An Israeli attack targeting head of Hamas' military wing kills at least 71

Biden signs into law bill enhancing US support for Tibet

Mehbooba, other politicians claim they are under 'house arrest'

Priyanka Gandhi slams BJP over 'Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas'



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DIPHU, KARBI ANGLONG, SUNDAY, JULY 14, 2024

PRICE ₹ 8 PAGES 12

15 injured as 'drunk'

man goes on rampage with SUV in Silchar

SILCHAR, July 13: Fifteen per-

sons were injured in Silchar town

in Assam as an allegedly drunk

man went on a rampage with his

SUV, hitting people and vehicles -

- whatever came in its way, before

coming to a halt because of a bad

The incident happened on Fri-

day night, triggering panic in the

town, they said. The SUV first hit

three people near the municipal of-

fice, and while trying to flee, it injured another three persons at

Capital Point. After that, it struck

three motorbikes and some e-rick-

shaws at Trunk Road near the radio

As the rampage went on, people started following the SUV on their

two-wheelers. The vehicle came to a stop at the Tennis Club Point as

it could not move forward due to

services in Assam

station, police said.

road, police said on Saturday.

Arunachal re-constitutes 6 Assam border dispute panels

ITANAGAR, July 13: The Arunachal Pradesh government has re-constituted six regional committees to examine and exercise the present status of border dispute with Assam.

A notification issued by the Home and inter-state border affairs department on Thursday said that the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the regional committees, as established, will continue to be governed by the provisions set forth in the original notification issued on June 1, 2022.

The remaining six districts of the state where border dispute with Assam still persists as people from both states have not agreed to demarcation of villages along the inter-state border includes, Pakke Kessang, Papum Pare, Kamle, Lower Siang, Lower Dibang Valley and Longding district respec-

The state government has appointed Health and Family Welfare minister Biyuram Wahge as the chairman of the committee for Pakke Kessang district with the deputy commissioner and superinManagement minister Balo Raja has been appointed as the chairman with Rajya Sabha MP Nabam Rebia, Doimukh MLA Nabam Vivek, Papum Pare DC and SP as

While Law, Legislative and Justice minister Kento Jini has been appointed as the chairman for Lower Siang district, Commerce and Industries minister Nyato Dukam is the chairman of the Kamle district regional committee.

Rural Development minister Ojing Tasing and Agriculture minister Gabriel D Wangsu have been appointed as chairman for Lower Dibang Valley and Longding district respectively, the notification said. On July 15, 2022, the chief ministers of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam signed an agreement to end the decades-old border issue and decided to "restrict" the number of disputed villages to 86 instead of 123.

It was called 'Namsai Declaration' after the name of the place where their meeting was held. Assam and Arunachal Pradesh share an (CONTD. ON PAGES-2)

Assembly bypolls: Cong gets 4, TMC 4 in Bengal, BJP bags 2, AAP 1, DMK 1 & Independent 1

Boost for INDIA bloc, blow for saffron party

NEW DELHI, July 13: In a boost to the INDIA bloc, its constituents won 10 of the 13 assembly seats where by-elections were held in seven states, while the BJP managed to bag two and an Independent pocketed one seat as votes were counted on Saturday.

The Congress won four seats two in BJP-ruled Uttarakhand and two in Himachal Pradesh. The TMC bagged all the four seats in West Bengal while the AAP won the Jalandhar West seat in Punjab and the DMK emerged victorious in the Vikravandi constituency in Tamil Nadu.

The BJP won the Hamirpur seat in Himachal Pradesh while Independent candidate Shankar Singh clinched the Rupauli seat in Bihar.

Voting was held in these seats on July 10. The Congress hailed the results, saying they "reflect the

changing political climate in the country" and it has now become clear that the web of "fear and illusion woven by the BJP has been broken". West Bengal chief minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee thanked the people and said the party will dedicate the by-

election and the Lok Sabha poll

victories to the "martyrs" on its July 21 Martyrs' Day rally.

Tamil Nadu chief minister M K Stalin referred to the INDIA bloc's good show and said BJP should learn lessons from its defeats.

"BJP must realise that without respecting regional sentiments it

Assam flood: Water receding in many parts

party," he said. He described his party's victory as people's "thanksgiving" to DMK regime's welfare schemes.

Hailing the victory in Madhya Pradesh, chief minister Mohan Yadav said the people have reposed their faith in the BJP governcannot run the government and the ment's (CONTD. ON PAGES-2)

the bad (CONTD. ON PAGES-2) Scindia, Himanta discuss expanding telecom

GUWAHATI, July 13: Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) minister Jyotiraditya Scindia met Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday to discuss various development issues in the state, including the expansion of telecommunication services. Scindia, who had been on a two-day visit to the Northeast since Friday, held a morning meeting with Sarma and described their discussions as fruitful, emphasising their shared commitment to advancing Assam's development. "Also discussed on potential areas" where telecommunication services can be (CONTD. ON PAGES-2)

Several BJP MLAs want to join Cong in Assam: MP Pradyut Bordoloi

MP Pradyut Bordoloi on Saturday claimed that several sitting BJP MLAs from Assam have approached him and other senior leaders about joining the opposition party, which will take a final call during its upcoming 'political affairs meeting

Addressing a press conference, he, however, said the party is

GUWAHATI, July 13: Congress averse to inducting a few BJP leaders, who have been indulging in hurling abuses on the Congress in the past. "Many MLAs have contacted our party and some have reached out to me. They want to join the Congress. Our party will take a final call and discussions are going on presently," said Bordoloi,

> a former Assam minister. The two consecutive term Lok

Sabha MP also claimed that the "inside story" of BJP is not as rosy as the ruling party tries to project.

"A constant clash is going on between old and new BJP members. The influence and functioning style of the Dada brigade (followers of CM Himanta Biswa Sarma) is not appreciated by many old timers in the party," Bordoloi said. The senior (CONTD. ON PAGES-2)

GUWAHATI, July 13: The flood situation in Assam remained grim on Saturday even though the water levels have started receding in many parts of the state, officials said.

The India Meteorological Department's Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC) in Guwahati has said that moderate rainfall is very likely to occur at most places of Assam with isolated heavy to very heavy rain likely over Kokrajhar district.

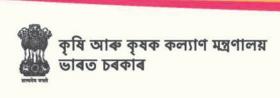
"Low to moderate flash flood risk is likely over few watersheds and neighbourhoods of Arunachal Pradesh and southern parts of Assam and Meghalaya," it

Meanwhile, a report by the Assam State Disaster

Management Authority (ASDMA) on Friday night said that seven more people lost their lives and over 12.33 lakh people are reeling under the deluge across 23 districts. The total number of people losing their lives in this year's flood, landslide, storm and lightning has increased to 106.

Dhubri is the worst hit with over 3.18 lakh people affected, followed by Cachar with almost 1.5 lakh people and Golaghat with more than 95,000 people reeling under flood waters, it added.

"Flood water is receding in many parts of the state. As the rain has stopped in most areas, the condition is likely to improve further," a senior official of ASDMA said. (CONTD. ON PAGES-2)



🏄 প্ৰধানমন্ত্ৰী ফচল বীমা যোজনাই বতৰৰ অনিশ্চয়তাৰ সৈতে জড়িত ক্ষতিশংকা কম কৰি পৰিশ্ৰমী কৃষক ভাই-ভনীৰ আৰ্থিক হিত ৰক্ষা কৰাত একেৰাহে গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ ভূমিকা পালন কৰি আহিছে। এই কৃষক হিতৈষী বীমাৰ লাভ কোটি কোটি কৃষকে পাব ধৰিছে।

- **নৰেন্দ্ৰ মোদী**, প্ৰধানমন্ত্ৰী

ফচল বীমা কৰাওক সুৰক্ষা কৱচ পাওক



62 কোটিৰো বেছি কৃষকৰ আৱেদন প্ৰাপ্ত কৰা হ'ল

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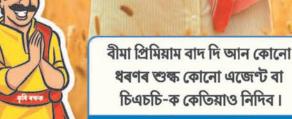


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আপোনাৰ ফচলৰ বীমা কৰোৱাৰ বাবে আজিয়েই যোগাযোগ কৰক























'Innovative approach of PM Modi led to launch of UDAY scheme'

NEW DELHI, July 13: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's innovative approach averted a crisis in the power sector and led to the launch of transformative UDAY scheme, according to a book authored by R Balasubramaniam.

2 THE HILLS TIMES

Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY) was launched in 2015 with the objective of achieving a comprehensive financial and operational revival of power distribution companies.

The book titled 'Power Within: The Leadership Legacy of Narendra Modi' among other things talks about Modi's attentiveness to varied viewpoints, insistence on innovative, out-of-the-box solutions, and creation of a conducive environment for junior officers to contribute ideas in policy making.

Balasubramaniam is a member of Capacity Building Commission, which was created in 2021 to facilitate preparation of annual capacity building plans of departments, ministries and agencies, among other things.

Quoting Finance Secretary T V Somanathan, the book said a meeting was convened by the Prime Minister's Office to deal with the precarious financial health of DIS-

The meeting, which included key ministers and officials like the

Pakistan reaches new USD 7 billion loan deal with IMF

ISLAMABAD, July 13: Pakistan and the IMF have agreed on a USD 7 billion aid package spread over more than three years to help the cash-strapped country deal with its chronic economic issues.

"Building on the economic stability achieved under the 2023 Stand-by Arrangement (SBA), IMF staff and the Pakistani authorities have reached a staff-level agreement on a 37-month Extended Fund Facility Arrangement (EFF) of about USD 7 billion," the global lender said in an overnight statement, confirming the muchawaited deal subject to the approval by the IMF's Executive

Board. The Washington-based lender further said the new programme aims to support the authorities' efforts to cement macroeconomic stability and create conditions for stronger, more inclusive, and resilient growth in the cash-strapped

includes steps to strengthen fiscal and monetary policy and reforms to broaden the tax base, improve State Owned Enterprises' (SOE) management, strengthen competition, secure a level playing field for investment, enhance human capital, and scale up social protection through increased generosity and coverage in the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP)," it read.

The International Monetary Fund also stated that continued strong financial support from Pakistan's development and bilateral partners would be critical for the programme to achieve its objec-

An IMF team led by Nathan Porter, IMF's Mission Chief to Pakistan, held discussions with the Pakistani side during the May 13-23, 2024, staff visit to Islamabad.

According to the statement, the new programme aims to capitalise on the hard-won macroeconomic stability achieved over the past year by furthering efforts to strengthen public finances, reduce inflation, rebuild external buffers and remove economic distortions to spur private sector-led growth. (PTI)



then power minister Piyush Goyal and finance minister Arun Jaitley, focused on the persistent challenges facing the power sector.

Somanathan attended the meeting as the then joint secretary in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) alongside his junior colleague Brajendra Navnit and other officers.

"The prime minister attentively absorbed the power ministry's plea for a bailout akin to the 2003 initiative. The RBI advocated for the government's intervention to restructure loans and authorize increased borrowing by state governments. The power ministry accordingly proposed allowing states to take over a substantial part

of the DISCOM debt by relaxing the 3 per cent fiscal deficit ceiling," the book published recently

The then expenditure secretary expressed concerns that such a move might only perpetuate a cycle of inefficiency unless the power sector and DISCOMs committed to substantive reforms, it

The prime minister, fully engaged with these discussions, recognized that inaction was not a viable option, as it could precipitate a power crisis with farreaching implications for India's burgeoning economy and the daily lives of its citizens, it said,

relief could be given without creating conditions for the cycle to

Faced with what appeared to be a classic case of a need for relief versus creating perverse incentives, the prime minister sought practical, innovative solutions from the team.

"In this context, Brajendra Navnit, the junior-most officer in the room, boldly proposed allowing state governments to enhance their borrowing capacity, but with a condition: in the future, if DIS-COMs continued to incur losses, these losses would automatically be counted as a part of the 3 per cent fiscal deficit. This would provide short-term relief, but if states did not carry out improvements, they would face budget constraints," it said.

The book said, the suggestion of the junior-most officer was accepted and a balanced approach was agreed upon, aiming to provide financial relief to DISCOMs while maintaining fiscal discipline among states.

It showcased the prime minister's willingness to foster a collaband orative innovative problem-solving environment, and led to the launch of the transforma-

Ramaiah Memorial Hospital enters landmark collaboration with Mount Sinai Health System

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, July 13: Ramaiah Memorial Hospital (RMH), a premier multi-super-specialty quaternary care facility based in Bengaluru, has signed an exclusive long-term collaboration agreement with the renowned Mount Sinai Health System of New York. This strategic partnership aims to advance healthcare services through clinical excellence, quality care, research, innovation, and technology.

The agreement underscores Mount Sinai's commitment to supporting RMH in enhancing its clinical competencies and centers of excellence in several specialty areas, including Oncology, Cardiology, Neurosciences, Urology-Nephrology, and other clinical fields. Dr. M. R. Jayaram, Chairman of Gokula Education Foundation, expressed enthusiasm about the collaboration, stating, "This significant partnership

with Mount Sinai aims to advance clinical excellence, enhance patient care, and integrate innovative technologies to elevate our healthcare standards.'

Dr. Szabi Dorotovics, President of Mount Sinai International, highlighted the historical spirit of Bengaluru's founder Kempegowda in fostering development and prosperity. He remarked, "Our collaboration seeks to provide Bengaluru and Karnataka with the highest international standards of healthcare, enhancing wellness and prosperity."

Dr. S. C. Nagendra Swamy, President of RMH, highlighted the hospital's dedication to continuous improvement and strategic development. "This collaboration will exponentially enhance our capabilities, providing our clinicians with access to cutting-edge medical research, training programs, and the latest technologies from Mount Sinai," he stated.

Pak Finance Minister Aurangzeb says new IMF deal to help country's macroeconomic stability

ISLAMABAD, July 13: Pak- ternational lender in a statement lic finance, energy and stateistan's Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb on Saturday said the USD 7 billion aid package deal struck with the IMF would help bring macroeconomic stability to the cash-strapped country.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced the aid package, spread over more than three years, late on Friday night, giving much-needed respite to the nation that has been facing chronic economic issues.

The programme needs to be approved by the IMF's Executive Board. The Washington-based insaid the deal should enable Pakistan to "cement macroeconomic stability and create conditions for stronger, more inclusive and resilient growth"

The latest bailout package follows a commitment by the government to implement reforms, including a major effort to broaden the country's tax base, the Dawn newspaper reported on Saturday.

Aurangzeb said it would aid Pakistan in achieving macroeconomic stability. "We need to ensure structural reforms and bring self-sustainability in areas of pubowned institutions," the finance minister was quoted by Geo News

Pakistan's economy has faced multiple challenges in the past few years, from the COVID-19 pandemic, the effects of the war in Ukraine and supply difficulties that fuelled inflation, as well as the devastating flooding that affected a third of the country in 2022, the Dawn said. Pakistan found itself in a debt crisis with its foreign currency reserves dwindling and was forced to turn to the international lender obtaining its first emergency loan in 2023. (PTI)

Contd. from Page 1...

Arunachal re-constitutes 6

804.1-km-long border. Arunachal Pradesh, which was made a union territory in 1972, has been maintaining that several forested tracts in the plains traditionally belonged to hill tribal chiefs and communities and these were "unilaterally" transferred to Assam earlier. After Arunachal Pradesh achieved statehood in 1987, a tripartite committee was appointed, which recommended that certain territories be transferred from Assam to Arunachal

Pradesh. Assam contested this and the matter was in the Supreme Court for a long time. (PTI) Boost for INDIA bloc,

"guarantee of trust". In Uttarakhand, Congress's Qazi Mohammad Nizamuddin won the Manglaur seat for the fourth time edging out BJP's Kartar Singh Bhadana by a narrow margin of 422 votes. Nizamuddin won the seat twice on a BSP ticket and once on a Congress ticket in the past. The BSP, which had won the seat in the 2022 assembly polls, was relegated to the third position. In Badrinath, Congress's Lakhapat Butola, a firsttime contestant, scored an upset victory over former minister and MLA Rajendra Bhandari of the BJP whose resignation as a legislator just before the Lok Sabha polls had necessitated the bypoll. Butola's victory margin

Congress candidate Kamlesh Thakur, wife of Himachal chief minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, defeated BJP's Hoshiyar Singh to win the Dehra seat by a margin of 9,399 votes. Hardeep Singh Bawa also defeated his nearest rival and BJP candidate K L Thakur in Nalagarh by 8,990 votes. Bawa is a five-time Indian National Trade Union Congress president.

BJP's Ashish Sharma, however, managed to win the Hamirpur seat defeating Congress candidate Pushpinder

The Congress's strength in the 68-member assembly had dropped from 40 to 34 after six of its MLAs joined the BJP. It has now regained the tally it secured in the assembly elections in 2022, after winning four seats in bypolls -- held along with the Lok Sabha elections in June -- and two more it won on Saturday.

The bypoll results ensured that for the first time in the electoral history of the state, a husband and wife --Sukhvinder Sukhu and Kamlesh Thakur -- would be members of the Himachal Pradesh assembly. In another first, there will not be a single Independent MLA in the assembly.

In the 2022 assembly elections, three Independents namely Hoshiyar Singh (Dehra), Ashish Sharma (Hamirpur) and K L Thakur (Nalagarh) were elected but they resigned after voting for BJP candidate Harsh Mahajan in the Rajya Sabha election on February 27. They joined the BJP due to which the seats fell vacant. Himachal Pradesh BJP chief Rajeev Bindal alleged Sukhu spent crores of rupees for the by-elections and

nvolved the entire state government in the poll campaign but still lost in his home district Hamirpur. He also alleged that the Congress won the two seats by "threatening people, tempting them and misusing" the government machinery. The Trinamool Congress continued its winning streak from the recent Lok Sabha

elections by sweeping the West Bengal bypolls, wresting Raiganj, Bagda and Ranaghat Dakshin seats from the BJP and securing a record victory margin in Maniktala. TMC candidates Krishna Kalyani, Madhuparna Thakur and Mukut Mani Adhikari won the Raigani, Bagda,

and Ranaghat Dakshin seats respectively, while Supti Pandey won Maniktala in North Kolkata

In Punjab, Mohinder Bhagat of the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) won the Jalandhar West seat by defeating AAP legislator and joined the BJP in March. Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Mann said the victory shows

BJP nominee Sheetal Angural by a margin of 37,325 votes. The seat fell vacant after Angural resigned as the that the people of the state are "very happy" with his government's work. In Tamil Nadu, the ruling DMK's Anniyur Siva emerged victorious in the Vikravandi assembly constituency,

defeating NDA constituent PMK's Ambumani C by 67,757 votes. In Madhya Pradesh, BJP's Kamlesh Pratap Shah won the Amarwara assembly seat by a margin of 3,027

votes against Congress's Dheeran Sah Invati, while in Bihar, Independent candidate Shankar Singh won the Rupauli seat, defeating JD(U)'s Kaladhar Prasad Mandal by 8,246 votes. (PTI)

15 injured as 'drunk'

condition of the road, they said. Police rushed to the spot and took the car along with the driver into custody, they added. Several bottles of liquor were found in the car, a police officer said. "A total of 15 people were injured in the incident," he said. (PTI)

Several BJP MLAs want

leader stressed that the issue of BJP leaders joining the Congress will be discussed during the upcoming 'political affairs meeting' of the party, scheduled to take place from July 15 to 17. Asked if the Congress is ready to accept all the BJP leaders who wish to join it, Bordoloi said, "Why will

we take all of them? There are some leaders who always abuse us. Why should we take them?" He, however, did not name any BJP leaders who have contacted him or other party colleagues and expressed willingness to join hands with them. In the last few months, speculations have been rife in political corridors that a former BJP central cabinet minister, several sitting MLAs, mostly from the Upper Assam constituencies,

and a few former MLAs are in talks with the Congress leaders to join the opposition party with thousands of The BJP leaders have, however, termed these reports as rumours and claimed that no one from the ruling party will ever join the Congress. In the recently held Lok Sabha elections for 14 seats in Assam, the BJP re-

tained its nine MPs, while its allies AGP and UPPL bagged one each. In the opposition camp, Congress also retained its three MPs. (PTI)

Assam flood: Water receding

The administration has been operating 316 relief camps and relief distribution centres in 18 districts, taking care of 2,95,651 displaced people at present.

The state government has distributed 3,621.01 quintals of rice, 666.3 quintals of dal, 6,266.61 quintals of salt and 11,446.82 litres of mustard oil among the flood victims of the state during the last 24 hours.

At present, 2,406 villages are under water and 32,924.32 hectares of crop areas have been damaged across Assam, the ASDMA said. Embankments, roads, bridges and other infrastructure have been damaged by flood waters in many districts across the state. At present, the mighty Brahmaputra is flowing above the danger mark at Nimatighat, Tezpur and Dhubri.

Its tributaries Burhidihing at Chenimari and Disang at Nanglamuraghat are flowing above the danger level. The Barak river's tributary Kushiyara is also flowing above the danger mark at Karimganj town, ASDMA said. On account of widespread flooding, over 6,67,175 domestic animals and poultry are affected across the

Scindia, Himanta discuss

expanded to move towards a more 'Connected and Digital Assam'," the Union minister posted on X. Sarma also wrote on X about the meeting and said the duo had a good discussion on several topics, including improving digital infrastructure in Assam by augmenting penetration of 4G, 5G and high-speed internet services. They also addressed strategies for developing a skilled workforce to support telecom infrastructure and implementing advanced technologies for swift network restoration in flood-prone areas. The ministers also discussed improving coordination with the North Eastern Council and expediting the implementation of projects sanctioned by the DoNER Ministry. (PTI)

First Indian ship takes perishable food items to Maldives' southernmost port

MALE, July 13: The first shipment carrying 150 tonnes of perishable food items from India to a port at Addu is set to reduce the cost and complexity of imports into the southern atolls of Maldives, according to media reports here. An Indian ship carrying fresh fruits, vegetables, onions, garlic, and eggs had set sail from Tuticorin Port and reached Hithadhoo Port at Addu, the southernmost atoll of this archipelagic nation, late on Wednesday night.

The arrival of the Indian cargo ship also saw the opening of a direct shipping route by the Maldives Ports Limited (MPL) from Tuticorin Port in Tamil Nadu to Hithadhoo Port at Addu.

Atoll Times news portal said several years ago perishable food items were brought to Addu from Tuticorin in wooden ships, which could sail only at certain times of the year. "Now with steel ships, food can be brought to Maldives without interruption," the report said on Friday.

The service will be operated by Kerala-based Finesse Group, which is the largest supplier of fruits and vegetables to the Mal-

"This marks a new chapter in the collaboration between MPL, Hithadhoo Regional Port, and Indian shipping companies to deliver fresh fruits, vegetables, onions, garlic, and eggs directly to Addu residents," another news portal Truth MV said.

Calling it as "a landmark development poised to transform the logistics landscape for Addu City," Maldives Maritime Journal (MMJ) said this initiative is set to significantly reduce the cost and complexity of importing goods, particularly perishables, into the

OPPO India unveils Reno12 5G series

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 13: OPPO India has launched the Reno12 series, marking a significant step in making AI-powered smartphones widely accessible in the country. Branded as "Your Everyday AI Companion," the Reno12 series introduces advanced features like AI Eraser 2.0, AI Clear Face, AI Best Face, and Smart Image Matting 2.0, allowing users to capture flawless and fun photos without the need for complex editing. Additionally, the AI Toolbox, powered by Google Gemini LLM, includes AI Writer, AI Summary, and

the 12GB+512GB version. The Reno12 5G is priced at ₹ 32,999 with 8GB RAM and 256GB storage. Sales for the Reno12 Pro 5G will commence on July 18, while the Reno12 5G will be available from July 25 on the OPPO

e-Store, Flipkart, and across mainline retail outlets. Peter Dohyung Lee, Head of Product Strategy at OPPO, highlighted the significance of this launch, stating, "The Reno12 series marks a milestone for OPPO as we pledge to accelerate AI phone adoption. This series showcases OPPO's advanced GenAI capabilities, futuristic design, and unparalleled energy efficiency. We envision that AI will make mobile de The Reno12 Pro 5G is available in two variants: ₹ vices more personalized and intuitive, transforming 36,999 for the 12GB+256GB model and ₹ 40,999 for how users interact with their smartphones.

