



Mamata Banerjee demands capital punishment for culprits

ST Correspondent

Kolkata, August 16: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday accused the opposition CPI(M) and the BJP of orchestrating vandalism at RG Kar hospital and attempting to obscure the truth behind the rape and murder of a woman doctor by spreading fake news on social media. Reiterating her demand for capital punishment for the culprits involved in the crime, Banerjee commended the



Kolkata Police for their investigation, which was later transferred to the CBI by the Calcutta High Court. She also urged the Central Bureau of Investigation to resolve the case by Sunday and demanded that the culprits be hanged. "We want the truth to come out, but some quarters are spreading lies to mislead people. Attempts are being made to hide the truth by circulating fake news on social media. We condemn these activities. We want the culprits to be punished," she said while addressing a rally. Banerjee led a protest rally from Mouli to Dorina Crossing in Kolkata on Friday, demanding justice for the woman doctor who was allegedly raped and murdered at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital last week. "The nexus between the Left and BJP should be exposed. The CPI(M) and the BJP are behind the vandalism of RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. They vandalised the hospital to destroy evidence of the ghastly crime," she said. The woman post-graduate trainee doctor was allegedly raped and murdered in the seminar room of the state-run health facility on August 9. A civic volunteer has been arrested in connection with the crime. A group of people entered the hospital and vandalised the emergency department, nursing unit and medicine store in the early hours of Thursday. The mob also damaged CCTV cameras at the state-run health facility and ransacked a stage where junior doctors had been demonstrating against the alleged rape and murder of the doctor there and demanding security at their workplace.

President Murmu, PM Modi pay tributes to Atal Bihari Vajpayee on death anniversary

Sanjay Kumar

New Delhi, August 16: President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tributes to former



prime minister and BJP stalwart Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his death anniversary on Friday. They were joined by other dignitaries, including Union ministers, and leaders from different parties at his memorial 'Sadaa

Atal' here. A widely-respected politician acknowledged as among the finest orators, Vajpayee played a crucial role in drawing allies for his party in the coalition

In phone talks with PM Modi, Bangladesh's Yunus assures safety of Hindus

Naresh Malhotra

New Delhi, August 16: In his first direct contact with New Delhi after becoming the head of Bangladesh's interim government, Mohammad Yunus on Friday conveyed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a phone conversation that Dhaka would prioritise protection and safety of Hindus and all other minority groups. In the talks initiated by Yunus, Modi reaffirmed India's support for a democratic, stable, peaceful and progressive Bangladesh and underlined the importance of ensuring the safety of Hindus and other minority communities in the violence-hit country. The assurance by Yunus came a day after Modi, in his Independence Day speech, said 140 crore Indians are concerned over the safety of Hindus and minorities in the neighbouring country. "Received a telephone call from Professor Muhammad Yunus, @ChiefAdviserGoB. Exchanged views on the prevailing situation," Modi said on X. "Reiterated India's support for a democratic, stable, peaceful and progressive Bangladesh. He assured protection, safety and security of Hindus and all minorities in Bangladesh," he

said. In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the two leaders also discussed ways to take the bilateral relationship forward in line with the "respective national priorities". "During the call, the prime minister reaffirmed India's support for a democratic, stable, peaceful and progressive Bangladesh. He emphasised India's commitment to supporting the people of Bangladesh through various development initiatives," it said. "The prime minister also underlined the importance of ensuring the safety and protection of Hindus and all other minority communities in Bangladesh," it said. "Prof Yunus, in turn, assured that the Interim Government would prioritise protection, safety and security of Hindus and all minority groups in Bangladesh," the MEA said. There have been mounting concerns in New Delhi over widespread incidents of attacks on the

minority Hindu community in Bangladesh after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigned and



fled to India on August 5 following weeks of violent unrest. Days after Hasina fled to India, the interim government, headed by Nobel laureate Yunus, was sworn in on August 8, along with 16 advisers. On Tuesday, Yunus reached out to Hindus in Bangladesh as he visited the

Khakeshwar temple in Dhaka and said his government would punish those who attacked the minority community members. Hasina (76), who ruled Bangladesh with an iron hand for 15 years, resigned as the prime minister following massive protests that initially began as an agitation against a job-quota scheme but weeks later, morphed into a mass movement demanding her ouster from power. In his Independence Day speech from the ramparts of the Red Fort in the national capital, Modi on Thursday said India is committed to peace and that it will remain a well-wisher of Bangladesh in its development journey. "As a neighbouring country, I can understand the concern regarding whatever has happened in Bangladesh. I hope that the situation there will become normal soon," Modi said. "In particular, the concern of 140 crore countrymen is that the safety and security of Hindus and minorities there is ensured. India always wants the neighbouring country to march on the path of peace and prosperity," he said.

Haryana to vote on October 1; Jammu and Kashmir election in 3 phases beginning September 18

Simmi Kaur Babbar

Srinagar/Jammu, August 16: Political parties cutting across party lines on Friday welcomed the Election Commission's (ECI) announcement of three-phased assembly elections beginning September 18 in Jammu and Kashmir, saying the people were eagerly waiting for the restoration of democracy in the Union Territory after six years of central rule. Almost all the parties, including National Conference, Congress, BJP, CPI(M) and DPAP, thanked the Election Commission and said the poll announcement maintained the supremacy of the Supreme Court which had set the September 30 deadline for the holding of the much awaited assembly elections in J-K. The Election Commission said the assembly polls in J-K would be held in three phases on September 18, 25 and October 1. The counting of votes would be on October 4. Reacting to the ECI announcement, National Conference vice-president and former chief minister Omar Abdullah said it was better late than never. The former chief minister

said it is perhaps for the first time after the 1987-88 polls, that the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir are being held in a short time and in just a few phases. "It obviously will be a new experiment for the politi-

Ravinder Sharma said, reacting to the announcement by the chief election commissioner Rajiv Kumar. He said the people in J-K were waiting for the assembly elections for the past six years after the fall of PDP-BJP government in June 2018.

"Though we were pressing for restoration of full statehood before the holding of assembly elections, the announcement by the Election Commission is a welcome step and we are hopeful that the commission will ensure level playing field and adequate security without any discrimination," Sharma, who is also the chief spokesperson of the Congress, said. He also hoped that ECI would look into the massive reshuffle in police and civil administration ordered in the

Union Territory on the day of

the announcement of polls. "There should be no unnecessary transfers and if such a thing had happened, the Election Commission should take appropriate action," the Congress leader said.

Decide CM face of MVA first; will back any candidate announced by Congress, NCP (SP): Uddhav Thackeray

Navdeep Singh Sahni

Mumbai, August 16: Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Friday insisted on deciding MVA's chief ministerial face first rather than going by the logic of who wins most seats, asserting that he would back any candidate announced by the Congress and NCP (SP). Addressing party workers of the opposition bloc Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) here, Thackeray said if the Lok Sabha polls were to protect democracy and the Constitution, then the Assembly polls are a fight to preserve Maharashtra's self-respect. Maharashtra Assembly elections are likely to be held in October or November. The MVA comprises the Sena (UBT), Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP) and Congress. He insisted that the chief ministerial candidate must be decided first, rather than by the logic of the party that wins the most seats in the elections. Thackeray said the experience he had

during his alliance with the BJP was that whoever had the numbers would get the CM's post. But this policy was detrimental as this would lead to one party trying to defeat the other's candidate to maintain an upper hand in the alliance, he said.

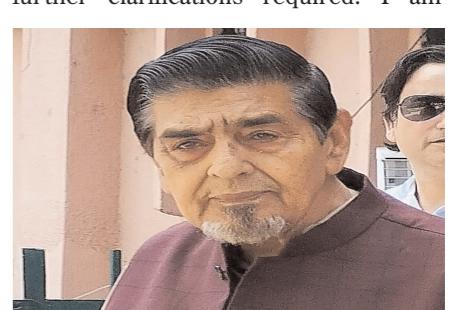
"First, decide (the CM's face) and then go ahead, but do not go by this policy (those having the most seats will get the CM's post)," Thackeray said. "Uddhav Thackeray will back any candidate announced by Congress and NCP (SP) as the CM face of MVA. I don't have the feel-

ing that I am fighting for myself but it is for the rights of Maharashtra," Thackeray said. Thackeray asked the MVA cadres to rise above self-interest and fight for the sake of protecting Maharashtra's pride and interest. He also urged them to be the ambassadors of the opposition alliance in the state. On Prime Minister Narendra Modi's pitch for a secular civil code in the country, Thackeray wondered if he had given up Hindutva. During his Independence Day speech, Modi had said, "I would say, it is the need of the hour that India should have a secular civil code. We have lived 75 years with a communal civil code. Now, we have to move towards a secular civil code. Only then would religion-based discrimination end. It would also end the disconnect the common people feel." The PM noted that the Supreme Court has given various directions in this regard. The spirit of the Constitution also encourages such a code, he said, referring to Article 44 under the Directive Principles of State Policy.

in this achievement. Let me take this opportunity to thank the people who were behind this. Especially the management who had the confidence and trust in us to handover the development of a new launch vehicle to a new team which was able to achieve the targeted launch of D1, D2 and D3 within a short time frame.

Anti-Sikh riots case: Delhi court likely to pass order on framing charges against Jagdish Tytler on August 30

New Delhi, August 16: A Delhi court is likely to pass on August 30 an order on whether to frame the charges against Congress leader Jagdish Tytler in a case related to the killing of three people at Pul Bangash during the 1984-anti Sikh riots. Special CBI judge Rakesh Siyal on Friday reserved the order after getting some clarifications from the parties. "There are no further clarifications required. I am



reserving the order for August 30," the judge said. In its charge-sheet filed in May 2023, the CBI had accused Tytler, a former union minister, of "inciting, instigating and provoking the mob" which had assembled near the Pul Bangash gurdwara on November 1, 1984. Citing witness, it claimed, Tytler alighted from a white ambassador car in front of the gurdwara and instigated the mob, shouting "Kill the Sikhs, they have killed our mother!" Three people were then done to death by the mob that was enraged over the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards a day before. A sessions court had in August last year granted anticipatory bail to Tytler in the case on a personal bond of Rs 1 lakh and surety of the like amount. The Central probe agency has invoked charges under Sections 147 (rioting), 109 (abetment) read with 302 (murder) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), among others, against Tytler.



Ravinder Sharma said, reacting to the announcement by the chief election commissioner Rajiv Kumar. He said the people in J-K were waiting for the assembly elections for the past six years after the fall of PDP-BJP government in June 2018.

"Though we were pressing for



Third developmental flight of SSLV is 100 per cent success: ISRO Chairman

Tejinder Kaur Babbar

Sriharikota, August 16: ISRO on Friday successfully launched an Earth Observation Satellite (EOS-08) on board a small satellite launch vehicle, giving a boost to India's space programme. The third developmental flight carrying Earth Observation Satellite (EOS-08) along with a passenger satellite SR-0 DEMOSAT was successfully placed into the intended orbit as planned. "The third developmental flight LV-D3 with EOS-08 satellite has been successfully accomplished. The rocket has placed the spacecraft in the very precise orbit as planned. There are no deviations in the injection of satellites," ISRO Chairman S Somanath said, addressing the gathering from the Mission Control Centre at this spaceport here. He said the launch parameters of the satellite indicate that everything (mission launch) is perfect and the Earth Observation Satellite and the passenger satellite SR-0

DEMODSAT have been injected after the manoeuvres. Kenyan held with cocaine worth Rs 20 crore at Mumbai airport; DRI unearths 'liquid' modus operandi

"Congratulations now to the LV-D3 project team and with this the third developmental flight of LV has been completed," he said. "We are in the process of transferring LV technologies to industries and so it is a very good beginning for the LV and the launch vehicle," he said. The payload carried by the rocket has been designed and realised by the ISRO team, he said. "It is 100 per cent successful. The satellite has been placed into its intended orbit," Somanath told reporters later. "As I am aware, solar panels (of the rocket) have already been deployed. Further, we are looking for certain activities in the VTM stage and all that will be completed in due course of time. So congratulations once again to the entire team who worked behind the scene to develop this LV rocket and its culmination of developmental programme. Let us give a big round of applause to the entire (SSLV-D3) team," he said. Mission Director S S Vinod said, "Today, we have achieved a major milestone in the journey of LV. The last and final developmental flight of LV-D3 has been successfully accomplished and with that we are moving into the operational phase." He said the scientists have injected the EOS satellite and the passenger satellite into the precise orbit. "The efforts put in by one and all has resulted

in this achievement. Let me take this opportunity to thank the people who were behind this. Especially the management who had the confidence and trust in us to handover the development of a new launch vehicle to a new team which was able to achieve the targeted launch of D1, D2 and D3 within a short time frame.

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News box

Karnataka: SWR records historic Rs 268.3 crore passenger revenue in July 2024

BENGALURU. July turned out to be historic for the South Western Railway (SWR) Zone as it recorded its best passenger revenue for a single month at Rs 268.3 crore, said Bengaluru Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Yogesh Mohan.

Delivering a talk after hoisting the national flag and inspecting a parade to mark the 78th Independence Day celebrations at Mahatma Gandhi Railway Colony, the DRM said, "In the first four months, from April to July 2024, SWR earned Rs 1,077 crore as passenger revenue, a 6.47 % increase over the corresponding period last year."

Revenue through freight in the first four months of this fiscal touched Rs 2,632 crore at the originating stations in SWR.

Initiatives by the Railway Protection Force (RPF) like 'Operation Nanhe Farishtey' and 'Meri Saheli' helped rescue 553 children and 10 women in the previous financial year. During the same period, the RPF recovered Rs 20.69 lakh worth of stolen railway property, registered 16,057 cases and seized 1,383 live reserved tickets worth Rs 44.52 lakh under the Railway Act.

Independence Day at KIA

Meanwhile, cultural programmes and parades marked I-Day celebrations at Bengaluru airport on Thursday.

Karnataka govt's five ambitious guarantee schemes make it to Independence Day show



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Top printer files cybercrime complaint in Hyderabad

HPSL manager Ramesh Philip said that the email was sent in the name of National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and contained an attachment informing that HPSL has been blacklisted.

HYDERABAD. Hitech Print Systems Limited (HPSL), an RBI-approved printer, has filed a complaint with the cybercrime police that an email from an unknown ID that it has been blacklisted was sent to its clients. Given that HPSL's clients include universities, banks and government departments, and it is known for handling sensitive documents such as question papers, the incident has been taken seriously.

HPSL manager Ramesh Philip said that the email was sent in the name of National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and contained an attachment informing that HPSL has been blacklisted.

Philip said that the sender's email was anticorruptionofindia@proton.me and NIOS confirmed that they haven't sent any such email. "Circulating such false letters with criminal intention in mail will cause immense loss to us and also make us ineligible to participate in any tenders and will tarnish the image of the company," the complaint said.

A complaint is registered with the Cybercrime police of Hyderabad Commissionerate under Sections 66-C,66-D ITA-2000-2008 and is being probed.

First rabies case from Ranipet in 2024; official says close proximity of wound to brain may have caused boy's death

RANIPET. The death of a four-year-old boy on Tuesday – 17 days after a stray dog bit him – has been confirmed as a result of rabies, making it the first reported case of rabies from Ranipet district this year, according to official sources. The stray dog was killed on July 27, the day of the incident, after the villagers allegedly pelted stones at the animal. The boy, Nirmal (4), was the son of B Kalaivani and Balaji, an autorickshaw driver from Gandhipuram in Arakkonam Taluk. Nirmal had a sister Jenitha. On July 27 evening, while Nirmal was playing outside, he was attacked by the stray dog and suffered injuries to his mouth. "I had just gone inside the house to get some water. When I returned, I saw him with injuries in his mouth. He was bleeding profusely," said Balaji. The parents rushed Nirmal to the Government Head Quarters Hospital in Kancheepuram, where the doctors



administered a four-dose rabies vaccine. Upon the doctor's recommendation, Nirmal was shifted to Chengalpattu Government Hospital for plastic surgery. He was provided intensive care for 15 days in Chengalpattu. After his condition stabilised, his parents brought Nirmal back to their home. "But soon after, he started showing symptoms like shouting and crying," his father added. Again, Nirmal was taken to the

Chengalpattu GH, where the doctors informed the parents the rabies virus has infected his nervous system and that he might die within two days. Balaji said, "His condition was critical. His body also began to swell." On Tuesday, Nirmal succumbed to the viral infection. Following his parents' request, the body was cremated in their village with proper safety measures. The dean of Chengalpattu GH and senior health department officials could not be reached for a comment. Ranipet district deputy director of health services T Senthil Kumar said the boy received all four doses of the vaccine as he was treated in the medical college hospital. "The death could be due to the wound being in close proximity with the brain; in such cases it affects the brain faster. The dog that bit Nirmal attacked an 11-year-old boy and his father. The duo, after medical examination, is safe at the moment."

