

# THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI SATURDAY 6 JULY 2024



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Modi govt may fall in Aug, claims Lalu Yadav; BJP says RJD chief is 'hallucinating'



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Biden set for rally and TV interview as he seeks to recover from debate

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Alia Bhatt & Sharvari to headline first female-led YRF Spy Universe film *Alpha*



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### WINDOWS



Canadian singer Justin Bieber arrives to attend Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant's sangeet in Mumbai on Friday.

### PM urges athletes to share feedback on Paris Olympics

New Delhi: Confident that India's bid to host the 2036 Olympics will be successful, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has urged athletes bound for this month's Paris Games to share their views on the arrangements in the French capital to help his government's ambitious plan to bring the quadrennial showpiece here. Mr Modi said those travelling to the French capital would do the country a huge service by providing inputs from their experience. "We are hoping to host the Olympics in 2036, it will help in creating a sporting atmosphere (in the country). Work is in progress to prepare infrastructure for it," the Prime Minister said.

### 6 BRS MLCs join Cong in Telangana

Hyderabad: Six BRS MLCs joined the Congress late last night in the presence of Telangana chief minister A. Revanth Reddy, dealing a significant blow to the K. Chandrasekhar Rao-led party. The Bharat Rashtra Samithi continues to suffer from desertions. Full report on Page 3

### 8 newborns die within 24 hrs in WB hospital

Berhampore (West Bengal): Eight newborns have died due to alleged medical negligence at Murshidabad Medical College and Hospital in West Bengal in the last 24 hours. Five of them died at the newborn critical care unit while 3 others died at the paediatric ICU. Full report on Page 4

### COUNTERPOINT



Not a neta, on my release, I aim to be a godman to get more followers, power, money...

### WEATHER

Max: 31°C  
Min: 26°C  
RH: 78%  
Rain: 60%

Forecast: Rain

### ASTROGUIDE

Krodhi: Uttarayana  
Tithi: Ashada Shukla Padyami till 4.26 am (Sunday)  
Star: Punarvasu till 4.47 am  
Varjyam: 4.27 pm to 6.05 pm  
Durmuhurtam: 5.51 am to 7.35 am  
Rahukalam: 9 am to 10.30 am  
SUNSET TODAY 7.23 PM  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.29 AM  
MOONRISE TOMORROW 6.26 AM  
MOONSET TODAY 8.05 PM

## Rishi Sunak leads Tories to worst-ever defeat, to step down as leader New PM promises 'govt of service', claims a 'decisive vote for change' Starmer UK PM after Labour wins by a landslide, beat Tories 412-121

ADITI KHANNA  
LONDON, JULY 5

Sir Keir Starmer became Britain's new Prime Minister on Friday and vowed to rebuild Britain, hours after his Labour Party secured a landslide victory in a general election in which the weary voters inflicted a "sobering verdict" on Rishi Sunak's Conservatives, who suffered their worst electoral drubbing.

Mr Starmer, 61, assumed charge as the UK's 58th Prime Minister after his customary audience with King Charles III at Buckingham Palace, soon after Mr Sunak's meeting with the British monarch.

The Labour Party secured 412 seats in the 650-member House of Commons, up 211 from the last election in 2019. Mr Sunak's Tories won just 121 seats, down 250 seats from the previous election. While Labour had a vote share of 33.7 per cent, the Conservatives had 23.7 per cent.

"Our country has voted decisively for change, for national renewal and a return of politics for public service," said Mr Starmer in his inaugural address from a lectern outside 10 Downing Street, the official residence of the British Prime Minister.

As leader of a new  
Turn to Page 4



Britain's new Labour Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer and his wife Victoria walk past supporters towards 10 Downing Street in London on Friday. — AP

## Starmer eyes a 'new strategic partnership', FTA with India

Modi greets new PM, Sunak No place for Hindu-phobia

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI  
NEW DELHI, JULY 5

With the electoral defeat on Friday of Indian-origin erstwhile British PM Rishi Sunak's Conservatives, India is now looking forward to dealing with Labour Party leader Sir Keir Starmer who took over as Britain's new Prime Minister. To New Delhi's relief, Mr Starmer has

made efforts to reverse the perceived anti-India image of his centre-left party that has now swept the polls in Britain. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on X on Friday: "Heartiest congratulations and best wishes to Keir Starmer on the remarkable victory in the UK general election. I look forward to our positive and constructive collaboration to further

strengthen the India-UK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in all areas, fostering mutual growth and prosperity."

In a separate message to Mr Sunak, Mr Modi wrote: "Thank you for your admirable leadership of the UK, and your active contribution to deepen the ties between India and the UK during your term in office. Best  
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## Defence, trade ties on Modi-Putin talks agenda for Monday

PM in Russia & Austria from July 8 to 10

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JULY 5

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will discuss the whole gamut of bilateral ties with Russian President Vladimir Putin on July 9 during his visit to Russia for the upcoming 22nd annual bilateral summit. Besides the issues of regional and global interest, Mr Modi and Mr Putin will review the "special privileged partnership" between the two nations that encompasses defence supplies, trade ties and energy cooperation. The annual India-Russia Summit is taking place after three years.

Briefing the media in the national capital ahead of the Prime Minister's visit to Russia, foreign secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra said that Mr Modi is expected to raise the issue of Indian nationals trapped in the Russian Army and being



Narendra Modi

PRIME MINISTER Modi and President Putin will review the 'special privileged partnership' that encompasses defence supplies, trade ties and energy cooperation

forced to fight on the battlefield against Ukraine. New Delhi is strongly pushing for their immediate release and return to India.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict is also expected to be discussed prominently, and Mr Modi is expected to push for an end to the conflict and reiterate that it is  
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## Naidu meets Sitharaman, seeks funds for Andhra

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JULY 5

Andhra Pradesh chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Friday met finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman to seek enhanced financial support for his state. It is learnt that during the meeting, Mr Naidu mentioned various ongoing projects in Andhra Pradesh that require urgent Central assistance.

Mr Naidu is seeking enhanced assistance for Andhra in case the special category status cannot be granted to the state.

"The CM presented a detailed memorandum outlining the state's requirements and the rationale behind the demand for increased allocation," the sources said.  
More on Page 3

## Neet-PG exam to be in 2 shifts Aug. 11 Cancelling Neet-UG 'counterproductive', Centre, NTA to SC

AVINASH PRABHAKAR JHA  
NEW DELHI, JULY 5

The National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) on Friday announced that the Neet-PG medical entrance exam will now be conducted in two shifts on August 11. In a separate development, the Centre, in its affidavit to the Supreme Court, said that scrapping Neet-UG 2024 will jeopardise the interests of honest candidates and that it asked the

CBI to conduct a comprehensive probe into the alleged irregularities.

The Neet-PG exam was earlier scheduled to be held on June 23. However, it was postponed just 12 hours before the exam as a 'precautionary measure'.

In a notification issued on Friday, the board said, "In continuation of NBEMS notice dated June 22, the conduct of Neet-PG 2024 examination has been rescheduled. It will now be conducted on

THE NEET-PG exam was earlier scheduled to be held on June 23. However, it was postponed just 12 hours before the exam as a 'precautionary measure'

August 11 in two shifts. The cut-off date for the purpose of eligibility to appear in the Neet-PG 2024 shall continue to be August 15."

The Union health ministry had on June 22 postponed the Neet-PG

entrance examination, scheduled to be held on June 23, as a "precautionary measure" in the wake of allegations about the integrity of Neet-UG exams.

The health ministry had decided to undertake a thorough assessment of the robustness of the processes of the Neet-PG entrance examination.

Amid the growing clamour for cancellation of the controversy-ridden Neet-UG exam over alleged  
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## BJP appoints state in-charges, retains most office-bearers

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JULY 5

The BJP on Friday named several of its state unit in-charges and co-in-charges, retaining most of the incumbents.

While Prakash Javadekar and Satish Poonia are repeated as in-charges of Kerala and Haryana, respectively,

BJP national general secretaries Vinod Tawde, Tarun Chugh and Radha Mohan Das Agarwal continue as in-charges in Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir and Karnataka, respectively.

Bihar MLA Nitin Nabin will be in-charge of Chhattisgarh, Ashish Sood of Goa, Shrikant Sharma of Himachal Pradesh,

Laxmikant Bajpai of Jharkhand, Mahendra Singh of Madhya Pradesh and Vijaypal Singh Tomar of Odisha.

Former Gujarat CM Vijay Rupani and the party's national general secretary Dushyant Kumar Gautam will continue to be Punjab and Uttarakhand in-charge, respectively.

## HC seeks CBI's response on Kejriwal's bail in excise case

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JULY 5

The Delhi high court on Friday sought the CBI's response within a week to chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's plea for bail in the excise policy case and fixed July 17 as the next date for hearing in the matter. Mr Kejriwal's writ petition challenging his arrest and CBI remand is also listed before the high court on the same date.

Senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, who appeared for Mr Kejriwal, said that this was not a matter related to Section 45 of the PMLA.

Mr Singhvi said: "This is not a case where there can be any remotest allegation of the triple test being touched, forget being violated. Can't be a flight risk, can't be non-cooperation, can't be an instance of influencing witnesses. Four people have got bail. Just because they say I'm a special class, I'm a VIP, so VIP does not get the bail that everybody else gets."  
More on Page 2

## Prachanda to face July 12 floor test as allies withdraw support

Kathmandu, July 5: Nepal's embattled Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda", who lost support from two major alliance partners earlier this week, is set to seek a vote of confidence from the House of Representatives on July 12, it was announced on Thursday.

The Prime Minister sent a letter to the Parliament Secretariat asking the latter to make arrangements for the vote, local media reported. "Dahal chose to go for



Pushpa Kamal Dahal

the floor test by the article 100(2) of the Constitution which says 'if the political party which the prime minister represents is divided or a political party in coalition government withdraws its support, the

prime minister shall table a motion in the House of Representatives for a vote of confidence within thirty days." The Kathmandu Post reported.

Earlier, Mr Prachanda had announced that he would not quit after the resignation of eight Cabinet ministers belonging to the largest party and instead face a vote of confidence in Parliament. This will be the fifth time Prachanda, 69, will seek a vote of confidence within a term of one and a half years. —PTI



Sadhus wait for registration of Amarnath Yatra at the Ram Mandir base camp in Jammu on Friday. — PTI

## IN BRIEF

## ₹41L seized in DJB laundering case

**New Delhi:** The Enforcement Directorate on Friday said it seized ₹41 lakh in cash, "incriminating" documents and digital devices during searches conducted as part of a money laundering case linked to alleged corruption in the augmentation of some sewage treatment plants by the Delhi Jal Board. The raids were launched on July 3 and covering multiple places in Delhi, Ahmedabad, Mumbai and Hyderabad and cash of ₹41 lakh, various incriminating documents and digital evidence were seized during the searches, the probe agency said in a statement on Friday. The money laundering investigation arose from an FIR of the Delhi government anti-corruption branch against a company named Euroteck Environmental Pvt Ltd. and others alleging a scam in the DJB in the name of augmentation and upgradation of 10 sewage treatment plants at Pappankala, Nilothi, Najafgarh, Keshopur, Coronation Pillar, Narela, Rohini, and Kondli. These four tenders, valued at ₹1,943 crore, were awarded to various joint venture (JV) entities in October, 2022.

## 34-yr-old found dead near Old Rly station

**New Delhi:** A 34-year-old man, who used to supply water to makeshift shops near the Old Delhi Railway Station, was found dead Friday with a deep wound on the back of his neck. The police said they received a PCR call at around 7 am at the Kotwali police station regarding a case of murder. "A team reached the spot near Dargah Maidan Parking. The body of a young man was found lying on a cot. He was identified as Gaurav Thakur, a resident of the Fatehpuri area," a senior police officer said. The officer said he used to supply water to 'rehris' near the Old Delhi Railway Station. "On close examination, the deceased was found to have a deep wound on the back of his neck. A case under section 103 of the BNS (Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita) is being registered. "A forensic examination of the spot is being done. Investigation is in progress," said the police.

## Bike-borne man dies after tempo hits him

**New Delhi:** A 25-year-old man died after his motorcycle was hit by a tempo near GTB Enclave in Delhi's Shahdara on Friday, the police said. The deceased has been identified as Nishant, they said. The police said that the tempo driver was apprehended from the spot. "A PCR call regarding an accident was received at GTB Enclave police station. On reaching the spot it was found that one bike was hit by a tempo. The person driving the bike died at the spot," a senior police officer said. The police said that the accused driver Saddam (27), was nabbed and an FIR was registered. Investigation into the matter is in progress.

## RETAIL PRICES OF TOMATOES IN CITY AT ₹70-80/KG

**New Delhi:** Retail prices of tomatoes in Delhi have surged to around ₹70-80 per kg on lower supply due to recent heatwave conditions. Mother Dairy, a leading supplier of fruits and vegetables in Delhi-NCR, is selling tomatoes at ₹75 per kg through its retail 'Safal' stores. The local vendors are selling at ₹70-80 per kg. "The recently occurred heatwave conditions across key tomato growing belts in the hilly regions in the North have impacted the production of the crop, resulting in constrained supply for retail markets and subsequent price volatility," a Mother Dairy spokesperson said on Friday. Online marketplaces Otpy and Blinkit are selling tomatoes at ₹80 per kg. Local vendors attributed the high retail prices to a sharp increase in wholesale prices of tomatoes at ₹50-60 per kg. However, according to the data compiled by the department of consumer affairs, the retail prices of tomatoes in Delhi are ₹55 per kg. All-India average price of tomatoes on Friday is ₹58.25 per kg. The maximum and minimum prices of tomatoes are ₹130 per kg and ₹20 per kg, respectively.

■ Delhi unit plans to make cow service major poll plank, likely to give shape to aggressive campaign tomorrow

## Do gau sewa, post pics on app: BJP to its netas

SHASHI BHUSHAN  
NEW DELHI, JULY 5

In a move to align more closely with its Hindutva ideology, the Delhi BJP has introduced a new mandate requiring all its state senior leaders and functionaries to engage in cow service. Under the new directive, the Delhi BJP leaders and functionaries are expected to upload photographs and videos of "serving the mother cow" in BJP's 'Saraal' app.

This latest measure, which mandates cow-relat-

ed media uploads, has also been made a prerequisite for participation in the state executive committee to be held on July 7 in the national capital. Failure to do so will result in their absence being officially recorded, regardless of their actual participation. A senior party leader revealed that "gau sewa" was going to be one of the main election planks for the Delhi BJP. Delhi will be going to polls in February next year.

The Delhi BJP has asked its national office bearers, national council members

from the city, and members of the state core group to do "Gau sewa" and also to arrange sanitation facilities at 'Gausshala' (shelter home for cows) before the meeting on July 7.

It is learnt that the state leadership has already prepared a detailed list of works assigned to different levels of office bearers.

Besides their visit to "Gausshala" for cow service, the senior leaders are also asked to reach out to the heads of 'sewa basti' and discuss the expansion of the party and visit and

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do service at orphanages, old age homes, and homes for leprosy patients.

The Delhi BJP has sent a list of work to be done by its leaders before the one-day "extended state executive meeting" and uploading videos and pictures of assigned works on the

'Saraal' app is mandatory. "Their attendance will be valid only after the picture and video of their assigned work are uploaded on the Saraal app," he said.

A senior party leader claimed that for the first time, the Delhi BJP has issued an official instruction to perform "Gau Sewa."

After the Lok Sabha polls, Sunday's meeting will be the first meeting and sources said that the BJP state executive will discuss plans for next year's Assembly polls to return to power in Delhi.

"Apart from the Arvind Kejriwal-led government's failure, the party's poll plank will prominently focus on its core agenda of 'Hindutva' which also includes 'holy cow,'" a party leader said.

State office bearers, state executive members, Members of Parliament, and MLAs assigned to hold meetings at booth level, felicitated 'Panna Pramukh' and 'Tridev' (comprising booth president, booth in charge and polling agent) at their homes, and held public hearing with civic and gov-

ernment official to address people's grievances.

The party also has instructed its candidates contesting the 2020 Assembly polls and 2022 municipal polls to carry out sanitation drives and hold meetings with the 'mandir committee' and market and resident welfare association, and key voters.

District in-charges and co-in-charges, Lok Sabha convenors, and Assembly in-charges have been asked to visit people detained under MISA during 'emergency' and felicitate them.

## Prez decorates 6 CRPF bravehearts

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JULY 5

Six CRPF personnel, including four posthumous, were decorated with military gallantry medals by President Droupadi Murmu during a defence investiture ceremony held here on Friday. The family members of inspector Dilip Kumar Das, head constable Raj Kumar Yadav and constables Bablu Rabha and Shambhu Roy received Kirti Chakras (posthumous) from Ms Murmu. They were recognised for displaying gallant action during an anti-Naxal operation in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district on April 3, 2021.

Twenty-two security personnel, including eight from the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), were killed in action during this gunbattle, followed by a Naxal ambush that went on for six hours.

Ms Murmu awarded the Shaurya Chakra for their exceptional valor during operations in Aurangabad in Bihar, and Srinagar, On February 25, 2022, a



President Droupadi Murmu confers Shaurya Chakra upon Captain M.V. Pranjal (right) posthumously during the Defence Investiture Ceremony-2024 (Phase-I) at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on Friday. Shaurya Chakra being conferred upon selection grade constable Saffullah Qadri, Jammu & Kashmir olice, posthumously.

ing their bravery and dedication to the nation.

During an investiture ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on Friday, the two bravehearts of the CRPF were awarded the Shaurya Chakra for their exceptional valor during operations in Aurangabad in Bihar, and Srinagar, On February 25, 2022, a

special search and destroy operation was launched in the Chhakarbhandha forest area in Aurangabad district involving 205 CoBRA, 47 Bn CRPF, and the Bihar police. As the troops approached their target, Maoists opened fire.

Demonstrating unwavering determination, assistant commandant Singh



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led a flanking attack, causing the Maoists to retreat. Despite being gravely injured by an IED and losing his left foot, he continued to lead his troops, securing a dominant position and recovering IED-making materials. For his exceptional bravery, Mr Singh was awarded the Shaurya Chakra on 15 August 2023.

## HC asks CBI to reply on CM's bail plea in 1 week

Hearing of writ petition against CBI arrest on July 17

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JULY 5

The Delhi high court on Friday sought the CBI's response within a week to chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's plea for bail in the excise policy case and fixed July 17 as the next date for hearing in the matter.

Mr Kejriwal's writ petition challenging his arrest and three-day CBI remand is also listed before the high court on the same date.

Senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, who appeared for Mr Kejriwal, said that this was not a matter related to Section 45 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Section 45 PMLA refers to "offences which are cognisable and non-bailable" and also lists the requirements to be followed for granting bail for an offence of money laundering.

Mr Singhvi said, "This is not a case where there can be any remotest allegation of the triple test being touched, forget being violated. Can't be a flight risk, can't be non-cooperation, can't be an instance of influencing witnesses. Four people have got bail. Just because they say I'm a special class, I'm a VIP, so VIP does not get the



► SENIOR ADVOCATE Abhishek Manu Singhvi, who appeared for Mr Kejriwal, said that this was not a matter related to Section 45 of

bail that everybody else gets."

CBI lawyer D.P. Singh said there are four charge sheets filed by the Central agency in the matter.

He submitted that Mr Kejriwal has filed a writ petition against the arrest by the agency which is coming for a hearing on July 17, and that the grounds in his bail petition and the plea against arrest "are almost identical."

The high court asked if Mr Kejriwal had moved a bail plea in the CBI matter before the trial court, to which Mr Singh said he hadn't.

The bench told Mr Singhvi, "These are two (ED and CBI) independent cases. You will also have

## Kavitha custody extended July 18

**New Delhi:** A court here on Friday extended till July 18 the judicial custody of BRS leader K. Kavitha in a corruption case linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam. Special judge Kaveri Baweja passed the order.

