual Fund discussed in detail the changes in mutual fund taxation following the Union Budget 2024.

New Delhi. The Union Budget 2024 has introduced significant changes to the taxation of mutual funds, aiming to simplify the tax structure and provide clarity for investors. These changes impact various types of mutual funds differently, altering how they are taxed in both the short and long term.

Radhika Gupta, MD & CEO of Edelweiss Mutual Fund, discussed the overall announcements in the budget on social media platform X and also shared a video explaining the changes in mutual fund taxation following the Union Budget 2024.

She explained that before the Budget, mutual funds were subject to varying

tax categories, including long-term and short-term capital gains, marginal tax rates, and indexation



benefits. With this Budget, all of this gets simplified and the concept of indexation goes away," Gupta noted.

How will Budget 2024 impact your mutual fund investments? Under the new tax regime, there are now three main categories for mutual fund taxation. The first category includes equity mutual funds with more than 65% equity holdings. They are taxed as capital assets—20% in the short term and 12.5% in the long term, with long term being anything held for more than one year," Gupta said.

The second category consists of funds

holding more than 65% in debt securities. These are taxed at the marginal rate without any distinction between short-term and long-term investments. Gupta pointed out that this category remains unchanged from the previous year.

The third category encompasses funds that do not fit into the first two categories, such as gold index funds, gold ETFs, funds of funds investing in equity, international funds, and conservative or hybrid funds.

Gupta said, "These have a taxation in short term at marginal rate and long term is 12.5% where long term means more than two years." Discussing the impact of these changes, Gupta said the benefits for long-term investors in the third category. "If you are a long-term investor, instead of attracting the marginal rate of taxation, they now attract 12.5% capital gains tax over a two-year long term," she said. Overall, she indicated that the Budget 2024 simplifies the tax structure for mutual funds and provides significant benefits for long-term investors in specific categories.

Sensex, Nifty open lower after budget day; realty stocks fall, ITC gains

New Delhi. Benchmark stock market indices opened slightly lower a day after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget 2024.

The S&P BSE Sensex was down 48.96 points at 80,380.08 at 9:24 am, while the NSE Nifty50 fell 15.90 points to trade at 24,463.15. All the other broader market indices also opened traded flat.

While most other sectoral indices gained, Nifty realty fell after Sitharaman proposed to remove the indexation benefit for some asset classes like gold and property. Experts believe that there could be a short-term impact on realty stocks due to the move. On the other hand, consumer-oriented stocks are likely to rise as a result of the government's announcement related to income tax. The new tax regime has been sweetened slightly, with marginal revision in the tax slabs and a hiked standard deduction.

The top five gainers on the Nifty50 were ITC, Titan, HDFCLife, Tata Motors and Tech Mahindra. On the other hand, the top losers were Tata Consumer Products, HUL, Bajaj Finance, Nestle India and Britannia. Dr. V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial



Experts welcome budget relief for cancer patients, urge higher health spending

NEW DELHI. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a major relief for cancer patients in the country in the Union Budget 2014-25. The budget proposed to exempt three crucial cancer treatment medicines that are needed for patients in India from customs duty. What are these drugs used for specifically? Trastuzumab Deruxtecan: This is an antibody-drug conjugate used primarily to treat HER2-positive breast cancer that has spread to other parts of the body (metastatic). It is also being studied for use in other types of cancer, such as gastric cancer.

Osimertinib: This is a targeted therapy used to treat non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) with specific mutations in the EGFR gene. It is particularly effective against cancers that have developed resistance to earlier generations of EGFR inhibitors.

Durvalumab: This is an immunotherapy drug that works by blocking the PD-L1 protein, helping the immune system to attack cancer cells. It is used to treat non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) and urothelial carcinoma (bladder cancer).

How commonly are these drugs

prescribed?

Trastuzumab Deruxtecan: This is commonly prescribed for patients with advanced HER2-positive breast cancer who have not responded to other treatments. It is relatively new but has shown significant promise in clinical trials.

Osimertinib: This is widely prescribed for patients with EGFR-mutated non-small cell lung cancer. It is often used as a first-line treatment and is also prescribed for patients whose cancer has progressed despite other EGFR inhibitors.