Municipal corporation officials said they have taken precautionary measures and removed all the stray dogs from the area.

Dog bite? Do this

Immediately wash the wound with soap and get rabies vaccine shots

Bleeding at the wound site indicates potentially severe exposure. So, rabies immunoglobulin should be administered near the wound along with the vaccine on the day of the first visit or within seven days from the date of the first vaccine dose

Four doses should be administered on the day of the dog bite, followed by third, seventh and 28th day

If a hospital refuses to administer the vaccine immediately after the dog bite, a complaint can be registered by calling 104

Source: Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine

Technically, health of ITIs in Telangana unsound

The state government allocated Rs 708 lakh to the Employment and Training Department for the FY 2024-25. This was less than the revised estimate of Rs 724 lakh in FY 2023-24.

HYDERABAD. Going by the condition of the Industrial Training Institute (ITI) at Mallepally, the state government has its task cut out when it comes to implementing its plans to upgrade the ITIs in the state to Advanced Technology Centres (ATCs) with the aim of providing development with advanced technologies.

The ITI at Mallepally, the oldest in Telangana, is the same ITI where the chief minister laid the foundation stone for the construction of an ATC in June. Such a

foundryman has yet to receive replacement facilities and a shed of its own. Established in 1957, the Mallepally ITI currently offers 21 trades with 37 units, accommodating over 700 students. However, several workshops, including Turner, Fitter, Machinist, and CNC, urgently require new machinery, as the existing equipment has been in use for decades.

Mallepally ITI principal P Jyothi Rani told TNIE: "As of now construction work on four ATCs is underway and it will start

shortage of attendants and security. They said that while at least 22 personnel are required, only six people are available.

Recently, the Sanathnagar ITI which was earlier located in Czech Colony, was also moved to the Mallepally campus due to nonavailability of land, the officials said.

Sanathnagar ITI principal R Srinivasa Rao told TNIE: "The ITI was moved to the Mallepally campus as there seemed to be some issue related to space for the building. We have been provided a separate facility in the Mallepally campus near Nice Hospital for workshops and classes. Our ITI has nine trades and 15 units with an intake of 224 students."

Shockingly, the Khairatabad ITI, which will also have a dedicated ATC, still does not have a building of its own since its inception in 2014. The ITI has been under the umbrella of the Mallepally ITI campus all these years. The Khairatabad ITI is now sharing space with the Sanathnagar ITI, with the uncertainty over a dedicated facility of its own continuing to loom over it. Khairatabad ITI principal K Vema Reddy said: "The Khairatabad ITI has three trades and six units with an intake of 64 students. At present we are accommodated with the Sanathnagar ITI facility and discussions are underway to provide a separate facility for us."

The state government allocated Rs 708 lakh to the Employment and Training Department for the FY 2024-25. This was less than the revised estimate of Rs 724 lakh in FY 2023-24. In fact, the Budget estimate for FY 2023-24 had sanctioned Rs 680 lakh, but it was raised to Rs 724 lakh in the revised estimate.



soon for the Mallepally ATC." She welcomed the government's decision to upgrade the ITIs saying that new trades would be useful in skill enhancements of students. "However, the government needs to upgrade the machinery in some of the workshops as some of the machines are over 60 years old," Jyothi Rani said.

Faculty members pointed out that while the syllabus has changed over the years, the same machines have been put to use for practical training in the workshops.

In addition, the ITI also faces a severe

Three property owners lauded for paying taxes on time



CHENNAI. The city corporation issued letters of appreciation to three property owners, one from each region, for ensuring that their property taxes were paid without any delay, on the occasion of Independence Day. One among them is 78-year-old Lalitha, who with her family packages loose spices for a daily wage.

Lalitha, a resident of George Town, lives with her son Ramprakash, daughter Jayarani and three grandchildren. In their 500 sq.ft house, they package loose spices for a daily wage of Rs 200 per person.

"My mother has been doing this work for the past many years. She does not like taking loans mainly because she doesn't want to give anyone the chance to walk into our house and demand their money back. It is for the same reason that the property taxes are paid on time, she doesn't want anyone to come asking," said Ramprakash.

A Karthikeyan of Vadapalani and M Sambath of Pallikaranai were also issued letters of appreciation for paying taxes on time. The civic body also acknowledged three large property taxpayers for not delaying payments – RMZ Infinity Pvt Ltd, whose property tax amounted to Rs 3.7 crore, DLF Info Park with Rs 2.8 crore, and Ford Motors with Rs 1.9 crore.

Celebrating Independence Day, mayor R Priya hoisted the national flag at the Ripon Buildings. 131 corporation officials were commended on the occasion for carrying out their work diligently in the last year.

Suspended Mysuru constable listed for CM's medal sparks controversy

Allegations of collusion with criminals led to Salim Pasha's suspension a month ago, yet his name appeared on the award list.



mysuru. Call it an oversight or negligence of authorities, a head constable who was suspended a month back amid allegations of colluding with anti-social elements, appeared on the list of recipients for the prestigious Chief Minister's Medal.

The Chief Minister medal, an honour typically reserved for officials with exemplary service records, has now been mired in controversy following this incident. Salim Pasha, who was part of the City Crime Branch (CCB) unit in Mysuru, was suspended a month ago amid

serious allegations of misconduct. The accusations against him are far from trivial. Pasha is alleged to have colluded with criminal elements, indirectly facilitated the theft of public property, and contact with the criminal elements. On July 12, based on a report from the ACP of Vijayanagar sub division, the city police commissioner's officer ordered his suspension until pending departmental enquiry.

Despite these charges, his name was somehow included among those being recognised with the Chief Minister's Medal, a list which was released on Wednesday, raising eyebrows and sparking outrage within the department.

According to sources, Pasha maintained suspiciously close ties with relatives of the accused in these cases and the CDR report even proved it, which ultimately led senior officials to recommend his suspension. The incident has cast a shadow over the award, with many within the police department and the public questioning how such a glaring mistake could occur. The

situation has left the police and even authorities undermining the integrity of the awards process. Though police are tight-lipped about the incident and are unavailable for calls, sources revealed that a special committee meticulously reviews the service performance of candidates before recommending names to the government, however his name might be nominated before the suspension but it could have been reviewed again, said an official, on condition of anonymity.

All of BDA's flats priced over one crore sold out in Chandra Layout

BENGALURU. Within one year of commencement of sale, all 120 3BHK flats of the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA), the priciest ones to date priced at over Rs one crore, have been sold out.

Billed 'Nagarbhatti Flats', its prime location at the entrance of Chandra Layout in Nagarbhatti and proximity to the metro network and the outer ring road are cited as the key reasons for the demand.

A top official told TNIE, "We made the sale of the last flat on Saturday (August 10). This is the first time in our history that we are selling flats above Rs One crore. The response has been terrific. More than 20 of the 120 flats have been



purchased by judges and advocates. The flats are located in one ten-floured tower with 12 flats on each floor. The Rs 54.75-crore project was completed in August 2023

and the sale of flats began immediately.

"With the Nayandahalli Metro station just one km away and the outer ring road in its vicinity, connectivity serves as its biggest plus point. Three parks nearby and the Durga Parameshwari temple too proved to be big draws," he said.

Amenities like an in-house gym and roads within the apartment are offered. The base price for the flat is Rs 1.04 crore with an additional Rs 2.5 lakh charged for car parking. This base price applies to flats up to the fifth floor. Beyond that, flats are levied an additional fee for the view of the City it offers.

THE SIKH TIMES

Edited, Printed, Published
Owned by Simmi Babbar
N - 31, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar
Delhi-110009
Printed at Qaumi Patrika Printing
Press, A-4/A-144, Tronica City
(Lon), Ghaziabad (Uttar Pradesh)
Corporate Office:
5, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg,
Press Area, ITO, New Delhi
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RNI No. DELENG/2008/25465

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News box

Firm flouted norms to bag waste collection contract in Gurgaon's Bandhwari: Plea to MCG

GURGAON. A private agency has submitted a complaint to the MCG commissioner alleging discrepancies in the information provided by another firm that was awarded the contract for secondary waste collection and its transportation to Bandhwari. The complaint comes days after reports of three allegedly related private firms participating in a sanitation tender in Manesar in violation of the norms. According to the complainant, the agency that was awarded the contract earlier this week and another bidder are allegedly owned by family members sharing common ownership and interests, with both companies based in Sonipat. The complainant further alleged that the firm awarded the tender doesn't meet the criteria of having completed at least one project worth Rs 1.5 crore. MCG commissioner Narhari Singh Banger flagged off the vehicles of the agency that secured the contract on Wednesday. "Both the agencies are operated by the same person as the same mobile number is mentioned in their letterheads," the complainant, which was filed on Wednesday, stated. Moreover, a check of the documents submitted by both agencies (copies of which are with TOI) revealed that the owner of one of the firms has been granted power of attorney for the other. The complainant also claimed the agency applied for contracts for two zones, but MCG awarded it the contract for all four zones. When approached by TOI, commissioner Banger said: "I'll ask the chief engineer to look into the facts of the matter and proceed accordingly." A senior MCG official, meanwhile, dismissed the allegations. "All eight agencies that participated in the bidding process met the technical requirements outlined in the tender. The contract was ultimately awarded to the firm that submitted the lowest bid. As stewards of public funds, it is crucial to allocate resources wisely and responsibly. Awarding the contract to a firm with higher rates would be an imprudent use of taxpayers' money," the official said. The official added, "The tender requirements do not stipulate that the winning agency must have completed a single solid waste management project valued at Rs 1.5 crore. This criterion can be satisfied through the completion of multiple smaller-scale projects."

Rain streak to continue for 1 more week in Gurgaon, IMD issues yellow alert

GURGAON. The city experienced a humid day with sporadic rain (5.5mm) on Thursday. India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a yellow alert for one more week. The minimum temperature escalated to 27.7 degrees Celsius from Wednesday's 25 degrees. A blanket of dark clouds covered the sky during mid day and the city witnessed light drizzle, bringing the daytime temperature 1.5 notches below normal. It was recorded at 32.4 degrees Celsius on Thursday, a dip from Wednesday's 33.4 degrees. IMD has predicted more spells of moderate to heavy showers over the next few days. The maximum temperature is likely to be around 27 and 28 degrees Celsius, and the minimum around 25 degrees till Aug 16, hinting at the likelihood of heavy rainfall at isolated and scattered



locations throughout Haryana. "Moderate to heavy rainfall over southern parts of Haryana is likely for Aug 21. Active monsoon conditions will continue over Punjab, Haryana, and Chandigarh during the next five days," an IMD official said. The heavy downpour is likely to cause waterlogging in several low-lying areas of the city, causing inconvenience to the commuters. By evening, several areas in Delhi too were hit by intense rainfall. On Thursday, the maximum temperature dropped slightly at 34 degrees Celsius, the season's normal, against 35.4 degrees Celsius a day earlier. The minimum temperature was 27.2 degrees Celsius, two notches below normal, against 26.6 degrees a day earlier.

Woman's body found at plot near Gurgaon's Ghamroj toll plaza

GURGAON. A 21-year-old woman, who arrived in the city last week to meet a friend, was found murdered in Bhondsi. Her decomposed body was found on Aug 12 at a plot near the Ghamroj toll plaza. The woman's identity was confirmed when her family recognised a tattoo on her hand. A murder case was registered on Wednesday. The woman, Kusuma alias Muskan was from Sudamanagar in UP's Firozabad. On Aug 8, she came to meet her female friend at Govardhan Kunj in Bhondsi. She told her mother that with the help of her friend, she would look for a job in the city. On the night of Aug 10, Kusuma left her friend's place to return to Firozabad, but she did not make it to home. "The body was in a highly decomposed condition," said DCP (south) Siddhant Jain. "The death was due to blunt force trauma to the head. There were no other injuries or sexual assault," said a forensic medicine expert.

A preliminary probe revealed that Kusuma was in a relationship with Raja Yadav. Call Details Record (CDR) analysis of the woman also confirmed that she remained in contact with the offender and his presence in the city on Aug 10. "Raja is in Firozabad prison involving another case. We will take him into custody on a production warrant and question him further about the crime," said a senior police officer.

Political maneuvering through patriotism: BJP leader Naveen Goyal's Tiranga Yatra in Gurgaon showcases his strength

GURGAON. In a display of political influence, BJP leader Naveen Goyal organised a grand "Tiranga Yatra" in Gurugram, where thousands of people participated in a patriotic bike rally. With 8,000 bikes and over 200 cars, the event painted the city in the colours of the national flag, showcasing the strength of the BJP at the grassroots level. The rally, which covered a 12-kilometre stretch from Leisure Valley Park to the Shaheed Smarak, lasted over four hours.

Dr. Sudha Yadav, a member of the BJP's Central Parliamentary Board, flagged off the rally and praised Goyal's efforts, emphasising that politics and social service go hand in hand. She highlighted the importance of such events in galvanising public sentiment and reinforcing the BJP's commitment to both nation-building and societal welfare.

As the rally made its way through Gurugram, it was met with enthusiasm at various points, including grand receptions with flower showers by the residents. The BJP leaders paid homage to the martyrs at the Shaheed Smarak, and Goyal, in his speech, vowed to continue



serving Gurugram's citizens. He also expressed confidence in the BJP's ability to form the govt for the third time in Haryana, driven by the energy and patriotism witnessed in the youth during

the yatra. The event also featured performances by Haryanvi artists, who added to the patriotic fervour, making the rally not just a political statement but a cultural celebration of national pride.

This "Tiranga Yatra" underscored the party's strategy of blending political activities with community engagement, aiming to strengthen its influence in Haryana.

9 years of wait ends, woman (44) with scar ectopic pregnancy gives birth to baby girl

GURGAON: After 9 years of attempts to conceive and losing a baby to a birth defect, a 44-year-old woman with a high risk of ectopic pregnancy gave birth to a healthy child after doctors treated her rare condition with a robotic surgery. Doctors at CK Birla Hospital in the city said it was the first time that a robotic surgery was used to treat such a condition in India. The patient, a homemaker from Bihar, approached them in August 2023, they said. "The patient had a history of unsuccessful naturally conceived pregnancies. In 2014, she underwent a caesarean section procedure but lost her baby to spina bifida, a birth defect in which the foetus does not fully develop a spine," said Dr Aruna Kalra, director of obstetrics and gynaecology at CK Birla Hospital. The patient, in June 2023, tried getting pregnant through in-vitro fertilisation (IVF), but that ended in an ectopic pregnancy at the site of the scar where her 2014 caesarean section was carried out. In scar ectopic pregnancies, the embryo implants within the scar tissue, instead of the uterine cavity, leading to an abnormal pregnancy. These are particularly rare, arising in 1% of all ectopic pregnancies, and in one of 1,500-2,000 pregnancies. The condition, doctors say, is life-threatening. Scar pregnancies can cause uterine rupture, haemorrhage and other complications. Doctors said the patient was traumatised from her previous baby's death in-utero, followed by the unsuccessful IVF pregnancy. She was determined to have a child of her own and was seeking an experienced empathetic gynaecologist who would understand her, doctors said. "Moreover, she had healthy embryos preserved in a bank. Upon finding a gynaecologist experienced in high-risk pregnancies, she took a leap of faith holding the hands of healers and scientific advancements. Aware of the risk of another ectopic pregnancy, we decided to try a robotic-assisted surgical approach," Dr Kalra said. The woman underwent the surgery in August 2023. In the minimally-invasive procedure, a robot was used to suture the site of the scar from the previous caesarean section. "The surgery was a success. There was no blood loss, tissue injury or complications, and the patient was discharged on the same day. The robustness of the stitching was such that the patient could become pregnant three months after the surgery," Dr Kalra added. In Nov 2023, the woman opted for IVF. She delivered a baby girl through caesarean section in July 2024. "This was a rare case of scar pregnancy. Because we repaired the scar robotically, it became rather simple to deliver the baby this time," Dr Kalra said. She pointed out that though scar pregnancies are rare, their incidence is increasing as more and more people are opting to give birth through caesarean section.