The Enforcement Directorate had arrested the 46-year-old from her Banjara Hills residence in Hyderabad on March 15,

the benefit of the sessions judge first hearing you, maybe you succeed there...I'm not on the capacity of this court or the competence of the court (to hear the bail plea)." Mr Singh said the Delhi CM had moved a plea in the apex court against his arrest, but "bail application by the same petitioner was filed before the sessions court."

To this, Mr Singhvi responded, "I went to the Supreme Court. It heard me. It reserved orders and said that you have remedy...a generous concession, liberty was given to me to apply for bail. The sequence is totally different...This is an avoidance technique. I'm asking for a short date..."

## SC to revisit verdict on same-sex marriage

**New Delhi, July 5:** The Supreme Court is scheduled to consider on July 10 a batch of pleas seeking review of its last year's judgement which refused to accord legal recognition to same-sex marriage. According to the cause list of July 10 uploaded on the apex court website, a five-judge bench headed by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud would consider including the pleas seeking review of the October 17 last year verdict.

As per the practice, the review pleas are considered in-chamber by five-judge benches.

Besides the CJ, the other members of the bench will be Justices Sanjiv Khanna, Hima Kohli, B.V. Nagarathna and P.S. Narasimha.

In a setback to gay rights activists, the apex court had on October 17 last year refused to accord legal recognition to same-sex marriage, saying there was "no unqualified right" to marriage with the exception of those that are recognised by law.

The apex court, however, had made a strong pitch for the rights of queer people so they don't face discrimination in accessing goods and services.

— PTI

## Pvt school coerce parents to opt for school transport

**New Delhi, Jul 5:** Scores of students from primary classes were made to stay back by a private school in Prashant Vihar even after regular hours to coerce their parents to opt for school transport over private vans, the parents alleged.

The students were made to sit under the open sky in the humid weather with many of them crying to go back home, their parents claimed.

There was no immediate reaction from the school authorities.

Videos of the purported incident have emerged on social media.

The aggrieved parents have said they will approach Delhi lieutenant-governor V.K. Saxena and education minister Atishi over the issue and demand action against the school.

One of the parents, requesting anonymity, claimed that the school ended at 12.15 pm, but the authorities did not allow the students to leave.

"What was more concerning was they did not even permit the van drivers to pick up the children. The students were made to stay back till 1.15 pm. We received text messages from the school asking us to come and pick up our children," he told a news agency over the phone.

Speaking about the matter, another parent, a resident of Rohini, called the move "extremely wrong."

"The school could have arranged a parent-teacher meeting for all the parents instead of forcing us to opt for school transport for our children by making our wards sit outside in the humid weather," he added.

## Sanjay Singh named AAP's chairperson

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JULY 3

Aam Aadmi Party on Friday appointed Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh as the chairperson of the AAP Parliamentary Party. He has also been chosen as the leader of the party in the Upper House. The party officially informed the Speaker of both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha about Mr Singh's appointment in a letter.

"Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal has always given me the opportunity to raise my voice from the streets to the Parliament. I will fulfil the responsibility of the party's parliamentary group chairperson with utmost dedication. I am deeply grateful to Arvind Kejriwal and the Aam Aadmi Party," said Mr Singh in a post on X.

Previously Mr Singh served as the leader of the party in the Rajya Sabha during his first term.

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"The school could have arranged a parent-teacher meeting for all the parents instead of forcing us to opt for school transport for our children by making our wards sit outside in the humid weather," he added.

— PTI

## 'Need to sensitise foreigners on organ transplant in India'

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JULY 5

The Union health ministry has written to the ministries of external affairs and home affairs underlining the need to sensitise foreign nationals visiting India for organ transplants about guidelines and legal requirements that regulate the process in the country.

Union health secretary Apurva Chandra in his letter noted that India has emerged as one of the leading destinations for foreign nationals to get their organs transplanted owing to world-class health facilities and highly skilled medical professionals.

"It is essential for these foreign nationals visiting India for organ transplant to understand the specific guidelines and legal requirements that regulate the process of organ transplantation in India," Mr Chandra said in the letter.

In order to sensitise the foreign nationals who visit India on medical visa for organ transplantation along with addressal of their queries regarding rules pertaining to the same, the ministry of health has prepared scroll messages and creatives, and the health secretary urged dissemination by displaying it on the websites/portals of bureau of immigration under Ministry of home affairs and at airports as well as on the web-

► IT STATED that when the donor or recipient is a foreign national, then prior approval of the authorisation committee shall be required before removing or transplanting human organ or tissue or both

sites of ministry of external affairs and Embassies and missions of India abroad.

The scroll messages stated that when the donor or recipient is a foreign national, then prior approval of the authorisation committee shall be required before removing or transplanting human organ or tissue or both. No Indian living donor is permitted to donate his organ(s) to a foreigner, recipient unless he is a near relative of the recipient, the message stated.

In April, Dr Atul Goel, Director General of Health Services (DGHS) had urged all states and UTs to ensure regular collection and sharing of data of all transplant cases including those of foreigners, with National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO) on a monthly basis.

He had urged them to investigate any violations and take appropriate action, including suspension of registration for performing organ transplant, of the hospitals involved in illegal activities.

## Defence, trade on Modi-Putin talks agenda

■ Continued From Page 1

adversely impacting the developing countries of the Global South.

The Prime Minister, who is expected to reach Russia on the afternoon of July 8, will be hosted to a private dinner by the Russian President the same evening. This will be Mr Modi's first visit to Russia since the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war more than two years ago. It will also be the first bilateral talks between the two leaders in Mr Modi's third term in office.

On the afternoon of July 9, the Prime Minister will depart for the Austrian capital Vienna for the second leg of the visit. He will visit

the central European nation on July 9-10.

This is the first prime ministerial visit from India in more than four decades and is expected to focus on "business, innovation and technology" and the strong partnership in start-ups.

During the media briefing in the national capital on the Prime Minister's impending visit to Russia, Mr Kwatra said the bilateral India-Russia annual trade volumes have grown to a staggering \$65 billion due to the bilateral "energy cooperation". However, the trade imbalance between the two nations remains an issue and is expected to be discussed during

the talks between the two leaders.

According to the figures given by the foreign secretary, Indian exports to Russia are only a meagre \$4 billion, while Indian imports from Russia are a staggering \$60 billion.

Asked about the economic sanctions of the G-7 nations on Russia, Mr Kwatra said India has been in touch with the G-7 on this issue to protect Indian national interests in sectors including the diamond industry.

On the issue of Indians trapped in the Russian Army, Mr Kwatra said that, as per estimates, their number could be between 30 and 45, adding that 10 such Indians have

already been released and have returned to India. With Mr Modi set to take up the matter directly with Mr Putin, the foreign secretary said that New Delhi has already been pursuing the matter "strongly" with Russia.

Asked whether India will be keen to mediate to bring about an end to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Mr Kwatra underlined New Delhi's position that "diplomacy and dialogue" are the way forward. He said the sooner the conflict ends, the more beneficial it would be for the entire world.

The situation in the Indo-Pacific region and cooperation in multilateral forums such as

BRICS, SCO and the G-20 are also expected to be discussed between Mr Modi and Mr Putin.

Asked about reported delays in the supplies of the S-400 missiles from Russia to India, Mr Kwatra pointed to the robust defence ties between the two nations and termed it an important component of the ties.

On the Kudankulam civil nuclear energy reactor that symbolises strong India-Russia civil nuclear energy cooperation, the foreign secretary said that Kudankulam 1 and 2 power plants are already operational, while work on the power plants 3 to 6 is "in progress".

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
NOTICE INVITING TENDER	
30-Elect-33-T-2024-25-E3	
Electrical work regarding repairing of Air-Conditioning System installed at Dormitories in DLI Main Railway Station with other works and provision of VRF type air conditioning plant along with CAMC.	
Name of Work and its Location:-	30-Elect-33-T-2024-25-E3
Approx Cost of the works in:-	Rs. 99.16 Lacs
Address of the Office:-	Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.
Bid Security:-	Rs. 198300.00
Date & time of submission of tender:-	31.07.2024, 12.00 Hrs.
Opening of tender:-	31.07.2024, 12.00 Hrs.
Website & Notice Board:-	www.ireps.gov.in & Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 2043/24	

SHORT TAKES

**BJD netas still mum a month after fiasco**

**Bhubaneswar:** Leaders of the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in Odisha continue to remain muted ever since they lost power to the BJP on June 4 after an unscripted rule of 24 years. Neither BJD president Naveen Patnaik nor any other leaders of his party have come out with any statement on how they want to reshape their future. The BJD's crushing defeat in both the LS and Assembly polls has left it in a state of helplessness. The regional party which got 12 Lok Sabha seats in 2019 drew nil this time while its strength in Odisha Legislative Assembly dropped to 51 from 115 seats. Though many senior BJD leaders initially blamed Mr Patnaik's "over-reliance" V. Karthikeyan Pandian, a Tamil Nadu-born bureaucrat-turned politician, to run the party and the government, they withdrew to their cocoon after Mr Patnaik himself came out to defend Mr Pandian.

**Noted singer's son beaten up by tenant**

**Mumbai:** Renowned singer Hemlata's son Aditya Bali was allegedly assaulted on Friday by his tenant and two others in Oshiwara in the western part of the metropolis, a Mumbai police official said. The incident occurred in the evening when Mr Bali, an actor, went to his shop which he had rented to one Shankar Sharma, the official said. "He had gone to the shop to remove an internet router. Sharma allegedly violated the rental agreement, due to which an argument ensued between him and Bali. After he was assaulted, Bali approached Oshiwara police with a complaint against Sharma and two others," the official informed. A non-cognisable case has been registered on Mr Bali's complaint and further probe is underway, the police station official added. — PTI

**BSP's chief in TN hacked to death**

**Chennai:** Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) Tamil Nadu president K. Armstrong died after he was hacked by a six-member gang near his house on Friday, the police said. The two-wheeler-borne gang attacked Armstrong, a former councillor of Chennai corporation, near his house in Perambur inflicting grievous injuries on him, and fled. He died on the way to the hospital, it said. The police has launched a hunt to trace out and nab the suspects. Tamil Nadu BJP chief K. Annamalai expressed shock over the incident and targeted chief minister M.K. Stalin. Armstrong, previously served as the councillor of the Greater Chennai Corporation. Although the BSP does not enjoy much electoral influence, Armstrong was well known in the state as a dalit Ambedkarite voice.

**ED CHARGES PC'S WIFE NALINI OVER SARADHA SCAM**

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI KOLKATA, JULY 5**

The ED has chargesheeted Congress veteran and former Union minister P. Chidambaram's wife, Nalini Chidambaram, under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in the multi-crore Saradha chit fund scam. It submitted a chargesheet of 65 pages with 1,000 pages of evidence against her at a PMLA court in Kolkata on Friday. The ED chargesheet alleged, "Between 11.06.2010 to 17.06.2012, a total of ₹1,489 crores was paid by Saradha Group to Nalini Chidambaram. Out of this, after deducting ₹15 lakhs as TDS, ₹1,349 crores reached Nalini Chidambaram's account. There was no agreement entered between Saradha Sudipta Sen and Nalini Chidambaram which obliged Sudipta Sen to pay this amount." It also stated that Ms Chidambaram "claimed that the funds received by her from Saradha Group were her fees paid by Saradha Group on behalf of Manoranjana Singh and for drafting the MOU and agreements etc., but Nalini Chidambaram, a tax consultant and lawyer, did not raise any bill or invoice invoice either to Manoranjana Singh or to Sudipta Sen or on their companies as a proof to support her claim".

**Naidu meets Nirmala, seeks funds for 'distressed' Andhra**

Also meets Rajnath, Nadda; FM assures CM to look into state's demands

**AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, JULY 5**

Andhra Pradesh chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Friday met finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman to seek enhanced financial support for his state. It is learnt that during the meeting, Mr Naidu mentioned various ongoing projects in Andhra Pradesh that require urgent Central assistance. Mr Naidu is seeking enhanced assistance for Andhra in case the special category status cannot be granted to the state. "The CM presented a detailed memorandum outlining the state's financial requirements and the rationale behind the demand for increased allocation," the sources said. The TDP ministers in the Centre were also present during the meeting. Mr



Andhra Pradesh chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu meets finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman during a meeting in New Delhi on Friday. — PTI

Naidu also met defence minister Rajnath Singh and health minister J.P. Nadda. The meeting with the FM comes days before the Centre is busy giving final touches to the Budget. Sources indicated that Ms Sitharaman gave a patient hearing to Mr Naidu's concerns and assured that she will look into Andhra Pradesh's demands within the broader fiscal constraints. On Thursday, Mr Naidu had met Prime Minister Narendra Modi with a list of demands for his state. Key among Mr Naidu's demands were funds for

the Polavaram irrigation project, special assistance for backward regions, and support for the development of the new capital, Amaravati. The chief minister also sought resolution of pending issues stemming from the bifurcation of the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh. Later, while speaking to the media, Mr Naidu outlined an ambitious roadmap to transform the state to put it on the world map in the next five years and emphasised the significance of the Centre's backing for it. During his interaction, the CM also touched upon the sensitive issue of minority reservations, acknowledging existing challenges. The regional party has already asserted that the reservation given to Muslims was for social justice and not appeasement and will continue in the state.

**In major setback to BRS, 6 party MLCs join Cong**

**Hyderabad, July 5:** In a major setback to the Opposition BRS in Telangana, six party MLCs joined the ruling Congress late on Thursday night in the presence of chief minister A. Revanth Reddy. The Bharat Rashtra Samithi continues to suffer from desertions, with several leaders, including six MLCs, leaving the party after its defeat in the Assembly polls last year. The six MLCs who switched over to the Congress are: Dande Vithal, Bhanu Prasad Rao, M.S. Prabhakar, Boggarapu Dayanand, Yegge Mallesham and Baswaraju Sarajah, Congress sources said. AICC in-charge of party affairs in Telangana Deepa Dasmuni and other leaders were present when the BRS MLCs joined the Congress at the residence of CM Revanth Reddy, who is also the PCC president. According to the Telangana Legislative Council website, the BRS

**NCW remarks: Legal action against Mahua**

**New Delhi, July 5:** The National Commission for Women (NCW) on Friday said it has initiated legal action against Lok Sabha MP Mahua Moitra for her remarks against its chairperson Rekha Sharma. This comes a day after the TMC, commenting on a video posted on X showing the NCW chairperson's arrival at the site of a stampede that recently took place in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras, wrote, "She is too busy holding up her boss' pajamas". The NCW in a statement said that a formal complaint has been filed with the police and a letter has been sent to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla at Parliament stating that Ms Moitra's remarks are condemnable in strongest possible words and being a Member of Parliament, it is unbecoming of her stature. Reacting to the same, Moitra took a jibe at the NCW and posted on X, "Come on @DelhiPolice <<https://x.com/DelhiPolice>> please take action immediately on these suo moto orders."

**Jailed preacher Amritpal, Engineer Rashid take oath**

**AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 5**



Family members of Kashmiri leader Sheikh Abdul Rashid leave after he took oath as a Lok Sabha MP in Parliament on Friday. — PTI

Jailed radical Sikh preacher Amritpal Singh and Kashmiri leader Sheikh Abdul Rashid, who were granted parole to take oath as members of the Lok Sabha, were sworn in as MPs on Friday. While Rashid, popularly known as Engineer Rashid, is in Delhi's Tihar Jail in a terror funding case registered under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, Singh is lodged in a prison in Assam's Dibrugarh district for offences under the National Security Act. Both were brought to Parliament amid heavy deployment of security personnel in and around the complex. The MPs-elect took oath in the chamber of the Lok Sabha Speaker after completing formalities. They could not take oath as members of the 18th Lok Sabha on June 24 and 25 along with the other winning candidates.

Singh, 31, and Rashid, 56, won the recent Lok Sabha elections from Khador Sahib in Punjab and Baramulla in Jammu and Kashmir, respectively, as Independents while being incarcerated. For taking the oath, Rashid was granted a two-hour custody parole, excluding the travel time from Tihar to Parliament. Singh was granted a four-day custody parole, beginning July 5, in view of the travel from Assam to Delhi and back. Their

parole orders stated that during their period of temporary release, they could neither speak to nor address the media on any issue or make any statements. Their family members also cannot make a statement in any form of media. While Singh, a Khalistani sympathiser who heads the "Waris Punjab De" outfit, has been allowed to meet his family in Delhi, Rashid's family had permission only to attend his oath-taking.

**■ Mungeri Lal ke hasin sapne: BJP says RJD chief 'hallucinating' Modi govt may fall in August: Lalu**

**Patna, July 5:** RJD president Lalu Prasad Yadav on Friday claimed that the Narendra Modi government at the Centre was "weak" and could "fall" as early as within a month. The remark was promptly dismissed by the BJP, which said the ailing septuagenarian was "hallucinating" and that the recent general election was a reaffirmation of the people's faith in Mr Modi's leadership. Mr Yadav made these predictions at an event organised to commemorate 28 years of the formation of his party, which he founded by splitting the Janata Dal.



RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav helps party chief Lalu Prasad Yadav wear a silver crown during the party's 28th foundation day event in Patna on Friday. — PTI

Mr Yadav, who spoke in a weak voice for less than 10 minutes, with younger son and heir apparent Tejashwi Yadav by his side, said "The Modi government is weak (kamzor). It can fall any time. It can fall in August."

He urged party workers to be prepared for such a scenario. He highlighted that in the recent Lok Sabha elections, the RJD had increased its seat count and vote share compared to five years ago. "For quite some time, we have been the single largest party in the Bihar

Assembly. Unlike many others, we have never compromised on ideology," Mr Yadav said, a staunch opponent of the BJP, recalling his tenure and achievements, including the arrest of L.K. Advani in 1990. Mr Yadav made the remark at a time most leaders of the NDA were

at a BJP function where the newly-inducted Union ministers, from Bihar, were felicitated. Reacting to Mr Yadav's statements later, Union minister Nityanand Rai, a former Bihar BJP president, accused the RJD supremo of hallucinating, using a colloquial Hindi phrase "Mungeri Lal ke hasin sapne". "People have voted for Modi, who is now serving a record third term. Under his leadership and guided by chief minister Nitish Kumar, the NDA in Bihar will continue to defeat the Opposition, which was disgraced during RJD's rule," Mr Rai said. However, sources in both the RJD and the NDA, who spoke on condition of anonymity, were unanimous in the opinion that Mr Yadav had deftly tried to fish in troubled waters. — PTI



Footwear of public lying along a road near Marine Drive in Mumbai on Friday, a day after the victory parade of the Indian men's team which won the T20 World Cup. — PTI

**U'khand live-in couples can access each other's past info**

Move aims to protect couples from deceit, ensure safety

**PRITHVIRAJ SINGH DEHRADUN, JULY 5**

In a significant development, couples willing to get into live-in relationships in Uttarakhand can get detailed information, including past activities of their partners, before they start living together. The state government will make provisions for access to the past information of live-in partners in the rules being readied by it before the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) is implemented in October. According to officials, providing details of the past activities of the live-in couples will help female partners the most, especially given their safety and security. This move is also aimed at protecting couples

from deceit and fraud. Going by the information shared by officials, the UCC, once implemented, will provide live-in couples with details of each other's past before they decide to move ahead with their decision. State home department officials claimed that a provision has been made in the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) draft rules to provide detailed information about the live-in partners' past. The UCC incorporates mandatory registration of live-in relationships, marriages, divorces or break-ups in Uttarakhand. Under the provision, personal information will be shared only with the couples if both file a joint application with the requisite authority or the local police station, officials said. The information sought will be available online. The UCC draft rule committee is still working on the provision and other aspects, officials added. With this, accessibility of information about their marriages, divorce and other past relationships will also be given online through an OTP, informed an official. Both partners will get an OTP message through their Aadhaar links. There will also be a verification message following which information desired will be sent to the live-in couples on their mobile. The information will be accessible explicitly to the couples.

