



3
KHANDU SWORN IN AS
ARUNACHAL CM FOR
THIRD STRAIGHT TERM



11
ISRAELI MILITARY STRIKES
DOZENS OF TERROR
TARGETS IN GAZA



16
INDIA BEAT US,
WINDIES HOLD OFF
NEW ZEALAND

NEET-UG 2024 SNOWBALLS INTO A MAJOR ROW

NTA CANCELS GRACE MARKS AWARDED TO 1,563 CANDIDATES

Retest on June 23 for affected candidates
Students hold protests in Delhi, Kolkata

ASHISH SINHA
NEW DELHI

The National Testing Agency (NTA) lawyer on Thursday told the Supreme Court that the decision to give grace marks to 1,563 NEET-UG, 2024 candidates for admission to MBBS, BDS and other courses has been cancelled. The Centre and NTA's counsel told the vacation bench of justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta that the candidates whose grace marks have been cancelled. They will be given the option to take the exam again on June 23.

The NTA said the results of the re-examination will be declared on June 30 and counselling for admission to MBBS, BDS and other courses will start from July 6. If any of the 1,563 candidates does not want to take the exam again, then their previous marks, without grace marks, will be given for the result.

Considering the arguments of the Center and NTA, the bench said that all the petitions, including the petition filed by Alakh Pandey, Chief Executive of Physics Wala, on the issue of giving grace marks, will be heard on July 8. These petitions also include petitions seeking cancellation of NEET UG 2024 due to al-

P4

EDUCATION MIRED IN POLITICS



"No concrete evidence of any kind of rigging, corruption or paper leak has been found so far in the NEET examination - Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan



"There has been fraud, paper leak, corruption. The future of 24 lakh students... is at stake due to the deeds of Modi government. - Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge

Questions that beg answers

- How were grace marks calculated?
- What action will be taken by NTA to prevent such incidents in future?
- What steps has NTA taken to prevent cheating?
- Will the questions raised about the exam be put to rest by removing the grace marks of 1563 candidates?
- What has happened so far in the FIR filed regarding the paper leak?
- What will happen to the exam centress on which questions were raised?
- Will an SIT be formed to investigate this matter?

P4

G7 meet: PM to showcase India as bridge-builder between North & South

MANISH CHAND
BARI (ITALY)

Days after creating history by winning a third consecutive term as the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi arrived at Borgo Egnazia, a secluded luxury resort in the Puglia region, to join the G7 Summit as the leader of the world's fastest growing major economy and the most populous democracy.

The G7 is a familiar turf for PM Modi as he has attended five summits of the world's wealthiest countries earlier and has developed personal equations with most G7 leaders, including French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholtz. This year's G7 summit is special as it marks the 50th anniversary of the foundation of G7, a grouping of the world's richest and most advanced nations.

The overarching focus of PM Modi's participation in the G7 summit in Italy will be to position India as a bridge-builder between the North and the South in



a world polarised by geopolitical rivalries and tribal-nationalistic animosities.

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, known to be an ardent admirer of the Indian leader, was one of the first world leaders to congratulate PM Modi after winning the elections on June 4. In this telephonic conversation, the two leaders also briefly discussed

synergies on the G7 agenda in Italy, according to senior Indian officials familiar with the conversation. The two leaders will also hold bilateral talks that will focus on scaling up economic and defence ties between India and Italy.

FOCUS ON GLOBAL SOUTH
The G7 summit, to which

important initiatives which were fructified during India's G20 presidency.

In New Delhi, ahead of the G7 Summit, foreign secretary Vinay Kwatra outlined the agenda for PM Modi's participation at the G7 summit in Apulia. "It will afford him an opportunity to engage with other world leaders present at the G7 Summit on issues of importance to India, as also to the Global South," said Mr Kwatra. "At G7 also, we have always brought the issues of Global South to the forefront," he added.

With the interests of the Global South on the mind, PM Modi's remarks at the outreach summit of the G7 will focus on a cluster of issues, including artificial intelligence, energy transition, Africa, and the Mediterranean, which impinge on interests of the developing countries. In his remarks at the outreach session on AI, PM Modi will make an eloquent case for promoting

P4

Doval continues as NSA, Mishra remains as Principal Secy to PM

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval will continue in his present role in the Narendra Modi-led NDA government which was sworn in on June 9. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of Dr PK Mishra, IAS (Retired) as Principal Secretary to Prime Minister with effect from June 10. His appointment will be co-terminus



Ajit Doval with the term of the Prime Minister or until further orders whichever is earlier, the Government of India stated in a letter. The ACC also approved the



Dr PK Mishra appointment of Doval as the National Security Advisor, effective June 10, 2024. A 1968 batch IPS officer, Doval is a renowned coun-

P4

Groundwater in Himachal has cancer-causing pollutants: Study

AGENCIES
MANDI (HIMACHAL PRADESH)

Researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology Mandi and Jammu revealed the presence of cancer-causing pollutants in the groundwater of Himachal Pradesh's Baddi-Barotiwala (BB) industrial area. The comprehensive study employed chemical hydrology techniques to analyse groundwater samples and identify sources of contamination and associated health risks.

The research revealed significant health risks posed by contaminated groundwater, due to geogenic uranium and industrial pollutants such as zinc, lead, cobalt, nickel, and chromium.

In India, the majority of extracted groundwater is used for agriculture and domestic consumption. However, rapid urbanisation, industrialisation, and population growth have led to increased groundwater use and a de-

cline in its quality. Northern India has faced severe water quality issues. Similar issues are evident in Himachal Pradesh's BB industrial area, where industrialisation has contaminated groundwater with toxic metals, exceeding permissible limits. The reliance on untreated groundwater has caused numerous health problems, including significant reports of cancer and renal disease between 2013 and 2018.

Dr Deepak Swami, Associate Professor, School of Civil and Environmental Engineering, IIT Mandi, along with his research scholar Mr Utsav Rajput, in collaboration with Dr Nitin Joshi, Assistant Professor, Dept of Civil Engineering, IIT Jammu, have published a research paper in the prestigious journal, Science of the Total Environment, that investigates the chemical hydrology of groundwater in the region, identifying dominant ion

P4

Deploy full counter-terror force: PM after J&K review

AJAY JANDYAL
JAMMU/NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday conducted a comprehensive review of the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir in the wake of recent terror attacks in the Jammu region, according to reports.

During the review, PM Modi was accompanied by National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and other senior

officials. The Prime Minister was provided with a detailed briefing on the current security landscape in Jammu and Kashmir, focusing on the ongoing counter-terrorism efforts in response to the recent attacks.

Reports indicate that Prime Minister Modi emphasized the need to deploy the full spectrum of counter-terror capabilities to address the threat. He also engaged

P4

CITY THIRSTY FOR WATER



As parts of the city grappled with the acute shortage, water minister Atishi said Delhi faces a water shortage of 50 million gallons per day (MGD). The government urged

people not to waste water and asserted the problem cannot be solved by merely restraining the tanker mafia. exam, is at stake due to the deeds of Modi government.

REPORTS P5

INSIDE

NEWSPAPERS: BEYOND FREEDOM STRUGGLE

As we navigate the digital landscape, the lessons learned from the past – the fight for press freedom, the importance of fact-checking, and the need for inclusivity – become even more critical.

DETAILS P9

IAF's transport aircraft on standby to bring bodies of Kuwait fire victims

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Indian Air Force's C-130J Super Hercules transport aircraft is on stand-by at the Hindan airbase near Delhi for bringing back bodies of Indian-origin persons who lost their lives in a fire incident in Kuwait. Defence officials said on Thursday.

Foreign Minister of Kuwait Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya has assured visiting Union Minister of State for Exter-



C-130J Super Hercules transport aircraft

nal Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh of "early repatriation" of mortal remains of Indians who were killed in a fire incident on Wednesday at a

labour housing facility in the Mangaf area of Kuwait.

He also conveyed his condolence on the tragic incident and said that full

support will be extended in medical care and the investigation of the incident.

"MoS @KVSinghMPGonda called on FM of Kuwait H.E. Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya in Kuwait. FM Yahya conveyed his condolences on the tragic incident. He assured full support including for medical care, early repatriation of mortal remains and investigation of the incident," the Indian Embassy in Kuwait said in a post on X.

P4

Kerala varsity says no to Sunny show

AGENCIES
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

University of Kerala has denied permission for a performance by Bollywood actor Sunny Leone at its engineering campus.

As part of the tech fest, the students union had planned a programme by Leone on July 5.

University Vice-Chancellor Mohanan Kunnummal said permission was denied as there was an existing directive from the Higher Education Department



banning the performance of "outside bands" on the campuses.

After the recent stampede incident at CUSAT campus, there is an existing direc-

tion banning performances by outside band on the campuses, Kunnummal said.

The Vice-Chancellor said he learned about the event after seeing a poster for it.

"There is also a regulation that money should not be collected from outside for functions inside the campuses. On this particular campus, there are only around 300 students, and for a Bollywood celebrity, an exorbitant amount needs to be collected," he added.

23 PEOPLE FROM KERALA AMONG 45 DEAD IN KUWAIT FIRE INCIDENT

TDG NETWORK
KUWAIT CITY

As many as twenty-three residents of Kerala were among 45 Indians who died in the fire incident here on Wednesday.

The incident, which occurred on Wednesday, has sent shockwaves through communities both in Kuwait and India.

The detailed breakdown of the victims reveals the extent of the devastation: 7 from Tamil Nadu, 3 from Andhra Pradesh, 1 each from Bihar, Odisha, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Haryana, Punjab, and West Bengal, in addition to the 23 from Kerala.

Kuwaiti authorities are working tirelessly to investigate the cause of the fire and provide support to the affected families. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed his deepest



Union Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh meets an Indian who was injured in the Mangaf fire incident at Jaber Hospital in Kuwait on Thursday. ANI

condolences and assured all possible assistance to those impacted by the tragedy.

Following the deadly fire incident, Union Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh reached Kuwait to monitor the situation and to ensure that appropriate medical attention is provided to Indian victims of the fire.

First Deputy Prime Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, on

behalf of the Emir of Kuwait ensured MoS MEA Vardhan Singh all necessary assistance and support for the victims of the deadly fire incident that killed over 45 Indians.

Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah conveyed his condolences on behalf of the Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

He also thanked the Deputy Prime Minister and

the leadership of Kuwait proactive facilitation being provided by Kuwaiti authorities.

Foreign Minister of Kuwait Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya also assured visiting Union Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh of “early repatriation” of mortal remains of Indians who were killed in a fire incident on Wednesday at a labour housing facility in the Mangaf area of Kuwait.

He also conveyed his condolence on the tragic incident and said that full support will be extended in medical care and the investigation of the incident. MoS MEA Singh also visited Mubarak Al Kabeer Hospital in Kuwait where seven Indians, who were injured in a fire incident, are undergoing treatment. He ascertained their well-being and assured them of the Indian government’s support.

During his visit, he said

that he appreciated the hospital authorities, doctors, and nurses for taking good care of Indians.

After arrival in Kuwait, Kirti Vardhan Singh immediately rushed to Jaber Hospital to ascertain well-being of Indians who had been injured in the fire incident in the Mangaf area on Wednesday.

He met six injured Indians undergoing treatment at the hospital.

Over 40 Indians died and over 50 others were injured in the fire, the Ministry of External Affairs said, adding the injured are being treated in five government hospitals in Kuwait.

Citing the hospital authorities, the MEA reported that most of the admitted patients are stable. Meanwhile, the Indian Embassy in Kuwait continues to remain in touch with local authorities to provide relief to those affected by the incident.

CBI begins probe into certificate forgery in Odisha postal hiring

TDG NETWORK
BHUBANESWAR

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has launched an extensive investigation into alleged certificate forgery in Odisha postal recruitment following a complaint from the Director of Postal Services, Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

Searches at over 67 locations have been conducted across various districts of Odisha, including Kalahandi, Nua-pada, Rayagada, Nabarangpur, Kandhamal, Kendujhar, Mayurbhanj, Balasore, and Bhadrak.

This massive operation involved more than 204 officials, including 122 officers from the CBI and 82 personnel from other departments, highlighting the scale and seriousness of the investigation. The search teams are striving to uncover the interstate organised gang responsible for providing these fake certificates.

CBI registered a regular case on May 9, 2023, under sections 120-B, 420, 468, and 471 read with 511 of the IPC and

Searches at over 67 locations have been conducted across various districts of Odisha, including Kalahandi, Nuapada, Rayagada, Nabarangpur, Kandhamal, Kendujhar, Mayurbhanj, Balasore, and Bhadrak.

Section 7(a) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (as amended in 2018) on a complaint by the Postal Department against 63 candidates of the Gramin Dak Sevak Exam, 2023 (Odisha Circle) & others, including unknown officials of the postal department and unknown private persons.

The complaint raised concern about the recruitment process for 1,382 posts in Gramin Dak Sevak (GDS), for which online applications were invited on January 27, 2023. The minimum qualification required was a 10th pass certificate from any recognised board, with proficiency in the local language being mandatory.

According to the procedure, applicants were required to upload their certificates and mark sheets to a central server. Selection was automated based on the marks secured in the 10th standard. Selected candidates were informed via SMS and email and were asked to report to the verifying authority within 15 days for document verification prior to their appointment.

During the verification process, the Odisha Postal Circle allegedly discovered that 63 candidates from various postal divisions, including Baleswar, Mayurbhanj, Kalahandi, and Barhampur, had submitted forged or fake 10th pass certificates.

These certificates were allegedly issued by the Board of High School and Intermediate Education, Allahabad; the West Bengal Board, Kolkata; and the Jharkhand Academic Council, Ranchi, among others.

Kuwait fire: Kerala announces Rs 5L aid for kin of deceased

TDG NETWORK
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala health minister Veena George will urgently travel to Kuwait to coordinate efforts to assist families of those who were killed and injured in the massive fire at a residential building in Kuwait, the state government said on Thursday.

After a special cabinet meeting held this morning the Chief Minister Pinaray Vijayan-led government announced an ex gratia of Rs 5 lakh for the families of the deceased and Rs 1 lakh for those who were injured in the June 12 mishap in Kuwait’s city of Mangaf. Over 40 Indians were killed in the massive fire.

As per the Kerala government, George will be accompanied by State Mission Director (NHM) Jeevan Babu to coordinate efforts related

The State Cabinet said that the number of people from Kerala who died in the fire has gone up to 19.

to the treatment of those from the State who sustained injuries as well as oversee the repatriation of the bodies of the deceased.

The State Cabinet said that the number of people from Kerala who died in the fire has gone up to 19.

The Cabinet announced that two prominent businesspersons from Kerala, Yusuf Ali and Ravi Pillai informed Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan that they would donate Rs 5 lakh and Rs 2 lakh, respectively.

The Cabinet added that the aid by the two business-

men would be provided via the Non-Resident Keralite’s Affairs (NORKA). This will bring the total assistance to Rs 12 lakh per family.

The cabinet also expressed its condolences for the deaths in the Kuwait fire.

“Efforts are being made under the leadership of NORKA and with the initiative of expatriates to provide all possible assistance to those affected by the disaster,” the Kerala government said.

“A help desk and a global contact centre are operating round the clock and the state government will fully support the interventions being carried out by the Indian government in Kuwait,” it added.

Kerala’s representative in Delhi, Professor K V Thomas, is maintaining constant contact with the Ministry of External Affairs, the state government said.

All 4 doors of Jagannath Temple opened

TDG NETWORK
PURI

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi along with Deputy Chief Ministers KV Singh Deo and Prabhati Parida on Thursday offered prayers at the 12th-century temple of Lord Jagannath temple in Puri. The four gates of the temple that were kept closed since the COVID-19 pandemic were thrown open today for devotees.

Majhi who was sworn in as Odisha Prime Minister M’s BJP government in its first Cabinet meeting approved a proposal to re-open all four gates of Shree Jagannath Temple in Puri early on Thursday morning and set up a corpus fund for it.

Puri MP Sambit Patra, Balasore MP Pratap Chandra Sarangi and other ministers and leaders of the party were also present at the temple.



Odisha CM Mohan Charan Majhi said, “We had proposed to open all the four gates of Jagannath Temple in yesterday’s cabinet meeting. The proposal was passed and today at 6:30 am, I along with my MLAs and Puri MP (Sambit Patra) attended the ‘Mangala aarti’... For the development of the Jagannath Temple and for other works, we have proposed a fund in the cabinet. When we present the next state budget, we

will allot a corpus fund of Rs 500 crore for the temple management.”

State minister Suryabanshi Suraj said, “During the elections, we had said that we would reopen all four gates... All four gates of the temple are going to be opened today. All members of the Council Ministers are present here. The CM is also present. A corpus fund worth Rs. 500 crore has also been announced for development

projects. We took the oath yesterday and we are opening the gates today.”

The previous BJD administration had continued to keep the four gates of the temple closed since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Majhi took oath as the Chief Minister of the first Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in Odisha in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday.

Along with Majhi, two deputy Chief Ministers -- Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo and Pravatī Parida were also sworn in. The oath-taking ceremony was held at Janata Maidan in Odisha’s Bhubaneswar.

Odisha Governor Raghubar Das administered the oath to the first BJP Chief Minister of the state, along with the deputies. Biju Janata Dal (BJD) leader Naveen

Patnaik, who served as chief minister of Odisha for 24 years was also present on the stage.

The ceremony also witnessed the presence of several high-profile leaders from the Bharatiya Janata Party including -- Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Union Ministers Rajnath Singh, Ashwini Vaishnaw and Nitin Gadkari, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Dev Sai, Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath were among the dignitaries who arrived in Bhubaneswar to witness the event.

Reducing airfare key priority of new civil aviation minister

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Ram Mohan Naidu, a member of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and a key ally in the NDA, formally assumed office as the Union Minister of Civil Aviation on Thursday, becoming the youngest member in Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s cabinet.

Speaking to ANI after taking charge, Ram Mohan Naidu outlined his vision, emphasizing his dedication to serving the nation and his priority of making air travel more affordable.

Addressing the issue of airfares, Naidu said, “It is an important issue. My whole intention is to make sure that air travel is accessible to the common man. To make this



a reality, the prices have to be affordable. My priority would be to bring down the prices (airfares).”

He also highlighted his commitment to completing the Bhogapuram airport project in Andhra Pradesh’s Vijayanagaram district by the end of 2025.

“I have a personal commitment to my state, Andhra

Pradesh, and my brother state of Telangana. The Bhogapuram Greenfield airport project is crucial for North Andhra Pradesh, and I aim to complete it in record time,” Naidu said.

Naidu took charge as the Minister of Civil Aviation, alongside his Minister of State (MoS), Murlidhar Mohol. He succeeds BJP’s Jyotiraditya Scindia as the Minister of Civil Aviation. Earlier, Naidu emphasised his commitment to enhancing the travel experience for all passengers, regardless of their socio-economic background. “Travelling by plane is no longer just for the rich. People from all classes are flying now, so I will strive to ensure better and more comfortable travel for

them,” Naidu had told ANI.

“PM Modi has given me an important responsibility, and I will try to fulfill it. During our meeting, the PM told me that aviation requires more involvement from younger people. The sector has much scope and potential,” he added. At 36, Ram Mohan Naidu is a three-time Lok Sabha MP from Andhra Pradesh’s Srikakulam and the youngest minister in the Modi 3.0 cabinet.

In the recent Assembly elections, TDP and its allies emerged victorious over Jagan Mohan Reddy’s YSRCP, securing 16 out of 25 seats in Andhra Pradesh and consolidating their position as a crucial ally of the BJP at the Centre.

50 suspects detained in connection with attack on pilgrims’ bus in Reasi

TDG NETWORK
REASI

As many as 50 people have been detained in connection with the recent terrorist attack on a pilgrims’ bus in the Kanda area of Jammu and Kashmir’s Reasi, officials said on Thursday.

Earlier on June 9, nine people died after terrorists opened fire on a bus after which the bus fell into a gorge in Reasi.

“District Police Reasi have detained 50 individuals in connection with the recent terrorist attack on a pilgrims’ bus in the Kanda area of Police Station Pouni. The incident, which occurred on 09.06.2024, resulted in several casualties and left the community in shock and grief,” Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Reasi, Mohita Sharma said.

The SSP stated that the detentions were made after an investigation led by the Kanda Area Police Station.

“The detentions were made following an intensive investigation led by the police at the Kanda Area Police Station, Pouni. Significant leads have been uncovered, aiding in the identification and capture of those who may potentially involved in orchestrating the attack,” she added.

The SSP also revealed that the search operations were extended to Arnas and Mahore to uncover more evidence and apprehend any terrorists in hiding.

“To ensure a comprehensive probe, search operations have been expanded to encompass the far-flung areas of Arnas and Mahore. These operations aim to uncover further evidence and apprehend

hundred terrorists who may be hiding in these remote regions,” she said.

Reasi SSP urged the public to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity to the authorities immediately.

“The law enforcement agencies are committed to bringing the perpetrators to justice and ensuring the safety and security of all residents and visitors in the area,” she said.

Jammu and Kashmir region has been witnessing a surge in violence with three significant attacks: the Reasi terror attack, the Kathua terror attack, and the Doda terror attack.

The first incident was reported on June 9, when terrorists targeted a bus in Reasi, causing it to plunge into a gorge, resulting in the deaths of at least nine pilgrims and injuring 42 others.

Security forces intensify search operation in J&K’s Doda after encounter

TDG NETWORK
DODA

Security forces have intensified their search operation in the Kota Top area of Gandoh in Doda District, following an exchange of fire with terrorists in which a Special Operations Group (SOG) constable was injured on Wednesday night.

Efforts to locate the terrorists have ramped up, with forces combing the jungles and implementing heightened security measures.

Efforts to locate the terrorists have ramped up, with forces combing the jungles and implementing heightened security measures.

According to officials, the encounter, which started on

June 12 at 20:20 hrs, involved a clash between security forces and terrorists at Kota Top, Gandoh, Doda. During this operation, Constable Fareed Ahmed (973/D) of the Special Operations Group (SOG) Gandoh sustained injuries.

The Jammu and Kashmir police shared that the encounter was ongoing and further details were awaited.

Following the encounter, the Jammu and Kashmir police released sketches of four terrorists believed to be hiding in the upper reaches

of Bhaderwah, Thathri, and Gandoh in the district. A reward of Rs 5 lakh is being offered for any information leading to their capture, with assurances that the informant’s identity will remain confidential.

Security has been tightened, with ‘Naka’ checking and rigorous vehicle inspections implemented across the region.

This recent encounter follows a series of terror attacks in the Jammu and Kashmir region over the past few days.

Lok Sabha Speaker election to be held on June 26

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The election for the post of Lok Sabha speaker is to be held on June 26, an official statement from the Lok Sabha said on Thursday.

“In pursuance of sub-rule (1) of Rule 7 of the Rules of Procedure and conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, the President has been pleased to fix Wednesday, the 26th June, 2024, for holding

the election to the office of speaker, Lok Sabha”, read the official release.

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Om Birla presently holds the post of LS speaker.

He was elected as the speaker of the 17th Lok Sabha in June 2019, following a motion for election moved by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In the recently concluded Lok Sabha polls, Birla was fielded from Kota by the BJP, and he bagged the Parlia-

mentary seat with a margin of over 41,139 votes.

Meanwhile, the first session of the 18th Lok Sabha will be held from June 24 and conclude on July 3 for oath/affirmation of newly elected Members, Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Kiren Rijju said on Wednesday.

The 264th Session of Rajya Sabha will also commence on June 27 and conclude on July 3, the minister said.

“First Session of 18th Lok Sabha is being summoned

from 24.6.24 to 3.7.24 for oath/affirmation of newly elected Members, Election of Speaker, President’s Address and discussion thereon. 264th Session of Rajya Sabha will commence on 27.6.24 and conclude on 3.7.24.”

President Droupadi Murmu will address a joint sitting of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha on June 27.

The last session of the 17th Lok Sabha (Budget session) was held between January 31 and February 10, 2024.

KHANDU SWORN IN AS ARUNACHAL CM FOR THIRD STRAIGHT TERM

TDG NETWORK
ITANAGAR

BJP leader Pema Khandu took oath as the chief minister of Arunachal Pradesh for the third term consecutive term on Thursday.