Services, said, "Now that the steep increase in STCGs tax and the marginal increase in LTCGs tax on equity is a reality, investors should focus on investing in stocks which can deliver superior returns. In the present context FMCG stocks look attractive from the valuation perspective." "Watch out for stocks like ITC and United Spirits. It is important to understand that the Budget strengthens the India Growth Story with focus on growth with financial stability. The fiscal consolidation being attempted through the Budget is a big positive that should not be missed amidst the concerns of increase in capital gains tax. Another important factor is that the removal of indexation benefits on gold and real estate will make equity a superior asset class, relatively," he added.

"The higher tax on F&O trading is intended to discourage the excessive speculation in this segment and, therefore, is a welcome move."

ICICI Bank, Dabur, HUL and more: These stocks in focus after Budget 2024

NEW DELHI. The Union Budget 2024 announcements have put the spotlight on several sectors and stocks, with most experts calling it a balanced plan. Sujan Hajra, Chief Economist & Executive Director at Anand Rathi Shares and Stock Brokers, said the budget reflects a strategic "balancing act, meticulously maintaining fiscal health while vigorously pursuing economic growth".

"Infrastructure, manufacturing and housing—critical engines driving the nation's long-term economic strength, are key focus areas in this budget. Parallely, the government has, aiming to boost consumption, crafted specific initiatives especially for the weaker economic sections and lower- and middle-income classes, through a sharper focus on agriculture, employment incentives, welfare programs and tailored income-tax relief," Hajra said. "As such, we believe this budget sets the stage for the next five years of the Modi 3.0 government with structural growth in focus and would be positive for consumption- and infrastructure-oriented sectors," he added.

Anand Rathi Shares and Stock Brokers also

highlighted some stocks that are poised to benefit from the strategic measures announced in the budget.

The brokerage firm's key picks include Astral, Crompton Greaves Consumer, Dabur, Finolex Cables, Hero MotoCorp, HG Infra, HUL, ICICI Bank, M&M, NCC, Neogen Chemicals, PNC Infra, SBI, Sagar Cements, Senco, Siemens, Shilchar Technologies, Spandana Sphoorty, Sumitomo Chemicals, Suzlon, and Ultratech. "We believe equity markets will credit this government's adeptness in navigating the complex landscape of economic governance amid fiscal prudence. We believe this budget will benefit industries such as agro-chemicals, automobiles, capital goods, cement, infrastructure, FMCG, metals, retail and renewable energy," Hajra said.

"The IT sector might grapple with implications of changes to the share-buyback policy, whereas the financial sector largely remains neutral. Further, we believe the change in the indexation norm for real estate may not impact end-user demand," he added. Disclaimer: The



views, opinions, recommendations, and suggestions expressed by experts/brokers in this article are their own and do not reflect the views of the India Today Group. It is advisable to consult a qualified broker or financial advisor before making any actual investment or trading choices. How will Budget 2024 impact stock markets? In addition, Hajra highlighted that the budget maintains fiscal prudence by reducing the fiscal deficit target by 20 basis points to 4.9% of FY25e GDP and

retaining a target of 4.5% for FY26. He noted that a big focus of the budget is on sectors like agriculture, education, and employment generation to drive economic advancement and inclusivity.

The anticipated boost in consumer spending, especially at the grassroots level, is expected to catalyse a sustained recovery. Income-tax relief measures for the new tax regime are designed to further stimulate consumption demand, particularly for lower-income groups.

"The budget prioritises sectors such as agriculture, education and employment generation, broadening the base for economic advancement and ensuring inclusivity in growth trajectories. This strategy is anticipated to catalyse a sustained recovery in consumer spending, especially at the grassroots level. Further, the income-tax relief measures announced for the new tax regime could boost consumption demand, especially at the bottom of the pyramid," Sujan Hajra said.

NEWS BOX

Paris Olympics 2024: India wants to win medal for PR Sreejesh, says Harmanpreet Singh

New Delhi. Indian men's hockey team captain Harmanpreet Singh has said that the team wants to dedicate their Paris Olympics 2024 campaign to retiring goalkeeper PR Sreejesh and win a medal for him. Sreejesh, who has been one of India's best goalkeepers of all time, decided to bring down the curtains on his playing career after the event in Paris. The 36-year-old had played a pivotal role in India's bronze medal win at Tokyo.