**After LS, Maha gears up for MLC elections July 27**

**BHAGWAN PARAB MUMBAI, JULY 5**

Maharashtra, after the recent LS polls, will witness yet another political slugfest as the Vidhan Parishad polls for 11 seats have become inevitable with 12 candidates fighting for them. The six-year term of 11 sitting MLCs in the Maharashtra Vidhan Parishad ends on July 27. The polls for these 11 seats will be held on the same day. Friday was the last date for the withdrawal of nominations. However, none of the 12 candidates withdrew the nomination, which would make the elections interesting given the current strength in the state Assembly.

**WB MLAs take oath, gov terms it unconstitutional**

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI KOLKATA, JULY 5**

Two newly-elected Trinamul Congress MLAs — Sayantika Banerjee and Rayat Hossain Sarkar — were administered oath by Assembly Speaker Biman Banerjee at a special session in the House on Friday after a month-long dilemma over their swearing-in ceremony at Raj Bhavan following their victory in the West Bengal bypolls. Governor C.V. Ananda Bose, however, described the administration of oaths as a "violation of the Constitution". After becoming the member of the House, Ms Banerjee, the Baranagar legislator, said, "I am

very happy. I can sleep peacefully." Mr Sarkar, the Bhagawangola legislator, meanwhile, said, "What should have happened earlier happened a bit late. We gained some experience." Mr Bose, who had on Thursday authorised deputy Speaker Ashish Banerjee to administer the oath to the two TMC MLAs, however, expressed his displeasure at the conduct of the Speaker and spoke about a report being sent to President Droupadi Murmu for not following his order. The two legislators had been staging a sit-in on the Assembly premises in protest against the governor's stance, demanding to be sworn

in by the Speaker within the Assembly premises. "Q. Speaker has defied Constitutional prescription. What next. Ans: A report is being sent to the Hon'ble President about the Constitutional impropriety of the Speaker in 'administering' the oath or affirmation to the two newly elected MLAs," Raj Bhavan said in a question-answer format statement. "This constitutional transgression has been done in spite of the governor appointing the deputy Speaker as the person before whom the two newly-elected MLAs shall make and subscribe an oath or affirmation," it observed.

**Call on opening Ratna Bhandar today: Minister**

**AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO BHUBANESWAR, JULY 5**

A 16-member committee formed under the chairmanship of Justice Biswanath Rath (Retd) will take a final call on the opening of Ratna Bhandar of Lord Jagannath's Srimandir on Saturday. According to state law minister Prithviraj Harichandan, the government has formed a 16-member committee, headed by the former judge, as per the Odisha high court. "The Justice Rath-led committee will sit on July 6 to decide the modalities on how the work will progress," he told reporters on Friday.

POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH (PIMER) BHUBANESWAR						
CORRIDORIUM						
Ref: Global Tender Enquiry Notice No. P/EP/23-24/G/06						
Following changes are made:-						
Sl. No.	Equipment/Item Name	Original Bid/ submission Date	Revised Bid/ Submission Date	Original Bid/ Opening Date	Revised Bid/ Opening Date	Deptt. Name
10.	Fully Automated IHC Stainer	06.07.2024	06.08.2024	08.07.2024	07.08.2024	Histopathology

All other details shall remain the same. Professor In-Charge (EP)

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, PWD (BORDER ROADS & NEC WORKS), ASSAM, CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI -03**

No.CE/Maint/MMPNA/01/2023-24/30

**PRESS NOTICE RE-INVITING TENDER**

The Chief Engineer (Border Roads & NEC Works), PWRD, Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3 invites Rebids on behalf of Governor of Assam for 3 (three) packages amounting to Rs.269.00 Lakh (approx) including GST etc. from approved and eligible contractors registered with PWRD, Assam, subject to approval of works proposes under "Periodic Renewal/Repair of roads under Mukhya Mantrir Path Nabikaran Aachani for the year 2023-24 in 3(three) LACs of Assam"

Details may be seen from 08-07-2024 to 15-07-2024 at website [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in). Amendment /Addendum to the SBD, if any, and further notifications shall appear in this website and also at the office of the undersigned during office hours. The contractor/bidder must be registered with the Electronic Tendering System (ETS) of PWRD, Assam website [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in).

Formal work order will be issued after receipt of Administrative Approval from competent authority.

Note:- N.I.T. Value is inclusive of GST (12%), Labour cess (1%) etc.

Chief Engineer, PWRD (Border Roads & NEC Works) Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3

Janasanyog/C/1082/24/ 6-Jul-24

**HDFC BANK GOLD LOAN BRANCH RELOCATING**

Existing premises address :-  
HDFC BANK LTD. 44, Denaar Bhawan, Ground floor, Indira Place, New Delhi - 110019

New premises address :-  
HDFC BANK LTD. Ground floor, Unit No 25-32, 5-1 level Block - F, International Trade Tower Indira Place, New Delhi - 110019

Date of shifting: 6th July 2024

For more details please contact: DM / Mr. Manish Rughav - 9015460234

HDFC BANK

SHORT TAKES

Woman abducted, killed by kin in Raj

**Kota:** A 20-year-old woman was allegedly abducted by her father and brother and killed in Rajasthan's Jhalawar district, with police retrieving her burnt body from the pyre and initiating a probe into the "honour killing" case. By the time police reached Sourit village, after being informed by the woman's husband, around "80 per cent" of the body was burnt, an official said. "It is a case of honour killing as the parents of the woman, Shilma Kushwah, had raised objections to her getting married to Ravindra Bheel, who belongs to a different caste," Harnwadshahaji deputy superintendent of police Jai Prakash Atal said. A year ago, Kushwah and Bheel ran away and got married in UP's Ghaziabad, the police said. On Thursday, the couple, who lived in Jhalawar's Sourti village, came to Harnwadshahaji in neighbouring Baran district to withdraw money from a bank, they said. — PTI

Bridges' collapse: 14 engineers suspended

**Patna:** The Bihar government on Friday suspended 14 engineers in connection with a series of recent incidents of bridge collapse in the state, a senior official said. The decision was taken after a probe panel submitted its report to the Water Resources Department (WRD). "It was found that engineers were negligent and monitoring was ineffective? that is the main reason behind the collapse of small bridges and causeways in the state," additional chief secretary of WRD, Chaitanya Prasad, told reporters here. Those suspended include three executive engineers. A total of 10 bridges collapsed in Siwan, Saran, Madhubani, Araria, East Champaran and Kishanganj districts in the past 17 days, officials said. — PTI

Cheetah, cubs enjoy monsoon showers

**Bhopal:** A thrilling sight of five cheetah cubs, romancing with monsoon rains under watchful eyes of their mother, Gamini, in Kuno National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh, was captured on camera by the forest officials on Friday. A video of the rare sight was soon posted by Union minister for environment, forest and climate change Bhupendra Yadav on social media platform X which attracted 3,77,000 viewers and 1,032 likes within a few hours. In the video clip, the cubs were seen in a playful mood, pushing, kicking and climbing on each other under the watchful eyes of their mother Gamini — the South African cheetah brought along with other cheetahs to KNP in a cheetah reintroduction project a couple of years ago. Eight cheetahs were brought in September 2022.

Turmoil in Cong's minority cell in Maha

30 office bearers tender resignation over no LC ticket to Muslim

SONU SHRIVASTAVA MUMBAI, JULY 5

As the Congress has not given the Maharashtra Legislative Council ticket to a minority community member, there is unrest in the minority cell of the party. The party has given a ticket to Pradnya Satav for biennial election for 11 seats of the Maharashtra Legislative Council. Around 30 party office bearers of Muslim community have tendered their resignation from their posts. A party insider said that

this will be the first time that there will be no members from Muslim community in the Council. Maharashtra has a total 78 members of the Legislative Council. Of the 78 members, the Congress party has eight members. Congress legislators Wajahat Mirza and Pradnya Satav are retiring on July 27, 2024. The party high command has re-nominated Ms Satav as it can get only one candidate elected. Zakir Hussain Kureshi, joint secretary of minority cell of Maharashtra

party candidates in Lok Sabha, the letter said. "Leaders like Arif Naseem Khan, Wajahat Mirza and Muzaffar Hussain were in the zone of consideration for the Council election," the letter said. "However, the party did not nominate any of them. As a result, there is huge disappointment in the muslim community. The party has also misled the community. Therefore, I offer my resignation," it added. "This paper is in possession of several letters, which echoes the same sentiments. Congress, wrote a letter to Wajahat Mirza, president of Maharashtra Congress minority cell, stating the party did not give a single ticket to Muslim community in the Lok Sabha election. However, the muslim community wholeheartedly campaigned for the

Maha introduces bill to check unfair means in examinations

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, JULY 5

Maharashtra government on Friday introduced a bill against unfair practices in examinations. All offences registered under the proposed act will be cognizable, non-bailable. The bill provides for minimum three years of jail. The bill titled "Maharashtra Competitive Examination Act, 2024" aims to prevent unfair means in the com-

petitive examinations, bring greater transparency, fairness and credibility and reassure the youth that their sincere and genuine efforts will be fairly rewarded and that their future is safe. State minister Shambhuraj Desai tabled it in the Assembly. According to the bill, those found guilty shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not less than three years, which may be extended to five years and with a fine of up to ₹10 lakh.

At ₹1.26cr, India's defence output hits record high

PAWAN BALI NEW DELHI, JULY 5

India's indigenous defence production achieved the highest ever growth during Financial Year 2023-24 in the wake of Modi government's "Aatmanirbharta" drive. The value of defence production in the country has gone up to a record-high figure of ₹1,26,887 crore, reflecting a year on year growth of 16.7 per cent. The value of defence production in FY 2022-23 was ₹1,08,684 crore. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said government is committed to establish India as a leading global defence manufacturing hub. "Very encouraging development. Compliments to those who have contributed to this feat. We are committed to nurturing a supportive environment to enhance our capabilities and establish India as a leading global defence manufacturing hub. This will enhance our security apparatus and make us Aatmanirbhara," he said. Indian defence PSU stocks has given one of the best returns in the stock market in last couple of years, as government focused on "Make-in-India" in the defence sector. In one year the shares of Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd has given a return of 196 per cent (1,495 per cent in 5 years), Bharat Electronics Ltd of 165 per cent (796 per cent in 5 years) and Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd of 333 per cent (3,263 per cent in 5 years).

5 die after inhaling suspected toxic gas inside well in C'garh

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY RAIPUR, JULY 5

Five people on Friday died after inhaling suspected toxic gas inside a well in Chhattisgarh, police said. The tragedy happened in the village Kikirda under the Birra police station area in Janjgir-Champa district at around eight in the morning, according to the police. The deceased have been identified as Ramchandra Jaiswal,

Ramesh Patel, Rajendra Patel, Jitendra Patel and Tikeswar Chandra, police said. According to Bilaspur range inspector general of police Sanjeev Shukla, preliminary investigation has suggested that Jaiswal first entered into the village well to take out a wooden plank that had fallen into it. He, however, fainted inside the well. His family members then shouted for help. Three fellow villagers (Ramesh Patel, Rajendra

Patel and Jitendra Patel) jumped into the well to rescue him. Later, Chandra entered the well when all the four did not come out. He also fell unconscious inside the well. Later, the local people informed the police about the incident. A team of state disaster response force (SDRF) soon rushed to the spot. All the five bodies were removed from the well, Prima facie, it appears they died after being exposed to some poisonous gas, the police said.

N-E situation remains grim, 8 killed in rains, landslides

MANOJ ANAND GUWAHATI, JULY 5

Heavy rainfall has caused havoc in northeastern states. Pointing out that over 21 lakh people were affected in Assam, official sources said that at least seven districts of Arunachal Pradesh in the central and eastern parts of the state were cut-off due to landslides caused by flash floods. The affected districts include Lohit, Changlang, Anjaw and East Siang. In the last 48 hours, eight persons, including two children, were killed in rain-induced landslides and floods in Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura. Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday said the flood situation was improving as the water flowing above the danger mark in Brahmaputra River and its tributaries continued to recede. Mr Sarma, who was inspecting areas facing waterlogging problems in Dibrugarh, said that power had been shut off due to the area inundated with water. "The flood situation has improved and water has receded, but it continues



People carry their pets through a flood-affected area in Guwahati on Friday. — PTI

at the places where there has been a breach of the embankment. The power supply has been cut for the safety of the people. The power can be restored in 2 minutes but the power has been cut off as there is water everywhere," Mr Sarma said. While the minister's evaluation suggested improvement in Dibrugarh, an alert was issued in Kamrup district where the Brahmaputra, Digaru and Kollong rivers are flowing above the danger marks and submerging vast amounts of land. The flood has also affected the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve

where the floodwaters killed 31 animals - 30 hog deer and one other pup. Forest guards, however, rescued 82 animals, a two-month-old rhino among them. Meanwhile Assam State Disaster Management Authority in a statement said six people have died and over 21 lakh people have been affected across 29 districts. This year, 62 people have died in the state from storms, landslides and floods. The State Disaster Response Force has been deployed, along with the NDRF and fire services, to carry out rescue operations across the state.

JMM gets into poll mode, plans yatra

Yatra to launch anti-BJP campaign

AMRESH SRIVASTAVA NEW DELHI/RANCHI, JULY 5

Preparing for the Assembly election to be held in November-December this year, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) is all set to kick start a public campaign, "Jan aabhar yatra" to garner support, especially that of tribal community. Chief minister, Hemant Soren will lead the campaign along with the senior leaders of the party, including former CM Champai Soren. The party insiders said a proper strategy is being chalked out for the proposed campaign, which will touch all 81 Assembly constituencies in the state in a few months, with a special impetus on the tribal areas. The yatra could begin in a fortnight. In this outreach programme, the party leaders will also explain to its cadre and supporters that how the BJP attempted to dethrone an elected government led by a tribal

leader through the misuse of Central probe agencies like CBI and ED, sources added. This yatra is focused on organising the party's cadre and oiling its machinery for the upcoming Assembly elections and to meet JMM workers and office-bearers to set up the tone for our poll preparations, a party insider said. The senior office bearers and MPs and MLAs of the party will be entrusted with specific numbers of the constituencies for this outreach programme and they will explain the development works made by the government in the last five years. JMM dismissed reports that claimed former CM Champai Soren was upset over his resignation and was forced to do so.

Army gets 35K of total over 6 lakhs AK-203 assault rifles

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 5

Indo-Russian joint venture, situated in the Uttar Pradesh's Amethi district, has assembled and transferred 35,000 AK-203 assault rifles to the Indian Army ahead of PM Narendra Modi's visit to Russia. The joint venture between Indian Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) and Kalashnikov Concern, and Rosoboronexport — both subsidiaries of the Rostec State Corporation — has to manufacture over 6 lakh AK-203 assault rifles in India. While in the initial lot of the assault rifles, the local components would be less, but over the time, the assault rifles will have components 100 per cent indigenously produced. The Kalashnikov AK-203 assault rifle is a version of the AK-200 rifle chambered for the 7.62x39mm cartridge used in the Indian Army.

Kin accuse hospital of medical negligence, pathetic attitude 8 newborns die in Murshidabad hosp

PRANMOY BRAHMACHARI BERHAMPORE, JULY 5

Eight newborns have died due to alleged medical negligence at Murshidabad Medical College and Hospital in Murshidabad of West Bengal in the last 24 hours. Five of them died at the special newborn critical care unit while three others died at the paediatric intensive critical care unit from Thursday to

Friday. Families of the deceased complained about medical negligence and the pathetic attitude of the state-run hospital behind the deaths. Rafique Sheikh, father of one of the victims, of Beldanga said, "My baby was admitted last Saturday. He was recovering gradually. His limbs were moving. Suddenly the hospital authorities informed me over the phone that he died on

Thursday night due to suffocation." Another man, Pintu Sheikh, from Farakka said, "My baby, being underweight and premature, was referred and admitted to this hospital

yesterday. His condition was improving but doctors said he died at 11am today." Hospital principal Dr. Amit Dawn said, "90 malnourished, underweight and premature newborns from different hospitals in Murshidabad were referred here in critical stage. The doctors and hospital staff did their best but could not save them." He, however, denied the allegations.

Starmer UK PM after Labour wins

Continued from Page 1 Labour Party government, Mr Starmer said that the work ahead is "urgent and we begin it today". However, he said this would not be as simple as "flicking a switch". "When the gap between the sacrifices made by people and the service they receive from politicians grows this big, it leads to the weariness in the heart of a nation, a draining away of the hope, the spirit, the belief in a better future. But we need to move forward together," he said. Mr Starmer acknowledged that the lack of trust could only be healed by actions, not words, and pledged that his government would treat every single person in the country with respect. He noted: "If you voted Labour yesterday, we will carry the responsibility of your trust as we rebuild our country. But whether you voted Labour or not, in fact, especially if you did not, I say to you directly: 'my government will serve you'." "Politics can be a force for good, we will show. We've changed the Labour Party, returned it to service, and that is how we will govern. Country first, party second." Citing the need for schools and affordable homes, Mr Starmer vowed to "rebuild" the country's "infrastructure of opportunity", doing so "brick by brick". He vowed a "government of service" and spoke of the need for a national "reset". The incoming PM also had warm words for his 44-year-old predecessor, Rishi Sunak, who he praised for an added accomplishment. "His achievement as the first British Asian Prime Minister of our country, the extra effort that will have required should not be underestimated by anyone. We pay tribute to that today and recognise that dedication and hard work he brought to his leadership," he said.

Starmer eyes a new partnership with India

Continued from Page 1 Pakistan. "What my Labour government will seek with India is a relationship based on our shared values of democracy and aspiration. We will seek a free trade agreement (FTA), we share that ambition, but also a new strategic partnership for global security, climate security, economic security." Mr Starmer was quoted as having said earlier. He was also quoted as having said: "Any constitutional issues in India are a matter for the Indian Parliament, and Kashmir is a bilateral issue for India and Pakistan to resolve peacefully." It may be noted that India and the UK share a "warm and thriving" relationship. The India-UK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership was launched in 2021 along with the "India-UK Roadmap 2030". The

ment to a partnership that delivers for both the countries". It may be noted that the two nations are still negotiating a free trade pact that is favourable to both. Ties between the two nations are seen as at their strongest-ever in the past seven and a half decades, especially during the tenure of Mr Sunak as Prime Minister in Britain. New Delhi will be hoping that continues under Mr Starmer's government as well. Another major issue in bilateral ties are the extremist activities of pro-Khalistan elements in that country. But Britain is taking action. In a major victory for Indian security concerns, Britain had in August last year announced new funding of a whopping £95,000 (about ₹1 crore) "to enhance the UK's capability to tackle pro-Khalistan extremism".

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Neet-PG exam to be in 2 shifts Aug. 11

Continued from Page 1 malpractices, the Centre and the National Testing Agency (NTA) told the Supreme Court on Friday that scrapping it will be "counterproductive" and "seriously jeopardise" lakhs of honest candidates in the absence of proof of a large-scale breach of confidentiality. The top court is scheduled to hear a batch of pleas on July 8, including those alleging irregularities in the examination held on May 5 and seeking a direction that it be held afresh. The NTA, which conducts the Neet-UG for admissions to MBBS, BDS, AYUSH and other related courses, and the Union education ministry have been at the centre of media debates and protests by students and political parties over alleged large-scale malpractices ranging from question paper leaks to impersonation in the test held on May 5. The Union education ministry and the NTA filed separate affidavits opposing the pleas, which have sought scrapping of the exam plagued by controversy, a re-test and court-monitored probe into the entire gamut of issues involved. In their

responses, they said the CBI has taken over the cases registered in different states. "It is also submitted that, at the same time, in the absence of any proof of any large-scale breach of confidentiality in a pan-India examination, it will not be rational to scrap the entire examination and the results already declared," the Centre said in its preliminary affidavit to the Supreme Court filed by a director in the education ministry. "Scrapping the exam in its entirety will seriously jeopardise lakhs of honest candidates who attempted the question paper in 2024," the ministry said. The Centre said that in any examination, the competing rights and interests of a large number of students who take it without adopting any unfair means must also not be jeopardised. The NTA, in its separate affidavit, said: "The cancellation of the entire examination on the basis of the aforesaid factor will be hugely counterproductive and significantly harmful to the larger public interest, especially to the career prospects of the qualified candidates."