Lawyer (38) collapses during visit to friend's flat, dies of heart attack in Gurgaon

GURGAON: A 38-year-old advocate working for a private law firm in the city was declared dead at a hospital after he collapsed at a friend's flat in Essel Towers on MG Road on Monday evening. Police said the death appears to be due to health reasons, possibly a heart attack, but an autopsy report is awaited. His family reached Gurgaon from their hometown in Ranchi on Tuesday evening. A case has not been registered so far. Cops said the advocate joined the law firm around four months back. He went to meet his friend, who is also a colleague in the same firm, at her house in Essel Tower's Pilot Court on Sunday. An RWA representative said the friend lives in a condominium with three other women. "Four women stay in the flat and the advocate was visiting one of them. According to security personnel, an ambulance came and took him to the hospital at around 7pm on Monday," the RWA representative said. Cops said the advocate collapsed while he was sitting with his friend and some others. "He was rushed to a nearby private hospital by the people in the flat in an ambulance, and he was declared dead by doctors," Rishi Kant,

Name Change

I, SANJU JAIN / TANUJ KUMAR DOSHI S/O Shri Paras Mal Doshi Residing at D-225, Jhilmil Colony/near community centre, Delhi-110095 have changed my name to Tanuj Doshi Jain for all future purpose.

Name Change

I, SODAGAR (UID: 2516 1552 8210) residing at S/o Late Sh. Alka R/o H. No. B-154, Sanjai Colony, Bhati Mines, New Delhi-110074 declare that my name is mentioned as a Nominee in my wife namely MAHARANI's Bank Account No. 60731011002457, in Bank of India, Chhatarpur Branch, New Delhi and my correct name is SODAGAR THAT I declare and undertake that name of my wife is AMILPI, aged 15 years written as AMILPI in my minor son name ASWAJITH in his school record. The actual name of my wife is AMILPI S. KRISHNAN which may be amended accordingly.

Name Change

I, SHAM SUNDER S/O INDERJEET residing at BLOCK-E-67, 3RD FLOOR, NEAR SEHGAH PASTRY SHOP, KRISHNA NAGAR, DELHI-110051 have changed my name to SHYAM SUNDER MARWAH for all future purpose.

Name Change

I, KAMINI W/O SHYAM SUNDER MARWAH residing at 6/7, 3RD FLOOR, BLOCK-E NEAR SEHGAH PASTRY SHOP, KRISHNA NAGAR, DELHI-110051 have changed my name to KAMINI MARWAH for all future purpose.

Name Change

I, JC-1841893X Rank-HAV Name-HARICHAND MANDAL R/O NO-3-VILL-DURGANAGAR BHAGIRATHI ROAD, PO-CHAKDHA, DIST-NADIA, WEST BENGAL-741222 have changed my wife's name from MRS JAYEETA MANDAL to JAYEETA MANDAL for all future purposes vide affidavit dated 16/08/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

Name Change

I, JC-472722W Rank-SUB NAME-MANPAL SINGH S/o RAJ SINGH R/o H NO-3171, SECTOR-13, BHAWANI, HARYANA-127021 have changed my mother's name from SHAKUNTALA DEVI to SHAKUNTALA for all future purposes vide affidavit dated 16/08/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

Name Change

I, NO-16118926Y Rank-HAV Name-SHARANAPPA ALAGAWADI S/o KAPALEPPA residing at VPO-TADAHALI TEH-NAVALGUND, DIST-DHARWAD, KARNATAKA-582208 have changed my mother's name from RATNAVA to RATNAVA KAPALEPPA ALAGAWADI for all future purposes and in my service records my mother's date of birth wrongly mentioned as 05/10/1960 instead of her correct date of birth as 01/01/1960 vide affidavit dated 16/08/2024 before Notary Public, Delhi.

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News box

Vaccine group Gavi says it has up to \$500 million to immunise for Mpox in Africa

London The global vaccine group Gavi has up to \$500 million to spend on getting shots to countries affected by an escalating mpox outbreak in Africa, its chief executive Sania Nishtar told Reuters. Gavi helps countries with fewer resources buy and deploy vaccines, usually against childhood diseases like measles, but it expanded into broader efforts during the Covid-19 pandemic. The money is available in the organization's "First Response" fund, which was set up after global health agencies like Gavi were left behind by high-income countries in procuring vaccines during the early days of Covid-19. It can be used to respond to health emergencies, which were declared by the World Health Organisation and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) this week. The funds are largely left over from money donated by governments and global health funders for the Covid-19 response. "The money for the vaccines is ready to be tapped into," said Nishtar, but there were hurdles to clear, including official requests for vaccines from affected countries, as well as approvals of the vaccines from the World Health Organisation, which declared mpox a global health emergency on Wednesday.

Gavi and Unicef, which work together to buy vaccines, cannot do so without WHO approving them. On Wednesday, the global health agency said it was hoping to finalise its evaluation of the vaccines by September. Nishtar said Gavi was also in early talks with the manufacturers of the two mpox vaccines that are widely used, made by Bavarian Nordic (BAVA.CO) and KM Biologics. Official orders can only proceed after approval, she said.

Monsoon brides': Extreme weather fuels Pakistan child marriages

DADU. As monsoon rains were about to break over Pakistan, 14-year-old Shamila and her 13-year-old sister Amina were married off in exchange for money, a decision their parents made to help the family survive the threat of floods. "I was happy to hear I was getting married... I thought my life would become easier," Shamila told AFP after her wedding to a man twice her age in hope of a more prosperous life. "But I have nothing more. And with the rain, I fear I will have even less, if that is possible." Pakistan's high rate of marriages for underage girls had been inching lower in recent years, but after unprecedented floods in 2022, rights workers warn such weddings are now on the rise due to climate-driven economic insecurity.

The summer monsoon between July and September is vital for the livelihoods of millions of farmers and food security, but scientists say climate change is making them heavier and longer, raising the risk of landslides, floods and long-term crop damage. Many villages in the agricultural belt of Sindh have not recovered from the 2022 floods, which plunged a third of the country underwater, displaced millions and ruined harvests. "This has led to a new trend of 'monsoon brides,'" said Mashooque Birkmani, the founder of the NGO Sujag Sansar, which works with religious scholars to combat child marriage. "Families will find any means of survival. The first and most obvious way is to give their daughters away in marriage in exchange for money."

Birkmani said since the 2022 floods, child marriage has spiked in villages in Dadu district, one of the worst-hit areas that for months resembled a lake.

US unemployment benefits applications decline for second week

World Initial applications for US unemployment benefits fell for a second week to the lowest level since early July, despite a recent pullback in hiring. Initial claims decreased by 7,000 to 227,000 in the week ended Aug. 10, according to Labor Department data released Thursday. The median forecast in a Bloomberg survey of economists called for 235,000 applications.

Economists and investors are on the watch for signs that the labor market may be weakening faster than anticipated after the July employment report showed the jobless rate rose for a fourth month and hiring slowed. First-time applications for unemployment benefits have trended up this year but remain subdued near 2019 levels. Continuing claims, a proxy for the number of people receiving unemployment benefits, also declined, to 1.86 million, in the week ended Aug. 3. A separate report from the Commerce Department Thursday showed that US retail sales accelerated in July by the most since early 2023 in a broad advance. Sales were boosted by a sharp snapback in car sales after a cyberattack on auto dealerships earlier this year, but electronics and appliances also posted gains, pointing to a consumer that's holding up despite higher borrowing costs.

Treasury yields and stock-index spiked after the reports. The moderation in the job market, alongside recent improvement in inflation, reinforces the case for the Federal Reserve to lower interest rates next month during its September policy meeting.

Washington, Republican US presidential candidate Donald Trump said on Thursday he told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during their last meeting in July to quickly end Israel's war in Gaza, but the former president also criticised ceasefire demands. "He knows what he's doing, I did encourage him to get this over with," Trump told reporters at a press conference on Thursday. "It has to get over with fast... Get your victory and get it over with. It has to stop, the killing has to stop." Trump was referring to his meeting with Netanyahu at his Mar-a-Lago residence in late July, when Netanyahu visited the United States. He also met President Joe Biden and Vice President and Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris during his trip. There has been an increased risk of a broader war in the Middle East after the recent killings of Palestinian Islamist group Hamas' leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran and Hezbollah military commander Fuad Shukr in Beirut. Both drew threats of retaliation against Israel. In an event later on Thursday about

tackling antisemitism, Trump criticised Biden and Harris' months-long calls for a ceasefire in Gaza. "From the start, Harris has worked to tie Israel's hand behind its back, demanding an immediate ceasefire, always demanding ceasefire," Trump said, adding it "would only give Hamas time to regroup and launch a new October 7 style attack." Trump added: "I will give Israel the support that it needs to win but I do want them to win fast." In the same event, Trump also labelled pro-Palestinian supporters calling for an end to US support for Israel's war as "pro-Hamas thugs" and "jihad sympathisers." He threatened to arrest and deport them from the US if he became president. Netanyahu's office and Trump both separately denied on Thursday an Axios report that said they had spoken the previous day about Gaza ceasefire and hostage release talks. Biden laid out a three-phase ceasefire proposal in



an address on May 31. Washington and regional mediators have since tried arranging the Gaza ceasefire-for-hostages deal but have run into repeated obstacles. The Axios report cited two US sources. One source said the reported call was intended to encourage Netanyahu to take the deal, but stressed he did not know if this is indeed

what the former president told Netanyahu.

Egypt, the United States and Qatar have scheduled a new round of Gaza ceasefire negotiations this week. Washington, Israel's most important ally, has said that a ceasefire in Gaza will reduce the rising threat of a wider war. The latest bloodshed in the decades-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict was triggered on October 7 when Hamas attacked Israel, killing 1,200 and taking about 250 hostages, according to Israeli tallies. Israel's subsequent assault on the Hamas-governed enclave has since killed over 40,000 Palestinians, according to the local health ministry, while also displacing nearly the entire population of 2.3 million, causing a hunger crisis and leading to genocide allegations at the World Court that Israel denies.

Kamala Harris will be 'one hell of a President': Joe Biden at 1st joint event

World Vice President Kamala Harris and President Joe Biden held their first joint event since Biden exited the 2024 presidential race and supported her to take his place as a Democratic nominee. Appearing at Prince George's County Community College, Biden hailed Harris, stating that she will become "one hell of a president," ABC News reported. The event came as Republican candidate Donald Trump addressed a press conference in New Jersey — his second campaign event in the last two days. On Thursday, Democrats gathered to celebrate a significant milestone for the Biden administration: a newly announced agreement aimed at reducing the cost of 10 widely used prescription drugs. This move is expected to provide financial relief to millions of Americans, addressing one of the nation's most pressing healthcare challenges. The White House announced that Medicare has secured agreements with drug manufacturers to lower prices for all 10 drugs chosen in the



Marlboro, Maryland. During the event, President Biden boosted his vice president, bringing the crowd to their feet several times. The feeling was mutual. "There's a lot of love in this room for our president," Harris stated, adding that "few leaders in our nation have done more on so many issues, including expanding access to affordable healthcare, than Joe Biden." Earlier, the White House announced that Medicare has secured agreements with drug manufacturers to lower prices for all 10 drugs chosen in the

Israel-Hamas war death toll crosses 40,000 as peace talks continue in Qatar

The White House says a new round of talks aimed at halting the Israel-Hamas war has resumed in Doha and is expected to run into Friday. The talks will also focus on securing the release of scores of hostages, with a potential deal seen as the best hope of heading off an even larger regional conflict. The United States, Qatar and Egypt were to meet with an Israeli delegation in Qatar as the Palestinian death toll from the 10-month-old war surpassed 40,000. A Palestinian official said Hamas would not take part in Thursday's talks but that its senior officials, who reside in Qatar, were ready to discuss any proposals from the mediators, as they have in past rounds. A

cease-fire in Gaza would likely calm tensions across the region and may persuade Iran and Lebanon's Hezbollah to refrain from retaliatory strikes on Israel after the killing of a top Hezbollah commander in an Israeli airstrike and of Hamas' top political leader in an explosion in Iran's capital. The mediators have spent months trying to hammer out a three-phase plan in which Hamas would release scores of hostages captured in the October 7 attack that triggered the war in exchange for a lasting cease-fire, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and the release of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel. Qatar's Foreign Ministry

first round of negotiations. "It's a relief for the millions of seniors that take these drugs to treat everything from heart failure, blood clots, diabetes, arthritis, Crohn's disease, and more — and it's a relief for American taxpayers," Biden said in a statement. The Biden administration's drug pricing negotiations target 10 high-cost prescriptions, including Eliquis, Jardiance, and Stelara. These reduced prices, effective in 2026, could save taxpayers \$6 billion and Medicare Part D enrollees \$1.5 billion in out-of-pocket expenses. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services estimate price cuts between 38% and 79%. The President stated that he could fly Americans to Canada or France to procure the very same drugs for far less than the "totally unaffordable" ones in the US. "Kamala and I both get it. We know it isn't just about health care — it's about your dignity," the president said.

Kim Jong Un, Putin pledge to deepen ties on North Korea's liberation day

South Korea, UPDATED. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un reaffirmed a pledge to deepen cooperation with Russia in a message to President Vladimir Putin as Pyongyang marked an anniversary of independence from Japan's colonial rule, KCNA state news agency said on Friday. It was in reply to a message of congratulations from Putin on the Aug. 15 liberation day anniversary where the Russian leader said the bond forged as Soviet soldiers fought against Japan continues to serve as the basis of their ties, KCNA said. "The friendly feelings of the armies and peoples of the two countries forged and deepened in the bloody struggle against the common enemy serve as a strong driving force for developing... relations of friendship and cooperation into comprehensive strategic partnership and invincible comradeship," Kim said. Kim and Putin held a second summit meeting in less than a year in June in Pyongyang, signing a pact on "comprehensive strategic partnership" that includes mutual defence agreement. It came amid accusations by South Korea, Ukraine and the United States that Kim is helping Russia in the war against Ukraine by supplying rockets and missiles in return for economic and other military assistance from Moscow. Kim visited a memorial honoring the soldiers of the Korean revolutionary soldiers who fought in resistance to Japan to end the 1910-1945 colonial rule and the Liberation Tower where Soviet Red Army soldiers are remembered, KCNA said. North Korea's state founder Kim Il Sung, who is the current leader's grandfather, was backed by Soviet Union General Secretary Joseph Stalin who declared war against Japan near the end of World War Two. The Soviets backed Kim's communist forces that eventually established North Korea after Korea's liberation in 1948.

North Korean state media made no mention of a blueprint for unification announced by South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol on Thursday, calling for dialogue with Pyongyang and proposing an international conference on North Korea's human rights.

Thailand lawmakers to elect new PM, ousted leader's daughter is frontrunner

Thailand, Thai lawmakers will vote on Friday to decide whether to appoint billionaire Thaksin Shinawatra as prime minister, elevating a third member of the clan to the nation's top job despite her never having held office. Paetongtarn Shinawatra, whose father and aunt have served as premier, would become the youngest leader in Thailand's history as a constitutional monarchy if elected. She would also become the kingdom's second woman prime minister, after her aunt. The vote, slated to begin at 10 am (local time), was forced after the kingdom's top court sacked premier Srettha Thavisin for appointing a cabinet minister with a criminal conviction. Srettha's ouster on Wednesday was the latest round in a long-running battle between the military, pro-royalist establishment and populist parties linked to Paetongtarn's father, a telecoms tycoon and one-time Manchester City owner. The Pheu Thai party selected Paetongtarn as its replacement candidate Thursday. None of the 10 other parties in the coalition it leads put forward an alternative. Bhumjaithai -- the third-largest party in parliament -- said it had "agreed to support a candidate" from Pheu Thai in Friday's vote.

Paetongtarn must now secure 247 ballots from the body's 493 sitting members. "We are confident



that the party and coalition parties will lead our country," she said after the party announced her candidacy. However, in Thailand's tumultuous brand of politics, a win in parliament is not assured. Paetongtarn, who has never held elected office, helped run the hotel arm of the family's business empire before entering politics three years ago and was a near-constant presence on the campaign trail in 2023. That year's national election saw the fledgling Move Forward Party top the vote-getting after pledging to reform the country's strict lese-majeste laws and break up powerful business monopolies. But alarmed senators blocked MFP's attempt to form a government. Pheu Thai subsequently formed an

alliance with pro-military parties once staunchly opposed to Thaksin and his followers, leading to Srettha's ascension. Less than a year later, he became the third Pheu Thai prime minister to be kicked out by the Constitutional Court. Srettha was ousted over his appointment of Pichit Chuenban, a former lawyer associated with Thaksin's family who had a criminal conviction. View More Products Last week, the court also voted to dissolve MFP and ban its executive board members from politics for 10 years.

ong shadow Thaksin Shinawatra has cast a remarkable shadow over the kingdom's politics for two decades. He transformed Thai politics in the early 2000s with populist policies that won him and his party enduring loyalty from the rural masses -- and two elections. But that success came at a cost: he was despised by Thailand's powerful elites and conservative establishment, who saw his rule as corrupt, authoritarian and socially destabilising. Ousted as prime minister by the army in 2006, Thaksin took himself into exile two years later but never stopped commenting on national affairs -- or meddling in them, according to his critics. Thaksin returned to the country last year.