Sreejesh had initially suggested he could play well beyond the Paris Olympics but then went on to announce his decision before the games started. Harmanpreet, who is set for his third Olympics alongside Sreejesh, penned an emotional message for the India goalkeeper on his Instagram account. The India captain said that Sreejesh has been an inspiration to the team. Harmanpreet also remembered the 2016 Jr. men's World Cup where Sreejesh served as a mentor to the team and helped them lift the title.

Harmanpreet said that the team wants to 'win it for Sreejesh' and they're more encouraged to stand on the podium once again at the Olympics. "Paris 2024 will indeed be a special tournament. We have decided to dedicate our campaign to the legend PR Sreejesh. He has been an inspiration for all of us and I still remember his mentorship in 2016 Junior World Cup when we lifted the title. It was the beginning of many of our careers in International hockey. We want to 'Win it for Sreejesh' and we are all the more encouraged to stand on the podium once again."

What Sreejesh said about his retirement

Sreejesh opened up about his retirement on social media and said he looks back at his career with immense pride and his journey has been nothing short of extraordinary.

"As I prepare for my last dance in Paris, I look back with immense pride and forward with hope. This journey has been nothing short of extraordinary, and I am forever grateful for the love and support from my family, teammates, coaches, and fans."

Eoin Morgan denies reports of becoming next England white-ball coach

New Delhi Former England captain Eoin Morgan has denied reports suggesting that he could replace Matthew Mott as the next white-ball coach on July 23, Tuesday. England's defence of both their world titles ended in poor fashion as they had a horrendous campaign in India last year during the ODI World Cup. This was followed by a semi-final exit at the hands of India in the T20 World Cup 2024, as the pressure has started to mount on Mott. Reports in the British media has suggested that Mott would leave the post and England have started to sound out to possible candidates. Morgan has been one of the names linked with the job, but quickly dismissed the suggestions. Speaking to Sky Sports, while commentating for the Hundred, Morgan said that it was actually news to him.

"This news is actually news to me," he said. "It's obviously not nice when a coach comes under fire and there is a lot of speculation about his future, but only time will tell what will happen."

I want to coach down the line

Morgan admitted that he would want to coach the team down the line, but the timing at the moment is correct one. The former England captain said that he has a young family at the moment and wants to spend time with them. Morgan also said that he is enjoying his commentary duty as well.

"I've been asked a lot [in the media] over the past couple of months about the role, and if I would take it on," Morgan said. "My answer has simply been that the timing for everything in my life at the moment is not right. Yes, I want to coach down the line. But I have a young family, and I spend a lot more time at home and watching cricket doing this [commentary]. I'm absolutely loving what I'm doing," said Morgan.

England pacer Jofra Archer sets sights on playing in the next Ashes series

New Delhi. England pacer Jofra Archer is aiming to play in the next edition of the Ashes and claimed he would use the rest of the current year to proving people wrong. Archer has made a slow and steady return to the field after struggling with a lot of injury setbacks over the past few years. The pacer has returned to T20 cricket, but is yet to make it to the longer formats. Recently, Ben Stokes said that Archer won't be rushed back into the longest format of the game. Speaking to BBC in an interview, Archer said that he wants to use the rest of 2024 to make sure making it to the Ashes series will remain a possibility. The pacer said he is tired of seeing people make fun of him on social media with regards to his fitness and want to prove everyone wrong. "I am going to use the rest of this year to make sure that is at least a possibility. I'm tired of going on Instagram and seeing posts saying 'he's going to be on the physio's bed in the next two weeks' and stuff like that. I want to spend the rest of the year proving some people wrong and hopefully play in another Ashes," said Archer. Archer said that he aims to manage himself as best as possible and get through until the start of the Championship next year. The pacer plans to use those games and keep building up towards his return to Tests. "I will manage myself as best as possible and get myself [through] until at least maybe the start of the Championship next year."

Asia Cup 2024: Smriti Mandhana gifted 'token of love' statue by Nepal captain

Women's Asia Cup 2024: India batting star Smriti Mandhana was gifted a special Buddha statue by Nepal cricket team after their game in Dambulla on Tuesday. Smriti also agreed to pose for photographs with the Nepal players after India's 82-run victory.

