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Amaninder Singh Thind (Max)

Office : 516-864-8100

Cell : 516-474-7573

athind@cbamhomes.com

amaninderthind.cbamhomes.com

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The 'war on drugs' and how the world is re-adjusting its response



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Countries Blame China at UN Over Xinjiang 'Abuses'



(By Staff Reporter) Dozens of countries voiced concern Tuesday at alleged abuses in China's Xinjiang region, and demanded that the UN rights chief publish a long-delayed report on the rights situation there. "We continue to be gravely concerned about the human rights situation in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region," The Netherlands ambassador to the UN in Geneva Paul Bekkers told the UN Human Rights Council.

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Boris Johnson says UK government 'not deterred' by criticism of Rwanda deportation policy



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Sri Lanka official who alleged pressure to award project to Adani Group resigns

Although Ferdinando retracted his statement a day after his appearance before the panel and claimed he had become "emotional", it triggered a political controversy

(By Staff Reporter) DAYS AFTER he alleged before a Lankan parliamentary panel that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had "pressured" President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to award a power project to the Adani Group, the Chairman of Sri Lanka's Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB), M M C Ferdinando, resigned on Monday. Although Ferdinando retracted his statement a day after his appearance before the panel and claimed he had become "emotional", it triggered a political controversy, with the Opposition accusing the Rajapaksa government of "pampering" Modi's "friends" to allow them "backdoor entry" into the



country. Announcing that Ferdinando had stepped down, Sri Lanka's Minister of Power and Energy

Kanchana Wijesekera tweeted on Monday afternoon:

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First India, Israel, US, UAE or West Asian Quad leaders' Summit next month



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**COLDWELL BANKERS
AMERICAN HOMES**

Amaninder "Max" Thind
Licesed Real Estate Salesperson

**Office : 516-864-8100,
Cell : 516-474-7573**

athind@cbamhomes.com,
amaninderthind.cbamhomes.com
142 Jackson Ave, Syosset, NY 11791

Keralites working in Gulf fear backlash over derogatory remarks against Prophet

Around 1.7 million people from Kerala work in the Gulf region. Many among them say the controversy created by BJP leaders' remarks could affect their livelihood overseas



leaders. I have lived and worked in Dubai for the past 18 years. The UAE has offered me good opportunities and I love this country. I was never alienated over my Hindu credentials," 42-year-old C.N Dileep, who works as a network specialist in Dubai, told INDIA TODAY. "The UAE government has condemned the remarks and demanded an explanation from the Indian government. So far, the crisis appears to have been handled with minimum collateral damage. But similar utterances in the future may well affect our livelihood."

The remarks against the Prophet have invited condemnation from many countries, including Qatar where an estimated 445,000 NRKs work. Qatar was among the countries that summoned their respective Indian envoys to lodge a protest, and also demanded an apology from the Indian government. This was followed by

claims that Qatar was targeting Indians and that its malls were shelving Indian products. The chain of events prompted calls on Twitter for boycott of the Qatar Airways, with #BoycottQatarAirways trending on the micro-blogging site.

NRKs feel all of this shows that this explosive matter has the potential to spiral into a very big controversy. "I've been living in Qatar and running my firm here for the past 36 years. It's shameful for me as an Indian that such remarks were made by members of the ruling party in my native country," says P.N. Baburajan, who made Qatar his home in 1986. Calling the remarks "irresponsible", he adds: "No nation must engage in such irresponsible utterances that endanger the livelihoods of thousands of Indians working in the Gulf. It's a dangerous trend."

Sensing trouble, Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan condemned the remarks made by Sharma and Jindal. "It has become a norm for BJP leaders to issue statements with communal undertones. Their irresponsible statements are going to harm the livelihoods of millions of Indians working in the Gulf. I demand that the prime minister clarify his stand on these irresponsible statements," Pinarayi told INDIA TODAY.

Several Muslim groups in Kerala have condemned the remarks. While Kerala governor Arif Mohammad Khan has sought to downplay the controversy, emphasising on India's tradition of inclusivity, the state government is worried about Gulf nations perceiving India as anti-Muslim. The state has a long history of trade with Gulf countries and any backlash is bound to have a disastrous effect on its economy.

(SAI Bureau) For the Indian diaspora in the Gulf, the derogatory remarks made by suspended/ expelled BJP leaders Nupur Sharma and Naveen Kumar Jindal against Prophet Muhammad have come as a shocker and caused apprehension about a potential backlash on them overseas. Around 1.7 million people from Kerala work in the Gulf region and their remittances support thousands of families back home, where unemployment is

high even among the educated youth. The economic hardships brought by the pandemic drove thousands of Indians working abroad to financial misery. Kerala itself saw an estimated 400,000 NRKs (non-resident Keralites) return home after having lost jobs. Many NRKs now fear that the controversy over remarks against the Prophet could bring them fresh uncertainties. "We are scared about the fallout of the irresponsible comments by BJP

Who is Arati Prabhakar, the Indian physicist set to become Science Advisor to US Prez Biden

A veteran of Washington politics, the applied physicist was born in India and raised in Texas. She will be the first woman of colour to lead the key position

(SAI Bureau) As the US sets out on a path to go deeper into space, explore quantum physics and conduct groundbreaking scientific tests, Dr. Arati Prabhakar will be spearheading the core science team. Born in India and raised in Texas, Dr. Prabhakar has been in public service for decades, heading key institutions in different presidential terms. Dr. Arati Prabhakar, who will have to face the senate and secure confirmation to get the top job, will also lead President Biden's cancer moonshot initiative. The 63-year-old will take over the role from Eric Lander, who resigned in February after accepting that he bullied his staff and created a hostile work environment.

The position has been vacant ever since. A veteran of Washington politics, the applied physicist was first appointed as the head of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) by the Clinton administration in 1993. After completing her term, she moved to the West Coast and spent close to two

decades in Silicon Valley as a venture capitalist. She was called back by



former President Barack Obama and given the responsibility to lead the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) between 2012-17. She became the second woman in history to lead DARPA, where she created a biotechnology office that

pioneered work on RNA vaccines to fight the current pandemic. In her new role, she

will help push the President's science agenda which he has laid out in the past, including implementing the learning from the pandemic about what is possible—or what ought to be possible—to address the widest range of needs related to our public health. Biden has also called for

identifying ways in which breakthroughs in science and technology can create powerful new solutions to address climate change, ensure that the US is the world leader in the technologies and industries of the future and that the fruits of science and technology are fully shared across America and among all Americans. While she will push the scientific agenda, Dr. Prabhakar will not be able to spearhead new initiatives as of yet, since the appointment comes on the heels of the American midterm elections. "Dr. Prabhakar was a fantastic DARPA director who led the agency at a critical time for our nation's defense. She is a superb and forward-thinking leader who understands the innovation ecosystem throughout the country and the need to attract and retain new and diverse talent to America's science and technology enterprise," Ash Carter, the former Secretary of Defense was quoted as saying by Politico.