Ukraine turns tables on Russia with Kursk incursion, but challenges ahead

Ukraine has chalked up a string of victories more than a week since blindsiding Russia with a lightning cross-border assault, but the risks are piling up as its troops make plans to hold territory and Russia recovers its footing.

Ukraine poured thousands of troops into the western Russian region of Kursk last week, pulling down Russian flags in towns seized by its soldiers and wresting the war initiative

from Moscow for the first time in months. On Wednesday, officials in Kyiv said Ukraine would use seized Russian territory as a "buffer zone" to shield its north from Russian strikes. Oleksandr Syrskyi, head of the Ukrainian armed forces, said on Thursday that Kyiv had set up a military commandant's office in the occupied part of Kursk, suggesting ambitions to dig in. The occupied area exceeds 1,150 sq km, Syrskyi said. Ukraine's goals in Kursk include distracting Russian forces from the eastern Ukrainian region of Donbas, where Russia has made steady advances for months and which it is seeking to take in its entirety, former Ukrainian defence minister Andriy Zagorodnyuk said in an interview. There is, however, no sign of that happening for now. Apart from a reputational blow to President Vladimir Putin, the biggest

invasion of Russia since World War Two has been destroyed Russian forces, captured soldiers who can be traded and created a sore on Russia's flank, said Polish military analyst Konrad Muzyka. The Russian defence ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Ukraine's defence ministry referred questions to the armed forces, which did not immediately respond. Russian officials have said the Ukrainian attack on Russian territory is a "terrorist invasion" and that civilian infrastructure was targeted, which Ukraine denies. Putin said that Russia will deliver a "worthy response" to the attack but that the immediate task is to eject all Ukrainian troops from Russian territory. Ukraine, which has not said how long it might remain, was "not interested" in permanently taking Russian land, a foreign ministry

spokesperson said this week. Putin has said Ukraine wants the territory as a bargaining chip in eventual peace talks. Serhiy Zgurets, a Kyiv-based military analyst, predicted Ukraine would seek to retain control of the land between the towns of Rylsk, Korenevoye and Sudzha and the border, giving it control of a roughly 20-km-wide strip of Russian territory. In the area, he said, could be defended by a small force using long-range artillery systems and air defences. "This line is not difficult to defend, given there are few roads and a large number of rivers," Zgurets said, adding that the area could be easily supplied from the Ukrainian region of Sumy across the border. He said he didn't expect troops to press towards the Russian regional capital of Kursk, something that could expose them to attacks from the flanks.

News box

11-Year-Old Girl Sexually Assaulted By Teacher At Mumbai School



Mumbai. An 11-year-old girl was allegedly sexually assaulted by a school teacher in Mumbai's Kandivali. The Class 7 student informed the school authorities about it on Wednesday. She told her principal that the teacher had called her after her class and touched her inappropriately, according to the police complaint. The incident occurred in July. The principal then informed her parents, who approached the police and filed the complaint.

Based on the statement of the girl, a police case has been filed under the stringent POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) Act against the teacher.

The teacher has been summoned to record his statement. The police are also probing the CCTV footage for evidence. The incident comes amid a massive uproar over the safety of girls and women - sparked by the rape and murder of a doctor while on duty at a government hospital in Kolkata.

Listen to the latest songs, only on JioSaavn.com Women across the country are demanding a safer surrounding for them - be it at schools, workplaces, and streets. As many as 63,414 POCSO cases were filed in 2022, the latest crime data published by the National Crime Records Bureau.

Woman, 22, Gang-Raped In UP, 5 Men Detained: Cops



Bijnor, UP. Police have detained five men for allegedly raping a 22-year-old woman here and making a video of the act, officials said on Wednesday. The incident took place on the night of August 9, the police said citing the rape survivor.

The complainant alleged that the five accused forcefully took her from her house to a secluded place where they raped her, the police said. She also alleged that they made a video of the act and threatened to kill her, they added.

Circle Officer Anjani Kumar said the woman reported the matter to police after the accused started threatening her taht they would post the video on social media.

"The FIR was lodged on Wednesday and we were able to detain all the accused. Interrogation is underway after which they will be put under arrest," Kumar said. The five accused are said to be residents of the same village as the rape survivor, he added.

Unable To Repay Loans, 3 Of Family Die By Suicide In Karnataka: Cops

Hassan, Karnataka. In a tragic incident, three members of the same family killed themselves in the Hassan district of Karnataka, said police officials.

The incident took place at the Kerebidi area in Channarayapatna taluk of Hassan district.

Those who have been identified as Srinivas (43), Shweta (36) and Nagashree (13). Three of them, a husband-wife and daughter, committed suicide by jumping into the Hemavati canal.

The couple's body has been found in the Hemavati canal, while the search operation is continuing to find the girl's body.

Reportedly, they were unable to pay the debt, and as a result, the tragic incident occurred.

Srinivas was a car driver and his wife, Shweta, was a teacher at a private school. Srinivas had taken loans from various places but was unable to repay them.

Family members have been searching for them since last Tuesday. When they did not get any clue, they complained to the Channarayapatna Nagar Police Station.

The bodies of Srinivas and Shweta were found in a canal near Bagur Hobali, Mudlapur, yesterday evening, and the fire brigade personnel and the police, who removed the bodies, are continuing to search for the dead body of the girl Nagashree.

SP Hassan Mohammad Sujeeta visited the place and inspected it. A case has been registered at Nuggehalli Police Station and further investigation is ongoing.

Mandatory Commissioner of Police nod delaying FIR in Chennai cybercrime cases

Additional Director General of Police Cyber Crime Wing Dr Sandeep Mittal said a Madras High Court circular has clearly stated that FIRs need not be insisted after the crime is registered at the national portal.

CHENNAI. A senior Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer, who retired as Principal Chief Commissioner of Income Tax on July 31, had to run from pillar to post to register an FIR after he lost Rs 4.6 lakh in his bank account in an online fraud on August 4.

The inspector of the cyber crime cell of the Chintadripet Police Station, where a complaint was filed on August 7, wanted the prior approval of Greater Chennai Police Commissioner A Arun to file the FIR, DN Kar, the retired official, said.

Kar told TNIE that Rs 4.6 lakh was swindled from his account after he received an SMS about SBI netbanking reward points. He mistakenly clicked on the link which took him to a bank's mirror image site and his personal details were stolen. He later found that four debit transactions for Rs 69,874, Rs 98,879, Rs 55,986 and Rs 23,546 were made from his account within two hours.

He immediately called SBI's helpline number, and got his bank account and internet banking facility locked. He also registered a complaint with the Central Cybercrime Helpline 1930 and uploaded the complaint on the central government's cybercrime portal. While three transactions were reversed and the funds were returned to his bank account, SBI and a message from the cybercrime portal

informed him that an FIR was needed for reversing the fourth transaction of Rs 2.35 lakh.

Accordingly, on August 7, Kar said he had asked an Income Tax inspector to approach the Chintadripet police station along with all the required documents to file an FIR on his behalf. The complaint papers were taken by the police station staff but no acknowledgement was given, which Kar said was a violation of Section 154 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS). After several follow-ups, including messages to the police commissioner, and intervention of a top police official, an FIR was registered at Chetpet police station on August 14.

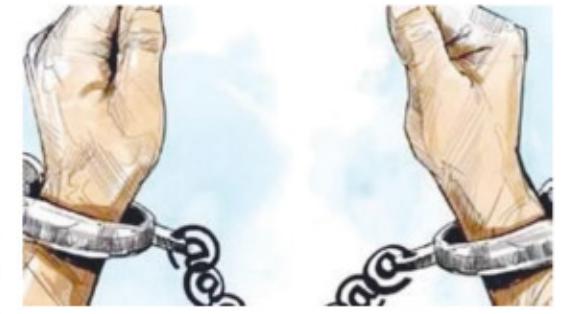
TNIE accessed the circular dated July 22, signed by the CoP, which stated that cases pertaining to cheating or criminal breach of trust or misappropriation, forgery, immovable property frauds or grabbing, and cyber crimes should be brought to his knowledge before filing a CSR or FIR. The commissioner's concurrence should be obtained either through phone or note. Police sources said this has resulted in delay in filing of FIRs in such cases.

When contacted commissioner Arun, he said there is no need for registering an FIR in cybercrime cases such as these for the banks to take action. One can approach 1930 (Cyber Crime Helpline)

and the amount can be secured. Only in cases pertaining to data theft, FIRs are being filed, he said.

"Regarding cases pertaining to cheating or criminal breach of trust or misappropriation, forgery, immovable property frauds or grabbing, the instruction to take prior approval was given to cut down on katta panchayats (kangaroo courts)," the commissioner said. When asked about SBI seeking an FIR, the officer said that the banks may not be aware of the provisions regarding FIRs pertaining to such cases. Kar, however, said an FIR has to be filed immediately and any delay would only help the perpetrators and not the victims. Additional Director General of Police Cyber Crime Wing Dr Sandeep Mittal said a Madras High Court circular has clearly stated that FIRs need not be insisted after the crime is registered at the national portal. Contacting 1930 immediately is the first line of action by victims against financial cyber frauds. 'Golden hour' is lost in case of even slight delay, he said. "Judicial magistrates are directed not to insist on separate FIRs being registered on the basis of an application filed under Section 457 CrPC in matters or complaint that have been registered on the national cybercrime portal," the HC circular said.

Father arrested for selling four-day-old infant for Rs 2 lakh in Chennai



CHENNAI. A 34-year-old man was arrested on charges of selling his four-day-old son to a couple for Rs 2 lakh. The complaint was filed by the mother of the child after she grew suspicious about claims by her husband that the baby was still undergoing treatment at the hospital. A search is on to trace the baby and the couple who bought the baby.

According to the Vyasarpadi police, the accused was identified as Sathy Das, an auto rickshaw driver. His wife Shyamala delivered a male child at the government maternity hospital in Royapuram on August 6.

On August 10, he took the child and handed it over to a mediator when Shyamala was sleeping. Sathy had received Rs 25,000 as an advance when Shyamala was seven months pregnant. After handing over the child, he received the remaining amount.

When Shyamala asked him about the child, Sathy gave evasive replies, saying that doctors had taken the child for check ups. After getting discharged, when the couple went back home, Shyamala grew suspicious when Sathy kept saying that the child was at the hospital for treatment. She then lodged a police complaint. He later told the police that his acquaintance acted as the mediator and facilitated the deal with a couple from Ennore for Rs 2 lakh. He said that he sold the child as his earnings were not enough to support a third child.

Protests over Kolkata horror continues in Telangana

Telangana Junior Doctors Association (T-JUDA) organised a rally at Gandhi Medical College, protesting and chanting slogans for justice. Around 600 doctors participated in the demonstration.

HYDERABAD. Doctors in the state continued the protest against the rape and murder of a 31-year-old female PG resident doctor at the RG Kar Hospital in Kolkata. The protest, which started on Wednesday, continued on Thursday with rallies and black badges by the doctors. Demanding justice for the deceased victim, the medical fraternity urged the authorities to implement the Central Protection Act to provide safety and security for the medical staff in all hospitals and medical colleges across the country. On Thursday evening, the Telangana Junior Doctors Association (T-JUDA) organised a rally at Gandhi

Medical College, protesting and chanting slogans for justice. Around 600 doctors participated in the demonstration. NIMS also witnessed a similar action as doctors led by the Resident Doctors Association (RDA) held a rally on the hospital campus.

Meanwhile, the RDA has also decided to boycott all the OPDs and elective OTs services for the next two days, starting from Friday morning, to show support for the cause. Indian Medical Association (IMA) is also planning to boycott essential services for 24 hours in the days ahead to press for their demands for justice.



Short intense rains lash Hyderabad, leave commuters stranded

The moderate rains covered the GHMC limits including Rangareddy, Medchal-Malkajgiri and further to Sangareddy.

HYDERABAD. Short intense rains and thunderstorms lashed the city on Thursday evening, leaving the commuters stranded and soaked in the sudden downpours.

The moderate rains covered the GHMC limits including Rangareddy, Medchal-Malkajgiri and further to Sangareddy.

Other districts of Adilabad, Bhadrak, Kothagudem, Jangaon, Jayashankar Bhupalapally, Karimnagar, Kurnambheem Asifabad, Mulugu, Vikarabad experienced light to moderate rains. The highest rainfall in the state was recorded in Sangareddy at 93.8 mm,

followed by Hyderabad at 87.5 mm and Nagarkurnool at 87 mm. IMD said the trough from Rayalaseema to the Comorin area from south Telangana

extends up to 1.5 km above mean sea level.

The state will experience light to moderate rains or thundershowers till August 20. IMD has issued a yellow alert for thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and gusty winds of around 30-40 kmph till August 20.

For the next 48 hours, the city will experience light rain or thundershowers accompanied by gusty winds up to 30-40 kmph. Maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to be around 32°C and 24°C respectively. Surface winds are likely to be Westerlies/North-Westerlies with wind speeds around 8-12 kmph.



Woman, two others including stepbrother arrested for honeytrap in Bengaluru

She would then invite the victims to her house. Unaware of the trap, when the victims came to her house, she used to take them to the bedroom.

BENGALURU. A 32-year-old woman and her stepbrother along with another male accomplice have been arrested for allegedly honey trapping some men and extorting money from them. The main accused had separated from her husband,

when the victims came to her house, she used to take them to the bedroom. Her two associates would enter and threaten the victims and extort money from them. If the victims refused to give money, the main accused would threaten them of filing a rape complaint against them.

The accused are identified as Najma Kausar, 32, a resident of Agrahara Layout, her stepbrother Khaleel, 24, and Mohammed Ashik, 20. The incident came to light after one of her victims, a delivery boy, filed a complaint in the Sampigehalli police station. Kausar had given a missed call to the delivery boy. Assuming that it could be somebody known to him, the victim called back and got trapped on August 8.

The accused had attacked him with a lethal weapon after they did not find enough money on him. The police are on the lookout for another accused who was part of the gang. Further investigations are on.

Karnataka faces soaring temperatures despite monsoon season

BENGALURU. It's monsoon, but temperatures are soaring. This phenomenon is being experienced not only in the city, but also in other parts of the state. In Bengaluru, the maximum temperature recorded on August 15 was 29.6 degrees Celsius, 1.4 degrees Celsius above normal. On August 14, the maximum temperature was 31 degrees Celsius, 2.8 degrees Celsius above normal.

On Wednesday and Thursday, the minimum temperature was 22.5 degrees Celsius, 2.4 degrees Celsius above normal. India Meteorological Department (Bengaluru) Director N Puviyarasan, told The New Indian Express that the weather conditions so far this month were similar to that of May. "The sun is blazing and the sky is clear with no wind and humidity is high. There is also a dip in rainfall, due to which the temperatures are rising across the state," he said. He said this situation will continue for the next three days when the monsoon will become active again.



Man avails loan by impersonation over phone, held in Chennai

CHENNAI. A 37-year-old man was arrested by the cyber crime police on charges of impersonation and taking a loan of Rs 3 lakh by fraud from a private bank. According to the police, the accused was identified as C Rajkamal of Acharapakkam, who was employed in a telecom company. The issue came to light when the complainant A Senthil Kumar checked his CIBIL score and found that a loan had been availed in his name. When he checked with the Bank in India, he found that another man impersonating him had availed a loan for Rs 3 lakh. "In 2021, after moving abroad, Senthil's bank account and mobile number became inactive. Rajkamal was allotted Senthil's old number when he purchased a new sim card. When he got a call on his new number offering a loan, he availed it," police said. He convinced bank officials over the phone that he was Senthil and got the loan.

Karnataka Lokayukta office to go paperless

BENGALURU. Karnataka Lokayukta office will go paperless as it is adopting e-administration and digitising all sections to bring transparency and reduce the pressure on the staff, said Lokayukta Justice B S Patil at his Independence Day address on Thursday. He further said that the necessary training has been imparted to the staff of the institution to adopt e-administration with the help of the e-secretariat. In the next phase, digitalisation will be introduced in complaints receiving and technical sections also, he added. Justice Patil also said that the strength of the officials and the staff of the institution has increased after the merger of the Anti-Corruption Bureau. The service details of all 1,247 officials and staff are being digitalised.