Dambulla. Nepal captain Indu Barma came up with a heart-warming gesture after their Women's Asia Cup 2024 match against India, gifting stand-in captain Smriti Mandhana a special Buddha statue. The 'token of love' was handed over to Smriti Mandhana during the post-match presentation ceremony in Dambulla, Sri Lanka on Tuesday, July 23.

India defeated Nepal in a one-sided contest in



their final Group A match to seal a spot in the semi-finals of the Women's Asia Cup. While it was intense on the field, India and Nepal players kept it light off it. Smriti Mandhana and Indu Barma went on to pose for a photograph with the former flaunting the special gift from the Nepal cricket team. Soon after the post-match formalities,

young Nepal cricket team players did not miss an opportunity to get photos clicked with Smriti Mandhana. The Indian batting star took time out to pose with every player, who requested a photograph with her. India ended the group stage of the Women's Asia Cup in a dominant fashion, winning all three games. After outclassing Pakistan in the

tournament opener, India went on to beat the UAE and Nepal.

Smriti Mandhana led the team against Nepal after Harmanpreet Kaur was rested for the match. India were in the mood to experiment with their batting order as stand-in captain Smriti decided against opening the batting. Shafali Verma made a special by hammering 81 off just 48 balls, hitting 12 boundaries and a six. She stitched a 122-run opening stand in just 84 balls with Dayalan Hemalatha, who made 47 off 42 balls. Jemimah Rodrigues, batting at No. 4, chipped in with a 15-ball 28 as India posted 178 for 3 on the board.

In reply, Nepal managed only 96 for 9 in their quota of 20 overs. Only four of their batters got to double-digit scores as the Indian spinners spun a web around them. Deepti Sharma continued her fine form in the Asia Cup, picking another three-wicket haul while Radha Yadav and Arundhati Reddy chipped in with 2 wickets.

India and Pakistan qualified for the semi-finals from Group A. While Pakistan are likely to face Sri Lanka in the semi-final, India might face either Bangladesh or Thailand on Friday.

'Don't see any problem between Virat Kohli and Gautam Gambhir': Ashish Nehra

New Delhi Former India pacer Ashish Nehra has claimed that he doesn't see any problem between Virat Kohli and Gautam Gambhir as they will start sharing the dressing room once again.

Gambhir will be taking over as the India coach from the Sri Lanka tour, where Kohli would be part of the ODI squad. Both men have had on-field spats during the IPL, but seemed to have buried the hatchet during the 2024 season as they were seen having warm conversations. Gambhir had shutdown the chatter about his equation with Kohli during his first press conference and Nehra feels there will be no animosity between the two inside the dressing room. Speaking to India Today's sister channel Sports Tak, the former pacer said that both men are very passionate individuals. Nehra feels that once both of them come into the Indian dressing room, they will be united for the team's



cause. "Virat Kohli and Gautam Gambhir are two very passionate individuals. Whenever they play for a team, they can turn up against the opposition. But, when they are together in a dressing room, they are together, united for the team. You're talking about Virat Kohli, who has an experience of over 16-17 years, Gautam Gambhir is also experienced. The things on

the outside, people get an impression about it. It's not just Gambhir and Kohli, there are so many players who have had on-field spats in the past, but when they play together for a team, they have done well as a player, as a coach-captain, as a coach and senior player," said Nehra. Gambhir is upfront, transparent

Nehra also said that Gambhir is always upfront and transparent and speaks his mind all the time.

"Gautam Gambhir is upfront, transparent which is great. He keeps it clear and speaks his mind. That's very important. Yes, I agree, everybody has their own style (of coaching), to operate with the coach, captain and player. I don't see any problem with these two and where they are in their careers," said Nehra. India will start the tour of Sri Lanka on July 27 with the T20I series. Kohli will be expected to join the squad before the ODI series begins on August 2.

Paris Olympics 2024, football: New Zealand report Canada to IOC after drone incident

New Zealand has raised a complaint about Canada to the international Olympic Committee after the women's football team's training was disrupted by a drone. The drone operator was found to be a member of the Canada women's football team.