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Indian-Origin Nursing Home Employee Fined For Theft, Cheating In Singapore

Latha Narayanan, 59, stole an ATM card belonging to an elderly resident she was assigned to look after and withdrew SGD 1,000 in cash. She also used the card to buy food and toiletries at a supermarket



(SAI Bureau) Singapore: An Indian-origin nursing home employee was fined SGD 4,000 on Monday after she pleaded guilty earlier to theft and cheating an elderly resident. Latha Narayanan, 59, stole an ATM card belonging to an elderly

resident she was assigned to look after and withdrew SGD 1,000 in cash. She also used the card to buy food and toiletries at a supermarket. Two other similar charges against Latha were taken into consideration during sentencing, according to a report

by The Straits Times. The court heard that in 2019, Latha, who was a health assistant at Woodlands Care Home, was assigned to care for the victim, a 65-year-old man. He died in January 2021, according to court documents. The court heard that sometime in 2019, the man forgot the PIN number for his ATM card and Latha accompanied him to the bank to obtain a new code after a regular hospital visit. The man received his new PIN number in the presence of Latha and placed his ATM card in the pocket of his phone cover. He then handed the device to her for safekeeping. On November 21, 2019, Latha used the card entrusted to her to withdraw SGD

1,000 in cash, committing theft, said the prosecution. She then used the card on November 25 to pay for SGD 73 worth of food and toiletries at a supermarket in Woodlands, dishonestly inducing staff at the store to make the transaction. The offences came to light when the elderly man reported to the police on November 27 that he lost his ATM card and that unauthorised withdrawals had been made from his bank account. This was not Latha's first brush with the law. In 2017, she was fined SGD 600 for property-related thefts, according to court documents. Seeking a fine of SGD 4,000, the prosecution said that the total amount involved in Latha's case

was SGD 1,870, noting that restitution was made in the form of a donation to the Singapore Cancer Society on February 9 this year. In mitigation, defence lawyer Ashwin Ganapathy, who also sought a fine of SGD 4,000, said Latha was committed to making restitution despite needing months to gather the funds. He told the court in an earlier session that Latha had been a victim of bullying in her youth and endured abuse in her marriage. She was also abused by the victim whom she cared for at the nursing home, Mr Ganapathy added. The penalty for theft and cheating is a jail term of up to three years and a fine.

Indian national arrested in US over scam targeting senior citizens

A 24-year-old Indian national in the US was arrested by officials for participating in a scam targeting senior citizens

(SAI Bureau) US federal law enforcement officials have arrested a 24-year-old Indian national in Virginia on charges of participating in an alleged nationwide scam targeting senior citizens. Anirudha Kalkote was produced before a US magistrate in Houston on Friday to face the charges.

The 12-count superseding indictment charges Kalkote with conspiracy and mail fraud. Also named in the indictment is MD Azad, 25, an illegal resident of Houston, who was originally charged in August 2020. He will appear again in court on the new charges in the near future.

The indictment alleges victims were sometimes re-victimised multiple times and threatened with bodily harm if they did not pay.

Upon conviction, both of them face up to 20 years in federal prison and a possible USD 250,000 fine. Three others have already pleaded guilty in relation to the scheme and are awaiting sentencing - Sumit Kumar Singh, 24, Himanshu Kumar, 24, and MD Hasib, 26. They are Indian nationals who illegally resided in Houston.

According to the charges, the ring tricked and deceived victims using various ruses and

instructed them to send money via wire through a money transmitter business such as Western Union or MoneyGram, by buying gift cards and providing to the fraudsters or by mailing cash to alias names via FedEx or UPS. One such scheme allegedly involved the claim of providing computer technical support services. The indictment alleges that the scheme generally worked because fraudsters contacted victims by phone or via internet sites directing them to a particular phone number, federal prosecutors said.

Once victims contacted them,



they were told various stories such as they were communicating with an expert that needed remote access to their computer in order to provide technical support services.

The fraudsters then allegedly gained further access to their personal data and bank and credit card information, the Department of Justice said in a statement.

Kuwait To Deport Expats Over Protest Against Prophet Remarks

All expats in Kuwait must respect Kuwait laws and not take part in any type of demonstrations, said the instructions

(SAI Bureau) Kuwait has said that it will deport expatriates who participated in a demonstration against the remarks made by suspended BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma on Prophet Muhammad, news agency ANI reported quoting local media. The decision was taken as the protesters violated the laws and regulations of the country which prohibits sit-ins or demonstrations by expatriates in Kuwait, the report said. The authorities are in the process of "arresting expats and referring them to the deportation centre to be deported to their countries", the report said quoting the Arab Times. The expats will be banned from entering Kuwait again, it said. All expats in Kuwait must respect

Kuwait laws and not take part in any type of demonstrations, the report said quoting the instructions to authorities. The nationality of the expats who protested is not mentioned in the report.

The remarks by suspended BJP leader Nupur Sharma on Prophet Muhammad had triggered massive protests in the Gulf, with Indian envoys in the region summoned by the Arab nations to register strong protests over the issue. India has dismissed the remarks as those made by "fringe elements" and that it had taken strong action against those who made controversial remarks on Twitter against the minorities. In response to a media query regarding the

statement issued by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs on offensive tweets in India, the Spokesperson of the Embassy of India in Kuwait said, "Ambassador Sibi George had a meeting in the Foreign Office in which concerns were raised with regard to some offensive tweets by individuals in India."

Strong action has already been taken against those who made derogatory remarks. A statement was also issued by concerned quarters emphasizing respect for all religions, denouncing insult to any religious personality or demeaning any religion or sect. Vested interests

that are against India-Kuwait relations have been inciting the people using these derogatory comments. The Bharatiya Janata Party has suspended its spokesperson Nupur Sharma from the party's primary membership and expelled its Delhi media head Naveen Kumar Jindal for their inflammatory remarks. "Ambassador conveyed that the tweets do not, in any manner, reflect the views of the Government of India. These are the views of fringe elements," said the spokesperson. In line with our civilizational heritage and strong cultural traditions of unity in diversity, the Government of India accords the highest respect to all religions," added the spokesperson.

Indian-Origin Man, 28, Jailed In UK For Stalking 121 People

Vishaal Vijapura was sentenced at Croydon Crown Court in south London on Tuesday and also received a Sexual Harm Prevention Order for a term of five years, which imposes restrictions on his activities under a court order

(SAI Bureau) London: A 28-year-old Indian-origin man who had pleaded guilty to stalking offences has been sentenced to two years and eight months' imprisonment by a UK court for seven counts of stalking in relation to aggravated offences against 121 victims. Vishaal Vijapura was sentenced at Croydon Crown Court in south London on Tuesday and also received a Sexual Harm Prevention Order for a term of five years, which imposes restrictions on his activities under a court order. Vijapura had pleaded guilty at the same court to seven counts of stalking involving fear of violence through the internet. "The dedication and commitment from the officers working on the case, with national support from colleagues across the UK, has meant that Vijapura can no longer put these victims at fear of violence," said Detective Inspector Paul Smith, from Scotland Yard's South Area Public Protection Unit. "Some of the victims police have contacted were too scared to venture out alone after the threats received from Vijapura. The internet is now a safer place with future proofing against ongoing offending from this man in the form of a custodial sentence. This kind of criminality



is dangerous and offensive and will absolutely not be tolerated," he said. "The victims in the case have shown great strength in coming forward. They have supported the investigation and provided evidence of how Vijapura's misogynistic behaviour has deeply affected their lives. It is wholly right that he has received a custodial sentence," he added. The UK's Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) authorised the charges against Vijapura to illustrate his overarching stalking behaviour towards 121 known victims. In