This apart, it has been contemplated to submit a proposal before the Karnataka Public Service Commission to take necessary steps for the appointment of nine posts of First Division Assistants and 26 posts of Second Division Assistants. This was in view of the shortage of assisting staff to the officials in the institution, Justice Patil said. Speaking on the occasion, Upalokayukta Justice K N Phaneendra remembered those who fought for independence. Another Upalokayukta Justice B Veerappa administered the oath to eradicate corruption, saying that removal of corruption is freedom in the real sense.



Focus on prevention, preparation to blunt impact of disasters

THERE was a perfect balance among natural resources in the pre-industrial period that lent stability to the land use system. But this system started giving way in the post-industrial phase, especially as a result of industrialisation, deforestation and fast-paced development. The resultant climate change has led to an increase in the frequency and intensity of hydrometeorological disasters like landslides and cloudbursts in hills, floods in plains and cyclones in coastal regions. This year has seen catastrophic destruction in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Kerala. The situation in the NCR, Mumbai, Pune, Jaipur, etc, is not much different. There has been a colossal loss of life and property. Thousands of people have died, many are missing and several others have been displaced. Many roads, bridges and dams have been washed away.

These disasters are a result of habitations that have been allowed to come up on the natural path of water movement and the infrastructure erected below the floodplain level. In the hills, fragile earth and rocks have been cut to construct roads and buildings. Mining is being carried out with complete disregard for the recommendations of the Environmental Impact Assessment and the Environmental Clearance. Forests have been degraded and damaged, reducing their power for water conservation and its smooth movement. Muck generated from construction and infrastructure development is dumped on the banks of rivers and streams to be carried away with flowing water, further raising the flood level and causing more damage and destruction. The floodgates of storage and run-of-the-river hydroelectric projects are not managed responsibly. Local residents and tourists in many places are caught off guard and washed away in flood waters in the absence of an early warning.

The scientific and dynamic National Policy on Disaster Management (NPDM), 2009, offers guidance for the holistic and strategic management of disasters. But what the policy contains is not being followed to the hilt, leading to the destruction these disasters inflict every year. The disaster management continuum in the policy is divided into the pre-disaster phase of prevention, preparation, early warning, mitigation and risk reduction and the post-disaster stage of response, rescue, evacuation, relief and rehabilitation. Most post-disaster needs assessment studies have shown that pre-disaster management is economically feasible and advantageous. This calls for a rethink at the management strategy. Ensuring an effective response has always been prioritised in disaster management, ignoring the role of pre-disaster steps. The situation demands better management of these hydrometeorological disasters. The scientific guidelines of the NPDM must be adopted. A fully prepared governance system — which prioritises prevention and adequate preparation — would drastically reduce the loss of life and property. There are standard operating procedures to prepare for all disasters. It is not understood why these are not followed. After all, half of the work is already accomplished if such a system is in place before a disaster strikes. Though the need for a comprehensive flood forecasting system has been felt, it has still not been developed. The India Meteorological Department and the Central Water Commission must promptly prepare such an early warning system for river basins, watersheds or dams in collaboration with states and union territories, as per the requirements. Despite the launch of the National Landslide Risk Mitigation Project, there is no sign of an early warning system for predicting landslides. Doppler radars have been installed to predict heavy rains and disaster situations, but every year, they fail to deliver when required. And this year was no exception. Only early warning systems developed and installed for cyclones have helped ensure almost no loss of life and minimum damage to property in the affected coastal regions.

AS turmoil continues in Bangladesh despite the formation of an interim government, India stands out as the sole bright spot in South Asia on the economic front. Our eastern neighbour has faced an economic downturn in recent years, while Sri Lanka in the south has been recovering from the political and economic crises that erupted two years ago. Pakistan is also struggling to deal with inflation and the burden of international debt, and its GDP growth remains below 3 per cent. In sharp contrast, India recorded robust economic growth of nearly 8 per cent in the last fiscal, and inflation has moderated to a five-year low of 3.5 per cent. Interestingly, both Sri Lanka and Bangladesh seemed to be doing better than their big brother neighbour in terms of development indices at one point. Faulty policies stalled growth and engulfed them in political upheavals that forced their heads of government to flee to safety abroad.

In the case of Bangladesh, which is in the eye of a storm, it was described as an economic miracle until recently. This was surprising for a nation considered to be a basket case for many decades since its creation in 1971. After Sheikh Hasina had assumed power in 2009, a drive was launched to accelerate the pace of development. Investment was made in infrastructure, while focus was laid on industry and services. The result was a sustained growth rate of over 6 per cent for roughly a decade. This led to a rapid rise in per capita income levels. At one point, India's per capita GDP was significantly higher than that of Bangladesh. But it had fallen behind by 2020. Other development parameters also improved, with infant mortality rates lower than those in India and Pakistan. And its life expectancy became the highest in the South Asian region. There were inherent flaws, however, in the economic strategy adopted by Hasina's Awami League government. A big one was the reliance on a single industry, that is, ready-made garments. It became a huge revenue earner for the economy, and it still accounts for 85 per cent of the country's exports. The other critical lifeline for the economy was the inflow of remittances from the overseas diaspora. The situation began to deteriorate with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 as garment factories shut down for months, creating widespread unemployment. The scenario worsened with the outbreak of the Ukraine war in 2022, making imports, especially fuel, more expensive. Remittances dropped while global recessionary trends led to a dip in the demand for garment exports. The current account deficit widened, and foreign exchange reserves suddenly contracted. Ultimately, Bangladesh sought a loan of \$4.7 billion, which was granted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in early 2023. The economic woes of the past few years have been the backdrop for the unrest that ultimately led to the downfall of the Hasina-led government. But the political upheavals could have long-

It is in India's interest to assist crisis-hit neighbours

There is potential for disruption to the domestic economy with a contagion effect from the countries facing economic emergencies.



term ramifications unless bilateral relations are brought back on an even keel. Apart from the \$12-billion annual trade, Indian companies have made sizable investments in Bangladesh. Amid uncertainty, there is already talk of shifting the units back to India. Such an attitude would ultimately have a negative outcome. Firstly, the withdrawal of investments or cutting trade ties would deprive India of an easily accessible market. Secondly, creating a vacuum in the supply of basic goods could lead to a flood of cheap Chinese imports into Bangladesh. And since the long land border is relatively porous, these could find their way into India. Besides, there has been increased cooperation in infrastructure. Several credit lines had been provided to Bangladesh for the development of road, rail and port projects. In addition, India has been exporting electricity to Dhaka. It would be in the interest of both countries to ensure that such developmental projects are not disrupted in any way. There is as much concern about Sri Lanka. President Ranil Wickremesinghe had negotiated a \$2.9-billion IMF loan to bring the economy back on track. India, too, provided a \$3.5-billion loan to the cash-strapped country. The downturn in that country's fortunes was caused by a series of unusual economic policies by the previous government. This included deep tax cuts that created severe revenue shortfalls. The situation was worsened by a decision to suddenly shift to organic fertilisers. The

move led to shortages of the staple foodgrain, rice, and the main cash crop, tea. One of the key conditionalities laid down by the IMF was a rollback of the tax cuts. As for Pakistan, it has taken recourse yet again to an IMF loan. But last year's crisis, when inflation shot up to nearly 40 per cent, has been overcome; it has now moderated to 11.8 per cent. Besides, foreign exchange reserves are no longer at dangerously low levels. One of the reasons for the hardships there was a decision taken by the Imran Khan government to cut retail petroleum rates at a time when world prices had risen sharply. Debt incurred as a result of the involvement in China's Belt and Road Initiative also reportedly played a role in the economic distress. Therefore, India remains an outlier in South Asia with a sustained growth rate and steady post-Covid recovery. Yet, there is potential for disruption to the domestic economy with a contagion effect from the surrounding countries facing economic emergencies. Assistance to neighbours like Sri Lanka is very much in India's interest. The impact of a failing economy on India will be even greater in the case of Bangladesh, in view of the extremely long land border. Apart from issues related to trade and investment, an immediate concern would be an influx of refugees. It can only be hoped that the new interim government moves swiftly to restore order and ensure that the economy is back on track. This will be in the best interest of the entire region in the long run.

The sinking feeling

Urban flooding brings cities to their knees



continues for Gurugram residents. Stormwater drainage systems often don't operate to their designed capacities because of poor maintenance; in

some cases, the capacities have not been augmented despite the rapid pace of urbanisation. Encroachments and unplanned growth have worsened the situation. Adequate preparedness is half the battle won when it comes to flood control. However, high-intensity rainfall in a short duration invariably catches the municipal and urban development authorities off guard. And hapless citizens are left to sink or swim in waterlogged streets.

Apparently, funds are not an issue. Under AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation), 772 stormwater drainage projects worth Rs 2,140 crore have been completed in various states and union territories. Thousands of waterlogging points have been reportedly eliminated, yet the inevitable happens whenever it rains heavily. A lack of political and administrative will is reducing glitzy cities to hellholes. They must set their house in order sooner than later.

India must invest more in regional integration

Even though India is an island of economic growth and stability in the region, its path forward lies through a stable and secure neighbourhood.



EVEN as India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy has suffered a huge blow with the meltdown of the Sheikh Hasina regime in Bangladesh, it has managed a significant turnaround with a smaller but important neighbour, Maldives. The process is an indicator as to how India is seeking to readjust its neighbourhood policy from its earlier over-emphasis on security.

To be fair, both sides can take credit for this. India refused to get rattled by the initial anti-Indian moves of the Muizzu government and continued to maintain an even tenor in ties. Yet by a not-so-subtle call to boycott Maldivian tourism in January that nearly halved Indian tourist inflow into the country, New Delhi ensured that Male got the message. Muizzu changed course in March this year following his visit to China. In an interview to the local media, he spoke of the importance of India to his country and that India would "continue to remain Maldives' closest ally." He acknowledged India's role in Maldives and the importance of ongoing projects facilitated by India and expressed gratitude for their contribution.

One factor in this development was the fact that Maldives is indebted to India to the tune of nearly \$0.5 billion and the new Maldivian Government has been looking for leniency in repayment terms. Muizzu could not but have seen how New Delhi had bailed out Sri Lanka in 2022 when the country was hit by a major economic crisis and at a time when China had dithered. New Delhi came through for Maldives as well when, in May, the State Bank of India deferred the repayment of \$50 million by a year. But it is not just the Indian debt that worries Muizzu. As Aditya Gowdara Shivamurthy of the Observer Research Foundation has pointed out, the nation's economy is undergoing "a severe crisis and is struggling to stay afloat". Borrowing by past governments have saddled the country with a debt-to-GDP ratio of 110 per cent and its reserves are rapidly

depleting. But none of these clouds were visible in the recently concluded three-day visit of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to the Maldives, the first high-level trip to the country by an Indian minister after President Muizzu assumed power in November 2023. This was a signal that India-Maldives relations were once again on an even track. Jaishankar held meetings with Muizzu, Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer, Defence Minister Ghassan Maumoon and the ministers of finance, economic development and trade. Jaishankar visited several of the projects India is involved in. Several of them are funded through India's Lines of Credit. Among the key projects are the Greater Male Connectivity Project, the Addu Reclamation and Shore Project and a major four-lane bridge project to develop it as a regional hub whose centrepiece will be the Gan International Airport. Also

being developed with Indian help is the Hanimaadhoo International Airport expansion project, whose foundation stone was laid by Jaishankar in January 2023. Relations between the two countries came under severe strain when Muizzu came to power on an 'India Out' platform and immediately pushed for the removal of all of the small number of Indian military personnel stationed in the islands to service Indian-supplied helicopters and aircraft for search and rescue operations. He pointedly made his first visit to Turkey and then to China where he signed a slew of agreements seeking to end the island nation's dependence on food imports and healthcare from India. His first meeting with Prime Minister Modi was at the sidelines of the COP28 climate summit in Dubai in December 2023. His first official visit took place in June when he visited New Delhi to attend the

swearing-in of PM Modi's third government. In the past, China has made major inroads into the Maldives by promoting a range of mega-infrastructure projects and providing liberal aid and loans. The big Indian concern is of Chinese maritime activities in the Maldives. A Chinese company has been given the lease of Feydhoo Finolhu island, located close to Male and there have been periodic reports about the sale to China of the Gadhoo island, next to the Gan airport, in the southern part of the country. Indian objections led to the scrapping of plans to build a Joint Ocean Observation Station in its westernmost atoll of Makunudhoo. As the record shows, India has moved beyond its 'security first' approach and is willing to engage neighbours through an all-round policy emphasising trade and development along with security. In the case of the Maldives, India has, however, taken the precaution of developing a new base in the Minicoy island that is closest to the Maldives, and shoring up its naval presence in Lakshadweep. But on a long-term basis, India needs to put serious money and effort into promoting regional integration. BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) has not really worked, and the Bangladesh uncertainty makes it less likely that it will do so soon. There is a need to go back to SAARC and its South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) project. No doubt this involves even trickier diplomacy, especially in dealing with Pakistan, but India needs to look ahead instead of backwards. It should be clear by now that even though India is an island of economic growth and stability in the region, its path forward lies through a stable and secure neighbourhood. An integrated South Asian region provides this option and can also be the basis of common security and prosperity.



How green is your home?

What story can the dust collected from your house tell?

These organisms can indicate not just the geographical location of your residence, but also the proportion of male and female members in the house, and can also reveal if you have a pet, says a new study.

The new findings highlight the impressive amount of microbial diversity in the average household.

"Every day, we are surrounded by a vast array of organisms in our homes, most of which we cannot see," said co-author of the study Noah Fierer, associate professor at the University of Colorado Boulder in the US.

"We live in a microbial zoo, and this study was an attempt to catalog that diversity," Fierer said.

The study examined roughly 1,200 homes across the US. On average,

each home contains more than 5,000 different species of bacteria and around 2,000 species of fungi.

Fungal communities tend to be more predictive of a home's location while bacterial communities provide clues about the identity of its residents.

"Geography is the best predictor of fungi in your home," Fierer noted.

When it comes to bacteria, however, where you live may be less important than whom you live with.

From the dust samples, researchers could confidently predict which homes had pets such as cats or dogs and, to a slightly lesser extent, the gender ratio of the residents.



Tips to buy rustic furniture

If you are the one who likes rugged and country-side look in a house, doing up your pad with rustic furniture is your best bet. It makes your house look unique and interesting. Here are a few options

colours.
For your bedroom



Choose a teak wood bed, instead of rot iron one. For the country-side charm, you can also have a piece of log placed in the room, near the bed to make your bedroom look interesting.

For your balcony
A few wooden chairs in the balcony along with an unpolished table looks great. To complete the look, you can have a wooden or a cane swing chair placed near the

How to decorate your home with Mirrors

If mirrors fascinate you more than anything, here's how using mirrors differently can make your home look playful and classy at the same time.

Mirrors as art work

Mirrors are not always a utility or random piece of decor that is just only used in wardrobes or dressing tables. Mirrors can be creatively used as artwork at home to lend an artistic look. You can either have a collection of small or different-sized mirrors, hung haphazardly to create an artsy look on the wall. You can also use a single statement mirror on a highlighted wall to add to its charm.

Brighten your living room with a mirror wall

Since, space crunch is something we all face while living in a city like Mumbai, ideas that make the home look spacious are always welcome. Living rooms make for a great place for installing a super-large mirror; especially mirror walls. Use one wall in your living room to install a simple wooden frame mirror, to open up the space with the entire reflection of the room. Make sure you use a wall near the window, so that it also

reflects enough sunlight to make your home look bigger and brighter.

A mirror cabinet for a bigger looking kitchen

Using a mirror instead of tiles for your kitchen wall against the sink or the platform will help open up a small area. You can also use mirrors as a sliding door for your cabinets so that they do not look like one. Especially if you have an open kitchen, this mirror will help you talk to people in the living area without facing them as well as increase the brightness of the space.

Create optical illusion in the hallway

If you always thought a hallway is something you just quickly pass by, you got to think again. Adding mirrors to the space will open up the area so that you don't feel confined within it. If you creatively place them, they can also serve as hallway utilities, like the ones here. Drawers and cabinets with mirror doors in the hallway can make the home look lively and colourful, as they would reflect everything around it. No to mention, you can always stop by to have a good look at yourself while passing.