The swearing-in ceremony held at DK State Convention Centre in Itanagar was attended by Union Ministers Amit Shah, JP Nadda, Kiren Rijiju, and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

Khandu, 44, became Chief Minister for the first time in 2016.

He was re-elected as leader of the BJP Legislature Party in Arunachal Pradesh on Wednesday, paving the way for him to be sworn in as the Chief Minister for the third straight term.



Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lieutenant General KT Parnaik (retd.) invited Khandu to form the government.

Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lieutenant General KT Parnaik (retd.) invited Khandu to form the govern-

The BJP won 46 seats in the 60-member Arunachal Pradesh assembly in the elections held simultane-

ously with the Lok Sabha election. BJP won ten seats unopposed in the state before the elections were held.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday congratulated Khandu and wished him success in developing the state at "an even faster pace." He further congratulated others who took oaths as ministers in the state.

Taking to social media platform X, he wrote, "Congratulations to Pema Khandu Ji on taking the oath as the Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh. I would also like to congratulate all those who took the oath as ministers.

"My best wishes to them for their future endeavours in serving the people. This team will ensure that the state develops at an even faster pace," he wrote further.

The swearing-in ceremony

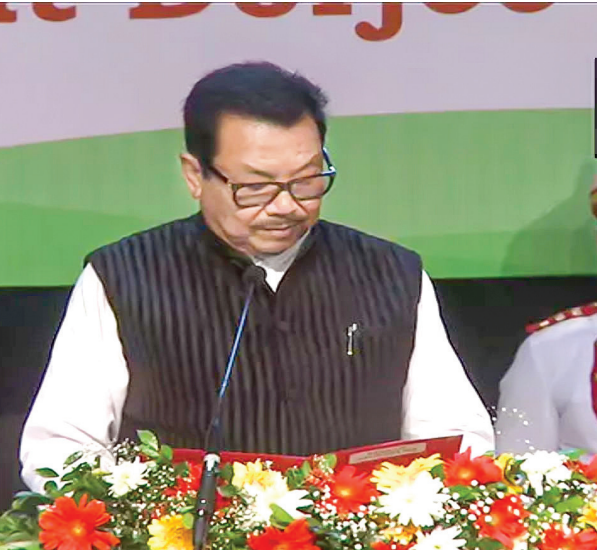
Arunachal: Chowna Mein takes oath as Dy CM for 2nd consecutive term

TDG NETWORK
ITANAGAR

Chowna Mein took oath as the Deputy Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh on Thursday for his second consecutive term.

Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lieutenant General Kaiwalya Trivikram Parnaik (retd.) administered the oath of office to the ministers. A total of 11 MLAs, including the Chief Minister and his deputy, took the oath of office today in the Arunachal Pradesh assembly.

Biyuram Wahge, Nyato Dukam, Gabriel Denwang Wangsu, Pasang Dorjee Sona, Mama Natung, Dasanglu Pul, and Kento Jini are among 11 cabinet members who took the oath today.



held at Dorjee Khandu State Convention Centre in Itanagar was attended by Union Ministers Amit Shah, JO Nadda, Kiren Rijiju, and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, among others.

Chowna Mein won unop-

posed from the Chowkham constituency after his opponent, Bayamso Kri of the Congress, withdrew his nomination.

Khandu became CM for the first time in 2016. He was re-elected as leader of

the BJP Legislature Party in Arunachal Pradesh on Wednesday, paving the way for him to be sworn in as the Chief Minister for the third straight term.

Khandu and Chowna Mein were among the 10 candidates who won the elections unopposed.

Khandu met the governor on Wednesday after being elected the leader of the eighth Legislative Assembly of the State and staked a claim to form the government.

The governor then invited him to form the government.

The BJP returned to power in the state for the third time in a row winning 46 seats in the 60-member Arunachal Pradesh assembly in the elections held simultaneously with the parliamentary polls.

Naidu offers prayers at Tirupati temple ahead of assuming office

TDG NETWORK
TIRUPATI

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu along with his family offered prayers at Tirupati Balaji temple in Tirumala on Thursday morning.

CM Naidu reached Tirumala on Wednesday evening, where he received a warm welcome from the temple authorities.

During the visit, the Chief Minister was accompanied by his wife Nara Bhuvaneshwari, son and state minister Nara Lokesh, Lokesh's wife Nara Brahmani, and their son Devansh.

People in huge numbers were pictured outside the Tirumala temple upon the arrival of the Chief Minister.

Speaking to reporters in Tirumala after the temple visit, CM Naidu said, "My family members are devotees of Lord Tirumala



Venkateswara. I visit the deity before making any major decisions. I have never seen such success given by the people of the state. People's rule has started in the state, there should be a purge."

"The Lord saved me earlier when I was attacked by Naxals. I prayed for this state's prosperity. Economic disparities should be removed in the state. My goal is not only to create wealth but also to distribute it to the poor."

"I have been donating money for Annadanam (food donations) since the day my grandson Devansh was born. I always work for a poverty-free society," Naidu added.

The Chief Minister asserted good governance in the state, adding that his government will not tolerate political conspiracies.

"Andhra Pradesh will play a key role in the country's politics. From today on, good governance begins.

Jharkhand Congress leaders meet to select new CLP leader

TDG NETWORK
RANCHI

Congress leaders in Jharkhand held a meeting on Thursday to decide the next Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader, following party leader Alamgir Alam's resignation from the position after being arrested by the Directorate of Enforcement in a money laundering case.

After the meeting, Congress Jharkhand in-charge Ghulam Ahmad Mir stated that whoever is chosen as the next CLP leader will be acceptable to all.

"The meeting that took place today was necessary... A resolution was passed authorizing the party's high command to handle everything. Whoever is chosen as the CLP leader will be acceptable to all of us," Ghulam Ahmad Mir told reporters.

Jharkhand Congress President Rajesh Thakur reiterated this stance, saying that everyone will accept the decision of the party leadership.

"Today there was a meeting of the legislative party, it is sad that our legislative party leader has resigned... There was a lot of discussion about who should be given the responsibility and everyone together decided that whatever decision the leadership takes will be acceptable to us," Thakur said.

He further added that the leaders have spoken with the party's state in-charge Ghulam Ahmad Mir about the sentiments of the MLAs, and he will discuss the issue with the leadership.

Alamgir Alam submitted his resignation to Chief Minister Champai Soren for the ministerial post.

PM Modi heading to G7 Summit 'to salvage his image': Jairam Ramesh

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh criticized Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday, just before Modi's departure for the G7 Summit in Italy. Ramesh drew a comparison with former PM Manmohan Singh's influential visit to the same summit in 2007, claiming that PM Modi is heading to Italy to "salvage" his "diminished" international image.

The Congress General Secretary (Communications) further said that Manmohan Singh emerged as the "Voice of Global South" through substance and not through "hollow self-boasts."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to depart for Italy today to attend the Summit of the Group of Seven (G7), marking his first trip abroad after assuming office for the third consecutive term.



Taking to social media platform X, Jairam Ramesh said, "The G7 Summit of the heads of state of the USA, Canada, Germany, France, Italy, UK and Japan has been taking place since the late 1970s. Between 1997 and 2014, Russia was also a member. Since 2003, India, China, Brazil, Mexico, and South Africa have also been invited to G7 Summits."

The Rajya Sabha MP said that Manmohan Singh and German Chancellor Angela Merkel had presented the

'Singh-Merkel formula' for ensuring equity in global climate change negotiations to the world during the 2007 summit.

Taking a jibe at PM Modi, the Congress leader referred to him as "ek tihai pradhan mantri" (one-third prime minister) and said that it can't be expected from him to accept this history.

"The most famous of the G7 Summits from India's point of view was in June 2007 in Helligendamm, Germany.

Army undertakes motorcycle expedition to mark silver jubilee of Kargil War

TDG NETWORK
JORHAT (ASSAM)

Commemorating the 'Rajat Jayanti' (Silver Jubilee) of the Kargil victory and in tribute to the valour and sacrifices of the soldiers, the Indian Army and the Regiment of Artillery are conducting a pan India Motorcycle Expedition.

The expedition christened as 'Delta 5 Motorcycle Expedition' was flagged off simultaneously from three locations--Dinjan military station (east), Dhanuskodi (south) and Dwarka (west) and will converge in Delhi before culminating in Drass in Kargil.

On the Eastern Route, Delta 5 Expedition will traverse 4000 Km to Drass, passing through eight states and union territories. The expedition reached



Jorhat Military Station on June 12 where Major General Deepak Sharma, VSM General Officer Commanding, 41 Sub Area flagged off the riders.

Brigadier MR Subodh, Deputy General Officer Commanding 41 Sub Area

further flagged off the expedition from Jorhat on June 13. All the motorcyclists of the expedition are from the Regiment of Artillery.

The spirit of the expedition is to highlight the stellar role played by the Indian Army in the war and to honour the

brave hearts who made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty.

The Delta 5 Motorcycle Expedition will felicitate Kargil Veer Naris and War Veterans en route in true recognition of their selfless sacrifice to the Nation.

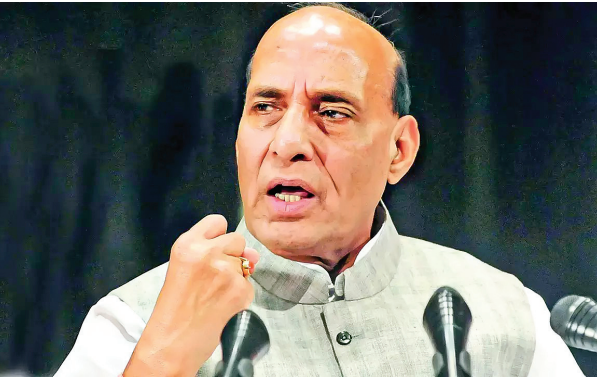
Rajnath emphasises on self-reliance in defence manufacturing

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Minister Rajnath Singh who took charge as Defence Minister on Thursday said the priority of Prime Minister Narendra Modi government will be to develop a strong, 'Aatmanirbhar' government with robust and self-reliant defence manufacturing.

Singh who took charge as the Defence Minister at his office in South Block in the national capital said that the government will strive to boost exports in the defence sector and aims for a target of Rs 50,000 crore over the next five years.

"PM Modi has given me the responsibility of the Defence Ministry again. Our priorities will be the same, the protection of the country. We want to develop a strong and



'Aatmanirbhar' Bharat. We want to become self-reliant on defence manufacturing. We have exported defence equipment worth over Rs 21,000 crore. Our target is to take this figure to Rs 50,000 crore in the next five. We are proud of our three armed forces, Indian Army, Indian Navy and Indian Air Force," Singh said.

A Member of Parliament from Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, Rajnath Singh,

had taken up the responsibility to head the Ministry of Defence for the first time on June 1, 2019.

Born on July 10, 1951, in the Chandauli district of Uttar Pradesh, Singh pursued a Masters in Physics from the University of Gorakhpur and was a teacher by profession.

He served as a member of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly in 1977-1980 and 2001-2003. He was Minister

of Education in the government of Uttar Pradesh from 1991 to 1992, while also serving as Minister of Surface Transport in the Union Cabinet from 1999 to 2000.

Later, he was Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh in 2000-2002. In 2003, he served as Minister of Agriculture in the Union Cabinet. He was elected to the Rajya Sabha for two terms in 1994-1999 and again in 2003-2008.

In 2009, he was elected to the 15th Lok Sabha. He also served as a member of the Committee on Ethics on October 7, 2009.

Rajnath Singh was inducted in the Union Cabinet in the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on May 27, 2014, as the Minister of Home Affairs. He is married to Savitri Singh and they have two sons.

G Kishan Reddy takes charge as Union Minister of Coal and Mines

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Bharatiya Janata Party leader and Union Minister G Kishan Reddy officially took charge as Union Minister of Coal and Mines on Thursday in the presence of Union Minister Pralhad Joshi in the newly formed BJP-led National Democratic Alliance government.

Reddy received a warm welcome with bouquets and shawls from Union Minister Pralhad Joshi, his colleagues and top officials of the min-



Reddy received a warm welcome with bouquets and shawls from Union Minister Pralhad Joshi, his colleagues and top officials of the ministry.

istry.

After taking charge, G Kishan Reddy performed a puja-archana in the office.

While addressing media persons, Pralhad Joshi extended his warm wishes and blessings to G Kishan Reddy.

Kishan Reddy won the Secunderabad Lok Sabha seat with 4,73,012 votes in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

He was earlier a three-time MLA and BJP Floor Leader in Telangana and Andhra

Pradesh Assemblies.

Gangapuram Kishan Reddy started his political career as a Yuva karyakarta (youth worker) in the Janata party. He joined the BJP at its inception in the year 1980.

He entered politics very early by joining the youth wing of the Janata Party and joining the BJP when the erstwhile Janasangh cadre split from the Janata Party.

In 1977, he started his political career as a Leader of the Youth wing of the Janata Party. In 1980 on the forma-

tion of the BJP from the Jana Sangh, Kishan Reddy joined the party full-time.

He was appointed as the President of the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (Youth wing of BJP) in 2002 when BJP was in power at the Center.

He contested as an MLA from Himayatnagar Assembly constituency in 2004 for the first time, when unfortunately, the entire opposition experienced a rout.

In 2014, he was elected as MLA from Amberpet Assembly Constituency, Hy-

derabad City.

In 2019 he won the Lok Sabha elections from Secunderabad Constituency.

In May 2019, he became the Minister of State for Home Affairs and from July 2021 he was a Union Minister for Tourism, Culture and Development of the North Eastern Region.

Gangapuram Kishan Reddy hails from Ranga Reddy District, Telangana State was born in a middle-class farmers' family in 1960 to Late Gangapuram Swami Reddy and Late Andalamma.

All you wanted to know about what is NEET-UG controversy

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Medical entrance exam NEET-UG with over 24 lakh candidates appearing for it has become a centre of controversy over allegations of several irregularities and has triggered protests across the country and a political slugfest. Here is an explainer on what has happened so far:

ALLEGED IRREGULARITIES

There have been allegations of inflation of marks in NEET-UG which has led to a record 67 candidates sharing top rank with perfect score. Last year, two students shared the top rank. Students

have been alleging the marks have been randomly reduced or increased for several candidates, affecting their ranks. The grace marks awarded to over 1,500 students to compensate for loss of time for delay in exams at six centres is also under scanner. There have been allegations of paper leak too. The Economic Offences Unit of Bihar Police had last month said that its investigation has revealed that the question papers and answers for NEET-UG were provided to approximately 35 aspirants before the May 5 exam. Thirteen individuals have been arrested so far in connection with the case.

WHY GRACE MARKS? Students from at least six

centres in Meghalaya, Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Surat and Chandigarh had complained about the loss of time during the exams. At these locations, the students did not get the full 3 hours and 20 minutes to write the exam due to administrative reasons, such as the distribution of the wrong question paper, torn OMR sheets, or delay in the distribution of OMR sheets. A committee formed by the NTA investigated the matter and chose to use the formula devised and adopted by the apex court in a 2018 judgement, to address the loss of time faced by candidates. The loss of time was ascertained and such candidates were compensated with grace marks.



Police personnel stop the SFI activists during their protest march towards the AG's office against the irregularities in the NEET examination result scam, in Thiruvananthapuram on Thursday. ANI

NTA'S STAND

The National Testing Agency (NTA) has maintained that the sanctity of the exam has not been compromised. It has attributed the rise in the number of top scorers to increase in the competitiveness

of the exam and increase in performance standards.

According to officials, grace marks have been awarded to 1,563 candidates to compensate for the loss of time in line with the Supreme Court approved formula. Out of the

67 candidates who got 720 out of 720 marks, 44 are on account of the revision in one Answer Key of Physics, and six are on account of compensatory marks for loss of time.

This adjustment aimed to address inconsistencies in NCERT textbooks, ensuring candidates were not disadvantaged by factual discrepancies. Sixty-three cases of students using unfair means were reported in NEET-UG out of whom 23 have been debarred for varying periods.

GOVT STAND

The Ministry has set up a four-member expert panel headed by former UPSC chairman to review the grace

marks awarded to students. Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has denied the allegations saying there is no evidence of paper leak and claims of corruption in NTA are unfounded.

POLITICAL SLUGFEST

The Congress has been demanding a Supreme Court-monitored probe into the NEET Exam, asserting the anger in the country over the matter will “reverberate inside Parliament as well.”

Shiv Sena leader Priyanka Chaturvedi slammed the Education Minister for defending NTA, claiming that the Bihar Police investigation has found a paper leak.

The Maharashtra government has sought immediate

cancellation of the exam, alleging that its results have caused injustice to the students from the state.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin said the trends from the latest NEET results have once again vindicated the DMK on its stand opposing the exam.

SC STAND

The apex court has noted that the sanctity of NEET-UG, 2024 was affected and has refused to stay the counselling process for admissions. The NTA expert panel has told the court that the decision to give grace marks to 1,563 NEET-UG candidates for admission to MBBS, BDS and others courses had been cancelled .

No paper leak: Pradhan on NEET row

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

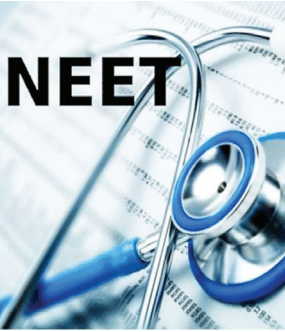
Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has said that there has been “no paper leak” in the NEET-UG paper and government is ready to give answers to the Supreme Court which is hearing the petitions related to the exam.

Pradhan, who took charge as Union Education Minister for his second successive term on Thursday, told mediapersons that 24 lakh students have successfully taken the NEET examination.

“I want to assure the students and their parents that the Government of India and NTA are committed to providing justice to them.

Twenty-four lakh students have successfully taken the NEET examination. There is no paper leak, no proof has been found yet. A court-recommended model was adopted for around 1560 students and a panel of academicians has been formed for the same..We will accept the verdict of the Court,” he said.

“There is no corruption. In connection with the NEET examination, 24 lakh students appear in the examination. A hearing in the Supreme Court is underway today and this issue is regarding around 1,500 students. Govt is ready to give answers to the Court. This specific issue is being taken into consideration and a committee of academicians



has been formed. The Government will present this in front of the Court...NTA conducts 3 major examinations that is NEET, JEE and CUET successfully in the country..We will take action against the people responsible...,” he added.

Minister of State for Education Jayant Chaudhary was also present at the press conference.

Answering queries, Pradhan said the system of two sets of question papers “is not a new practice”.

“It has been in practice for many years. The final set is decided on the day of the examination, just before the exam. In six centres, the wrong set was circulated which delayed the exam there, by 40 minutes. The issue pertains to that incident only. The practice of two sets of question papers didn't appear suddenly,” he said.

The National Testing Agency (NTA) on Thursday told the Supreme Court that score-cards of 1563 candidates who got “grace marks” in the 2024 National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (Undergraduate) exam will

be cancelled and the candidates will have a chance to reappear for the exam.

NTA told a bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta that a committee has been constituted to review the results of over 1,563 candidates who were awarded “grace marks” to compensate for the loss of time suffered while appearing for NEET-UG.

“The Committee has decided to cancel the score-cards of 1563 NEET-UG 2024 candidates who were given grace marks and these students will be given the option to take a re-test,” NTA said.

“Exam will be conducted on June 23 and result will be declared before June 30,” it added.

Questions that beg answers

CONTINUED FROM P1

- **What evidence does NTA have to prove its transparency?**
- **Is the NTA system foolproof?**
- **How will NTA prove its credibility among the candidates after this incident?**
- **Will the NEET exam held on May 5 be cancelled?**
- **Will the results released on June 4 be cancelled?**
- **Will other candidates also get a chance to appear in the exam again?**
- **What will happen now in the hearing to be held on July 8 in the Top Court?**
- **When will NEET counselling start?**

NTA cancels grace marks

CONTINUED FROM P1

legations of question paper leak and other irregularities.

However, the court once again said that it will not stay the counselling process for admission. The court has fixed the next hearing of the case on July 8.

In fact, NTA conducted the examination on May 5 at 4,750 centres and about

NTA conducted the examination on May 5 at 4,750 centres and about 24 lakh candidates participated in it.

24 lakh candidates participated in it. The results of the examination were expected

Aircraft on standby

CONTINUED FROM P1

MoS MEA Singh also visited Mubarak Al Kabeer Hospital in Kuwait where seven Indians, who were injured in a fire incident, are undergoing treatment. He ascertained their well-being and assured them of the Indian government's support.

During his visit, he appreciated the hospital authorities, doctors and nurses for taking good care of Indians.

After arrival in Kuwait, Kirti Vardhan Singh immediately rushed to Jaber Hospital to ascertain well-being of Indians who had been injured in the fire incident in the Mangaf area on Wednesday. He met six

injured Indians undergoing treatment at the hospital.

Over 40 Indians died and over 50 others were injured in the fire, the Ministry of External Affairs said, adding the injured are being treated in five government hospitals in Kuwait.

The people who have sustained injuries are admitted and undergoing treatment in five government hospitals in Kuwait: Adan, Jaber, Farwaniya, Mubarak Al Kabeer and Jahra hospitals.

Meanwhile, the Indian Embassy in Kuwait continues to remain in touch with local authorities to provide relief to those affected by the incident.

Doval continues as NSA

CONTINUED FROM P1

counter-terrorism expert and an expert on nuclear issues. Doval has served in Punjab as IB's operational chief.

“The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Shri Ajit Doval, IPS (Retired) as National Security Adviser with effect from 10.06.2024. His appointment will be co-terminus with the term of the Prime Minister or until further orders, whichever is earlier. During the term of his office, he will be assigned the rank of Cabinet Minister in the Table of Precedence,” the notice stated.

“The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Dr PK Mishra, IAS (Retired) as Principal Secretary to Prime Minister with effect from 10.06.2024. His appointment will be co-terminus with the term of the Prime Minister or until further orders whichever is earlier,” it said.

The Cabinet has also approved the appointment of Amit Khare, IAS (Retired) (JH:1985), and Tarun Kapoor, IAS (Retired) (HP:1987) as the following officers as Advisors to Prime Minister Modi.

G7 meet: PM to showcase India as bridge-builder between North & South

CONTINUED FROM P1

ethical use of AI and the use of AI for solving problems in developing countries of the Global South. In the intervention, Modi will pitch for “AI for all” and showcase India's success in setting up world-class digital public infrastructure, said officials.

IT'S TIME FOR AFRICA

On June 14, while addressing an outreach session at the G7 summit, PM Modi will underline India's commitment to spur Africa's development and resurgence. PM Modi is expected to showcase India's multi-faceted development

partnership with Africa and how India has promoted African interests in global forums such as G20 and the UN. In his speech, PM Modi will highlight how the African Union became a permanent member of the G20 under India's G20 presidency at the New Delhi summit in September 2023, said official sources. In this context, he will also meet the president of Mauritania, which holds the African Union presidency. PM Modi will also urge G7 and the international community to provide support to debt-distressed African countries. Under its G7 presidency, Italy is advocating an

inclusive approach based on three pillars: listen-respect-build together, as enshrined in the Mattei Plan for Africa. The focus of PM Modi's short visit to Italy will be largely on a series of bilateral meetings he is expected to hold with the leaders of G7 countries as well as emerging economies on June 14. While bilateral meetings are being finalized, the show-stealer is likely to be his first meeting with US President Joe Biden after being re-elected for a third consecutive term. The talks will set the stage for the trajectory of India-US ties for the next six months till the US elec-

tions in November 2024. The meeting will focus on accelerating the implementation of key outcomes of Prime Minister Modi's historic visit to the US in June 2023, which culminated in path-breaking outcomes in areas of defence co-production and critical technologies.

Besides Biden, Modi is expected to meet the leaders of Italy, France, Germany, Japan, Brazil and Argentina.

This year, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, the host of the G7 summit in Apulia, is hoping to mobilise consensus on using Russian money stashed in the banks of G7 countries to support

Besides Biden, Modi is expected to meet the leaders of Italy, France, Germany, Japan, Brazil and Argentina.

Ukraine's reconstruction. The summit will also focus on promoting peace in the Middle East, which plunged into chaos and instability after the Hamas attack on Israel for over eight months.