Rahul in Hathras, meets victims' kin

Continued from Page 1 benefits". The BJP alleged that Mr Gandhi has been "doing the politics of fear and confusion" ever since he became the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha. BJP MP Sudhanshu Trivedi said: "Earlier, we saw how he lied on the Agniveer issue. Now, on this heart-wrenching Hathras incident, the politics that he is trying to do is sad. Such incidents should be seen with the utmost sensitivity.

More than 50 people have died in Tamil Nadu, ruled by the INDIA bloc. Most of them were from the SC community. Leave aside going there, Mr Gandhi has not even spoken about it... One shouldn't see any incident with vulture eyes for political benefits." While politics over the stampede continued unabated, the UP's SIT probing the incident has recorded the statements of 90 people so far and submitted a preliminary report to the

Uttar Pradesh chief minister. "A preliminary report has been submitted while work on the detailed report is underway," ADGP Anupam Kulshrestha, who is heading the three-member SIT, said. The SIT said the scope of the investigation has been expanded as more evidence has emerged. "Definitely, the gathered evidence suggests culpability on the part of the event organisers," Ms Kulshrestha said.

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## THE ASIAN AGE

6 JULY 2024

### Britain votes for a change as Starmer wins huge mandate

Landslide win for the UK Labour Party had already been etched in writing on the wall. As Keir Starmer comes storming into 10 Downing Street like the red knight on a charger, it is the margin of victory that will be seen as stupendous as it goes down in red letters in history books.

It was a classic case of anti-incumbency that saw the rout of the Tories in their worst performance in decades, but it could be said that they had brought about this disenchantment in the British people on themselves in 14 years, gradually to begin with and then with a wrecking ball velocity in the last four years since the Covid pandemic.

All the signs pointed to a decline that can be paraphrased in one simple sentence — “It’s the economy, stupid.” And the Tories did not tend to it well enough as the standard of living plateaued even as cost-of-living threatened to mow down everyone in its path. It was up to a son of immigrants and Britain’s first Indian-origin Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, to take the blame while bowing to circumstances as the fall guy.

Among economic and social indicators that worsened during Tory rule are hospital waiting lists, homelessness, net migration, productivity, asylum waiting lists and graduate debt. Having restructured Britain since 2010 and promoted Brexit after slashing spending on welfare and public services in unpopular austerity moves, Tory rule left most Britons with the impression that they were worse off.

Data show the economy, along with productivity, has been stagnant since 2008 and growth did not recover after the pandemic slump. Since wages have been stagnant (after adjusting for inflation) throughout their reign, the electoral calamity was foreseen long before the voting day of July 4. And whatever three Tory Prime Ministers since David Cameron and his EU referendum misadventure of 2016 attempted was insufficient to change the course of this ultimate poll disaster.

The expectation is that things will change dramatically in this swing to the left, quite apart from pressing the exit button on the promised Rwanda haven for migrants and such measures that had a Tory stamp on it. The rich will be taxed more even as private school fees will have VAT imposed on them. What remains to be seen is how far the metrics will change under a pragmatic Labour leader and whether he will be a transformative PM as Labour would like to believe.

As far as India’s ties with the new Labour government goes, it may be time for a reset on the old question of the party having supported self-determination for the people of J&K. But that was under the radical leadership of Jeremy Corbyn. It is believed that Mr Starmer, who needs no propping up by fringe elements of any religion in multicultural UK, will take a more realistic stand.

Improved strategic relations with India, now far more of an economic power than in 2010, are on Mr Starmer’s radar, so too the Free Trade Agreement that has been waiting to take off for long. Britain’s place and prominence in global geopolitics may have changed over time, even declined, but this political twist with Labour romping home might prove historic in a positive way after years of chaos under a soap operatic Tory leadership.

### Hemant back: Questions for ED

Jharkhand Mukti Morcha chief Hemant Soren was sworn in as the chief minister of Jharkhand after being in prison for five months, putting him in a small league of CMs who have taken oath of office after a stint in jail.

Mr Soren was incarcerated over corruption charges. The Enforcement Directorate arrested him under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in connection with a case of allegedly illegal sale and purchase of 4.55 acres of land in Ranchi that reportedly belongs to the Indian Army.

Justice Rongon Mukhopadhyay, judge of the Jharkhand high court, while granting bail to Hemant Soren, made scathing remarks on the maintainability of the ED’s charges, and observed that there were reasons for the court to believe that Mr Soren was perhaps not guilty of the PMLA offence.

The judge also said in his order that the present case was based on circumstantial evidence, which is insufficient to prove someone guilty under established norms of Indian and global jurisprudence. However, the ED appears to have gone ahead with the arrest of Mr Hemant Soren armed with special provisions of the PMLA, the judge observed. Mr Soren was duly elected as the representative of the people of Jharkhand, the court also noted in its observations.

This begs the question: If the ED could not prove charges levelled against him, how would the Central investigative agency make good his loss of reputation and time? This was exactly what the court wondered and sought to know.

If an investigative agency could arrest an elected chief minister merely on circumstantial evidence, it amounts to violation of the federal spirit of the Constitution, too, and is a subversion of the people’s mandate. It is akin to the Central government hijacking the people’s choice, especially of an Opposition party, through its investigating agency.

It is, therefore, high time that the Supreme Court intervenes to introduce necessary safeguards in the PMLA.

Mr Soren’s return to the CM’s chair is a victory of democracy, but it has raised yet another question on the credibility of the Enforcement Directorate.

## THE ASIAN AGE

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Farrukh Dhondy  
Cabbages & Kings

Starmer in No. 10, as Tories bite the dust, but don’t wait for any major shift

“Who has not felt in love some pain — Some thought of love’s betrayal? Or was it just some jealous, vain Fantasy which so many dreams assail? O Bachchoo, keep some basic faith Fantasies may be a lie — A ghost, a spectre or a wraith That betrays the love between you and I?”

— From Poems Posted on Theek-Thaak, by Bachchoo

That the Labour Party was going to be the UK’s next government from July 5 was as predictable as the Pope not converting to Protestantism or bears not using public lavatories and continuing to defecate in the jungle. The opinion polls have been predicting it for months. On election night after the July 4 single-day election, the exit polls predicted that Labour would get 410 seats in the House of Commons — and so it came almost precisely to pass. A 170-173 majority over the Opposition.

No secret ballot, I voted Labour. As Martin Luther said: “I can do no other!” I would have said so to exit pollsters but there weren’t any outside the rock-solid Labour constituency polling booths in South London. Why deploy paid personnel to find out if the Pope is still a Catholic? (This clichéd analogy is getting tedious — Ed. Sorry, but getting the point

home, yaar — fd). OK, so a majority of 170 and a disastrous fall for Hedge Sunak’s (This column clairvoyantly called him Hedge Soongone!) Tory Party but... a very strange BUT: While Labour won the highest number of seats in its history, it did so with the lowest percentage of votes — even five per cent down from its disastrous loss to the Tories in 2019. How? The vicissitudes of the first-past-the-post system. I know the maths but, gentle reader, needn’t bore you with them.

Instead, let me enumerate my personal feelings of schadenfreude and disappointment when the results were declared. I was happy to learn that while the ultra-right bigoted, racist party called Reform, predicted by the exit polls to win 13 seats, only ended up with four. Four too many perhaps for the good of a civilised nation, but it should stop its leader Nigel Farage from cultivating his ambition to “unite the right” and, perhaps, even worm himself into the leadership of the depleted Tory party. This possibility was endorsed by none other than Ms send-them-to-Rwanda Cruella Braverman. Incidentally, she retained her seat, as did Hedge and the other Ms pander-to-Rwanda, Priti Patel. Triple Yuck!

The balancing schadenfreude to these disappointments is the fact that eleven Tory ministers and former ministers lost their seats — among them former PM Liz Truss, defence minister Grant Shapps and Penny Mordaunt, who was self-appointed in

the running to replace Hedge as leader of the Tories after his party’s certain defeat and his resignation from the post.

The other loss which prompts celebration is the defeat of Pomposity-in-human-form, a fellow called Jacob Rees-Mogg, the former minister for Brexit. If this were a photographic column, gentle reader, you’d be able to judge for yourself — but there’s always the Internet for the curious.

What happens now — as certain as the Pope... err... OK... OK... the furniture and wardrobe moving trucks arrive through the security gates of Downing Street and cart Hedge’s family’s ample possessions away. Perhaps a couple of more modest trucks instal the Starmer family in No. 10 and Rachel Reeves, now certainly the chancellor of the exchequer (finance minister, yaaron), in No. 11. Long before that, of course, Sir Keir Starmer would have gone to the Palace to be formally appointed the Prime Minister by King Charles III.

But that’s just protocol. What happens to Britain? According to very many commentators and “experts”, including pro-Labour ones, “nothing very much in the immediate future”.

This landslide or tsunami victory for Labour has been labelled a lurch to the Left. That’s only in contrast with the movements to the Right in Europe, such as the triumph of Marine Le Pen’s party in France. Keir Starmer and Rachel Reeves have, over the past year, cultivated good relations with busi-

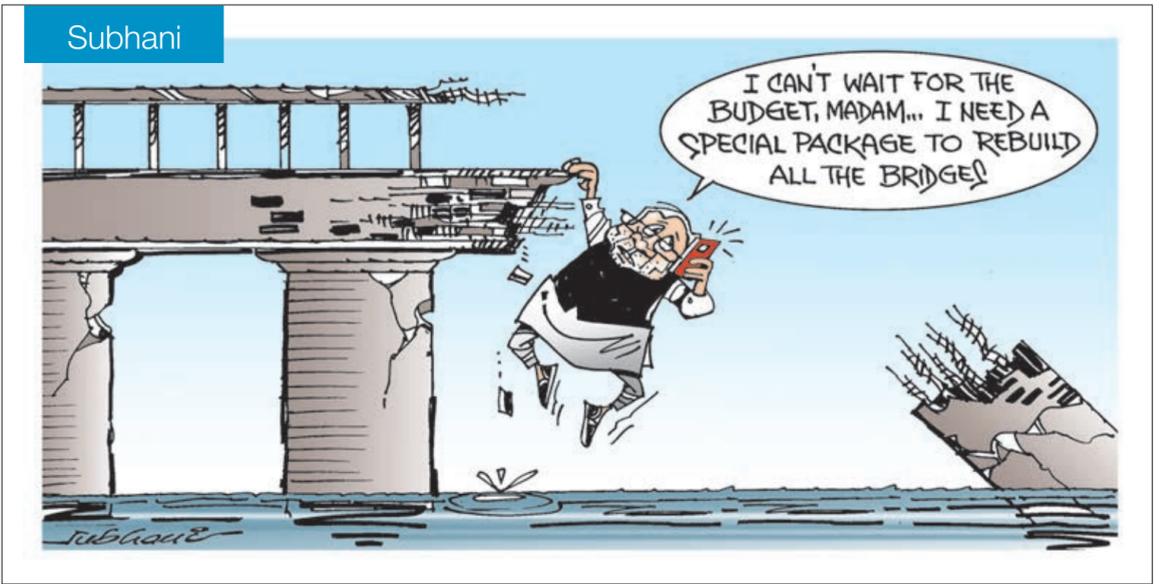
ness of all sorts. D.H. Lawrence once wrote to E.M. Forster saying “business is no good!”, but Ms Reeves and Mr Starmer probably don’t read DH’s letters or if they do, disagree with him. Their economic mantra is that they will fund reforms in the National Health Service and education, etc, by growth in the economy rather than raising the taxes of the general public.

Yes, they will tax those who escape taxation by being “non-doms” — such as Mrs Hedge, though when she was named and shamed she did agree to pay tax on her foreign income — declaring themselves as resident outside the UK.

“Only visiting, Guv!” Ms Reeves may abolish such status absolutely. That may, as Rustum Immoralearningswalla, my second cousin thrice removed (each time by the immigration authorities) maintains, lead to a flight of the rich from the country, taking their investments with them. Which will, of course, affect the plan to grow Britain’s economy.

One Cabinet appointment that I shall be watching out for is that of the foreign secretary. The shadow post was held by David Lammy, who didn’t oppose the Tory pro-Israeli stance even as the slaughter of civilians in Gaza proceeded.

Labour later retracted. Will he be confirmed as foreign secretary and will that, with Labour’s huge majority, result in suspension of arms sales to Israel? There will be so many watching this space.



### Collapsing bridges, airports no promo for ‘Viksit Bharat’



Patralekha Chatterjee  
Dev 360

In times of war, bridges make attractive targets. They are attacked. Their collapse disrupts the enemy’s lines of communication. It is called “bridge busting”. But what explains the collapse of not one, but ten bridges, in just over a fortnight, in Bihar?

Bridges have been collapsing with monotonous regularity in Bihar, catapulting the state to the status of a top headline-grabber amid all the turbulent national and international news. The state government, headed by JD(U) chief Nitish Kumar, a nine-time chief minister and an engineer by training, has responded in predictable ways — it has set up a high-level committee to probe the recent bridge collapse; it is talking about stern action against anyone found guilty of lapses. The Bihar Engineering Services Association (BESA) has warned that there could be more such collapses in the monsoon season, when rivers are in spate.

The BESA has demanded a structural audit of all recently completed and under-construction bridges in the state. Familiar questions are being asked about the possible use of substandard materials by contractors, poor maintenance, carrying capacity and lack of resilience in extreme weather.

While Bihar’s record of collapsing bridges may be hard to match, this is not a new story, nor is it only about Bihar. A suspension bridge over Machchhu river in Morbi city, Gujarat, collapsed in October 2022. Scan the headlines in recent days, and disasters leap out, from different corners of the country. Not just bridges.

On June 28, in Delhi Airport’s Terminal 1, a canopy collapsed after heavy rain, leading to the death of a 45-year-old taxi driver, the sole breadwinner for his family, and injuries to many more. Canopies of two other airports — at Jabalpur and Rajkot — have also col-

lapsed in recent days. As I write comes the news of a portion of the four-lane Gurgaon-Sohna elevated flyover caving in again, within eight months, and a slab of another flyover collapsing on a moving car in Mumbai’s Andheri area. The list goes on.

A common thread emerges from all the talk about investigations and compensation. It knits the recent disasters, and should force us to turn our gaze to the other side of India’s infrastructure story, beyond ribbon-cutting and inaugurations. Why is the government at the Centre, and in affected states, so quiet on maintenance and regular structural and safety audits? What is being done to equip critical infrastructure for climate-change fuelled extreme weather?

“Every structure is meant to last for a certain number of years. It comes with an ‘expiry date’. That works if there is regular maintenance. Every structure must be maintained. It must be subjected to a rigorous structural audit. This means paying attention and prompt response to recommendations and strengthening the structure when necessary. That is key to avoiding a disaster. But unfortunately, in India, often there is a silo approach to development which hampers collaboration of every stakeholder. Whether in construction or maintenance or audit, one must look at who is doing the job and whether they are qualified for it,” says Dr Rita Savla, a physician and founder-director of RADHEE Disaster and Education Foundation, a Mumbai-based NGO working in post-disaster trauma management and road safety.

“This also means scrutinising how tenders are drafted, how companies are selected when it comes to construction and maintenance. There have been many disasters in the past. We have not learnt too many lessons. This leads to a

Disasters are weaponised in political battles in hyper-polarised India. Discussions pivot around who inaugurated a structure, and not when the last safety audit was done.

culture of impunity. Errant parties know they will get away,” she adds.

The government routinely outsources many projects to private firms but, as Dr Savla points out, “the overall oversight remains with the government”. When lapses are detected after a disaster, government officials are merely transferred. But as she says: “A transfer is not a punishment... There is tremendous lethargy in the system. It is critical that a tender is drafted in a language that does not leave loopholes. There should be a strict monitoring system to prevent disasters. Finally, it is very important to look at what happens after a disaster.” If a bridge collapses, people can get injured. Post-disaster, it is medical help that determines the fate of a person, whether she or he will survive or die, as Dr Savla points out. “We should talk about the rights of survivors if they are injured — which means access to required medical care which should not only save life, but also ensure early recovery, prevent disability along with financial compensation.”

One common refrain in the wake of the recent infrastructure-related disasters pivots around intense rainfall. But it should surprise no one that it rains during the rainy season. And in times of climate change, erratic and extreme weather are the new normal. The discussion should be around what is being done.

“Climate change will likely lead to more extreme weather events, exacerbating the effect on airports that are already affected and putting at risk those that have not yet experienced climate-related effects. Airports face numerous climate challenges which may impact their operations, infrastructure, and business continuity,”

notes a report by the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

Many airports around the world have begun adapting to wild weather swings. Amsterdam’s Schiphol Airport, for example, has installed a special hydraulic model developed to calculate a variety of climatic scenarios and established new standards for drainage.

What about India? “The country’s urban infrastructure is not developed with climate resilience in mind. We need to prepare our infrastructure for intense storms and floods that climate change will churn out in the next 50 years,” says Dr Roxy Koll, climate scientist at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology and lead author of IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) reports.

Niranjan Sahoo, a senior fellow at the Observer Research Foundation, also notes that “extreme weather events are becoming a regular phenomenon. Our infrastructure planning, as evident from recent incidents, is clearly out of sync with requirements”. Worryingly, disasters are weaponised in political battles in hyper-polarised India. Discussions pivot around who inaugurated a structure, and not when the last safety audit was done. Despite all the brouhaha, even today, an ordinary citizen does not know when Delhi’s Terminal 1 had its last safety audit and whether it was overseen by a government agency.

“Sharpening polarisation around infrastructure is very unfortunate. Instead of owning up and investing in their upkeep, it has become a blame game between the two principal (political) parties. In the process of scoring points, the moot issues of climate resilient infrastructure are lost,” says Mr Sahoo.

The new coalition government, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, promises a “Viksit Bharat” (Developed India) by 2047. Collapsing bridges and airports are not good promos.

The writer focuses on development issues in India and emerging economies. She can be reached at patralekha.chatterjee@gmail.com.

### LETTERS PM ANY ORATOR?

The two-hour, 15-minute long speech of the Prime Minister was only that... LONG. There was no content or depth of any kind. There was only denigration, vilification and fake scorn. It is true that to begin with there was never much depth in the ideas of the Prime Minister who prefers to merely coin acronyms and appropriate fads. However, the recent speech has proved all this beyond doubt. Those who say that the PM is an eloquent speaker ought to listen to this recent speech. I am certain they will eat their words.

Errol Fernandes Nashik

### DAUGHTER’S GUILT

BIG FAT INDIAN weddings may be great for the economy (or not) but bad for those who have to pay for them. Parents of the couple, especially the bride, have often spent more than what they can afford which results in lifelong debt. Those opting for quiet weddings without fanfare are subject to the taunts and jeers of the society they live in. The practice that parents are responsible for their children’s marriage must be discontinued. Their responsibility should end with the education of the child. According to the Jefferies report, Indians spend twice the amount on weddings than they do on education. This should change!