A statement mirror at the dining area

Now, you would ask why do we need a mirror in the dining area? We say, why not? As mentioned before, mirrors are not just an utility, its a style statement. Using a statement mirror with a beautifully carved wooden or metal with filigree worked frame on one of the walls of your dining space, will add to the motif of the room without taking away from the more interesting things, like food. Although an attention-getter, the mirror will only enhance the look of your enclosed dining area.

Make a statement with your

Sofa

Two-seaters are cosier
A comfortable two-seater sofa can double up as a space to take a nap on or watch your favourite show on TV.

Bright upholstery works Choose bright upholstery to jazz up your otherwise simple and minimalist decor.

Paisley shaped settees
Take paisley to another level with a bright settee. There are some available that are in the shape of a paisley too. Try different shapes.

Stylish recliners
Single recliners can add personality to your decor.
Lounge on your L-shaped sofa
An L-shaped sofa is not just comfortable but can also work as a lounger



The latest design trends for living room furniture have to offer many traditional and contemporary sofa designs and myriad options of using colours, textures and designs to enhance the feel of a room. Here are a few ideas



Will contest J&K Assembly polls, get majority on our own, says Farooq Abdullah



Farooq Abdullah welcomed the decision of the Election Commission to announce the election schedule for J&K, which will go to polls for the first time since Article 370 abrogation.

NEW DELHI. National Conference president Farooq Abdullah said he would contest the upcoming Assembly election in Jammu and Kashmir and exuded confidence of getting a majority on its own in the Union Territory, which has been without an elected House for five years now. In an exclusive interview with India Today, Abdullah, however, did not reveal if the party planned to contest the polls solo or in an alliance. The Election Commission, which recently visited J&K to assess poll preparedness, is likely to announce the election schedule for the Union Territory today at 3 pm. This will be the first Assembly election in J&K following the scrapping of its special status under Article 370. "I welcome the decision of the ECI to announce Assembly polls in J&K. I will be contesting the elections. We will get a

majority on our own," the former Chief Minister said. The National Conference is part of the opposition's INDIA bloc. However, Abdullah said the party would hold discussions on a pre-poll alliance. "Can't say yet whether we will enter into a pre-poll alliance with any party or not. We will hold discussions on that," he told India Today. The 86-year-old leader, who did not contest the Lok Sabha polls earlier this year, has indicated on several occasions his willingness to put his hat in the Assembly election ring. Earlier this month, speaking to reporters in Doda district, Abdullah said, "Omar Abdullah (his son) does not want to fight the elections under the present setup. He has made up his mind that he will not fight the elections till the restoration of statehood (of Jammu and Kashmir). However, I am

going to fight the elections as I am not dead." The former Union Minister has said that unemployment and inflation were the biggest problems facing Jammu and Kashmir. The elections come amid growing encounters between terrorists and security forces in Jammu and Kashmir. The National Conference chief had previously questioned the rise in infiltration of terrorists from Pakistan despite heavy military deployment, PTI reported. "There is so much military deployed on the borders (in Jammu and Kashmir), which I feel is not there in any other country, but still they (terrorists) are managing to sneak into this side," Abdullah had said. "They are all in close collaboration, united for our destruction," he further said.



Delhi traffic cop among 2 hurt by Chinese manja



NEW DELHI. Two persons, including a policeman, were injured in separate incidents after they were "hit" by Chinese 'manja' (string) that is still being used to fly kites despite prohibition, a Delhi Police officer said on Thursday. The condition of the injured is stated to be stable. The police said that assistant sub-inspector Surendra, posted at the Punjabi Bagh Circle, suffered an injury from the kite string while he was on his way to his workplace. The 47-year-old officer was hit by a manja thread near Yamuna Vihar in Bhajanpura, after which he visited a nearby hospital. "He was discharged after treatment and is stable now," said a police officer. In another incident, a 34-year-old man suffered a serious injury when he was grazed by the manja while he was riding a scooter with his wife near Signature Bridge in northeast Delhi, the police said.

The government has banned the sale, production, storage, supply, import, and use of kite flying thread made of nylon, plastic or other synthetic material. Other types of thread laced with glass, metal or any other sharp materials have also been banned since 2017. Till August 8, 147 FIRs have been registered by police during this kite flying season.

PM Modi Urges Indian Olympians To Join 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' Campaign

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has urged the Indian Paris Olympics contingent to join the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign. During his interaction with the contingent at his residence on Thursday, the Prime Minister highlighted the need to create awareness about the importance of planting trees to save the environment. "Today, the country is running a campaign called 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' to save the environment. I urge all of you to join this campaign and plant a tree with your mother. Many of you come from villages and ordinary families. In Paris, you saw how they are promoting the environment. So, when you visit your villages, encourage people to adopt natural farming," the Prime Minister told the sportspersons.

He also said the contingent members should inspire the youth to focus on fitness. PM Modi expressed confidence that the sportspersons will also inspire everyone in the direction of conservation of the environment and nature. The 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign was launched by PM Modi on World Environment Day. He had planted a Peepal tree at Buddha Jayanti Park in the national capital. In a post on X, he wrote, "I call upon everyone, in India and around the world, to plant a tree in the coming days as a tribute to your mother."

The campaign has set an ambitious target of planting 800 million saplings by September 2024 and 1.4 billion saplings by March 2025. This large-scale initiative aims to enhance environmental protection and foster a sustainable future.



Odisha, Bengal, Jharkhand brace for heavy rain amid cyclone threat

A new low-pressure system has formed in the Bay of Bengal, with the IMD predicting heavy rain in the eastern states of Odisha, West Bengal, and Jharkhand.

NEW DELHI. Heavy rain has been predicted in the eastern states of Odisha, West Bengal, and Jharkhand in the next 2-3 days due to the formation of a low-pressure area in the northwestern Bay of Bengal. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said the low-pressure system is likely to intensify in the coming days. It is expected to move west-northwest, passing through Gangetic West Bengal and Jharkhand over the next 2-3 days. The IMD said the cyclonic circulation associated with the low-pressure system could potentially drive significant weather changes across the region, leading to increased rainfall and potential floods. Under its influence, squally weather with gusty

winds reaching speeds of 40 to 50 kmph is expected over the northwestern Bay of Bengal on Friday



and Saturday, officials said. In Odisha, heavy rain is expected in Bhadrak, Balasore, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Cuttack,

Khurda, Nayagarh, Puri, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Angul, Dhenkanal, Nabarangpur, Koraput, and Malkangiri districts. Coastal Odisha and other districts such as Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Boudh, Kandhamal, Rayagada, Angul, and Dhenkanal will experience thunderstorms with lightning. The following 24 hours may see continued heavy rain in Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Deogarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, and Bargarh, the IMD said.

In view of the developing weather conditions, authorities have advised residents in West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Odisha to take necessary precautions. Fishermen have also been advised against venturing into the northwestern Bay of Bengal.

Person In Constitutional Post Trying To Destroy Economy: Jagdeep Dhankhar

New Delhi: Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar today accused "a person holding constitutional position" of trying to destroy the Indian economy. His comments were seen to be directed at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his remarks on the latest report by US short-seller Hindenburg Research.

The report, which targeted India's markets regulator chief Madhavi Puri Buch, has been rejected by the SEBI boss, the Adani Group, and top economists of the country. Mr Dhankhar, addressing law students at the National Law University (NLU) on Friday, said he was "extremely worried" over what he called a narrative aimed at destroying India's economy.

"I got extremely worried when a person holding a constitutional position, just last week, declared in a well-publicised media; I would say campaign, beseeching the Supreme Court to suo-moto (on its own) invoke jurisdiction to give wings to a narrative aimed at destroying our economy," the Vice President said. He said the youth must neutralise forces that keep partisan and self-interest above that of the nation. "We cannot allow it."

It happens, it is at the cost of our rise," he added. Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, while speaking about the Hindenburg report, had called for the Supreme Court's intervention. Mr Dhankhar urged the

students to look around and find out if the highest courts in other countries ever use "suo-motu cognisance". "Jurisdiction of institution is defined by the Indian Constitution, be it legislature, be it executive, be it judiciary. Jurisdiction of courts is decided. Look around the globe, look at the Supreme Court in the US, the highest court in the UK, or other formats. Has there been suo-moto cognisance even once? Has a remedy been created beyond what is provided in the Constitution?" said the Vice President.

The Hindenburg report was earlier rejected by SEBI chairman and the Adani Group as "baseless" and "malicious".

"FIR Within 6 Hours": Centre's Directive To Protect Healthcare Workers

The notice comes amid protests over the rape and murder of a doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, following which medical professionals across India have gone on strike.

New Delhi: The Union Health Ministry has ordered all government hospitals, centre or state, to file police complaints within six hours of violence on campus or against staff and health workers.

A brief notice issued Friday morning said the head of the institution concerned

would be held responsible if no such complaint is made within the stipulated time. "Recently it has been observed that violence has become common against doctors and other healthcare staff at government hospitals. A number of healthcare workers suffered physical violence during the course of their duty. Many were threatened or exposed to verbal aggression."

Most of this violence is done either by patients or patients' attenders. In view of this it is stated that in the event of any violence against any healthcare worker while on duty, the Head of the institution shall be responsible for filing an institutional FIR within a maximum of six hours." The notice comes amid furious protests nationwide over the rape and murder of a doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, following which medical professionals across the country have gone on strike demanding better protection and safer work environments. Earlier the Calcutta High

Court came down strongly on the Bengal government while hearing petitions on this issue, including one by the doctors' parents alleging laces by hospital administration.



The state and the police have firmly denied any claim of negligence on their part. The police have firmly trashed any talk of impropriety on their part, including the parents' claim they first treated the death as a 'suicide' and then later did not allow them to view the body.

The police have also dismissed talk they failed to secure the crime scene that was believed to be the target of the vandals. The court, though, has demanded photographic proof of this. The body of the doctor was found in a seminar room on the RG Kar Hospital campus on August 9.

An autopsy confirmed multiple heinous injuries, from her arms and legs to her genitals. The grisly killing sparked a massive agitation by doctors in that hospital, from across Kolkata and Bengal, and across India. The protests were followed by vandalism at the RG Kar Hospital. In a hearing this morning the High Court had some tough questions for the police regarding the vandalism, including asking how they could have allowed a mob of 7,000 to gather. The High Court then directed the CBI to submit an interim report on the vandalism. The court had earlier handed the case over to the CBI, arguing there is "no further time to lose" in ensuring justice.

How to add Life to your Walls

Be a little creative and add more colour and vibrancy to your wall. Walls with a dash of colour and imagination can change the look of your room. And there are simple not so expensive ways to add more life to your walls. Just let your creative juices flow. And then see the change.

Art power: Nothing brightens up the wall like a canvas. So, if you have an artwork then display it. Choose the perfect place to showcase it so that it becomes the centre of attraction. And if you don't have the money to buy original art, don't lose heart. You can always buy a print and with a stylish frame, it can change the look.

Colours of life: Interestingly, fabrics add much colour to a wall. India is a country of great textile heritage. So, you can choose from the ikkats to mangalgiris for adding a completely different, vibrant look to your



wall. If you have seen the Calico Textile Museum in Ahmedabad, you will definitely know the power of textile in adding a warm rich look. Learn to use saris, dupattas, rugs in adding more colour and texture to your decor.

Stringing memory: Memories are great to have as company in your intimate space. Dig into your album for your favourite family photos and then arrange it to bring in a sense of personal touch to your space. How about being a little different and creative? Write your favourite poem on a nice handmade paper and then frame it. You can also make a collage out of your kids' paintings and then frame it to hang on the wall.

Shelve it: Do you think shelves are boring? Well, you couldn't be more wrong. These days there are many colourful shelves in different shapes available in the market. Even you have an ordinary shelf, paint it in warm colours with different motifs and see the result yourself. Arrange your favourite books, DVDs and knickknacks on the shelf and see the transformation.

Floor colours can enhance your decor

Your floor can add a lot to your room not just by way of dimensions — larger, smaller, wider, narrower — but can also add abstract emotions to it, like making it look warmer and happier. Here are tips to keep in mind when you are doing up your floors....

Light-coloured floors: Brighten a dark room using a very light floor. This also makes it look larger. The reflected light will make the room look lighter. Pale floors can make your room look great when paired with dark furniture.

Dark floors: Dark hardwood floors can add immense character to a large room and dark floors have the incredible ability to embrace all kinds of decor schemes. You could choose to have light-coloured furniture for a dramatic effect. With dark floors, it would be good to avoid dark walls.

Floor skirtings: Floors look larger when the skirtings are of the same colour. When the floor skirtings are of the same colours as your walls, it gives the opposite effect.

Floor and furniture: Your floor colour should be two shades lighter than your furniture. With dark floors, use furniture that is pale. If needed, use a rug that helps to provide this contrast.

Moods to go with floors: Beige or orangish floors that have a yellow tinge, look cozy and are warm and happy. Brown floors are earthy and sober. Dark floors have elegance and character. All white or pale floors can make your home look calm and peaceful.



7 things to help organise your Living area



If you have been thinking to renovate your home and get rid of the clutter for the longest time, then this is the right time to start. However, if do not want to spend a lot and still want your house to look organised, then just get rid of these seven simple things and you can change the look of your living room instantly.

Bills, envelopes and invites:

Most living rooms have a stack of unimportant papers lying everywhere. From various utility bills to credit card statements, and from envelopes to wedding invites, we always tend to dump all this on our coffee table or our TV cabinet in the living room. Get rid of empty envelopes and bills older than three years, and organise the rest in drawers, so that they're hidden.

Extra cushions:

Cushions lend a sense of style to the living room; vibrant coloured and abstract design cushions help the living area come to life. However, too much of anything is a bad idea. Do not overcrowd your living rooms with cushions, limit them to your couch or a baithak. Don't overdo it by keeping them on chairs, window seats, recliners or by simply increasing their number.

Big-size music system and CDs:

That big four-CD-changer home theatre system with four massive speakers covering a complete wall of your living room, might have emotional value, but it definitely adds to the clutter. Simply replace it with a sleek sound bar that would be hardly noticed but has effective sound quality, and you will notice that the room looks less cluttered.

5.Candles:

You definitely had a romantic evening in mind when you picked up those scented candles. However, they are now lying unattended in various corners coated with loads of dust. Get rid of those candles and buy lights that are easy to clean and can be used for a longer duration. Make sure they are all hanging lights so that the floor remains de-cluttered.

Bean bags:

Most people buy bean bags to create a relaxed sitting arrangement, however, they are rendered redundant after a while as they trigger back problems. They then just lie there in clumps, occupying a lot of space and we end up dumping things on bean bags which adds to the clutter. Make way for a smart pair of antique wooden or recliners that will occupy less space and will prove useful as well.

Artificial plants:

This is one of the most useless things in anybody's living room, as they do not add any charm to the room whatsoever. In fact, Feng Shui and vastu experts warn about keeping artificial plants in homes as they have some kind of negative energy. Get rid of them as they attract a lot of dust and occupy unwanted space. Invest in real plants instead.

Miniature artifacts:

Not many people can maintain art-house like interiors, as it needs a lot of cleaning. Miniature artifacts and handicrafts enhance the look of your living room and make it look arty. These objects make your house look dingy and unkempt if they are not dusted and maintained from time to time. If de-cluttering your house means having a clear space, then miniature artifacts need to be got rid of. In fact, a less-cluttered house looks bigger and better.

How to make your own Bottle garden



To take care of fungus and insect infection, add a small quantity of fungicide and insecticide to the soil mixture. It is advisable that these chemicals are mixed in water and then added to the soil.

Making the soil moist has certain advantages. The dust will not fly while you fill the bottle with soil. And when you plant the saplings, the soil won't crack. Selection of plants

The plants chosen should be slow-growing because fast-growing plants need frequent pruning, which is bit difficult in case of a bottle mixture. It is not necessary to sterilise the soil mixture.

Herbs like sage, oregano, basil and ferns work

quite well for a bottle garden as they usually adapt to the size of their environment be it a small bottle or a big container.

Keep the bottle near a window. But direct sunlight must be avoided, or else plants will wilt inside.

How to sow a sapling Place the selected saplings inside the bottle with the help of fork and forcep. Pour a few droplets of water and close the lid of the bottle. The plants start growing inside the closed bottle. You should not water again unless the saplings start wilting. So, what are you waiting for? Happy gardening!