Whirlpool India unveils Ice Magic Pro **Glass Door refrigerator range**

HT Bureau GUWAHATI, July

Whirlpool India, a subsidiary of Whirlpool Corporation, has launched its new range of single door refrigerators, the Ice Magic Pro Glass Door series. This new range seamlessly blends superior aesthetics with advanced craftsmanship, setting a new standard for contemporary Indian homes.

Reflecting the company's belief in stylish and modern product offerings, the Ice Magic Pro series features "never seen before" patterns on glass doors, designed to add a layer of elegance to any living space. The range is available in three distinctive designs—Gold

each celebrating the rich arts and diverse culture of India.

Beyond their visual appeal, these refrigerators are packed with innovative features to ensure superior performance. The Ice Magic Pro Glass Door series includes Whirlpool's trademarked Microblock Technology, which guarantees up to 7 days of garden-fresh produce and preserves the nutritional value of food. Additionally, it offers 12 hours of milk preservation during power cuts, maintaining freshness and quality.

Kumar Gaurav Singh, Vice President-Marketing at Whirlpool India, expressed pride in the new launch: "At Whirlpool, we believe our products enhance the overall lifestyle of our customers through style, functionality, and durability. With the launch of our Ice Magic Pro Glass Door Refrigerator Range, we are proud to offer a unique range of designer refrigerators that not only elevate home design but are also equipped with advanced features. Our goal is for customers to feel a sense of pride and ownership with a product that reflects their personalities. The varied design options add a touch of grace to any household, transforming the refrigerator into a piece of art that reflects the style and aura of the home. At Whirlpool, we're not just about manufacturing appliances; we're about inspiring dreams and enriching lives.'

Dust, Silvia, and Night Bloom— Tomato prices may ease in coming weeks on supplies from Andhra, Karnataka

tomato price, which soared to ₹75 per kg in the national capital, is expected to cool in the coming weeks as supply improves from southern states, a government official said on Saturday.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said prices of potato and onion, which also spiked due to supply disruptions, are expected to stabilize soon.

"Prices of tomato, potato and onion are ruling high in Delhi and some other cities. Extreme heat followed by spells of excess rainfall disrupted supplies, causing a spike in prices in consuming areas," the consumer affairs ministry official told PTI. Tomato price in New Delhi has surged to ₹ 75 per kg, but is likely to ease if heavy rainfall does not further disrupt supply chains, he said.

According to the ministry data, retail tomato price in Delhi was ₹ 75/kg on July 12, down from ₹



150/kg in the year-ago period. In Mumbai, the price was ₹ 83/kg, while Kolkata reported it at ₹ 80/kg. The all-India average retail price of tomato stood at ₹ 65.21/kg on July 12, compared to ₹53.36/kg last year.

Currently, Delhi is receiving tomato supplies from Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. "Prices will start easing as hybrid tomatoes from Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka reach the national capital," the official said.

The government does not plan to reintroduce subsidized tomato sales, a measure implemented last year when the price exceeded ₹ 110 per kg. The official exuded confidence that prices would norplies improve from Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

The official noted that India has 283 lakh tonne of stored potato, sufficient to meet domestic demand despite lower production compared to the previous year. Onion prices, which have eased in Maharashtra's wholesale markets, are expected to decline further with the arrival of the new crop in

Heavy rainfall has disrupted the supply of tomatoes, potatoes, onions, and green vegetables in key consuming areas, leading to price hikes across metros.

In Delhi, retail potato price was ₹ 40/kg on July 12, up from ₹ 25/kg last year, while onion price increased to ₹ 57/kg from ₹ 33/kg. The government remains optimistic about price stabilisation in the coming weeks, provided there is no further disruption due to adverse weather conditions. (PTI)

Scindia visits North East Cane and Bamboo Development Council (NECBDC)

Wide marketing of Bamboo products will sensitise consumers: Union minister

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, July 13: Union development of north eastern region (MDoNER) visited The North East Cane and Bamboo Development Council (NECBDC) on Sat-

This visit highlights the government's unwavering dedication to sustainable development and the promotion of the rich cultural heritage of the North Eastern Region, a PR stated.

During his visit, Scindia was given an in-depth tour of the NECBDC facilities, where he interacted with artisans and stakeholders, gaining valuable insights into the traditional crafts of cane and bamboo. These crafts are integral to the region's cultural and economic fabric. The minister lauded the council's efforts in advocating for bamboo and cane as sustainable alternatives in various sectors, emphasizing their role in eco-friendly development.

NECBDC, established to lead the development of the cane and bamboo sector in the North East-



comprehensive

local youth.

NECBDC's activities and led the

tour to NECBDC campus. The

minister inspected various innova-

tive products developed at

NECBDC, including Bamboo

Vinegar, Bamboo Charcoal, Bam-

boo Laptop Holders, Bamboo Card

Holders, Bamboo Lampshades,

Bamboo Luxury Chairs, and Bam-

boo Earrings and Jewellery, among

others. He expressed enthusiasm

for the creativity and skill of the

Scindia expressed his excite-

ment about the potential of the

products and artifacts created by

HT Correspondent
MARGHERITA, July 13: Pen-

gree police recently apprehended 3

NSCN linkman from new life

foundation rehabilitation centre lo-

cated at Bargolai under Margherita

The linkmen have been arrested

for allegedly demanding ransom

money from businessman Rupam

apprehended linkmen have been identified as

Ankur Gogoi who held from Kete-

tong, Avinash Ghosh of Jagun and

Lupan Singpho a lady of

New Life Foundation Rehabilita-

tion Centre and an upcoming busi-

nessman of Margherita on

Saturday talked to the press giving

details about his experience with

extortion attempts by the militant

Gogoi recounted how he had been

approached by NSCN linkman

Ankur Gogoi in the year 2023 and

Surya Gold Cement, has an-

nounced a generous contribution

of ₹ 20 lakh to the Chief Minis-

ter's Relief Fund to support the

victims of the recent devastating

vide immediate relief and rehabil-

communities, addressing the ur-

gent needs of those impacted by

the floods. With a long-standing

commitment to social responsibil-

ity, the company's contribution re-

flects its dedication to community

support and assistance in times of

Vedant Agarwal, managing di-

rector of Purbanchal Cement Ltd,

expressed his heartfelt concern for

the flood victims and reaffirmed

the company's commitment to

aiding the community. He stated,

This contribution aims to pro-

to the affected

floods in Assam.

₹ 20 lakh to CM Relief Fund

GUWAHATI, July 13: Purban- community, especially in times of

Rupam Gogoi proprietor of the

police station in Tinsukia.

Gogoi of Margherita.

Arunachal Pradesh.

group NSCN.

overview of

various projects, including skill development workshops, technological advancements in bamboo processing, and creating market linkages for artisans. The council's work has significantly contributed to the socio-economic development of the region, empowering local communities and promoting sustainable practices, the PR fur-

In his first visit as minister of DoNER, Scindia was accompanied by Chanchal Kumar, secretary, DoNER, while M C Omi Ningshen, MD, NECBDC, provided a

East region, believing they can achieve global recognition. He was very happy to look at these artisans' commitment and hard work. These products developed by the concerted efforts of NECBDC are likely to continue significantly contribute to the #MakeInIndia initiative and in fulfilling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of building #AtmanirbharBharat. Scindia said that it is imperative that premium and innovative products are being developed using Bamboo that should be widely marketed to sensitize consumers about the quality of craftsmanship which are available in NER. The visit of Union minister to the North East Cane and Bamboo Development Council (NECBDC) underscores the priority given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government to the development of the North East Region.

REGION

The focus on sustainable materials, cultural heritage, and economic empowerment aligns with the broader vision of 'Viksit Bharat' and 'Viksit Purvottar'.

NSCN linkmen arrested for extortion in Tinsukia

Floods situation improves

in Dibrugarh

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, July 13: The Floods situation in Dibrugarh improved marginally on Saturday with water level started receding, reducing the affected population to 12537 in 64 villages in the district.

"At least 64 villages were still affected with 12537 population. 821 inmates are taking shelter at 11 relief camps. 2377.5 hectares of crop land were affected," said an ASDMA report.

For nine consecutive days, Dibrugarh town remained under water due to the overflowing of Dibrugarh Town Protection (DTP) Drain. But now the situation improved and things have come to normal.

Most of the roads were damaged in Dibrugarh town and other areas. Public are having a harrowing time due to the damaged of the roads. The Dibrugarh Municipal Coorporation (DMC) have started cleaning the drains.

"Most of the drains were clogged due to dumping of garbage and we have cleaning the drains. We appeal everyone not to dump garbages in drains," said an official of DMC.

He further added, "Encroachment of DTP drain is the main reason of urban flooding. The drain has been encroached by public and some private hospital which resulting in waterlogging and urban

NTPC hosts bureaucrats to inspire the young



HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, July 13: The Girl Empowerment Mission (GEM) at NTPC Bongaigaon Salakati hosted bureaucrats Kabita Deka, ACS, additional district commissioner of Kokrajhar, and Rima Trishna Haloi, ACS, assistant Commissioner of Kokrajhar to inspire young partici-

Deka, was welcomed by Sangeeta Singh, president of Bardwi Shikla Ladies Club. NTPC Bongaigaon, Salakati engaged in a heartfelt interaction with the girls.

Sharing her remarkable journey through the civil services, she offered invaluable advice and encouraged the girls to pursue their dreams with determination and passion. Her words resonated deeply, instilling a sense of ambition and selfconfidence among the young participants.

Rima Trishna Haloi, further enriched the visit with her insights and experiences. Her commitment to social responsibility provided the girls with a powerful role model, emphasizing the importance of selfreliance and personal safety. From July 11 to 13, Haloi conducted selfdefence and martial arts classes, imparting invaluable skills and significantly boosting the morale of the girls. Her dedication and expertise self-defence were evident throughout the three-day session, inspiring the girls with practical techniques and strategies for selfprotection.

The visitors were given a tour of the beautifully adorned GEM venue by Sangeeta Singh, who highlighted the impressive infrastructure and initiatives undertaken.

Both dignitaries expressed their admiration and satisfaction with the setup, acknowledging the efforts made to create a nurturing environment for the girls.

The programme was coordinated by Onkar Nath, AGM (HR), Madhurjya S Lahkar, Sr Manager (corporate communication) and Aduity Thakuri, CSR executive of the station, whose support and guidance continue to play a crucial role in the

success of the GEM initiative. The visit concluded with a memorable group photograph, capturing the inspiring moments shared between the dignitaries and the girls. This visit has undoubtedly left a lasting impact, motivating the girls to strive for excellence and embrace

Sonitpur DC reviews post flood situation

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, July 13: A review meeting of the District Disaster Management Authority, Sonitpur was held recently under the chairmanship of district commissioner cum chairperson of DDMA, Sonitpur Deba Kumar Mishra at the conference hall of District Commissioner's Office.

Accompanied by ADC cum CEO, DDMA, Sonitpur Garga Mohan Das and programme manager, DRR, ASDMA and nodal officer for flood management at Sonitpur Muktaram Deka, the meeting discussed various matters related to flood management and other disaster management aspects. Later, Deka along with district project officer and other officials of DDMA, Sonitpur visited flood damaged sites at Batamari and Bhumuraguri under Tezpur revenue circle, the model relief camp at Jamuguri Academy HS School under Naduar revenue circle and took stock of the situation and discussed with the relief management committee. The team also visited erosion site at Dighali under Chariduar revenue circle.

One detected with JE at Kaliabor

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, July 13: Sujit Kumar Changmai, a resident of Kaliabor Sunarigaon village was detected with Japanese Encephalitis (JE) and was undergoing treatment at a hospital in Guwahati, sources added here. Following the detection of JE in the village, a special medical team from Nagaon Health department rushed to the village on Saturday and inspected the situation. The medical team initiated preventive measures to control the spread of the disease in the village, sources said further. It is pertinent to mention here that a five year old babyboy identified as Ganesh Munda, died of Encephalitis disease a few

Soil testing lab inaugurated

HT Correspondent

DEMOW, July 13: Sivasagar district commissioner Aditya Vikram Yadav inaugurated the Static Soil Testing, Quality Control, and Input Testing Laboratory at Rajmai on Saturday.

Devashree Diksha Sandilya, district media expert anchored in the programme. In the inauguration programme Asif Borah, district agriculture officer, Arundhati Bordoloi, Amrit Saikia, agriculture assistant director, Bhupen Das, agriculture executive engineer, agriculture department officials, local farmers, Dehingporia FPC officials along with

Women sent outside Assam in pretext of engagement

HT Correspondent

MORIGAON, July 13: The student body of Morigaon district stated that a group of miscreants has allegedly sent girls outside Assam by luring them of engagement at the proposed semi conductor plant at Jagiroad. According to the allegations the girls have been sent outside Assam for training prior engagement at the plant.

"The group of notorious persons has adopted unfair means in the name of engagement in the semi conductor project," the student body stated. The president and the secretary of the student's body have urged the administration to take exemplary punishment against the group of notorious persons who took advantage of the poor condition of the local girls. They alleged that the persons have been engaging them in private companies in Bengaluru, Karnataka in the name of training for engagement in the Semi Conductor Project. The students' body also alleged that the group has been sending the girls outside Assam by collecting money from them in the pretext of job verification.

Sonitpur district admin conducts eviction drive

HT Correspondent

TEZPUR, July 13: The district administration conducted an eviction drive at Poruwa Chariali daily Market area on NH-37 (A) under Mahabhairab Police outpost here recently. In the area many people have been occupying government land to set up business establishments. As reported, among the government land encroachers, one encroacher was running an ice cream factory (Mahi ice-cream factory) occupying a huge chunk of government land. Local indigenous people had been demanding the administration to free the area from the illegal occupation by the encroachers. However, on Friday morning an eviction team comprising officials from Tezpur Development authority, Tezpur revenue circle office, and police administration including Ratish Borah, circle officer, Madhurya Buragohain and supported CRPF's team conducted the drive and demolished the illegally set up Mahi Ice-cream's factory. District administration sources said that the eviction drive would continue to make the area free from the illegal settlers.



threatened with a hefty ransom of ₹ 30 lakh where he further revealed that the extortionists resorted to blackmail tactics, attempting to damage his reputation if he did not comply with their demands.

However, Gogoi displayed remarkable courage by refusing to cave in to their pressure and he reported the incident to the

"We believe in standing by our

caused unprecedented hardship,

and we expect that the continuous

efforts of the government and

public at large will help the com-

munities impacted by floods. We

urge the people and the organisa-

tions to stand together in this dif-

The Assam floods have

caused widespread destruction,

displacing thousands, and dam-

aging infrastructure across the

state. The Chief Minister's Re-

lief Fund is actively involved in

coordinating and distributing aid

to ensure timely and effective

assistance to those in need. Pur-

banchal Cement Ltd encourages

other businesses and individuals

to come forward and support the

relief efforts to help rebuild the

lives of the flood-affected com-

ficult times"

tember 22, 2023, and filed a formal FIR (First Information Report) and the police have since apprehended Ankur Gogoi, a significant development in the case.

Rupam Gogoi firm stance against extortion is a commendable example for other businessmen targeted by such nefarious elements at 83 number Margherita

Purbanchal Cement contributes NFR extends special train services



HT Bureau GUWAHATI, July 13: The NFR has decided to continue the service of special train between Guwahati

and Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra for six trips in both directions to clear the extra rush of passengers.

Accordingly, special train no

Vaishno Devi Katra) will continue with its services on July 15 and 22, August 12, 19 and 26 and Septem-

Guwahati at 11.20 pm on Monday to reach Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra at 8.45 pm on Wednesday. Similarly, special train no 04680 (Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra -Guwahati) will continue with its services on Friday, July 12, 19 and August 9, 16, 23 and 30.

The train will depart from Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Karta at 9.30 pm on Friday to reach Guwahati at .10 pm on Sunday. The train will have 18 sleeper coaches, 2 general coaches, 1 AC-2 tier cum AC-3 tier coach.

During it's both ways journey, the special train will run via Goalpara Town, New Cooch Behar, New Jalpaiguri, Katihar, Khagaria, Barauni, Chappra, Gorakhpur, Gonda, Bareily, Saharanpur, Ambala Cantt, Jalandhar Cantt, Jammu Tawi stations.

Guwahati Chapter of Young Indians achieving milestones IGF, SSB Guwahati attends Special

Young Indians focus on key areas such as accessibility, climate change, rural development

GUWAHATI, July 13: The Guwahati Chapter of Young Indians (Yi), under the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), is making significant strides in empowering the youth of North East India.

This dynamic chapter is providing a robust platform for young professionals and entrepreneurs to engage with critical issues affecting their region and the nation at large. Since its inception, the chapter has been actively working towards empowering the youth, promoting entrepreneurship, and driving positive change in the community.

Young Indians focus on key areas such as accessibility, climate change, rural development, sustainability, innovation, entrepreneurship, and leadership. The Guwahati Chapter exemplifies this mission through its various impactful initiatives.

The Yi Guwahati Chapter has worked closely with the department of youth affairs, Government of India, as part of the India's Youth 20 initiative. The chapter has also collaborated with the education department, Government of Assam, to host events and workshops focused on youth development Recently, the chapter organized a Cyclothon and walkathon on the International Day Against Drug Abuse & Illicit Trafficking in partnership with the Narcotics Control Bureau, Guwahati Unit. This event underscored



drug-free lifestyle. Additionally it has partnered with the transport department, Government of Assam, to promote road safety awareness and reduce accidents in the state. The chapter's iconic Chota Cop program has been instrumental in promoting road safety awareness in schools across Guwahati. By expanding their presence in local schools, they regularly organize field visits, providing students with practical industry exposure. This initiative ensures that students can apply their textbook knowledge to realworld scenarios, enhancing their learning

The Guwahati Chapter's activities have an underlying theme of equal opportunity. They focus on ensuring basic facilities for those in need and include specially challenged youth in every step of their programs. From organizing para games, kids got talent, excursions, awareness sessions, braille menu etc, the chapter consistently delivers on its promise to help youth grow and become

One of the chapter's notable social initiatives is the Masoom Awareness Session, where in members tirelessly work to create a safe and protected environment for children, by raising awareness and providing training on child sexual abuse and conducting workshops, training sessions, and awareness programs for children, parents, teachers, and caregivers, to educate them on the issue of CSA. The initiatives focus on topics such as recognizing signs of abuse, appropriate boundaries, and healthy relation-

Sainik Sammelan in Gossaigaon

HT Correspondent
GOSSAIGAON, July 13: Sudhir Verma, Inspector General of Fron-

tier, SSB Guwahati paid a familiarization visit at the 31st Battalion of SSB, Gossaigaon, demonstrating the ongoing commitment to attain operational excellence and ensure the well-being of the SSB personnel within the 31st Bn. SSB, Gossaigaon recently.

Verma, inaugurated a fitness park on the premises of 31 Bn SSB Gossaigaon and interacted with the officers and officials of the 31 Battalion SSB followed by Special Sainik Sammelan Verma, had dwelt at length at the various critical aspects of their operations, focusing on the challenges and achievements of the battalion and emphasized the importance of the roles and responsibilities of the SSB ensuring the highest standards of performance and se-

curity. Verma, also undertook a thorough review of the area of responsibility assigned to the 31 Battalion. This review included assessing the current security measures, operational readiness, and



logistical arrangements in place. Verma's visit provided an opportunity to highlight operational concerns and re-align strategies to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the SSB's mission in the region.

Verma, commended the officers and officials for their dedication at the India-Bhutan border uniting efforts to ensure the security and sanctity of the border areas. He acknowledged the challenges faced by the battalion and expressed his confidence in their ability to overcome these challenges through teamwork, vigilance, and commitment to duty.

Editor's pick

PM Modi's strategic visit

By: Kumardeep Banerjee

This week marked several high-profile meetings amongst senior leaders around the globe, discussing primarily various conflicts and possible outcomes. PM Narendra Modi, in his first state visit during his third stint, visited Russia and Austria. The State visit by the India PM was the first since the Ukraine war and underscores the primacy of Russia in India's state of af-

Meanwhile, all North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) leaders assembled in Washington DC to discuss global geopolitics. Ukraine and the Middel East featured prominently in all the discussions, even though the flavours were significantly different.

The India-Russia joint statement following President Putin and PM Modis' bilateral meetings read "The Sides highlighted the imperative of peaceful resolution of the conflict around Ukraine through dialogue and diplomacy including engagement between both parties. They noted with appreciation relevant proposals of mediation and good offices aimed at peaceful resolution of the conflict by international law and based on the UN Charter in its entirety and totality.

"Earlier, PM Modi during one of the televised speeches of the two leaders told his Russian counterpart "peace is of utmost importance" and solution to Ukraine could not be found on the battlefield. He expressed serious concern regarding the bombing of a children's hospital in Kyiv and said "When innocent children are murdered, one sees them die, the heart pains and that pain is

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, with whom PM Modi has had several telephone calls in the past, called the Russia state visit by India "a blow to peace efforts."

NATO Secretary General, Mr Stoltenberg in the run-up to the NATO summit said "Allies will agree a financial pledge for Ukraine", and that he also expects more immediate military sup-

Ukraine is moving closer to NATO ". The close relationship with NATO was one of the reasons Russia came marching into Ukraine. It was a tightrope walk for PM Modi, in Russia, given the relatively new strategic relationships, he has developed in his last decade of being at the helm, crucial among them being the India-US partnership.

It would be worth mentioning that In the wake of the war in Ukraine, India has not yet verbally criticised Russia, for its aggression and has also stayed away from multilateral resolutions against Moscow. In the first few months, of Russia's attack on Ukraine, several US top leaders had criticised India's stance re-

garding the war, and even a threat of sanctions was discussed. However, with deft diplomatic efforts made by both long-term partners, the high-decibel criticism was restricted to closed-door

PM Modi's state visit to Russia opened some of the past heartburn regarding Ukraine in Washington. US State Department spokesperson Mattew Miller said "US has raised concerns with India regarding its relationship with Russia".

He added "We would urge India, as we do any country when it engages with Russia, to make clear that any resolution to the conflict in Ukraine needs to be one that respects the UN charter, that respects Ukraine's territorial integrity," This comes at a time when the US has been seen to be one of the most important allies of India in the recent past.

Interestingly President Putin upon re-election chose to visit Beijing in one of his first official trips and followed it with a bilateral last week, on the sidelines of the SCO summit in Kazakhstan. China and Russia have mutually agreed to be friends without any limitations, and are widely seen as challengers to what they allege as the US-led democratic order. India and China are on an extremely rough patch due to the military aggression on India's bor-

India managed to walk the tight rope for now, but at some point of time it will have to balance it out with more actionable statements on world conflicts.(Courtesy: The Pioneer)

Five day week in banks. When?

¬he Indian Banks Association (IBA) and bank officers unions recently concluded deliberations around wage settlement. The proposal of five-day work week also found a mention in the joint note that was signed by them. The 9th Joint Note, signed on March 8, 2024, outlined these changes, designating all Saturdays as holidays once government approval is secured.

The Indian Bank Association (IBA) in December last year (2023) formally put forward a consideration to the Department of Financial Supervision, Ministry of Finance, for its approval and declaration for five-day banking and declaring all Saturdays as public holidays, given the working conditions and rising stress levels, along with increased automation and the availability of banking services 24×7 .