Anthony Henriques Mumbai

### WHY KOO SHUT DOWN

THE LAST TWO years has seen about 1,500 Indian startups shutting up operations owing to macro-economic headwinds. Launched in 2020 as a counterpoise to Twitter, now X, Koo, a Bengaluru-based firm, gained limelight owing to the public spat between Twitter and the government over content regulation. It had 2.1 million active users at the outset. But while its vision of a hyper-local, multilingual social media space found acceptance among many bureaucrats, celebrities and citizens, its close connection with the ruling dispensation’s political overtones restricted its appeal. Too much reliance on external funding (Tech Global gave \$30 million) also proved to be detrimental.

Vijay Singh Adhikari Nainital



SHORT TAKES

INDIA LAUNCHES UPI PAYMENTS AT GALERIES IN PARIS

London/Paris, July 5: India has launched the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) at Paris' historic department store Galeries Lafayette after a successful launch at the iconic Eiffel Tower.

"On July 3, 2024, the UPI became live at the flagship store of the world-renowned Galeries Lafayette in Haussmann, Paris. This expands the acceptance of UPI in Paris after a successful launch at the iconic Eiffel Tower," the Indian Embassy in France said.

OVER 36 CHINESE WARPLANES SEEN AROUND TAIWAN

Taipei, July 5: Taiwan's defence ministry said on Friday it had detected 36 Chinese military aircraft around the island in the previous 24 hours. A further 26 aircraft — including fighters, transport planes and drones — were detected after 6:55 am (2255 GMT) Friday, the ministry said.

China claims self-ruled democratic Taiwan as part of its territory. It has stepped up pressure on Taipei in recent years and held war games around the island following the May 20 inauguration of new Taiwanese leader Lai Ching-te, who Beijing regards as a "dangerous separatist".

Spain PM's wife's graft testimony suspended

Madrid, July 5: Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez's wife arrived at a Madrid court to testify before a judge Friday as part of a preliminary corruption probe into her business ties, but the hearing was quickly suspended with a new date set for July 19.

Last month, a Madrid court summoned Begona Gomez to testify "as an investigated party" as part of a judicial inquiry into "the alleged offences of corruption in the private sector and influence peddling".

SPAIN PM'S WIFE'S GRAFT TESTIMONY SUSPENDED

Some of the potential problems that Starmer will need to manage stem from quirks of the UK's first-past-the-post electoral system and the fragmentation of its political landscape, which have conspired to produce one of the most unequal results in electoral history.

"The system doesn't work very well when you've got so many parties," said Bogdanor.

Labour looks set to win fewer votes than it did in its disastrous 2019 election, but gain around 210 more seats in the 650-seat parliament thanks to the fractured right-wing opposition.

Only around one in three voters chose Labour, leaving Starmer having to balance the wants of his army of MPs and a public that is, paradoxically, not particularly enthusiastic for the incoming government.

Starmer's approval ratings are some of the lowest for an incoming Prime Minister, with polls by Ipsos and YouGov in May showing them at minus 18 and minus 20 points.

"It's a punishment election. People simply want to punish the Conservatives," said Bogdanor.

7 PALESTINIANS KILLED IN ISRAELI WEST BANK RAID

Jenin, Palestinian Territories, July 5: Israeli troops killed seven Palestinians — with Hamas claiming five as members — in a raid on Jenin in the occupied West Bank on Friday, officials said.

At least 14 Palestinians have now been killed in Israeli operations this week in the West Bank, where the Gaza war has fuelled tensions October.

The Israeli military said the raid was carried out to find militants behind an attack last week in which an Israeli captain was killed. Hamas said one of the latest seven dead was a "commander" in the group.

MYANMAR CIVIL WAR: FIERCE FIGHT BREAKS OUT

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FRENCH DIRECTOR CHARGED WITH RAPE OF ACTORS

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Benoit Jacquot, who has more than 50 director credits in film and television, has become one of the most prominent figures in a belated reckoning within the French movie industry and beyond over sexual violence and physical abuse. The Paris prosecutor's office said the judge investigating allegations against Jacquot handed him an array of preliminary charges.

Headaches await Labour after landslide win

Supermajority does not have any constitutional significance in the UK, as it does in the US

London, July 5: Labour on Friday secured a huge majority in the UK's general election, giving it a massive mandate but also a few headaches once celebrations die down.

Before the vote, the Conservatives warned voters not to hand Labour party leader Keir Starmer the "blank cheque" of a "supermajority", but as prime minister he will now have a majority of over 170 and five years up against a demoralised main opposition.

"The main advantages are clarity. It means the government of the day can get on with its programme, unhindered and encumbered," Tony McNulty, lecturer at Queen Mary University of London and a Labour minister under Tony Blair, told AFP.

The thumping win also gives Labour "a nice reservoir of talent" to fill government roles, albeit with the risk of disappointing more MPs who miss out, said McNulty, who became an MP during Labour's 1997 landslide.

However, a "supermajority" does not have any constitutional significance in the UK, as it does in the United States, explained King's College London professor Vernon Bogdanor.

"A government with a majority of 30 can do more or less what it wants, just as much as a government with a majority of 200," said Bogdanor, one of the country's leading constitutional experts.

Some of the potential problems that Starmer will need to manage stem from quirks of the UK's first-past-the-post electoral system and the fragmentation of its political landscape, which have conspired to produce one of the most unequal results in electoral history.

"The system doesn't work very well when you've got so many parties," said Bogdanor.

Labour looks set to win fewer votes than it did in its disastrous 2019 election, but gain around 210 more seats in the 650-seat parliament thanks to the fractured right-wing opposition.



Britain's King Charles III (R) welcomes incoming Prime Minister Keir Starmer during an audience at Buckingham Palace in London on Friday. — AFP



Britain's ex-PM Rishi Sunak and his wife Akshata Murty, are greeted by Clive Alderton, principal private secretary to The King and Queen (R), and Equerry to The King, Commander William Thornton, as they arrive at Buckingham Palace, in London, on Friday. — AFP

I have given this job my all, but you have sent a clear signal that the government of the United Kingdom must change. — RISHI SUNAK, UK ex-PM

New foreign secy likely to visit India within first month

ADITI KHANNA LONDON, JULY 5

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Friday named David Lammy as his new foreign secretary, as the newly-appointed PM started the process of forming a Labour Party government after winning the general election with a landslide.

The 51-year-old Labour politician and lawyer, who has been a vocal advocate of strong bilateral ties with India and referred to external affairs minister S. Jaishankar as a "friend", told India Global Forum in London last week that he intends to visit India within the first month of office if his party is elected to govern in Thursday's polls.

"Look forward to continuing our engagement and strengthen the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership," Mr Jaishankar posted on X, in his congratulatory message.

In his post after being appointed to one of the highest offices in the UK government, Lammy said: "It is the honour of my life to be appointed secretary of state for foreign, commonwealth and development affairs."

"The world faces huge challenges, but we will navigate them with the UK's enormous strengths. We will reconnect Britain for our security and prosperity at home."

Last week, referring to the missed Diwali 2022 deadline set by former Prime Minister Boris Johnson for the India-UK free trade agreement, he pointed out that "many Diwalis have come and too many businesses have been left waiting."

"My message to [finance] minister [Nirmala] Sitharaman and [trade] minister [Piyush] Goyal is that Labour is ready to go. Let's finally get our free trade deal done and move on," he said.

Describing India as a "priority" for the party and an economic, technological and cultural "superpower", Mr Lammy had sought to set the tone for his future tenure in a Labour-led Cabinet as foreign secretary. — PTI

FIVE KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM UK GENERAL ELECTION



THE UK GENERAL ELECTION MARKS A TURNING POINT FOR THE COUNTRY WITH LABOUR RETURNING TO POWER AFTER 14 YEARS OF CONSERVATIVES IN DOWNING STREET.

**1 LABOUR LANDSLIDE, BUT NOT HISTORIC**  
Labour won 412 seats in the 650-seat parliament with only three seats left to declare, guaranteeing the centre-left party a whopping majority after 14 years in opposition.



Political satire artist Kaya Mar holds a new painting depicting Britains incoming Prime Minister Keir Starmer holding an "L" next to another painting depicting (L-R) Britains outgoing prime minister Rishi Sunak along with former premiers. — AFP

**2 HARD-RIGHT BREAKTHROUGH**  
The anti-immigration Reform UK, led by Brexit talisman Nigel Farage, fired a shot across the bows of the establishment by winning more than four million votes, the third highest vote share of any party.

**3 CONSERVATIVE CATASTROPHE**  
"Massacre, catastrophe, Waterloo..." there was no shortage of words to describe the depths of the defeat for the Tories, who won a landslide only five years ago but looked set to be reduced to around 120 seats.

**4 SCOTTISH NATIONALISTS IN CRISIS**  
The Scottish nationalists suffered a terrible evening, with former first minister and independence figurehead Nicola Sturgeon admitting that "it's not a good night" for the Scottish National Party (SNP).

**5 LIB DEM COMEBACK**  
The return of the pro-EU Lib Dems as the third largest party and a major force in Westminster is one of the election's more unlikely stories following its dismal showing in 2019.

● Rachel Reeves as finance minister is the first woman to hold the position in the country's history.

7 PALESTINIANS KILLED IN ISRAELI WEST BANK RAID

Jenin, Palestinian Territories, July 5: Israeli troops killed seven Palestinians — with Hamas claiming five as members — in a raid on Jenin in the occupied West Bank on Friday, officials said.

At least 14 Palestinians have now been killed in Israeli operations this week in the West Bank, where the Gaza war has fuelled tensions October.

The Israeli military said the raid was carried out to find militants behind an attack last week in which an Israeli captain was killed. Hamas said one of the latest seven dead was a "commander" in the group.

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Struggling Biden vows to fight on

Washington, July 5: President Joe Biden, scrambling to defuse a political crisis over his shaky debate performance, will participate in a television interview on Friday that will be closely watched for signs of whether his mental acuity is failing.

Biden will travel to Madison, Wisconsin, to rally Democratic voters. During the trip he will be interviewed by ABC News, part of a flurry of events over the next week aimed at showing Americans he still has the stamina to run against Republican candidate Donald Trump in the November 5 election.

While Biden insists he is staying in the race and that his health is not faltering, he is under enormous pressure to step aside and open a path for his 59-year-old vice president, Kamala Harris.

Some donors are making their displeasure known loudly, halting funding or looking at possible Democratic alternatives. Even some of Biden's closest political allies, like former Speaker Nancy Pelosi, have raised questions about his health.

Several public opinion polls have shown Trump establishing a sizeable lead over the Democratic president since the debate.

The White House has blamed a cold for Biden's shaky performance and Biden himself cited jet lag from back-to-back trips to Europe. — Reuters

Pope to preside over interfaith meet

Rome, July 5: Pope Francis will preside over an interfaith meeting in a mosque in the world's largest predominantly Muslim country during a four-nation Asian visit in September that will be the longest and most complicated foreign trip of his pontificate.

The Vatican on Friday released the itinerary for Francis' September 2-13 trip to Indonesia, East Timor, Papua New Guinea and Singapore. The packed schedule makes clear that the 87-year-old pontiff, who has battled health problems and is increasingly reliant on a wheelchair, has no plans to slow down.

After a day of rest upon arrival in Jakarta on September 3, Francis launches into a typically rigorous round of protocol visits to heads of state and government, speeches to diplomats and meetings with clergy and public Masses. Francis will be the third pope to visit Indonesia, after Pope Paul VI in 1970 and Pope John Paul II in 1989. — AP

VATICAN EXCOMMUNICATES ARCHBISHOP VIGANO, CRITIC OF POPE FOR 'SCHISM'

Vatican, July 5: The Vatican has excommunicated Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, one of Pope Francis' most virulent critics, after judging him guilty of splitting the Church, the dicastery in charge of doctrine said Friday.

The 83-year-old ultra conservative, who has called in the past for Francis to resign as pope, has been on trial since last month after being accused by the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith of the crime of schism. "At the conclusion of the penal process, the Most Reverend Carlo Maria Viganò was found guilty of the reserved delict of schism," wrote the dicastery, adding that his punishment was "excommunication" in accordance with canon law. — AFP

MOB RANSACKS POWER STATION IN PAKISTAN

Quetta, July 5: Hundreds of people in one of Pakistan's hottest cities stormed a power station in protest against cuts lasting up to 20 hours a day, police said Friday.

The protesters also ransacked the station's neighbouring administrative office in Thursday night's incident in rural Sibi, in southern Balochistan province, where temperatures peaked at 45 degrees Celsius (113 degrees Fahrenheit).

"People stormed the electricity supply office and ransacked it last night and a case has been lodged against them," police official Anayatullah Bungulzai told AFP, adding that the group numbered up to 800 people. Planned power cuts, also known as loadshedding, happen frequently in Pakistan due to fuel shortages, varying in length in different areas.

Meanwhile, the government in Pakistan's Punjab province is now set to ban all social media platforms — YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok — for six days between July 13 and 18, citing the need to control "hate material" during the Islamic month of Muharram. — Agencies

NATURE'S FURY Trail of destruction in Caribbean, Venezuela

Beryl makes landfall in Mexico

Cancn, Mexico, July 5: Hurricane Beryl slammed into Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula on Friday near the resort town of Tulum with fierce winds, US forecasters said.

The National Hurricane Center said the storm was packing maximum sustained winds of 100 mph (160 kph) making it a Category 2 hurricane, weaker than earlier in the week as Beryl hit islands in the Caribbean.

Mexico's national water commission Conagua reported similar wind speeds, with even stronger gusts.

"Please stay home," the Governor of Quintana Roo state, Mara Lezama, said in a video released overnight.

The storm was expected to bring a dangerous sea surge from the Caribbean and big waves, the NHC added.

Beryl has left a trail of destruction across the Caribbean and the coast of Venezuela, killing at least seven people.

It was the first hurricane since NHC records began to reach the Category 4 level in June and the earliest to hit the highest Category 5 in July.

In Mexico, schools in the area bracing for a hit were suspended Thursday and shelters set up for locals and tourists. In Cancun, a two-hour drive from Tulum, people stocked up on food and other essentials for days. — AFP



A drainage system lies damaged from floodwater in Pamphret, Jamaica, in the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl. — AFP

## quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	79,996.60	-0.07
Nifty 50	24,323.85	0.09
S&P 500*	5,545.41	0.15
Dollar (₹)	83.48	0.03
Pound Sterling (₹)	106.77	0.29
Euro (₹)	90.39	0.25
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	72,675,308	0.43
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	87.70	0.31
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.993	-0.005
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	4.333	-0.014

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

### KPI inks deal to supply 50MW hybrid power

KPI Green Energy has inked a pact to supply power from a 50MW solar-wind hybrid project with Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam. This project, comprising 50 MW solar and 16.80 MW wind, was awarded through a competitive bidding process on Nov.1, 2023, and secured through a reverse e-auction on Jan.22, 2024. This achievement speeds up the efforts to reach the company's goal of 1,000 MWp capacity by 2025, it said.



### Coforge buys 17% stake in Cigniti for ₹645 crore

IT company Coforge on Friday bought a 17 per cent stake in Cigniti Technologies for ₹645 crore through open market transactions. According to the block deal data available with the BSE, Coforge purchased a total of 46.18 lakh shares or 16.9 per cent stake in Cigniti. The 46.18 lakh shares of Cigniti were sold by Kukulnuru Madhava Lakshmi, Kukulnuru Kumar Bapuji, Sapna and Chakkilam at the same price.

### QMS Medical acquires 51% stake in Saarathi

QMS Medical Allied Services has acquired a 51 per cent stake in Saarathi Healthcare for ₹450 crore. "The acquisition of Saarathi is extension of our services and another step of our expansion plan. Saarathi specialises in disease management leading to better disease outcomes essentially enabling us to provide a comprehensive portfolio to our clients," QMS Medical Allied Services CMD Mahesh Makhija said.

### Experion acquires 7.8 acre land in Gurugram

Realty firm Experion Developers has acquired a 7.81-acre land in Gurugram for ₹400 crore to develop a real estate project. The company, wholly-owned subsidiary of Experion Holdings, Singapore, has acquired the land parcel. In April, the company had said it would invest about ₹1,500 crore to develop a luxury housing project 'Experion Elements' in Noida as part of its expansion plans.

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# Steel demand to rise on govt's infra push: Report

## Robust industrial activity positions Telangana as key driver

FC CORRESPONDENT WITH AGENCY INPUTS HYDERABAD, JULY 5

With a sustained momentum of investment across different sectors, overall steel demand in India is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5 per cent to 7.3 per cent over the next decade leading to a steel demand of 221-275 million tonnes by FY 34 (under different scenarios), according to a report by Deloitte.

The report, released at the Steel InfraBuild Summit, organised by the Indian Steel Association (ISA) in Hyderabad on Friday, said the steel industry plays a crucial role in Telangana's economic landscape as during the last fiscal, the state's steel consumption grew by 15.75 per cent year-on-year from 4.73 million tonne (MT) in FY22 to 5.48 MT in FY23, outpacing the national average, it said.

"Telangana's steel consumption in financial year 2023 was 5.48 MT for a population of 3.5 crore which translates to a per capita steel consumption of 156.43 kg, significantly higher than the national per capita steel consumption of 93.4 kg. This underscores the state's robust industrial activity but also positions Telangana as a key driver of future economic growth," the report said.

The rising growth of electric vehicles in Tamil Nadu will lead to an increased demand for electrical steel, while the



ISA president Naveen Jindal, steel secretary Nagendra Nath Sinha at Steel InfraBuild Summit in Hyderabad. — R. Pavan

## SAIL plans capex of ₹6,500 cr: CMD

Hyderabad, July 5: Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) will be investing ₹6,500 crore towards capex during the current financial year as part of its ₹1 lakh crore investment plan over the next few years, SAIL CMD Amarendra Prakash said on Friday.

He said the industry approached the government seeking measures to control the dumping of cheap metal by China into India and hoped that steps will be taken to address the menace.

"We also have regular growth of food processing industries will drive the demand for stainless steel, the report further said. Maharashtra, Uttar

Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have established themselves as leaders in steel consumption, leading to 41 per cent of the total consumption in FY23, the report said.

"Government spending on infrastructure projects will drive the initial growth phase in the next decade. The development of 11 industrial corridors comprising 32 projects, to be developed in four phases under the PM GatiShakti national master plan, will be a key driver for steel consumption," the report explained.

From FY14 to FY24, India's finished steel consumption posted a CAGR of 5.67 per cent. In FY24, domestic finished steel consumption reached 136 million tonnes, marking more than 14 per cent year-on-year growth driven by sustained momentum across developmental projects and increased government spending in various end-use industries.

Infrastructure is crucial, and the steel industry must step up significantly. Steel's benefits go beyond self-interest: it can reduce construction time by 20 per cent and by 32 per cent with composites," Nagendra Nath Sinha, steel secretary.

"When constructing houses and high-rise buildings, we can achieve much more. Passion, good planning, and proper on-site implementation are critical. For faster building, steel is the way to go," Naveen Jindal, chairman, Jindal Steel and Power and president of ISA posted on social media platform X, during the Hyderabad event.

## Financial inclusion key for GDP growth

Mumbai, July 5: Reserve Bank's executive director Neeraj Nigam on Friday said low labour force participation among women is a barrier to financial inclusion efforts and also to economic growth.

He said there is also a need to up the credit supply to women, pointing out that only 7 per cent of the overall outstanding loans to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are to women-led businesses.

"One significant barrier for financial inclusion and indeed to economic growth and development is more participation of females in economic activities," he said, pointing out that official data suggested female labour force participation at 32.8 per

cent in FY22, as against over 77 per cent in men. Speaking at the 'Financing Women Collaborative' conference organised by Niti Aayog and Transunion Cibil, Nigam expressed satisfaction on access to financial services front, pointing out that the Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana and social security transfers have helped. With the challenges on supply taken care of, he said there are issues on demand side which warrant attention. — PTI

## US Fed committed to tame inflation, says CEO

FALAKNAZ SYED MUMBAI JULY 5

While the US Fed has made significant progress in bringing down inflation to around 2.5 percent, it still has a long way to go to reach 2 percent target on a sustained basis but remains committed to getting the job done," said John C. Williams, president and CEO, Federal Reserve Bank of New

York on Friday. Williams was delivering the fourth Suresh Tendulkar memorial lecture at the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) titled 'Managing the known unknowns.'