Penalty if CIL fails to supply coal to consumer

NEW DELHI. In a first such instance, state-owned Coal India Limited (CIL) will be liable to pay a penalty if it fails to supply coal to consumers through e-auction. Until now, only buyers faced penalties for not lifting the full quantity bid for. The move aims to increase CIL's supply and maintain its market relevance. Currently, CIL is the sole supplier of coal via e-auction and the provision of penalty would now be part of the e-auction contracts of Coal India going ahead. The move is to make the contract equitable and fair. Earlier, there was no penalty on CIL, if CIL failed to supply coal to the consumer. It used to forfeit the security deposit of consumers, if the consumer failed to lift successful bid quantity of e-auction," said a senior official of the coal ministry. These measures aim to boost CIL's supply and maintain market relevance amid rising competition from commercial mining and private players. Phasing out of coal from certain sectors is driving CIL to prioritise supply. Reports suggest demand for CIL's coal could drop by up to 58% in next two years.

To counter this, CIL has relaxed restrictions on supply to thermal power plants and independent power plants (IPPs). These entities can receive coal beyond their annual contracted quantity (ACQ). Earlier capped at 120% of ACQ, there is no upper limit now. CIL said these measures are part of India's broader plan to reduce coal imports and become self-sufficient in coal production.

Aurobindo Pharma arm gets warning letter from USFDA for formulations unit in Telangana

NEW DELHI. Aurobindo Pharma Ltd on Friday said its arm Eugia Pharma Specialities Ltd received a warning letter from the US health regulator for its formulations manufacturing unit in Telangana. Earlier in May, the company had stated that Unit-III, a formulation manufacturing facility of Eugia Pharma Specialities Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary, received Official Action Indicated (OAI) status by the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA). "Subsequent to OAI, the unit has received a warning letter," Aurobindo Pharma said in a regulatory filing. It did not elaborate on the details of the warning by the regulator. "There is no impact on the existing supplies to the US markets," the company said. Aurobindo Pharma said it remains committed to working closely with the USFDA and continues to enhance its compliance on an ongoing basis.

The USFDA conducted an inspection at Unit-III, a formulation manufacturing facility of Eugia Pharma Specialities Ltd, located at Pashamylaram, Patancheru Mandal, Sangareddy district in Telangana, from January 22 to February 2, 2024. Subsequently, the USFDA determined the inspection classification status of this facility as 'Official Action Indicated (OAI)'.

As per the USFDA, OAI implies that the regulator may withhold approval of any pending product applications or supplements filed from such facility till the outstanding observations related to non-compliance of manufacturing norms laid down by it.

SBI hikes lending rate by 10 bps across tenors, raising EMIs for borrowers

NEW DELHI. State Bank of India, the country's biggest lender, has raised the Marginal Cost of Funds-based Lending Rate (MCLR) by 10 basis points (0.1 percentage point), across tenors, making most of the consumer loans costlier. This is the third time in a row that the bank has increased MCLR.

The benchmark one-year tenor MCLR, which is used to price most consumer loans such as auto and personal, is now pegged higher at 8.95 per cent against the earlier rate of 8.85 per cent, according to the information posted on its website. The three-year MCLR is 9.10 per cent, while the two-year is now 9.05 per cent, up 10 basis points. Among others, the rates of one-month, three-month and six-month tenors are in the range of 8.45-8.85 per cent. The MCLR on overnight tenor will be 8.20 per cent against 8.10 per cent. The new rates are effective from August 15, 2024, it said. The rate hike has come days after RBI kept its benchmark lending rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent for the ninth consecutive time earlier this month.

Rubber price jumps amid shortage

CHENNAI. India is facing an acute shortage of natural rubber with domestic production falling short of demand by around 5.5 lakh tonne.

According to Shashi Singh, president of the All India Rubber Industries Association (AIRIA), natural rubber production in India has increased from 8.4 lakh tonne in 2022-23 to 8.6 lakh tonne in 2023-24. "But there has also been a sharp rise in natural rubber consumption which has gone from 13.5 lakh tonne in 2022-23 to 14.2 lakh tonne and so the deficit is still 5.5 lakh tonne," he said. India, he added, has always been dependent on imports because domestic production of natural rubber has not kept pace with demand. "Natural rubber imports face a 25% customs duty or Rs 30 per kg whichever is higher but that's just one part of the issue," said Singh. The other is the availability of natural rubber. "Right now China is stocking up and Bangladesh, which had become a good source of natural rubber, is in turmoil," added. The immediate result is a sharp increase in the price of natural rubber. "The price is currently at Rs 247 per kg which is the highest in 15 years compared to Rs 182 per kg as on April 1, 2024. So in 4 months, it has nearly doubled," he said.

US court orders Vedanta Group-backed Sterlite Tech to pay USD 96.5 million to Prysmian

Additionally, the court has awarded USD 200,000 penalty on Stephen Szymanski, Sterlite Technologies Inc (STI) Executive Vice President for Americas Region, for misappropriation of trade secrets of Prysmian.

NEW DELHI. An American court has ordered Vedanta Group-backed Sterlite Technologies' overseas arm to pay USD 96.5 million, about Rs 810 crore, in damages to US-based Prysmian for violating trade secrets norms, according to a regulatory filing and plaintiff's statement. Additionally, the court has awarded USD 200,000 penalty on Stephen Szymanski, Sterlite Technologies Inc (STI) Executive Vice President for Americas Region, for



misappropriation of trade secrets of Prysmian. STI is the US subsidiary of Sterlite Technologies (STL) which has contested the judgement and may file an appeal against it. Prysmian in a statement said a South Carolina jury on August 9

ordered in favour of Prysmian following a three-week trial in the district court of Columbia, South Carolina.

"The jury found that Sterlite was unjustly enriched by taking Prysmian's trade secrets and awarded USD 96.5 million in

damages against Sterlite Technologies, Inc. In addition, the jury found that Stephen Szymanski had been unjustly enriched by misappropriating Prysmian's trade secrets," Prysmian said in the statement dated August 12.

Prysmian further said that the court awarded USD 200,000 penalty against Szymanski, personally. "Szymanski ran Prysmian's optical fibre cable business in North America, and departed Prysmian for Sterlite, a direct competitor, in August 2020," the statement said. Szymanski joined STI in September 2020. STL in a regulatory filing on August 10 had informed BSE that it is not a party to this dispute neither are any claims being made against it. "STI believes the judgement is not supported by the testimony and evidence presented at trial and intends to vigorously pursue all available post-trial remedies including an appeal," the STL filing said. STL had posted a consolidated loss of Rs 48 crore and decline of about 20 per cent in revenue from operations at Rs 1,218 crore in the first quarter ended June 30, 2024.

Sensex zooms 1,000 points, Nifty climbs over 24,400 in market rally

New Delhi Benchmark stock market indices rallied in the afternoon session on Friday as global markets gained momentum following US jobs and spending data that helped reduce fears of a recession. The S&P BSE Sensex gained 1023.08 points to 80,128.96, while the Nifty50 added 295.55 points to 24,439.30 as of 12:38 PM. The market capitalisation of companies listed on the BSE increased by Rs 4.77 lakh crore, reaching Rs 449.06 lakh crore, compared to Rs 444.29 lakh crore on Wednesday.

Among the 30 stocks in the Sensex, 26 were trading positively. The top performers included M&M, Tech Mahindra, and 81 stocks achieved their 52-week high today. Meanwhile, 20 stocks hit their 52-week lows in early trading. Out of 3,156 stocks traded, 2,209 were in the green. About 844 stocks were in the red, while 103 stocks remained unchanged.

The BSE midcap index rose by 420 points to 46,976, and the smallcap



index surged by 490 points to 52,955.

All 19 BSE sectoral indices were in positive territory. The auto, banking, capital goods, and IT sectors were the leading gainers, with their indices climbing by 811 points, 572 points, 613 points, and 711 points, respectively.

As the market rallied this morning, 118 stocks hit their upper circuit, while 92 stocks reached their lower circuit limits. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) sold equities worth Rs 2,595.27 crore on a net basis on Wednesday, while domestic institutional investors (DIIs) bought shares worth Rs 2,236.21

crore, according to provisional NSE data. On August 14, benchmark indices closed higher. The Sensex ended 150 points up at 79,105, and the Nifty finished 5 points higher at 24,143.

US market performance - Overnight, the US market saw significant gains. The Dow Jones rose by 538 points to 40,546, the Nasdaq gained 399 points to close at 17,591, and the S&P 500 increased by 90 points to 5,545 on Thursday. Asian markets performance - Japan's Nikkei advanced by 1,126 points to 37,853, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng added 287 points to reach 17,396. The Taiwan Weighted Index climbed 446 points to 22,341, and South Korea's Kospi rose by 47 points to 2,691 today. European markets performance - In Europe, the FTSE gained 66.30 points to reach 8,180 on Thursday. France's CAC added 90 points to 7,423, and Germany's DAX closed 298 points higher at 18,183.

DPIIT relooks at FDI from China: Govt sources

NEW DELHI. The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) is considering revisiting the restrictions placed on foreign direct investment (FDI) from China as part of a broader evaluation of the country's foreign investment policies, as per the government sources. Consultations with stakeholders are underway, and a decision has not yet been reached, sources said. "DPIIT is looking into what should be the revised FDI policy, and it is working in that direction. They are doing stakeholder consultations," a top official said. The Economic Survey for 2023-24, released in July, emphasised the potential benefits of increasing FDI from China to enhance India's exports. It argued that utilising FDI as part of 'China-Plus One' strategy is more beneficial than solely relying on trade. This is relevant as China is India's largest import partner, and the trade deficit with it has been on the rise. The survey highlighted the experiences of countries like Vietnam, Mexico, Taiwan, and



South Korea, which have benefitted from increased Chinese FDI as the US shifted its trade focus away from China. As per another official, the government is aiming to cut dependence on China via Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, which encourages domestic production. As production capacities are developed under this scheme, reliance on Chinese imports will fall, he said. It's important to acknowledge India has strong domestic consumption, which will play a role in this strategy, he added. As per the latest figures from the commerce department, exports to China during April-July 2024 fell 4.54% to \$4.8 billion, while imports from China rose by 9.66% to \$35.85 billion. Meanwhile, on trade deficit with China, Sunil Barthwal, Commerce Secretary, during press conference said "no country has been able to decouple from China, including the US and EU? The point is that in trade, you are dependent upon all countries who are in the value chain." Chinese import will fall once mfg capacities built'

According to an official, the government is aiming to reduce dependence on China via Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, which encourages domestic production.

Banks forced to raise rates as deposits dry up

MUMBAI. Amid slow growth in deposits and rising credit demand, banks are staring at lower margins/profits as they chase depositors offering them higher prices for their money. As a result, analysts see the cost of funds on average rising by as much as 25-30 bps this fiscal, which may top 5.25% system wide.

While credit growth has been averaging 15-16%, deposits accretion has been averaging at 11-12% this fiscal. In FY24, credit grew 19.3% but deposit inched up only 14.7%, forcing banks to offer higher prices for term deposits. And typically, banks earn more when interest expense (which is what they pay for their funds) is lower. In a normal scenario, banks price deposits/liabilities lower than their assets/loans to protect their margins/spreads. But since lending rates are already high, banks are forced to increase deposit rates even as they hold the lending rates. According to rating agency Crisil, banks

profitability is set to moderate due to higher cost of deposits as they continue to re-price already elevated deposit rates. Deposit costs are expected to increase 25-30 bps this fiscal after having risen 140 bps since the start of the rate tightening cycle in May 2022. As a result, net interest margin is likely to compress 10-20 bps this fiscal to 3-3.1%. For instance, since the beginning of this fiscal, leading banks have increased their deposit rates twice — in June and early July. Before that, they had another round of deposit repricing in December 2023. State-run banks are taking a lead in raising special short-term fixed deposit schemes. The new offers vary from 7.05-7.3% for 360 to 666 days money. While BoB is offering 7.25% for rates for 399 days and 7.15% for 333 days, SBI is giving 7.25% for 444 days and 7.1% for 400 days.

This had the cost of deposits for SBI rising to 5% in the June quarter from 4.55% a year ago and 4.81% in

Q4FY24, pulling down its yield on advances to 8.83% in June 2024 from 8.91% in March 2024. Similarly, the second largest lender HDFC Bank saw its cost of funds rising to 4.9% from 4.6% and the yield on yield on assets inching down to 8.4% from 8.7%.

On the other hand, the second largest private sector lender ICICI Bank's cost of funds shot up to 4.84% this quarter from 4.31% and that of Axis Bank this increased from 5.17% to 5.44%. On the other hand, state-run banks led by SBI have hiked loan prices, too, this month to protect their margins. On Wednesday, SBI increased its lending rate by 10 bps across tenors, effective August 15 for loans priced on the marginal cost of funds-based lending rate (MCLR). The new rate varies from 8.20% for overnight rate money to 9.10% for three years loans. Earlier this month BoB, Canara Bank, and Uco Bank also hiked their MCLR-based loans by 5 bps for six-month and one-year tenures.

If product is good, will sell: Mahindra



Even if I had steroidal growth (in two-wheeler biz), I would still not be happy. We faced several impediments like Covid-19, which slowed things down in past few years.

NEW DELHI. Anand Mahindra, chairman of Mahindra Group, said if a company's product is terrific, they are bound to succeed. Pointing out that the group's two-wheeler division faced several impediments such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which slowed things down in the past, Mahindra, at launch event of BSA Gold Star 650, said he is confident that their effort to share a part of history along with a great product is sure to take off. "Even if I had steroidal growth (in two-wheeler biz), I would still not be happy. We faced several impediments like Covid-19, which slowed things down in past few years. The kind of machines created by our team in R&D centres of India and the UK is unparalleled," said Mahindra as his

subsidiary company - Classic Legends - which has revived the iconic Jawa and Yezdi motorcycle brands, on Thursday, launched another iconic motorcycle brand - the BSA - in India. He added, "What we always believe is if your product is terrific, you will succeed. This is what I believe here to happen as well... Jawa, Yezdi and BSA are cult-like brands and there is a big community for them. We have to give a kickstart."

1,000 crore over three years towards product development, distribution and marketing. BSA Gold Star 650 first made a comeback in the UK in 2021 and was then launched in other parts of Europe, Turkey, New Zealand, and the Philippines. BSA is ready to enter the US, Australia, and Japan soon after. Anupam Thareja, co-founder of Classic Legends said the market size of the 650 cc segment is 15,000-20,000 per annum and is growing very fast. He expects that with this new launch, this segment will double or triple in size in the next few years.

Classic Legends, currently, can produce half a million two-wheelers from its Madhya Pradesh plant. This year, it will be rolling out 100,000 units across the three brands. The company is setting up a production facility in the UK.

M&M launched Thar ROXX at Rs 12.99 lakh. NEW DELHI: Mahindra & Mahindra on Thursday launched BSA Gold Star 650 at a starting price of Rs 3 lakh. Gold Star 650, competes with Royal Enfield's 650 twin range, boasts a 652cc liquid-cooled single-cylinder engine delivering a torque of 55 Nm and 45 bhp. The Birmingham Small Arms Company (BSA) was once the world's largest motorcycle manufacturer. Classic Legends acquired BSA brand in 2016 and last year announced plans to spend Rs

1,000 crore within next 3 to 5 years."

NEWS BOX

Pro Kabaddi League 2024 auction Day 2 live-streaming: When and where to watch

After some record-breaking bids on Day 1, the auction for the Pro Kabaddi League 2024 resumes on Friday, August 16 as more players will be seen going under the hammer with 12 teams going all out to have them on their squad. The opening day of the auction was full of memorable moments with several players attracting huge bids from the team owners. Sachin Tanwar emerged as the costliest buy on the opening day being sold for a whopping INR 2.15 Crore to Tamil Thalaivas. Iranian Raider Mohammadreza Shadlou Shadih also sparked the interest of several teams and was bought for INR 2.07 Crore by Haryana Steelers. Shadlou's fellow countrymen Fazel Atrachali went to Bengal Warriors while Indian captain Pawan Schrawat was



retained by Telugu Titans for INR 1.725 Crore. Pardeep Narwal will be seen donning the jersey of Bengaluru Bulls in the upcoming season being bought for INR 70 Lakh. The other top buys from Day 1 include, Bharat Hooda by UP Yoddhas (1.30 Crores), Ajinkya Pawar (Bengaluru Bulls) and Sunil Malik (U Mumba). Heading into Day 2, Patna Pirates (2.87 Crore) Dabang Delhi (2.16 Crore), Bengal Warriors (1.97 Crore), Gujarat Giants (1.91 Crore), Puneri Paltan (1.85 Crore) and UP Yoddhas (1.44 Crore) are the teams with the highest purse amount. Hence, more players will be seen attracting huge bids as the Day 2 of the auction gets underway. Heading into Day 2, Patna Pirates (2.87 Crore) Dabang Delhi (2.16 Crore), Bengal Warriors (1.97 Crore), Gujarat Giants (1.91 Crore), Puneri Paltan (1.85 Crore) and UP Yoddhas (1.44 Crore) are the teams with the highest purse amount. Hence, more players will be seen attracting huge bids as the Day 2 of the auction gets underway.