January 2021, the Metropolitan Police said it was made aware of a list Vijapura had published online containing victims' personal details, as well as a short essay attempting to justify raping the women and more victims came to light during the police investigation. On many other occasions, Vijapura took the victims' images from their personal social media profiles and published these with a rhetoric stating that the victims enjoyed outlandish sexual gratification. He also published posts online of them with their personal details

encouraging serious sexual violence against them, the Met Police said. Vijapura sent many of the victims --- who span across 16 police areas of England --- direct messages containing "vile and horrific topics with sexualised themes throughout". "These victims have provided evidence and impact statements, as well as providing evidence of them receiving or being aware of online correspondence from Vijapura. Evidence was also gathered showing Vijapura identified the victims online and then followed this up by paying for online services in order to obtain their names and address details," the Met Police said. Following the publication of the online list and the associated essay, Vijapura was arrested on January 28 last year and subsequently bailed with conditions, pending the download and review of his many electronic devices. In March 2021, Vijapura was arrested again in relation to a new offence and by then he was also found in breach of his police bail conditions. The Met Police said detectives managed a complex investigation involving the forensic analysis of many devices in order to gain the necessary evidence to get Vijapura to face justice in court.



Geeta Sexena
Bureau Chief (Punjab))

Gagandeep Singh
Deputy News Editor

Sharanjit Singh Thind
Editor in Chief

Susmita Ghosh
Managing Editor



10 hours of questions, drama and fresh summons: Rahul Gandhi's date with ED

Congress leaders and workers took to the streets as Rahul Gandhi appeared before the Enforcement Directorate in Delhi for questioning in the National Herald case



(SAI Bureau) Congress MP Rahul Gandhi arrived at the Enforcement Directorate (ED) office in Delhi on Monday to appear before it in connection with the National Herald case. He was not alone. The Gandhi scion led a 'Satyagraha' march against the ED summons and party workers took to the streets in solidarity.

Here's how Rahul Gandhi's 'date' with the ED went. On Monday morning, Rahul Gandhi was joined by his sister Priyanka Gandhi as they led several senior leaders and hundreds of workers to the ED office amid heavy

police deployment and barricades. P Chidambaram was, however, amazed since bulldozers were missing in action.

PROTESTS, DETENTION

Delhi Police, who had denied permission for a Congress rally, detained several leaders, including Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and party general secretary KC Venugopal. They were taken to various police stations. At around 11 am, Rahul Gandhi arrived at the ED office, amid zindabad chants. Police lathicharged the protesters as ED began grilling

the former Congress chief in a money laundering case. Senior leaders Adhir Chowdhury and Harish Rawat were dragged out from the protest site. "Jails may be filled, but Congress won't accept defeat," said spokesperson Pawan Khera, as other detained leaders found solace in the song 'Raghupati Raghav...' "Even the British could not suppress the voice of Congress during the freedom struggle, then how can this ruling government?" asked Randeep Singh Surjewala as ED grilled Rahul Gandhi. As many as 459 Congress leaders and workers were detained and later released. This included 15 Lok Sabha MPs, 11 Rajya Sabha MPs including Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge. As many as five MLAs from several state Assemblies were also detained. All woman workers/functionaries detained by police have been released.

RAHUL MEETS SONIA

At around 3 pm, Rahul Gandhi left the ED office after three hours

of questioning. During his 'lunch break', the former Congress chief met Sonia Gandhi, who is recovering from Covid, at Ganga Ram hospital. She will also have to appear before the ED in the case on June 23.

CONGRESS LASHES OUT AT BJP

When the clock struck six, various party leaders addressed the media, lashing out at the BJP-led Centre and ED. Ashok Gehlot claimed that the BJP is the force behind ED and CBI moves against Rahul Gandhi and other Opposition leaders. "The BJP doesn't care about people or their issues. The public is being harassed in the name of religion. The BJP is the force behind ED, CBI raids," Gehlot said.

"This is nothing but politics. Had there been a legal point in this case, it would not have taken eight years for action. This is their [BJP] method to harass people, but we will not be scared. We will continue to fight," said MP Mallikarjun Kharge.

Meanwhile, several others

accused Delhi Police of manhandling senior leaders. Surjewala accused the cops of 'brutalising' its leaders. Chidambaram said he suffered a "suspected hairline crack" during protests.

Amid all this, the ruling BJP hit back at the Congress protest, calling the demonstrations a 'fake satyagraha' in support of corruption. "Through his drama, Rahul Gandhi has proven that he has done something wrong. Otherwise, he would've gone there silently and given a statement to media later. But procession was taken out and he appeared before ED with an army. India has changed, nobody will be scared of you now," said Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma.

At 9:40 pm, Rahul Gandhi left the ED office after nearly ten hours of questioning. But the 'date' did not end there. Reports emerged that the ED has summoned him once again tomorrow as few questions were not covered during today's interrogation.

Am not in presidential race: Bihar CM Nitish Kumar

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has clarified that he is not in the presidential race. The election for the country's highest constitutional post will be held on July 18 and the counting for it will take place on July 21

(SAI Bureau) Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Monday categorically said he is not in the race in the July presidential election setting to rest speculations on it. "I am not in the race to become the country's next president, nor am I going anywhere. Such reports are unfounded and are mere speculations," he said to queries by scribes on the sidelines of his weekly public outreach programme.

The election for the country's highest constitutional post will be held on July 18 and the counting for it will take place on July 21. "I repeat I am not in the race to become the country's next president," was his curt reply when asked to comment on Bihar Rural Development Minister Shrawan Kumar comment on his being a worthy candidate for the post. Immediately after announcement of the schedule for the presidential poll on June 9, Shrawan Kumar, who is also a senior JD(U) leader, had said Nitish Kumar has all the abilities required

for being president.

He had also said "Being a Bihari, I wish that Nitish Kumar will become president of India" and though he is not in the race "Every person would want him to become the president of the country". He is a better candidate for the post and he can shoulder the responsibility well," the minister had insisted. The ball for



Kumar being in the presidential race was set rolling by Maharashtra leader Nawab Malik in February who said that his party, headed by Sharad Pawar was ready to support the JD(U) leader for the country's highest constitutional office if he snapped ties with the BJP. Batting for Bihar, which he has been helming since 2015 and had done so on five previous occasions, Kumar said the alleged use of money and other corrupt practices in the recently concluded Rajya Sabha polls does not exist in the state.

30-foot chariot topples on devotees in Tamil Nadu's Dharmapuri, two killed

A 30-foot chariot toppled on devotees in Tamil Nadu's Dharmapuri district on Monday, killing two

(SAI Bureau) Two people were killed and three others were injured when a huge chariot of a popular temple in Tamil Nadu's Dharmapuri district toppled on Monday.