For India, the importance of the G7 summit in Italy this year lies in the strong mes-

sage it will send to the world on maintaining a rules-based international order. In a veiled critique of China, the summit's joint declaration is expected to stress on enhancing international coordination to sustain the rules-based international order, including in the maritime domain.

Manish Chand is Editor-in-Chief, India and the World magazine and CEO, Centre for Global India Insights, a think-tank focused on global affairs. He is currently in Fasano, Italy to report on and analyse the G7 summit and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Italy.

Groundwater in Himachal

CONTINUED FROM P1

sources and measuring the geospatial variation of toxic metal concentrations.

By determining potential contamination sources, the study evaluated non-carcinogenic and carcinogenic health risks from oral intake of contaminated groundwater using the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) human health risk assessment model for both adults and children. The researchers identified key metals of concern and prepared geospatial maps showing metal contamination and health risks across village boundaries.

Speaking about the research, Deepak Swami said, “Groundwater poses high health risks through oral intake, necessitating urgent remediation. Monitoring industrial effluents for zinc, lead, nickel, and chromium is essential to prevent health hazards. Policies must be framed to balance industrial development with public health for sustainable growth.”

The study found that the region's groundwater is rock-dominated, mainly of the calcium carbonate type. Uniform uranium levels were detected in all samples, with most metals traced to industrial sources, while uranium

and molybdenum were naturally occurring. The human health risk assessment revealed high non-carcinogenic risks for both adults and children, primarily due to natural uranium, with additional risks from industrial sources of zinc, lead, cobalt, and barium. Carcinogenic risks were high for adults, mainly from industrial nickel and chromium.

Nitin Joshi, Assistant Professor, at IIT Jammu, spoke about the research and said, “Our research group conducted a field study to map the pollution status in the industrial region of Baddi-Barotwala.

DELHI IN DEEP WATER

HIMACHAL TO SC: NO SURPLUS WATER

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

As parts of Delhi grappled with acute water shortage, the Supreme Court on Thursday directed the city government to approach the Upper Yamuna River Board (UYRB) for additional supply after Himachal Pradesh took a sharp U-turn and said it does not have surplus water to spare. A vacation bench of Justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and Prasanna B Varale asked the Delhi government to submit an application to UYRB by 5 p.m. seeking water for the national capital on humanitarian grounds.

Exhausted women and children could be seen walking long distances and standing and sitting in serpentine queues for a few buckets of water that tankers would bring. Many would return home with not enough water to cook a meal or quench their thirst.



People wait for a water tanker's arrival to collect drinking water as the national capital faces a water crisis, at New Ashok Nagar area in New Delhi. ANI

The national capital was in for a huge disappointment when the Himachal Pradesh government told the court it does not have surplus 136 cusecs of water, recanting an earlier statement.

The bench said Yamuna water sharing between states is a complex and sensitive issue and the court

does not have the technical expertise to decide on it even on an interim basis. "The issue should be left to be considered by the body constituted with the agreement of parties in the memorandum of understanding dated 1994.

"Since UYRB has already directed Delhi to submit an application for the supply

of additional 150 cusecs of water on humanitarian grounds, such an application be made, if not already made, today by 5 pm, and thereafter the board shall convene a meeting tomorrow and take decision in the matter at the earliest.

If need be, the board can convene on a day to day basis," the bench said while

The SC bench said Yamuna water sharing between states is a complex and sensitive issue and the court does not have the technical expertise to decide on it even on an interim basis.

disposing of the plea filed by the Delhi government. The top court was hearing a Delhi government's petition seeking a direction to Haryana to release the surplus water provided by Himachal Pradesh to the national capital to mitigate its water crisis.

As the hearing commenced, Delhi government's advocate Abhishek Singhvi said everything possible to augment water availability will be done.

Atishi, Raghav meet Kejriwal, discuss water, power crises

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Amidst the persisting water and power crises in Delhi, state minister Atishi and AAP MP Raghav Chadha said on Thursday that they met Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal lodged in the Tihar jail and were directed to take measures to curb the problems as soon as possible. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convenor is lodged in Tihar jail's number 2 in the excise policy-linked money laundering case. "Today I met Kejriwal ji, who is lodged in Tihar jail in a fake case by the central government. But, he still worries about the people of Delhi, more than himself.

"He inquired about the issues related to the power and water and he told me that he watched the water crisis in Delhi on television in Tihar,

'Delhi faces water shortfall of 50 million gallons a day': Atishi

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Claiming that Delhi faces a water shortage of 50 million gallons per day (MGD), the city government Thursday urged people not to waste water, and asserted the problem cannot be solved by merely restraining the tanker mafia.

As parts of the city grappled with the acute shortage, the Supreme Court asked the AAP government to approach the Upper Yamuna River Board (UYRB) for additional water on humanitarian ground.

The situation prompted Lt Governor V K Saxena to ask the Delhi Police to set up patrols along the Munak canal, supplying water to the national capital, to ensure the tanker mafia does not lift water from it.

Under his directions, the



Delhi Police set up pickets and started patrolling the 15-kilometre stretch of the Munak canal on the Haryana borders. The canal enters Delhi from Bawana and reaches the Haiderpur Treatment Plant.

Meanwhile, the BJP attacked the AAP government, accusing it of failing to check water leakage and wastage, while encourag-

ing illegal tanker mafia.

Delhi Water minister Atishi inspected the main pipeline supplying water to South Delhi, and asserted the "rumours" of water leakages in Delhi Jal Board (DJB) pipelines were "rumours".

She also met Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in Tihar jail, and said he is worried about the people

of the city and has directed to ensure the water crisis is resolved as soon as possible.

The chief minister also directed AAP MLAs to go on the ground and take all possible steps to provide water to the people in their areas, she said.

A day after the Supreme Court slammed the AAP government over tanker mafia in water-scarce national capital, the Delhi government claimed they were operational on the Haryana side of the Yamuna river over which the DJB has no jurisdiction. Meanwhile, the plight of the people, especially those in unauthorised colonies and slum clusters, continued with exhausted women and children seen struggling with grown ups for a few buckets of water that tankers would bring.

'Tanker mafia operational on Haryana side of Yamuna'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A day after the Supreme Court slammed the AAP government over tanker mafia in water-scarce national capital, the Delhi government claimed they were operational on the Haryana side of the Yamuna river over which the Delhi Jal Board has no jurisdiction. In an affidavit filed before the top court, the Delhi government said water tankers are needed to cater to areas not connected to water supply lines or where the supply is inadequate.

It said the total water supplied by the Delhi Jal Board and private tankers in the city is around 5-6 million gallons per day which constitutes only 0.5 per cent of total supply.

"DJB has been trying to improve the availability of water tankers so that even private tankers can be replaced by public tankers. Multiple letters have been written by the Petitioner Government to the



MERELY RESTRAINING TANKER MAFIA WON'T SOLVE WATER CRISIS

New Delhi: A day after being questioned by the Supreme Court over tanker mafias and the wastage of water, Delhi Water Minister Atishi on Thursday, said that out of the total water supply in Delhi, only 4-5 million gallons per day (MGD) of water is used by the tankers, adding that even stopping of 'tanker mafia' won't help in fully redressing the problem. She further said that the Delhi government has taken multiple steps, but the water shortage can't be met unless Delhi receives its due share at the Wazirabad barrage and the Munak canal. The AAP leader today inspected the water distribution network near Akshardham. Atishi said, "We have come here to check the main water pipeline from Sonia Vihar to various areas of South Delhi. Senior officers have also been ordered to check all pipelines for any leakage.

Lieutenant-Governor of Delhi (who is at present in charge for ensuring action).

"The tanker mafia is operational on the Haryana side of the Yamuna river over which DJB has no jurisdiction," it

said. Highlighting the steps taken taken by the Delhi government to stop water wastage, it said it has reduced losses in water transmission from Haryana to Delhi from 30 per cent to 5 per cent.

AAP govt failed to prevent wastage of water, says BJP

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi BJP on Thursday attacked the AAP government over the water crisis in the national capital, accusing it of failing to prevent wastage of water and misleading people on the issue. Addressing a press conference, Delhi BJP secretary and New Delhi MP Bansuri Swaraj said due to the shortage of water, people are being fleeced by the tanker mafia.

Earlier in the day, police here began patrolling the Munak canal area to check the activities of the tanker mafia and Water Minister Atishi inspected a pipeline network supplying water to south Delhi residents.

The Delhi government is ensuring through patrolling by additional district magistrates and sub-divisional magistrates across the city that not even a single drop of water is wasted due to leakage from the main pipelines, Atishi said in a post on X.

Hitting out at Atishi, Swaraj alleged that instead of ensuring action against the tanker mafia, the minister is extending protection to them.

"Atishi says that even if the tanker ma-

fia is stopped, not much water would be saved. This is very unfortunate because people facing water shortage are being fleeced by the tanker mafia," she said.

The BJP leader also criticised the AAP government for "failing" to prevent wastage and leakage of water and "misleading" people on the issue.

"I want to ask the AAP government and Atishi how long will they continue to come up with excuses and mislead people. They should come out of their air-conditioned press conference rooms and see the plight of the people," Swaraj said.

On Atishi's letter to Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena seeking a probe into alleged collusion between senior officers and the tanker mafia, Swaraj said the Delhi government faced the Supreme Court's wrath on the issue of the tanker mafia but it was trying to shift the blame on the officers.

The Supreme Court on Thursday directed the Delhi government to approach the Upper Yamuna River Board (UYRB) for water supply as Himachal Pradesh took a U-turn and told the top court that it did not have surplus water to spare.

Delhi saw 90% hike in vector-borne diseases: MCD report

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The breeding of vector-borne diseases like dengue, malaria and chikungunya spiked by nearly 90 per cent in Delhi during the monsoon season last year as compared to 2022, revealed an MCD report. According to the report, which also outlines the action plan of the corporation for the prevention and control of vector-borne disease for the forthcoming monsoon season, there has been a spike in the number of such breedings found during home inspec-



tions in the last four years since 2020.

Monsoon is expected to arrive in the national capital by the end of this month, around June 27.

Delhi recorded 3,25,875 cases of mosquito breeding at home in 2023, nearly 90 per cent higher than 1,71,931 in 2022, the data in the report

shows. The year 2022 also saw a considerable dip in the number of house breeding cases by over 24,000 cases. In 2021, Delhi recorded 1,96,303 instances of such breedings. In 2020, instances of mosquito breeding at homes in Delhi stood at 1,09,550. The report also shows, the number of legal notices issued by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) to owners of households where the breeding of vector-borne diseases was found also increased to 1,72,481 in 2023 from 1,22,282 in 2022 -- a 41 per cent jump in a year.

MCD forms task force to control mosquito breeding before monsoon

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The MCD has roped in various agencies, including the PWD, police, ASI and Delhi Metro, to prevent and control vector-borne diseases in the national capital ahead of the monsoon season. As per the Municipal Corporation of Delhi's action plan for 2024-25, apart from forming a multi-agency task force, the civic body has readied anti-larval measures and has made arrangements to spread awareness about the spread of diseases like ma-

laria and dengue. Monsoon is expected to arrive in Delhi by the end of this month, according to the weather department.

Hospitals have also been asked to reserve beds for dengue patients in preparation for any outbreak of vector-borne diseases, which saw a 90% jump last year. The civic body has deployed 5,207 pieces of equipment of different kinds for the purpose, which includes 2,600 Knapsack sprayers used for weekly anti-larval measures, 1,064 hand-operating fogging machines.

Plan to control air pollution to come into effect from June 15, says Rai

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi's summer action plan to control air pollution in the national capital will come into effect from June 15, Environment Minister Gopal Rai said on Thursday.

The city government has come up with a summer action plan, which will mainly focus on tree plantation, Rai said at a press conference.

"We held a meeting on Thursday in which 30 de-

partments participated. The focus of the summer action plan will be on tree plantation. From June 15 to September 15, the government will work by focusing on 12 key points of the summer action plan," he said.

The greening agencies have been directed to prepare their action plans, he added.

Delhi's Air Quality Index (AQI) fluctuated between 'moderate' and 'poor' during May 24 to June 12, Rai said and added that dust

particles play an important role in summer pollution.

All the agencies will jointly run an anti-dust campaign from June 15 to June 30. For this, 580 patrolling teams will go on inspections and monitor if dust control measures at construction sites are being followed, he said.

In May 2023, the Delhi government launched an action plan to combat air pollution during the summer months with a focus on controlling dust pollution.

Demolition drive: HC grants 1 month for vacating mosque premises

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has directed the DDA and a local religious body to grant one month's time to the caretaker of a mosque and madarsa to vacate the Hazrat Nizamuddin-based masjid premises which has been decided to be demolished by the authorities. A vacation bench of Justice Amit Sharma, in an order passed on Wednesday, made it clear that no further

extension of time shall be granted to petitioner Faizyab Masjid and Madarsa or any other person claiming through it to vacate the premises. The mosque and madarsa are situated near the ISBT bus depot at Sarai Kale Khan in Hazrat Nizamuddin.

The high court was hearing a plea seeking to declare the action of officials of the Delhi Police and Delhi Development Authority (DDA) of threatening demolition of the masjid on June 13 to be il-

legal, arbitrary and unconstitutional. The Delhi Religious Committee, represented by advocate Arun Panwar, has decided to remove unauthorised religious structures from public land. The petition also sought to direct the authorities to supply a copy of the orders and minutes of meeting and other file notings relating to the decision to demolish the masjid and madarsa and grant an appropriate time to the petitioner to avail legal remedies against it.

CHANDNI CHOWK SHOP GUTTED



A fire broke out in the Marwadi Katra market at Chandni Chowk on Thursday. ANI

Zoo enhances enclosure surveillance post chinkara conflict

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Zoo, authorities have announced plans to add more CCTV cameras to animal enclosures following a recent bout of aggression between two male chinkaras that led to the death of one of them. The fierce fight between two male chinkaras occurred on June 1.

Delhi Zoo Director Sanjeet Kumar explained that such conflicts among animals are not uncommon.

"For dominance, males often engage in fights both in the wild and in zoo conditions. Unfortunately, in this case, the fight led to severe injuries. The affected male suffered from an intestinal injury and was rushed to the hospital, but it succumbed to injuries during treatment," he said.

The surviving chinkara, which sustained minor injuries, has been kept in an enclosure with other animals, including one born last month.

HOUSING PRICES SOAR AS INFLATION MODERATES

For investors seeking to preserve and grow their wealth amidst inflationary pressures, real estate has emerged as a popular hedge against this dreaded but inevitable dynamic, says consultancy research Anarock

Real estate – a hedge against inflation

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Steady population growth coupled with urbanization consistently fuels housing demand. As more people migrate to cities for better opportunities, rising residential demand exerts upward pressure on prices. Moreover, real estate investments can generate rental income, which potentially grows

over time in response to inflation. As the cost of living rises, landlords typically adjust rental rates. Also, investors can leverage their real estate assets to borrow funds for further real estate acquisitions. During inflationary periods, the cost of borrowing (interest rates) typically rises. However, investors who have secured fixed-rate financing before inflationary pressures set in can benefit from lower borrowing

costs in real terms, enhancing the profitability of real estate investments. “Real estate investments offer diversification benefits within a portfolio,” says Agarwal. “Unlike financial assets such as stocks and bonds, which may be negatively impacted by inflationary pressures, real estate - including residential, commercial, and retail - provides a tangible asset with intrinsic value. Diversifying investment

portfolios with real estate holdings can mitigate overall portfolio risk and enhance long-term returns.” Residential real estate prices have risen continuously since 2013, and in the last two years, appreciated at a CAGR of 13% while CPI inflation moderated by 1.3% on an annual average basis to 5.4% at the end of FY24. This trend signifies a clear out-performance of real estate prices compared to inflation.

After the 2019 elections, average residential prices across the top 7 cities have appreciated at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 6% - rising from INR 5,600/sq.ft. in June 2019 to INR 7,550/sq.ft by the end of FY 2024. A similar trend was witnessed in relation to the 2014 elections. Average prices across the top 7 cities saw an annual rise of over 6% in 2014 when compared to the preceding year - from INR 4,895/sq.ft in 2013 to INR 5,168/sq.ft in 2014.

Shobhit Agarwal
MD & CEO – ANAROCK Capital



SUPPLY-DEMAND DYNAMICS

In the last decade, there were periods when the supply of real estate exceeded demand, resulting in stable price growth that kept pace with inflation in the pre-pandemic era, according to Anarock research. Between 2013-2020, the top 7 cities recorded a cumulative supply of 23.55 lakh units against a demand for 20.68 lakh units, it added. Gradually, demand rose in tandem with new supply. Available inventory peaked at approx. 8 lakh units by the end of 2016. However, following the pandemic, residential real estate saw rapid recover, leading to significant price growth that has outpaced general inflation, the real estate consultancy said.

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY

SUPREME COURT VERDICT ON NEET	DATE: 13 TH JUNE 2024
MALE: 93%	FEMALE: 7%
Q-1 Supreme Court has ordered to remove grace marks in NEET controversy, your opinion	
A- Right decision	81.00%
B- Wrong decision	18.00%
C-Can't say	1.00%
Q-2 Did NAT i.e. National Testing Agency adopt wrong procedure in allotment of grace marks?	
A- Yes	86.00%
B-no	9.00%
C-Can't say	5.00%
Q-3 Should the NEET exam controversy end after the Supreme Court's decision?	
A- Yes	59.00%
B-no	10.00%
C- There should be a judicial inquiry	29.00%
D-Can't say	2.00%
Q-4 Has NEET 2024 exam tarnished the reputation of the National Testing Agency?	
A- Yes	88.00%
B-no	7.00%
C-Can't say	5.00%
Q-5 Whom will you give credit for raising the voice of justice for the victimized students of NEET 2024?	
A- TV channel	31.00%
B- Social media	48.00%
C- Educational Expert	10.00%
D- Legal experts	4.00%
E-Can't say	7.00%



THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY

RSS-BJP MEET ON UP POLITICS	DATE: 13 TH JUNE 2024
MALE: 96%	FEMALE: 4%
Q-1 Are the reports of tussle between Sangh and BJP after 2024 election results true?	
A- Yes	74.00%
B-no	25.00%
C-Can't say	1.00%
Q-2 What is your opinion on Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat's statement on Manipur violence?	
A- Advice to the Center	20.00%
B- Concern of Manipur	38.00%
C- General statement	31.00%
D-Can't say	11.00%
Q-3 What will be the main issue of discussion in the meeting of Sangh chief Bhagwat and CM Yogi in Gorkhpur?	
A- Defeat in UP	25.00%
B- Defeat in Ayodhya	21.00%
C- Coordination of Sangh-BJP	21.00%
D-Can't say	17.00%
Q-4 Whose role will be important in the selection of the next national president of BJP?	
A-BJP	29.00%
B- Intensive	3.00%
C- Both will decide together	60.00%
D-Can't say	8.00%

MUMBAI, NEW DELHI RANK 3RD, 5TH GLOBALLY IN REAL ESTATE PRICE GROWTH

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Mumbai and New Delhi are among cities in India that recorded a sharp annual increase in their real estate prices in the first quarter of 2024, according to a report by London-headquartered global property consultancy firm Knight Frank.

In case of Bengaluru, the average real estate prices witnessed a modest 4.8 per cent rise in prime residential or luxury homes during the January-March quarter of 2024.

According to the report by the property consultant, titled 'Prime Global Cities Index Q1 2024', Mumbai's significant rise on the international index was largely due to the rise in demand in the city. While the demand has been strong for all segments, there has been a rise in the sale of higher value products. Mumbai recorded the third



highest year-on-year growth in prime residential prices in Q1-2024, pushing it up the ranking table by three places to 3rd position from its 6th position in Q1-2023.

Delhi NCR rose from 17th rank in Q1-2023 to 5th in Q1-2024 with a growth of 10.5 per cent on a yearly basis. However, Bengaluru observed a slight decline in ranking from 16th place in Q1-2024 to 17th rank in Q1-2024, even while it recorded a 4.8 per cent yearly growth in residential prices.

India's main cities, notably New Delhi and Mumbai, have witnessed a surge in house prices driven by robust eco-

nomie growth, with annual GDP growth exceeding 8 per cent in the just concluded financial year 2023-24.

Manila, the capital city of Philippines, claimed the top spot in the ranking with a 26.2 per cent annual rise in prices. The growth, as per the Knight Frank report, can be attributed to two key factors: purchasing power, and substantial infrastructure investments within and around the city.

Tokyo in Japan jumped 17 places up with 12.5 per cent yearly price growth and ranked 2nd in the index.

Despite Japan's overall population decline, Tokyo

sustains a net population growth owing to migration from other regions within the country.

Shishir Baijal, Chairman and Managing Director at Knight Frank India said, "The strong demand trend for residential properties has been a global phenomenon, led by gateway markets of Asia-Pacific and EMEA (Europe, Middle East, and Africa)." "Like its peers in these regions, the improved rankings of Mumbai and New Delhi on the Prime Global Cities Index was underscored by the resilience in sales growth volume. We expect the momentum of sales to remain stable over the next few quarters as the economic conditions are likely to remain broadly unchanged."

The Prime Global Cities Index is a valuation-based index tracking the movement of prime residential prices across 44 cities worldwide. The index tracks nominal prices in local currency.

India rejects Jammu and Kashmir references in China-Pak statement

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

India on Thursday stoutly rejected "unwarranted" references to Jammu and Kashmir in the latest joint statement by China and Pakistan and asserted that the Union Territory and Ladakh "have been, are and will always remain" its integral parts.

The joint statement was issued in Beijing on June 7 following talks between Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chinese Premier Li Qiang.

"We have noted unwarranted references to the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir in the joint statement between China and Pakistan of June 7. We categorically reject such references," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

"Our position on the issue is consistent and well-known to the concerned



parties. The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and the Union Territory of Ladakh have been, are and will always remain integral and inalienable parts of India," he said.

Jaiswal was responding to a media query on the joint statement.

"No other country has the locus standi to comment on the same," Jaiswal said.

The MEA spokesperson also took strong note of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that featured in the joint statement.

"The same joint statement also mentions activities and projects under the so-called China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), some of which are in India's sovereign territory under forcible and illegal occupation by Pakistan," he said.

"We resolutely oppose and reject any moves by other countries to reinforce or legitimise Pakistan's illegal occupation of these territories, impinging on India's sovereignty and territorial integrity," Jaiswal said.

Gangster Iqbal Kaskar acquitted by MCOCA court in Thane

TDG NETWORK
THANE

A special MCOCA court in Thane acquitted Iqbal Kaskar, brother of fugitive gangster Dawood Ibrahim, in an extortion case.

In his order on Wednesday, special MCOCA judge Amit M Shete said Kaskar was given the benefit of doubt and acquitted as the prosecution had failed to prove the charges against him.

Kaskar was tried for offences under the stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act as well as Indian Penal Code sections 384 (extortion), 386 (extortion by putting a person in fear of death or grievous hurt) and 387 (putting a person in fear of death or grievous hurt, in order to commit extortion) as part of a case registered at Thane Nagar police station on October 3, 2017.

NIA chargesheets 7 ISIS terrorists for setting up sleeper cells in UP

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

In a significant move to dismantle the ISIS-linked anti-India network, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) filed a chargesheet on Thursday against seven suspects involved in the Bellary IS module case on charges of setting up Uttar Pradesh sleeper cells and fabricating explosives.

These seven accused were earlier arrested by the NIA.

As per the agency, the accused have been charged with "recruitment and radicalization of vulnerable youth as mujahideens to operate as terrorist sleeper cells."

"They were part of a bigger ISIS conspiracy to prepare 50 such sleeper cells in each district of India by 2025. The accused were also involved in the fabrication of explosives for the furtherance of the ISIS goal to establish the Caliphate System in India by waging jihad against the



Government of India," the NIA said.

The men, who were actively engaged in propagating the ISIS ideology, the NIA said, have been chargesheeted under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, Arms Act and Explosive Substances Act. As per the NIA investigations in the case (RC-03/2023/NIA/BLR), registered in December 2023, the Bellary module was inspired by the separatist and violent ideology of the proscribed terrorist organisation, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

"The sleeper cells were being prepared to carry out guerrilla attacks on the Indian soldiers, police and leaders of specific religious organisations," said the anti-terror agency. The improvised explosive devices prepared by the accused were meant to unleash terrorist violence in various parts of the country, NIA investigations have further revealed. It said that the accused had already carried out a trial blast in Bellary, Karnataka, and had also been sharing jihad-related digital documents/data with other vulnerable youth.