New Delhi New Zealand's Olympic Committee (NZOC) reported that their women's soccer team experienced a disruption during a training session due to a drone operated by a staff member from the Canadian team, whom they are set to play against in Group A on Thursday. The NZOC promptly reported the incident to the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) integrity unit. The NZOC said that a drone

was flown over the training session on July 22 and the incident was immediately reported to the police. This was followed by the detention of a support member of the Canada team, who was the operator of the drone. "On July 22, a drone was flown over the New Zealand women's football team training session in St Etienne," the NZOC said on Tuesday. "Team support members immediately reported the incident to police, leading to the drone operator, who has been identified as a support staff member of the

wider Canadian Women's football team, to be detained." Following this, Team Canada issued an apology and launched an investigation into the matter. The Canadian Olympic Committee acknowledged the incident, specifying that it involved "a non-accredited member of the Canada Soccer support team." They stated that they are currently "reviewing next steps with the IOC, Paris 2024, Canada Soccer, and FIFA. In a statement they released, the Canadian Olympic Committee said they stand for fair-play and are shocked and disappointed with what has happened." The Canadian Olympic Committee stands for fair-play and we are shocked and disappointed. We offer our heartfelt apologies to New Zealand Football, to all the players affected and to the New Zealand Olympic Committee," they said in a statement. Canada and New Zealand will lock horns during the Olympics on July 25 in their opening match. Both teams are in Group A, which also has France and Colombia.



said Maresca.

Hope everyone will be on same page

Chelsea captain Reece James commented on the matter as well and said he had spoken to Fernandez and the people affected about the matter and it would stay within the club. The Blues skipper is also hoping that everyone will be on the same page and everyone can move on from the situation. "It's obviously a really difficult situation. I think Enzo (Fernandez) quickly acknowledged he did wrong, put his hand up and apologised to the club, the team and the people offended." "I have spoken to Enzo and everyone involved but those conversations have to stay in house. He hasn't arrived yet so I don't know if there is anything to amend. I hope everyone will be on the same page and we can move on from the situation," said James. Chelsea will face Wrexham at the Levi's stadium on July 25, Thursday in their first pre-season game in the US.

I am not surprised: Ashish Nehra reacts to Hardik Pandya T20I captaincy snub

New Delhi Former India fast bowler and Gujarat Titans head coach Ashish Nehra said he was not surprised by the Indian management's decision not to appoint Hardik Pandya as the new T20I captain. Nehra said he understood the thought process of chief selector Ajit Agarkar and newly-appointed coach Gautam Gambhir in picking Suryakumar Yadav as the new T20I skipper. Hardik Pandya, who led India in T20Is in 2023, was Rohit Sharma's deputy in the victorious World Cup campaign in June in the USA and the West Indies. While Hardik was expected to replace Rohit as T20I captain after the latter retired from the format, the BCCI announced Suryakumar as the new T20I captain for the upcoming three-match series in Sri Lanka. Ajit Agarkar, speaking to the press on Monday, said that the team management wanted Hardik Pandya to focus on his fitness and backed Suryakumar to shine in his new role. The former fast bowler pointed fingers at

Hardik's recurring injury concerns that have put him on the sidelines frequently over the last four to five years. No, I am not surprised. When it comes to cricket, these things keep happening. Yes, Hardik Pandya was vice-captain in the World Cup, but at the same time, there is a new coach who has come in. Every coach and every captain have different thoughts. At this time, his (Gambhir's) ideas are toward that direction," Nehra told India Today's sister channel Sports Tak. "I think Ajit Agarkar and Gautam Gambhir have made it clear, that's good. He is playing one format, 50-over also, he is playing less. Hardik Pandya, in white-ball cricket, will remain a very, very important player for Indian cricket. When you have him, you can have 4 fast bowlers, he brings in a different balance to the side and keep in mind, that there's no impact player in international cricket. Not just Hardik Pandya, but when you have so many matches, there will be changes. Even



Rishabh Pant has captained, KL Rahul was captained," he added.

COACH NEHRA THRILLED FOR SHUBMAN GILL

Notably, Hardik Pandya tasted success in his first assignment as the captain of an Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise in 2022 at Gujarat Titans. He formed a good working relationship with Titans' coach Nehra. The two oversaw GT's run to glory in IPL 2022 and the team also reached the final of IPL in 2023. Meanwhile, Ashish Nehra also

welcomed the decision to appoint Shubman Gill as the vice-captain in both T20Is and ODIs, saying the Gujarat Titans captain will only improve with experience across all three formats. Nehra and Gill worked together as the captain and coach for the Titans in 2024. "They have made Shubman Gill in not just one format, but in all three formats. That means you are looking ahead."