Williams, who is also a member of rate-setting panel of US Fed, said uncertainty will continue to be the defining characteristic of monetary policy for the future. He said that the central

## RBI LAUNCHES SURVEY OF ORDERS IN MANUFACTURING

Mumbai, July 5: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday announced the launch of quarterly "order books, inventories and capacity utilisation" survey of companies in the manufacturing sector - a key input it uses to formulate the monetary policy.

The RBI has been conducting the order books, inventories and capacity utilisation survey (OBICUS) of the manufacturing sector on a quarterly basis since 2008.

The information collected in the survey includes quantitative data on new orders received during the reference quarter (April-June), backlog of orders at the beginning of quarter, pending orders at the end of quarter. — PTI

## REAL ESTATE SEES \$4.8 BILLION FUNDING SO FAR THIS FISCAL YEAR

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JULY 5

Real estate sector saw record funding in the first half of FY2025 at around \$4.8 billion.

During the Jan.-June period of 2024, the realty sector saw investments amounting to \$4.7 billion. This was 62 per cent higher than \$2.9 billion received in same period of last year.

The investments secured so far are 81 per cent of the \$5.8 billion funding attracted in 2023. The 40 deals reported in H12024 are twice the number recorded in the same period last year.

Foreign institutional investors dominated investments at \$3.1 bn, which is a 65 per cent share of total investments in H1 2024. Domestic investors made up for 35 per cent share of investments against 37 per cent in 2023.

Warehousing sector with 34 per cent share of investments was followed closely by residential with 33 per cent share and office sector with 27 per cent.

The residential sector has experienced a significant revival, achieving an all-time high half-year investment of \$1.6 billion and this can be attributed to regulatory reforms and improved transparency in the segment in the last 5-7 years. With a total of 25 deals, residential investments surpassed the office sector by 25 per cent in terms of transaction volume.

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Ravi Ranjan Prasad Mumbai, July 5

Investment managers are identifying and investing in transformative trends of 5,000 companies beyond the 800 most profitable companies in India as these profitable companies are growing the fastest, said a presentation by Marcellus Investment Managers on Friday.

"While the large 800 companies are aggregating 60 per cent of corporate India's profit, these 5,000 small-cap companies with \$5 million to \$50 million profit are the challengers class company that are growing," said Saurabh Mukherjea, founder and chief investment officer, Marcellus Investment Managers.

The transformation in India's corporate landscape is being brought

## Angel tax to be focus in Budget

FC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 5

Ahead of the Union Budget, the department for promotion of industry and internal trade (DPIIT) has mooted the removal of angel tax on start-ups, but the final view in this matter will be taken by the finance ministry, a source privy to development said on Friday.

While previously the angel tax, a tax levied on capital received on the sale of shares of a start-up above the fair market value, applied only to local investors, the Budget for 2023-24 fiscal (April 2023 to March 2024) widened its ambit to include foreign investments.

In September last year, the income tax department notified new angel tax rules that comprise a mechanism to evaluate the shares issued by the unlisted start-ups to investors.

Replying to a query on industry demand for removal of angel tax, department for promotion of industry and internal trade secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh said: "Based on the consultation with the start-up ecosystem that we have here we have recommended that in the past as well and I think we have recommended it this time also but ultimately an integrated view will be taken by the ministry of finance."

As per the Budget, the excess premium will be considered as 'income from sources' and taxed at the rate of up to over 30 per cent. However, start-ups registered by the DPIIT are exempt from the new norms.



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To a query on Tesla, Singh said "the last we have heard from them" was in the week the results of general election was announced.

"Let's see. But the process of finalising the guidelines (for EVs) is on by the ministry of heavy industries. They have more than one enquiry I understand," he said. On June 7, days after the declaration of the results of the general election, American tech billionaire Elon Musk in a post on X said he is looking forward to his companies doing "exciting work" in India.

The congratulatory message came two months after the chief executive official of the electric car-maker Tesla and microblogging platform X in April postponed his proposed visit to India due to "very heavy Tesla obligations".

Musk later wrote on X that he is looking forward to coming to India later this year.

## Investment avenues widen

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The transformation in India's corporate landscape is being brought



about by the shrinking working capital cycle, rise of the internet which has given a platform to reach out to the whole country.

The rulers (the 800 large companies) are headed for colossal change as small and mid-caps are doing well and are reflective of changes in the country, Saurabh Mukherjea said.

The empowerment of Indian women is a powerful narrative in India's growth story as urban Indian women are accumulating more wealth, as evidenced by larger bank

deposits and higher earnings in sectors like the booming tech industry. These transformative themes are creating new investment opportunities across various sectors. Investors are now able to tap into the burgeoning entrepreneurial landscape in smaller towns, capitalise on the diversification of global supply chains with the China plus one opportunity, and explore the rising women-centric consumption and investment trends, Saurabh Mukherjea said.

## Realme, Sony announce deal for 5G smartphones

Bangkok, July 5: Mobile phone-maker realme has announced a partnership with Japanese consumer electronics giant Sony for its upcoming 5G smartphone, with which the company will foray into a new segment of device having AI-imaging feature.

"This collaboration between realme and Sony will see the debut of the world's first Sony's LYT-701 camera sensor in the realme 13 Pro Series 5G," company officials said.

Addressing the media, Francis Wong, head of Product Marketing at realme, said that for years, the smartphone industry has been locked in a megapixel, sensor size, and lens technology arms race.

While advancements in smartphone cameras have given users more flexibility and control, purely hardware-based improvements are reaching a ceiling, he said.

The company will later announce the dates for official launch of the device in India and other markets, a statement said. The AI-imaging enabled device comes with indus-



try first Hyperimage-technology which includes multiple lenses, periscope lenses, and sensors, which provide the essential building blocks for capturing high-quality images, realme said.

Besides, it provides the user on-device artificial intelligence (AI) imaging algorithms and cloud-based AI image editing.

The LYT-701 camera sensor and a 50MP periscope telephoto camera with the Sony LYT-600 enables the phones to deliver quality image.

"This collaboration is about more than just technology, it's about empowering everyone to capture and share their world in ways never before imagined," said Toshimitsu Kurosaka, vice president of Sony Semiconductor Solutions (Shanghai) Limited. — PTI

## HANDY TOOLS Company focus remains on winning more business in AI memory

# Samsung sales rise 23%, highest since Covid

Suwon-si (South Korea), July 5: Samsung Electronics posted its fastest pace of sales and profit growth in years, reflecting a recovery in memory chip demand as artificial intelligence (AI) development accelerates globally.

The world's largest maker of memory chips and smartphones posted a 15-fold surge in operating profit to 10.4 trillion won (\$7.5 billion) in the June quarter, outstripping analysts' projections. Sales grew around 23 per cent, the biggest rise since



● SOUTH KOREA'S government said this week the country exported the most semiconductors on record in June, driving its trade surplus to \$8 billion - the largest since 2020.

Covid-era highs clocked in 2021. The results underscore how the \$160 billion memory market is bouncing back this year from a severe post-Covid downturn, driven by a boom in

data centers and AI development. That demand pushed average memory chip prices 15 per cent higher from the previous quarter, CLSA estimates, helping Samsung's largest division reverse losses

last year.

Both Dram and Nand prices were lifted by demand for AI servers and enterprise data storage, helping to reverse inventory valuation losses, said Sanjeev Rana, an analyst at CLSA Securities Korea. Samsung's foundry, or contract chipmaking, operations also got a boost from improved IT demand, he said.

South Korea's government said this week the country exported the most semiconductors on record in June, driving its trade surplus to \$8 billion - the

largest since 2020.

The company is benefiting from a broader industry recovery, investors remain concerned about its market position in the newer field of AI chips against SK Hynix Inc. Longer term, Samsung's focus remains on winning more business in AI memory, while at the same time allaying fears of oversupply.

South Korea's biggest company is holding a Galaxy unpacked event in Paris next week in a bid to sustain momentum for its phones. — Bloomberg

## SHORT TAKES

### Pragg, Gukesh held in Round 8

**Bucharest:** Indian Grandmaster R. Praggnanandhaa played out a draw with Fabiano Caruana of the United States, while world championship challenger D. Gukesh also split points with Dutchman Anish Giri in the eighth and penultimate round of the Superbet Classic chess tournament here. For the fourth time, the day did not produce a single decisive game and draws on all five boards meant that Caruana kept his slender half point lead going in to the final round in the 10-player round-robin tournament. With 5 points in his kitty from eight games, the American continued to be followed by Praggnanandhaa, Gukesh and Alireza Firouzja of France, who all are a half point behind. Russian Ian Nepomniachtchi and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France share the fifth spot on four points each ahead of Wesley So of the United States, Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan and Giri on 3.5 points each. Deac Bogdan-Daniel of Romania remains on the bottom of the standings on three points in the tournament. — PTI

### Bangla's top GM dies during match

**Dhaka:** Bangladesh's top-ranked chess grandmaster Ziaur Rahman died Friday at the age of 50 after suffering a stroke and collapsing on his board in the middle of a national championship match, an official said. Bangladesh Chess Federation general secretary Shahab Uddin Shamim told AFP that Ziaur collapsed during his 12th round match of the championship against fellow grandmaster Enamul Hossain before he was declared dead at a hospital in the capital Dhaka. "Players and officials present in the hall room took him to the hospital quickly after he collapsed. Upon reaching there, doctors said he had already died," Shamim said. Enamul said it took them a few seconds to realise that he had suffered a massive stroke. When he was playing, it never felt like he was sick. It was my move. So, when he was falling down, I thought he was leaning down to pick up a water bottle. But then he collapsed, and we rushed him to the hospital. His son was playing at the next table," said Enamul. Ziaur is the highest ranked of Bangladesh's five chess grandmasters. He won the national title several times. — PTI

### Football referee Uvena retires

**New Delhi:** India's Uvena Fernandes, who officiated as an assistant referee at the 2016 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup, has announced retirement, the All India Football Federation (AIFF) said on Friday. Uvena became the only Indian assistant referee in a FIFA World Cup final, having officiated at the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup 2016 in Jordan. The 43-year-old Uvena, who hails from Goa, will continue to serve as a referee assessor and instructor. "I have been a referee for almost 20 years, and I think I have already done justice to my badge, achieving several milestones in the process. Now, I thought, it is time to make way for the youngsters," she said in a release by AIFF. "Since I have already done my bit, I thought the youngsters should also get a chance, and I can contribute as an instructor or an assessor so that I can do justice to Indian football," Uvena, a senior officer in the Indian Air Force, said. Uvena was a member of the elite FIFA panel and officiated in four matches, including the final at the U-17 Women's World Cup. She received the prestigious AFC Referees Award. — PTI

### Pak to host Eng, Windies, Bangla

**Karachi:** Deviating from its tradition of announcing international series at the last minute, the Pakistan Cricket Board confirmed on Friday that the men's team will play nine Tests, 14 ODIs and nine T20Is in the 2024/25 season, including a high-profile series against England. Pakistan will host England in a three-match Test series in October this year, while tours by Bangladesh and the West Indies are also on the calendar. "These series are a vital part of our strategy to strengthen Pakistan's position in international cricket," said Mohsin Naqvi, the PCB chairman. In a statement, the PCB said Bangladesh will play two Tests in Rawalpindi (21-25 August) and Karachi (30 August-3 September) to kick off the season. — PTI

# YOUNG GUNS TAKE AIM

**Harare, July 5:** A new-look Indian T20 team would embark on a journey of self-discovery without their constant talismans, Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, hoping to unearth their mainstays for the future in a five-match series against Zimbabwe starting here on Saturday. Even as the euphoria of T20 World Cup triumph sweeps through the length and breadth of India, Shubman Gill, who was a reserve in that squad, will hit a refresh button along with a bunch of IPL performers. All the fresh faces are expected to make their international debut during the series scheduled to be played entirely in the Zimbabwean capital. Two young men, who are lined for debut could be Punjab's Abhishek Sharma, who had a stupendous IPL for Sunrisers Hyderabad and the young Assamese lad Riyan Parag, who has given ample demonstration of his capabilities as a competent T20 batter. Both of them tick all the boxes for this format. While over the past few years, Rohit and Kohli have skipped a lot of bilateral series, especially in shortest format, their international retirement from the format is bound to be felt more strongly. The skills and quality that the two modern greats brought to the table will be hard to replicate but as it is the order of nature, the old guard has to make way for the new one.

Zimbabwe certainly isn't the most formidable opposition but in T20 format, the gulf between sides is comparatively lesser than the other two traditional forms of the game. The hosts, led by the gutsy Sikandar Raza, who played for Punjab Kings in the IPL recently, could

prove to be a handful on nippy afternoons at the Harare Sports Club where the ball will jag around during the afternoon starts. Some solid performances in this series will keep these youngsters in contention for future when the first team players of the world champion side are back on national duty. Shivam Dube, Sanju Samson, and Yashasvi Jaiswal will be available from the third match onwards and some of the young men would only get a couple of games to prove their mettle.

In future, the likes of T20 captain-in-waiting Hardik Pandya, his likely deputy Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant, Axar Patel, Arshdeep Singh, and Kuldeep Yadav will also be back playing the format and there won't be too many vacancies in the playing eleven. From now till the 2026 T20 World Cup in India, the national team will play 34 games in the shortest format. While skipper Gill is expected to open, one needs to see whether his friend Abhishek gets his maiden India cap or the seasoned CSK captain Rituraj Gaikwad ends up being the chosen one. — BCCI

## NEW-LOOK INDIA SANS ROHIT, KOHLI SET TO FACE ZIMBABWEANS



India's coach VVS Laxman interacts with captain Shubman Gill on the eve of T20I series against Zimbabwe in Harare on Friday. — BCCI



Pressure and expectations...they I think always remain. But what Virat *bhai* and Rohit *bhai* have achieved, if I look to achieve that or reach that, it will be very difficult for me. Every player has his own goal, where he wants to reach. That is the pressure. If you want to reach where other people have reached, then you have more pressure. — SHUBMAN GILL, India skipper

## Sikandar should lead from front: Sammons

**New Delhi, July 5:** Sikandar Raza's vast experience of playing in various T20 leagues would certainly come in handy for an inexperienced Zimbabwe outfit, which would like to punch above its weight against a talented Indian side full of IPL performers, head coach Justin Sammons said ahead of five-match series, starting Saturday. "I think we're very fortunate to have a player like Sikandar Raza leading the side. He brings great experience. We want him to lead from the front. He's been superb in the changing room and



Riyan Parag

Rituraj Gaikwad

taking the players under his wing. We want his bat to do the talking, as well as his bowling," Sammons said. Over the

years, Indian selectors have always rested its top players during the summer months when the team tours the African nation where a five-match T20I series' broadcast rights help in keeping the host country's cricket board in good health and best of spirits. Even then three players from the T20 World Cup winning squad — Shivam Dube, Yashasvi Jaiswal and Sanju Samson are expected to be available from the third game of the series and all four stand by, including skipper Shubman Gill are part of the set-up, taking the count up to seven. This is an opportunity for this team to do that and to showcase their skills against the best and obviously to get an understanding of where they're at, said Sammons, who was South Africa's batting consultant between 2021 to 2023. Sammons said that his focus is on the future and he wants to build a good team. — PTI

## Martinez saves Messi's blushes

**Houston, July 5:** Goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez was the hero, saving two penalties and Lionel Messi's blushes as holders Argentina defeated Ecuador in a penalty shoot-out to book their place in the Copa America semi-finals on Thursday. A Lisandro Martinez header had put world champions Argentina 1-0 up ten minutes before half-time but Kevin Rodriguez headed in a stoppage-time leveller for Ecuador, who had risen to the occasion in front of 69,456 fans at Houston's NRG Stadium.



Argentina's L. Martinez celebrates after scoring against Ecuador in the Copa quarterfinal match on Thursday. — AFP

Messi missed the opening penalty, chipping against the bar, but thanks to heroics from Martinez, Argentina recovered to win the shoot-out 4-2 and progress into the semi-finals where they will face the winner of Friday's match between Venezuela and Canada. Messi's botched 'panenka' brought back memories of his miss in the

shoot-out loss to Chile in the 2016 Copa final but luckily for him goalkeeper Martinez was in the mood to repeat his own past. He pulled off superb diving saves to deny Angel Mena and Alan Minda and get his team in front before Nicolas Otamendi slotted home the decisive fourth kick. It was a major scare for the favourites but not for the first time they had their goalkeeper to thank for the victory. — AFP

## Swiss are against time, England; Dutchmen eye Turkey for meal

**Dusseldorf, July 5:** Switzerland have never reached the last four of a major international tournament but have shown that they can battle with the big boys ahead of their Euro 2024 clash with England on Saturday. Murat Yakin's side were ruthless in dumping hapless holders Italy out of the tournament last week-end and went within seconds of beating hosts Germany and topping Group 'A'. The Swiss are also one of two so-called "dark horses" who are left in the tournament alongside Turkey, with the other six either previous champions or, in England's case, heavily tipped to break their Euros duck.



England's Harry Kane (centre) during a training session on Friday the eve of their quarterfinal match against Switzerland in Dusseldorf. — AFP

"We sent out an important signal tonight with the game we played. We did not only club together and defend as a unit and sit back, we showed we could attack and dominate proceedings," said Yakin. Switzerland have reached their second straight Euros quarterfinal with a squad which contains very few stars, with Bayer Leverkusen midfielder Granit Xhaka and Manuel Akanji of Manchester City their biggest names. Instead Switzerland have a team unit which is more than the sum of its parts and has a great chance to reach a historic semi-final by eliminating England, who would already be out of the tournament were it not for the last-gasp heroics of Jude Bellingham against Slovakia. Driving the Swiss forward are Bologna teammates Dan Ndoye, Michel Aebischer and Remo

Freuler, who are making an impression in Germany after pushing their unfancied Serie 'A' club to the Champions League. **GAKPO, GULER LEAD DUTCH CHARGE** Cody Gakpo and Arda Guler endured frustrating seasons but both have established themselves as their teams' vital players as the Netherlands face Turkey in a Euro 2024 quarter-final clash on Saturday in Berlin. Netherlands won the competition for the first and only time in 1988, with Ronald Koeman, Ruud Gullit, Frank Rijkaard and Marco van Basten among a talented squad. The current roster is less illustrious but Liverpool winger Gakpo, 25, is successfully staking his claim to be their leading light, with three goals. "Gakpo is our star," former international Pierre van Hooijdonk said. "He is a great player who is solid on the ball," said Koeman after the win over Romania. — AFP



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz reacts after winning a point against Francis Tiafoe of the United States during their third round match at the Wimbledon in London on Friday. — AP

## Alcaraz downs friend Tiafoe

**London, July 5:** Carlos Alcaraz came back from the brink in a five-set thriller against close friend Francis Tiafoe, winning 5-7, 6-2, 4-6, 7-6 (7/2), 6-2 to keep his Wimbledon title defence on track here on Friday. The Spanish third seed was out-hit and out-fought for large periods of the match on Centre Court by his US opponent but found an extra gear when he needed to in a match lasting nearly four hours. The two men were meeting for the first time since Alcaraz came out on top in an epic five-set match in the semi-finals of the 2022 US Open on the way to his first Grand Slam title. "Always a big challenge playing against Francis. He is a really talented player, really tough to face and he has shown again that he deserves to be at the top and fight for big things. Really difficult for me to adapt my game, to find solutions to put him in trouble but really happy to do it at the end of the match," said Alcaraz. He will face America's Brandon Nakashima or 16th seed Ugo Humbert of France in the fourth round. Tiafoe, seeded 29th, put Alcaraz's serve under intense pressure in the opening set, carving out six break points and taking two of them to win it 7-5. But the Spaniard slashed his error count in the second set, breaking twice to level the match under the roof on a damp day. Alcaraz fended off another clutch of break points from Tiafoe in the third set but cracked in the seventh game and the American, combining brutal power with finesse, made the crucial breakthrough, whipping up the crowd as he sealed the set. The champion was in deep trouble at 0-30 in the ninth game of the fourth set but won four straight points to stay on serve. An energised Alcaraz stepped up a level in the tie-break, powering his way to a 5-0 lead and cupping his

### THE RESULTS

**Men's singles third round:** Tommy Paul (USA x12) bt Alexander Bublik (KAZ x23) 6-3, 6-4, 6-2. **Second round:** Ben Shelton (USA x14) bt Lloyd Harris (RSA) 4-6, 7-6 (7/5), 6-7 (5/7), 6-3, 7-6 (10/7); Grigor Dimitrov (BUL x10) bt Shang Juncheng (CHN) 5-7, 6-7 (4/7), 6-4, 6-2, 6-4; Gael Monfils (FRA) bt Stan Wawrinka (SUI) 7-6 (7/5), 6-4, 7-5 (7/3); Francisco Comesaña (ARG) bt Adam Walton (AUS) 7-5, 1-6, 6-7 (12/14), 6-1, 7-6 (10/8); Lorenzo Musetti (ITA x25) bt Luciano Darderi (ITA) 6-4, 4-6, 6-7 (5/7), 6-4, 6-4; Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard (FRA) bt Yoshihito Nishikita (JPN) 6-4, 6-1, 6-2; Emil Ruusuvuori (FIN) bt Stefanos Tsitsipas (GRE x11) 7-6 (8/6), 7-6 (12/10), 3-6, 6-3; Taylor Fritz (USA x13) bt Arthur Rinderknech (FRA) 6-3, 6-4, 3-6, 6-4; Alexander Zverev (GER x4) bt Marcos Giron (USA) 6-2, 6-1, 6-4; Arthur Fils (FRA) bt Hubert Hurkacz (POL x7) 7-6 (7/2), 6-4, 2-6, 6-0 - retired; Novak Djokovic (SRB x2) bt Jacob Fearnley (GBR) 6-3, 6-4, 5-7, 7-5.