Jarange suspends fast, gives govt 1 month for Maratha quota

TDG NETWORK
CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR

Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange on Thursday suspended his indefinite fast over the reservation issue six days after launching it, and set a deadline of one month before the Maharashtra government to accept the community's demands.

He made the announcement after Maharashtra minister and member of Maratha quota sub-committee Shambhuraj Desai, Shiv Sena MP Sandipan Bhumre met him at his native Antarwali Sarati village in Jalna district and discussed the issue.

Addressing people at the protest site, Jarange said, "We are giving a month's time to the government to fulfil the demands of the Maratha community. But we will also go ahead with our preparations for the upcoming assembly elections. If the government doesn't provide reservation to us, we will go and take it."

"If the demands are not fulfilled in a month, neither the opposition members nor those in the government should come to us. We will defeat the candidates (in the state assembly elections) by declaring their names," he said.

Jarange, who launched his fresh round of protest from Saturday, has been demanding implementation of the draft notification that recognises Kunbis as "sage soyare" (blood relatives) of Maratha community members and also seeking a law to identify Kunbis as Marathas.

Kunbi, an agrarian group, falls under the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category, and Jarange has been demanding that Kunbi certificates be issued to all Marathas, thus making them eligible for quota benefits.

Talking after his meeting with Jarange, minister Desai said, "A meeting will be convened tomorrow (over the issue). Of the last five months, two months passed in following the model code of conduct (for the Lok Sabha polls).

Six dead, three injured in blast at explosives factory near

TDG NETWORK
NAGPUR

Six workers including five women were killed and three injured in a blast at an explosives manufacturing factory near Nagpur city on Thursday afternoon, police said.

The incident took place around 1 pm at Chamundi Explosive Pvt Ltd at Dhamna village under Hingna police station limits, around 25 km from here.

A total of nine injured persons were brought to two private hospitals in the city, said Nagpur police commissioner Ravindra Singhal.

Of them, five women and a man died during treatment, he told mediapersons.

Most of the victims were working in the factory's packaging unit when the explosion took place, another police official said.

Further probe was on, he added.



NCP (SP) MLA from Katol and former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh visited the blast site. The factory is located in the Katol assembly constituency.

Union minister and Nagpur MP Nitin Gadkari took to X to express condolences for the deceased.

The BJP leader also appealed local party workers to cancel a program organised here in the evening to welcome him to the city after he again took oath

as Union road transport minister following the Lok Sabha elections, his office said in a statement. NCP (SP) MLA from Katol and former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh visited the blast site. The factory is located in the Katol assembly constituency.



Family members mourn the death of CRPF jawan Kabir Das Uikey, who lost his life in the anti-terror operation at Kathua during his last rites, in Chhindwara on Thursday. (ANI Photo). ANI

CII expects India's GDP at 8%

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on Thursday said that it anticipates India's Gross Domestic Product to grow by 8 per cent in 2024.

Sanjiv Puri, President of CII, shared his optimism about India's economic trajectory, highlighting that the previous year had surpassed all expectations. "We have had a great year and every estimate for the last year has been beaten, but we believe the best is yet to come. We are optimistic about the reports and estimates that have come out within and outside India," said Puri at an event organised by the

industry body here on Thursday.

The event also focused on the country's Economic Growth Outlook and the key reform priorities for the country including the industry expectations from the upcoming Union Budget, expected next month.

Puri emphasized that policy interventions, particularly those aimed at improving the Ease of Doing Business (EODB), have significantly strengthened the Indian economy. These reforms have created a more favourable business environment, enabling industries to thrive and contribute more effectively to economic growth.

He pointed out that various indicators of economic

health are robust and that certain sectors are poised for further improvement. These include agriculture, information technology, services, and global trade, which are expected to drive economic expansion in the coming years.

CII's positive outlook for the current fiscal year is based on several key factors. The organization expects the Indian economy to grow at a robust rate of 8 per cent, driven by strong performance across multiple sectors.

CII highlighted that the policy measures implemented by the government, aimed at simplifying business processes and reducing bureaucratic hurdles, have been instrumental in

fostering a conducive environment for growth. These measures are particularly beneficial for small and medium-sized enterprises, which form the backbone of the Indian economy.

Additionally, CII expressed confidence in the government's ability to manage inflation. CII noted that inflation is expected to remain close to the target range of 4 to 4.5 per cent in 2024.

This projection is based on various economic indicators and the government's proactive measures to control price rises. Keeping inflation in check is crucial for maintaining purchasing power and ensuring sustainable economic growth.

Bengaluru court issues arrest warrant against Yediyurappa

TDG NETWORK
BENGALURU

A Bengaluru court on Thursday issued a non-bailable arrest warrant against former Chief Minister and senior BJP leader B S Yediyurappa in a POCSO case. The Special Investigation Team of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) had moved the First Fast Track court seeking an arrest warrant

against him since he failed to appear for questioning on Wednesday. Yediyurappa had sought time to join the probe. The BJP veteran, who is also a member of the party's parliamentary board, is presently in Delhi, and he is likely to join the probe after he returns, sources close to him have said.

According to police, Yediyurappa has been booked under the POCSO Act and

Section 354 A (Sexual harassment) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) based on a complaint by the mother of a 17-year-old girl who alleged that he molested her daughter during a meeting on February two this year, at his residence in Dollars Colony here.

The victim's brother had filed a petition in the court earlier this week alleging that though the case was



registered on March 14, no progress has been made in

the investigation. The petitioner prayed that Yediyurappa should be arrested and interrogated.

After the Sadashivanagar police registered the case in March, the Karnataka Director General of Police Alok Mohan had issued an order transferring it to the CID for further investigation.

urappa should be arrested and interrogated.

After the Sadashivanagar police registered the case in

March, the Karnataka Director General of Police Alok Mohan had issued an order transferring it to the CID for further investigation.

The 54-year-old woman, who had leveled the charge against Yediyurappa, died at a private hospital here last month, due to lung cancer.

The 81-year-old Yediyurappa has denied the charge and said he would fight the case legally.

Securing India’s digital future: Issues, challenges and opportunities of cyber security

OPINION

DR. S.KRISHNAN & VAISHALI SONI



In October, 2023, Resecur-ity, a US company, in- formed the world about the availability of Indians’ personal data on the dark web. It would have been easy to ignore this amid the deluge of bad news filling our news feeds but for the size and sensitivity of data. The seller of the data set was providing verifiable, sensi- tive information of 55% of the Indian population — roughly around 815 million (81.5 crore) citizens. This in- cluded personally identi- fiable information like name, phone number, Aadhaar number, passport number and address. All for a paltry sum of USD80,000. On De- cember 18, 2023, Delhi police had arrested four individu- als in this matter.

As the world is advancing in the realm of digitalisation, the threat of cyber attacks has also grown and India is no exception to it. In the digital age, India finds itself grappling with a rapidly es- calating threat the surge of cyber crimes. As technology advances, so do the tactics of cybercriminals, leading to an unprecedented rise in mali-

cious activities across the country. From identity theft to financial fraud, the specter of cybercrime looms large, posing a substantial risk to individuals, businesses, and the nation’s overall se- curity. This alarming trend is fueled by the widespread adoption of digital technolo- gies, as more Indians em- brace online platforms for communication, commerce, and financial transactions. With the growing reliance on the internet, hackers and cybercriminal syndicates have found fertile ground to exploit vulnerabilities, leav- ing a trail of victims in their wake.

HOW VULNERABLE IS INDIA TO CYBER ATTACKS?

India has a large and grow- ing population of internet users, with more than 52% of the population or 759 million people accessing the internet at least once a month in 2022. India is the second largest online market in the world, behind China. By 2025, the number is expected to grow to 900 million. India has a rapidly

expanding digital economy, with sectors such as health- care, education, finance, re- tail, and agriculture relying on online platforms and ser- vices. However, India’s out- dated or inadequate cyber security infrastructure, poli- cies, and awareness, making it easy for hackers to exploit the gaps and weaknesses in the system that’s why India faces sophisticated and per- sistent cyber threats from state-sponsored and non- state actors, who target In- dia’s strategic, economic, and national interests.

CHALLENGES POSED BY CYBER ATTACKS ON INDIA

India’s critical infrastruc- ture, such as power grids, transportation systems, and communication networks, is vulnerable to cyber at- tacks that can disrupt es- sential services and endanger public safety and national security. For example, in October 2019, there was an attempted cyber-attack on the Kudankulam Nuclear power plant. The financial sector in India faces a high risk of cyberattacks from cybercriminals who seek to profit from stealing or ex- torting money. Attacks on banks, financial institutions, and online payment systems can cause financial losses, identity theft, and a loss of trust in the financial system. For instance, in March 2020, a malware attack on the City Union Bank’s SWIFT system led to unauthorised transactions worth USD 2 million. As India moves to- wards a digital economy, the amount of personal and gov- ernment data stored online increases. This also increas- es the risk of data breaches, where hackers access and leak sensitive information. Data breaches can have se-



The financial sector in India faces a high risk of cyberattacks from cybercriminals who seek to profit from stealing or extorting money. Attacks on banks, financial institutions, and online payment systems can cause financial losses, identity theft, and a loss of trust in the financial system.

rious consequences for the privacy and security of indi- viduals and organisations. For example, in May 2021, the personally identifiable information (PII) and test re- sults of 190,000 candidates for the 2020 Common Ad- mission Test (CAT), used to select applicants to the IIMs, were leaked and put up for sale on a cybercrime forum. India, like other countries, is a target for cyber espionage activities that aim to steal confidential information and gain a strategic edge. Cyber espionage can affect India’s national security, foreign policy, and economic de- velopment. For example, in 2020, a cyber espionage campaign called Operation SideCopy (a Pakistani threat actor) was uncovered, which targeted Indian military and diplomatic personnel with malware and phish- ing emails. Supply chain

vulnerabilities refer to the weaknesses in the software or hardware components that are used by government and businesses for their op- erations. Cyber attackers can exploit these vulnerabilities to compromise the systems and services that depend on these components, and cause widespread damage. For example, in December 2020, a global cyberattack on SolarWinds, a US-based software company that pro- vides network management tools, affected several In- dian organisations, includ- ing the National Informatics Centre (NIC), the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), and Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL).

INITIATIVES REGARDING CYBER SECURITY?

National Cyber Security

Policy aims to build a secure and resilient cyberspace for citizens, businesses, and the government. It outlines vari- ous objectives and strategies to protect cyberspace infor- mation and infrastructure, build capabilities to prevent and respond to cyber attacks, and minimise damages through coordinated efforts of institutional structures, people, processes, and tech- nology. Another initiative is that of Cyber Surakshit Bharat Initiative, which was launched to raise awareness about cyber crimes and cre- ate safety measures for Chief Information Security Offi- cers (CISOs) and frontline IT staff across all government departments. Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre was established to provide a framework and eco-system for law enforcement agen- cies to deal with cyber crimes in a comprehensive and co- ordinated manner.

Cyber Swachhta Kendra (Botnet Cleaning and Mal- ware Analysis Centre) was launched in 2017 to create a secure cyberspace by de- tecting botnet infections in India and notifying, enabling cleaning and securing sys- tems of end users to prevent further infections. Another organization, Computer Emergency Response Team

- India (CERT-In), which is part of the MeitY which collects, analyses and dis- seminates information on cyber incidents, and also is- sues alerts on cyber security incidents. The government has established the National Critical Information Infra- structure Protection Centre (NCIIPC) to protect the CII of various sectors, such as pow- er, banking, telecom, trans- port, government, and strate- gic enterprises. Defence Cyber Agency (DCyA) is a tri-service command of the Indian Armed Forces that is responsible for handling cyber security threats. It has the capability to conduct cyber operations, such as hacking, surveillance, data recovery, encryption, and countermeasures, against various cyber threat actors.

WHAT SHOULD INDIA DO FURTHER TO SAVE ITSELF FROM CYBER ATTACKS?

India’s primary legislation governing cyber crimes is the Information Technology (IT) Act of 2000, which has been amended several times to address new challenges and threats. However, the IT Act still has some gaps and limitations, such as the lack of clear definitions, proce- dures, and penalties for vari- ous cyber offences, and the low conviction rate of cyber criminals. India needs to en- act comprehensive and up- dated laws that cover all as- pects of cyber security, such as cyber terrorism, cyber warfare, cyber espionage, and cyber fraud. India has several initiatives and poli- cies to improve its cyber se- curity, such as the National Cyber Security Policy, the Cyber Cells and Cyber- crime Investigation Units, the Cyber Crime Reporting Platforms, and the Capacity

Building and Training pro- grams. However, these ef- forts are still inadequate and fragmented, as India faces a shortage of technical staff, cyber forensics facilities, cyber security standards, and coordination among various stakeholders. India needs to invest more in developing its human and technologi- cal resources, establishing cyber security centers of excellence, adopting best practices and standards, and fostering collaboration and information sharing among different agencies and sec- tors.

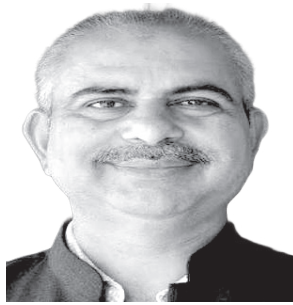
India is not alone in fac- ing the challenges of cyber security, as cyber attacks transcend national bound- aries and affect the global community. India needs to engage more with other countries and internation- al organisations, such as the United Nations, the In- ternational Telecommuni- cation Union, the Interpol, and the Global Forum on Cyber Expertise, to exchange best practices, share threat in- telligence, harmonise cyber laws and norms, and coop- erate in cyber investigations and prosecutions. India also needs to participate more actively in regional and bi- lateral dialogues and initia- tives, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, the BRICS, and bilateral forums it has like Indo-US Cyber Security Forum, to build trust and confidence, and to address common cyber security issues and interests.

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An essential reading for a deeper understanding of India-Nepal ties

BOOK REVIEW

RASHEED KIDWAI



The book ‘Kathmandu Chronicle: Reclaiming India-Nepal Relations’ stands out for its blend of histori- cal insights and forward- looking vision; Combining personal anecdotes with thoughtful analysis, the book goes beyond formal ties to explore broader av- enues for collaboration

In the intricate world of international relations, few bonds are as paradoxical as that between India and Ne- pal. ‘Kathmandu Chroni- cle: Reclaiming India-Nepal Relations’ by K V Rajan and Atul K Thakur explores this dynamic relationship with meticulous detail and fresh perspectives, shed- ding light on its turbulent past and the potential for a reinvigorated future. The

book, written by seasoned diplomat Amb K V Rajan, India’s longest-serving ambassador to Nepal (1995-2000), and Atul K Thakur, a distinguished policy pro- fessional and a long-time scholar on Nepal’s affairs, offers absolutely a new narrative that oscillates be- tween hope and caution.

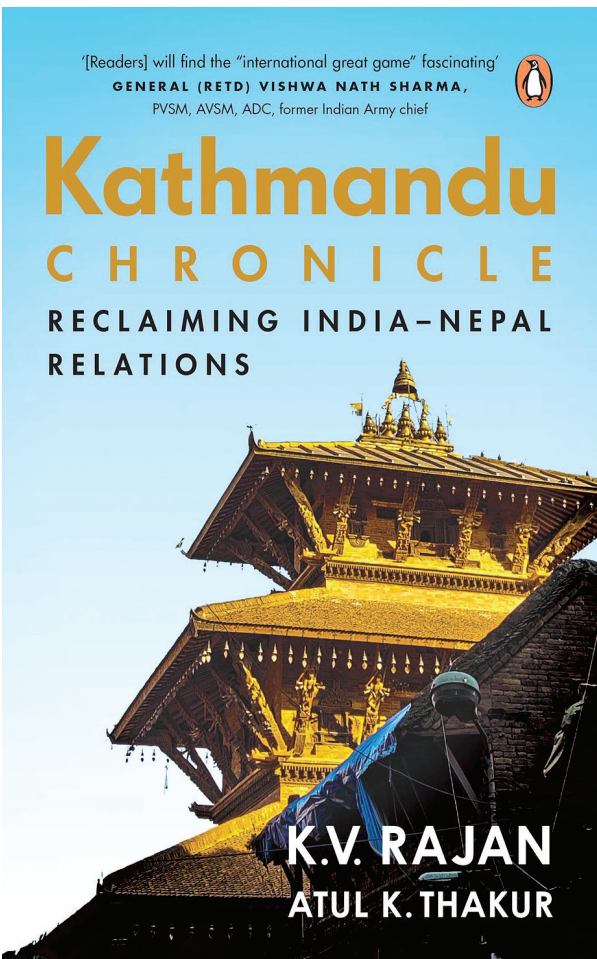
The work seeks to answer some fundamental ques- tions such as why do anti- Indian protests happen often in Nepal, and why is there so much distrust despite India’s good inten- tions? ‘Kathmandu Chroni- cle’ sheds light on these pertinent issues with sto- ries that haven’t been wide- ly known before. The best part of it is that the work seeks to respond to these queries through anecdotes, research, and clear ex- planations, uncovering in both implicit and explicit man- ner, the real causes behind the strained relationship between India and Nepal.

The book comes out with rich observations on almost every pages, “Nepal regis- tered several significant

turning points in a relatively short span of time—among them achievement, at last, of full-fledged multi-party democracy after two popu- lar upheavals and not a little help from across the south- ern border; a peaceful ne- gotiated end to ten years of violent Maoist insurgency and the mainstreaming of Maoists into the democratic polity; adoption of a Con- stitution (albeit somewhat im- perfect and hastily rushed through); a peaceful and in the end dignified exit of the institution of monarchy; the assertion of a new identity as a secular federal demo- cratic republic.”

Rajan and Thakur expert- ly and carefully explore the historical milestones and challenges that have shaped India-Nepal ties. From the royal family massacre to the Maoist insurgency, from political upheavals to democratic transitions, each event is dissected to reveal its impact on bilateral relations. Rajan’s firsthand experiences provide fasci- nating insights into the key players and their motiva- tions, offering readers a nu- anced understanding of the complex interplay of politics and diplomacy.

They further write in the book, “Nepal’s history in recent decades has been marked by tumultuous events and transformations, and its relations with India by sharp fluctuations. Many



books on both subjects have been written by scholars and foreign policy practi- tioners, Nepalese as well as Indian. Yet, too many unan- swered questions remain, about the hows and whys of the past, the depth and chal- lenges of present trends, and prospects for the fu- ture, in an increasingly un- certain post-Covid world.” The authors’ unravel the diplomatic manoeuvres,

showcasing India’s delicate balancing act in safeguard- ing its geopolitical interests while maintaining Nepal’s goodwill.

The authors’ candidly ad- dress the mutual distrust that has plagued India-Ne- pal relations. They attribute this to a failure on both sides to fully grasp each other’s aspirations and concerns. While India sometimes struggled to comprehend

BOOK: Kathmandu Chronicle: Reclaiming India–Nepal Relations

By K V Rajan and Atul K Thakur

PUBLISHED BY: Penguin Random House India (PRHI)

PRICE: INR 499

Nepal’s quest for sovereignty, Nepal, influenced by his- torical narratives, remained wary of Indian intentions. Yet, amidst the challenges, authors identify signs of optimism. Recent develop- ments such as infrastruc- ture projects and a growing recognition of each other’s geopolitical interests signal a shift towards stronger ties. The authors’ advocate for a pragmatic approach, em- phasizing the importance of mutual trust, understand- ing, and cooperation in the post-COVID world.

We all know that the his- torical bond between India and Nepal has long been recognized, yet the current disconnect between the rul- ing elite and the younger generation in Nepal poses a challenge for India’s influ- ence. While past political alliances formed strong ties between the two nations, these relationships have faded, leaving India with a weakened foothold in Ne- pali affairs. The nostalgia

for bygone friendships is evident at public events, but it does little to address the evolving dynamics of the present. With historical ties no longer holding the sway they once did, India’s diplo- macy in Nepal must adapt to this changing landscape by establishing new avenues for engagement and culti- vating trust with the young- er generation.

The book ‘Kathmandu Chronicle: Reclaiming India-Nepal Relations’ stands out for its blend of histori- cal insights and forward- looking vision. Combining personal anecdotes with thoughtful analysis, the book goes beyond formal ties to explore broader av- enues for collaboration. It envisions a future where India and Nepal deepen their connections through cultural, economic, and social engagement, aim- ing for a stronger and more enduring relationship. By emphasizing the potential for multifaceted coopera- tion, the book offers a road- map for building a more robust partnership between these neighbouring coun- tries, “Nevertheless, there is hope within and among friends outside Nepal, es- pecially India, that it is on the right track, and that with patience, perseverance, ex- perience and support, the kind of leadership and di- rection it desperately needs will emerge, and Nepal will

experience a speedier and smoother transition to a minimum desirable level of governance and inclusive development.”

In this context, ‘Kathman- du Chronicle’ emerges not only as a historical analysis but also as a roadmap for the future. The authors Amb K V Rajan and Atul K Thakur highlight the importance of learning from the past while embracing new mindsets and innovative approaches to forge enduring relation- ships. Their vision of a model cooperative relation- ship between India and Ne- pal transcends generational gaps, emphasizing the need for both nations to evolve together in uncertain times. By heeding the lessons of history and adapting to the needs and aspirations of today’s youth, India-Nepal relations can regain its or- ganic strength and pave the way for a stronger, more resilient bilateral partnership in the future. Something that is always wishful.

‘Kathmandu Chronicle’ is essential reading for any- one seeking a deeper un- derstanding of India-Nepal relations. With its blend of historical insights, personal narratives, and forward- looking perspectives, the book is a timely reminder of the enduring bond between two culturally intertwined nations and the imperative of reclaiming and strength- ening their ties.

VIJAYANT SHANKAR
NEW DELHI

The concept of a newspaper has a surprisingly long history, with its roots stretching back to the Roman Empire. The earliest known example is the "Acta Diurna", a handwritten compilation of government pronouncements, legal notices, and public news posted in the 1st century BC. This government-sanctioned gazette served as a precursor to modern newspapers, informing citizens of important happenings within the Roman world.

The story of newspapers in India offers valuable lessons for navigating the complexities of the digital age. Here, the fight for a free press was intricately linked to the fight for freedom itself. Early publishers like James Augustus Hicky, despite facing censorship and persecution, demonstrated the power of the press to challenge authority and ignite public discourse. This unwavering commitment to truth and accountability serves as a guiding principle for journalists today, even in the face of online manipulation and misinformation.

Centuries later, in 8th century China, the concept of a printed newspaper emerged. Using a revolutionary technique of carving individual characters onto wooden blocks, the Chinese produced the world's first printed newspaper. This innovation, along with the development of printing ink and paper, paved the way for mass-produced news dissemination. Notably, the Koreans adopted this printing method soon after.

In Europe, however, there was widespread adoption of printing technology, leading to a surge in affordable books and, more significantly, for our purposes, the rise of popular newspapers. This democratization of communication empowered a wider public to access information previously restricted to a select few.

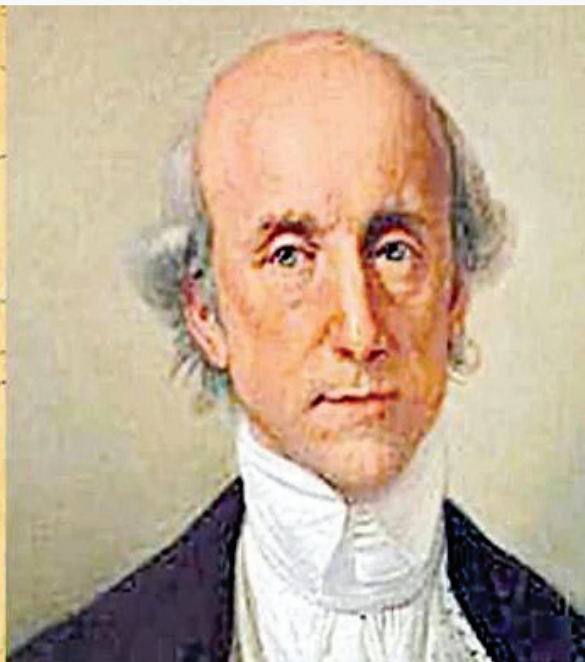
In 1690, the seeds of American journalism were sown with the publication of 'Publick Occurrences Both Foreign and Domestic.' This short-lived venture, led by the British journalist Benjamin Harris, marked the first attempt at a newspa-

NEWSPAPERS FROM FREEDOM STRUGGLE AND BEYOND

As we navigate the digital landscape, the lessons learned from the past – the fight for press freedom, the importance of fact-checking, and the need for inclusivity – become even more critical.