"In the settlement that was concluded in 2015, it was agreed that the second and fourth Saturdays of the month would be observed as bank holidays. You are well aware of the increasing stress under which the workforce in the banks are doing their job. Indian banks have adopted core banking solutions long back. Most of the transactions can be done online without visiting the bank branch. Practically there is no need for customers to visit a bank branch

Bank unions had written to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in February urging the implementation of five-day work week. The section 25 of the Negotiable Instruments Act mandates the government to declare every Saturday as a holiday. The government, owning public sector banks, has authority in this matter. It should be noted that this move not only improves work-life balance for employees but could also poten-

By: Vinod Chandrashekhar tially enhance efficiency and productivity within the banking

When a five-day week is adopted, various benefits accrue to the banks and the following are considered significant: Enhanced efficiency, Reduced absence rate, Enhanced enterprise competition, Retention of talents and Promotion of corporate image

Complete shutting of offices will also result in considerable savings on the cost of electricity etc. The following benefits may accrue to the employees also: Rest and recuperation leading to greater devotion, Enhance time with family, lesser travel to the office, the scope for further studies and improvement of knowledge. With increased holidays, people may travel more

and this will boost the economy. Indian Banks' Association (IBA) and bank unions signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in December last year, unions had urged implementation of a five-day work week within 180 days just like government offices, RBI offices and Life Insurance Corporation of India who work five days a

week The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) serves as India's central banking institution and plays a critical role in regulating and supervising the country's financial system. The RBI's regulation of banking hours is fundamental to maintaining a balance between efficient banking services and

the welfare of bank employees. The role of the government in this transition is pivotal. The proposal requires a nod from the Central Government and discussions with the RBI, which regulates banking hours and interbank operations. Banks on the other hand have been instrumental in India's economic stability since the pandemic and are waiting for a final stamp of approval on the 5-day workweek. (The author can be reached at dixitpatrakar@yahoo.in)

NATO: A history marked by conflict and controversy

the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) marked its 75th anniversary, touting its mission to uphold global peace. Despite these claims, NATO's history is marred by conflicts that span continents, driven by its quest for dominance. Following a lackluster showing in the presidential debate, President Joe Biden announced additional military aid to Ukraine. This move further embroils the small European nation in NATO's strategy to undermine Russia through proxy warfare. Additionally, NATO's ambitions extend to Asia, where it seeks to antagonize China into potential conflict.

Despite NATO's claims of promoting global peace, finding genuine examples of the alliance ensuring peaceful lives for ordinary people remains difficult. More often, NATO's actions align with its broader goal of maintaining supremacy through strategic alliances, often with questionable partners. NATO must be held accountable for its violations of international law and its repeated failures to protect unarmed civilians in almost every conflict it has been involved in since its inception. While NATO marked its 75th anniversary with much fanfare, mainstream media largely overlooked the 25th anniversary of NATO's intervention in Yugoslavia—an intervention that highlights the alliance's warcentric approach. June 10 commemorates the end of NATO's 78-day bombing campaign in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, an operation launched without UN Security Council approval.

NATO dropped 22,000 tonnes of bombs, including 15 tonnes of depleted uranium, resulting in over 2,500 deaths, including 79 children, and displacing more than a million people. The aftermath of the campaign saw longterm health and environmental consequences from the depleted uranium munitions. In the decade following the bombing, around 30,000 people in Serbia developed cancer, with over 10,000 fatalities. Studies have also shown increased cancer rates and other

dren born after 1999. Despite NATO claiming immunity based on agreements with Serbia and Montenegro, around 3,000 victims have filed lawsuits against

Serbian experts challenge NATO's claims of immunity, asserting that no agreements absolve the alliance from responsibility for past war crimes. NATO's attempts to avoid accountability only highlight its transgressions and the suffering inflicted on countless individuals. Since its inception, NATO's military interventions have often led to chaos and trauma rather than fostering peace and stability. One such instance is the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which ranged from April 1992 to December 1995 among the country's three **DEGREE OF THOUGHT** abrupt end with the withdrawal of

ethnic By: Dipak Kurmi US and NATO groups over their future and territorial divisions. Just before the conflict erupted, NATO quickly recognized Bosnia and Herzegovina's independence, intensifying the ethnic strife in the region. NATO then conducted extensive airstrikes against Bosnian Serb forces, ultimately pressuring the warring factions to sign the Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

main

As a result of the conflict, 278,000 civilians lost their lives, over 2 million people were displaced, and the war caused more than £5.1 billion in direct economic losses, with most economic facilities destroyed. The Kosovo War, fueled by ethnic tensions and spearheaded by USbacked NATO forces without UN authorization, spanned from March 24, 1999, to June 10, 1999. The three-month bombing campaign resulted in 1,800 civilian deaths, 6,000 injuries, and extensive infrastructure damage, leading to economic losses of £150 billion.

This marked NATO's first offensive war against a sovereign state without UN approval, signaling a shift towards a policy of interventionism and expansionism. NATO's actions breached in-

ternational law, including the UN Charter and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, by using force against Belgrade. Despite these violations, no NATO member has been fully held accountable for their actions. This stands in stark contrast to the swift retribution faced by figures like Saddam Hussein of Iraq, who was quickly hanged by Western forces, or Muammar Gaddafi of Libya, who was extra judicially killed—a moment infamously summarized by former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton with, We came, we saw, he died." In Afghanistan, the US-led NATO coalition initiated a war against al-Qaida and the Taliban on October 7, 2001, in response to the September 11 attacks. The twodecade-long conflict came to an

forces in May 2021. This war resulted in 241,000 deaths, including 71,000 civilians, and displaced millions of people.

The war inflicted severe economic losses, averaging about £45 million per day, and plunged Afghanistan into social chaos. Currently, 72% of the population lives below the poverty line, and 3.5 million children are deprived of education. A recent report from the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), released this Monday, disclosed alarming statistics: over 24% of Afghan children aged 5-17 suffer from anxiety, and 15% are afflicted by depression in this war-ravaged nation.

This is the legacy of those who promised to ensure peaceful lives under a rule-based system grounded in democratic principles. During this period, terrorist networks like the East Turkestan Islamic Movement and Al-Qaeda flourished, exacerbating regional instability. This destructive pattern continued in Iraq and Libya, where NATO interventions led to significant civilian casualties and enduring instability. NATO's actions have repeatedly destabilized peace and security, solidifying its image as a war machine rather moil, having misjudged Russia's resolve to protect its interests and overestimating its capacity to extend its military alliance to Russia's borders. The plan to inundate Ukraine with weapons for a quick triumph has backfired, as Russia has demonstrated formidable resilience in defense.

As the conflict prolongs, NATO member states grapple with rising costs and inflationary debt, while Ukraine exhausts its supply of combat-ready soldiers. Western leaders, heavily committed to the conflict, are increasingly losing confidence in Ukraine's ability to reclaim lost territories without escalating the situation and potentially involving NATO troops—a step that lacks public backing. Recently, Russia has made gradual territorial advances, progressing in the Kharkiv Oblast and forcing Ukrainian troops to withdraw from a neighborhood in Chasiv Yar, Donetsk.

Despite ongoing efforts, significant progress remains elusive. casting doubts on Russia's military capabilities. Ukraine, while struggling to hold its ground, has employed drones to target Russian ships, energy facilities, and border regions, resulting in casualties. Two and a half years into the conflict, neither side seems poised to achieve a decisive military victory. Ukraine faces formidable challenges in retaking occupied territories, while Russia's assertiveness has strengthened NATO's commitment, with long-term support pledged to Kyiv.

A viable resolution necessitates bringing both parties to the negotiating table. Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi have expressed support for dialogue. Allies of Russia should urge President Vladimir Putin to halt hostilities and engage sincerely in peace talks, while advocates for Ukraine should encourage Kyiv to consider diplomatic negotiations-despite NATO's firm opposition to this approach.

than a peacekeeping force. In Ukraine, NATO now faces tur
proach, a Trump victory could open avenues for a negotiated settlement, while a Biden re-election might extend the conflict, possibly turning Ukraine into another Afghanistan or Vietnam-like quagmire. Meanwhile, despite sanctions, Russia's economy has shown resilience, bolstered by robust trade partnerships with China and India.

Historians may interpret the US-led NATO expansion as a strategic misstep that prompted the formation of a counter-alliance among BRICS nations. President Xi Jinping views Putin as instrumental in opposing the United States and its allies, although a new Trump administration could potentially mitigate broader conflicts and mend relations with adversaries.

During the summit, news reports highlighted NATO and its ndo-Pacific partners—Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand—launching four collaborative projects aimed at strengthening cooperation. US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan announced these initiatives at the NATO Defence Industry Forum. Amidst the celebration of this military alliance, Asia faces the challenge of defending its interests against a coalition adept at using proxies to achieve its goals. This historical pattern echoes throughout significant episodes in history.

Asia must now prioritize cultivating strong trade partnerships and resolving territorial disputes through constructive dialogue, preempting external interference. History presents a clear lesson: either succumb to foreign ambitions, as witnessed in the tragedies following World War II, from Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, to ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan, Libya, and Syriaor choose to prosper together in dignified coexistence. The path to a peaceful future depends on a collective dedication to peace and a firm stance against NATO and its proxies. It's often wiser to deal with the known challenges than to risk uncertain alternatives. (The writer can be reached at di-

Europe is poised to enter a new period of confrontation between NATO and Russia

By: Nitya Chakraborty

urope has entered a dangerous pe-The summit of the 32 nation North Atlantic Treaty Organisation(NATO) held in Washington on July 9 to 11 has decided to pledge US \$43 billion worth of military aid to Ukraine next year and what is more, has declared their intention to admit Ukraine to NATO as a full member. Ukraine President Zelensky attended the summit hosted by US President Joe Biden.

The immediate upshot is that the current efforts of the United Nations for cease fire to stop massive destruction of lives and property in the country, will have no meaning as the rejuvenated Ukrainian president is going back to his country to be ready for intensifying the war efforts against the Russians bolstered by the granting of massive military aid from the NATO. Significantly, this year is the 75th year of NATO which was founded by the western nations in 1949 at the height of cold war between the United States and the then Soviet Union ruled by Joseph Stalin.

The Summit decisions have all the bearings of a belligerent West led by the USA to corner Russia in other areas of Europe including the present countries of east Europe. USA has been making efforts for military deployment in Germany on the plea that President Putin has imperial ambitions

nearby countries and that should be combated in collaboration with Germany. Acriod with all the potential of the 28 month old Ukraine war crossing the cordingly, the US and Germany in a joint statement announced that the US will deborder into other parts of the continent. ploy its military and long range cruise missiles in Germany as a deterrent. The phased deployment of these US missiles will start from 2026.

> All the decisions taken at the summit are meant to anger the Russian President Vladimir Putin who in the course of his discussions in the last two years made the point that Russia would never tolerate the NATO membership of Ukraine and President Zelensky was being egged by the USA and the other NATO nations to continue the war rejecting all the bilateral and multilateral negotiations on ceasefire.

Further, as regards deployment of long range US missiles in Germany, President Putin had conveyed earlier his strong objections to the American officials including the President Biden saying the US move would start the cold war again in new form. The plan to spend US\$ 43 billion in 2025 was proposed by NATO's outgoing Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at a foreign ministers' meeting in Prague in May. However, Stoltenberg had wanted NATO members to make a multi-year commitment to Ukraine in order to show Russia it cannot win the war by waiting for Western support to wither.

Instead, the funding will be reviewed next year. Ukrainian president recently complained that the western aid has slowed down and this is adversely affecting the capability of the Ukrainian military against the Russian attacks. The July 10 decision of the NATO summit was meant to appease the Ukrainian president that the western nations will not allow Ukraine to be defeated by the Russians. The summit declaration also says allies will continue to support Ukraine's "irreversible path to full Euro-Atlantic integration, including NATO membership." It affirms that "Ukraine's future is in NATO." However, the declaration also underscores that Ukraine can only join when all current members agree. The United States and Germany in particular are against rushing the process as per diplomatic sources But other NATO member states want to demonstrate that Russia cannot put the brakes on Ukraine joining NATO by waging war against the country.

It is recalled that NATO has accepted the idea of Ukrainian membership in principle since 2008, while Ukraine has had its NATO membership ambitions enshrined in its national constitution since 2019. Alongside the \$ 43 billion pledge, NATO leaders also agreed to launch a project for the training of Ukraine's military. Such move is taken for the first time. There are reports with Pentagon, that the Ukrainian military personnel could not use many sophisticated weapons supplied by the NATO countries due to lack of training in handling the high tech equipments. So now, the Pentagon experts will take a major re-

sponsibility in training the Ukrainian military. Sensing the urgency, the training project starts with immediate effect from

Interestingly, the summit declaration also calls on China to cease "all material and political support to Russia's war effort." China "cannot enable the largest war in Europe in recent history without this negatively impacting its interests and reputation," says the declaration. This has been stated knowing fully that at the recent summit, both President Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping have underlined their joint stand on the global issues and the need for taking joint approach.

President Putin has also got a fresh boost after the World Bank report stated that Russia has joined the high income group of nations like the USA defying all the economic sanctions that have been imposed on Russia in the last few years. President Putin is expected to expand the war in Ukraine in the wake of the NATO summit decisions. The situation may change in NATO position if Donald Trump wins in the presidential elections in November this year. His policy is to bring down the US share of military aid outside to the minimum. The maverick Republican is sure to dilute the role of NATO as president. But taking the situation as it stands today; the cold war environment has become hotter in Europe with NATO confronting a powerful economically strong Russia (IPA

In one week, Labour PM Starmer is positive on domestic front but following same policy on NATO

By: Ben Chacko

abour has spent its first week in power signalling ✓ a changed approach from the Tories — a national wealth fund for infrastructure projects, a reset to devolution with a new council of the regions.

In Washington Keir Starmer's purpose is different — to show his "cast-iron commitment" to continue the last government's subordination to US foreign policy, co-ordinated through the NATO military alliance. This was never in doubt — Starmer is merely affirming Britain's role in the US-led imperialist bloc as every postwar Labour prime minister has before him.

There are good reasons. though, to regard British foreign policy as every bit as disastrous as domestic policy in recent decades. On one level the Morning Star can agree with

Starmer's lines at the NATO its military than the next 10 "rules-based order" summit — yes, the world is getting more dangerous. Two current major wars, in Palestine and Ukraine, show a real capacity to expand into wider conflicts and drag in other powers.

Both relate, in different ways, to the major fault line in international relations, that between the US and the old European colonial powers on one side, and the rest of a world in which that transatlantic bloc carries less and less weight.

Starmer's speech, calling on NATO members to spend more on their militaries, follows the Western convention of presenting the alliance as guarantors of "rules-based international order" which is under threat from rising "authoritarian states.

In reality, the arms race is driven by NATO. Not only does the United States spend more on

countries put together, the NATO bloc taken together is responsible for 75 per cent of all military spending worldwide, though it comprises just 12 per cent of the world population and 30 per cent of its GDP.

Three-quarters of all arms spending is not, in Starmer's eyes, enough. Though Labour opts to stick to arbitrary Tory spending rules overall, it promises billions more for the military: raising the defence budget to 2.5 per cent of GDP entails a rise from £64.6bn to £87.1bn, a £22.5bn increase in spending annually. By contrast, axing the two-child benefit cap to lift hundreds of thousands of kids out of poverty is something Labour says it cannot afford: the Institute for Fiscal Studies estimates this would cost £3.4bn a year.

Nor can NATO's claim to spend this money defending a

scrutiny. Last month saw Julian Assange secure his freedom after years of persecution in British jails for exposing the war crimes of "the empire," as the US bloc is widely known in the global South.

Britain has been alongside the US in ripping up international law with wars of aggression against Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, conflicts whose consequences persist in ongoing conflicts and refugee crises

Today's militarism risks igniting a new world war with China, the principal economic and technological rival to the US. All in the name of upholding a global system of unfair trade treaties and unfettered corporate access to resources that keeps a majority of the human race in poverty is wrecking ecosystems at an accelerating rate and is destabilis-

ing the climate into the bargain. Nothing could be more important than stopping this war. Those who claim the troop build-ups are a deterrent ignore history, not just that of the first world war but recent history: Russia's invasion of Ukraine followed the expansion of NATO to its borders, its encirclement by US bases and a whole series of enormous NATO military manoeuvres the "Defender Europe" exercises — simulating war against it. Unsurprisingly, frightening Russia did not prevent war but provoked it, feeding a parallel rise in nationalist militarism there. The drive to World War III will not be challenged by the opposition Conservatives, or by more than a handful of MPs. But its consequences if unchallenged are unthinkable. So a real opposition must be built outside Westminster. (IPA Service)

Behind closed doors: The untold stories of hardworking men

By: Aubaid Ahmed Akhoon

The strength of a man is not in his physical might, but in his unwavering spirit to face challenges and provide for those he loves.

In a world where the clamor for gender equality often highlights the challenges faced by women, it is equally crucial to shine a light on the untold stories of men who tirelessly work behind the scenes. These men, who rise before dawn and return home only after the sun has set, carry immense burdens and responsibilities on their shoulders. This fatigue isn't a result of an inability to communicate or engage with others but stems from the relentless pressures of life that they face daily. Over time, these pressures mold them into men of action rather than words.

The relentless pressure of daily

Fyodor Dostoevsky, the Russian literary giant, captured the complexities of the human psyche with profound insight. Reflecting a mother's wisdom. Dostoevsky once noted, "My mother used to tell us that when your father comes home in the evening, bring a smile to his face because the outside world has become harsh for men." This advice underscores a significant truth: men encounter a harsh reality every day, one that demands strength, resilience, and often, silence. Unlike dreamers and dramatists, these men confront the bitter and demanding aspects of life head-on.

Understanding silent struggles It's crucial to acknowledge and understand the silent struggles these men endure. Their quiet demeanor and exhaustion are not signs of indifference but reflections of the heavy burdens they carry to provide and protect. Offering them a warm welcome and a bit of understanding can make a profound difference, providing a brief respite from the unyielding demands of their daily

The unspoken burden of pro-

Many working men bear the unspoken burden of being the primary providers for their families. This responsibility can be overwhelming, leading to significant stress and fatigue. The constant pressure to ensure financial stability and meet familial expectations can drain their energy and spirit.

The need for emotional support Emotional support from family members can significantly alleviate the stress experienced by these men. Simple gestures like a warm greeting, a listening ear, or a few words of appreciation can go a long way. Creating an environment

where they feel valued and understood can help them unwind and recharge

Balancing work and family life Balancing the demands of work and family life is a challenge for many men. The expectation to excel in their careers while being present and supportive at home can create a tug-of-war situation. Encouraging open communication and shared responsibilities within the family can help strike a balance, making it easier for men to manage their roles

both at work and at home. A call for compassion and understanding

In our fast-paced world, it's easy to overlook the quiet struggles of those who work tirelessly behind the scenes. Recognizing the efforts of these men and showing compassion can foster a supportive home environment. By acknowledging their sacrifices and providing emotional support, we can help them navigate the harsh realities they face daily with a bit more ease and

Echoes of perseverance: Bahadur Shah Zafar's wisdom

Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Mughal emperor and a poet-king, penned verses that spoke to the trials and triumphs of perseverance. His couplet, "Mehnat se hai azmat ke zamaane mein nageen ko Be kaawish-e-seena na kabhi naamuri



di" translates to "Greatness comes to the gem through hard work; without the struggle of the chest, it never gains fame."

This couplet resonates deeply with the essence of this discussion. It reflects the idea that true greatness and recognition are achieved through persistent effort and dedication. Just as a gemstone achieves its brilliance through rigorous polishing, men who face life's challenges with courage and perseverance ultimately earn honor and respect. Their silent struggles and sacrifices, often unseen, shape their character and define their journey towards fulfillment and achievement.

The silent sacrifices of men: An unspoken reality

Men's suffering often goes unnoticed and unacknowledged in our society. Their pain is usually internalized, unshared with even the anguish is a heavy burden to carry, as men find it challenging to express their emotions openly, often due to societal expectations and stereotypes

The invisible burden A man might be breaking down inside, yet he cannot easily seek solace in his mother's embrace, nor can he openly cry with his father. The societal norm that men must be strong and stoic leaves them isolated in their struggles. Despite enduring significant internal turmoil, a man will often mask his pain with a smile in the morning, joining his friends with a facade of cheerfulness. His nights might be filled with silent battles, his tears unseen, and his heart heavy with unfulfilled de-

The unseen warrior Men's sacrifices are vast and var-

ied, spanning the roles of a son,

husband, father, and brother. Each The societal pressure to be the unrole comes with its unique set of challenges and expectations. As sons, they carry the hopes and dreams of their parents. As husbands, they bear the responsibility of being providers and protectors. As fathers, they are seen as the rock for their children, always dependable and unyielding. As brothers, they are expected to be the pillar of support in their siblings' lives.

These roles require constant selfsacrifice, often going unnoticed and unappreciated. A man's dedication and commitment are immense, as he continuously puts the needs of others above his own. This relentless sacrifice can sometimes lead to a gradual erosion of his spirit, but still, he persists, driven by a sense

of duty and love. The silent struggle

Even in the company of friends, where one might expect a release, men often keep their struggles hidden. The culture of masculinity disemotional courages open expression, leading many to suffer in silence. Instead of seeking help, they may turn to quiet reflection or private coping mechanisms, like contemplating their unfulfilled desires and whispering prayers of strength.

Despite the emotional turmoil, men are expected to present a cheerful and composed exterior. wavering pillar of strength can be overwhelming, leading to an internal conflict between their true emotions and the persona they are expected to maintain.

Recognizing and valuing their sacrifice

Understanding and acknowledging the silent sacrifices men make can lead to a more empathetic and supportive society. Encouraging open dialogue about emotions and mental health can help dismantle the harmful stereotypes that prevent men from seeking the help they need. Recognizing their struggles and offering support can alleviate some of the burdens they carry.

Men's sacrifices are boundless, and their strength lies not in their silence but in their ability to endure and persist despite the challenges. By fostering a culture of empathy and understanding, we can ensure that their silent battles are no longer fought alone, and their contributions are valued and celebrated.

"A real man is one who rises to the challenge of making a difference in the lives of those around him, not for recognition, but out of love and duty." (The author is a columnist, motivational speaker, and Associate Editor of Weekly 'Education Quill'. He can be reached akhoon.aubaid@gmail.com)

Form-16 festivities



By: Kamal Baruah

t was short but a threatening text, while a recent SMS on Lthe first week of July to our mobile devices, had woken up individual taxpayers across India, reminding to file essential ITR before 31st July to avoid last week rush. Alas! Text message alerts kept notifying us for several reminders on every alternate

As a result, there are a hives of activities in the financial institutions. Tax consultants are in their heyday during the July, assist filing ITR for a lot of taxpayers as July 31st deadline set by Income Tax Department, whose accounts are not required to be audited. Besides all supports from CAs. one can easily get personalized care from Income Tax helpdesk during this month.

As usual, there is a hectic business schedule in the morning hours at banks; but bankers are astounded to see the large number of customers especially senior citizens arrive at a bank, who are in need of statement. There are so many economic jargons used by a particular group of people, especially in this July and which most other people do not understand.

Customers demand a series of services from annual statements to statements of earned interest. Banks keep an eye on the whole customer journey to offer real time help.

Besides, there are demands of Form No 16, 16A, 16B, Part-A, Part-B, Traces, TDS, Income Tax, Advance Tax, Self-Assessment Tax, Challan No ITNS 280 and whatever else one like to call it, customer care professionals need to listen, more than ever, in fact, they lend them their ears for how better listening that can win and keep customers. That makes it critically important to attract new customers and retain existing ones.

In spite of the fact that people have a negative view of the banking sectors because banks have projects that take years to reach fruition. Sometimes, employees sitting at their desks fail to build that relationship with each customer that walks through the door. After all, we live in age of ecommerce.

Young customers may think they want an all-digital world, but senior citizens actually don't, branches remain key to personal engagement and emotional connection with customers.

Despite the availability of various Apps for integrated banking solution, dedicated website for pensioners and WhatsApp banking services, there has been a much higher footfall in this July.

They demand everything from banks to ensure a hassle-free smooth tax filing ITR process at tax consultants as determining which ITR to choose can be challenging and also ensuring accuracy and compliance is crucial.

Besides there are demands of bank statements/passbooks for interest on a savings account and fixed deposits as compelled by tax consultants? Though bank statements collected by visiting bank are chargeable, customers don't mind pay bank charge fees.