**Women's singles third round:** Jasmine Paolini (ITA x7) bt Bianca Andreescu (CAN) 7-6 (7/4), 6-1. **Second round:** Iga Swiatek (POL x1) bt Petra Martic (CRO) 6-4, 6-3; Yulia Putintseva (KAZ) bt Katerina Siniakova (CZE x27) 6-0, 4-6, 6-2; Bernarda Pera (USA) bt Caroline Garcia (FRA x23) 3-6, 6-3, 6-4; Jelena Ostapenko (LAT x13) bt Daria Snigur (UKR) 6-3, 6-0; Danielle Collins (USA x11) bt Dalma Gecse (HUN) 6-3, 6-4; Beatriz Haddad Maia (BRA x20) bt Mara Camila Osorio (COL) 3-0-ret; Barbora Krejickova (CZE x31) bt Katie Volynets (USA) 7-6 (8/6), 7-6 (7/5); J. Bouzas Maneiro (ESP) bt Cristina Bucsa (ESP) 7-6 (7/1), 6-3; Elena Rybakina (KAZ x4) bt Laura Siegemund (GER) 3-6, 3-6, 6-3; Caroline Wozniacki (DEN) bt Leylah Fernandez (CAN) 6-3, 2-6, 2-6, 7-5.

ear to the crowd as he pulled level at two sets apiece. An early break in the decider for Alcaraz emphatically underlined the change in momentum and he repeated the feat to take a 4-1 lead. Tiafoe held serve to delay the inevitable but Alcaraz served out to love, sealing the deal with a clever drop shot before letting out a roar and raising his arms to the sky. — AFP

## INDIAN WOMEN GO DOWN TO SA IN T20 OPENER

**Chennai, July 5:** Having lost the Test and ODI series, South Africa bounced back to defeat India by 12 runs in the first women's T20I to secure their first win of the multi-format tour, here on Friday. Opener Tazmin Brits (81, 56 balls) and Marizanne Kapp (57, 33b) struck belligerent fifties as South Africa posted an imposing 189/4 after India opted to bowl. In reply, Smriti Mandhana (46, 30b) and Shafali Verma (18, 14b) gave India a brisk start before South Africa triggered the collapse. Jemimah Rodrigues raised India's hopes with 53 not out from 30 balls, while Harmanpreet Kaur made 35. But South Africa held nerves to restrict them to 177/4. Earlier, Brits hit three sixes and 10 fours in her career-best 81. — PTI

**Brief Scores:** South Africa 189/4 in 20 overs (Tazmin Brits 81, Marizanne Kapp 57; Pooja Vastrakar 2/23, Radha Yadav 2/40) beat India 177/4 in 20 overs (Jemimah Rodrigues 53, Smriti Mandhana 47).

## spotlight

Fashion Meets Sports At The Paris Olympics

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# delhi THE AGE

SATURDAY | 6 JULY 2024

SWATI SHARMA

THE ASIAN AGE

When Radhika Merchant got all dressed up for her pre-wedding festivities recently, all eyes were on the exquisite pieces of jewellery adorning her. Soon enough, the world learned that it was designed by American designer Lorraine Schwartz, who has designed jewellery for no less than Beyoncé and Kim Kardashian.

While Radhika Merchant will undoubtedly dazzle with even more exquisite pieces at her wedding to Anant Ambani on July 12, the big question is why people prefer “Made in US” over “Made in India.”

What can overseas jewellery designers do that Indian designers cannot?

While it's undeniable that it's a personal choice, it raises the question of whether Indian jewellery designers can compete with overseas designers in terms of skill.

### A PERSONAL CHOICE

Farah Ali Khan, a renowned jewellery designer and gemologist, says, “It's not that the Indian designers don't have good designs; we have amazing designs and exquisite craftsmanship, and in fact, Indian designers are selling abroad.”

Farah says she is one of the designers who sells not only in India but also internationally. “I'm also known internationally, but I guess maybe they (Ambanis) wanted to work with an international designer. Maybe they believed that their expenditures would remain undisclosed. Choosing an Indian designer for their jewellery exposes them to the risk of financial disclosure, she argues, noting that most designers maintain confidentiality,” says Farah.

Ironically, says Farah, international stars are wearing Indian designers. Her pieces have graced the red carpet at the Oscars, Grammys, and the Golden Globes with celebrities ranging from Priyanka Chopra

## LOOK WHO DESIGNED MY JEWELLERY!



News world over is the Ambani wedding and the jewels they are wearing. The bride-to-be Radhika's jewels are designed by American designer Lorraine Schwartz. What is it that makes overseas jewellery designers a favourite among the elite? Are westerners better at crafts than Indians?



American jewellery designer Lorraine Schwartz made custom pieces for Radhika Merchant. On Instagram, she shared stunning pictures of the necklaces and earrings that she customised for Radhika. This included an opal and diamond necklace



(Above) ALL THAT GLITTERS: Deepika Padukone in jewellery designer Farah Ali Khan's collection (L) Farah Ali Khan



and Kareena Kapoor to Beyoncé and Serena Williams wearing them. “I've had people on the red carpet internationally wear

my jewellery. Manish Malhotra and Sabir Sachi both have it. Several Indian designers have garnered international recognition for their jewellery designs. So it's strange when people in India choose international designers versus Indian houses,” she says. However, the designer claims that the jewellery Ambanis chose was stunning, particularly the gemstones like paraibas, which most Indians would not experiment with.

This is because people here tend to stick to the safer choices of diamonds, emeralds, and rubies.

ALTHOUGH IT'S A PERSONAL CHOICE, IT BEGS THE QUESTION OF WHETHER INDIAN JEWELLERY DESIGNERS CAN COMPETE WITH ABROAD DESIGNERS IN COMPETENCE.

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## Tumult over nebuliser

A doctor calls Samantha a 'health & science illiterate', slamming her over her medical advice

✦ Samantha Ruth Prabhu recently talked about an alternate way to treat common viral infections on her Instagram story. She shared a photo of her using a nebuliser with a mixture of hydrogen peroxide and distilled water — not medicines that are usually prescribed by doctors.

This caught the attention of Dr Cyriac Abby Philips, aka The Liver Doc, who called out Samantha — said she's a “health and science illiterate.” He explained nebulising with hydrogen peroxide could be harmful — there are no proven benefits. Celebs or individuals promoting such treatments should be fined and face legal action, he said.

Samantha responded, “My post and intentions were strongly criticised by a particular individual. The gentleman also works as a doctor. I am certain that he possesses more knowledge than me. He could have shown kindness and compassion by not being so provocative in his words.” Evidently Sam was hurt by the doctor's criticism but when it comes to medication, health and wellbeing, isn't it best left to the experts. Actors often promote a certain way without adequate knowledge. Netizens too reacted and said spreading ill-informed advice is dangerous.



Before taking medication for a common viral, consider trying an alternative approach. One option is to nebulise with a mixture of hydrogen peroxide and distilled water. Works like magic. Avoid unnecessary use of medicine. #alternativemedicine @dr\_mrs\_hem\_chellur

# FASHION MEETS SPORTS AT THE PARIS OLYMPICS

Armed with the world's top fashion houses and designers, countries unveil their 2024 Olympic ceremonial uniforms

ANUSHREE CHAURASIA

Paris is known as the fashion capital of the world. As the countdown to the Paris 2024 Olympics and Paralympic Games continues, the excitement and fervour around 'fashion meets sports' has reached its crescendo. All eyes are on the international fashion labels and ace designers like Ralph Lauren, Stephane Ashpool, Adidas, Puma, Asics, and Tasva with designer Tarun Tahiliani to name a few who have packed a sporty punch in the opening and closing ceremony uniform kits. While uniform kits of some nations are still under wraps, most countries have proudly displayed their 2024 Summer Olympics attire.

Host country France was the first to make a splash with their wavy uniforms. Young designer Stephane Ashpool cleverly integrated the French flag's red-white-and-blue colours in the uniform in the casual, yet chic Parisian style. This year, the designs are particularly significant as the focus is on 'inclusivity', 'diversity', 'sustainability', modern aesthetics, and each nation's unique identity.

Legendary American fashion designer Ralph Lauren for the ninth time designed stylish Olympic ceremony outfits for Team USA in the characteristic red-white-and-blue colours. The fashion brand even issued a statement saying: "The looks embrace a patriotic spirit reflected in a signature palette of red, white and blue." Lauren introduced outfits that emphasise sustainability, with recycled materials and advanced cooling technology.



PHOTO: STEPHANE ASHPPOOL

PHOTO: RALE LAUREN



PHOTO: TASVA INSTAGRAM

## DESI-GLOBAL TOUCH

Given India's growing prominence in the international sports arena, the ceremonial outfits by Tasva, designed by ace designer Tarun Tahiliani met everybody's expectations. From the textile to texture everything was kept top-notch. The kurta bundi set was crafted from lightweight moss cotton and the saree features a viscose crepe for a natural drape and maximum comfort. The revelation of these designs has somehow caused an uproar amongst fans to see what the track and field uniforms will look like and whether they will also cater for style and comfort the same way the ceremonial outfits do. Indian Olympics Association President, Dr PT Usha unveiled the details of Team India's official cere-

monial dress code. Tahiliani has brilliantly incorporated India's tricolour in Banarasi brocade. The ceremonial dress is a blend of traditional aesthetics and contemporary comfort. "We worked closely with the IOA to create an attire that tells a story about India. This is our dream — to see our traditions celebrated and honoured around the world," explains Tahiliani, chief design officer, Tasva at the unveiling ceremony.

## FASHION & SPORTS

Olympian, Arjuna Awardee and world gold medalist, Dutee Chand, a professional sprinter and current national champion in the women's 100-meter says, "During Olympics men are given



trousers to wear and women are given their usual sarees or salwars. I want the uniforms to be like that around this time too because it represents India and Indian culture. I also expect to see some tribal art in the uniform. To represent even our tribal community would be such a proud moment for the country."

The unveiling of Olympic uniforms is always a highly anticipated event, offering a first-time glimpse into the national pride and cultural heritage each country will showcase. Japan's uniforms, designed by ASICS, draw inspiration from traditional Japanese motifs, while Australia's uniforms, by Sportscraft and Volley, highlight their green and gold colours, embodying the nation's vibrant and sunny disposition. These designs not only reflect the unique identities of each nation but also incorporate the latest advancements in sportswear to enhance athlete performance.



South Korea's Olympics uniform

Samant Chauhan, an Indian Fashion Designer and Fashion House opines that it would be amazing to have unique Indian textiles represented because many Indian brands are going global now. Samant adds, "And what would be a better chance than this to highlight our various textiles? Something that shows our rich heritage." While designers and fashion critics niff and naff about the uniforms, the world can't wait to see the most fashionable Olympics ever!

# People who dance are more open and less neurotic

According to new research, dancers are more agreeable, which may indicate neurotic levels

People who cut up the dance floor tend to be more agreeable and more open than wallflowers, according to an analysis at German research institute Max-Planck-Gesellschaft which studied professional and amateur dancers in Germany and Sweden.

People who dance were found to be more extroverted and less neurotic than others, including even



musicians who aren't the dancing kind, according to the study, published in the science journal Personality

and Individual Differences. "Both dancers and singers show a high degree of extraversion in their personality —which may be due to the fact that their means of expression when dancing and singing is their body — and this is a very socially exposed situation, more than if you express through an instrument," lead author Julia F. Christensen said. While dancers and musi-

cians share high openness, neuroticism differentiates them, the study concluded. However, the research found evidence of personality differences between dancers of different styles, with swing dancers seemingly even less neurotic than Latin and Standard dancers.

The researchers said these differences between dance styles need more research

—something they hope to do by "extend[ing] their research into dancers' personalities to many other cultures and dance styles." "Dance school entrepreneurs, a special group of people that are both entrepreneurs and dancers, were generally even more open and agreeable and less neurotic than dancers and non-dancers," the team said.

— dpa

# LOOK, WHO DESIGNED MY JEWELLERY!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

“The Indian designers could do as well or even better, and they should try Indian designers too,” says Farah, pointing out that Ambanis did wear jewellery designed by Indian jewellery houses for the pre-wedding celebrations in Jamnagar, though they chose western designers for the event in Portofino (Italy).

## THE BUZZ

Another jewellery designer, Archana Aggarwal feels that when celebrities like Radhika Merchant wear jewellery by foreign designers, it can create a buzz and garner attention.

Archana's jewellery has graced the likes of celebrities such as Shraddha Kapoor, Parineeti Chopra, Sara Ali Khan, Suzzane Khan, Athiya Shetty, Yami Gautam, Neha Kakkar, Rakulpreet, Esha Gupta and more.

“Celebrity endorsements may influence elite individuals, inspiring them to emulate their style choices. While Indian jewellery designers also offer exquisite craftsmanship and stunning designs, the preference for foreign designers among the elite may stem from a desire for international flair, brand prestige, and the allure of owning a piece created by a renowned global name,” she says.

## AESTHETICS

The design aesthetics offered by foreign designers may differ from the typical offerings in the Indian market. “Their innovative and trendsetting designs can appeal to those seeking something unique and cutting-edge in jewellery,” says Archana.

Especially well-known foreign designers often have established brand names that carry prestige and reputation, she says. According to Archana, the status and recognition of these brands in the global fashion industry may attract elite individuals.

Some international designers create limited-edition pieces or bespoke jewellery, adding an element of exclusivity and rarity to their collections. “This exclusivity can be appealing to

elite customers who value uniqueness and individuality. The choice between Indian and foreign designers primarily comes down to personal taste, style preferences, and individual motivation,” adds Archana.

## WEST IS BRILLIANT

Disha Shah, founder of DiAi Designs, says India has been known for its intricate craftsmanship, an array of various diamonds and gemstones, and stunning designs. “In fact, it has also been and still is a major hub for manufacturing fine jewellery, whether everyday wear or designer pieces,” she says.

Disha feels the West is brilliant with their design curations, branding, and marketing strategies, and Hollywood has also been a great inspiration for many.

“India does lack a ‘global’ fine jewellery brand, but the jewels that are available here are nothing less than exceptional either. Despite having excellent resources and craftsmanship, Indian jewellery brands receive little recognition due to a lack of marketing investment,” feels Disha.

She says these brands focus heavily on their long-established, customer-centric relationships. Disha adds, “In contrast, wearing foreign brands often serves as a status symbol, reflecting one's position in society and adherence to the latest trends and designs.”

## THE ART OF CRAFTSMANSHIP

Indians have always inspired the world with their heritage of architecture, jewellery, and textiles.

“But over the evolutionary years, things started changing; the exchange of art across the seas became a common practice, which brought diversification of art globally. If we observe how designers work overseas, we will understand that it is not significantly different from our own. Every art piece is



Lorraine Schwartz designed 70 carat diamond earrings for Beyonce at Grammys in 2021.

carefully and thoughtfully crafted, but the only difference is in the way it is translated into the thoughts of the artist and the artisan,” says Drashty Bhandari, director of Design & Sales Gems and Jewels Palace (Jodhpur).

In contrast to India, the foreign world values artists and recognises their talent.

“If we closely observe the jewellery worn by the Ambani family, it becomes evident that many pieces were sourced from various auction houses with origins in India, including pieces from Mugal and Nizam. Therefore, I believe that Indian designers have also received recognition and an equal opportunity to showcase their jewellery within the family, not just Western or international designers,” says

Drashty adding, “It's not only the Indian media that neglects to feature Indian designers, but also those who work with designers abroad, despite conducting more thorough research.

We'd know that foreign designers procure their major loose precious stones and diamonds from India.”

## ATTENTION TO DETAIL

“I really don't think that they care about who is making the product or whether it comes under what brand name; they are really more conscious of the whole look, design, sensibility, and making of the product. So the whole idea of picking up a piece depends on the client's appearance and mood at that point in time,” says Drashty adding, “Foreign jewellers can easily produce many pieces from reputable Indian manufacturers, but the majority of Indian pieces are not exportable.”



Drashty Bhandari

“IF WE CLOSELY OBSERVE THE JEWELLERY WORN BY THE AMBANI FAMILY, IT BECOMES EVIDENT THAT MANY PIECES WERE SOURCED FROM VARIOUS AUCTION HOUSES WITH ORIGINS IN INDIA, INCLUDING PIECES FROM MUGAL AND NIZAM,” SAYS DRASHTY.

## A HUG FOR OLD TIMES' SAKE

Virat Kohli acknowledges first coach

Virat Kohli, who ended his sojourn in the T20 format of cricket on a high, scoring a spectacular 76 off 59 balls in the final of the T20 World Cup finals against South Africa at Barbados, managed to catch up with his childhood coach, Rajkumar Sharma, in the midst of the team's insanely busy victory schedule on their return to India.

The former skipper of Team India and Coach Sharma shared a hug, and memories of their early days together.

“From your first practice to your incredible success, you've always made me proud

@virat.kohli . Keep going strong beta #viratkohli #proud #indiancricketteam #indiancricket,” Sharma posted on Instagram.

On returning to India, the team had breakfast with Prime Minister Narendra Modi almost as soon as their flight landed in Delhi, and left for Mumbai immediately thereafter, to participate in an exhilarating bus parade and felicitation programme.



## GET QUIRKY WITH ELTON!

Elton John is getting rid of clothes from his wardrobe to collect money for the Elton John AIDS Foundation

Elton John is recognised globally not only for his music but also for his distinctive fashion sense.

Currently, the rock star is offering his fans the opportunity to purchase some of his dazzling attire.

The 77-year-old musician is auctioning off numerous belongings from his wardrobe on eBay, with all profits from the transaction going to his Elton John AIDS Foundation.