James Augustus Hicky's Bengal Gazette



Raja Ram Mohan Roy

per in the fledgling American colonies. However, the honor of establishing the first American-run newspaper goes to John Campbell, whose 'Boston News-Letter' debuted in 1704. Daily news consumption arrived in America in 1783 with the launch of Pennsylvania's first daily newspaper

The story continues beyond American shores. Russia's venture into the realm of newspapers is believed to have commenced in 1703 with the publication of its inaugural journal. The narrative of print journalism in India provides a distinctive perspective. Here, the struggle for a free press became intricately intertwined with the quest for independence, crafting a captivating saga of resilience, innovation, and the perpetual pursuit of free speech. This narrative un-



Lokmanya Tilak

'Kesari' by Bal Gangadhar Tilak

folds against the backdrop of colonialism, showcasing how the printing press became a potent tool in the hands of those fighting for

liberty and justice.

A HISTORICAL LOOK AT PRINT JOURNALISM IN INDIA

The history of print media in India dates back centuries, closely linked to the nation's fight for independence and its journey to becoming a democracy. When the first newspapers in India emerged, they provided a platform for debate and information during British rule. Over time, print media played a crucial role in mobilizing the masses, spreading nationalist ideas, and fostering a sense of unity among Indians.

EARLY ATTEMPTS AND THE STRUGGLES AGAINST CENSORSHIP

The first unsuccessful attempt at starting a newspaper in India came in 1776. William Bolts, a former employee of the East India Company, expressed his desire to publish a critical paper but was promptly silenced by the company itself. This incident foreshadowed the long and arduous battle for press freedom that Indian journalists would face.

In 1780, James Augustus Hicky defied the odds and launched "The Bengal Gazette," also known as the "Calcutta General Advertiser." This marked the birth of the first successful newspaper in India. Hicky's

publication was groundbreaking in many ways. However, Hicky's venture was short-lived. His publication was significant not only for being the first newspaper in India but also for its role in shaping public discourse and challenging authority during a time of British colonial rule. His sharp criticism of the then Governor-General, Warren Hastings, and his administration led to his arrest and the eventual closure of the paper in 1782.

The British Raj, wary of the potential for dissent, implemented a series of laws aimed at controlling the press. The Censorship of Press Act of 1799 and the Licensing Regulation Ordinance of 1823 restricted the publication of anything deemed detrimental to the British administration. These measures were met with resistance from influential figures like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who used his newspaper "Mirat-ul-akhbar" to advocate for press freedom.

THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM AND THE RISE OF NATIONALIST VOICES

A turning point arrived in 1835 with the abolishment of the Licensing Regulation by Governor-General Charles Metcalfe. This ushered in a period of relative press freedom, leading to a surge in the number of newspapers, particularly those published

The concept of a newspaper has a surprisingly long history, with its roots stretching back to the Roman Empire. The earliest known example is the "Acta Diurna", a handwritten compilation of government pronouncements, legal notices, and public news posted in the 1st century BC.

in Indian languages. However, this period of relative freedom was short-lived. The Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 led to tighter press control, with the introduction of the Licensing Act of 1857.

The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw the rise of the Indian nationalist movement, and newspapers became a powerful tool for its leaders. Iconic publications like "Kesari" by Bal Gangadhar Tilak and "The Indian Opinion" by Mahatma Gandhi emerged as platforms to voice dissent against British rule and advocate for self-governance. These publications, along with many others, faced constant scrutiny and censorship from the British authorities. Acts like the Newspaper (Incitement to Offense) Act of 1908 and the Indian Press Act of 1910 were implemented to curb seditious content.

The history of press regulations in India has seen a series of legislative measures aimed at controlling and managing the dissemination of information through various media. These laws were introduced over different periods, each with a specific purpose and context.

■ **Press Act or the Metcalfe Act:** Named after Charles Metcalfe, this act was more liberal compared to its predecessors. It eased some of the stringent measures imposed by earlier regulations, allowing for

greater freedom of the press. Metcalfe is often credited with fostering a more open environment for journalism in India.

■ **Vernacular Press Act:** Enacted in 1878, this act specifically targeted Indian-language newspapers. It was designed to curb the criticism of British policies in the local press, which was increasingly vocal in vernacular languages. The act gave the government the power to confiscate printing presses and stop the publication of offending newspapers.

■ **Registration Act:** This act required all newspapers and publications to be registered with the government. It aimed to keep track of all operating media outlets, ensuring that they adhered to legal requirements and standards set by the authorities.

■ **Indian Press Act:** This comprehensive act consolidated various previous regulations and introduced new measures to control the press. It included provisions for licensing, registration, and censorship, giving the government extensive powers to regulate the media industry.

■ **Newspaper Act:** This act was introduced to regulate the publication and distribution of newspapers. It included provisions for registration, licensing, and compliance with legal standards. The act aimed to ensure that newspapers oper-

ated within the framework of the law and maintained certain ethical and professional standards.

These legislative measures reflect the evolving relationship between the press and the government in India. While some acts aimed to provide more freedom to the press, others were designed to impose stricter control. The balance between freedom of expression and government regulation has always been a complex and contentious issue in the history of Indian journalism.

THE PRESS AFTER INDEPENDENCE AND THE CHALLENGES OF A NEW ERA

India's independence in 1947 marked a new chapter for print journalism. The landscape of the press underwent significant changes, reflecting the evolving political, social, and economic realities of the newly formed nation. Established English dailies like "The Times of India" and "The Hindustan Times" continued to be prominent voices, while regional language newspapers like "Anandabazar Patrika" (Bengali) and "Eenadu" (Telugu) catered to the diverse linguistic needs of the population.

The 1950s and 1960s saw the rise of the vernacular press. With increasing literacy rates, newspapers in regional languages witnessed a surge in readership. The government also played a role in shaping the media landscape through the establishment of the Press Trust of India (PTI) in 1947, a national news agency that provided news coverage across the country.

The introduction of offset printing technology in the 1970s further revolutionized the industry, allowing for faster printing and wider circulation of newspapers. However, the latter half of the 20th century also saw the emergence of new challenges. The Press Commission Reports of 1954, 1962, and 1977 aimed to regulate the press and maintain journalistic standards, while also attempting to balance freedom of expression with social responsibility.

THE PAST INFORMS THE DIGITAL FUTURE

The historical tension between press freedom and government control offers a cautionary tale for the digital age. While social media platforms have democratized information sharing, they have also become breeding grounds for fake news and echo chambers. Newspapers, with their commitment to fact-checking and editorial oversight, can serve as a vital source of credible information in this new landscape.

Furthermore, the rise of the vernacular press in India highlights the importance of catering to diverse audiences. In the digital age, this translates to the need for news outlets to be accessible in multiple languages and formats, reaching a wider audience and fostering a more inclusive information ecosystem.

The story of Indian newspapers is ultimately a testament to the enduring power of journalism. As we navigate the ever-evolving digital landscape, the lessons learned from the past – the fight for press freedom, the importance of fact-checking, and the need for inclusivity – become even more critical. By upholding these core principles, journalists can continue to play a vital role in informing and empowering citizens in a world saturated with information.



Anandabazar Patrika

DELHI HIGH COURT ALLOWS SECTION 11(6) PETITION: MERE INITIATION OF ARBITRATION PROCEEDINGS DOES NOT BAR CORPORATE DEBTOR FROM PURSING REMEDIES UNDER IBC

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court in the case Pitambar Solvex Pvt Ltd And Anr. Vs Manju Sharma And Ors. observed and has held that mere initiation of the arbitration proceedings initiated does not bar the corporate debtor from pursuing his other remedies including those under the Insolvency Bankruptcy Code.

The Delhi High Court bench of Justice Neena Bansal Krishna was hearing the present matter.

FACTS OF THE CASE

The Respondents, who were the founders or promoters of Petitioner No.1, approached OFB Tech Private Limited and Petitioner

No.2 with the intent of selling 100% of their shares in Petitioner No.1 to OAgri Farms Private Limited, the Petitioner No. 2. Following the discussion, the signed and executed a term sheet, projecting an average EBITDA of approximately Rs.17.92 Crores for the Financial Year 2021-22 based on a turnover of Rs.501 Crores and Rs.390 Crores for the years 2021-22 and 2022-23, respectively.

However, the actual average EBITDA of Petitioner No.1, according to the books, was about Rs.4.50 Crores, significantly lower than projected.

The petitioner in the plea alleged that the Respondents assured them that the EBITDA reflected in the books was not a true



indicator of the company's valuation and claimed the actual EBITDA was around Rs.17.92 Crores. Thus, the Respondents allegedly depicted a promising picture of future growth which led Petitioner No.2 to enter into a Share Purchase Agreement.

Further, the petitioner claimed that they later dis-

covered that the accounting figures for previous years were falsified and that the Respondents failed to provide transitional services, which adversely affected the company's operational efficiency and customer relationships. The Petitioners served a Notice of Invocation which was met with a detailed denial from the

Respondents.

On the other hand, the respondent argued that the terms were negotiated and denied any fraud or misrepresentation, stating that amounts were due from the Petitioners, which needed to be cleared to avoid civil litigation. Subsequently, the Petitioners served a notice of arbitration to which the Respondents replied on December 21, 2023 with no Arbitrator appointed, the Petitioner approached the Delhi High Court, High Court for appointment of an arbitrator.

The Respondents argued that there were two separate agreements (Share Purchase Agreement and Credit Facility Agreement) with different signatories which caused a misjoinder

of causes of action. They contended that the petition was flawed on these grounds.

Furthermore, the Respondents claimed there was no actual dispute between the parties and that the Petitioners owe admitted amounts.

It has also been argued by them that a petition under Section 7 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code was filed in NCLT, Jaipur, and the petition under Arbitration Act was a tactic by the Petitioners to evade the proceedings in NCLT by fabricating disputes.

OBSERVATIONS MADE BY HIGH COURT

The High Court in the case clarified that the arbitrator has the liberty to

register the two arbitrations separately if it is determined that the agreements constitute separate causes that cannot be consolidated into one arbitration.

The respondent contended with regards to the second objection that there was no dispute between the parties and that the outstanding amounts were admitted by the Petitioners. The High Court in the case observed and has rejected this argument and held that various disputes had been explicitly disclosed in both the Legal Notice and the Notice of Invocation of Arbitration.

Further, the Respondents' reply dated December 02, 2023 in response to the Notice of Invocation, made claims for certain amounts

as due from the Petitioner, indicating that disputes indeed existed.

The High Court stated that the initiation of arbitration proceedings does not bar the corporate debtor from pursuing other remedies, including those under the IBC.

The High Court appointed Justice Mukta Gupta (Retd.) as the Sole Arbitrator to adjudicate the disputes between the parties.

The counsel, Advocates Mr. B.B. Gupta, Sr. Advocate with Ms. Arundhati Kajju, Mr. Sanyam Khetarpal, Mr. Achal Gupta and Ms. Lekha appeared for the Petitioner.

The counsel, Advocates Mr. Ankit Sareen, Adv. for R-1. Mr. Prakash and Mr. Yash Tandon for R-2.

Allahabad High Court: State Machinery Should Cancel License Of Journalists Involves In Blackmailing, Anti-Social Acts

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Allahabad High Court in the case Puneet Mishra Alias Puneet Kumar Mishra And Another vs. State Of U.P. Thru. Addl. Chief Secy. Home Lko.AndAnother observed and has said that the State Machinery should cancel the licenses of journalists who are involved in anti-social activities like blackmailing the common man to get financial benefits in the garb of their licences.

The bench headed by Justice Shamim Ahmed in the case observed and has refused to quash criminal proceedings initiated against two persons, a journalist and a newspaper distributor by profession, who

are facing a case under Section 384, Section 352, Section 504, Section 505 of the Indian Penal Code, IPC, 3(2)(Va), and 3(1) (S) SC/ST Act.

It was also alleged before the court that the applicants were involved in blackmailing the common man by taking photographs and printing the material in the newspapers against innocent persons.

The counsel appearing for the accused submitted before the court that they had been falsely implicated in the case and that the charge sheet had also been filed without proper investigation.

Before the court, it was argued that the Police acted routinely and that the Magistrate did not apply his ju-

dicial mind while passing the cognizance and summoning order.

The court in the case was apprised that the accused had been implicated in the case as they had shown a piece in the newspaper about cutting a prohibited green tree.

On the other hand, the GA and Addl. Advocate General appearing for the state submitted before the court that a Gang operates in the entire State, comprising Journalists. This gang is being involved in anti-social activities like blackmailing the common man to get financial benefits as well as other benefits in the garb of printing material against them in the newspapers and defaming their image in society. Thus, it was sub-

mitted that this was one of such cases.

The court while considering the arguments made by counsel stated that the impugned summoning order, chargesheet, and cognizance order filed against the applicants are 'perfectly just and legal.'

Further, the court stated that prima facie cognizable offence is made against the applicants under the Sections of I.P.C. and the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

The court stated that the matter is very serious and the State Machinery should take cognizance of the same and cancel the licence of such Journalists, if they are found operating in such type of antisocial activities

in the garb of their licence and there are machinery with the State Government which is capable to stop such type of activities which is being operated in case, if the case is found to be true

The court noted that the applicants, who claimed to be newspaper journalists, could not show any document proving that they were recognised by the newspaper (Swatantra Bharat) and even after the court's query, the applicants and counsel failed to show any such paper.

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case stated that no interference was required in the matter.

Accordingly, the court dismissed the petition.

Supreme Court: Principles Of Res Judicata May Not Strictly Apply When Public Interest At Stake

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Government of NCT of Delhi & Anr. v. M/s BSK Realtors LLP & Anr. and connected matters observed that the principle of res judicata may not strictly apply in situations where public interest is at stake.

The court in the case ruled in favor of the Delhi government and its entities in a batch of land acquisition cases.

The bench comprising of Justice Surya Kant, Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice Ujjal Bhuyan in the case observed and has stated that in such kind of cases a more flexible approach ought to be adopted by the courts, recognizing that certain matters transcend individual disputes and have far-reaching public interest implications.

The present matter relates to land acquisition process initiated by Delhi government under the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 for planned development of Delhi. Between the year 1957-2006, various notifications were issued for acquiring lands and awards passed fixing compensation and in some cases, compensation amounts were deposited in treasury, as landowners did not come forward. Thus, in some others, possession could not be taken by the government

entities, as landowners challenged the proceedings and obtained a stay.

Therefore, the 1894 Act was being replaced by the 2013 Act, which brought various reforms.

The Section 24 of the new Act states that land acquisition proceedings initiated under the earlier regime would be deemed to have lapsed in certain cases, including when compensation had not been paid or possession had not been taken.

The Section 24 was being interpreted in various Supreme Court decisions in the case Pune Municipal Corporation v. Harak Chand Mistrimal Solanki. Based on Pune Municipal Corporation and other similar decisions, the Delhi High Court allowed the writ petitions of certain affected landowners, which includes respondent-M/s BSK Realtors, and declared as lapsed land acquisition proceedings pertaining to them.

The High Court judgments were carried in appeal before the Supreme Court by Delhi government authorities like DMRC, DDA, etc.

Therefore, the 'first round' of litigation resulted in different outcomes, including dismissal of some civil appeals.

Four years later, in the year 2020, the decision in Pune Municipal Corpora-

tion was overturned by the Constitution Bench decision in the case Indore Development Authority v. Manoharlal, wherein the court held that acquisition proceedings initiated could be declared as lapsed only when both conditions i.e., non-payment of compensation to the landowners and failure of the State to take physical possession of the acquired lands, were met.

The Delhi government sought reconsideration of the Delhi High Court decisions, which declared acquisition proceedings as lapsed based on Pune Municipal Corporation.

However, The SLPs or appeals/M.A.s moved at this stage constituted the 'second round' of litigation, and pleaded authorities like DDA, DMRC, etc. the petitioners in the first round as co-respondents.

The court stated that among various issues raised regarding maintainability of the SLPs or appeals in the second round, one pertained to the principle of res judicata.

Therefore, the appellant-authorities' case was that the decision in Manoharlal applied retrospectively from January 01, 2014, and thus, the Supreme Court orders in the first round could not operate as res judicata if the law had been altered.

Accused Bibhav Kumar Moves Delhi High Court Seeking Bail: Swati Maliwal Assault Case

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court in the case Sh. Bibhav Kumar v. State Of NCT Of Delhi observed wherein the Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's close aide Bibhav Kumar approached the court seeking bail in the alleged Swati Maliwal assault case.

The Trial Court denied bail of Kumar on May 27. The Session Court rejected his second regular petition on June 07.

The bail petition has been filed through Advocate

Karan Sharma and Advocate Rajat Bharadwaj. The present case is a classic case of abuse of criminal machinery and subterfuge investigation as Kumar as well as Maliwal have both lodged complaints against each other but it is only the matter which is being investigated.

However, Kumar, is because Maliwal is an influential person who being the Member of Parliament. The Kumar concluded before the court that no investigation is being done on the part of his complaint with regards to breach by

Maliwal.

The petitioner in the plea submits that while passing the Bail Rejection Order the Ld. ASJ failed to consider the fact that all the evidences in relation to the aforesaid F.I.R. has been collected by the I.O. and has also recorded the statements of the witnesses therefore the custody of the Petitioner is not required and no useful purpose shall be served by keeping the Petitioner in the Judicial custody. Further, the petition states that Kumar was threatened of dire consequences

to the extent of implicating in false and frivolous cases and that Maliwal's First Information Report, FIR is an 'emanation of the nefarious design of the complainant.'

Kumar moved a petition wherein challenging his arrest in the case.

The bench headed by Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma in the case observed and has reserved order in his petition.

In the present case, the FIR was registered on the written complaint of Aam Aadmi Party's. AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal.

Kumar was arrested on May 18.

It has been alleged by Delhi Police that Kumar has always been non-co-operative during investigation and gave evasive answers to the questions.

Further, it was alleged before the court that he deliberately did not disclose the password of his mobile phone, which is an important piece of information in the probe to unearth the truth. Maliwal alleged that Kumar assaulted her when she went to meet Kejriwal at his residence dated May 13.

Supreme Court: Refusal Of Accused In Sexual Offence Case To Undergo Medical Examination Shows Unwillingness To Cooperate With Investigation

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case observed and has directed a person accused of sexual assault of his 9-year-old daughter to undergo a medical examination, wherein observing that his refusal would amount to non-cooperation with the investigation.

In the present case, the court was hearing the petition filed by the mother of the victim girl challenging the Karnataka High Court's order wherein the court stayed a police notice asking the accused to appear for medical examination. The High Court in the case observed and has passed an order wherein the court

stayed coercive actions against the accused. The same was conditional on the accused cooperating with the investigation and after the High Court's order, when the police issued a notice to the accused asking him to appear for medical examination, he protested.

Therefore, an application was filed by him before the High Court stating that the Investigating Officer was threatening him with arrest if he did not tender himself for medical examination at the same hospital where the victim was examined. The High Court in the case observed and has stayed the notice which mandated the accused to undergo medical examination.

The Supreme Court while noting that the High Court's first interim order was subject to the accused cooperating with the investigation, thus, the court observed that his refusal to undergo medical examination showed that he was not cooperating with the investigation.

The bench comprising of Justice PV Sanjay Kumar and Justice Augustine George Masih in the case observed that in any event, his clear statement to the effect that he did not want to be subjected to medical examination shows that he is not willing to cooperate with the investigation. The bench in the case observed that the Respondent No. 2 has to comply with the

Section 41-A notice and subject himself to medical examination as directed by the Investigating Officer. Thus, he cannot voice apprehensions about the medical facility that he is being referred to without any tenable basis. The bench directed the accused to be present before the Investigating officer for medical examination on July 10, 2024 at 10 A.M. The court stated that this court is constrained to stay the order dated 23rd May, 2024 passed by the High Court of Karnataka in IA No. 2 of 2024. Respondent No. 2 shall present himself before the Investigating Officer on July 10, 2024 at 10.00 a.m. for being subjected to medical examination.

The present case involved serious offences as stated under Section 6, Section 10 the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, POCSO Act, Section 376 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 and Section 75 of The Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children Act, 2015). The counsel, Advocate Mr A Velan (AOR) and Advocate Ms Navpreet Kaur appearing for the Petitioner submitted before the Supreme Court that the impugned order overlooked the medical report indicated sexual intercourse and the victim's statement as stated under Section 164 of the Code Criminal Procedure, CrPC which implicated the accused.

Sandeep Mehta that the decision was being taken by the panel constituted by the National Testing Agency, NTA on June 12, 2024 to allay the fears of the students. Further, the counsel, Advocate Kanu Agarwal stated that the panel was of the view that the award of compensatory marks to 1563 students on the grounds of loss of time resulted in a 'skewed situation' because the grace marks had to be limited only to the un-attempted questions. The committee constituted concluded after determining all the aspects that it would be appropriate to recommend the cancellation of the scorecards of the 1563 students.

The bench in its order stated that the petitioner who had approached for NEET-UG 2024 has raised a grievance with regards to the grant of compensatory marks to 1563 candidates using

the normalisation formula where, at the examination centres, the candidates who were not allowed 3 hours 20 minutes time admissible to them were permitted to take their examination for lesser time. Thus, the compensatory marks have been awarded which is based on the recommendation of a Grievance Redressal Committee while relying upon a judgment of this Court in the case of Disha Panchal vs. Union of India and others. Therefore, this award of compensatory marks was challenged. The National Testing Agency, NTA constituted another committee to reconsider the issue and gave its recommendation on the award of compensatory marks. The subsequent committee held meetings on June 10, June 11 and June 12, 2024 and has made recommendations which have been placed before us.

IMF RELEASES \$ 336 MN TRANCHE TO SRI LANKA

The third tranche under Extended Fund Facility arrangement was released during an executive board meet of International Monetary Fund Wednesday, IMF said.

AGENCIES
COLOMBO

The IMF has disbursed the third tranche of USD 336 million from its USD 2.9 billion bailout package to Sri Lanka, even as it cautioned that the economy of the cash-strapped nation remains vulnerable and the path to debt sustainability is “knife-edged”.

The third tranche under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) arrangement was released during an executive board meeting of the International Monetary Fund held on Wednesday, the Washington-based global lender said in a statement.

With the release of the third tranche amounting to USD 336 million, the total



IMF financial support disbursed so far to Sri Lanka under the bailout package is about USD 1 billion, the statement said.

Two tranches of USD 330 million each were released in March and December 2023.

The IMF noted that Sri Lanka's economy has started recovering, inflation remains low, revenue collection is improving, and reserves con-

tinue to accumulate.

However, “despite these positive developments, the economy is still vulnerable and the path to debt sustainability remains knife-edged,” it warned.

Strong reform efforts, adequate safeguards, and contingency planning help mitigate these risks, the IMF said.

“To restore fiscal sus-

tainability, sustained revenue mobilisation efforts, promptly finalising the debt restructuring in line with programme targets, and protecting social and capital spending remain critical. Advancing public financial management will help enhance fiscal discipline, and strengthening the debt management framework is also needed,” it underlined.

The EFF-supported programme aims to restore Sri Lanka's macroeconomic stability and debt sustainability, mitigate the economic impact on the poor and vulnerable, rebuild external buffers, safeguard financial sector stability, and strengthen governance and growth potential, the IMF said.