Now most of the financial institutions provide interest paid /accrual, total / overhead tax deducted certificate (Form 16B) in one downloaded page. Part-A of Form 16 which contains details of tax deducted and deposited by the employer can be downloaded from TRACES, a centralized processing cell, by deductor for a given TAN, PAN and Financial Year. However, Part-B of Form 16 contains details of the salary and deductions of the employees.

There are even demands of Form 26AS (Annual Tax Statement) from the financial institutions, which is a summary of taxpayer's information provided by the Income Tax Department. It shows details of tax deducted on your behalf by deductors, details on tax deposited by taxpayers and tax refunds received in the financial year. This form can also be accessed from the Income Tax Department's website.

Customers have high expectation for their single window counters, where all facilities should be available in one place. What comes across in our day to day banking is a great sense of humors and happiness too.

We share at leisure time. Unfortunately, banks are even trolled for infamous lunch break. Should they work through or take a break? The other day one senior citizen was in rather a hurry at my desk on the very afternoon after lunch enquiring his Form No 16.

Soon I served him quickly; the next need for filing ITR to be done at my desk itself. Unfortunately, that was not available in banks. Probably, he heard of single window service at banks and definitely came his anticipation. As the trust is the most important aspect of banking.

The festive time isn't over until we make to ensure customers satisfied, delighted across all interactions. All types of Form 16 and related documents finally head to Income Tax Return. Come this July and join the ITR festivities. Worsening flood situation may put a damper on the activities of ITR, but you don't expect a deadline extension from our Madam Finance Minis-

Let's join the group of IT Department's Proud Filer Badge before deadline to avoid various penalties for late filing Income Tax Return for the FY 2023-2024. That would surely provide financial institutions some respite after the Form-16 Festiv-

SHORT STORY

By: Dr. Suman <u>Bharali</u>

rilson was an eighteen years old lad who lived in a village called Mediville. He was the son of a peasant. Wilson was three years old when his parents left this world. Thereafter, Solomon, his father's close friend took care of him. Wilson was told that his parents died in an epidemic which spread in the village fifteen years

Wilson was tall, well-built and strong. His eyes were bright and sharp. Shoulders were broad, chest muscular and fist was like stone. He was confident and brave. Once he killed a wolf which killed many cattle in the village. He was called "Boss of the street" by his friends and people of the village as he feared nothing and was righteous.

One day, Wilson was roaming in the street with his friends. They saw a giant cloud of dust at a distance. They rushed towards it and saw that the convoy of a Royal Minister was approaching them. Knowing about it everyone cleared the street and rushed inside home leaving what they were doing and dropping whatever they had in their hands.

Nearby them some children were playing. When the chariot approached near the children started running away. But a threeyear old child fell on the ground. The minister's convoy was advancing with the speed of an arrow. Seeing this Wilson jumped grabbed the child and dived away from the road. Then he shouted at the convoy which passed by just in that moment.

"Hey! Are you blind?" The chariot stopped abruptly making sharp sound by its wheels

and raising a huge amount of dust. The minister looked back and inquired.

"Who dared to shout at me like that? Come forward."

Fulfil if you promise "I." Replied Wilson with a bold voice. Stepping forward.

"Don't you know who I am? The minister asked. "I know you very well, you royal dogs." Wilson replied with

"You leave no chance to exploit us and don't have any regard for our lives." Wilson continued.

Hearing it the minister felt hu-

miliated and shouted back. "You creeping snail, from where did you get this courage to

stop and insult me like this?" "Soldiers cut him into pieces and feed to the dogs." The minister ordered his accompanying

guards. "Come on. I am not afraid of barking dogs." Wilson challenged them back.

Keeping the child at a safe distance he advanced towards them. The soldiers were armed with swords and Wilson was empty handed. No one dared to interfere in the fight. Everybody was looking through the windows of the

surrounding houses. As a soldier ran towards him to attack, Wilson gave him a strong kick on the ribs. The soldier fell on the ground and couldn't stand up again. Wilson picked his sword and started fighting with other soldiers ferociously. After about ten minutes all the soldiers were lying on the ground moaning. Seeing this, the minister started fleeing away with his chariot.

While leaving he warned. "I will not leave you. You have to pay the price for this." What will you do? I fear no-

body." Wilson shouted back. "You will repent for what you have done. Be ready to face the consequences." Replied the minister and faded away.

The people came out of the houses and gathered around Wilson. They started to tell him that he should not have offended the minister. It will be considered as a treason. He should have kept

quiet like all others. They were afraid of the punishment they have to face for the mishap.

"Don't be afraid nothing will happen to anybody till I am here. Living without freedom is like death. All should have the courage to stand against injustice and speak without fear. Go and do your routine works. I am here; you need not have to worry."Wilson replied and gave courage to the people.

Gradually, everybody returned to their places and started their works again.

The evening passed calmly. Everybody was a little anxious and anticipating some bad retaliation. As the night passed by people fell asleep due to fatigue of the day labours. Wilson was awake till late but he also fell asleep eventually.

In deep sleep Wilson heard loud screaming and movements all around. He woke up, jumped off his bed and went out of his house. A cold chill passed through his spine and he become stiff when he saw the scenario outside. The whole village was is fire. All the houses and shops were gutted. People and cattle were running here and there shouting. Some people were carrying water; some lying in the ground fainted, some holding their children tight. Some people were burnt inside their house while in sleep.

He rushed to save a person inside a burning house. After taking

him out, he ran towards another. But how many can he save. All the people he knew were in danger. His neighbours, relatives, friends, everyone. While taking out a child from a burning house a large piece of burning wood fell on his head and he became unconscious.

When he woke up, he saw he was lying on ground safe but surrounded by people all around. As soon as he gained consciousness, people started to accuse and abuse him.

"Look what have you done? Who asked to show your brav-

"The whole village is turned into a graveyard because of you." "We lost everything. Where will we go now? What will we do At distance people were

screaming and crying as they lost their family members and near ones. All around was ash and smoke. The night sky was full of smoke and the air smelled of burning flesh

"We all had to face the consequence of your deeds. Who asked you to pick a fight with the Royal minister?" Asked a man grabbing his collar and shaking him vio-

"Because of you we lost our children, spouse, house and all our assets. Bring them back shouted a woman beating his

The pushed them aside and sat on the ground.

"Please be quiet. My head will burst out." He held his head and shouted.

"I know it all happened because of me. I take full responsibility of what happened. I will do what I can. I will avenge every life lost and they have to pay for everything that is lost. I promise in front of you all, till I don't kill all the Royal people responsible for this massacre, I will not take rest or return to this village."

He got up and started walking away from the village slowly dragging his feet. He went into the forest nearby. Not knowing where he wants to go or what he intends to do. A few minutes later, he heard footsteps follow-

He stopped and looked back. He saw some of his friends were following him.

When they saw he was looking at them. They spoke

You are not alone friend. We all are with you."

'No, no, please leave me alone. I have already done too much damage to the village. I don't want to bring more misfortune to your lives. Let me go. You return back to the village and your families. They need you." Replied

"Do you consider us as your friend?" Asked one of them.

You think we are opportunistic. We are friends in good times as well as bad times. Friends share everything. That's what you always say." Said another friend. "We will stick together till the

end. You can't leave us nor will we leave you alone." Said another one.

"What you did was right. We should have supported you. But we are ashamed that we did not have the courage to fight along with you earlier. We have suffered a lot. Now no more. Either we will live with full freedom or we will die fighting." Said one of them. (...To be continued in the next edition)

POETRY

Essay On Flood

Original: Assamese: Mowsam Hazarika Translated by: Dr. Birendra Sarma

We are captived in the shelter camp.

We are all captived by flood of Luit.

Somebody gives relief

bread, biscuits and loaves.

The reporters are taking photographs Only the belly is burning in hunger. A helicopter is flying in the sky

Someone observes the uniform flood.

The review of officer is going on But there is cry of distress amongst the people.

Lot of rains of assurance are falling But sleep slips away in the

The burning of mind is extinguished in the mind itself The tears of eyes are also dried up in the eyes.

There will be silts of pain and agony. We shall again be captived in that silt The speed of life will also be reduced.

The flood will recede after some days

When Dying Rivers Rage...

By: Bipul Chandra <u>Kalita</u>

Silence snaps ties with tolerance when dying rivers rage. Raise unasked questions on the rationals' idiotic irationality And, show their displeasure on their inno-

cent dependents!

Their greedy killers have nothing to do with man's bond with nature: Ultramodern civility has

changed their outlook, And the green growers have to die repeatedly with the dying rivers...

I am dying with the

deads every year,

Shedding tears of sweat, blood and broken dreams; Wealthy dreamers smash

my sweetest dreams To multiply their luxur-Applying their tricks to wash my brain and balm

my pain...

This Is God's **Destiny**

By: Otteri Selva Kumar

Poverty here It's because of living Some people prosper here They are living For laborer In sweat exploitation Green Bleeding Some are exploiting Poverty is fat like that Picking up What to do with this rich class? And that God Couldn't do one thing By the laws here, Nothing could be done Here is God's destiny

Orphaning the poor Hand Folded Mouth Rich class Having fun

Laughing at the same time!!!

An Israeli attack targeting head of Hamas' military wing kills at least 71 in southern Gaza Strip JERUSALEM July 13: Israel hiding for more than two

said it targeted Hamas' shadowy military commander in a massive strike in the southern Gaza Strip that killed at least 71 people, according to local health officials.

It was not immediately known whether Mohammed Deif was among the dead. But Israeli officials confirmed that he and a second Hamas commander, Rafa Salama, were the targets.

Deif is believed by many to be the chief architect of the Oct. 7 attack that killed some 1,200 people in southern Israel and triggered the Israel-Hamas war. He has topped Israel's most-wanted list for years and is believed to have escaped multiple Israeli assassination attempts in the past. His potential killing threatens to derail cease-fire talks and would be seen as a major Israeli victory in the nine-month campaign.

Hamas rejected the claim. "This is not the first time that the occupation has claimed to target Palestinian leaders, and their lies were later proven to be false," the group said in a post on X.

Jihad Taha, a Hamas spokesperson, added that the claims Deif was the target of the strike is a "baseless statement" and "comes in the context of justifying and covering up the crimes and mas-

The Gaza Health Ministry said at least 289 others were injured in the attack and that many of the injured and dead were taken to



nearby Nasser Hospital.

At the hospital, Associated Press journalists counted over 40 bodies and witnesses there described an attack that included several strikes.

Footage of the aftermath showed charred tents, burnt-out cars and household belongings scattered across the blackened earth as emergency workers and Palestinians displaced by the nine-month war searched for survivors. Amid the smoke and wreckage, some used carpets to carry the bodies.

Witnesses said the strike landed inside Muwasi, the Israeli designated safe zone that stretches from northern Rafah to Khan

The coastal strip is where hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians have fled to in search

of safety, sheltering mostly in

"This was designated as a safe zone filled with people from the north," said one displaced Palestinian man who did not give his name. "Children were killed and we had to gather their body

According to an Israeli official, the strike was carried out within a fenced area of Khan Younis that was run by Hamas, but did not elaborate on the precise location.

The latest deadly strike comes as U.S., Egyptian and Oatari mediators continue to push to narrow gaps between Israel and Hamas over a proposed deal for a threephase cease-fire and hostage release plan in Gaza.

Mohammed Deif has been in

and is believed to be paralyzed after surviving multiple assassination attempts

One of the only known images of the man is a 30-year-old ID photo released by Israel, and even in Gaza, only a handful of people would recognize him.

The U.S.-backed proposal calls for an initial cease-fire with a limited hostage release and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from populated areas in Gaza.

At the same time, the two sides will negotiate the terms of the second phase. Phase two is supposed to bring a full hostage release in return for a permanent cease-fire and complete Israeli withdrawal from Gaza.

Israel launched its campaign in Gaza after Hamas' Oct. 7 attack in which militants stormed into southern Israel, killed some 1,200 people — mostly civilians — and abducted about 250.

Since then, Israeli ground offensives and bombardments have killed more than 38,300 people in Gaza and wounded more than 88,000, according to the territory's Health Ministry. The ministry does not distinguish between combatants and civilians in its

More than 80% of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been driven from their homes, and most are now crowded into squalid tent camps, facing widespread hunger.

Rescuers recover body of Indian from two buses swept away in mudslide in Nepal

KATHMANDU, July 13: Rescuers in Nepal on Saturday recovered the body of a 40-year-old Indian national working in this country, the first from two buses that were swept by a mudslide into a rain-swollen river with more than 50 passengers a day earlier.

The two buses carrying 54 passengers, including seven Indians, went missing in the Trishuli River in the landslides at the Simaltal area along the Narayanghat-Mugling road in Chitwan district on Friday. Three people swam to safety later.

The first body from the buses has been recovered from 50 km away from the accident site. The deceased was identified as Rishi Pal Shahi from India, police

The body was found half covered by sand in the Narayani River of Chitwan district, police said, adding that he was carrying an In-

Other missing Indian nationals are earlier identified as Santosh Thakur, Surendra Sah, Adit Miyaan, Sunil, Shahnawaj Alam, and Ansari.

There were 24 people including seven Indian nationals on board a bus heading towards Kath-

mandu from Birguni and another bus heading to Gaur from Kathmandu was carrying 30 local people. The two buses fell into the river as the landslide accompanied by muddy water, triggered by heavy rain, swept them

According to Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) and Chitwan District Police Office spokesperson Bhesh Raj Rijal, the deceased Indian national was a passenger of the bus which was heading to Gaur from Kathmandu, MyRepublica news portal reported.

Shahi was originally from the Rajmunuwa area of Bihar's Motihari city and used to live and work in Vepal, the report said, quoting his brother.

Rescuers assisted by divers from Nepal's security forces on Saturday resumed the search for the missing persons. Earlier, it was reported that more than 60 peo-

The Nepali Army, Nepal Police and armed police personnel along with deep divers are being mobilised to resume the search operation, according to the Nepal

The Armed Police Force (APF) deployed a water drone to find the missing buses in the Trishuli River, MyRepublica reported.

DSP Shailendra Thapa, co-spokesperson of APF, said that a search operation has been resumed by using a sonar camera through pipeline inspection.

More than 500 security personnel are involved in the search operations, according to the police official.

The search operation was stopped on Friday evening as it was not possible to work during the night with high water current coupled with muddy water, the police official said.

The search operation resumed at 8 am Saturday.

"All possible locations will be searched and we will put all our best efforts into search and rescue." he said.

Nepal is one of the world's most vulnerable countries to the climate crisis and has witnessed multi-

ple extreme weather events over the past decade and a

Evidence suggests that maximum temperatures in Nepal are rising faster, at 0.056 degrees Celsius a year, compared to the global average rise of 0.03 degrees Celsius a year, The Kathmandu Post newspaper reported.

Experts say extreme weather events-excessive rainfall in a short period, continuous rains for several days after the monsoon, dry spells, droughts, below-average precipitation, and above-normal winter temperatureshave become more frequent in Nepal.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority estimates that 1.81 million people and 412,000 households will be affected by monsoon this

North Korea threatens to boost nuke capability in reaction to US-South Korea deterrence guidelines



SEOUL, July 13: North Korea threatened Saturday to boost its nuclear fighting capability and make the US and South Korea pay "an unimaginably harsh price" as it slammed its rivals' new defence guidelines that it says reveal an

intention to invade the North. On Thursday, President Joe Biden and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol authorised the signing of joint nuclear deterrence guidelines as part of efforts to enhance their capabilities to cope with North Korea's growing nuclear arsenal.

The guidelines were adopted a year after the two countries established a consultation body to bolster information-sharing on nuclear operations and discuss how to integrate US nuclear weapons and South Korean conventional weapons in contingen-

In a statement carried by state media. North Korea's Defence Ministry said the US-South Korea guidelines betrayed "their sinister intention to step up their preparations for a nuclear war against" North Korea.

The statement said its enemies' escalating nuclear threats urgently require North Korea to further improve its nuclear deterrent readitant elements to the composition of the deterrent". It said the US and South Korea will "pay an unimaginably harsh price" if they fail to stop provocative acts.

Details of the US-South Korean guidelines weren't available, but experts say they are largely about how the two countries would integrate US nuclear weapons and Korean conventional weapons to respond to various potential contingencies caused by North Korean attacks and provo-

Experts say the US and South Korea are expected to map out detailed concept and operation plans based on the guidelines and review them via bilateral military exercises.

The guidelines are the first of kind between the allies. The US has repeatedly promised to use all its military capabilities to protect South Korea if it is attacked by North Korea, but many experts in South Korea believe the US lacks plans on how it would implement its extended deterrence to its ally. South Korea has no nuclear weapons.

North Korea has argued it was forced to pursue nuclear weapons with US-led nuclear threats. US and South Korean officials have steadfastly said they have no intention of attacking North Korea.

Concerns about North Korea's nuclear program have grown in recent years as the North has performed a slew of provocative missile tests and openly threatened to use nuclear weapons preemptively in potential conflicts with its adversaries. (AP)

Former Pak PM Imran Khan acquitted in illegal marriage case;

to remain behind bars after his arrest in three more cases

Biden signs into law bill enhancing US support for Tibet

WASHINGTON, July 13: President Joe Biden has signed into law a bill which enhances US support for Tibet and promotes dialogue between China and the Dalai Lama toward a peaceful resolution of the dispute over the status and governance of the remote Himalayan region.

China had opposed the Resolve Tibet Act and described it as a destabilising Act. The Act was passed by the House of Representatives last February and it cleared the Senate in "Today. I have signed into

law S. 138, the "Promoting a Resolution to the Tibet-China Dispute Act" (the "Act"). I share the Congress's bipartisan commitment to advancing the human rights of Tibetans and supporting efforts to preserve their distinct linguistic, itage," Biden said on Friday in a late-night statement.

"My Administration will continue to call on the People's Republic of China to resume direct dialogue, without



preconditions, with the Dalai Lama, or his representatives, to seek a settlement that resolves differences and leads to a negotiated agreement on Tibet," Biden said.

The 14th Dalai Lama fled Tibet in 1959 and came to India where he set up the government-in-exile Dharamshala in Himachal

From 2002 to 2010, the Dalai Lama's representatives and the Chinese government that did not produce any concrete outcome.

China views the 89-yearold Tibetan spiritual leader, who is based in India, as a "separatist" who is working to

split Tibet from the rest of the country.

The Act does not change longstanding bipartisan US policy to recognise the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas of China as part of the People's Republic of China (PRC) -- a policy decision that Biden said falls within his authority to recognise foreign states and the territorial bounds of such states.

The Act enhances US support for Tibet— empowering actively and directly counter disinformation about Tibet from the Chinese government.

It rejects false claims that Tibet has been part of China since "ancient times," pushing for negotiations without preconditions between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama or his representatives or the democratically elected leaders of the Tibetan community and affirming the State Department's responsibility to coordinate with other governments in multilateral efforts toward the goal of a negotiated agreement on Tibet.

In June, China had opposed the bill. "Anyone or any force who attempts to destabilise Xizang to contain or suppress China will not succeed." Chiforeign ministry spokesman Lin Jian told reporters in Beijing. "The US should not sign the

bill. China will take resolute measures to defend its sovereignty, security and development interests," he said.

partment imposed visa restrictions on several Chinese officials for their involvement in the repression of marginalised religious and ethnic

Teenage boy charged with assault, threats to kill after UK gurdwara attack

LONDON, July 13: A 17-year-old boy arrested after two women were injured in an attack with a "bladed weapon" on a UK gurdwara has been charged with multiple offences, including assault and threats to kill, on Saturday.

Investigators from the Kent and Essex Serious Crime Directorate charged the boy, who cannot be named as a minor, over what the local police is referring to as a "disturbance" at Sri Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara in Gravesend, south-east England, on Thursday evening. The gurdwara, one of the largest outside India, said it is cooperating with the investigation and stated that 'Guru Granth Sahib Ji' was not present in the Darbar Hall at the time of the incident.

"On Saturday 13 July, a 17-year-old boy was charged by investigators from the Kent and Essex Serious Crime Directorate, with assault occasioning actual bodily harm, using or threatening unlawful violence, threats to kill, threatening a person with a bladed weapon and possessing a bladed article in a

public place," the Kent Police said in a statement. According to local reports, the boy who has been remanded in custody to appear before Maidstone Crown Court was living with a Sikh family in the area and suffering from some mental health issues.

"We understand local people's concerns about this incident which we are treating as isolated. Our patrols will remain in the area for reassurance and we would like to thank the community for their continued support and assistance," said Chief Superintendent Angie Chapman, North Kent Divisional Commander.

The police said the "disturbance" took place inside the premises of the gurdwara and the two women who suffered cuts and bruises were "assaulted" outside the building shortly afterwards.

"Officers attended the scene where a local teenage boy was arrested. Nobody was seriously injured during the incident and the constables recovered a bladed weapon," the police added.

UK Security Minister Dan Jarvis said he was being kept updated about the attack. "All communities must be safe in their places of worship," he added.

"Distressed to learn of stabbing attack at Gravesend Gurdwara, where I've worshipped on many occasions. Government must do more to tackle such anti-Sikh hate crimes, because Gurdwaras are supposed to be our peaceful place for prayer, refuge and reflection," said his Labour Party colleague and British Sikh MP

Taiwan steps up alertness after detecting test-firing by China's missile unit

TAIPEI, July 13: Taiwan's Defence details on the tests taken by the force, Ministry said on Saturday it was monitoring "waves of test-firing" by China's missile unit in a region more than 1.600 kilometres (1.000 miles) from the self-ruled island and that its air force stepped up its alertness.

China views the democratic island as a breakaway province that should be reunified with the mainland.

According to Taiwan's military news agency, the ministry had detected "multiple waves of test-firing operations" by China's Rocket Force in Inner Mongolia on Saturday. It did not give

which takes charge of China's arsenal of missiles.

It is not immediately clear whether the tests were related to China's harassment of Taiwan. In recent years, China has ramped up its military activities around the island, which is ruled by the Democratic Progressive Party. In May, Taiwan's newly elected Pres-

ident Lai Ching-te said in his inauguration speech that he wants peace with China and urged it to stop its military threats and intimidation of the island. China's military has displayed a strong show of force toward Taiwan since Wednesday, when the US new top envoy to Taipei promised that Washington would help the island defend itself.

Taiwan's Defence Ministry said Thursday it had detected 66 warplanes around the island and that dozens flew across the median line in the Taiwan Strait, the de facto boundary between the two sides.

On Saturday, 30 warplanes also were detected around Taiwan over a 24-hour period with 20 crossing the median

Britain's Princess of Wales to make rare public appearance at Wimbledon men's final

Pakistani court on Saturday acquitted jailed former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi in the un-Islamic marriage case, the only case keeping the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party founder behind bars since August last year.

ISLAMABAD, July 13: A

However, barely an hour after his acquittal in the case, an antiterrorism court in Lahore approved the request to arrest the PTI leader in three cases linked to the unprecedented May 9 riots following his arrest in an alleged corruption case.

The PTI called his latest arrest a "gimmick to keep the illegal imprisonment prolonged". On February 3 -- days before the general elections on February 8 -- an Islamabad court convicted the couple based on a complaint filed by Bushra Bibi's ex-husband, Khawar Fareed Maneka, who alleged that they contracted marriage during

the former first lady's Iddat pe-

In Islam, a woman can't remarry before completing four months after divorce or the death of her husband.

The couple had challenged the sentence in a district and session court of the capital Islamabad where Additional Dis-Sessions

Judge the case. T h

the judgment in the afternoon after reserving the

verdict earlier in the day, acquitting Khan, 71 and Bushra, "If they are not wanted in any

other case, then PTI founder

Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi

quittal in the cipher case. cricketerturnedpolitician been

should be released [from jail]

immediately," the judge said

But it was not clear if he

would be released. However, it

was the only case for which

Khan was in jail after the

Toshakhana corruption case

sentence was suspended and ac-

after accepting their appeals.

since Auyear after he was sentenced in h

behind bars

elections.

that they married without her observing the mandatory waiting period of Iddat. He asked the court to declare the marriage null and void. Khan and Bibi become prime minister.

oped affection for each other during their meetings. She got divorced from her husband of 28 years with whom she had five children.

were fake and he will also get justice in all other cases," he said, demanding that Imran Khan should be freed as it was the last case in which he was convicted. (PTI)

LONDON, July 13: Britain's Princess of Wales, Kate Middleton, will make a rare public appearance amid ongoing cancer treatment to present the winning trophy at the men's tennis single's final of the Wimbledon Championships in London, her Kensington Palace office announced on Saturday.