The deceased have been identified as C Manoharan (57) and G Saravanan (50). The incident occurred while the 30-foot decorated chariot of the Kaliamma temple was being driven around the important streets surrounding the temple as part of the Vaikasi festival. "The chariot overturned all of a sudden and two men who got caught under the chariot's wooden

wheel died," a senior police officer said. The devotees who were pulling the chariot and those watching the procession immediately rushed to the

the chariot, he said.

Three men who were rescued were admitted to the Dharmapuri government hospital.



Russia overtakes Saudi Arabia to become India's 2nd biggest oil supplier: Industry data

Russian-origin crude hit 5 per cent of India's total seaborne imports in April for the first time, rising from under 1 per cent throughout 2021 and Q1 2022, the data showed



(News Agency) Russia has overtaken Saudi Arabia to become India's second-biggest supplier of oil after the war in Ukraine, industry

data showed. Indian refiners bought about 25 million barrels of Russian oil in May, or more than 16 per cent of all their oil imports. Russian-origin crude hit 5 per cent of India's total seaborne imports in April for the first time, rising from under 1% throughout 2021 and Q1 2022, the data showed. India, the world's third-biggest oil-importing and consuming nation, has long defended purchases of crude oil from Russia following President Vladimir

Putin ordering the invasion of Ukraine. The Oil Ministry had last month stated that "energy purchases from Russia remain minuscule in comparison to India's total consumption." Iraq remained the top supplier to India in May and Saudi Arabia is now the third biggest supplier. India has taken advantage of discounted prices to ramp up oil imports from Russia at a time when global energy prices have been rising. After the U.S. and

China, India is the world's third-largest consumer of oil, over 85 per cent of which is imported. Following its invasion of Ukraine, there are now fewer buyers for Russia's Ural crude oil, with some foreign governments and companies deciding to shun Russian energy exports, and its price has fallen. Indian refiners have taken advantage of this and bought Russian crude oil at a discount as high as \$30 per barrel. Earlier, the crude was disadvantageous because of high freight cost.

After RS elections, BJP and MVA set to clash in Maharashtra municipal polls

The Bharatiya Janata Party has set its eyes on June 20 state council polls for 10 vacant seats. Meanwhile, the MVA is confident of winning six seats

(News Agency) After a high voltage drama during Rajya Sabha polls in Maharashtra, BJP-backed independent candidate Sadabhau Khot has withdrawn his nomination from the Maharashtra council polls scheduled on June 20. BJP will now contest with five candidates. With this, a total of 11 candidates are now in the fray for 10 seats. In a turn of events earlier today, a meeting was held between Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) supremo Sharad Pawar and party leaders Ajit Pawar, Dilip Walse Patil, Jayant Patil and Sunil Tatkare at Pawar's private residence Silver Oak in Mumbai. As per sources, analysis of the setback in the Rajya Sabha polls and strategy for upcoming MLC polls were discussed at length. However, all leaders refused to comment post meeting. Also, a series of meetings of BJP candidates with Devendra Fadnavis, leader of the Opposition, at his official residence, while Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) allies met at Shayadri guest house to work out a proposal for unopposed MLC polls. However, the efforts turned futile as Mumbai Regional Congress Committee chief Bhai Jagtap, Mumbai Congress Chief and the second candidate of Congress did not succumb to the pressure by allies for withdrawing nominations, told the sources. Fadnavis clarified in a press conference that they would have tried to make this election unopposed if MVA had agreed to give five seats to the BJP. "But they did not withdraw any candidate and we are confident of winning the fifth seat due to the unrest in MLA's of MVA," Fadnavis said. However, Cabinet Minister and Congress leader Balasaheb Thorat said that they have surplus votes and there is no point in withdrawing Congress candidates. "There is no issue between MVA and allies and they can manage the votes to make all six candidates win," he said. Meanwhile, the BJP is in high spirits after the miraculous



victory of the third candidate, Dhananjay Mahadik, by defeating Shiv Sena's Sanjay Pawar, in recent Rajya Sabha polls. This has boosted the confidence of the party's state leadership to challenge the MVA government again in the battleground of MLC polls. Hence, the BJP has fielded five candidates, namely, Pravin Darekar, Shrikant Bhartiya, Ram Shinde, Uma Khapre, Ram Shinde and Prasad Lad. While MVA allies, Amasha

Padvi Ani Sachin Ahir from Shiv Sena, veteran leaders Ram Raje Nimbalkar and Eknath Khadse from NCP and Chandrakant Handore and Bhai Jagtap from Congress are in the fray. In a 288-member assembly, only 285 members can vote for the legislative council polls as Minister Nawab Malik and Anil Deshmukh are under trial. Shiv Sena MLA Ramesh Latke passed away recently. Given the total strength, as per the formula, the quota for winning

a single candidate comes down to 26.90 i.e. 27 in absolute terms. In this scenario, Shiv Sena with 55 votes can comfortably win two seats, the NCP with the support of two independents are claimed to win two seats with 54 votes and BJP can grab four seats with the support of a few independents claiming to have 113 votes. However, Congress has 44 votes and will need 10 surplus votes for their second candidate.

Murder of a 31 year old man caught in CCTV, 2 accused held

Farman, a 31-year-old person, was brutally murdered on Sunday night in Takiya Kale Khan area which falls under the jurisdiction of IP Estate police station. The incident was caught in the CCTV camera

(News Agency) Farman, a 31-year-old person, was brutally murdered on Sunday night in Takiya Kale Khan area which falls under the jurisdiction of IP Estate police station. Two accused have been apprehended from Haridwar in connection with the case. As per the authorities, a family dispute due to inter-religion marriage is the reason behind the murder. On June 12, information was received at PS IP Estate from LNJP hospital that one person, Farjan, a 29-year-old, resident of Mirdard Road, Delhi, had been stabbed and was brought dead in the LNJP hospital. Accordingly, a case was registered at IP Estate and investigation of the case was taken up. The dedicated police team swung into action and the accused persons were identified as Rajkumar aka Bhola and Mustakim aka Mota. Both the accused persons fled Delhi and were heading towards Ghaziabad. Immediately, a police



team was sent to follow the accused. The police team gave a hot chase and drove around 400 kilometres on National Highway to finally pin down the accused at CNG Pump Station at Jawala puri, Haridwar. The accused, Raj kumar aka Bhola resident of Mirdard Road, Delhi and Mustakim aka Mota resident of

Turkman Gate, Delhi were apprehended by the team. The vehicle, a Swift car, was seized and the weapon used for the crime (a knife) was recovered from it. The interrogation of Raj Kumar, resident of Takiya Kale Khan, Mirdard Road, Delhi, revealed that he had married the sister-in-law of deceased Farman about one year back. He further disclosed that wife of the deceased and Sabrina, wife of accused Rajkumar, are real sisters. There was a family dispute owing to Sabrina's inter-religion marriage between Farman and his wife Aalia's family. The dispute escalated and Raj kumar aka Bhola and Mustakim aka Mota stabbed the victim Farman to death. Mohd Idrish, the father of deceased also got injured while he was trying to save his son Farman. The sustained interrogation revealed that accused persons had an escape plan to flee to Nepal after some days. The co-accused, Mustakim, is a friend of Rajkumar and he had arranged the Maruti Swift car in which the duo had tried to flee to Nepal.