Stuart Broad wants England squad to 'take the positives' from Ben Stokes's injury

New Delhi Former England pacer Stuart Broad believes that the side need to take out the maximum positive out of their captain Ben Stokes missing out on their upcoming Test series against Sri Lanka, and come forth with a strong performance. Stokes has been ruled out for the remainder of the summer season after tearing his hamstring while playing in The Hundred. Stokes injured his hamstring on Sunday, 11 during the clash between his side, Northern Superchargers and the Manchester Originals in The Hundred. After the Superchargers were asked to chase down 153, Stokes came out to open the batting but had to retire hurt after facing issues with his hamstring. The England captain was carried off the pitch and has now subsequently been ruled out of the Three Lions' summer season by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB). However, Broad wants the England side, which will be



led by Ollie Pope in Stokes's absence, to find a silver-lining out of this mishap. "It's a real shame for the Test-match team because he looked so fit. He's worked so hard on his fitness. But to use that old sporting saying of 'take the positives', it actually gives England the chance to play against Sri Lanka with a make-up of team without Ben Stokes, that they are going to have to trial at some stage," Broad told PA News Agency. "Stokesy hasn't been able to bowl for a year-and-a-half but has been playing as a batter. What happens the night before Brisbane in 18 months' time if Stokesy's not very well? It's important for (replacement captain) Ollie Pope to get some experience and see what a team looks like without Ben Stokes – not that any of us would want that particularly, but you've got to find the positives in that and Stokesy will still be around," Broad added. Stuart Broad also revealed a conversation with Ben Stokes, where the England skipper jokingly said that he would be supporting the team as a coach in the Sri Lanka series.

WI vs SA 2nd Test: Mulder brings SA on top after Shamar Joseph's devastating spell

WI vs SA 2nd Test: Mulder brings SA on top after Shamar Joseph's devastating spell

New Delhi South Africa seamer Wiaan Mulder gave slight edge to his team at stumps on Day 1 of the second Test against West Indies on Thursday, August 15 at Providence Stadium, Guyana. The right-arm seamer registered figures of 4/18 to dismantle the West Indies batting and left them reeling at 97/7 at stumps trailing by 63 runs in the first innings. Earlier in the day, South Africa captain Temba Bavuma won the toss and elected to bat first. However, his openers Tony de Zorzi and Aiden Markram failed to vindicate his decision by losing their stumps against Jayden Seales and Shamar Joseph respectively. As a result, the Proteas were left reeling at 20/2 after 10.3 overs. Captain Bavuma (0 off 2) failed to trouble the scorers as he got trapped in front



of the stumps by Joseph. After three quick blows, Tristan Stubbs and David Bedingham got involved in a crucial stand for the fourth wicket to stabilize the innings. **Shamar Joseph runs through South Africa**

However, they failed to extend it beyond 37 with Jason Holder getting rid of Stubbs for

26 (65). Bedingham (28) also failed to convert his start and fell prey to Joseph to managed to find his edge which went straight to Joshua Da Silva. The right-arm speedster further shattered the stumps of Keshav Maharaj and Kyle Verreyne (21) to register third five wicket haul (5/33) of his

career. Dane Piedt (38*) and Nandre Burger (23) made some valuable contributions in the end to take their team to the score of 160. Jayden Seales also picked up 3/45 for West Indies. Wiaan Mulder leads South Africa's fightback.

Having just 160 runs in the bank, South Africa made sure they kept the opposition on the back foot right from the word go as Nandre Burger started the proceedings by dismissing Mikyle Louis for a six-ball duck. Wiaan Mulder also joined the party as he ran through the West Indies batting order dismissing Kraigg Brathwaite (3 off 19), Alick Athanaze (1 off 7) and Kavem Hodge (4 off 5) to leave the hosts reeling at 43/4. Burger (2/32) further sent Keacy Cart (26 off 37) on his way to the pavilion while Mulder also accounted for Joshua Da Silva (4 off 10) to further pile on the misery for the West Indies. With six wickets down on 56, Jason Holder (33*) tried to weather the storm and cashed on every scoring opportunity. He got involved in a crucial 41-run stand with Gudakesh Motie (11 off 25). However, Keshav Maharaj once again brought Windies back in the game trapping Motie in front of the stumps. As a result, West Indies were left reeling at 97/7 at stumps on Day 1 which saw a whopping 17 wickets fall.

PM Modi praises 'sarpanch' Harmanpreet for giving memorable farewell to PR Sreejesh

Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised the Indian hockey team and captain Harmanpreet Singh for giving memorable farewell to PR Sreejesh



would only get it back after them. But yes, I got a lot of support. I would want to say that this (Paris Olympics) was a good learning experience for me. It was also a little heartbreaking that I missed out even after coming so close. I will try my best next time," Lakshya told PM Modi. Although Lakshya's campaign received high-praise from fans and even his semi-final opponent and the World Number 1, Viktor Axelsen, the Indian star failed to bag a medal at the Paris Olympics. Padukone had even openly voiced his frustration at Lakshya missing out on a medal, and highlighted how the athletes must take up responsibility. India headed to the Paris Olympics with hopes of winning more than one medal in badminton. The pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, the Asian Games champions, were backed to win a historic Gold medal while PV Sindhu, HS Prannoy and Lakshya Sen were in the fray in the single campaign. As many as seven shuttlers headed to Paris with high hopes, but Lakshya, who was the last to qualify for the Games, reached the farthest.

India's badminton star Lakshya Sen revealed in a conversation with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, how his coach Prakash Padukone took his phone away during the Paris Olympics. Lakshya rose to recognition for his brilliant performance at the Games.

New Delhi India's rising badminton star Lakshya Sen shared with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, how his coach Prakash Padukone had taken away his phone for the entirety of his time competing at the Paris Olympics. PM Modi met and felicitated India's Paris Olympics athletes on Independence Day in New Delhi, where Lakshya revealed how he had little

knowledge about the hype surrounding him on social media during the Games.

Prakash Padukone held the position of the head coach for India's badminton team at the Paris Games, and has since gained quite a reputation for himself for his strictness with the players. In the video, PM Modi asked Lakshya whether he was aware of the increased hype and fascination of fans around him, to which Lakshya replied with the instance of strict rules of Prakash Padukone. "Prakash Sir had taken away from phone during the matches, and said that I

Manchester United still not ready for Premier League opener: Ten Hag on fresh team

Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag explained that the side is not yet ready for the Premier League season opener against Fulham, with new players having come in and having really little time to settle into the squad.



Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag revealed that the side is not yet fully ready for the Premier League 2024-2025 season opener against Fulham on August 17, specifically with many new signings coming in. Ten Hag explained that the new names in United would require more time to settle into the squad, and that is a problem they will have to deal with ahead

of the Fulham game. However, the Dutch manager also acknowledged that it was the basic problem that every manager in the League is thrown on the plate at ahead of a competitive season. Ten Hag is still hopeful that Manchester United will kick off their new season on a positive note, after having already tasted defeat to arch-rivals

Manchester City in the FA Community Shield via penalties. "That team is not ready, but the league starts and more managers have this problem. Still, we have some room, have some principles and we have to make a start. We can't hide, we have to deal with it," Ten Hag said at the pre-match press conference. "It's true, it's not the pre-season where in five to six weeks you work on a team, it's very complicated... The USA tour squad, and then we added the players (who had been at) Euros and Copa America and now new signings, and we have to make a team from it," Ten Hag said. United had a busy summer transfer window, which has seen names like Matthijs De Ligt, Younousse Mazraoui, Lenny Yoro and Joshua Zirkzee join the Red Devils. On the other hand, the side has also suffered a blow of injuries, which has seen Yoro and full-back Luke Shaw getting ruled out for an extended period even before the Premier League season had kicked off.

PM Modi asks for athletes' help to prepare for 2036 Olympics

Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked Indian athletes to help him in preparation for the 2036 Olympic Games in India. PM Modi shared that India will be bidding for the hosting rights of the sporting extravaganza.

New Delhi Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked for Indian athletes' help for smooth hosting of Olympics in 2036. Notably, India will be bidding to host the Olympic Games in 2036. PM also informed about the development during his speech on the occasion of the Independence Day on Thursday, August 15.

The PM had also invited the entire Indian contingent from Paris Olympics to join in on



the Independence Day celebrations at his residence in New Delhi. While addressing them, Modi asked athletes who've been a part of more than two Olympics to share their experiences and suggestions which will in turn help the country in hosting of the Games in 2036. "Our country is planning to get

management to event management. We must write down our observations and experiences and share it with the government so that while preparing for 2036 Olympics these small nuances can be taken care of," PM Modi told Indian athletes. You're an army of my team 2036: PM Modi further speaking ahead, PM Modi called the Indian contingent his 'army of team 36' and also asked the sports ministry to prepare a draft and take players' feedbacks and suggestions in detail. "In a way, you're an army of my team 2036, you all will have to help me. So that in 2036, we're able to host an Olympic like never before. I'd like the sports ministry to prepare a draft for the same and take their feedbacks and suggestions in detail so we will be able to prepare well," he added. Notably, India last hosted a major multi-sport event back in 2010 as they welcomed athletes from other countries for the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi. To prepare for the 2036 Olympic Games, a lot of infrastructure work will be needed in the country and one of Delhi, Mumbai and Ahmedabad could potentially be the front-runners to become hosts.



Jasmin Walia

Rumoured to Be Dating Hardik Pandya; Stree 2 Set To Dominate Khel Khel Mein And Vedaa?

Jasmin Walia, who is rumoured to be dating Indian cricketer Hardik Pandya, is a British singer and television personality who has been making waves both in the music industry and on social media. Jasmin and Hardik have been fuelling dating rumours with their social media interactions and are said to be vacationing together in Greece.

This Independence Day will see three big-ticket Hindi films locking horns at the box office: Rajkummar Rao and Shraddha Kapoor's *Stree 2*, Akshay Kumar's *Khel Khel Mein*, and John Abraham and Sharvari's *Vedaa*. According to trade reports, the

second installment in the *Stree* franchise is leading the race. *Sacnilk* reports that its day one advance booking figures are close to Rs 10 crore, surpassing the presales of Salman Khan's *Tiger 3* and

Ranbir Kapoor's *Brahmastra: Part One – Shiva*. The buzz around *Vedaa* and *Khel Khel Mein* isn't as strong. Ranvir Shorey's participation in *Bigg Boss OTT 3* came as a shock to some and a surprise to others. Throughout the course of the reality show, he made some interesting revelations about his personal life, from his break-up with a female actor (allegedly Pooja Bhatt) to co-parenting his 13-year-old son. He garnered significant support from fans and emerged as the second runner-up. *JioCinema's Shekhar Home* marks his first release post-*Bigg Boss OTT 3*.

The dramatic fall of superstar Rajesh Khanna from his film industry throne is the stuff of legend. Once the king of Bollywood, Kaka, as he was fondly called, saw his reign crumble as audiences flocked to Amitabh Bachchan and action-packed movies, leaving his drama-heavy roles in the dust. A 2012 *Rediff* article revealed a memorable moment when journalist Ali Peter John recounted how Khanna scoffed at being offered a spot on *Bigg Boss* during his career's lowest point.



Illeana D'Cruz

Reveals What She Does When She Misses Hubby Michael Dolan: 'You Look Through All...'

Illeana D'Cruz has been enjoying her motherhood to the fullest. She often shares photos of her son and keeps fans updated. Well, recently she took to her social media and shared how badly she is missing her hubby Michael Dolan. Illeana shared an old goofy video and revealed that she looked through all these lovely videos when missing him. Illeana D'Cruz shared a glimpse of her husband Michael Dolan and dropped a video in which we can see her recording a video of her husband while they are having a meal. She captioned it, "When you miss the man coz he working late so you look through all the lovely videos you got of him." The 37-year-old actress also shared another goofy video with her husband from their vacation.

Actress Illeana D'Cruz and her partner Michael Dolan are celebrating a milestone as their son Koa



Phoenix Dolan turned 1 recently. Illeana took to Instagram to share a collection of heartwarming photos from Koa's birthday celebration. The first picture shows Koa joyfully interacting with his birthday decorations, while another shows him enjoying a large piece of chocolate cake. A video features Koa holding a small paper bag, and other images capture him peacefully napping on Illeana's lap to having fun with his parents. The final photo is a family snapshot, showcasing Illeana, Michael and Koa all smiling brightly at the camera. Illeana frequently shares glimpses of Koa's life on her Instagram

feed. Earlier, she posted a set of photos featuring her little one enjoying the outdoors. The collection includes shots of Koa playing with grass, scenes of the stunning ocean and beach, and a candid moment of Koa standing by a window. Alongside the photos, Illeana wrote in the caption, "Rhody summer dream." During a recent interview with *India Today*, Illeana officially confirmed her marriage to Michael Dolan. She shared, "Married life is going well."

It's hard to comment on what I love about him the most. I'll have to think because I feel like every time I come up with an answer, there's something else that trumps that the next day." On the professional front, Illeana D'Cruz will soon appear in an upcoming TV series alongside Vihann Samat.



Suhana Khan, Navya Nanda Strongly Condemn Kolkata Doctor's Brutal Rape and Murder: 'We Deserve Better'



Bollywood actress Suhana Khan, along with Amitabh Bachchan's granddaughter Navya Nanda, has voiced their deep outrage on Instagram in response to the tragic rape and murder of a female trainee doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. The horrifying incident, which has sent shockwaves across the nation, prompted Suhana and Suhana to condemn the heinous crime and bring attention to the persistent and critical issue of women's safety in India. Taking to her Instagram stories on Thursday, Suhana shared a post by Navya Naveli Nanda. It read, "Yet another horrific rape has unfolded in front of our eyes. First and most importantly, let us pray for her and her family. Women have always played a very important role in the growth and development of our country. The workplace, the classroom and the home must be an enabling and safe space for us. Men and women need to unite against those mindsets and belief systems that continuously objectify women or think of them as easy prey."

The post further read, "The times we are out at night or what we wear are NOT signs for anything other than the fact that we have a right to live our life the way we desire. And for this, we cannot be made to live in continued fear or under threat. While nothing can ever compensate the pain and suffering the doctor went through that day, we need to take concrete steps to ensure this NEVER happens again. Whether it's stricter law enforcement or building safety protocols – steps need to be taken immediately. We deserve better. We will continue to fight for better. Because nothing and no one should ever be able to override the agency and dignity of women."

Ranvir Shorey Calls Sana Makbul A 'Female Chauvinist': 'Being A Girl Is Not A License To...'



Sana Makbul had made a strong statement against her *Bigg Boss OTT 3* co-contestant Ranvir Shorey, not long back. The actress, who emerged as the winner of the controversial reality show, spoke exclusively to *News18 Showsha* following her win when she called Ranvir a 'Male Chauvinist' and accused him of dominating women. Ranvir has now responded to Sana's claim that he is a 'sexist' by calling Sana a female chauvinist. In a chat with Siddharth Kannan, he said, "I believe Sana is a female chauvinist. You only get respect when you give it to others. Being a girl is not a license to misbehave and be unapologetic. When she told me something, I gave it back, so now she shouldn't be crying over me disrespecting her." He added that in the beginning of the show, they got along well. "Initially, we got along very well, I used to lovingly call her Pookie. I felt terrible about commenting on her lips, but I didn't know the dog incident. It started on a good note, but later when our fights began she would twist the topic and that caught on," he said.

Earlier, reacting to Ranvir Shorey's comment that she did not deserve to win *Bigg Boss OTT 3*, Sana had told *News18*, "I do feel that strong-headed women are targeted in our society, especially when men like Ranvir ji are so male chauvinist and narcissistic. Voh chaheinge ke ladkiya unke neechhe dab ke rahi (they want women to follow their orders) but the world is changed and you can't dominate women. Strong women like me are head high".

Following the announcement of the winner, Ranvir Shorey had also made some shocking comments, suggesting that if contestants are retained in the *Bigg Boss* house based on their social media following, the makers should simply award the trophy to the one with the most followers, bypassing the competition altogether. "Agar sirf social media following ke basis pe show pe rahenge, toh usse achha yeh hai ke jiski sabse zyada social media following hai usko seedha trophy de do (If staying on the show is only based on one's social media following, then it's better to just give the trophy directly to the one with the most followers)."