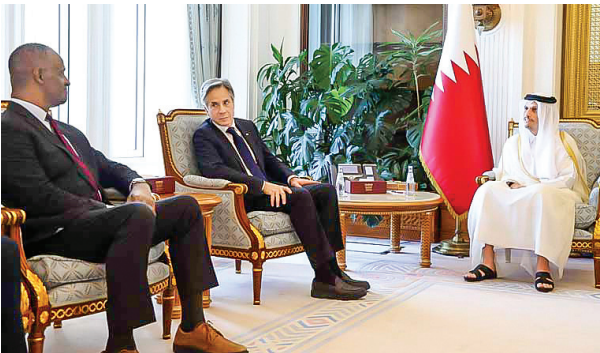
Some changes proposed by Hamas workable, some not: Blinken

AGENCIES
DOHA

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Wednesday that mediators would keep trying to close an elusive cease-fire deal for Gaza after Hamas proposed changes to a US-backed plan, some of which he said were workable and some not.

The back-and-forth laid bare frustration over the difficulty of reaching an accord that could end eight months of war that has decimated the territory, killed tens of thousands of Palestinians and left scores of Israeli hostages still languishing in militant captivity. Previous moments of optimism have been repeatedly dashed by the differences between the two sides.

The cease-fire proposal has global support but has not been fully embraced by Israel or Hamas. Blinken did not spell out what changes Hamas sought, but he said



the mediators Qatar, Egypt and the US will keep trying to close this deal. He put the onus on Hamas, accusing it of changing its demands.

“Hamas has proposed numerous changes to the proposal that was on the table. ... Some of the changes are workable. Some are not,” Blinken told reporters in Qatar. “I believe that they (the differences) are bridgeable, but that doesn't mean they will be bridged because ultimately Hamas has to decide.”

Blinken's comments came as Lebanon's Hezbollah fired a massive barrage of

rockets into northern Israel to avenge the killing of a top commander, further escalating regional tensions.

Hezbollah, an Iran-backed ally of Hamas, has traded fire with Israel nearly every day since the Israel-Hamas war began and says it will stop only if there is a truce in Gaza. That has raised fears of an even more devastating regional conflagration.

Air-raid sirens sounded across northern Israel, and the military said about 215 projectiles were fired from southern Lebanon, making it one of the largest attacks

since the fighting began. There were no immediate reports of casualties as some rockets were intercepted while others ignited brush fires.

Hamas asks for changes

Hamas conveyed its official reply to the proposal to mediators on Tuesday. Hamas spokesman Jihad Taha told the Lebanese news outlet Elnashra that the amendments requested by the group aim to guarantee a permanent cease-fire and complete Israeli troop withdrawal from Gaza.

The proposal announced by US President Joe Biden includes those provisions, but Hamas has expressed wariness about whether Israel will implement the terms. While the US says Israel has accepted the proposal, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has given conflicting statements, saying Israel is still intent on its goal of destroying Hamas.

Imran Khan's party terms PML-N govt's federal budget 'poisonous'

AGENCIES
ISLAMABAD

Slamming Shehbaz Sharif's government budget for fiscal year 2024-25 as “poisonous”, Imran Khan-founded Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf has said that the salaried class was suffocated by modifying the tax slabs, Geo News reported.

It added that despite making grandiose promises of a rescue package, it “cracked a joke by only allocating PKR 5 billion” for the agriculture sector. The party, making a sharp attack at the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)-led government, termed the Finance Bill 2025 presented by it in the National Assembly as a “poisonous budget” and a “bundle of contradictions”, according to Geo News.

The federal budget for FY25, according to a PTI spokesperson, was presented “against the nation, employment, and economic development”.

The former ruling party further accused the PML-N administration of being “actually dictated” by the International Monetary Fund



(IMF) and lacking control over the finalisation of the budgetary measures.

The PTI declared the growth rate of the gross domestic product (GDP) to be unrealistic, stating that it was set at 3.6 per cent and would not even increase to 2.4 per cent, as estimated by the World Bank, reported Geo News on Wednesday.

Additionally, the opposition party attacked the current administration for raising taxes on real estate, which would “only promote cash transactions,” and for eliminating tax breaks for exporters.

The PTI also attacked the government of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for raising the pay of govern-

ment employees by up to 25 per cent and increasing the petrol charge to PKR 80 per litre, both of which would increase the financial burden on taxpayers, reported Geo News.

The federal government unveiled the 2024-25 budget on Wednesday, with a total outlay of PKR 18.9 trillion.

First-time finance minister Muhammad Aurangzeb presented the budget to the National Assembly in the midst of a noisy demonstration by opposition MPs from the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), which is supported by the PTI. The lawmakers raised anti-government banners, stood on their desks, and tore copies of the Finance Bill 2025.

Widespread condemnation of Kashmiri man's killing in Pak

AGENCIES
KOTLI

The United Kashmir People's National Party (UKPNP) has strongly denounced the killing of a Kashmiri man in Pakistan.

Chaudhry Usman, a resident of Jalwa Gujran in the Kotli district of Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, was reportedly abducted from Rawalpindi and later found brutally murdered in Chakwal after being missing for a week.

UKPNP chairman and founder, Sardar Shaukat Ali Kashmiri, alongside central leaders like Sardar Nasir Aziz Khan and other party members, condemned this heinous act.

They emphasized the disturbing trend of targeted

killings of PoJK residents within Pakistan, particularly in Punjab. The UKPNP leaders highlighted the failure of higher authorities, administration, and the judiciary to deliver justice, with no arrests or punishments for the perpetrators.

Expressing profound sadness over the situation, the UKPNP demanded a thorough investigation into the killings of Kashmiris and urged for the perpetrators to be brought to justice while providing compensation to the affected families.

Furthermore, they called upon the United Nations to pressurise Pakistan to take immediate measures to safeguard the lives, property, and freedoms of people in PoJK and Pakistan-occupied Gilgit Baltistan.



Israeli military strikes dozens of terror targets in Gaza

AGENCIES
TEL AVIV

The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) said that its troops are continuing to operate against terrorist infrastructure and terror operatives in the Gaza Strip

To that end, IDF soldiers are continuing what it described as “intelligence-based, targeted operations” in the area of Rafah.

Over the past day, the forces conducted targeted raids in the area, located weapons, and eliminated several terrorists in close-quarters encounters. During one of the operations, IDF troops used a drone to identify and strike an armed terrorist.

Afterward, an Israel Air Force (IAF) aircraft struck the structure in which the terrorist had been operating.

Also, the IAF struck a launch site containing rockets that were ready to fire from the area of Rafah toward Israel.

In addition, IDF troops continue to operate in the central Gaza Strip. Over the past day, the forces eliminated more than ten terrorist operatives, including a



terrorist who took part in the October 7th Massacre in southern Israel.

Moreover, over the past day, the IAF struck and dismantled over 45 terror targets throughout the Gaza Strip, including military structures, armed terrorist cells, rocket launchers, tunnel shafts, and additional terrorist infrastructure.

In another incident, Lebanon's Hezbollah movement has fired multiple barrages of rockets into northern Israel in retaliation for an Israeli strike which killed one of its senior commanders.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) reportedly identified more than 200 projectiles that crossed the border on Wednesday. Some triggered

fires, but no casualties were reported.

It came as a top Hezbollah official vowed that the Iran-backed group would increase the intensity, force and quantity of its attacks. He was speaking at the funeral of Taleb Sami Abdullah, the field commander targeted in a strike in southern Lebanon on Tuesday night.

There have been exchanges of fire across the Israel-Lebanon border almost every day since the day after the start of the war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza on 7 October.

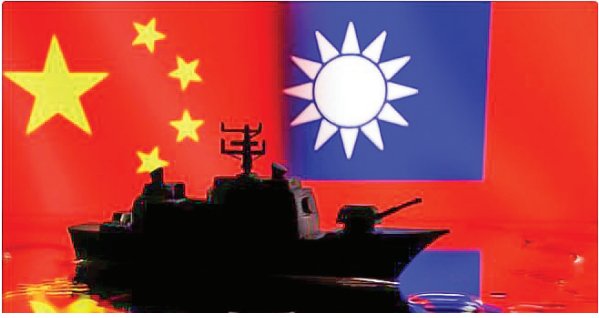
Hezbollah has said it is acting in support of the Palestinian group. Both are proscribed as terrorist organisations by Israel, the UK and other countries.

Taiwan reports Chinese military activity near its territory

AGENCIES
TAIPEI

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence (MND) has said that it has tracked 23 Chinese military aircraft and seven naval vessels operating around the island country from 6 am (local time) on Wednesday to 6 am (local time) on Thursday.

Of the 23 Chinese military aircraft, 19 crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait and entered Taiwan's southwest and eastern Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ). In response to China's action, Taiwanese



armed forces sent aircraft and naval ships and deployed coastal-based missile systems to monitor China's activity.

In a post on X, Taiwan's MND stated, “23 PLA aircraft and 7 PLAN vessels operating around #Taiwan

were detected up until 6 a.m. (UTC+8) today. 19 of the aircraft crossed the median line of #Taiwan Strait and entered Taiwan's SW and eastern ADIZ. #ROCArmed Forces have monitored the situation and responded accordingly.”

So far in June, Taiwan has detected Chinese military aircraft near its territory 132 times and naval/coast guard vessels 109 times, Taiwan News reported. Since September 2020, China has intensified its use of gray zone tactics by increasing the number of military aircraft and naval ships operating near Taiwan. According to Taiwan News report, gray zone tactics are termed as “an effort or series of efforts beyond steady-state deterrence and assurance that attempts to achieve one's security objectives without resort to direct and sizable use of force.”

Chancellor of Austria receives UAE's foreign minister

AGENCIES
DUBAI

Chancellor of the Republic of Austria, Karl Nehammer, today received Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, United Arab Emirates' Minister of Foreign Affairs in Vienna. The meeting was held in the presence of Alexander Schallenberg, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austria, as part of Sheikh Abdullah's working visit to Vienna.

During the meeting, Sheikh Abdullah conveyed the greetings of President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, to Chancellor Nehammer, and expressed his wishes for further progress



and prosperity to the Republic of Austria and its people.

Chancellor Nehammer conveyed his greetings to Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and his wishes for continued progress and development for the UAE. He affirmed the privileged relations between the two countries. Sheikh Abdullah and Chancellor

Nehammer discussed the comprehensive strategic partnership between the UAE and Austria, and ways to build on it to enhance cooperation mechanisms in all fields, including economic, commercial, investment, industrial, cultural, energy, and advanced sciences. They also reviewed the historical path of bi-

UAE, UZBEK MINISTERS OF JUSTICE DISCUSS ENHANCING COOPERATION

DUBAI: Minister of Justice Abdullah bin Sultan bin Awad Al Nuaimi, and Akbar Tashkulov, Minister of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan, have discussed ways to advance legal and judicial cooperation between the two friendly countries.

lateral relations between the two countries, which are celebrating this year the 50th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic relations.

Islamabad court acquits Imran Khan, Shah Mehmood Qureshi

AGENCIES
ISLAMABAD

A session court in Islamabad on Thursday acquitted Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan and senior party leader Shah Mehmood Qureshi in the Azadi March case, Pakistan-based ARY News reported.

According to details, the ju-



Several PTI leaders, including Pakistan's former PM Imran Khan, Shah Mehmood Qureshi and others were booked by police in various FIRs related to Azadi March, ARY News reported.

dicial magistrate Malik Muhammad Imran announced the reserved verdict and

Imran Khan, Shah Mehmood Qureshi and Awami Muslim League (AML) chief

Sheikh Rasheed. The court also ordered the acquittal of Sadaqat Abbasi and Ali Nawaz Awan from the Azadi March case.

Several PTI leaders, including Pakistan's former PM Imran Khan, Shah Mehmood Qureshi and others were booked by police in various FIRs related to Azadi March, ARY News reported.

The police had lodged 42 cases against PTI's senior leaders and workers for agitation after clashes broke out between the police and the PTI leader, according to ARY News report.

Imran Khan's march for “Haqqeeqi Azadi” (real freedom) on May 25, 2022. Prior to the march, authorities imposed Section 144, a measure used to curb gatherings,

Dawn reported. Authorities placed shipping containers on major thoroughfares to block their path.

Undeterred by the moves, the marchers, who tried to walk through the containers to head to Islamabad, were met with tear gas as police tried to disperse them. Police also charged them with batons, according to Dawn report.

FLYING HIGH



England flags fly in Bermondsey's Kirby Estate. The England men's football team will play their first match in the Uefa Euro 2024 tournament on Sunday, when they face Serbia in Gelsenkirchen. Source: PA

US, Ukraine expected to sign long-term security agreement at G7 Summit

AGENCIES
ROME

The US and Ukraine are expected to sign a bilateral security pact on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in Italy on Thursday, in a deal that lays out a path for Washington's long-term security relationship with Kyiv, CNN reported citing people familiar with the matter.

The agreement follows months of negotiations between the US and Ukraine and is expected to commit the US for 10 years to continued training of Ukraine's armed forces, more cooperation in the production of weapons and military equipment, the continued provi-



sion of military assistance, and greater intelligence sharing.

However, the pledge is expected to be an "executive agreement," CNN reported citing sources, making it less formal than a treaty and not

necessarily binding for any future presidents. So, there is the possibility of the deal being undone by future US administrations.

Former President Donald Trump, who is also the presumptive Republican

presidential nominee, has not explicitly said whether he would continue support for Ukraine if he wins in November. But, he has repeatedly affirmed that he would negotiate a quick end to the Russia-Ukraine war without explaining how.

He has also pushed European countries to contribute more to their own defence and said he'd "encourage" Russia "to do whatever the hell they want" if Europe didn't increase its defence funding.

The US-Ukraine agreement does not make a specific monetary pledge to support Ukraine's defence, two of the sources familiar with the agreement said.

Ukrainian President hopes important decisions in G7 Summit

AGENCIES
KYIV

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Thursday emphasised that the G7 Summit which began today, will be dedicated to Ukraine, their defence, and economic resilience, stressing that Ukraine is looking forward to important decisions.

Underscoring that he will be attending the G7 Summit today, Ukrainian President said that he will also held a number of bilateral meetings.

"Today is the G7 Summit in Italy, a meeting of our closest partners. Much of it will be dedicated to Ukraine, our defence, and economic resilience. And we look forward to important decisions today," President Zelenskyy said in a post on X.

"For us, the main issues are developing a fighter jet coalition, expediting pilot training, and accelerating aircraft delivery. Development of the Ukrainian air defence system based on the most powerful Western systems, as well as an increase



in long-range capability. Approval of the format for using Russian assets to benefit Ukraine, particularly in the development of our defence industry, and joint weapon production," he added.

The Ukrainian President said that he will also hold meetings with other world leaders and the IMF Managing Director.

"Today, I will attend the G7 meeting and hold a number of bilateral meetings. I will meet with the Summit's host, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, as well as Canadian and UK Prime Ministers Justin Trudeau and Rishi Sunak, European

Council President Charles Michel, and IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva," Zelenskyy said.

Moreover, he stressed that the bilateral security agreements will also be signed during meetings with US President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida. "The document with the United States will be unprecedented, as it should be for leaders who support Ukraine," the Ukrainian President added.

Zelenskyy further noted that a year ago, the G7 adopted a Declaration of support for Ukraine at the NATO Summit in Vilnius.

Clashes erupt between police, anti-Argentine govt protesters

AGENCIES
BUENOS AIRES

Clashes erupted between police and anti-government protesters outside Congress on Tuesday as Senators were scheduled to debate a bill on government and economic reforms proposed by Argentina's President Javier Milei, CNN reported.

Police used water cannons and tear gas to disperse the crowd while protesters were seen throwing objects back at police. A car that belonged to a Television station was overturned and set on fire before the firefighters



extinguished it, according to CNN report.

Protesters from various social groups and unions had gathered there to express opposition to the proposed reforms by Milei.

Argentina's Chamber of Deputies has already approved the bill, which includes a declaration of "a public emergency in administrative, economic, financial and energy matters for a period of one year," which would give legislative powers in those sectors to the Executive Branch without the need to go through Congress, CNN reported.

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AGENCIES
BARI

Leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) nations on Thursday began their three-day summit on global affairs in the southern Italian region of Apulia, where Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been invited for the Outreach session to be held on Friday. The Russia-Ukraine conflict is set to dominate the agenda as leaders of the G7 – the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, France and Japan – are hosted by Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni at the luxury resort of Borgo Egnazia on the Adriatic coast.

While India has reiterated its stance on "dialogue and diplomacy" as the best approach, British Prime Min-



ister Rishi Sunak is leading calls for "decisive" efforts to support Ukraine "whatever it takes." "We must be decisive and creative in our efforts to support Ukraine and end (Russian President) Putin's illegal war at this critical moment," Sunak said in a statement ahead of the summit talks.

AGENCIES
OTTAWA

The recent motion passed by the Canadian House of Commons acknowledging Tibetan self-determination has left China surprised. The motion, proposed by Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe, a Member of Parliament representing the Bloc Quebecois, gained unanimous support from attending MPs during Monday's session.

Expressing satisfaction with the outcome, the Canada Tibet Committee (CTC) declared on social media platform X, "Thrilled to announce that the Parliament of Canada has passed a unanimous motion declaring Tibet's right to self-determination." The relationship between China and Tibet has long been complex and



China asserts sovereignty over Tibet, viewing it as an integral part of its territory. However, Tibetans, led by the Dalai Lama and the exiled Tibetan government, advocate for greater autonomy or even independence.

marked by historical tensions. China asserts sovereignty over Tibet, viewing it as an

integral part of its territory. However, Tibetans, led by the Dalai Lama and the ex-

Former SpaceX employees sue Elon Musk

AGENCIES
TEXAS

Eight former employees of Elon Musk's SpaceX sued the company and Musk on Wednesday, alleging they were "wrongfully fired" for raising concerns about "sexual harassment" and "discrimination" in the workplace, reported the New York Times.

The employees were terminated in 2022 after circulating an open letter urging SpaceX executives to condemn Musk's comments on Twitter, later renamed X, which they deemed "a frequent source of distraction and embarrassment."

According to the complaint, Musk ordered the terminations upon learning of the letter.

"Our eight brave clients stood up to him and were fired for doing so," Laurie Burgess, a lawyer representing the former SpaceX employees, said in a statement. "We look forward to holding Musk accountable for his actions at trial."

The plaintiffs are seeking an unspecified amount of compensatory damages. SpaceX has not responded



The employees were terminated in 2022 after circulating an open letter urging SpaceX executives to condemn Musk's comments on Twitter, later renamed X, which they deemed "a frequent source of distraction and embarrassment."

to the allegations yet.

The lawsuit, filed in California state court in Los Angeles, called SpaceX's workplace an "Animal House" filled with inappropriate and sexually suggestive behaviour, the NYT reported.

Several plaintiffs said they had experienced harassment from other SpaceX employees that "mimicked Musk's

longer-term economic and social recovery and reconstruction.

"A priority for the PM at the Summit will be to work with partners to agree a way to use immobilised Russian assets to support Ukraine," a Downing Street statement said. Meanwhile, in his pre-visit media briefing in New Delhi on Wednesday, Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra recalled Modi's statement in September 2022 that "today's era is not of war."

"We have always maintained that dialogue and diplomacy is the best option," he said, pointing to the consequences of the war such as an impact on food, fuel and fertiliser availability, challenges to global supply chains and disruptions in the global economy.

iled Tibetan government, advocate for greater autonomy or even independence.

China's control over Tibet traces back to the 1950s when Chinese troops entered the region and established authority.

The 17 Point Agreement of 1951 formalised Tibet's incorporation into the People's Republic of China, though it remains disputed by Tibetan activists who argue it was signed under duress. Under Chinese governance, Tibet has faced political, economic, and social control, with controversial policies implemented by Beijing.

Tibetans often feel marginalised and oppressed, with reports of human rights abuses, restrictions on religious freedom, and attempts at cultural assimilation.

G7 Summit: Italian PM receives global leaders at Borgo Egnazia

AGENCIES
FASANO

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni received global leaders including UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, US President Joe Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau among others, for the 50th Summit of the Group of Seven (G7), scheduled for June 13 and 14.

Italian PM Meloni also re-



ceived Japanese PM Fumio Kishida, as he arrived for the 50th G7 Summit in Italy. Later, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz arrived at Borgo Egnazia in Fasano and was received by the Italian Prime Minister.

PM Meloni also received the President of the International organisation, the European Council, Charles Michel on Thursday, who also arrived in Italy to attend the G7 Summit.

Meanwhile, Prime Min-

ister Narendra Modi will be heading to Italy today to attend the Summit of the Group of Seven (G7), marking his first trip abroad after assuming office for the third consecutive term.

The Summit is scheduled to be held between June 13 and 14 in the Apulia region where India has been invited as an Outreach Country to the Summit, which will see participation from the seven member countries, US, UK, Canada, Germany, Italy, Ja-

pan, and France, as well as the European Union.

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni had invited PM Modi to attend the G7 Summit. It will be India's 11th participation in the G7 Summit and PM Modi's fifth consecutive participation at the G7 Summit.

On the sidelines of the Summit, PM Modi is expected to hold bilateral meetings and discussions with the leaders of the G7 and Outreach nations as well as the

international organisations.

Foreign Secretary Kwatra said that PM Modi is also expected to hold a bilateral meeting with his Italian counterpart Giorgia Meloni and the two leaders are expected to review the entire gamut of bilateral ties.

On June 12, the Indian ambassador to Italy, Vani Rao said that PM Modi will play an important role in one of the global platforms, to engage with other world leaders present at the G7 Summit

on issues of importance to India, as well as to the Global South. Addressing a special briefing, Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra said the visit assumes significance as it will be the Prime Minister's first overseas travel after assuming office in his third consecutive term.

On January 1, Italy assumed the G7 Presidency for the seventh time. Notably, the G7 nations are the US, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the UK.

SAIF, KAREENA MAKE STYLISH 'AIRPORT' APPEARANCE WITH THEIR SONS



TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Star couple Saif Ali Khan and Kareena Kapoor Khan with their sons Taimur and Jeh caught the attention of shutterbugs with their stylish appearance at the Mumbai airport on Thursday early morning.

The lovebirds arrived together at the airport with their kids and interestingly, they twinned in white for the journey which looked like the Pataudi family was headed for a vacation.

In the videos captured by Mumbai paps, Kareena can be seen wearing a white colour tee that she paired with

a green oversized jacket and denim.

Saif on the other hand kept it comfy. He opted for a white t-shirt, denim and a cap.

Entering the airport, Kareena was seen holding Jeh's hand, while Taimur and Saif were seen walking in front.

Saif also greeted and waved at the paps.

Kareena and Saif have been married for 11 years. The two have worked together in LOC Kargil (2003) and Omkara (2006), but it was on the sets of the 2008 film Tashan that they fell in love with each other. And on October 16, 2012, the two tied the knot.

TAMANNAAH GUSHES OVER HER BOYFRIEND VIJAY'S 'MATKA KING' POSTER



TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

After Vijay Varma shared a poster of his upcoming film 'Matka King' his girlfriend and actor Tamannaah Bhatia couldn't resist complimenting him.

Tamannaah re-shared Vijay's post on her Instagram stories and wrote, "Ufff with fire emojis." Vijay cutely responded to her reaction and posted "Baby" on his Insta stories.

Tamannaah and Vijay's relationship rumours started after an alleged kissing video of theirs from New Year 2023 had gone viral on the internet. The couple was also seen romancing in 'Lust Stories 2'.

After months of speculations about the actors dating each other, Tamannaah confirmed her relationship with Vijay in an interview in June last year. Ever since they often comment on each other's social media posts and make appearances in public together.

Coming back to Vijay's film, the shooting for series 'Matka King' has commenced.

The update was shared on the official social media handles of Prime Video.

"Ready to place our bet! #MatkaKingOnPrime soon but filming now," a post read on the Instagram handle of the streaming giant.

'BRIDGERTON'S NICOLA PRAISES CRESSIDA'S LADY WHISTLEDOWN PORTRAYAL



TDG NETWORK
WASHINGTON

In a whirlwind of scandalous revelations and emotional rollercoasters, the latest season of 'Bridgerton' has left fans awaiting for more.

From shocking twists to heartfelt confessions, the drama has many elements.

The latest bombshell to rock the high society of 'Bridgerton' revolves around the enigmatic Lady Whistledown, whose true identity has long been a mystery.