Kashmir: Three Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists killed in Pulwama encounter



(News Agency) Three terrorists of Lashkar-e-Taiba were killed by security forces during an encounter in South Kashmir's Pulwama district. One of the terrorists was responsible for the killing of police officer Reyaz Ahmad. "In the ensuing encounter, three local terrorists of proscribed terror outfit LeT were killed and their bodies were retrieved from the site of the encounter. They have been identified as Junaid Ahmad Sheergojri of Gadoora Pulwama, Fazil Nazir Bhat of Drabgam Pulwama and Irfan Ahmad Malik of Arabal Nikas Pulwama," said Vijay Kumar, Inspector General, Jammu and Kashmir Police. records, all the three killed terrorists were part of groups involved in several terror crime cases including attacks on police and civilians. Deceased Junaid Sheergojri, along with his associate Abid Hussain Shah of Monghama Pulwama, who stands neutralised on May 30, was involved in the killing of police personnel Reyaz Ahmad at his residential house on May 13. "Besides, he was also involved in the recent attack on outside labourers at a brick kiln in Chadoora on June 2 in the outskirts of Pulwama-Budgam axis, in which one labourer was killed and others injured," the J&K Police chief, Kumar, said.

The encounter ensued following a tip-off about their presence in the area. Then a joint search operation was launched by the police, Indian Army and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) on Saturday at 6.55 pm in the Drabgam village area of Pulwama. When the team approached their hideout, the terrorists opened fire indiscriminately which was effectively retaliated by the security personnel, leading to an encounter. "As per police

The police have found incriminating materials, arms & ammunition, including two AK-47 rifles and a pistol from the encounter site. Kashmir valley has witnessed 60 encounters so far, wherein 99 terrorists, including 28 from Pakistan, have been gunned down. The security forces have arrested 47 active terrorists and 185 terror associates. This year, 17 civilians and 16 security personnel have been killed in terror-related incidents.

Exodus of Kashmiri Pandits example of demographic shift after hate speeches, says Delhi HC

Delhi High Court on Monday said that the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits is an example of a demographic shift after hate speeches

(News Agency) Delhi High Court on Monday said that hate speeches are the beginning point of attacks against a targeted community and there have even been instances of demographic shifts in the aftermath of inflammatory speeches. The high court was referring to the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits. Justice Chandra Dhari Singh, quoting references from Bhagavat Gita and Spiderman comics, said that the methodology of hate speeches is not restricted to any religion or community and there are instances of hate speeches in different parts of the country targeted against people of specific communities. "The standards set by leaders are pursued by the subjects," the court said. "People who are mass leaders and occupy high offices must conduct themselves with the utmost integrity and responsibility. It is they who are the role models for the ordinary masses. Thus, it does not befit or behove the leaders to indulge in acts or speeches that cause rifts amongst communities, create tensions, and disrupt the social fabric in the

society," the court added. "There have been and there continue to be instances of hate speeches in different parts of the country targeted against people of specific communities, based upon the demographic composition. There have even been instances of demographic shifts in the aftermath of such Hate/Inflammatory speeches, the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the Kashmir valley is a prime example," the bench observed. The court's observations were made while dismissing a petition by CPI(M) leaders Brinda Karat and KM Tiwari challenging the trial court's refusal to direct the registration of an FIR against Union Minister Anurag Thakur and his BJP colleague and MP Pravesh Verma for their alleged hate speeches concerning anti-CAA protest at Shaheen Bagh here. The court, while dismissing the plea, held that it cannot order investigation of cases under sections 153A, 295A or 505 of the IPC, since the CrPC clearly says that courts cannot take cognizance of the charges without prior sanction of the government.

Indian health minister Mandaviya to travel to Russia for economic meet

(News Agency) India's Minister of Health, Chemicals and Fertilizers Dr Mansukh Mandaviya will be travelling to Russia next week for the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF). This will be the 25th edition of the SPIEF and will take place from June 15th to 18th. SPIEF has been taking place since 1997 with Russian President Putin addressing the mega gathering. Egypt will be the guest country this year. In 2017, India's Prime minister Modi was the chief guest at SPIEF. Advisor to the President of the Russian

Federation and Executive Secretary of the SPIEF Organizing Committee Anton Kobayakov has said, "we are seeing high levels of interest from the international community in platforms for dialogue like ours, and a number of countries have already expressed interest in sending representative delegations to SPIEF 2022," Minister Mandaviya's visit will be the first high-level visit from India to Russia since the latter's invasion of Ukraine in February. Russian FM Lavrov earlier this year had visited India.

'To stop development': Kerala CM on protests spiralling over gold smuggling case

Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan has claimed that protest against him over the gold smuggling case is to stop development in the state



we will not be silent against them. Will resist such political movements politically, the CM said.

"The purpose of the Opposition must be exposed. The Opposition is trying to undermine the development of Kerala. The state government aims to modernise the lives of people. There are many attempts to divide people. People need to be able to assemble and defend themselves against it. At the same time, we would go ahead with secular Kerala and would not allow any attempt to divide the people", he added. "The Left Democratic Front (LDF) government is making every effort to develop Kerala

comprehensively. Realising this, the people gave us another chance to rule the state. Industrial, agricultural and infrastructural development in all sectors of the state are improving. Both the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) and the BJP think that this development will harm them. They don't want the development to happen. What we are seeing now is part of that. We should not remain silent on this," he stated.

PROTESTS

Following the revelation of Swapna Suresh, there were strong protests against CM Pinarayi Vijayan across Kerala. Congress and BJP workers conducted protests at

various district headquarters in Kerala. On Monday, some youth Congress workers protested against the Kerala CM on a flight from Kannur to Thiruvananthapuram. They were arrested and charged with sections including an attempt to murder. The CPI(M) alleged it was an attempt to assassinate the Chief Minister. After this incident, conflicts broke out between CPI(M)-Congress workers in various parts of the state.

The head of the Gandhi statue at the Block Congress office in Payyanur, Kannur was found beheaded. The head of the statue was found placed on the lap of the statue.

(News Agency) Protests against Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan intensified following the revelation of Swapna Suresh, the main accused in the gold smuggling case. She had

claimed that CM Vijayan smuggled currency during his Dubai visits in 2017. But, the chief minister said all protests conducted by the Opposition are to sabotage developments and

AAP Gujarat's new organisational structure to challenge BJP leads to infighting

AAP Gujarat's new organisational structure to fight against BJP, however, has led to an infight in the party

(News Agency) Gujarat unit of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has formed a new organisational structure to fight against BJP, however, it has led to an infight in the party. Some leaders have resigned from their posts in the party, while several others have threatened to quit. Gujarat AAP in-charge Sandeep Pathak has called a high level meeting to resolve the matter at the earliest before the visit of Arvind Kejriwal to Gujarat on June 26.