The senior royal, herself a tennis player, will attend the final of the tournament on Sunday in her role as Patron of the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club since 2016. She will then present the Grand

Slam trophy to either Novak Djokovic or Carlos Alcaraz after their much-anticipated clash on the grass court. "The Princess of Wales, Patron of

the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club will attend the Gentlemen's Singles Final of The Championships, Wimbledon on Sunday 14th July," Kensington Palace said in a



going preventative chemotherapy following a cancer diagnosis. Last month, she attended King Charles III's annual birthday parade, known as Trooping the Colour, where she joined her father-in-law, husband Prince William and their three children -Prince George, Princess Charlotte and Prince Louis – on the Buckingham Palace balcony for the customary photograph.

It was her first official royal engagement since abdominal surgery earlier in the year and her social media revelation of a diagnosis of an undisclosed form of cancer in March.

Ahead of the appearance in early June, she issued a statement to stress that she plans to take things slow to give her body time to heal. She said at the time: "As anyone

going through chemotherapy will know, there are good days and bad days," she said, adding her treatment is ongoing and will be for a few more months. "I am learning how to be patient, especially with uncertainty. Taking

each day as it comes, listening to my body, and allowing myself to take this much needed time to heal." While she is on the tennis court in

London, Prince William will be flying to Berlin to watch England take on Spain in the finals of Euro 2024 in Germany.

In his role as President of the Football Association (FA), the 42-year-old Prince of Wales has been cheering the England football team, known as the Three Lions, through the tournament in which they made it to their first Euros final on foreign soil earlier this week. (PTI)





Toshakhana corruption case and subsequently sentenced in other cases ahead of the February 8

Bibi's ex-husband, Maneka, filed the case against the couple in November 2023, alleging married in 2018, the year Khan went on to win elections and Bibi was ostensibly his spiritual guide but the two devel-

She is the third wife of Khan, a former cricketing hero, who during his heydays of sporting career had a playboy reputation. PTI chief Gohar Khan welcomed the verdict and said it was a victory for the independent judiciary. "All these cases

> It will mark only the second official public appearance since the 42-yearold princess revealed she was under

India's overall SDG score increased to 71 in 2023-24, compared to 66 in 2020-21

Nagaland ranked among 3 worst performing states in SDG index



HT Correspondent

DIMAPUR, July 13: Nagaland topped Goal 5 (Gender Equality) with a score of 74 but was ranked among the three worst-performing states, along with Bihar and Jharkhand, in NITI Aayog's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) India Index 2023-24 released on Friday.

Uttarakhand and Kerala have emerged as joint top performing states with a score of 79, followed by Tamil Nadu (78) and Goa (77). Bihar (57), Jharkhand (62) and Nagaland (63) were the worst performing states.

Among the union territories, Chandigarh, Jammu and Kashmir, Puducherry, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Delhi were the top five performers. SDG India Index 2023-24 was released by NITI Aayog vice chairperson Suman Bery. India's overall SDG score increased to 71 in 2023-24, compared to 66 in 2020-21, supported by significant progress on eliminating poverty, providing decent work, economic growth, climate action and life on land, according to the NITI Aayog's SDG India Index The index shows that out of the 16 goals,

India's overall score is below 50 only on the 'Goal 5' (gender equality). According to the report, all states have shown an improvement in overall score. Scores for states ranged from 57 to 79 in 2023-24, significant improvement from 66 in 2020-21 and 57 in 2018 (baseline report). Between 2018 and 2023-24, Uttar Pradesh was the fastest moving state as it increased its score by 25, followed by Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand and Sikkim. The fourth edition of SDG India Index measured and tracked national progress of all states and UTs on 113 indicators.

The SDGs, constituted through an unprecedented consultative process, have 17 goals and

Manipur violence: ITLF seeks home minister Shah's help



IMPHAL, July 13: Manipur-based Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) on Saturday wrote to Union home minister Amit Shah, expressing serious concerns regarding the alleged heavy-handed actions against Kuki-Zo village volunteers by central agencies amid ongoing ethnic conflicts.

The letter strongly condemned multiple incidents, particularly in Jiribam's Phaitol and Mongbung villages, where it was reported that central security forces allegedly assaulted seven Kuki women and detained two village youths.

They also highlighted the arrest of three Kuki-Zo volunteers following an arson attack, along with allegations of burning residences belonging to community leaders, which have further escalated local tensions.

The forum also claimed that five Kuki women were physically assaulted, necessitating their hospitalisation, and alleged that security forces set fire to the residence of the general secretary of the Kuki Inpi (Jiribam, Noney, and Tamenglong).

These allegations come in the wake of operations by security forces at Phaitol and L Hengiol villages in Kangpokpi district on July 8 and 9, resulting in the arrest of three militants and seizure of three AK series rifles along with 1,300 rounds of ammunition.

They challenged chief minister Biren Singh's claims of peace talks, asserting that tribal leaders have not been involved in any such discussions.

"The CM should stop spreading rumours to gain public support. If some people have taken part in any meeting, they are doing so in their personal capacity,' the letter said. (PTI)

Violence follows tribal youth death in Tripura

AGARTALA, July 13: Several shops were torched and houses damaged in Tripura's Dhalai district following the death of a tribal youth in a group clash, prompting authorities to impose prohibitory orders, police said on Saturday.

The 19-year-old college student, who sustained serious injuries in a clash between two groups at Gandatwisa in Dhalai district on July 7, passed away at GBP Hospital here on Friday.

Additional police personnel have been deployed in the village after Friday's arson and Internet services have been suspended in the area. Four persons have been arrested in connection with the death of the youth, police said.

According to police sources,

Recommended against

Parmeshwar Reang, accompanied by his friends, had visited the Gandatwisa market to attend a fair organised on the occasion of Rath

"Suddenly, a clash erupted between two groups of youths, during which Reang sustained severe injuries. Initially admitted to Gandatwisa hospital, he was later transferred to GBP hospital as his condition worsened. He succumbed to his injuries on Friday," Dhalai SP Avinash Rai told PTI.

"After his body was brought back to Gandatwisa, around 110km from Agartala, emotions ran high and some houses and shops were vandalised in anger. We have arrested four persons in connection with the murder. Prohibitory orders have been enforced in Gandatwisa with heightened police presence to prevent further escalation," he added. To ease tensions, the Gandatwisa

SDM organised a peace meeting, Rai said, adding that the situation is currently under control.

Tipra Motha leader Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma condemned the youth's murder and called for justice.

"I strongly condemn the murder of Parmeshwar Reang in Gandatwisa. I have personally engaged with senior police officials demanding that the culprits be charged under relevant sections. I appeal for peace and urge everyone to show restraint. I will personally visit the family," he wrote on Facebook. (PTI)

ANTA clarifies stance on excommunication

Naga Tangpi (ANTA), the apex body of the Anal Naga tribe, has clarified recently that, one person by the name of Ws. Molun was excommunicated by his own clan and the Anal tribe in 2008.

In a press statement issued recently, the ANTA said, "Taking cognizance of the recent post regarding one individual called Ws.Molun, who claims to be a

Kuki, the Anal Naga Tangpi (ANTA), the apex body of the Anal Naga tribe, after an emergency meeting held on Friday, July 12, 2024, hereby makes a conclusive declaration that the said individual (Ws.Molun) was excommunicated by his own clan and the Anal tribe in 2008. He allegedly fled to Moreh Block and took refuge there. Since then, he has been a

The ANTA also said that it is not aware of any village called Motha in Moreh Block. "He is a selfstyled chief, illegally occupying the land belonging to Thangbung Minou Anal Naga village. The Anal Naga Chief's Association also does not recognise his chiefship nor the said village," the ANTA added.

The Anal apex body then said the signature appended in the document is without the knowledge or endorsement of the Anal tribe. "The Anal Naga tribe is Naga, and will always remain so. This fact needs no further clarification. Ws. Molun has acted in his individual capacity without any knowledge or consent of the tribe. He stands disowned by the Anal Naga tribe. He is solely responsible for his own actions," the ANTA further added. (NNN)

Manipur Assembly session from July 31

IMPHAL, July 13: A Manipur cabinet meeting held recently has decided to summon the next Assembly Session from July 31, 2024. However, it was not clear on the number of days of the ses-

Health & family welfare and IPR minister at Lamphel Sanakeithel, Imphal West, Sapam Ranjan Singh informed that 43 listed agendas and some unlisted agendas were discussed during the cabinet session.

The minister recalled that the last sitting of the Assembly Session was held on March 5, 2024. He informed that the cabinet approved the bifurcation of manpower particularly for ministerial staff and VDF in respect of 7 (seven) newly created districts across the state. He maintained that the new policy will also be applied to the VDF personnel.

The cabinet also approved the proposal for amendment of "The Manipur Private School (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2017" and framing of "The Manipur Private School (Registration and Regulation) Rules, 2024 as well as the proposal for framing of Separate Manipur Health Service (Dental) Rules and exemption from consultation/concurrence with MPSC, he stated.

The cabinet also decided to issue a fresh notification for filling up of vacant direct recruitment posts in the Directorate of Economics & Statistics. He asserted that the cabinet, reflecting on the complaints that there are some irregularities, has resolved to instruct the concerned directorate to cancel the then recruitment results if there are any irregularities and re-issue a new process for

Dr Ranjan also mentioned that allotment of land to Airport Authority of India, Imphal Airport has also been approved. He further said that the same is not an acquisition of a new land, but a land which is already within the campus itself. He continued that allotment of land for construction of AYUSH Dispensary at 17-Chaobok Village, Lilong sub-division, Thoubal and construction of Court Complex of District & Session Judge, Churachandpur has also been approved.

He then highlighted the need to strengthen Manipur Secretariat's Records and Library Section, which was also among the agendas discussed during the cabinet sitting. (NNN)

Govt ensuring free flow of essential commodities: Manipur CM

Singh received the inaugural consignment of foodgrains



IMPHAL, July 13: Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh on Saturday said that over the past 14 months, the government has been working diligently to prevent shortages of essential items.

Singh, who traveled by helicopter to Khongsang railway station in Noney district to receive the inaugural consignment of foodgrains by train, said, "Despite various challenges in the last 14 months, the government has remained committed to ensuring that our people do not face shortages of foodgrains, essential commodities, and fuel.'

He credited the cooperation of security personnel, the Food Corporation of India (FCI), railways, and the commitment of central government leaders for making this achievement

Expressing gratitude towards FCI, Railways, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Singh highlighted that this delivery marks the third such consignment, following two previous deliveries of essential commodities by train.

Singh noted, "With the assistance of central and state security forces including CRPF, AR, and BSF, and the support of people, the situation is gradually becoming normal."

"Delighted to witness the arrival of the first rice rake at Khongsang Railway Station from Punjab to Manipur. The rake, comprising 15 wagons carrying 950 metric tonnes of goods, represents a significant milestone in ensuring food security for Manipur," he posted on X. (PTI)

অসম লোকসেৱা আয়োগ ASSAM PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

No. 209PSC/CON/Exam-30/2018-2019

RESULT

The Assam Public Service Commission hereby declares today, the 13th July, 2024, the result of the recruitment for the post of Assistant Professor (Technical) in Engineering Colleges of Assam under Higher Education (Tech.) Department (Advt. No. 05/2017 dated 25/05/2017)

The Interviews for the said posts were conducted by the Commission from 5th July, 2024 to

12th July, 2024. The Commission recommended the following candidates for the said posts in order of merit.

Assistant Professor in Civil Engineering:

No. of Posts: 12 (RFW:4) Break-up: OC:7 RFW:2, OBC/MOBC: 5 RFW:2

Position	Roll No.	Name of Candidate	Gender	vacancy
1	12414	RUPAM JYOTI NATH	MALE	OPEN CATEGORY
2	12186	JIMLI DAS	FEMALE	OPEN CATEGORY
3	12236	MANIPUSPAK HAZARIKA	MALE	OPEN CATEGORY
4	12197	JYOTISMAN SAIKIA	MALE	OPEN CATEGORY
5	12104	BIBHUTI BHUSHAN BHARDWAJ	MALE	OPEN CATEGORY
6	12083	BAHARUL HUSSAIN	MALE	OPEN CATEGORY
7	12090	BARSHA SARMA	FEMALE	OPEN CATEGORY
8	12261	MINAKSHI KUMARI	FEMALE	RESERVED
9	12455	SIDDHARTHA KASHYAP	MALE	RESERVED
10	12520	UTPAL RAY	MALE	RESERVED
11	12515	UDDIPANA BORAH	FEMALE	RESERVED
12	12473	SUBHRAJIT PATHAK	MALE	RESERVED

Assistant Professor in Mechanical Engineering:

No. of Posts: 12, RFW:4 Break-up: OC: 9 RFW-3, OBC/MOBC: 2 RFW:1, STH:1

Position	Roll No.	Name of Candidate	Gender	Recommended agains vacancy
1	RESULT WITHHELD			
2		RESULT WI	THHELD	
3	19441	PALASH SAIKIA	MALE	OPEN CATEGORY
4	19287	KASHMIRI DEKA	FEMALE	OPEN CATEGORY
5	19346	MD ZAKIR HUSSAIN	MALE	OPEN CATEGORY
6	19205	DIPANKA BHUYAN	MALE	OPEN CATEGORY
7	19578	SAHEERA AZMI HAZARIKA	FEMALE	OPEN CATEGORY
8	19189	DHRIJIT KUMAR DEKA	MALE	OPEN CATEGORY
9	19351	MEHTAJ RIDWANA SAHIN	FEMALE	OPEN CATEGORY
10	19506	PRIYANKA NATH	FEMALE	RESERVED
11	19663	SONAM KUMAR GUPTA	MALE	RESERVED

N.B.: 1 (one) post reserved for STH Category could not be recommended due to non availability of

Assistant Professor in Electrical Engineering: No of Posts: 12 DEW:4

Position	Roll No.	S 5 RFW-2, OBC/MOBC:5 RFW:2, Name of Candidate	Gender	Recommended against vacancy	
1	14207	MOUSHUMI PATOWARY	FEMALE	OPEN CATEGORY	
2	14076	BIPUL KUMAR TALUKDAR	MALE	OPEN CATEGORY	
3	14082	BONTY HALO	FEMALE	OPEN CATEGORY	
4	14278	RAJ KAMAL KAKOTI	MALE	OPEN CATEGORY	
5		RESULT WI	THHELD		
6	14210	MUNMEE SAIKIA	FEMALE	RESERVED	
7	14097	DAYAL CH SHILL	MALE	RESERVED	
8	14343	SOUMYADEEP KUNDU	MALE	RESERVED	
9	14047	ARUNIMA DUTTA	FEMALE	RESERVED	
10		RESULT WI	THHELD		
11	14265	PRIYAKSHI SHYAM	FEMALE	RESERVED	

N.B.: 1 (one) post reserved for STP Category could not be recommended due to non availability of

Assistant Professor in Chemical Engineering: No. of Posts: 6, RFW:2

Break-up: OC: 2 RFW-1, OBC/MOBC:3 RFW:1, SC: 1

Recommended against Roll No. Name of Candidate vacancy 11054 MEENAKSHI BORGOHAIN **OPEN CATEGORY FEMALE OPEN CATEGORY FEMALE** 11055 MIRANDA KAKOTY 2 RESERVED MALE 11007 AKASH PRATIM BORA RESULT WITHHELD 11037 DEVIPRIYA GOGOI RESERVED RESERVED 11048 JITU DAS

Assistant Professor in Instrumentation Engineering:

No. of Posts: 2

Break-up: OBC/MOBC: 1, STP:1

Position	Roll No.	Name of Candidate	Gender	Recommended against vacancy
1	17011	HEMANTA SAIKIA	MALE	RESERVED
2	17013	JINTI HAZARIKA	FEMALE	RESERVED

Assistant Professor in Electronics & Telecommunication Engineering:

No. of Posts: 9, RFW:3

Break-up: OC: 5 RFW-2, OBC/MOBC: 1, STP:2 RFW:1, STH:1

Position	Roll No.	Name of Candidate	Gender	Recommended against vacancy
1	15402	PARISMITA A KASHYAP	FEMALE	OPEN CATEGORY
2	15137	DEBAJIT SARMA	MALE	OPEN CATEGORY
3	15044	ANANYA CHOUDHURY	FEMALE	OPEN CATEGORY
4	15177	FARHANA BEGUM	FEMALE	OPEN CATEGORY
5	15532	SABYASACHI BHATTACHARYYA	MALE	OPEN CATEGORY
6	15372	NIRANJAN JYOTI BORAH	MALE	RESERVED
7	15524	RUMI RANI PAO	FEMALE	RESERVED
8	15149	DEEP SIKHA BORDOLOI	FEMALE	RESERVED
9	15617	SUDIP GORLOSA	MALE	RESERVED

Assistant Professor in Computer Science Engineering: No. of Posts: 6, RFW:1

OC. 2 DEW 1 ODC/MODC 1 SC-1 STD-1

Position	Roll No.	Name of Candidate	Gender	Recommended against vacancy
1	13245	PALLABI PATOWARY	FEMALE	OPEN CATEGORY
2	13017	AMLAN JYOTI BARUAH	MALE	OPEN CATEGORY
3	13143	JAYASHREE DAS	FEMALE	OPEN CATEGORY
4	13111	GAUTAM NATH	MALE	RESERVED
5	13057	BARGA DEORI	MALE	RESERVED
6	13098	DHRUBAJYOTI MALAKAR	MALE	RESERVED

Assistant Professor in Industrial & Production Engineering: No. of Posts: 3, RFW:1

Br	Break-up: OC: 2 RFW-1, OBC/MOBC: 1					
Position	Roll No.	Name of Candidate	Gender	Recommended against vacancy		
1	16110	MONOI BARUAH	MALE	OPEN CATEGORY		
2	16097	MANASH BHUYAN	MALE	RESERVED		
3	16061	DIMBALITA DEKA	FEMALE	OPEN CATEGORY		

Assistant Professor in MCA: No. of Posts: 4, RFW:1

Position	Roll No.	Name of Candidate	Gender	Recommended against vacancy
1	18083	BHARADWAJ CHOUDHURY	MALE	OPEN CATEGORY
2	18387	PRIYAKSHI MAHANTA	FEMALE	OPEN CATEGORY
3	18048	ANTARA MALAKAR	FEMALE	RESERVED
4	18098	BIKRAM PATIR	MALE	RESERVED

Result withheld due to pendency of Writ Petitions (C) at Honourable Court.

Results may be accessed through the APSC's website www.apsc.nic.in

Principal Controller of Examinations, Assam Public Service Commission, Janasanyog /D/2457/24/14-Jul-24 Jawaharnagar, Khanapara, Guwahati-22

Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren meets

Delhi CM's wife Sunita Kejriwal

Kashmir 'Martyrs Day': Mehbooba, other politicians claim they are under 'house arrest'

litical leaders in Jammu and Kashmir, including PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti, on Saturday claimed authorities have put them under house arrest to prevent them from visiting the 'martyrs' graveyard' to pay homage to the 22 Kashmiri people killed by the army of a Dogra ruler on this day in

However, there was no official word on the claims made by the politicians.

Mehbooba, a former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir, alleged that she was put under "house arrest" at her residence in Khimber in the outskirts of the city.

"The gates of my house have been locked up yet again to prevent me from visiting Mazar e Shuhada - an enduring symbol of Kashmir's resistance and resilience against authoritarianism, oppression and injustice," she said in a post on X.

The PDP chief said the "sacrifices of our martyrs is a testament that the spirit of Kashmiri's cannot be crushed" and added that "today even observing it in remembrance of the protesters martyred on this day has been criminalised".

"On 5th August, 2019 J&K was dismembered, disempowered and stripped of everything that was sacrosanct for us. They intend to erase each one of our collective memories," she said referring to the abrogation of Article 370 and bifurcation of the erstwhile state of I-K into Union Territories of



Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

"But such assaults will only strengthen our determination to continue the fight for our rights and dignity," she added.

Separatist-turned-mainstream politicians and People's Conference chairman Sajad Lone also claimed that he has been put under

"For no reason informed of being under house arrest. I really fail to understand what the administration gets in stopping people from going to the martyrs graveyard," Lone said on X.

He said people have a right to choose their heroes and "the martyrs are heroes for the people of

"Why be in a denial and why on earth would a non-resident government need to meddle in it. Actually believing that a government will

decide on what has been historically heroic and who are the histor-

ical heroes is an unambiguous sign

of despotism," Lone said. The gate of the residence of National Conference (NC)'s provincial president, Kashmir, Nasir Aslam Wani, was also locked by

"The gate has been locked and police personnel deployed to stop us from going to pay our respects at martyrs' graves. I don't understand why. We will always remember their sacrifices," Wani said.

The party's youth wing president Salman Sagar said the administration was also putting restrictions on their political activ-

Sagar posted pictures and videos of the locked gates of his residence and claimed he was put under

leaders of the Apni Party from visiting the "martyrs' graveyard".

Members of the Apni Party, led by their president Altaf Bukhari, tried to march from the party's Sheikh Bagh office here to the graveyard, around 5 km in Nagsh-

band, but were stopped by police. Later, the leaders held "fateh' prayers on the road and paid tributes to the 22 Kashmiris.

NC vice president Omar Abdullah said from next year, Jammu and Kashmir would mark July 13? to pay homage to the 22 Kashmiri people. Reacting to the developments and referring to the impending assembly polls in J-K, he said this year is the last one the Jammu and Kashmir administration would be able to do so.

"Another 13th July, Martyr's Day, another round of locked gates and police excesses to stop people from paying homage to those who sacrificed their lives to establish a just, fair and democratic regime in J-K." Abdullah said in a post on X.

"Everywhere else in the country these people would have been celebrated but in J-K the administration wants to ignore these sacrifices. This is the last year they will be able to do this. InshaAllah. next year we will mark 13th July with the solemnity and respect this day deserves," he said.

The Supreme Court has asked the Union government to conclude the process of the conduct of the assembly polls in Jammu and

Kashmir by September 30 this

NC MP Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi said stopping people from paying their respects was not only disrespect to the idea of democracy but also a huge and "ugly shift" from the values over which the nation was founded.

Mehdi said the police and administration which used pay homage "to those brave hearts is now told to block the ways heading towards that graveyard and put locks on the doors of those who want to go and pay their respect to those heroes'

July 13 used to be a public holiday in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir and a grand official function was held every year on this day where the chief minister or the governor would be the chief

However, the administration dropped the day from the list of gazetted holidays in 2020, after the abrogation of Article 370.

Besides the official function. mainstream political leaders also used to visit the "martyrs' graveyard" to pay homage to the 22 Kashmiris who fell to the bullets of the Dogra army while protesting the rule of Maharaja Hari Singh.

However, no function was held this year, and officials said some restrictions on the assembly of people were in place in the Naqshbandh area of Nowhatta here to thwart any gatherings and to maintain law and order. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, July 13: Jharkhand mentary Party chief Sonia Gandhi

and described it as a courtesy call. Soren, the executive president of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, resigned as the chief minister before his arrest on January 31 by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with a money laundering case linked to an alleged land scam.

After spending around five months in prison, he secured bail and became chief minister again on July 4. Delhi Chief Minister and AAP national convener Kejriwal was arrested by ED on March 21 in a money laundering case linked to the alleged excise policy scam. The Supreme Court granted him interim bail on Friday but he will remain in jail as the CBI had arrested him in a related matter.

The issue of Soren and Kejriwal's arrest by the central probe agency was prominently raised by the leaders of the opposition INDIA bloc during the Lok Sabha poll campaigning.