While viewers were privy to Penelope Featherington's secret in the first season,

the ton remained blissfully unaware. However, season three brings a stunning turn of events as Cressida Cowper, portrayed by Jessica Madsen, boldly steps forward to claim the coveted title after Queen Charlotte's enticing offer of a reward. Speaking to E! News, Jessica Madsen revealed insights into her character's motivations, describing Cressida as "a mixed bag" who sets fire to the establishment. Meanwhile, Nicola Coughlan, known for her portrayal of Penelope Featherington, lauded the twist, likening Cressida to "an evil butterfly" with her mesmerizing portrayal.

PICTURE PERFECT

The Kerala government has honoured the Malayali film professionals who shone at the Cannes Film Festival. The cast of the film 'All We Imagine as Light', which won the Grand Prix award, including Kani Kusruti, Divya Prabha, Hridhu Haroon, and Aziz Nedomangad, were recognized for their achievements. (ANI)



JR NTR'S 'DEVARA' TO RELEASE ON SEPTEMBER 27

LATHA SRINIVASAN
CHENNAI

Devara, starring man of masses NTR, has been progressing with full force. Directed by the masterful Koratala Siva, this movie promises to be a global spectacle. Bollywood beauty Janhvi Kapoor is cast as the leading lady, while another Bollywood star, Saif Ali Khan, is set to entertain in a key role.

Today, the team announced a new release date for this highly anticipated film. This high-octane action saga, being crafted as a two-part cinematic experience, has set the release date for its first installment, "Devara: Part 1," on September 27th in Telugu, Tamil, Hindi, Kannada and Malayalam.

This date is perfect for a big pan-India release, promising to captivate audiences across the nation. The announcement has only added to the buzz surrounding "Devara." With NTR's powerful screen presence and Koratala Siva's directorial prowess, fans can expect



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a cinematic spectacle that blends intense action with a gripping storyline.

NTR plays the title role in "Devara," with Prakash Raj, Srikanth, Shine Tom Chacko, and Narain in key roles. Devara is a highly anticipated film presented by Nandamuri Kalyan Ram while it is bankrolled under the banner of NTR Arts and Yuvasudha Arts.

Ajay Devgn, Tabu shine in Neeraj Pandey film trailer



The musical romantic drama also features an eclectic ensemble of Jimmy Shergill, Saiee Manjrekar Shantanu Maheshwari and Sayaji Shinde. The original soundtrack of the film has been created by the Oscar-winning composer MM Kreem and the lyrics are by Manoj Muntashir.

Kreem and the lyrics are by Manoj Muntashir.

NH Studioz presents, A Friday Filmworks Production, Auran Mein Kahan Dum Tha is produced by Narendra Hirawat, Kumar Mangat Pathak (Panorama Studios), Sangeeta Ahir and Shital Bhatia. The film is set for a theatrical release on 5th July.

ALIA BHATT'S 'JIGRA' GETS A NEW RELEASE DATE



TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

The second half of 2024 seems to be quite exciting for film buffs as a lot of big movies including Alia Bhatt-starrer 'Jigra' will hit the theatres in the coming months.

On Thursday, the makers of 'Jigra' announced the new release date of the film. Earlier it was supposed to be released on September 27, 2024 but now audiences can watch it in cinema halls from October 11 onwards.

Sharing the update about the change in release date, Alia took to Instagram and wrote, "11.10.2024 | JIGRA | See you at the movies."

She also dropped the film's

new poster. Directed by Vasan Bala, 'Jigra' also stars Vedang Raina.

In February 2024, Alia

shared pictures from the sets after wrapping up the film which is made under Dharma Productions banner.

Sharing the post, she ear-

lier mentioned, "jigra oh... abki teri baari ho @vedangraina & that's a film wrap on #JIGRA @vasanbala @swapsagram. See you soon.

BRAIN PICKING



The biggest and the most important thing my mother told me is to be a good actor you first need to be a really good human being and an honest person.

— JANHVI KAPOOR
(Indian Actress)



SIDHARTH MALHOTRA WISHES DISHA PATANI ON BIRTHDAY



TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Actor Sidharth Malhotra wished his 'Yodha' co-star Disha Patani on her 31st birthday with a special post. Sidharth dropped a throwback picture from 'Yodha' promotions featuring himself and birthday girl.

He penned a message, which read, "Happy Birthday, @dishapatani. Have a kick-ass year ahead! Big love and hug." It's Disha's birthday, how her best friend Mouni Roy can forget to post something special for her.

Mouni dropped a video featuring cute moments of her and Disha on her Instagram handle.

The clip also showcased a glimpse of Disha's midnight birthday celebration.

Along with the video, Mouni penned a long mes-

sage, which read, "Happiest birthday to my happy simple straight forward most beautiful princepsa. Life was very good even before we became friends but its way better with you in it. This past year with you has been so adventurous and full of laughter and travels. Can't wait to create more fun memories. I pray to god he always blesses with the very best. May you meet your perfect stranger soon. Always be the ninja warrior that you are. Here's to the sister who brings sunshine in my life. More when we speak. Ily."

Friends who slay together, stay together --- that's what Disha Patani and Mouni Roy always depict with their bond. Making birthday more special for Disha's fans, the makers of "Kalki 2898 AD" unveiled first look poster of her character Roxie.

AKSHAY KUMAR, TAAPSEE PANNU'S 'KHEL KHEL MEIN' READY FOR RELEASE



TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

The release date of 'Khel Khel Mein' has been changed

Starring Akshay Kumar, Taapsee Pannu, Vaani Kapoor, Ammy Virk, Aditya Seal, Pragya Jaiswal and Fardeen Khan, the comedy-drama will be out in theatres on August 15, 2024. It was earlier supposed to be released in September.

Announcing the Independence Day release date of the film, Taapsee took to Instagram and wrote, "This Independence Day, step into a mad world of laughter, drama & loads of fun! Mark your calendars

for August 15, 2024 when #KhelKhelMein hits the theatres."

She also shared a picture with the team of 'Khel Khel Mein'.

Produced by Bhushan Kumar, Krishan Kumar, Vipul D Shah, Ashwin Varde, Rajesh Bahl, Shashikant Sinha and Ajay Rai, Khel Khel Mein "aims to redefine the comedy-drama genre, offering a rollercoaster ride of emotions that transcends the ordinary. Save the date for this cinematic delight, poised to leave audiences in splits and craving for more", as per the statement.

'Khel Khel Mein' is directed by Mudassar Aziz.

Fashion-forward outfits for fresh beginnings of the year

TDG NETWORK

Denim Skirts: Bollywood's Timeless Trend for Summer Chic
Denim skirts have long been a staple in fashion, but their resurgence in Bollywood is proving they are here to stay. Celebrities from India's glamorous film industry are embracing this versatile piece, demonstrating its adaptability and timeless appeal in the sweltering summer months.

The Denim Skirt Comeback
Bollywood's love affair with the denim skirt is not new. From the iconic looks of the 90s to today's contemporary styles, this fashion piece has seen various reinventions. Actresses like Kajol and Karisma Kapoor set early trends, pairing denim skirts with casual tees and chunky sneakers. Fast forward to 2024, and the denim skirt is making

catalysts for this trend is the array of Bollywood stars frequently spotted in chic denim skirts. Deepika Padukone, known for her effortless style, often pairs her denim skirts with crisp white shirts and statement accessories, creating a perfect blend of casual and elegant. Alia Bhatt, another style icon, prefers a more laid-back approach, combining her skirts with crop tops and sneakers, reflecting a youthful and vibrant vibe. Sara Ali Khan, famous for her eclectic style, has been seen sporting denim skirts with ethnic blouses, adding a fusion twist that resonates with her experimental fashion sense. Meanwhile, Sonam Kapoor, the queen of high fashion, elevates the denim skirt with blazers and heels, demonstrating its potential for more formal, yet still relaxed, settings.

Styling Tips from the Stars

The beauty of the denim skirt lies in its versatility. Bollywood's leading ladies offer a plethora of styling tips that can be easily adapted. For a casual day out, pair a distressed denim skirt with a graphic tee and sneakers, mirroring Alia Bhatt's youthful charm. For a more polished look, take cues from Deepika Padukone by tucking in a structured blouse and adding a pair of sleek flats or low heels. Accessorizing plays a crucial role in transforming the denim skirt. Statement belts, oversized sunglasses, and chic handbags can elevate a simple denim skirt into a fashion-forward outfit. Layering is another technique embraced by Bollywood stars. Adding a light denim jacket or a kimono over a simple tank top can create a dynamic and layered look perfect for summer evenings.

Conclusion

Bollywood's embrace of the denim skirt remains its enduring charm and outings

skirt is a testament to versatility. From casual to more polished events, this staple piece offers endless styling possibilities. As Bollywood's leading ladies continue to inspire with their impeccable fashion sense, the denim skirt remains a beloved and essential item for a chic and comfortable summer wardrobe.



waves again, blending nostalgic charm with modern sophistication. **Celebrity Inspirations** One of the major



AROMATHERAPY UNVEILED: HARNESSING FRAGRANCES FOR HOLISTIC WELLNESS



RIDHIMA KANSAL

Aromatherapy, an age-old practice of using natural plant extracts to promote health and well-being, has gained significant traction in recent years as a complementary therapy. Rooted in ancient cultures, from the Egyptians to the Chinese, aromatherapy employs essential oils to enhance physical, emotional, and spiritual health. This holistic approach to wellness is not just about pleasant scents; it's a powerful method that can impact mood,

cognitive function, and overall health.

The Science Behind Aromatherapy

At the core of aromatherapy are essential oils—volatile, aromatic compounds extracted from plants. These oils are concentrated essences of the plant's fragrance and therapeutic properties. The science of aromatherapy lies in the way these essential oils interact with the body's limbic system—the brain region involved in emotions, behavior, and long-term memory. When inhaled, the molecules from essential oils travel through the olfactory system and directly influence the limbic system, thereby affecting mood and stress levels.

Benefits of Aromatherapy

- 1. Stress Reduction and Relaxation:** Lavender, chamomile, and sandalwood are renowned for their calming effects. Inhaling these oils can reduce cortisol levels, the body's primary stress hormone, leading to relaxation and improved sleep quality. Lavender oil, in particular, has been extensively studied for its ability to reduce anxiety and promote relaxation.
- 2. Mood Enhancement:** Citrus oils like lemon, orange, and bergamot are known for their uplifting properties. These oils can help combat feelings of depression and lethargy. The refreshing scent of peppermint can also invigorate and rejuvenate, providing an energy boost.
- 3. Pain Management:** Essential oils such as eucalyptus, rosemary, and ginger have anti-inflammatory and analgesic properties that can help alleviate pain. For instance, eucalyptus oil is often used to relieve muscle pain and soreness, while ginger oil can ease the discomfort associated with arthritis.
- 4. Improved Cognitive Function:** Certain essential oils have been shown to enhance cognitive performance. Rosemary oil, for instance, has been linked to improved memory and concentration. The invigorating aroma of peppermint oil can also help increase alertness and focus.
- 5. Enhanced Immune Function:** Many essential oils have antimicrobial properties that can help support the immune system. Tea tree oil, known for its antiviral and antibacterial qualities, is commonly used to prevent infections. Eucalyptus oil can also help clear nasal passages and combat respiratory issues.

Methods of Using Aromatherapy

- 1. Inhalation:** The most common method is inhalation, where a few drops of essential oil are added to a diffuser or vaporizer. This allows the fragrance to disperse throughout a room, creating a therapeutic environment. Alternatively, a few drops can be added to a bowl of hot water, and the steam inhaled.
- 2. Topical Application:** Essential oils can be applied directly to the skin, but it's crucial to dilute them with a carrier oil like coconut, jojoba, or almond oil to prevent irritation. Popular areas for application include the wrists, temples, and the soles of the feet.
- 3. Baths:** Adding a few drops of essential oil to a warm bath can provide a relaxing and therapeutic experience. This method combines inhalation and topical absorption for maximum benefit.
- 4. Massage:** Aromatherapy massage combines the benefits of touch therapy with the healing properties of essential oils. The massage oils penetrate the skin, providing both physical relaxation and aromatic benefits.

Safety and Precautions

While aromatherapy is generally safe, it's important to use essential oils with caution. Some oils can cause allergic reactions or skin irritation, especially if not diluted properly. It's advisable to perform a patch test before using a new essential oil. Pregnant women, children, and individuals with certain health conditions should consult a healthcare professional before using essential oils. Aromatherapy offers a natural and holistic approach to health and well-being, leveraging the power of plant-based oils to enhance physical and emotional wellness. Whether seeking to reduce stress, alleviate pain, or simply improve mood, the therapeutic use of fragrances provides a versatile and accessible form of self-care. As interest in natural and alternative therapies grows, aromatherapy stands out as a timeless practice that continues to deliver profound benefits.

Ridhima Kansal is Director, Rosemoore



PROBIOTIC TREND IN SKINCARE: BENEFITS AND BEST PRODUCTS



DR. AJAY RANA

The beauty industry has evolved over the past few years into a more natural and scientifically backed approach to skincare. Probiotic skincare has taken the lead in this shift and is gaining interest from consumers and from dermatologists worldwide. But what exactly is probiotic skincare, and what is all that hype about? This article outlines all the benefits to your skin from probiotics and identifies some of the best products on sale right now. **Understanding Probiotic Skincare**

Probiotics are also called "good bacteria." These are live microorganisms that, when taken in adequate amounts, confer a health benefit to the host. In skincare, probiotics aim to balance the microbiome of the skin—a complex ecosystem of microorganisms that reside on our skin's surface. A balanced microbiome is essential in the support of healthy skin in warding off harmful bacteria, reducing inflammation, and boosting the skin's natural barrier function.

Benefits of Probiotic Skincare
Balancing the Skin Microbiome: Probiotics balance and stabilize the microbiome of the skin, which is of the essence in the sustenance of overall health. The balance precludes issues such as acne, eczema, and rosacea, countering harmful bacteria and promoting a healthy environment for the skin.
Skin Barrier Strengthening: The barrier in the skin is essential for retaining moisture and acting as a protection shield for

the entry of different stressors or environmental factors. Probiotics help strengthen the skin barrier, thus preventing the skin from drying out, becoming irritated, or sensitive.

Anti-inflammatory Properties: Many skin conditions are inflammatory in nature, for example, acne and eczema. Probiotics have anti-inflammatory properties and can help soothe the skin while reducing the body's response to these inflammations. This helps in skin clearing and makes it less reactive with time.

Superior Hydration: Probiotic strains help enhance the skin barrier for improved hydration and produce natural factors responsible for moisturizing. In this way, it helps to maintain the skin supple and well-hydrated.
Anti-aging Benefits: Probiotics also support anti-aging through skin regeneration and increased skin elasticity. It helps reduce fine-line marks and wrinkles, hence giving one younger-looking skin.

Best Probiotic Skincare Products

Here are some of the effective probiotics skincare products available, designed as the popularity of probiotics in skincare surges and a variety of products were developed to incorporate these beneficial microorgan-



isms:

Hydration Creams and Lotions: Moisturizers made with probiotic extracts nourish the skin by helping it to gain deep hydration and improve the texture of the skin. They can be used daily to maintain a balanced and healthy look.
Cleansers: Cleansers with probiotics clean out the impurities and makeup, as they bring good bacteria to the face.

This is suitable for sensitized or reactive skin because probiotics clean without stripping the skin of its oils.

Facial Mists: Probiotic mists are live bacteria that restore and maintain the skin's natural balance. All of these can be used during the day to refresh/hydrate the skin by promoting a healthy microbiome.

Serums: Probiotic serums provide highly active doses of beneficial bacteria to the skin. They only feed, hydrate, and brighten the skin, so they suit any skincare routine.

Cream Oils: A product that combines the hydrating elements found in a cream and the nourishing properties found in oil. They contain bioactives derived from probiotics, brightening and protecting the skin and giving it a radiant, dewy complexion.

In conclusion, probiotic skincare entails a relatively robust confluence of sophisticated science and natural beauty and imparts a promising way to

achieve and maintain healthy skin. By focusing on the skin microbiome, these products help with everything from tamping down inflammation to moisturizing more effectively and even defending against environmental assaults. It is getting clearer that as further research is conducted and discoveries arise regarding probiotics' huge effect on skin health, this is not just another fad but a constantly growing trend.

At this crossroad of modern personalised and scientifically driven skincare solutions, probiotics certainly make their way to the top as the natural yet powerful contender. The increasing interest in probiotic skincare goes beyond a trend—it's an understanding that a balanced microbiome plays a crucial role in overall skin health. Whether targeting specific skin concerns or just want to improve the overall complexion, probiotic skincare products should be part of that revolution for your skin.

SUMMER MUST HAVE FOR THIS SEASON

MANJULA GANDHI



Fragranote Customise Your Discovery Set 4 X 10ML
Craft Your Signature Perfume Collection with Fragranote! Choose any four 10ML perfumes from our exquisite lineup of eight, and create your personal-

ized Discovery Set. Dive into a world of scents, tailored uniquely to your preferences and style.

AVAILABLE: CUSTOMISE YOUR DISCOVERY SET 4 X 10ML (fragranote.com)

MRP: Rs 1699



Defi Beauty's BLEND

BUDDY - Say hello to your new best friend, Blend Buddy! This amazing makeup tool is here to help you achieve flawless makeup application with ease. It has been crafted with care and is vegan, cruelty-free, and latex-free, so you can have a guilt-free and ethical beauty experience. You won't want to be without Blend Buddy in your makeup bag. It's perfect for when you're at home, on-the-go, or travelling. Count on Blend Buddy to help you elevate your makeup routine and achieve flawless perfection wherever you are.

Price - Rs 575

Link - <https://defibeauty.in/products/blend-buddy?variant=48947030262034>



3) Praush Beauty - SATIN
It is a gorgeous Peachy Sheer Lip Oil With Shimmers which can be used alone on the lips to get a glossy look or can be applied over a lipstick to get

that bling look and plump effect. Elevate your lip care routine with Praush Pout Cushion Luxe Lip Oils, the ultimate fusion of hydration, style, and versatility.

Price - 650

Link- <https://praush.com/products/pout-cushion-luxe-lip-oil-hydrating-and-e?variant=47390143971608>

4) Boujee Beauty's Multi-chrome Eyeliners: Boujee Beauty's Color Shifting Eyeliners are designed for an effortless application, thanks to their precise wands. They offer vibrant, long-lasting colors that stay put all day, ensuring your look remains flawless from



dawn to dusk. What's more, these eyeliners feature a captivating Multi-chrome effect, with colors transitioning before your eyes, adding an irresistible pop of allure to your makeup routine. Whether you're aiming for subtle sophis-

tication or bold glamour, these eyeliners cater to all styles and skill levels, making every makeup session a spellbinding success. Get ready to awaken your inner makeup sorceress and unleash those show-stopping looks with our Color Shifting Eyeliners. You can trust that these eyeliners are the real deal.

MRP: 1199

Available: <https://boujeebeauty.in/collections/all>
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/boujeebeautyin/>

6) Fix My Curls Warm Vanilla Hair Mist is rich and decadent, with notes of Va-



nilla, White Orchid, Sugar, Tonka Bean, Coconut, Jasmine, Cacao, and Sandalwood, which will give one's hair an irresistible aroma. Available - Warm Vanilla (fixmycurls.com) MRP - Rs 500

'I'M MORE A HUMANIST THAN A FEMINIST AND MY BOOKS ALSO BEAR THIS STAMP,' SAYS WRITER DR. DIPAK GIRI



PROF SHIV SETHI

Dr. Dipak Giri is a prolific Indian writer. As an author and an editor, he has as many as twenty books to his credit. His books have touched so many glaring issues associated with Indian society, especially in the field of caste, class and gender. For few years, he has also been performing the role of editor-in-chief of a pres-

tigious literary journal Creative Flight. In the year 2020, The Journal of Commonwealth Literature included all his published books in the Indian section of "The Bibliography of Commonwealth Literature". Prof Shiv Sethi from the Daily Guardian had a conversation with the author. Here are a few excerpts.

1) Your personal website displays a large number of your books. Which book did you publish first and when?

I started my journey with the publication of Indian English Drama: Themes and Techniques which was brought out by Vishwabharati Re-

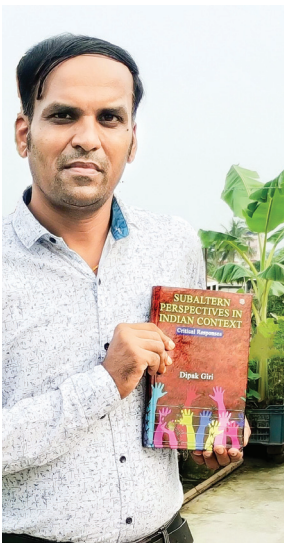
search Centre, Latur, Maharashtra, India in 2018.

2) Indianness is the very essence of your books. It's also evident in your selection of title. Is it true that you are more inclined to the theme of Indianness?

Yes, it's true. I believe "Charity begins at home". In India, there are many social problems which, as an Indian, need our attention first.

3) Apart from social issues, you have also worked on Indian literature. Would you like to share a few words with us on Indian literature?

As a student of literature, I hardly dislike any book of literary merit. However, Indian literature is close to my heart



more than any other literature because here I feel the smell of our soil. I've tried to work on all important literary genres – drama, novel, poetry

and short story written by Indians both in our native country and also in abroad.

4) In some of your books, you've worked on homosexuality in India. What made you take up such a bold and controversial subject for your study?

Homosexuality has long been a debated issue in our culture because most of us think that it's a foreign import. Of late Supreme Court of India has given a verdict for homosexual minorities but still, due to our ignorance and incomplete knowledge, we've been looking upon this practice as a sinful activity and hence it has become a social taboo in

course of time. My books which seek plea for this community effortfully shed light on this challenging issue.

5) You've also worked on female issues in some books. Are you a feminist writer?

It's true that I've long been associated with female question and my books also reflect it. However, I'm more a humanist than a feminist and my books also bear this stamp. They raise not only female issues but also the issues related with Dalit, lower caste people, untouchable, transgender, homosexual, tribal and many other subaltern groups of people.

6) You're an Editor-in-

Chief of Creative Flight. Would you like to share a few words on your experience as a chief of this journal?

It's really an amazing experience as an editorial chief of Creative Flight. The journal has given me a room to work with authors across the globe.

7) What led you to the decision of starting a journal?

It had always been a dream inside me that someday I would start my own journal, though this opportunity came to me in an unexpected way in 2020. It was during covidsituation when lockdown was going on and I was in home confinement I launched it and today

when I think we've successfully completed the fifth year of its publication, my joys know no bounds.

8) Are you working on any new book?

Yes, my upcoming book is Indian Short Story: A Critical Evaluation which will lead me to the milestone of my twentieth publication.

9) Congratulation for your new achievement! This is my last question. What message do you like to give people through your books?

With the ultimate overthrow of all categories that have resulted out of caste, class, colour, race, gender and religion, I wish to give the message of love for humanity through my books.

WHISPERS FROM MY WINDOW: A GLIMPSE INTO DR. RITU KAMRA KUMAR'S WORLD

RUPALI SETHI

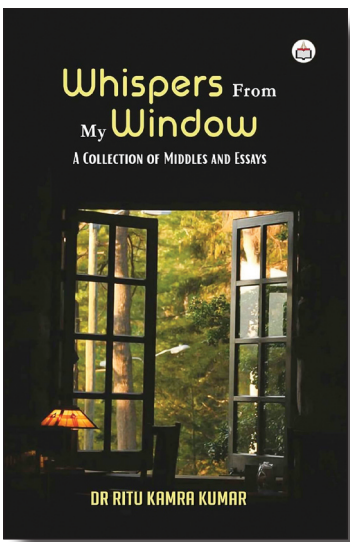
What does one do when their heart brims with emotions and stories? If you are Dr. Ritu Kamra Kumar, you transform those feelings into a literary work, giving them life in the form of a book. Dr. Ritu Kamra Kumar, has channelled her experiences and perspectives into her remarkable book, "Whispers from My Window". Divided into three sections- Nostalgic Roots, Social Pathways and Spiritual Trails the anecdotes deal with various and veritable aspects of life with insightful and engaging narrative.