It seems that all is not well in Gujarat AAP after the announcement of first list of the

new organisational unit. On June 8, Gujarat AAP dissolved its entire organisational unit saying they are coming up with a new powerful structure and strategy to fight BJP. The first list of the new organisational unit was announced on June 12. However, many leaders from South Gujarat and North Gujarat are upset with the new list. Major problems internally in the new announcement are that leaders from North Gujarat, who are part of party's Gujarat unit since the inception, were not given good place in the party and infact they

were sidelined. Major representatives are from South Gujarat, mainly Surat. North Gujarat does not have major representation. Party leaders are unhappy with the new list, they said that none of the leaders have been given posts on the basis of merits, and also alleged that new joiners from Congress have been given important posts. Many of the disgruntled leaders had a meeting with top AAP leaders on Tuesday. The party's state in-charge Sandeep Pathak, too met several leaders to resolve the issue at the



earliest, before Arvind Kejriwal's visit to Gujarat. The next list of

AAP's Gujarat unit will be out in a few days.

Indian PM Narendra Modi directs government departments for 1 million recruitments in next 1.5 years

(News Agency) Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's office (PMO) said on Tuesday (June 14) that the prime minister has directed government departments and ministries to recruit 1 million people within next 1.5 years. PMO tweeted saying that the prime minister reviewed status of human resources in all departments and ministries. "PM @narendramodi reviewed the status of Human Resources in all departments and ministries and instructed that recruitment of 10 lakh people be done by the Government in a mission mode in next 1.5 years," tweeted the PMO. This means that the government has set a deadline of December 2023 for recruitment of 1 million people. The Ministry of Labour and Employment on March 24 this year said, "The data on Employment and

Unemployment is collected through Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) conducted by National Statistical Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) since 2017-18." The decision of the government for the recruitment has come amid frequent criticism by the Opposition on the issue of unemployment. Opposition parties have been lashing out at the government over vacant posts in different government sectors. Modi's direction was welcomed by his colleagues in the government. Union Minister Anurag Thakur posted a tweet calling this a "major step" "PM @narendramodi ji has over the years made government more accountable and governance more people centric, ensuring last mile delivery.

Imposter in army uniform arrested near Eastern Command HQ in Kolkata

(News Agency) A con artist was arrested in Kolkata while trying to sneak into an army garrison near 'Water Gate' of Eastern Command HQ. The suspect was detained in army uniform, in a wearing an Army Major's uniform. Military intelligence received specific input on the 'imposter' roaming around Eastern



Command headquarters in army uniform. Acting on the input, a joint operation was launched with Kolkata Police to nab the suspect. The suspect has been identified as Mohammad Akbar Khan. After a brief search near Fort William, the imposter was nabbed

station for detailed investigation. The initial probe indicated that the imposter was into duping unsuspecting army aspirants, but other angles are also being probed. Few civil defence employees are also on the radar in this case.

Assam: Torrential Rain Throws Guwahati Out of Gear, Four Killed in Landslides

After five long years, the people of Guwahati in Assam experienced heavy downpours from 9 pm on Monday, flooding most of the residential areas in the state's capital city. Most of the houses and the ground floors of several apartments have got submerged due to heavy downpours.



carried out the rescue operations throughout the day. With no electricity since last night, drinking water was the major need for the stranded people. The administration has set up a relief camp at a nearby Hindi school for the people in the affected Anil Nagar area.

"We have arranged for food and drinking water for the stranded people while our NDRF team shall operate at night too to evacuate the stranded people and reach out to those at home in case of emergency. We are taking the marooned to their relatives in Guwahati on their wish and for the rest, we have set up a relief camp. The rains have been unprecedented and as Anil Nagar is in a depressed area and it's difficult to contain these floods," said Debashish Sharma, Commissioner of the Guwahati Municipal Corporation.

"There are drawbacks in the planning of Guwahati. Though I won't squarely blame the people living in the hills, the silt from the hills clogs the drain resulting in floods. I live near the worst affected areas and understand their woes," said Queen Oja, BJP MP from Guwahati. Many people expressed their anguish on Twitter over the situation in the city due to the torrential rains. Talking to CNN-News18, a commuter Nandini Saikia said, "I am a single mother, I take my child walking to the school which is just 200 meters away

from my house. But today, I almost had to swim to keep her in the school."

Another commuter Diganta Mahanta said, "I had to go to the office but the entire city is underwater. Every time there is rain, we are afraid to go out. The government has tried to do certain things to decrease this but somewhere it seems they have taken some wrong plan." Meanwhile, rain-induced landslides killed four people in the Bora Gaon area of Guwahati on Tuesday morning. The four, all construction workers staying in rented accommodation, were buried alive in their sleep. The deceased have been identified as Monowar Hussain, Mafijul Hoque, Aminul Hoque, and Hasmat Ali. While three of the victims were from Dhubri, the fourth one was from Kokrajhar. According to the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), incessant rainfall since Monday evening caused landslides in at least five areas of Guwahati. The authority had identified 366 landslide-prone areas across 19 hills that the city has sprung around.

Reports of landslides from Dima Hasao and Cachar districts had been received too.

The state government has issued an advisory, asking people in Guwahati and its adjoining areas not to venture out unless necessary.

Landslides have impeded traffic movement on the newly

constructed approach road to Kamakhya Temple. The yet-to-be-inaugurated road links the Shaktipeeth with Pandu and is likely to be used extensively in the ensuing Ambubasi Mela from June 22 to 26. The fair draws more than 10 lakh devotees. Talking to the media, GMC Commissioner Devasish Sharma stated, "We are using all our resources to rescue the people stranded and affected due to flood and landslide in the city. But please do not move out of your residence if there is no emergency."

Meanwhile, the Regional Meteorological Centre has predicted heavy to very heavy rains in the northeastern states over the next four days.

"We are prepared for eventualities. If it rains tonight, then the situation shall turn grave. Teams from the SDRF and NDRF are on a scramble and relief stocks too are ready," said Assam cabinet minister Jogen Mohan.

With Tuesday's disaster, the death toll in floods and landslides in the region since April went up to 54. Assam has been the worst hit with 36 dead — nine in landslides — followed by Meghalaya with 13 and Arunachal Pradesh with five.

Deputy Commissioner of Guwahati Pallav Jha has ordered the schools and colleges closed on June 15, owing to the warning of thunderstorms. However, the exams already scheduled can be conducted as scheduled.

Father, uncle attacked in Lucknow court: DHFL promoter Kapil Wadhawan's son

(News Agency) A Mumbai special court has issued a request letter along with production warrants for DHFL promoters, Kapil Wadhawan and Dheeraj Wadhawan, co-accused in the DHFL-Yes Bank scam case. The lawyers of both Kapil and Dheeraj Wadhawan had approached the Mumbai court along with Kapil's son Kartik, pointing out that various incidents took place at Lucknow and the long medical background of both accused was also put forth in the court. Kartik, in his affidavit, also stated that his father and uncle were attacked within the campus of Lucknow court. Earlier, the CBI had taken both Kapil and Dheeraj Wadhawan from the Taloja Central Prison in Navi Mumbai to Lucknow without the requisite permission from the Mumbai court, in whose custody the duo was.

The production warrants have been issued to Special Court, Anti-Corruption (Central Bureau of Investigation), Lucknow West, through Senior Superintendent of Jail, District Jail, Lucknow, to produce them before the Mumbai court on June 17. Special Judge MG Deshpande while going through the applications said that he carefully examined the plea and "It appears that the court at Lucknow is not made aware

of the previous history of these accused persons, medical aid provided to them and the recent order of the High Court for medical aid in respect of accused Dheeraj Wadhawan. Regarding the alleged attack on both accused in Lucknow court and the sworn statement made by Kartik Wadhawan, I am of the opinion that he may bring these facts to the notice of the Court at Lucknow."