Kalpna Soren and Sunita Kejriwal too had joined the poll campaigning on behalf of their jailed husbands and raised voices against their ar-

CBI, ED should not become 'political weapons': K'taka Home Minister on Nagendra arrest

BENGALURU, July 13: Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara on Saturday said central agencies like the CBI and Enforcement Directorate (ED) should not become "political

His comments come a day after the ED on Friday arrested former minister B Nagendra in connection with a money laundering probe linked to alleged irregularities in the Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation Limited. Following allegations against him in connection with the scam, Nagendra, who was Scheduled Tribes Welfare Minister, had tendered his resignation on June 6.

"I have said that ED is probing him (Nagendra), based on the information they get, they will take action. Now he has been arrested. Based on the in-

procedures happen in accordance with the law, but this should not be used politically," Parameshwara said. Addressing reporters here, he said central agencies like CBI, ED should not become political

The ED had earlier this week carried out searches at several places, including at the premises of Nagendra, and ruling Congress MLA Basanagouda Daddal, who is Chairman of the Corporation. The agency covered around 20 locations in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Maharashtra as part of a case registered under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the sources said.

Asked whether he felt Narendra's arrest was politically motivated, by using ED, Parameshwara said, "we don't have any objection to the probe... we too had constituted a Special Investigation

Team (SIT). SIT has recorded statements from Nagendra and Daddal, their investigation too is

The CBI probe is based on a complaint from the bank, he said. "now all of a sudden ED has entered the picture. They might have information, I don't want to dispute that. But our stand since the beginning is that ED and CBI should not become political weapons.'

To a question on ED probing into the allegations that the corporation's funds were used for elections, the Home Minister said, "I'm not aware of it. ED has not shared any information with the police, so it won't be right to speculate.'

The illegal money transfer issue involving the Corporation, came to the fore after its accounts superintendent, Chandrasekharan P died by suicide

Venugopal accuses Modi govt of targeting his phone with 'malicious spyware'

NEW DELHI, July 13: Congress general secretary

K C Venugopal on Saturday accused the Modi gov-

ernment of targeting his phone with a "malicious

spyware" and asserted that "we will oppose this bla-

tantly unconstitutional act" and breach of privacy.

Venugopal shared the screenshot of a message

purportedly from Apple which said that "you are

being targeted by a mercenary spyware attack that

is trying to remotely compromise the iPhone asso-

ciated with your Apple ID". In a post on X, Venu-

gopal said, "Thank you PM Modi ji for sending

your favourite malicious spyware on my phone

also! Apple has been kind enough to intimate me

a criminal and unconstitutional manner, going after

political opponents and invading their privacy in

this manner," the Congress general secretary, in-

charge organisation, said. The message of the Lok

Sabha elections was that the people reject any at-

tack on the Constitution and the "BJP's fascist

act and breach of our privacy tooth and nail," Venu-

"We will oppose this blatantly unconstitutional

"Let's be clear, the Modi government is acting in

about this special present of yours!"

agenda", he said.

CM Siddaramaiah of 'misuse of power' BENGALURU, July 13: Union Miniah's wife in an upmarket area in Mysuru, which had higher property value as compared to the location of her land

MUDA 'scam': Kumaraswamy accuses

ister H D Kumaraswamy on Saturday accused Chief Minister Siddaramaiah of "misuse of power", as he hit out at the latter for playing the caste card, following allegations against him in connection with alleged fraudulent allotment of sites to land losers by MUDA, which involves plots given to his wife Parvathi.

Pointing out that the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) scam case directly involves the CM's family, he requested any respected lawyer in the state to take this case before the Governor and seek prosecution sanction, and to take it before court. "Several scams of this state govern-

ment, one after the other, have become a topic of discussion across the country....there is negative feeling about this administration in Karnataka outside the state, after Congress came to power in the state, and it is painful," the JD(S) leader said. Hitting out at Siddaramaiah for playing the backward class community card, he asked, "what have you done for the backward classes to take protection in the name of the commu-

"People have given you power, don't take a bad name and go at the last stage (of your political career), give a respectable administration. You are trying to take protection in the name of backward classes, but you are running an administration that would bring a bad name for the backward classes communities," he told Siddaramaiah.

Denying the allegations against him in connection with the MUDA scam. Siddaramaiah on Thursday had claimed that a conspiracy is being hatched against him out of heartburn as he belongs to the backward class community and has become the chief minister for a second time. It is alleged that compensatory sites were allotted to Siddaramawhich had been "acquired" by the MUDA. The MUDA had allotted plots to Parvathi under a 50:50 ratio scheme in lieu of 3.16 acres of her land, where MUDA developed a residential layout.

Chief Minister Hemant Soren and

his wife Kalpana Soren on Saturday

met Sunita Kejriwal, the wife of

Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal who is in

jail in connection with the corruption

case related to the alleged excise pol-

AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay

Singh, who was present during the

meeting at the Delhi chief minister's

official residence here, said the talks

were cordial and the issue of "mis-

use" of central probe agencies

"He (Hemant Soren) and Kejriwal

both were victims of the BJP's poli-

tics of ill will, revenge and efforts to

stop opposition leaders from cam-

paigning in the Lok Sabha polls," he

The Jharkhand chief minister has

extended full support to Kejriwal, his family and the AAP in the fight

against the "atrocities", Singh added.

posted a video of the meeting on 'X'

and captioned it "INDIA is united

and his wife met Congress Parlia-

against dictatorship"

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)

Earlier in the day, Hemant Soren

against opposition leaders was dis-

cussed.

charged.

The controversial scheme envisages allotting 50 per cent of developed land to the land loser in lieu of undeveloped land acquired for forming layouts.

Pointing out that following the allegations, the CM is now saying his family doesn't want alternative sites given to his wife in lieu of 3.16 acres of her land acquired by MUDA, and that they be paid ₹ 62 crore as compensation as per rules, Kumaraswamy asked "whose land is it? Is it the ancestral property by CM or his brother-in-law?

"It doesn't actually belong to them, it is MUDA property, as ₹ 3,24,000 was paid to the original owner and land was acquired by MUDA during final notifi-

In 2004, Mallikarjuna Swamy (Siddaramaiah's brother-in-law) had reportedly purchased the 3.16 acres of land, and later did a gift deed of it to his sister Parvathi. Further pointing out that Siddaramaiah did not mention this land in the 2013 assembly election affidavit, Kumaraswamy said, in 2014, the CM's family wrote to MUDA stating that their land has been acquired by it for making a layout, and sought alternative sites in lieu of 3.16 acre they have lost.

Noting that according to rules, if the land that has been acquired is between three to four acres, only two sites should be given in lieu of the land acquired, and that it has to be given in the same locality and not elsewhere, Kumaraswamy said, in violation of rules in 2022 Siddaramaiah's wife was given 14 alternative sites by MUDA in Mysuru's

Priyanka Gandhi slams BJP over 'Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas'

NEW DELHI, July 13: In a scathing attack on the BJP, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Saturday said it comes as no surprise that those who opposed the Constitution and called for its abolition would indulge in the "negative politics" of marking 'Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas'.

Her remarks came a day after Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced that the government has decided to observe June 25, the day Emergency was declared in 1975, as 'Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas' to commemorate the "massive contributions" of those who endured inhuman pains of the period. Reacting to the development, Priyanka Gandhi said the great people of India have achieved Independence and their Constitution by fighting a historic battle. "Those who made the Constitution, those who have faith in the Constitution, will only protect the Constitution," she said in a post in Hindi on 'X'

"Those who opposed the implementation of the Constitution, formed a commission to review the Constitution, called for the abolition of the Constitution, repeatedly attacked the Constitution and the soul of democracy with their decisions and actions, they are indulging in the negative politics of marking 'Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas'. What is so surprising about this?" Gandhi said.

While the Congress has slammed the Centre's move as yet another "headline-grabbing exercise in hypocrisy" by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the top leadership of the BJP defended the decision, saving it will remind people of the Congress' "dictatorial mindset". (PTI)

Initiative aims to foster innovation and sustainability in India's agricultural sector through establishment of a ₹750 crore Category-II Alternative Investment Fund (AIF)

Government to launch 'Agri Fund for Start-Ups & Rural Enterprises'

NEW DELHI, July 13: The Government is poised to launch the 'Agri Fund for Start-Ups & Rural Enterprises (AgriSURE) to support start-ups and agripreneurs through investments in sector-specific, sector-agnostic, and debt Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs), as well as direct equity support to start-ups working in Agriculture and allied sectors.

This initiative aims to foster innovation and sustainability in India's agricultural sector through the establishment of a ₹ 750 crore Category-II Alternative Investment Fund (AIF).

The fund will offer both equity and debt support, specifically targeting high-risk, high- impact activities in the agriculture value chain. The announcement was made at the

Pre-Launch Stakeholder meet held at NABARD Headquarters in Mumbai. The event was attended by key stakeholders, including financial institutions, investors, AIF managers, and agri-star-

Distinguished guests included Ajeet Kumar Sahu, joint secretary, DA&FW; Shaji K.V., chairman, NABARD; Govardhan Singh Rawat, DMD, NABARD; and Ajay Kumar Sood,



In his address, Ajeet Kumar Sahu highlighted the fund's potential to create an ecosystem that enhances financing for the agriculture sector through innovative approaches, benefiting small and marginal farmers. Shaji K.V. emphasised the need for public and private sector collaboration to drive the next level of growth in agriculture through technological innovations.

that the fund will be set up with an initial corpus of ₹ 750 Crore with 250 crores each from NABARD and the Ministry of Agriculture, and 250 crores from other institutions.

The fund will focus on innovation in agriculture, enhancing the farm produce value chain, creating rural infrastructure, generating employment, and supporting Farmers Producer Organizations (FPOs).

The fund will also encourage ITbased solutions and machinery rental

NABVENTURES, a wholly-owned subsidiary of NABARD, will be the Fund manager of AgriSURE.

The fund is designed to operate for 10 years, extendable by two or more

Underscoring its commitment to fostering innovation, NABARD also launched the AgriSURE Greenathon

The hackathon aims to address three key problem statements: "Smart Agriculture on a Budget," which tackles the high cost of advanced agriculture technologies that hinder small and marginal farmers; "Turning Agri-Waste into Profitable Business Opportunities," focusing on transforming agricultural waste into profitable ventures; and "Tech Solutions Making Regenerative Agriculture Remunerative," which aims to overcome economic hurdles

practices. NABARD called upon participation from young innovative minds to contribute in the journey of our country towards 'Viksit Bharat' with their innovative solutions to alleviate the flailing issues of the agriculture. (PIB)

in adopting regenerative agriculture





SRINAGAR, July 13: Political parties in Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday voiced their strong opposition to the Centre's move to vest more powers in the Union Territory's Lieutenant Governor for taking decisions on matters related to police and all-India service officers.

While main regional outfits -- the National Conference (NC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) -- said the decision would "disempower" the people of Jammu and Kashmir, the Congress termed it as the "murder of democracy" and the Apni Party urged all parties to shun differences and unitedly protest against the

NC Vice President Omar Abdullah said the people of Jammu and Kashmir deserve better than a "powerless, rubber stamp" chief minister who will have to beg the Lieutenant Governor to get a peon appointed.

The former chief minister of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, however, said the move was "another indicator that elections are around the corner in J&K"

"This is why a firm commitment laying out the timeline for restoration of full, undiluted statehood for J&K is a prerequisite for these elections. The people of J&K deserve better than powerless, rubber stamp CM who will have to beg the LG to get his/her peon appointed," the NC vice president said.

NC chief spokesperson Tanvir Sadiq termed the decision "a blatant misuse of power" by the BJP-led government at the Centre to "disempower" the people.

"It is aimed only at weakening the democratic voice of the people of J-K. The Central government's preference of granting powers to an unelected lieutenant governor instead of an elected government is a clear attempt to undermine the future of a democratically elected government in J-K." he said.

Sadiq said the order shows how non-serious Delhi is to empower the people of J-K.

"We were promised by none less than the Prime Minister and the Home Minister of India that the statehood would be restored, this order nullifies all of that. This is saddening," he

PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti's daughter and her media advisor, Iltija Mufti, said the order seeks to disempower the powers of an elected government in Jammu and Kashmir.

J&K political parties oppose Centre's move to give more powers to Lt Guv "At a time when there's been considerable

speculation about GOI holding elections in J&K

this new MHA order & farmaan widening the

already unbridled powers of an unelected LG

make a few things abundantly clear," Iltija Mufti said in a post on X She said the order makes it clear that assembly elections will be conducted this year itself, and that the Centre "is well aware if & when state elections are held in J&K a non-BJP gov-

ernment will be elected". "The order seeks to disempower the powers of the next J&K state government only because BJP doesn't want to cede control or lose its iron grip over Kashmiris. Statehood is out of the question. An elected government in J&K will be

reduced to a municipality," she added. Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) president Vikar Rasool Wani

termed the move a "murder of democracy". "The murder of democracy in Jammu and Kashmir is evident before the restoration of proper democracy and statehood. MHA gave more powers, including the Police, Law and order, and the transfer of officers etc have been

vested in the LG." Wani said on X. Apni Party chief Altaf Bukhari appealed to Jammu and Kashmir's political parties to shun differences and unitedly raise voices against the

"This new decision aims at making the state hollow in which no powers will be left for an elected government... The people of Jammu and Kashmir do not support this," Bukhari said at a

press conference here. Bukhari, a former minister, said if the Centre wants to create a "powerless assembly" in Jammu and Kashmir, it will not be acceptable. "If they want the chief minister to be a toothless tiger and befool the people, then I do not think this will solve any of the issues con-

The Apni Party chief said this is not an issue that affects any one political party. "We appeal to all parties to shun political dif-

fronting the people of Jammu and Kashmir," he

ferences and come together on this issue. If we cannot stand united today, then we will never be. We should ensure that the statehood that we get is not hollow and has all powers to serve people," he said. "We have to be united to serve the interests

of the people," Bukhari said. The Centre has vested more powers in the Lt Governor of Jammu and Kashmir for taking decisions on police, officers of all-India services

tions for prosecution in various cases. Decisions regarding the appointment of advocate general and other law officers, besides matters related to the anti-corruption bureau, will also be taken by the Lt Governor.

such as the IAS and the IPS, and giving sanc-

The Union home ministry amended the rules under the Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, which was enacted for the bifurcation of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir into Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh while abrogating Article 370. (PTI)



While explaining the features of the fund CEO NABVENTURES briefed

NATION Haryana CM launches two environmental protection schemes

श्री नायब सिंह _{प्रात्नीय मुख्यमंत्री, हरियाणा}

Chief Minister Nayab Singh on Saturday launched two schemes aimed at encouraging tree plantation and increasing the green cover as part of efforts towards environmental

The government will provide ₹ 30 per tree to the 'Van Mitra' for planting and protecting trees under the 'Van Mitra' scheme in July and Au-

Under the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam Yojana', trees planted by the people will be entrusted to 'Van Mitras' for care and protection for which they will be provided Rs 10 per tree per month from September in the first year by the government and Rs 8 per month in the second year, according to an official release.

Saini launched these schemes during the 75th state-level 'Van Mahotsav' held in Karnal.

The CM also inaugurated an 'Oxy-van' in Karnal - a 40-hectare forested area for which work had started under then chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar in June 2021.

The 'Oxy-van' features the development of nine different types of forests. "To date, 10,000 trees have already been planted in the 'Oxyvan'. Today, an additional 20,000

Govt to boost educational

resources for deaf learners

tional resources for deaf learners.

community in Sign Language.

YUNIKEE is a social organisation

This partnership aims to facilitate

10,000 deaf learners through the cre-

ation and dissemination of educa-

tional resources in Indian Sign

Language (ISL). The MoU outlines a

series of responsibilities and obliga-

tions for both ISLRTC and YUNI-

KEE, emphasising a strong

collaborative approach with no finan-

YUNIKEE, in collaboration with

Infosys Foundation, will develop and

publish 23 sign language courses,

while ISLRTC will promote these

courses widely across its social media

platforms and other websites of the

Department of Empowerment of Per-

One of the key components of the

agreement is the development of 500

educational concept videos in ISL by

YUNIKEE. Of these, 200 videos will

be self-funded by YUNIKEE, and for

the remaining 300, YUNIKEE will

seek Corporate Social Responsibility

sons with Disabilities (DEPWD).

cial involvement.

that helps build and make products

and services accessible for the deaf

saplings were planted simultaneously by various social-religious organizations, students, and NCC cadets,'

said the release

The CM said on the occasion of World Environment Day on June 5, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a unique campaign in the name of 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' in Delhi. The PM had said that "the respect we give to our mother who gave us birth, we must give the same respect to mother earth who nurtured

Saini affirmed the Haryana government's commitment to enhancing the state's greenery and reducing pollution, in alignment with the Prime Minister's vision.

The CM pointed towards the growing global concern over environmental pollution and said this year, temperatures in several districts of Harvana reached as high as 50 degrees Čelsius.

He emphasised the urgent need for collective action to combat this crisis. He appealed to every family to plant at least one tree as a simple yet impactful step towards environmental conservation.

He also encouraged individuals to commemorate significant personal milestones such as a child's birthday,

a wedding anniversary, or any joyful occasion by planting a tree.

Saini, while referring to the Covid pandemic, said that "it had taught us that oxygen is most important for saving life on this earth"

Keeping this in mind, the government started a scheme to develop 'Oxy-vans' on an area of 5 to 100 acres in every district for environmental protection.

In the year 2022-23, 22 'Oxyvans' have been established in urban and rural areas.

The CM said many schemes have been started to make Haryana green.

Rewari and Mahendragarh districts falling in the Aravalli hills has been notified as reserved forest in the year 2023-24 and Rs 6 crore has been spent on its conservation.

Saini said the government has started the 'Pranavayu Devta' pension scheme as an expression of gratitude towards trees above 75 years of age. Under this scheme, a provision of pension of ₹ 2,750 per year per tree has been made for the maintenance of trees.

An amount of ₹ 2,750 per tree has been deposited in the bank accounts of the guardians of 3,819 trees in the year 2023-24.

Saini said like every year, a target has been set to plant approximately 1.5 crore saplings across Haryana this year. Since October 2014, the state has successfully planted around 18 crore saplings

To ensure the effectiveness of these efforts, the forest department will regularly map and monitor the growth of both newly planted and existing trees through geo-tagging drones, he said.

He said the government has developed herbal parks in various districts for the conservation and promotion of medicinal plants. (PTI)

Ensure foolproof security for Muhurram: IGP Kashmir to officers

SRINAGAR, July 13: Kashmir Inspector General of Police V K Birdi on Saturday directed security forces to increase surveillance and ensure foolproof security arrangements for Muhurram-related events in the valley.

Birdi chaired a security review meeting here which was attended by senior officers from the police force and its Criminal Investigation Department, Intelligence Bureau, Sashastra Seema Bal, Central Reserve Police Force, Border Security Force and Indo-Tibetan Border Police.

The meeting focused on various security arrangements put in place for Muharram during which a large number of religious processions are expected to be taken out in various parts of the valley, officials said.

The security measures related to the challenges in the management of mourning processions, crowd control, traffic regulation and maintenance of law and order during the period were also discussed, they said.

The IGP Kashmir directed the officers to have foolproof security arrangements in place to ensure the peaceful conduct of the events. Birdi also directed them to increase surveillance on "anti-national elements" and "mischief mongers". (PTI)

Low supply, high cost of greens sends kitchen budget in tailspin for Delhiites

NEW DELHI, July 13: Crop damage in states like Himachal Pradesh due to delayed rain has sent prices of vegetables skyrocketing in the national capital, with consumers forced to buy daily items such as tomatoes at double the price. Prices of kitchen staples like potatoes, onion, and tomatoes as well as green vegetables like cauliflower, cabbage, and those in the gourd family have particularly soared, vendors in the wholesale markets said.

"Currently, the wholesale price of tomatoes is around 50 to 60 rupees per kg. The local variety is selling for 1,200 rupees per 28 kilograms (1 crate), and the hybrid variety for 1,400 to 1,700 rupees. Earlier these used to sell for around 25-30 rupees," Sanjay Bhagat, a trader in Azadpur Sabzi Mandi,

"The price for other vegetables in the wholesale market is around 25 to 28 rupees per kg. Vegetables that used to sell for 10 to 15 rupees are now 25 to 30 rupees. Beans rates have also increased, selling for 40 to 50 rupees per kilogram,' he added.

The surge was caused by intense heat and delayed rain this year.

Bhagat said most suppliers get tomatoes from Himachal Pradesh, which had its crop dried up.

The crops in the mountains depend on rain, and this time it was too hot, with very little rain, which caused the plants to dry up and get infested with pests, he said.

The dry patch was followed by heavy rain, which further damaged the crops

"Right now, the supply is low, and the quality is poor," Bhagat added

Only two places are supplying tomatoes right now -- Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh - and according to estimates, the prices will remain high until the new crop from Maharashtra arrives around August 10-15, another trader in Okhla Sabzi Mandi said.

"The new crop takes about 60 days to grow. It is estimated that the prices will start stabilising around August 15," he said,

adding, the demand is still steady. Several people in Delhi PTI spoke to say the high prices of vegetables have sent their budgets in a

"I am only buying limited quantities and only those items which are absolutely necessary in the kitchen. A common man cannot afford to buy vegetables right now." Sarita, who was buying groceries in the Laxmi Nagar vegetable mar-

Deepak, in Mehrauli vegetable market, said, "Earlier, with 200 to 300 rupees, we could buy vegetables for the entire week but now it is spent in just two to three days. It has become difficult to manage the kitchen budget."

For many restaurants, though the hike in vegetable rates has inflated the cost of dishes served to customers, they refrain from recalibrating the prices.

"Most restaurants have fixed menus, and we have regular customers, so we can't fluctuate our prices like suppliers can. This puts pressure on our margins. We try not to increase our prices too often, but sometimes we are forced to do so annually due to these unexpected cost increases," Manpreet Singh, owner of Zen Restaurant in Connaught Place, and honorary treasurer of the National Restaurant Association of India, said.

"This is the challenge for restaurants with printed menus, which can't be changed frequently. Those with electronic menus or tablets are rare," he added.

Asked if the surge in items like tomato, garlic and coriander has led restaurants to reduce their usage in dishes, Singh said, it is usually not done unless absolutely necessary.

"As an owner, who has been serving people for years, we can't reduce the usage of any particular item. Some fast food outlets might do this, but most big established brands wouldn't until it's absolutely necessary. Regular customers expect consistency, and it's a long-term fight to maintain this," he said. "You can't stop serving tomatoes just because their prices

The owner of the street Kiosk shop selling meals in the Chhatarpur area of South Delhi said, "We have to buy vegetables at a higher cost but if we increase prices for dishes customers won't come. We don't have any option than to wait for the prices to come

If parole can be granted to share grief, why not for a happy occasion: Bombay HC

NEW DELHI, July 13: In a move to MUMBAI, July 13: The Bombay High Court enhance educational accessibility for has granted parole to a man to bid farewell to deaf students, the Indian Sign Lanhis son, who is going to Australia for further guage Research and Training Center (ISLRTC) and YUNIKEE have studies, holding that if parole can be granted to share grief, it can also be for a happy occasigned an agreement to boost educa-

The court said conditional release for a brief time is allowed to convicts to let them be in touch with the outside world and to arrange for their family affairs as though behind bars, the convict continues to be someone's son, husband, father or brother.

A division bench of Justices Bharati Dangre and Manjusha Deshpande in its order of July 9 said the provisions of parole and furlough have been time and again looked towards as a "humanistic approach" towards the convicts.

The court was hearing a petition filed by one Vivek Shrivastav seeking parole to arrange the tuition fees and other expenses for his son's education at an Australian university and to also bid farewell to him.

The prosecution opposed the plea claiming that parole is normally given in emergency situations. Arranging money for education and bidding son farewell are not grounds on which parole should be given, it said. The high court said it failed to understand this reasoning of the prosecution. "Grief is an emotion, so is happiness and if parole can be granted to share grief, why not to share a happy occasion or moment," the high court said.