Dr. Ritu Kamra Kumar's narrative is vividly brought to life with colourful depictions of childhood memories. The vibrant charpais of highway dhabas, where she once listened to bedtime stories or played hide and

seek, are described with such detail that they leap off the page. Her memories of her home at Ambala are vivid and beautifully presented in- The Magical Town Where Childhood Resides.

A notable quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Wait for your returning strength," is thoughtfully included by Dr. Kumar. She uses this to advise readers to focus their energy on helping friends during tough times, suggesting that aiding others can provide a necessary distraction and help overcome one's own struggles. Dr. Kumar believes that reflecting on someone else's hardship can put personal difficulties into perspective, offering a way to snap out of one's own bad phase.

Dr. Kumar's journey into creative writing began with her personal trials, particularly the emotional realization that her



son would visit her only occasionally. This crystallization of her tears on the paper marked the start of her literary endeavors. Her grief over the loss of her mother also finds a poignant place in her work, as evidenced

by its inclusion in - Reminiscing Mother's Sweet & Soothing Lullabies.

Progressive women who break the glass ceiling feature prominently in her stories, with "bichuas" (toe rings) symbolizing layers of Indian tradition and storytelling. Dr. Kumar's observations on life are deeply introspective. She suggests that our purpose, or "ikigai," resides within us and is kept alive by the magical memories that pulsate through our existence.

Dr. Kumar's exploration of the multitasking life of a woman is encapsulated in her mention of "Coffee with Sunita," implying that small moments of respite can offer significant comfort amidst life's challenges.

"Whispers from My Window" presents a collection of fascinating tales, including the story of a dishevelled ten-rupee note that

refuses to be separated from its owner, a misleading GPS lady, the pursuit of the perfect moment and treasured letters to a father. These stories are both captivating and unputdownable.

All the tales told come straight from her heart as they are about what is happening around us everyday. Since She is Professor of English, she brings profound understanding of language and narrative technique to her writing, enriching each story with layers of meaning and nuance. Each tale is a testament to Kumar's mastery of craft.

"Whispers from My Window" not only captures the essence of her personal experiences but also offers universal insights into life's challenges and joys. Grab a copy today to immerse yourself in the rich tapestry of her storytelling.

POEM

ETERNALLY TOGETHER YET APART.....

The sea loves the land with a mournful grace,
Her waves reach out in a longing embrace.
She weeps in whispers, her sorrow profound,
Knowing their union will never be found.

The land stands steadfast, a silent plea,
Bound by his roots, he aches for the sea.
He hears her lament in the night's gentle breeze,
Yet they're trapped in this sorrow, unable to ease.
Their loves a tragedy, tides and stone,
Forever apart, eternally alone

Close they may come with each rising tide,
Yet destiny keeps them on opposite sides.
The sea's whispers are tales of despair,
The land, in his silence, can only stare.
A love so deep, it breaks their hearts,
Forever condemned to live apart.

So they cherish their fleeting, bittersweet dance,
Each touch a reminder of lost romance.
A timeless sorrow, a cruel design,
Of sea and land, forever confined.

By Dr Haseena Kabeer

Prince of Naraka: A riveting modern take on an ancient epic

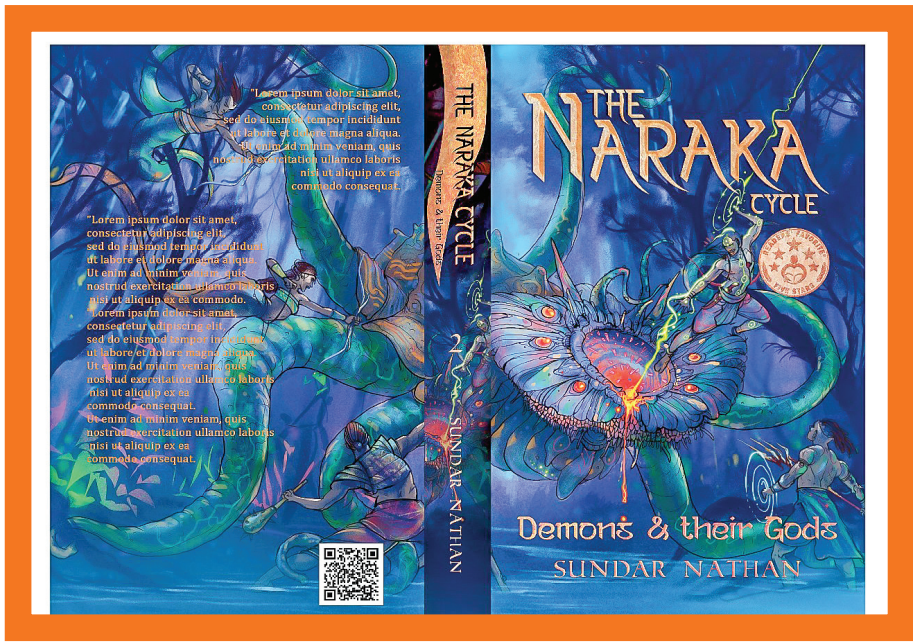
TDG NETWORK

"Prince of Naraka" is an enthralling supernatural fantasy saga that offers a fresh and vibrant reimaging of a slice of the Indian epic, the Ramayana. Set in the realm of Naraka, the novel intricately weaves a tale of mentorship, romance, political intrigue, and war, all seen through the eyes of its young protagonist, Raa One.

From the very beginning, the story hooks the reader with the depiction of the teenage crown prince of Asurapura, Raa One, as he prepares to face the perilous Trial of Seven Days in the aranya jungle. This trial is not merely a test of physical endurance but a rite of passage that pushes Raa One to his limits, both emotionally and mentally. When he emerges from the jungle nearly two weeks later, he is triumphant yet visibly changed, and it is clear that his journey is just beginning.

The narrative takes a sharp turn with the mysterious disappearance of Raa One's sister, Soor Pan, and her Vidyadharan boyfriend, Har Shaa. This subplot adds a layer of urgency and personal stakes to Raa One's journey. As Raa One delves deeper into the mystery, he uncovers the harsh realities of his kingdom, including the exploitation of mines by Devan overlords. This discovery serves as a catalyst for Raa One's internal and external conflicts, forcing him to confront uncomfortable truths about his realm and his own beliefs.

One of the novel's strengths lies



in its rich and complex world-building. The author brings the realm of Naraka to life with vivid descriptions of its landscapes, from the treacherous aranya jungle to the bustling city of Lanka. The diverse inhabitants of this world, including the snake-hybrid Nagas and the towering Rakshasas, are portrayed with depth and nuance. These characters are not mere mythical creatures but integral parts of the story, each with their own motivations and complexities.

As Raa One navigates alliances with these unlikely beings and the enigmatic group known as the Underground, he is pushed to question his role in the unfolding chaos. The novel delves into themes of leadership and purpose, with Raa One grappling with whether he is destined to be a leader, an observer,

or a cynic. This internal struggle is mirrored by the shifting dynamics of the external world, where power plays and political intrigues abound.

The relationship between Raa One and his mentor figures is another highlight of the novel. These relationships provide not only guidance but also a mirror for Raa One to reflect on his own journey and growth. The mentorship aspect is handled with sensitivity and depth, adding a layer of emotional resonance to the story.

Romance also plays a pivotal role in the narrative, adding a personal dimension to Raa One's journey. The love story is intertwined with the larger political and social upheavals, making it more than just a subplot but an essential part of Raa One's growth and development.

"Prince of Naraka" does not shy away from depicting the harsh realities of war and sacrifice. The losses and sacrifices made by the characters are deeply felt and add to the gravity of the story. These elements are balanced by moments of hope and resilience, making the novel a well-rounded and compelling read.

In conclusion, "Prince of Naraka" is a captivating tale that reinterprets an ancient epic for a modern audience. With its richly drawn characters, intricate world-building, and thought-provoking themes, it is a must-read for fans of fantasy and mythology. The novel's exploration of leadership, purpose, and sacrifice makes it a powerful and resonant story that will stay with readers long after they turn the last page.

MUST READ BOOKS IN JUNE:

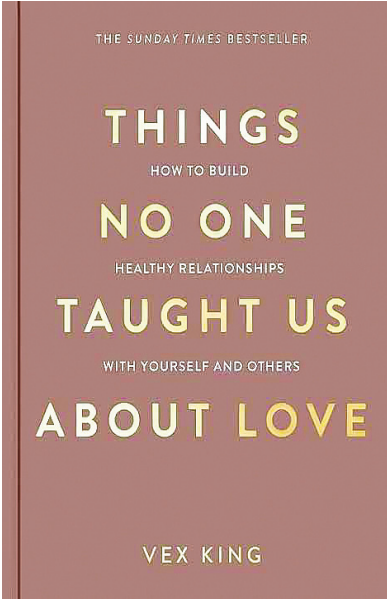
TDG NETWORK

This June, we bring you a curated list of the top four books that have been making waves in the literary world. These books promise to be your perfect companions for those long, lazy summer afternoons while compelling you to introspect!

READ BELOW AND READ ON -

1. THE 7% CLUB BY JENNY STILWELL:

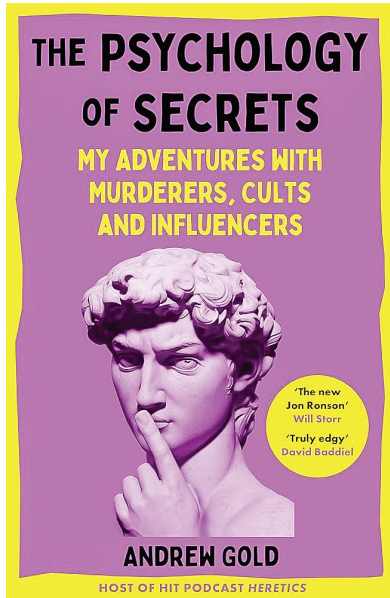
"The 7% Club" is a captivating exploration of the power of mindset in achieving success. Through compelling anecdotes and practical advice, she demonstrates how the small choices we make can have a



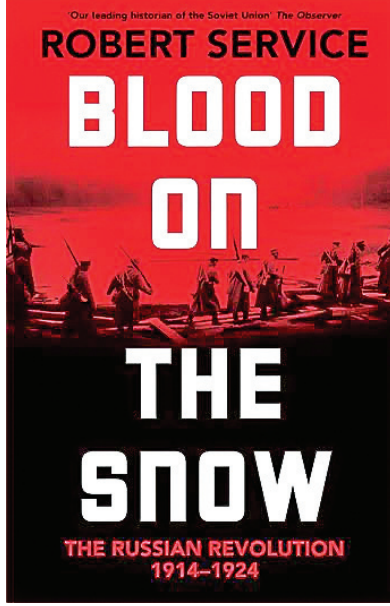
profound impact on our lives. Readers will be inspired to harness the potential of the 7% rule and unlock their full potential.

2. BLOOD ON THE SNOW BY ROBERT SERVICE:

Service's "Blood on the Snow"



paints a vivid portrait of the harsh realities of life in the Arctic, where survival is a constant battle against nature and oneself. With lyrical prose and keen insight, he delves into the lives of those who call this unforgiving landscape home, weaving together tales of courage, tragedy, and redemption. A mesmerizing read



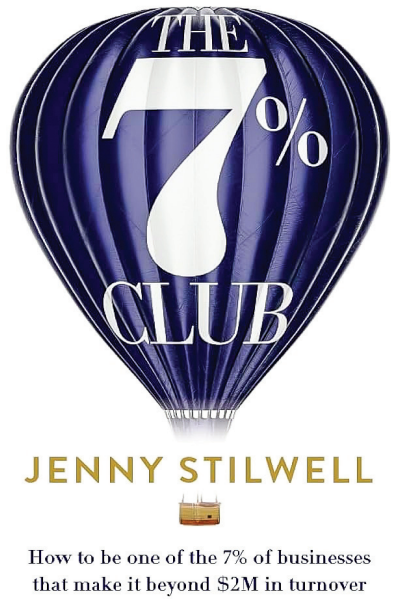
that lingers in the mind long after the final page is turned.

3. THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SECRETS BY ANDREW GOLD:

Gold's "The Psychology of Secrets" offers a fascinating glimpse into the hidden workings of the human mind. Drawing on cutting-edge research and real-life examples, he explores the motivations behind secrecy and the impact it can have on individuals and society. Thought-provoking and insightful, this book sheds light on a fundamental aspect of human behavior that is often overlooked.

4. THINGS NO ONE TAUGHT ABOUT LOVE BY VEX KING:

King's "Things No One Taught About Love" is a heartfelt exploration of love in its many forms.



Through personal anecdotes and profound reflections, he delves into the complexities of relationships, self-love, and healing. With warmth and wisdom, King invites readers to embrace the transformative power of love and discover its true meaning in their own lives.

INDIA BEAT US, WINDIES HOLD OFF NEW ZEALAND

TDG NETWORK
WESTBURY (US)

There was no upset this time for the United States as the home team was easily beaten by cricket heavyweight India at the Twenty20 World Cup on Wednesday. Suryakumar Yadav's half-century powered India to a seven-wicket win over the U.S., which had shocked Pakistan last week.

With the win, India reached the Super 8 round. The U.S. can advance by beating Ireland on Friday.

In a later match at Brian Lara Stadium in Trinidad, Sherfane Rutherford scored an unbeaten 68 from 39 deliveries to help the West Indies in their great escape — the co-hosts beat New Zealand by 13 runs.

The Caribbean lineup, 149-9 in its 20 overs, was



T 20 WORLD CUP

76-7 before its Rutherford-led recovery. Alzarri Joseph snared four New Zealand wickets and Gudakesh Motie took three — including New Zealand captain Kane Williamson for 1 — to restrict the Black Caps to 136-9 in reply.

On Long Island, Yadav's 50 runs came off 49 balls and included two boundaries and two sixes. He put on 72 runs off 65 balls in

an unbeaten fourth-wicket stand with Shivam Dube, who scored 31 not out as India finished with 111-3 in 18.2 overs in reply to 110-8 by the United States.

Left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh returned figures of 4-9 — including two wickets in the first over — to restrict the co-hosts after India had won the toss and opted to field at the Nassau County International Sta-

dium.

India was in early trouble in its chase as Indian-born medium pacer Saurabh Netravalkar continued his golden run for the Americans.

After bowling the co-hosts to the upset over Pakistan, he celebrated the wickets of Indian superstars Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli.

Kohli was caught behind for a golden duck — dismissed off the first delivery he faced — in what surely will become a career highlight for Netravalkar. Sharma (3) fell to a slower delivery as Netravalkar finished with 2-18 in four overs.

Rishabh Pant scored 18 off 20 balls batting at No. 3 before he was bowled by Ali Khan delivery. With India struggling at 39-3 in 7.3 overs, the U.S. team momentarily raised visions of an even bigger shock.

BOPANNA WILL PAIR WITH BALAJI AT PARIS GAMES, CONFIRMS AITA

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The All India Tennis Association (AITA) on Thursday confirmed that Rohan Bopanna will pair with N Sriram Balaji in the men's doubles event at the Paris Olympics.

The PTI had reported that 44-year-old Bopanna has picked Balaji as his partner for the Games as the veteran Indian aims to take his final shot at an Olympic medal.

"The All India Tennis Association (AITA) is thrilled to announce that Rohan Bo-

panna and N. Sriram Balaji have qualified for the Paris Olympics 2024 in the tennis doubles event. Their journey to the Olympics marks a significant milestone for Indian tennis," AITA said in a press release. The decision was made at the selection committee meeting, chaired by former Davis Cup Captain Nandan Bal.

Yuki Bhambri, India's number two doubles player, was also in contention but according to AITA sources, Balaji's ability to move swiftly on the court worked in his favour.



Diksha to lead strong Indian challenge in Italian Open golf

TDG NETWORK
ROME

Experienced Diksha Dagar will look to leave behind a rare missed cut, when she leads a strong five-member Indian contingent at the 2024 Ladies Italian Open starting here tomorrow.

Diksha will return to action here, after a rare missed cut last week.

The Indian star, who is headed to the Olympic Games in Paris, is just outside the Top-10 on the Ladies Order of Merit, where she was third last year.

Diksha is one of the five Indians in the field this week, with rookie Pranavi Urs, experienced Tvesa Malik, Vani Kapoor and Ridhima Dildari also teeing up at the Golf Nazionale, which is hosting the event for the first time.



Diksha had nine Top-10s last year including a win in the Czech Ladies Open and a third place finish at the Hero Women's Indian Open.

This year she has had two Top-10 finishes, including a third place at Joburg Open.

She will tee off in the afternoon session, as will Tvesa,

India debut was a dream moment: Hockey midfielder Manisha Chauhan

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

At 25, Manisha Chauhan, from Uttarakhand fulfilled her dream of making her international debut for the Senior Women's Hockey Team. The dynamic midfielder made her first appearance against Argentina during the Europe leg of the FIH Hockey Pro League 2023/24.

Expressing her delight at earning her first cap for India, Manisha said, "It is every player's dream to represent their country on a global stage. I have always dreamt of this moment ever since I started playing hockey. It was a special moment for me as I made my way onto the pitch wearing the Indian jersey. The coaching and support staff have put their trust

Prannoy, Sameer Verma enter Australian Open quarter-finals

TDG NETWORK
SYDNEY

Indian shuttlers HS Prannoy and Sameer Verma progressed to the men's singles quarter-finals of the Australian Open with contrasting victories over their respective opponents here on Thursday. While fifth seed Prannoy, a former world No.1, took just 46 minutes to get the better of Misha Zilberman of Israel 21-17 21-15 in the round of 16, Verma had to toil hard for one hour two minutes to upset eighth seed Loh Kean Yew of Singapore 21-14 14-21 21-19.

Prannoy will be up against second seed Kodai Naroaka of Japan in the next round, while Verma will take on Chinese Taipei's Chun-Yi Lin on Friday.

However, it was curtains for Kiran George in



Prannoy will be up against second seed Kodai Naroaka of Japan in the next round, while Verma will take on Chinese Taipei's Chun-Yi Lin on Friday.

the men's singles event as he lost 20-22 6-21 against seventh seed Kenta Nishimoto of Japan.

Among the Indian women shuttlers, eight seed Aakarshi Kashyap beat Australia's Kai Qi Bernice Teoh 21-16 21-13 to progress to the quar-

terfinals, where she will be playing third seed Yu Po Pai of Chinese Taipei.

But the tournament ended for Anupama Upadhyaya and Malvika Bansod in the women's singles second round.

While Anupama lost 11-21 18-21 against sixth seed

Putri Kusuma Wardani of Indonesia, Malvika was shown the door by another Indonesian, eight seed Ester Nurumi Tri Wardoyo 17-21 21-23.

It was also the end of the road for Panda sisters, Rutaparna and Swetaparna, in the women's doubles. The seventh seeded India pair were shocked 5-21 9-21 by Malaysian combination of Pei Jing Lai and Chiew Sien Lim. The mixed doubles pair of B Sumeeh Reddy and N Sikki Reddy, however, continued to march ahead as the eighth seeded Indian duo defeated Australia's Kai Chen Teoh and Kai Qi Bernice Teoh 21-11 21-11 to enter the last-eight.

But a tough contest awaited the mixed doubles duo in the quarterfinals. They will be up against top seeds Zhen Bang Jiang and Ya Xin Wei of China.

Tiger, Morikawa among early starters as US Open begins

TDG NETWORK
PINEHURST

Tiger Woods, Collin Morikawa, Brooks Koepka and Sweden's sixth-ranked Ludvig Aberg were among those set for a morning charge as the 124th US Open began Thursday at treacherous Pinehurst.

The 7,543-yard sandhills layout with its domed greens, sandy waste areas, native bushes and wiregrass was set to offer a formidable challenge to a field of 156 golfers. American Michael McGowan and Filipino Rico Hoey hit opening shots off the first and 10th tees, respectively, to begin the 1,000th championship event in US Golf Association history, dating to the first US Open in 1895.

World number one Scottie Scheffler, second-ranked Xander Schauffele and third-ranked Rory McIlroy tee off together in the afternoon feature group.



Scheffler is considered the man to beat with five US PGA Tour victories this year, the most by any player at this stage since Tom Watson in 1980.

Two-time Masters champion Scheffler has 12 top-10 showings in 13 starts this year and could match 15-time major winner Woods as the only players to win a US Open while atop the world rankings.

Schauffele won last month's PGA Championship for his first major title, snapping a two-year win drought.

McIlroy, who has called off his divorce plans, has five consecutive top-10 finishes at the US Open, improving every year in the run to finish second in 2023.

Messi says Inter Miami will be 'my last club'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Lionel Messi isn't thinking about joining an Argentine club to write the last chapter of playing career.

"I think Inter Miami is going to be my last club. Today I think it is going to be my last club," the Argentina captain said in an interview with ESPN.

Messi is preparing with his national team to compete in the Copa America in the United States. Argentina is the defending champion. The former Barcelona star has nothing left to prove in the game and filled the only significant unchecked box on his resume by leading Argentina to the World Cup title in Qatar in 2022.

He has won a record eight Ballon d'Or awards and left European football last year to join the MLS club.

Messi's contract with Inter Miami is set to expire at the end of the 2025 season.

"It was a difficult step to leave Europe to come here," he said. "Having become a world champion helped a lot, and also to see things differently. But I don't think about it. I try to enjoy. That's why I enjoy everything much more, because I am aware that there is less and less to go and I have a good



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time." Many Argentine fans hoped Messi would close his career with Newell's Old Boys, the club where he began his training as a child in his native city of Rosario.

The star said he's trying to enjoy the final stretch of his career to the fullest.

"I have a good time at the club, I am lucky enough to have teammates and friends (Luis Suárez, Sergio Busquets and Jordi Alba, all former Barcelona players) by my side," he said. "I had a good time in the national team, where I have teammates and friends too."

"I enjoy the little details that I know that when I don't play anymore, I'm going to miss," he added. "My whole life I did this. I love playing ball and I enjoy training, day-to-day life and match days. And yes, there is always the fear that everything will end."

Nadal to skip Wimbledon to focus on Olympics

TDG NETWORK
LONDON

Rafael Nadal confirmed on Thursday he will miss Wimbledon to focus on the Paris Olympics, which will be played on the clay courts at Roland Garros.

Spanish tennis chiefs announced Wednesday that 22-time Grand Slam winner Nadal and newly crowned French Open champion Carlos Alcaraz would be part of the country's team at the Games next month.

Nadal, 38, lost in the first round at Roland Garros last month and indicated he was likely to skip Wimbledon, played on grass courts, where he was champion in 2008 and 2010. The injury-plagued Spaniard, who has slumped to 264 in the world, said after his exit to eventual runner-up Alexander Zverev in Paris that switching surfaces would not be "smart."

"It looks difficult to make a transition to grass, having the Olympics again on clay," he said at the time. The former world number one, a 14-time French Open champion, only returned to competition in April after missing most of the past 16 months through injury.

Golf: India's Pukhraj leads after 1st round in Vietnam

TDG NETWORK
LONG AN (VIETNAM)

Indian golfer Pukhraj Singh Gill claimed a two-shot lead after carding an eight-under 64 in the delayed first round of the Nam A Bank Vietnam Masters on the Asian Development Tour here. The USD 85,000 event is being played at the Royal Long An Golf

and Villas, a 27-hole course designed by Sir Nick Faldo on the outskirts of Ho Chi Minh city.

As many as seven Indians are playing in the three-day event with a field of 142 players. Pukhraj was among the players who had to come back in the morning to finish his first round. Play was stopped early in the first

round due to the threat of lightning.

The 27-year-old Indian golfer began on the back-nine and opened birdie-birdie before adding one more on the 14th. An eagle on the 18th for the long-hitter saw him turn in five-under.

On the second nine, he birdied three times for a bogey free 64 and a two-shot lead

over Thailand's Tanapat Pichaikool (66).

Among the other Indians, Akshay Sharma (69) was Tied-9th, Sunhit Bishnoi (70) was Tied-18th, Arjun Prasad and Saptak Talwar with 71 each were Tied-33rd, and Khalin Joshi (72) and Aman Raj (72) were Tied-46th. Veteran Rahil Gangjee (74) was Tied-77th.