The court noted that there are four PMLA cases pending against the Wadhawans along with some CBI cases too. Further pointing to the irregularities, Judge Deshpande noted, "When a production warrant was issued by the Lucknow CBI court, the letter or any intimation to this court was not given, when both accused are undertrial prisoners, undergoing judicial custody in respect of the four cases." The judge went through the report of Superintendent, Taloja jail which clearly indicated that production warrant was given to him and he, then following the directions therein, contacted the party providing agency, arranged the police staff and honoured the production warrant. The superintendent did file a report about Wadhawan's being taken away to Lucknow. However, the court received the report only after they had been taken away.

Govt of not 'jumlas' but 'maha jumlas': Rahul on Centre's jobs announcement

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi took a swipe at the Centre over its announcement of jobs, saying this is a government of not 'jumlas' but 'maha jumlas'

(News Agency) Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday took a swipe at the Centre over its announcement of recruitment of 10 lakh people in the next year and a half, saying this is a government of not 'jumlas' but 'maha jumlas'. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asked various government departments and ministries to undertake

the recruitment of 10 lakh people on a "mission mode" in the next year and a half, his office said on Tuesday. The direction from Modi came

following a review of the status of human resource in all government departments and ministries, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said. Reacting to the announcement, Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi, "Just like eight years ago the youth were deceived with a promise of 2 crore jobs every year, in the same manner it is now the turn of 10 lakh government jobs." "This is a government of not 'jumlas' (rhetoric) but 'maha jumlas'," the former Congress chief said. The prime minister is not an expert at creating jobs, but in creating "news" over jobs, Gandhi alleged.



Chhattisgarh: 200 men at work, a village prays as boy stuck in 60-ft borewell pit for over 3 days

On Monday, more than 200 men were at work, trying to reach Rahul, who remains stuck 62 feet under ground since Friday. Their challenges range from groundwater level, unstable rocks, snakes and scorpions hiding in crevices, and inclement weather



While the plan to use robot had to be shelved after the machines didn't work on wet, slippery soil, rescue teams from SECL, SAIL, BALCO and NTPC set about testing soil strength, leakage of gases and other possible flaws. Meanwhile, water started gathering in the shaft, possibly due to the digging nearby and change in pressure. Drops of water were trickling through the shaft from Friday night, and by Monday morning rescue workers realised that water had filled up to Rahul's neck. Collector J P Shukla, who has been at the spot since Friday, ordered borewells of the entire village to be switched on to minimise water in the shaft. "We have announced in the village to not stop the borewells

and have cleared the immediate rescue site to make the process efficient. The boy will be rescued soon," he said. The biggest challenge for rescue workers is the topography — thick slabs of stones surround the pit and digging through them is a slow process. By late Monday evening, all machines were put aside as NDRF personnel geared up with oxygen tanks and torch head gear. "We are going to dig the last seven feet manually, as the machines are producing vibrations that might make the entire structure unstable," an NDRF rescue worker said. Sitting for over 60 hours in knee-deep water, Rahul has shown courage, rescuers say. "He is eating, sleeping and

even helping get water out of the shaft. His family is trying to talk to him through the hole and the camera we have sent in," an SDRF member said. "Sab ki pariksha hai (it's a test for all of us). We just want our child to be back safely. That's what the whole village is praying for," Shyama Bai, Rahul's grandmother said. CM Bhupesh Baghel has been personally monitoring the progress of rescue and talking to the family on video call every day. He is also updating details on social media and assuring people that Rahul will be saved. A 105-km green corridor has been created between Piharid and Apollo Hospital in Bilaspur, where Rahul will be taken after evacuation.

(News Agency) Monday morning in Chhattisgarh's Piharid village began with all villagers switching on their borewells and operating hand pumps continuously — to draw out water from a pit that was dug for a borewell. Their aim: to rescue a 10-year-old boy stuck for the last more than 75 hours.

On Monday, more than 200 men were at work, trying to reach Rahul, who remains stuck 62 feet under ground since Friday. Their challenges range from groundwater level, unstable rocks, snakes and scorpions hiding in crevices, and inclement weather.

On Friday, when Piharid residents Lala Ram Sahu and wife Geeta Sahu returned home, they found their eldest son Rahul missing. Rahul is deaf and mute, and also has developmental disabilities. After looking for long, they eventually realised he had fallen down a pit that was dug for borewell. Sahu said the pit was dug a few days ago and left with the mouth open when

it didn't yield much water. "We dug up to 80 feet but there was very little water. I had planned on getting it covered when we dug another hole," the worried father said. Sahu owns a small shop and cultivates the field behind his house, for which he needs water. The rescue operation started Friday evening. The hole is barely a couple of feet wide on the ground and widens as the depth increases, officials said. Earlier, district and state-level rescue teams considered pulling him up by throwing down a rope but found it difficult to communicate the plan. "He is taking food we are sending through cables but not holding the cables," one rescuer said. As NDRF teams reached the site late Friday, JCB machines were brought to dig parallel to the pit. By Sunday, the government had roped in a robotics expert; a high-duty machine to cut through rocks was sourced from Bilaspur, about a hundred km away. A team of Army and NDRF are also working at the spot.

Compensation norms violated: DGCA penalises Air India Rs 10 lakh for denying boarding

The aviation safety regulator has said that the matter is "of serious concern and unacceptable"



(News Agency) The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has fined the Tata Group-owned Air India Rs 10 lakh for violating the regulator's norms on denying

boarding to passengers holding valid tickets. The aviation safety regulator has said that the matter is "of serious concern and unacceptable". "A series of checks were carried out by DGCA and during our surveillance at Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Delhi, there were specific instances, in the case of Air India, where the regulation (regarding compensation to passengers) is not being followed, and therefore, a show cause notice was issued to the airline and also a personal hearing was afforded," DGCA said in a media release. It said Air India "does not have a policy in this regard and is not paying any compensation to hapless passengers, whose numbers can be anybody's guess". "To say the least, it is a matter of serious concern and

unacceptable. In the specific cases detailed in the show cause notice, after going through Air India's submissions, as part of enforcement action, the competent authority has levied a penalty of Rs 10 lakh," the DGCA said. It stated that the airline has been advised to immediately put systems in place to resolve the issue, failing which the aviation safety regulator will take further action. An e-mail sent to Air India seeking its comments for this report went unanswered. Last month, following several instances of airlines denying boarding to passengers, the DGCA had written to all airlines and directed them to strictly comply with the regulations. In the letter, DGCA had warned the airlines that any non-compliance would warrant strict action against the erring airline, including imposing financial penalties.

Ensure 100% Covid-19 vaccination, focus on kids & elderly, states told

He asked the states to focus on providing the first and second dose to children between 12 and 17 years, reaching out to them through school-based drives and campaigns targeted to reach out-of-school children during vacation



(News Agency) Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya urged the state health ministers to ensure 100% coverage of Covid-19 vaccines among the eligible population during the month-long 'Har Ghar Dastak' campaign 2.0 during a video conference held to review the progress of the programme. He asked the states to focus on providing the first and second dose to children between 12 and 17 years, reaching out to them through school-based drives and campaigns targeted to reach out-of-school children during vacation. "Let us accelerate our efforts to identify all beneficiaries in the 12-17 age group for the first and second doses so they can attend schools," the minister said.