"Shubman Gill is a work in progress. He is 24-25 years old now. He will get better as we go ahead. He has the desire to play all 3 formats, he has the heart to learn. He is not someone who thinks that whatever he is doing is right. He is not that kind of guy. Be it a youngster or an experienced player, he likes to have a discussion and learn," he said. Team India arrived in Sri Lanka on Monday and began training for the upcoming T20I series, starting July 27, on Tuesday. Coach Gambhir and captain Suryakumar oversaw their first training session together in Pallekele.



Janhvi Kapoor

On Telugu Debut Devara: 'Had A Great Time On Sets'



Telugu actor Jr NTR and Janhvi Kapoor are all set to showcase their magical chemistry for the first time on screen in their upcoming film Devara: Part 1. In the latest update, the latter has hinted that she will be shooting another song with Jr NTR and she is very excited about the song. Bollywood star Janhvi Kapoor, who is gearing up for her Telugu debut with star Jr NTR, recently said that she is looking forward to shooting another song with the actor. She was asked if she would rather act with Amitabh Bachchan or do a dance number with Hrithik Roshan or Vicky Kaushal.

The Dhadak actress said in an interview with Mashable India, "I just shot a song with Jr NTR sir and I can't wait to shoot our next song together. I will choose that; I want to dance with Jr NTR." For the unversed, the duo reportedly shot the first song of the film in Thailand. Earlier, Janhvi had spoken at length about her role in Koratala Siva's Devara during the promotions of her film Mr & Mrs Mahi.

Talking about her role, she said that it was very entertaining. Janhvi also revealed that she had a great time on the sets and was overwhelmed to see people doing their work with love, conviction and passion. The actress also said that she feels lucky to have got this opportunity.

The upcoming film Devara: Part 1, starring Jr NTR and Janhvi Kapoor in the lead roles, is directed by Koratala Siva. It will be the first part of a two-part film series. The action film stars Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan in the lead role of the antagonist. Devara: Part 1 also features brilliant actors like Prakash Raj, Srikanth, Shine Tom Chacko, Narain and many others in pivotal roles. The song was originally scheduled to release on May 19 but was postponed to September 27, due to the general elections and upcoming post-production work.

Kajol Has Wrapped Up Major Stunt Scenes in Maharagni, Reveals Samyuktha: 'Action Done By Us'



18 years after starting her acting career, south actor Samyuktha is all set to make her Bollywood debut with Maharagni: Queen Of Queens, which also marks Kajol and Prabhu Deva's onscreen reunion 27 years after Minsara Kanavu (also known as Sapnay in Hindi). The teaser of Maharagni featured Kajol in a never-seen-before-action avatar beating up bad guys and making an entry like a quintessential and larger-than-life south hero. The film will also see Samyuktha pack some solid punches. Sharing an update on Maharagni, Samyuktha exclusively tells News18 Showsha, "We've been shooting part-by-part. They've wrapped up a schedule that included major portions of Kajol ma'am's action sequences. Another schedule that included my introduction and some car chase sequences featuring me have also been wrapped. We had a blast! They got an action director from abroad and the way they planned everything was wonderful. I feel so grateful."

While 95 percent of the film shoot is still pending, Samyuktha is thrilled that she already got the opportunity to film some scenes with Kajol and Naseeruddin Shah. So, was she nervous about the same? "If your co-stars are cool, good to talk to and ready to strike up conversations, it's always nice. We had a photoshoot with all three of us and it was really fun!" she says. The Bheemla Nayak and Vaathi actor lauds her senior co-actors for putting in the effort to make her feel comfortable. Sharing an anecdote, she remarks, "With Naseeruddin sir, I felt like I was interacting with my own grandfather (laughs). During the shoot, he was to hold a glass of wine and he began explaining to me how 'daaru' actually means medicine. Since he was freely talking to me, I could be myself. It was only when I took a step back and took a moment that I realised where I'm and who I was working with." She further adds, "Kajol ma'am was helping me on the side with cues when I was shooting for my close-ups. It was really lovely of her. I was tense not because of them but because I wanted to get my Hindi dialect right. They've a lot of experience and I didn't want to give them that impression that I'm not prepared. I don't know how but I pulled it off eventually."