Gucci jackets, Versace robes, and personalised Prada loafers are some of the luxury items currently available for bidding on the internet auction platform. Cheaper options are available such as baseball caps and vintage concert t-shirts.

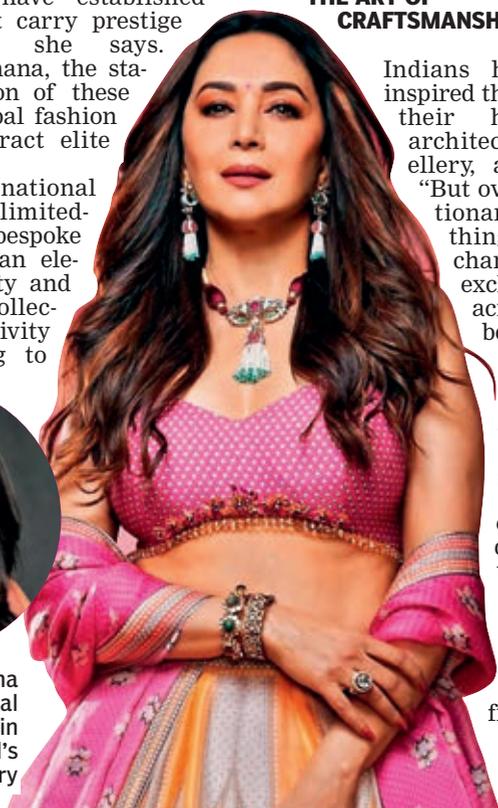
As stated in an online press release, the minimum bid for items is set at \$26.60, about the address of Elton's former Atlanta residence on Peachtree Road.

During an interview with auction house Christie's earlier this year, John mentioned that he had resided at the same location for three decades and it was there that he developed a passion for collecting art and objects.

Some additional items will be offered for sale immediately with no bidding required.



(Above) Archana Aggarwal  
(R) Madhuri Dixit in Archana Aggarwal's Timeless Jewellery



# tarot speak



**ARIES** | MARCH 21 TO APRIL 20

Dear Aries, This week's cards advise you to take a bold step and seize the opportunity that presents itself. Lady Tarot urges you to act on your ideas and embrace them. Coming up with outstanding ideas is one thing, but it takes effort, dedication, and hard work to bring them to fruition. The fire within you is inspiring, but it needs to be controlled to be useful. Prepare yourself for the work that lies ahead, knowing that the result will be worth it. Allow your idea to warm you and enter your life. An excellent time to build new relationships.

**LUCKY NUMBER: 1 | LUCKY COLOR: FIERY RED**  
**AFFIRMATION FROM LIGHT SEERS TAROT: I SEED MY BRILLIANT FUTURE WITH ROOTS OF INSPIRATION AND CREATIVITY**



**TAURUS** | APRIL 21 TO MAY 21

Dear Taurus, This week, your environment seems to be working against you. There is total chaos; everyone is operating against one another. It takes patience and perseverance to achieve something. Rest assured, there are no major blockages, just many small, irritating ones. Professionally, your productivity has decreased due to conflict caused by a mismatch between personality and work style. You'll have to fight harder for your goals and stand out in the workplace. Avoid getting too caught up in the drama; instead, concentrate on your responsibilities, and you will triumph eventually.

**LUCKY NUMBER: 5, LUCKY COLOR: LIGHT GREY**  
**AFFIRMATION FROM LIGHT SEERS TAROT: WE RISE TOGETHER IN ACCELERATED HARMONY**



**GEMINI** | MAY 22 TO JUNE 21

Dear Gemini, This week is about love and relationships. It brings a relationship in which the two parties involved appreciate one another, a blossoming romance with someone compatible, or a new partnership with great promise. True love is something that is built by two people. It also requires time. So, if you discover that you are compatible with someone, give the relationship time to develop without worrying about the next step. Some of you shall embark on a journey to connect with yourself, accept yourself as you are.

**LUCKY NUMBER: 2 | LUCKY COLOR: PEARL GREY**  
**AFFIRMATION FROM LIGHT SEERS TAROT: I LIVE IN A STATE OF ONENESS BY BRINGING HARMONY AND LOVE TO MY RELATIONSHIPS**



**CANCER** | JUNE 22 TO JULY 23

Dear Cancer, The cards advise you to face a fear this week, which will empower you. Take a moment to reflect on any unnecessary boundaries you may be creating around yourself. Are you holding back out of fear or self-doubt? Are you saying, "I can't..." when you really want to try? Don't worry, we all do it sometimes! However, it's important to challenge yourself to overcome your fears and take on new challenges. If you're struggling with anxiety, depression, or any other mental health issues, it's crucial to seek out supportive and healing practices. Remember that you hold the key to your own healing, and the journey begins with making positive choices.

**LUCKY NUMBER: 8, LUCKY COLOR: DARK BLUE**  
**AFFIRMATION FROM LIGHT SEERS TAROT: I AM FREE TO CHOOSE MY HEALING AND MY LIGHTNESS WITH STEADY DESIRE AND LOVE**



**LEO** | JULY 24 TO AUGUST 23

My Dear Leo, This week you are feeling hurt. Your heart has been pierced by the arrows of others' hurtful words, actions, or intentions, and they have inflicted intense emotions of pain, grief, and heartbreak. The good news is that this painful season will pass. It is time for these pain points to expand your perspective and see the bigger picture of what is happening around you. As Khalil Gibran says, "The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain." The hurt is temporary. The clouds will dissipate, and soon you will have a better perspective on what you can learn from the experience.

**LUCKY NUMBER: 3, LUCKY COLOR: MAUVE**  
**AFFIRMATION FROM LIGHT SEERS TAROT: MY HEART REMAINS TENDER AND OPEN**

**"TAROT CARDS ILLUMINATE THE KARMIC LESSONS WOVEN INTO OUR LIFE'S JOURNEY, GUIDING US TO UNDERSTAND THE PAST, EMBRACE THE PRESENT, AND TRANSFORM OUR FUTURE WITH WISDOM AND COMPASSION." — MAANYA KOHLI**



By **MAANYA KOHLI**  
**MAANYA, A RENOWNED TAROT CARD READER, BELIEVES THAT TAROT IS A TOOL FOR DIVINITY AND THE CARDS CAN BE A SPIRITUAL GUIDE IN VARIOUS LIFE SITUATIONS**

## YOU ASK WE ANSWER

### Navigating through daily life problems

**Q My future employment, wealth, and health intrigue me. Will I be able to live my way?**

— Anonymous

Dear Anonymous, cards have spoken! Your future in employment will shine with resilience and inner strength. You have the courage and determination to tackle any challenges that come your way. Stay committed to your goals. Your hard work will lead to a fulfilling career.

Though you might feel dissatisfied with your current financial situation, the cards encourage you to look beyond the surface. Take a moment to reassess your goals and consider new paths for growth. While juggling multiple responsibilities, it's crucial to find time for self-care. Incorporating routines that promote balance, like regular exercise, a

healthy diet, and stress management techniques, will benefit you. With careful management and a positive outlook, you can achieve well-being and good health. God Bless!

**Q When will I start working? I have many work challenges every other year. Will this end?**

— Aarti

Hi Aarti! The Tarot cards have some exciting news in terms of your profession. Within the next six months, you're set to land a job. Both hospitals and clinics are promising options, but hospitals might offer you more exciting opportunities, especially with international patients and healthcare practices. Plus, considering a job in an overseas hospital could bring you luck and good fortune. God Bless!

**Q I would like to know if I would marry Dr Vidya Kiran Bammidi, who was born on July 14th, 1990. If yes, when?**

— Addu Kiraanmayyee

Dear Kiran, The cards are painting a beautiful picture for your relationship with Dr Vidya Kiran Bammidi! It seems your bond is built on mutual respect, love, and understanding, which is a fantastic foundation. There's a promising hint that marriage could be on the horizon within six months. Lady of Tarot advises you to follow your heart, communicate openly, and nurture the special connection you share. Trust in the love you have, and it looks like your journey will lead to a wonderful and committed partnership. Stay positive, cherish every moment, and let love guide your way! God Bless!

**VIRGO** | AUGUST 24 TO SEP 23



Dear Virgo, This week might feel like you're carrying the weight of the world on your shoulders. Responsibilities and tasks may pile up, leaving you feeling burdened. However, the cards also remind you that persistence pays off. Think of it like the time you helped a friend move house — exhausting, but incredibly rewarding once done. Prioritise and delegate where you can. Remember, it's okay to ask for help. By the end of the week, you'll find a sense of accomplishment. Remember to take care of yourself.

**LUCKY NUMBER: 10**  
**LUCKY COLOR: CRIMSON**  
**AFFIRMATION FROM LIGHT SEERS TAROT: I RELEASE MY BURDENS TO THE ETHERS AND TRUST THE UNIVERSE TO TEND TO THE ESSENTIALS**

**LIBRA** | SEP 24 TO OCT 23



Dear Libra, This week might feel a bit chaotic and unstructured, as the cards signal a disruption in authority and control. Imagine a king suddenly losing his crown; things can get disorganised quickly! You might encounter challenges with authority figures or feel a lack of direction. However, this can be an opportunity to embrace flexibility and creativity. Think of it as a chance to rewrite your own rules. Remember, even in the midst of disorder, there's potential for growth. Take a deep breath, trust your instincts, and navigate the week with an open mind. After all, sometimes the best stories come from unexpected twists and turns!

**LUCKY NUMBER: 4**  
**LUCKY COLOR: DARK BROWN**  
**AFFIRMATION FROM LIGHT SEERS TAROT: I LEAD MY EVOLUTION WITH CONFIDENCE, AUTHORITY & GENEROSITY**

**SCORPIO** | OCT. 24 TO NOV. 22



Dear Scorpio, The cards signal a challenging week ahead, suggesting the end of a difficult situation. While this may seem daunting, it's also a powerful moment of release and renewal. Imagine a phoenix rising from the ashes—this symbolizes your journey. Just like the time Karina, my client, thought she lost everything when her business failed, only to find a new, more fulfilling path, you too will find clarity and strength through these trials. Embrace this transformation, knowing that brighter days lie ahead. Remember, there's a silver lining in every cloud, and next week is your turning point toward something better.

**LUCKY NUMBER: 10**  
**LUCKY COLOR: SUNSHINE YELLOW**  
**AFFIRMATION FROM LIGHT SEERS TAROT: I AM HEALING EVERYDAY**

**SAGITTARIUS** | NOV. 23 TO DEC. 21



Dear Sagittarius, This is a week filled with clarity and decisive action. You'll approach challenges with a sharp mind and clear communication. Imagine yourself as a wise judge, cutting through confusion with your keen insight. Just like when a friend relied on your advice and it transformed their dilemma into a clear path, your intellect will guide you. Expect to tackle projects efficiently, making strong, logical decisions. This is your week to shine as a leader. Embrace this energy and watch as your foresight and wisdom pave the way for success.

**LUCKY NUMBER: 3**  
**LUCKY COLOR: RUSTY ORANGE**  
**AFFIRMATION FROM LIGHT SEERS TAROT: I AM DEVOTED TO CONNECTEDNESS**

**CAPRICORN** | DEC. 22 TO JAN. 20



Dear Capricorn, This week, you might face some tension or conflicts. The cards indicate challenges in communication or disagreements. However, it's also a reminder to choose your battles wisely. In case you face a heated debate at work, instead of escalating, take a step back, listen, and find a compromise. By doing so, you shall earn respect and foster a collaborative environment. Approach situations with a calm mindset and avoid unnecessary confrontations. Focus on finding peaceful resolutions.

**LUCKY NUMBER: 5**  
**LUCKY COLOR: PASTEL BLUE**  
**AFFIRMATION FROM LIGHT SEERS TAROT: MY LESSONS MOVE ME AHEAD ALWAYS**

**AQUARIUS** | JAN 21 TO FEB 19



Dear Aquarius, This week promises exciting new beginnings, experiences, and choices! Think of it as the first steps along a new path or the first words on a blank page. Embrace the present and trust in the horizon! Don't hesitate to take chances. Just like we learn to walk by taking those first steps, we learn to live harmoniously through embracing change. So, dive into the unknown with enthusiasm! Children will bring joy to your life. Enjoy the happiness they bring!

**LUCKY NUMBER: 0**  
**LUCKY COLOR: SKY BLUE**  
**AFFIRMATION FROM LIGHT SEERS TAROT: I AWAKEN MY SOUL PATH AND I AM READY FOR ADVENTURE**

**PISCES** | FEB 20 TO MARCH 20



Dear Pisces, This week marks the end of a significant phase in your life, inviting you to reflect and grow. Take time to self-examine and process the lessons you've learned. Think of it as upgrading yourself, not becoming someone entirely new. You might feel a spiritual calling or a nudge to live more in line with your ideals. Expect epiphanies and awakenings, as your karmic slate is resetting. Embrace the opportunity to close this chapter with joy and step into a better version of yourself.

**LUCKY NUMBER: 20**  
**LUCKY COLOUR: YELLOW**  
**AFFIRMATION FROM LIGHT SEERS TAROT: HELLO ESSENCE, I AM HERE TO SHARE MY VOICE**

## IN THE NEWS



# Meet the voice behind Google Maps

**Karen Jacobsen prides in being the only woman, from whom men would learn the concept of directions**

Australian voiceover artist Karen Jacobsen's voice has become one of the most constant features in vehicles worldwide. Her voice is used in Google Maps and other GPS apps to help motorists find their way around routes they are unfamiliar with. More than one billion Google devices have been with the Maps feature, to date. "The only woman who men take command from without questioning," Jacobsen says jokingly.

Jacobsen told Great Big Story, a London-based documentaries company, "I am known as the only woman, men would take directions from." She said that in the early 2000's she was approached by Garmin GPS to be a voice artist for the feature of Google Maps. According to her Australian accent was the most suitable for the role as "It is pleasant to listen."

Jacobsen told the Great Big Story, "My speaking voice ended up in over a billion GPS and smartphone devices giving direction to people around the world. It's me who says you have reached your destination." When asked about her background,

she said, "I'm originally from Mackay, which is a town in North Queensland near Australia's Great Barrier Reef. I wanted to become a professional singer and move to America, and I did follow that dream to New York." "Not long after I moved there in 2002, there was an audition for voiceover artists, and a client was looking for a native Australian, female, voiceover artist living in the northeast of the United States. I realised I met all the qualifications. Therefore, went for that audition and got the job."

She also said that her Australian ancestry provided an advantage over her competitors. She said, "At that time, I was told that the Australian voice was a high priority because the Australian accent was considered the most pleasant English-speaking accent to listen to." According to Jacobsen, her voice was subsequently synthesised for highways and streets that weren't initially specified in her screenplay after she was initially asked to record generic traffic terminology.

The artificial creation of a human voice, known as voice synthesis, is useful for text-to-speech conversion.

**KAREN JACOBSEN'S VOICE IS USED IN GOOGLE MAPS AND OTHER GPS APPS TO HELP MOTORISTS FIND THEIR WAY AROUND ROUTES THEY ARE UNFAMILIAR WITH. MORE THAN ONE BILLION GOOGLE DEVICES HAVE BEEN WITH THE MAPS FEATURE, TO DATE.**

**Tarot Tip For Marriage: On Fridays, offer red or pink roses to a goddess idol or in a temple to attract love and marriage in your life.**

## 'Life's challenges often help us grow'

Hello, my dear readers! I'm Maanya Kohli, founder of Lady of Tarot, and your guide on this mystical journey through the Tarot. Last week, we delved into the life lessons up to the Hanged Man card. This week, let's explore the profound insights from the Major Arcana cards from Death to the Tower. These cards may seem daunting, but they hold the keys to transformation, renewal, and resilience.

The Death card often evokes fear, but it symbolises transformation and new beginnings. Just as the phoenix rises from its ashes, this card urges us to let go of the old to make way for the new. I once read for a client who felt stuck in a dead-

end job. The Death card appeared, prompting her to pursue a passion she had long neglected. She left her job, retrained, and now thrives in a career she loves. Temperance teaches us the value of moderation and harmony. It's about blending different aspects of our lives into a cohesive whole. Think of it as mixing the perfect cocktail—each ingredient must be balanced for the drink to taste just right. In our fast-paced lives, Temperance reminds us to find time for work, rest, and play. During a particularly hectic period, I pulled this card and realised I needed to slow down and realign my priorities. The results were transformative. The Devil represents the chains that bind us —

addictions, negative thoughts, or unhealthy relationships. Recognising these chains is the first step to breaking free. A friend once confided in me about feeling trapped in a toxic relationship. The Devil card appeared in her reading, encouraging her to confront and ultimately free herself from this toxic situation. It was challenging, but it led to her regaining her independence and self-worth.

The Tower card signifies sudden upheaval and revelation. While it can be unsettling, it also clears the way for new structures to be built. I recall a time when my client faced an unexpected job loss. The Tower card surfaced, mirroring his sense of chaos. However, this disruption

led him to start a new business and today, he is a famous entrepreneur. When your world feels like it's falling apart, remember that it might be paving the way for something even greater.

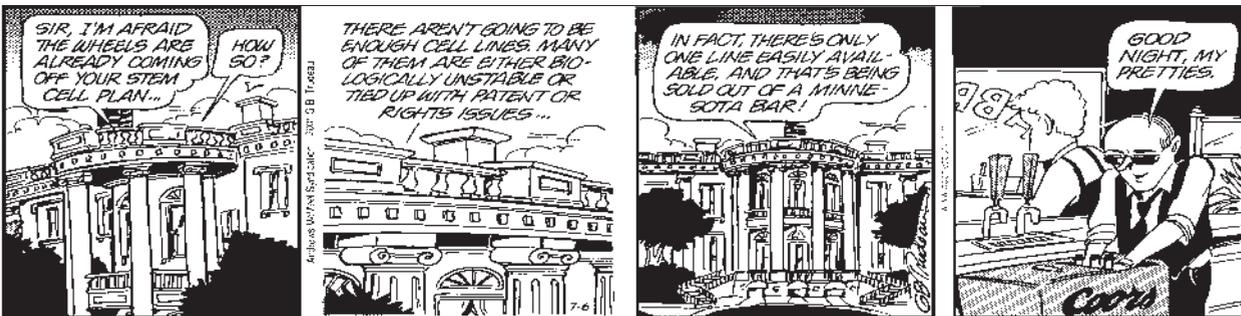
My dear readers, these cards, from Death to the Tower, teach us that life's challenges are often the catalysts for profound personal growth. By embracing transformation, seeking balance, breaking free from limitations, and welcoming change, we can navigate life's journey with grace and resilience. Stay tuned for next week's exploration of the Star, the Moon, and the Sun. Until then, let the wisdom of the Tarot guide you towards your highest potential.

# coffee-break

## CALVIN AND HOBBS | Bill Watterson



## DOONESBURY | Garry Trudeau



## B.C. | Johnny Hart



## UP AND RUNNING | Gray and Shack



## BLONDIE | Dean Young and John Marshall



## ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe



## Dennis the Menace



## hocus focus



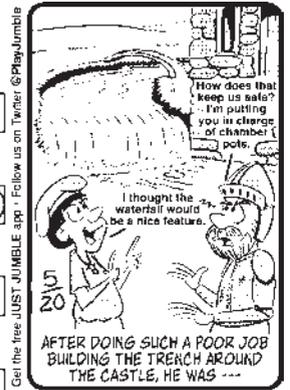
Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Woman's coat collar is missing. 2. Leaf is different. 3. Hair is different. 4. Arm is lower. 5. Hat is different. 6. Light is moved.

## jumble

CMHPO  
 KAQEU  
 DMIELD  
 TEPYOR



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: "O O - O O O O O O O O"

Yesterday's Jumbles: BAGGY SHIFT WINNER TUSSELE  
 Answer: She was loving not being married and wasn't planning on changing - A SINGLE THING