The court said it fails to understand if parole can be granted to celebrate marriage, then why the benefit of the rule cannot be extended to he can arrange for financial resources and bid the petitioner in the present case who needs it farewell to his son, who has secured an admisto arrange tuition fees for his son's foreign education and to bid him farewell. The court HC said. (PTI)

granted Shrivastav parole for ten days. Shrivastav was convicted in a 2012 murder case and is serving his life sentence. He was convicted in 2018 and he filed an appeal in HC

against his conviction in 2019 As per his plea, his son has been selected for a course in Australia for which tuition fees of ₹ 36 lakh have to be deposited along with travelling and stay expenses.

Shrivastav sought release on parole for a month to arrange the money and help out his The bench said the aim and objective of the

rules formulated to release a convict either on parole or on furlough was to enable the inmate to maintain continuity with his family life and deal with family matters. ...and also to save him from the evil effects of continuous prison life and maintain his

mental balance by creating active interest in

life and to enable him to remain hopeful for the future," HC said. "The core of the benefits made available under the Prisons (Bombay Furlough and Parole) Rules, is to repose the faith of a convict

in the system," the court said. It added that as per the Rules, parole is not just granted in cases of emergencies but also to attend happy occasions or to cater to the needs of family members.

"We miserably fail to understand why the benefit of parole should be denied to the petitioner on a happy occasion like this, where the petitioner is seeking temporary relief so that sion in a prestigious university in Australia,"

AERA imposes steep hikes on user development fee at Jaipur airport

JAIPUR, July 13: Flying in and out of Jaipur is set to get more expensive as the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India (AERA) has hiked the user development fee (UDF) at the Jaipur Airport by more than double to ₹805 per passenger, while a charge of ₹ 345 has been imposed on arriving visitors.

The fee hikes have been updated on the basis of proposals for development worth Rs 6,000 crore submitted by the Jaipur International Airport Ltd (JIAL). At present, the UDF on domestic departure

is ₹394 per passenger which will be 805 from August 1. There was no UDF on domestic arrival at present but now ₹ 345 will be charged per passenger on domestic arrival.

The revised tariff by AERA, which regulates the aeronautical charges, has been done under the set process considering the massive infrastructure development work that the JIAL is set to undertake in the next few years to enhance passenger convenience and security. However, the UDF for international departure has been reduced from the present ₹ 1,237 per passenger to ₹ 980 per passenger from August 1 to March 31, 2025.

Like domestic arrival, UDF has also been imposed on international arrivals, which will be ₹ 420 per passenger for the current fiscal year. The AERA issued an order on Friday to revise the UDF for domestic and international passengers at Jaipur airport for 2024-25, 2025-26, and 2026-27.

IPR(BTC)/C/2024-25/130

The revised fee for the current fiscal year will be applicable from August 1.

According to the AERA order, the UDF per departing passenger for domestic travel will be ₹805 from August 1 this year to March 31, 2025. This will be ₹ 875 per passenger in 2025-26 and ₹ 980 in 2026-27

At the same time, the UDF per passenger departing for international travel will be 980 from August 1 this year to March 31, 2025 and it will be ₹ 1,260 per passenger in 2025-26 and ₹ 1,400 in 2026-27.

Revision of tariff takes place in every five years at all the airports across the country but delay in case of Jaipur by two years was due to the Covid-19 pandemic, according to a JIAL official. The official told PTI here that the revision takes place on the basis of development plans, which involve huge costs.

The JIAL submitted a multi-year proposal to AERA, which regulates the aeronautical charges and has a well-defined process of determining tariff and after consultation with relevant stakeholders and verification of the investment and expenditure plan, essential for effectively running the operations decided on the tariff.

He said JIAL has carried out a master planning exercise to identify capital expenditure necessary for safety, security, passenger convenience and optimal utilisation of the airport and submitted the plan accordingly to the AERA. (PTI)

NAME CORRECTION

I, Sumidra Sharma is

legally wedded spouse of No. 1055787W, Rank-Havildar, Name - late Bindu Madhav Sharma presently residing at vill-Baluhandar, PO- Laskar Pathar, PS- Lanka, Dist-Hojai, Assam, PIN-782446. That I have changed my name from Rasho Sharma(name as per record) to Sumidra Sharma(new proposed name) as all my documents consists of the same name. That my Date of birth is 01-01-1958. That I am producing an affidavit for the purpose of evidence for my name. That both the names, Sumidra Sharma and Rasho Sharma pertain to the one and the same person i.e. Me.

Sumidra Sharma W/O- late Bindu Madhav Sharma PO- Laskar Pathar PS- Lanka Dist- Hojai, Assam

Dated Kokrajhar the 12th July/2024.

Satellite images suggest architectural wealth beneath Mahabodhi temple in Bodh Gaya: Officials

PATNA, July 13: A geospatial analysis utilising satellite images and ground surveys has found evidence of the presence of 'huge architectural wealth' buried in the Mahabodhi temple complex and its surroundings in Bihar's Bodh Gaya, officials said on Saturday.

The study has been carried out by the Bihar Heritage Development Society (BHDS), a wing of the Art, Culture and Youth Department, in collaboration with the Cardiff University of the United King-

The Mahabodhi temple complex, a UN-ESCO World Heritage site, is one of the four holy areas related to the life of Lord Gautam Buddha.

Bodh Gaya is a place where Lord Buddha is believed to have attained enlighten-

"The study has unearthed evidence of the presence of archaeological treasure beneath the soil of the UNESCO World Heritage site and its surrounding areas...It's a huge architectural wealth that needs further excavation," the Art, Culture and Youth Department's Additional Chief Secretary Harjot Kaur Bamhrah told PTI.

The UK-based varsity and the BHDS are cooperating in the project, 'Archaeology on the footsteps of the Chinese traveller Xu-

anzang Bengaluru-based National Institute of Advanced Studies faculty member M B Rajni, one of the project members, studied satellite images of the Mahabodhi temple and its surroundings and tried to correlate the findings with the description of 'Xuan-

zang', she said. The present Mahabodhi temple complex at Bodh Gaya comprises the 50-metre-high grand temple, the Vajrasana, the sacred Bodhi tree and other six sacred sites of Buddha's enlightenment, surrounded by numerous ancient stupas, well maintained and protected by inner, middle and outer circular boundaries.

"The BHDS in association with Cardiff University has been working on the multidisciplinary project on the archaeological trail of the travel of 7th-century Chinese



translator monk, Xuanzang, in Bihar. The satellite images from the last several years show an alignment of structures to the north of the temple, buried underground,' said Bamhrah.

Significantly, the images show the shift of the river Niranjana from east to west. "Let us remember that the Mahabodhi temple is west of the river, and the Sujata Stupa and several other archaeological remains are located east of the river. The monuments and other archaeological remains in the east of the river are now regarded to be independent of the Mahabodhi

"But the latest finding shows that both the temple and the Sujata stupa along with other archaeological remains stood on the same river bank in the past," she said.

Bamhrah said this is really "very signif-

"Thus, there is a strong possibility that the monuments and other archaeological remains, now east of the river, were a part of the Mahabodhi complex," the official

The BHDS plans to start "research to delimit the boundaries of the Mahabodhi complex in the light of these findings", she "Fresh ground-penetrating radar (GPR)

survey, followed by excavations, will be

undertaken to unravel the buried archaeological features shown by satellite images," Elaborating on the findings, BHDS Executive Director Bijoy Kumar Choudhary told PTI, "Our fresh study has revealed

several findings that include to the north of

the temple premises, a square monastery complex enclosed by a wall with a surrounding moat and an extended settlement to its north"

Hiuen Tsang, also known as Xuanzang, was a Chinese Buddhist, monk scholar, traveller and translator

He travelled from China to India to obtain Buddhist scriptures during the reign of King Harsha Vardhan. He is best known for his journey to India from 629 to 645 CE and his efforts to bring over 657 Indian texts into China. His writings had a significant impact on the development of Buddhism in China.

Xuanzang's travelogue of India helped Alexander Cunningham in 1860s and 1870s to identify famous sites such as Nalanda and Vaishali

"The square wall of the monastery complex is of special interest as it had been excavated by Cunningham in the 19th century, but no further excavations have been conducted. However, this area has great potential for systematic excavation.

"Upon analysing satellite imagery, we identified two concentric squares...an outer square enclosing 4.9 acres and an inner one enclosing 2.5 acres. Between the outer and inner squares, there is a gap of about 15 metres and in the south and 20 meters in the east and the west. The southern boundary of the outer square is approximately 300 feet from the wall of the Mahabodhi temple complex," says the report of Rajni.

"Although traces of the monastery are no longer visible on the ground, satellite imagery revealed that the squares overlap significantly with Samanvay Ashram," Rajni

In particular, the well that Cunningham observed at the Centre of the monastery's pillared court might be one of the two wells located within the Ashram to the south of the statue of Dwarkoji Sunderani, she said. 'The Ashram's southern boundary, marked

by a compound wall on a raised ridge, aligns with the southern boundary of the outer square, thus suggesting the buried remnants of an earlier wall," Rajni added. (PTI)

No. KDB/BTC/15thFC-17/2023-24/

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed tenders are invited on behalf of P&RDDeptt, BTC, Kokrajhar, from the intending Contractors/Suppliers/ Firms for the work mentioned below:-

Sl. No.	Name of activity	Estimated Value (In Rs.)	EMD/Bid Security (In Rs.)	Tender Fees	Last date & time of bid submission	Date & Time of bid opening
	Imp. of road E/F and S/G from near Dipak house to near Krishna house at Habrubari village.	Rs. 5,00,000.00	Rs. 5,000/- (1% for ST/SC/OBC) & Rs.10,000/- (2% for Gen)	Rs.150.00	08-08-2024 (14.00 Hrs)	08-08-2024 (14.00 Hrs)

Details NIT may be seen in all working days during office hours in the office of the undersigned. Tender papers will be issued to the contractors or their authorized agent from 15-07-2024 to08-08-2024 in the office of the undersigned on payment of cost of Tender paper in the form of demand draft/Banker cheque from any Nationalized Bank, duly pledge in favour of the Principal Secretary, BTC, Kokrajhar, payable at Kokrajhar. The Contractor should submit attested copy of latest Registration Certificate, GST Labour License, Pan Card, etc. along with the tender. In case office remains closed on tender issuing/receiving/opening datethe same will be issued /received/opened on the next working days without further notification. The successful Tenderer has to be submitted 1% (One P/C in case ST/SC/OBC/MOBC) and 2% (Two P/C in case of General) S.D. Money against the work in the form of FDR/Bankers cheque/Demand Draft from any Nationalized Bank duly pledge to the Block Development Officer, Kokrajhar Development Block, Titaguri as mentioned above at the time of allotment of work. After the Tender the Comparative Statement and the Tender papers along with other relevant papers will be forwarded to the Director, P&RD, BTC, for his kind approval. The Director P&RD, Kokrajhar reserves the right of accepting of tenders paper or outright rejection of the same without any reason thereof.

The Tender documents can be seen/obtained from http://sppp.assam.gov.in from 15/07/2024 (10.30 hours). A prebid meeting will be held on 19-07-2024 (11.30 Hrs). The address for the meeting is o/o the B.D.O., Kokrajhar Development Block, Titaguri. The Bid will be opened in the office of the undersigned as per the schedule mentioned above. The Tender Inviting Authority reserves the right to accept or reject any bid/tender and to cancel/annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award.

Name of the TIA: - BDO, Kokrajhar Dev. Block, Titaguri. Address of the TIA:- BDO, Kokrajhar Dev. Block, Titaguri ENTERTAINMENT

MUMBAI, July 13: Shah Rukh Khan touching the feet of Amitabh and Jaya Bachchan, Rajinikanth shaking a leg with Anil Kapoor and Ranveer Singh to Kim and Khloe Kardashian making a stylish entry... These were some of the scenes from Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant's extravagant nuptials which have been dubbed as the "wedding of the year" by

After months of grand pre-wedding celebrations in different installments, Anant -- youngest Ambani scion -- tied the knot with Radhika, daughter of pharma tycoons Viren and Shaila Merchant, on Friday night in Mumbai

Social media is flooded with clips of film and media celebrities attending the grand celebration, which took place at the Jio World Drive, a convention centre built and owned by the Ambani family.

On the red carpet, Amitabh and Jaya Bachchan, dressed in traditional finery, were joined by their children Abhishek Bachchan and Shweta Bachchan Nanda along with her husband Nikhil Nanda and their kids Navya and Agastya Nanda. Abhishek's wife Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and

daughter Aaradhya Bachchan posed for the shutterbugs later.

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It was a moment straight out of their 2001 hit family drama "Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham.." when Shah Rukh greeted and touched the feet of his on-screen parents Amitabh and Jaya Bachchan.

On early Saturday morning, Amitabh Bachchan shared a blog post after returning from the "glorious wedding".

".. and the feel after a very long time of public exposure, the wealth of love and affection that I can possibly think of with so many old acquaintances .. they seemed to have changed in their physiognomy, but extremely sincere in their affection towards the association and the love of our times well spent together .. This is what life is all about .. the associations and love and care .. (sic)" he wrote.

Like the Bachchans, Shah Rukh also reached the venue wife Gauri Khan, and elder children Aryan Khan and Suhana Khan.

Then there was also Rajinikanth, who arrived with his wife Lata,

From Bachchans, Khans to Kardashians, stars add glitz and glamour to AMBANI WEDDING



On the red carpet, Amitabh & Jaya Bachchan, dressed in traditional finery, were joined by Abhishek and Shweta along with her husband Nikhil Nanda & their kids Navya and Agastya. Abhishek's wife Aishwarya and daughter Aaradhya Bachchan posed for the shutterbugs later

daughter Soudarya, son-in-law Vishagan Vanangamudi and grandson Veer. The Tamil superstar, dressed in traditional Tamil wear, danced to 'dhol' beats with Ranveer and Anil Kapoor with the groom trying to match steps with the trio

Hollywood actor and former wrestler John Cena couldn't stop himself from grooving to the beats of the 'dhol'. Much to the delight of Indian fans from his WWE days, Cena -- powder blue kurta paired with a white bottom - also did his famous provocative gesture "You can't see me" as he shook a leg with fellow attendees.

Also part of the celebrations were American media personalities Kim Kardashian and Khloe Kardashian, who opted for traditional Indian attire custom made by celebrity designer Manish Malhotra.

SUNDAY, JULY 14, 2024

In a video doing social media rounds, the Kardashian sister duo could be seen being welcomed by Nita Ambani, the mother of the groom, into the wedding hall. In her Instagram Story, Kim said Anant-Radhika's wedding will feature on "The Kardashians", their popular reality series.

Actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas along with singer-husband Nick Jonas, Salman Khan, Sanjay Dutt, Arjun Kapoor, Rashmika Mandanna, Ananya Panday, Shanaya Kapoor, Madhuri Dixit Nene, Alia Bhatt, Ranbir Kapoor, Vicky Kaushal, and Katrina Kaif were part of Anant's 'baaraat' or wedding procession.

Akshay Kumar skipped the event amid reports of the actor being diagnosed with COVID-19.

One of the highlights of the function was Salman and Shah Rukh dancing and lip-syncing to their classic song "Bhangra Pa Le" from their 1995 film "Karan Arjun". Madhuri was all grace when she moved to the rhythm of her popular song "Choli Ke Peeche Kya Hai" from 1993's "Khalnayak" and Priyanka was having a time of her life dancing to "Chikni Chameli" from her 2012 film "Agneepath".

Rapper Rema brought the house down with his stage act on the chartbuster "Calm Down" with Salman, Ranveer, Anant and Ambani family patriarch Mukesh Ambani, as well as Shanaya Kapoor vibing in the audience. The Nigerian rapper reportedly charged around Rs 25 crore for his performance.

Vicky Kaushal rocked the stage as singer-rapper Honey Singh belted out smash hits like "Blue Hai Paani Paani", "Love Dose", and "Main Sharabi". Ranveer also led the crowd to join him as he performed the hook step of "Tattad Tattad" from 2013's "Ram-Leela".

Janhvi Kapoor, Khushi Kapoor, Sara Ali Khan, Ibrahim Ali Khan, Ram Charan and Mahesh Babu were also part of the wedding party. The three-day wedding Ambani extravaganza is the final stop in a string

of lavish parties the family has hosted since March.

The pre-wedding festivities kickstarted in Gujarat's Jamnagar which witnessed the performances by pop diva Rihanna and the who's who of Bol-

lywood.

In June, the celebrations continued with a luxury cruise party across
Italy and South of France where guests were enthralled by the likes of the

Backstreet Boys, Pitbull, David Guetta, Katy Perry and Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli.

Singer-songwriter Justin Rieber performed at the 'sangeet' ceremony.

Singer-songwriter Justin Bieber performed at the 'sangeet' ceremony last week in Mumbai.

Also part of the wedding celebrations were former Indian president Ram Nath Kovind, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin and former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair.

The celebrations will continue with a small dinner for exclusive guests on Saturday and a grand reception on July 14. (PTI)



KIM KARDASHIAN SAYS ANANT-RADHIKA'S WEDDING TO FEATURE ON 'THE KARDASHIANS'

NEW DELHI, July 13: American socialite and entrepreneur Kim Kardashian, who attended Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant's wedding with sister Khloe Kardashian in Mumbai, has revealed the lavish ceremony will be a part of their reality TV show "The Kardashians". Kim, 43, and Khloe, 40, were among several international celebrities who arrived in India to attend the nuptials of Anant and Radhika, held on Friday night at Mumbai's Jio World Drive -- a convention centre built and owned by the Ambani family.

In a previous video shared by Khloe on social media, a production crew with cameras, lights and microphones were seen following the sister duo around and some eagle-eyed fans had suspected they were shooting for "The Kardashians".

In her latest post on her Instagram Story, Kim posted a screengrab of a video of her and Khloe after they got ready ahead of the high-profile ceremony and shared they were indeed filming for their popular reality series.

"Had to screen grab our video be we're just so happy to be lucky enough to travel the world together! And duh we were filming The Kardashians too so you guys can see Kim and Khloe take India (sic)" she wrote.

"The Kardashians", which streams in India on Disney+ Hotstar, focuses on the personal lives of the Kardashian–Jenner family. The series is a retooled continuation of their previous reality show "Keeping Up with the Kardashians", which concluded in 2021 after a 20-season run on US network E!. Both the sisters, styled by Dani Levi, were dressed in custom-made designs and jewellery by celebrity-favourite designer Manish Malhotra. While Kim was draped in a glittering red saree, Khloe opted for an ivory-gold saree with heavy embellishments. (PTI)

India to host first global summit for media and entertainment sector in November

NEW DELHI, July 13: India will host the first World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit in November alongside the International Film Festival of India in Goa, with I&B Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw promising to strengthen the ecosystem for the protection of intellectual property rights in the media and entertainment sector.

Vaishnaw and Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant made the announcement of the first World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit in Goa from November 20-24 and described it as a visionary initiative by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as India seeks to make a mark in the media and entertainment

"IP rights hold huge value in the media and entertainment sector. We will be strengthening the ecosystem for protecting IP rights," Vaishnaw, the Information and Broadcasting Minister, said in his address at the curtain raiser event for WAVES.

Vaishnaw said the government was also exploring ways to make available low-cost funds to the media and entertainment sector with learnings from the venture capital model. Sawant said WAVES will add a new dimension for industry collaboration, networking and growth in the media and entertainment sector. He said the sector had produced 3,000 hours of content for the OTT platforms in 2023 itself.

The International Film Festival of India will be held from November 20-28 in Goa, Sawant said. The media and entertainment sector is pegged at USD 27.5 billion in India and the government seeks to position WAVES as a platform to evoke ideas, fuel conversations, facilitate knowledge exchange and engage in meaningful collaborations with industry leaders from across the world.

It also seeks to present India as a business-friendly country and an investment destination for the sector. I&B Secretary Sanjay Jaju said the WAVES event would seek to position India as a global leader in the media and entertainment sector. (PTI)

Directing a film in two languages a joy and challenge: Sudha Kongara on 'Soorarai Pottru', 'Sarfira'

MUMBAI, July 13: Directing a film in two languages is a rewarding as well as a challenging endeavour, says director Sudha Kongara, who helmed the Tamil hit "Soorarai Pottru" and its Hindi adaptation "Sarfira".

"Sarfira", fronted by Akshay Kumar, released in theatres on Friday. It is the Hindi remake of "Soorarai Pottru", featuring Suriya. Inspired by events from the life of Air Deccan Founder Captain G R Gopinath, the 2020 original won five National Film Awards, including Best Feature Film and Best Actor. Kongara said the toughest part of making a film in different languages is to ensure that the essence of the story "remains intact". "Directing the same film in two languages is both a joy and a challenge. The joy comes from being able to present the story to diverse audiences and witnessing how different cultural nuances can bring new dimensions to the narrative... "Working with different actors on reinterpretations of the film brings fresh perspectives, personalities and nuances to the characters, which can be equally enriching and refreshing," the filmmaker told PTI in an interview.

The plot of the two films revolves around the protagonist, who sets out to make the common man fly and in the process takes on the world's most capital-intensive industry with the help of his family, friends and sheer willpower.

Both Tamil and Hindi versions stay true to the narrative and spirit of the story, said the director, adding there are subtle differences in the execution to cater to respective audiences.

In "Soorarai Pottru", the name of the main lead played by Suriya is called Nedumaaran Rajangam or 'Maara'. In the Hindi remake, the character played by Kumar becomes Vir Mha-

Aparna Balamurali essayed Maara's wife, Sundari 'Bommi' Nedumaaran. The role has been played by Radhika Madan with a different name (Rani Mhatre) in "Sarfira". Paresh Rawal has starred in both versions.

"The actors, Suriya and Akshay and Aparna and Radhika had completely different takes on their roles, which have come out in their respective performances. Also, 'Sarfira' focuses on the entrepreneurial mindset of the current generation," she said.

Kumar's versatility as a performer and his passion for bringing stories of unsung heroes to the big screen made him the ideal choice for the Hindi adaptation, added Kongara.

"When I approached him with the script, he was immediately intrigued by the story and the character of Vir Jagannath Mhatre. He also had a lot of new ideas and inputs on how to make his character and 'Sarfira' different from the original and more suited to the Hindi market which has made the film

richer." The success of "Soorarai Pottru" laid the groundwork for "Sarfira", she said.

"The universal appeal of the story prompted me to make the film in Hindi. The protagonist's journey is not just a regional tale but a story of hope and perseverance that can inspire people across India and cut across demographics," added the director, who Hindi cinema directors Sanjay Leela Bhansali, Zoya Akhtar, Kabir

Khan, Neeraj Pandey, and Shimit Amin.

Kongara said the language of cinema transcends barriers.

"As a filmmaker, the language doesn't matter to me. If I get to work in Odisha cinema, or in Kannada I would love to make films in those languages too. In Hindi films, I would love to work with Amitabh Bachchan, Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, Madhuri Dixit, Shefali Shah, Tabu, Ranbir Kapoor, Deepika Padukone, Alia Bhatt, and work with Paresh Rawal again as he's a master."

From delving into his memoir "Simply Fly: A Deccan Odyssey" to unravelling the intricacies of the aviation industry, the director said she spent almost a decade on researching the subject because she wanted to authentically capture Gopinath's incredible journey. (PTI)



EURO 2024 FINAL

Spain eye record 4th title, England look to end 58-year wait

England meet in the final of the European Championship on Sunday. Spain is seeking a record fourth title at the Euros to break a tie with Germany, while England is bidding for a first major trophy in men's soccer since the 1966 World Cup.

Here's what to know about the

Spain will start as the favorite after winning all six of its matches at Euro 2024 and being widely regarded as the best team at the tournament. Winning the title would continue a strong period of success for Spanish national teams, with the men having captured the UEFA Nations League in June last year and the women following that up by winning the World Cup two months

Lamine Yamal is Spain's new star having set up three goals before the semifinals, where he scored a spectacular long-range strike in the victory over France — all at the age of 16. He turned 17 on Saturday, the day before the final. It is a breakthrough major tournament for Yamal, much like it was for a 19-year-old Kylian Mbappé at the 2018 World Cup and a 17-year-old Pelé at the 1958 World Cup.

Spain last appeared in a final at a major tournament in 2012, when the team won the third of its European Championship titles by beating Italy 4-0. England played in the final of Euro 2020, which was played in 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic, and lost in a penalty shootout to Italy.