Many Moods' Of Vicky Kaushal, Triptii Dimri and Ammy Virk.

Courtesy: Neha Dhupia



Starring Vicky Kaushal, Triptii Dimri and Ammy Virk, Bad Newz continues to win the audience's hearts for its fresh twist to the rom-com genre. Besides the lead trio, the film also has Neha Dhupia playing a pivotal role. The actress has now given her fans a sneak peek into some precious moments with the star cast of the film. In an Instagram post, she attached some pictures from the sets, emphasising the 'many moods' of its cast and crew. The heartwarming carousel opens with a never-before-seen image of Neha Dhupia along with Vicky Kaushal, Triptii Dimri and Ammy Virk. Posing against a picturesque background, the talented stars radiated joy. It is followed by a selfie wherein all four were joined by the director of the film, Anand Tiwari. A few pictures also showcase the camaraderie between Neha and Triptii as the actresses flash bright smiles for some endearing clicks. Next, we can also see Neha indulging in a chat with the director Anand. Additionally, a bunch of selfies offering a glimpse of the joyous time during the shoot have been added to the post.

Previously, Neha Dhupia dropped a fun BTS video on Instagram accompanied by a short note that read, "It's never not fun with this crazy bunch #maacora ki kasam mazaa aa gaya."

Bad Newz is a humorous twist from regular rom-com films, exploring an off-beat storyline around a rare medical condition. It delves into the life of a woman who finds out that she's expecting twins from two different fathers, portrayed by Kaushal and Virk, in a rare case of heteropaternal superfecundation. Produced by Amritpal Singh Bindra, Apoorva Mehta and Karan Johar's Dharma Productions, Bad Newz is a sequel to 2019 released Good Newz. Starring Kareena Kapoor Khan, Akshay Kumar, Kiara Advani and Diljit Dosanjh in the lead roles, the film emerged as a blockbuster at the box-office. Coming back to Bad Newz and its box-office performance, the film amassed nearly Rs 30 crore within three days of its release and continues to perform well.

Kartik Aaryan

Signs 'Pati Patni Aur Woh 2' As He Makes A Comedy Comeback? Here's What We Know

Kartik Aaryan continues to captivate audiences with his diverse film choices, showcasing his versatility as an actor in the industry. Following the praise for his recent hit, Chandu Champion, where his performance impressed many, he is now set to embark on a project that holds personal significance for him. Fans can anticipate his return to the comedy genre, as Kartik has greenlit the sequel to the 2019 smash hit Pati Patni Aur Woh, which not only dominated the box office but also left viewers thoroughly entertained. According to an insider familiar with the production, the screenplay for the sequel has been finalized, sparking high enthusiasm from Kartik as he gears up to revisit his character as the endearing small-town protagonist, "Kartik loved the script of PPAW 2 and, as soon as he gave his nod, the makers decided to get this one rolling soon. Knowing the actor's tight schedule and several films lined up, the makers have secured his dates as soon as possible. Once Kartik wraps up shooting for Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3, PPAW 2 will go on floors," the source told Bollywood Hungama.



The 2019 film Pati Patni Aur Woh received immense love from audiences for its unconventional love narrative, with Kartik's electrifying dance moves in the viral track 'Dheeme Dheeme' causing a frenzy online. The dance craze extended beyond just social media users, as even big names like Deepika Padukone and Hrithik Roshan were spotted grooving to the beats, enjoying the catchy steps.

With the sequel being produced by Bhushan Kumar and Juno Chopra, and directed by Mudassar Aziz, the project is shaping up to be an exciting endeavor. While the 'Woh' character is yet to be confirmed for the sequel, Kartik's successful track record in the comedy genre is undeniable. From hits like Pyaar Ka PUNCHAMA (1 & 2), Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweetie, Pati Patni Aur Woh, Luka Chuppi, to the upcoming Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2, Kartik has consistently proven himself as a box office magnet. Currently immersed in the filming of Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3, one of the most anticipated releases of the year slated for a Diwali launch, Kartik's dynamic lineup of projects promises an exciting cinematic journey ahead for his fans, with his upcoming films poised to make a significant impact at the box office.