England has shown resilience



by coming from behind in all three of its knockout-stage matches at Euro 2024. Jude Bellingham scored an equalizer from an overhead kick in the fifth minute of stoppage time in the extra-time win over Slovakia in the last 16, Bukayo Saka equalized in the 80th minute against Switzerland in the quarterfinals before England won a penalty shootout, and substitute Ollie Watkins scored a winner almost exactly on 90 minutes against the Netherlands in the semifinals. England coach Gareth South-

gate is often criticized for his ingame management but he has changed the culture inside the squad and is regularly getting the team deep at major tournaments. In Southgate's tenure that started in 2016, England has reached the World Cup semifinals in 2018 and now back-to-back European Championship finals.

Spain captain Alvaro Morata has been in training this week after limping out of the semifinal win over France after being knocked to the ground in the postmatch celebrations by a steward made two appearances as a sec-

trying to stop a pitch invader. Right back Dani Carvajal returns from suspension, leaving the only real selection dilemma at center back for coach Luis de la Fuente. with Nacho or Robin Le Normand vying to partner Aymeric Laporte. Dani Olmo should again fill in for the injured Pedri as Spain's attacking central midfielder. Southgate has to decide who to play at left back — or left wing back — out of Kieran Trippier or Luke Shaw. Shaw is a natural on that side but has only

ond-half substitute at Euro 2024 after recovering from an injury that had sidelined him since February. Otherwise, Southgate will choose the same players, with the 19-year-old Kobbie Mainoo having nailed down the problematic spot in central midfield alongside Declan Rice.

Spain's previous European Championship titles came in 1964, 2008 and 2012.

There are six players on a tournament-high three goals at Euro 2024 and two are playing in the final: England captain Harry Kane and Spain playmaker Dani Olmo. The others are Georges Mikautadze of Georgia, Cody Gakpo of the Netherlands, Ivan Schranz of Slovakia and Jamal Musiala or Germany.

It has been six years since Spain and England met in a senior men's international. In 2018, they played a Nations League doubleheader, with Spain winning 2-1 at Wembley Stadium and England winning 3-2 in Sevilla a month later. "I don't say it becomes run of the mill but it's a little bit more normal for us. That statement in itself is probably ridiculous given our history." — England coach Gareth Southgate on reaching a second straight final at the Euros.

"I would like him to work with the same humility, keep his feet on the ground in order to keep improving, learning with the same kind of attitude and that professionalism, that maturity that he shows on the pitch. He looks like a much more experienced player, to be honest," Spain coach Luis de la Fuente said on Lamine

Court orders framing charges of cheating, conspiracy against four in 2000 cricket matchfixing case

NEW DELHI, July 13: A court court said the call details and here has ordered framing charges of criminal conspiracy and cheating against four persons accused of fixing international cricket matches between India and South Africa in 2000.

Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Neha Priya was hearing the case against Rajesh Kalra, Krishan Kumar, Sunil Dara and Sanjeev Chawla. The Chanakaya Puri police station had registered a case against them.

Noting the evidence before it, the court said that the "chain of events, record of conversations. conduct and surrounding circumstances" showed the complicity of Kalra, Kumar and Dara in the deals struck by Chawla with Hansie Cronje (deceased and also an accused) and led to the "inference that they were acting in connivance and were co-participants in the main object of fixing cricket matches for monetary gain." In an order passed on July 11, the court said there was sufficient material on record to frame charges against the four accused under Indian Penal Code sections 420 (cheating) read with 120 B (criminal conspiracy) and for the offence under section 120 B of the IPC.

The material raised "grave suspicion against each of them regarding their role in the criminal conspiracy to cheat and dishonestly induce delivery of property from the spectators and BCCI during the test matches and one day international (ODI) cricket matches held in India from February 19 to March 19, 2000, between South Africa and India".

'Charges are ordered to be framed accordingly," the court said. In its 68-page order, the

recordings disclosed that the accused persons were in constant touch with each other discussing various facets of match-fixing and betting.

"The transcripts of their call intercepts reveal that during this time, they discussed the team composition for the next upcoming match in a series of matches between South Africa and India (based on the information received by accused Sanjeev Chawla from accused Hansie Cronje); the fixed team scores/ individual scores agreed with accused Hansie Cronje; amount of money to be placed on bets; pooling of money; their odds if the players don't perform as per agreed plan; money transactions during betting/match fixing, etc." the court said.

It observed that the maxim that truth is stranger than fiction was more true in the case of cricket than any other sport and the only thing predictable about a game of cricket was its unpredictability.

"In fact, one of the reasons for such astounding popularity of cricket is the element of uncertainty and the lack of predictability of results, even by the experts. If this aspect of the game is taken out of the equation, and if the spectators know that the result is pre-decided, there would be zero interest in watching the match,' the court said.

"For personal monetary gain, accused no. 6 Hansie Cronje (in connivance with the accused persons) is alleged to have fixed the matches, altered the natural course of the game and still participated in the matches as a captain of the rival team concealing

Britain's Princess of Wales to make rare public appearance at Wimbledon men's final

LONDON, July 13: Britain's and Prince Louis – on the Buck-Princess of Wales, Kate Middleton, will make a rare public appearance amid ongoing cancer treatment to present the winning since abdominal surgery earlier in trophy at the men's tennis single's the year and her social media revfinal of the Wimbledon Champi- elation of a diagnosis of an undisonships in London, her Kensington Palace office announced on Saturday.

The senior royal, herself a tennis player, will attend the final of the tournament on Sunday in her role as Patron of the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club since 2016. She will then present the Grand Slam trophy to either Novak Djokovic or Carlos Alcaraz after their much-anticipated clash on the grass court.

"The Princess of Wales, Patron of the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club will attend the Gentlemen's Singles Final of The Championships, Wimbledon on Sunday 14th July," Kensington Palace said in a statement.

It will mark only the second official public appearance since the 42-year-old princess revealed she was undergoing preventative chemotherapy following a cancer diagnosis. Last month, she attended King Charles III's annual birthday parade, known as Trooping the Colour, where she joined her father-in-law, husband Prince William and their three children – Prince George, Princess Charlotte

ingham Palace balcony for the customary photograph. It was her first official royal engagement closed form of cancer in March.

Ahead of the appearance in early June, she issued a statement to stress that she plans to take things slow to give her body time to heal.

She said at the time: "As anyone going through chemotherapy will know, there are good days and bad days," she said, adding her treatment is ongoing and will be for a few more months.

"I am learning how to be patient, especially with uncertainty. Taking each day as it comes, listening to my body, and allowing myself to take this much needed time to heal."

While she is on the tennis court in London, Prince William will be flying to Berlin to watch England take on Spain in the finals of Euro 2024 in Germany.

In his role as President of the Football Association (FA), the 42year-old Prince of Wales has been cheering the England football team, known as the Three Lions, through the tournament in which they made it to their first Euros final on foreign soil earlier this

Uruguay coach says players deserve apology, not sanctions after Copa America fight

CHARLOTTE, N.C., July 13: Uruguay coach Marcelo Bielsa thinks his players deserve an apology, not sanctions, for going into the stands at Bank of America Stadium and participating in a fight with Colombia fans following his team's 1-0 Copa a semifinal loss

An angry Bielsa criticized tournament organizers for not doing enough to protect the families of players seated behind the Uruguay bench and he justified players taking matters into their own hands to protect their loved ones. "We are in the United States, the country of security," Bielsa said through an interpreter during an emotional 45-minute news conference Friday. "How can you not defend your mother, your sister, a baby? If they did not do it, they would have been condemned by all of us."

CONMEBOL, South American soccer's governing body, said Thursday its disciplinary committee opened an investigation. "It is unacceptable that an incident like this turns passion into violence," the federation said in a statement.

Asked if he feared sanctions for his team, Bielsa grew irate. "The sanction does not have to be for the footballers, but for those who forced them to act like this," Bielsa said. "This is a witch

hunt. It is a shame. Uruguay had the option of



seating families in luxury boxes instead of in the crowd.

The team returns to the same venue for Saturday night's thirdplace game against Canada. While the crowd is expected to be more subdued, the same level of security is planned.

A raucous crowd of more than 70,000 — the vast majority of whom were wearing Colombia's colors — attended the match Wednesday night at the downtown Charlotte stadium, home of the NFL's Carolina Panthers and Charlotte FC.

There were only a few small patches of Uruguay fans in the crowd at the start of the game, many of them behind the team's

After an emotional and physi-

cal game that included seven vellow cards and one red, a fight broke out in the stands and drinks were thrown. Shoving and punches ensued. The melee grew in terms of the magnitude of people involved before more than a dozen Uruguay players, including Darwin Núñez, climbed a small set of portable stairs into

the crowd. Bielsa said not enough precautions were in place and an emergency exit path for Uruguay fans was not provided. Many in the Uruguayan soccer association delegation got away from the fighting by climbing down onto the playing field while Mecklenburg County Police and security restored order as the stadium was

ICC Board likely to discuss expenses of US leg of T20 WC

NEW DELHI, July 13: The United States-leg of the T20 World Cup is believed to have exceeded the budget and the allpowerful ICC Board will discuss the losses suffered when it meets during the Annual Conference of the world governing body in Colombo on July 19. Since the auditing isn't com-

plete, it is difficult to quote a figure of losses as the amount received through gate receipts (ticketing) is yet to be fully computed.

However, there is feeling among prominent board members that losses for the US-leg of the tournament could run into millions of dollars.

It has been learnt that Tournament Director Chris Tetley has resigned but according to sources aware of the developments, the 49-year-old Englishman had decided to put in his papers even before the start of the tournament. "Many members aren't happy with Tetley's performance. He had tendered his resignation but it can't be said that USA leg of the T20 World Cup has got

anything to do with it," an ICC board source told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

"With at least three ICC global tournament and all associate nation getting T20I status, management work is relentless. Tetley, it is believed had decided to quit some time back."

Those who have worked closely to conduct the event believe that ICC will actually earn handsomely through the ticket sales. However what has irked the influential members of the ICC is choice of New York city as one of the venues for the marquee event.

The pitch and outfield of the Nassau County Cricket stadium had received a lot of flak and that was avoidable.

"The event was supposed to be held in the USA and there were other cities apart from New York where matches could have been organised. Why wasn't it considered? "No practice matches were played to test the strip, which was certainly unsuitable for top flight cricket," the source said.

BHAICHUNG BACKS SPAIN IN EURO CUP FINAL AGAINST KANE'S 3 LIONS

NEW DELHI, July 13: Former India captain Bhaichung Bhutia has backed Spain to win the Euro Cup final against England on Sunday, expecting Lamine Yamal and Nico Williams to mesmerize the fans worldwide with yet another stunning show in the summit

clash. "Spain definitely is going to have upper hand in the final because the way they've been playing, the team is completely balanced. They look technically so good, they have been outstanding with six out of six wins. They're definitely a team which is in form.

"Yamal and Williams are going to come up with another stellar show," Bhutia told PTI Videos in an interview. The 47-year-old legendary

India striker acknowledged that 17-year-old Yamal "is definitely "a superstar in the making". "We saw in this tournament, how he's been, he's got his assists, he's got his goal in the semi-finals. He knows when to release ball, when to dribble past the defenders. The greatest quality of player is making the right decision. And with Yamal as a 16-year-old boy, we can see that he does not overdo," he ob-

served. "The quality and football brains, we can see quite a lot in him. Seven to eight years down the line, I'm sure, we will be

seeing him as a contender or winner of the Footballer of the Year, Ballon d'Or. He might be getting quite a few in his career in years to come," Bhutia said of Yamal.

Bhutia, however, reckoned that Williams could be the big surprise in the final on Sunday.

"For Spain, I feel Williams, though Yamal is there, can be a big surprise in the finals because he's got that pace. He can be a major factor in game changing moments in the finals. If he can get his judgment right, he's definitely going to be a huge problem because righthand side, if they're going to play with three defence in England, they are going to get a lot



On why England is not his favourite for the final, he said, "I've never been a fan of Gareth Southgate's formation of going very defensive. I think they started with 4-2-3-1 and they were more defensive and not positive-minded. The kind of quality players they have, they should be playing free-flowing, attacking football, what Spain

"But I think in quarter-finals, semi-finals, he's changed the formation 3-4-3, where Phil Foden, even Bellingham has been able to come out and play quite their natural game. One of the main reasons why Phil matches Foden could do his best was the

formation which they were playing, they don't really give him that attacking support where he needed that." He, however, said he will still bet on England captain Harry Kane because he is known to be a natural goal scorer.

"He's scored goals in Premier League, he's gone to Bundesliga, he's a goal scorer at Bayern Munich. I think he is one of the best goal scorers in this generation. If you have to bet anybody to score goals, it's Harry Kane. And we've not seen his best so far.

"Kane is still somebody who can score goals and can win single-handedly.'

decent effort to keep the proceed-

Tadiwanashe Marumani (32 off 31

Zimbabwe reached 150-plus target

with almost all the Indian bowlers,

save leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi, en-

tering their names in the wickets

bowler Tushar Deshpande (1/30 in

3 overs) was handed a debut cap

but in his first spell he flattered to

deceive, either pitching it too full

More often than not he drifted

on the pads allowing both openers

Madhevere and Marumani to pick

Deshpande would feel good that

he could get rid of Raza with a

slower delivery in the slog overs

to prevent Zimbabwe from sur-

passing 170 which would have

Zimbabwe's best opening stand

for the series in the first three

games was 9 but Madhevere and

Marumani added 63 in a solid

stand even if it was not exactly

However once the opening

stand was broken by left-arm spin-

ner Abhishek, who forced Maru-

mani to mistime a pull-shot into

Rinku Singh's hands, Zimbabwe

couldn't press home advantage

Madhevere was accounted for

by Dube as he couldn't get the re-

quired elevation and distance to a

short ball. Rinku at deep mid-

wicket completed formality.

Brian Bennett (9 off 14 balls),

who was brilliant with the bat in

the second game failed to get

going before Washington sent him

back. This was after Dube and Ab-

hishek bowled wicket to wicket

and kept a check on scoring. (PTI)

or bowling too short.

up easy boundaries.

been par on this track.

spectacular

they had gained.

Medium fast

ings under control.

Jaiswal, Gill smash Zimbabwe bowlers; India secure series with 3-1 lead



HARARE, July 13: Yashasvi Jaiswal's flair was complemented by skipper Shubman Gill's poise as young Indian team cantered to a 10-wicket victory over Zimbabwe in the fourth T20 International, taking an unassailable 3-1 lead in the five-match series.

This is the second time that India beat Zimbabwe by 10 wickets after a similar-margin win at the same venue in 2016.

Jaiswal and Gill's approach was in complete contrast as the Mumbai southpaw went hammer and tongs during his unbeaten 93-run knock while the skipper (58 not out) was ready to play the second fiddle in a chase of 153 which was completed in 15.2 overs.

Aditi makes cut, Diksha exits at Evian

EVIAN LES BAINS, July 13: Aditi Ashok assured herself of the cut but fellow Indian Diksha Dagar withdrew before the truncated second round on medical grounds at the Amundi Evian Championship here. Play was suspended on the day due to lightning in the area. The officials met twice to see if resumption was possible but the storm continued to intensify with heavy rain, thunder and lightning.

Aditi added 1-under 70 to her first round 71 and was 1-under for 36 holes and T-44th up from overnight T-52. The second round is yet to finish. Diksha, who had a rough 76 on the first day, however, withdrew on medical grounds. Aditi, who won a LET event at Hero Women's Indian Open in her first year, has since won four more. The last win came in Spain in November 2023 and she has been on the LPGA since 2017. At 12under-par after 13 holes, Ayaka Furue of Japan holds a three-stroke lead, over Australian Stephanie Kyriacou and Haeran Ryu of South Korea, after 16 and 11 holes respectively. (PTI)

The target was made to look way easier than it should have been on a track that had good

bounce and carry. Jaiswal, who had to sit out during the T20 World Cup campaign hardly looked rusty, playing shots all around the wicket.

The thumping bowler's backdrive off rival skipper Sikandar Raza was delightful and equally stylish was the pick-up pull off Richard Ngarava for a six.

The lack of pace in Zimbabwean attack on a good wicket became home team's undoing as the dominant Jaiswal had reached his half-century with nine boundaries when the skipper was yet to reach

There was no way that Zimbabwe could have stopped the runfeast as towards the end, the bigger interest was whether the two flag bearers of Indian batting into the next decade could reach their individual milestones of half-

century and century. It was Gill, who got his fifty and that didn't leave Jaiswal with enough runs to complete his hun-

India's part-time Earlier bowlers Shivam Dube and Abhishek Sharma performed commendably in the middle overs to restrict Zimbabwe to a manageable 152 for seven after being put into bat by Gill.

Raza smashed 46 off 28 balls

Shubhankar makes cut; Theegala lies fifth at Scottish Open



two at The Renaissance Club to get

to 12 under as he looks for a

maiden Rolex Series title to con-

tinue his remarkable rise in the

outside the top 300 on the Offi-

cial World Golf Ranking when he

missed the cut here in just his

fifth professional start 12 months

maiden titles on the DP World Tour

and PGA Tour, played on a victo-

rious European Ryder Cup team,

Tournament on his Major debut

Frenchman Antoine Rozner

stayed bogey-free for the week

with a 64 of his own to sit at 11-

under, a shot clear of Italian Mat-

teo Manassero, who carded a 63,

and South Korea's Sungjae Im

Defending champion Rory McIlroy, American pair Collin

Morikawa and Theegala, Spaniard

Alejandro de Rey, Dane Rasmus

Hojgaard and Swede Alex Noren

the first day went 10 shots worse

with a 72 and at 8-under, he was

six behind. He hit a tee shot out of

play on No. 8, his 17th hole, for a

Xander Schauffele, who shot 65

and made his 51st consecutive cut

Jordan Spieth missed the cut

with 71-68 and also exiting early

were Hideki Matsuyama and

Six back was PGA champion

Justin Thomas who had 62 on

were then at nine under.

who carded a 67.

double bogey.

on the PGA TOUR.

Rickie Fowler. (PTI)

finished second at the Masters

and risen to fourth in the world.

But since then, he has won

The 24-year-old was sitting

NORTH BERWICK (SCOT-LAND), July 13: India's Shubhankar Sharma squeezed inside the cut line at the Scottish Open, landing an eagle in his second round for a 2-under 68 here.

Shubhankar is currently tied 63rd with a total of 3-under, where the cut fell. He had carded a 1under 69 in the first round.

Indian-American Sahith Theegala, who is also getting ready for next week's Open, shot 66 despite a double bogey on Par-4 18th on his card.

With 66-65 he was 9-under for a tied fifth and just three behind Swedish youngster, Ludvig Aberg, who is growing into a top star.

Aberg carded a second consecutive round of 64 to take a one-shot lead into the weekend.

This is the first cut Shubhankar has made here since 2020, when he finished tied 26th, his best at the

Shubhankar, who was tied 8th at the Open last year at Royal Liverpool, and is scheduled to tee up at Royal Troon next week, had four birdies, four bogeys and an eagle

Shubhankar turned in 1-under after a birdie start on the 10th and then had two bogeys and an eagle

On his second nine, he bogeyed the second, birdied third and dropped a shot on the fourth, at which stage he was off the cut line.

His back-to-back birdie efforts on fifth and the sixth hauled him back inside the cut line for the

Aberg went bogey-free on day

3RD ASIAN YOGASANA SPORTS CUP

Dibrugarh Yoga exponent Dipa Sen bags Gold



DIBRUGARH, July 13: Dibrugarh Yoga exponent Dipa Sen recently brought laurels for Dibrugarh by bagging gold medal in the third Asian Yogasana Sports Cup held at Dubai, UAE. Dipa bagged the gold medal

Artistic group. The competition was organised by the Asian Sports Yogasana Federation in Dubai, UAE on June 25 to 27, 2024.

in traditional Yogasana and

Dipa said, "I am happy to bag a Gold medal in both categories. Before the competition, I practised the Yoga everyday. This time, I have made up my mind that I will participate in the competition anyway and thanks to God, I participated and won a

Gold medal,' "Before coming to Yoga, I have been suffering from numerous diseases and taken many medicines but my health has not improved and it's deteriorating. went to Hyderabad for my treatment and doctors advised me to do yoga. After that I started doing Yoga and now I am fully fit and left all the medicines," Dipa said.

She further added, "Yoga has given me strength and teaches me how to lead a healthy life. I have done Yoga courses from K K Handique Open University and now I have 30-40 students who regularly come for Yoga practice,".

"Yoga will keep your mind healthy and relaxed if you practise yoga everyday. I stay fit and healthy. Everybody should do Yoga regularly," Dipa said.

Gukesh and Praggnanandhaa to headline Indian team in 45th Chess Olympiad

CHENNAI, July 13: D Gukesh and R Praggnanandhaa are notable Indian names who will take part in the upcoming Chess Olympiad set to be held in Hungary's Budapest in September.

Gukesh, who will be challenging defending world champion Ding Liren of China in the World Chess Championship in November, will treat the event as dress rehearsal leading up to the summit clash.

The 18-year-old has been on a great run this year, having won the prestigious Candidates event in Toronto earlier in April to become the youngest to compete in the World Championship finale. Confirming the teams to PTI, AICF Presi-

dent Nitin Narang stated that the team also comprises Arjun Erigaisi, Vidit Gujrathi and Harikrishna Pentala. The women's team features Harika Dron-

avalli, Vaishali Rameshbabu, Divya Deshmukh, Vantika Agrawal and Tania Sachdev. One of the notable omissions from the Women's side happens to be Grandmaster Koneru Humpy for reasons unknown, who

Meanwhile, Narang also confirmed that discussions are underway with coaches to or-

won the bronze medal in 2022.



ganize a pre-event camp

"Camp is scheduled in the end of August. The venue and date will be finalized soon,"

India hosted the previous edition of the Olympiad for the first time in 2022, where the hosts took the bronze medal in both the Open and Women's categories.

It will be the 45th edition of the Olympiad. Hungary will host the event for the first time in an official manner, having hosted the second unofficial Chess Olympiad in 1926. (PTI)

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Ex-Olympians say India's Oly preparations should be continuous process



KOLKATA, July 13: India's preparation for the Olympics should be a continuous process and the authorities should not wake up just months before the commencement of the 'greatest show on earth', former Olympians said.

They were speaking at a panel discussion here "In search of glory: India's prospects in the 2024 Olympics" organised by Indian Chamber of Commerce at a city hotel on Friday night.

Hockey icon Gurbux Singh, a member of the gold-winning hockey team in 1964 Olympics and bronze-winning team in 1968 Olympics, underscored the importance of inculcating a sports culture

among the youth, to have sporting infrastructure and grounds at every educational institution.

"We wake up when the Olympics comes. The whole country wakes up. That attitude must change," he said, adding that 90 per cent of parents want their children to pursue vocations other than sports.

About India's prospects in hockey in the 2024 Olympics, Singh said, "We are in a difficult group and our first target should be to secure a berth in the semifinal. One important thing should be when you go for the match you only have win

Gymnast Dipa Karmakar, who missed

the bronze narrowly in the 2016 Rio Olympics by finishing fourth at the vault event, said: "One should have the will power to achieve everything...

Recalling how a former foreign coach had discouraged her from trying the diffi-cult vault event in gymnastics, Karmakar asked every aspiring girl to turn every disadvantage and adversity in her favour, to fight any discrimination and make the motherland proud.

Recalling the unforgettable moments during and after the Rio event, the Arjuna awardee said: "As I finished fourth I had told sir Bisweswar Nandi how can I face the crores of countrymen who had reposed so much faith in me, who had put so much expectations on me, I had wanted to go straight to my city Agartala on return but he said the entire country is waiting for you."

"And I really saw how ecstatic and amazing the response of people were to my arrival. I still remember the motivational words of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who amazed me the way he narrated every minute detail of my perform-

To a question by moderator Boria Majumder, Karmakar said she is expecting a 'double-digit medal tally" in athletics in the coming Olympics. (PTI)

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