Indian Navy conducts coordinated patrol with Indonesia Navy

The 38th edition of India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT) is conducted from June 13 to 24 in Andaman Sea and Malacca Strait



(News Agency) The navies of India and Indonesia on Monday began coordinated patrol in the Andaman Sea and the Malacca Strait. The 38th India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT) between the Indian Navy Units of Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) and Indonesian Navy is being conducted from June 13 to 24, a statement issued by the ministry of defence said. The 38th CORPAT is the first post-pandemic Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) between the two countries. It includes a visit by the Indonesian Navy units to ANC at Port Blair from June 13 to 15, 2022 followed by a Sea Phase in the Andaman Sea and visit by IN Units to Sabang (Indonesia) from June

23 to 24, 2022, read the statement. As part of Government of India's vision of SAGAR (Security And Growth for All in the Region), Naval Component under the aegis of HQ ANC undertakes coordinated patrols with other littoral countries of the Andaman Sea along respective Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) towards enhancing regional maritime security. India and Indonesia have enjoyed especially close relations, covering a wide spectrum of activities and interactions which have strengthened over the years. The two Navies have been carrying out CORPAT along their International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) since 2002, the statement said. Live TV

Delhi's Pride': Sarojini, Lajpat Among 5 Markets to Get 'World Class' Makeover, New Branding

(News Agency) Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday made an important announcement regarding some big and popular markets of the city. Sarojini Nagar, Lajpat Nagar, Khari Baoli, Kamla Nagar and Kirti Nagar will be the first five markets to get a "world class makeover" and "new identity" under the first phase of an initiative to revamp the city's market areas.

In a virtual press conference, shared on his Twitter, Kejriwal said, "With a new identity, the markets of Delhi will now move towards progress. Important announcement regarding big markets of Delhi." The chief minister said under this initiative, markets will be redeveloped, beautified, and get a new branding keeping in mind their public appeal. "These markets are

Delhi's pride and, once redeveloped, tourists from across the world will visit them. This is in accordance with the announcement in the 'Rozgar Budget' to create more job avenues," he added. He further said the Delhi government had put an advertisement in the newspaper on April 22, following which it received 49 applications from 33 markets. Soon, an eight-member committee was formed and nine were shortlisted, he added.

Kejriwal also said the committee members inspected the markets and then made a final list of five in consultation with market associations, shopkeepers and other stakeholders.

Each market was chosen for its unique selling point, and rebranding value. In their report,

the selection committee has mentioned that Kamla Nagar's USP lies in its appeal to the youth. "Kamla Nagar is known to be a popular spot for youngsters, who gather there for adda," Kejriwal said.

Khari Baoli has been chosen for having the best spices, and spices have been traded here since the Mughal empire.

Lajpat Nagar is known for high-end street fashion and is a one-stop destination for ladies' fashion and wedding shopping, the committee has noted in its report. As for Sarojini Nagar, the USP is fast fashion with the latest trendsetting fashions, while Kirti Nagar is a one-stop shop for furniture.

"I congratulate the market associations and shopkeepers of these markets. These have



been chosen for the first phase, The best designs will be to make them world standard," chosen, on the basis of which these markets will be remade," Kejriwal said. As for the design component itself, the Delhi government will announce a competition in six weeks, the CM said. "India's best designers and architects will take part in the competition.

Under the Delhi government's project, markets will be beautified and civic amenities enhanced so that footfall increases as does business.

How Army, Navy and IAF Will Induct and Train Agniveers under New Agnipath Scheme

(News Agency) Recruitments to the Armed Forces will undergo a massive change with the government on Tuesday launching a new Agnipath scheme, under which soldiers or 'Agniveers' would be hired for only four years. The scheme announced by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and three service chiefs will kickstart the process of recruitment into the Army, Navy and Indian Air Force (IAF), which continues to remain stalled for two years now. It was cleared by the cabinet committee on security on Tuesday. The committee is chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Under the scheme, youth between ages 17.5 and 21 will be recruited into the three services. They will have a training period of six months. It will be open to men and also to women progressively based on service-specific requirements.

Their enrolment will be based on 'All India All Class' basis and they will form a separate rank in the Armed Forces and will carry a distinct insignia. After exiting the services after four years, up to 25% of them can apply voluntarily to join the services on a regular basis, depending on merit and organisational requirements. As reported first by News18, their remuneration would be Rs 30,000-Rs 40,000 per month, aside from other risk and hardship allowances. News18 had reported that the scheme has a Seva Nidhi contributory package, under which the soldiers will contribute 30% of their monthly emoluments and the government will contribute the same amount. On completion of four years, they will receive Rs 11.7 lakh (with interest) and this will be exempt from income tax. In the instance of death on duty, they will receive over Rs

1 crore, including Seva Nidhi package and full pay of the period they could not serve. In the instance of disability, they will receive Rs 44 lakh based on the percentage of disability. Recruitment rallies will commence in 90 days and about 46,000 soldiers will be recruited under the scheme this year, of which 40,000 vacancies will be for the Army and 3,000 for the IAF and Navy.

Aside from the financial package, they will be incentivised with higher educational credits, lateral absorption and other bridging courses when they are released after four years, the government said. As per the government, the scheme will ensure a youthful profile of the Indian Armed Forces and will transform the Armed Forces into a tech-savvy and modern fighting force, while ensuring the availability of disciplined, motivated and

skilled youth from diverse backgrounds in civil society after four years, who will contribute to nation building. Defence minister Rajnath Singh told the media that various states and ministries in the central government are working towards ensuring that Agniveers get preference in jobs after they complete their tenure and the full picture will emerge in a few days. Army chief General Manoj Pande said the scheme would bring paradigm changes in the Human Resource Management of the Indian Army. "It will enhance youthful profile of the Army by reducing the average age of a soldier from 32 to 26 years, there will be an increase in technical threshold of the Army by recruiting Agniveers through ITIs & other technical institutes and there will be an increased availability of medically and physically fit personnel at the cutting edge level of field units," he said.

Increasing Chinese power on a global scale: Major headache for India?

By Susmita Ghosh

People's Republic of China (PRC) is gradually increasing strength across borders that it shares with India, as per U.S. Secretary of Defence Lloyd James Austin, in the 19th Shangri La Dialogue in Singapore organized by the International Institute for Strategic Studies. The approach is more of a coercive and aggressive route to its territorial claims. For this very reason, the USA is also taking the Indo-Pacific region as its operation priority while implementing the American grand strategy.

From the South China Sea to Ladakh to Arunachal, China is investing resources to gradually increase its military presence,

Expanding from the South China Sea to Ladakh to Arunachal, China is investing resources to gradually increase its military presence, which can be the cause of a major headache for India

which can be the cause of a major headache for India. Even in the East China Sea, the ever-expanding fishing fleet is causing frequent clashes with its neighbours. In the South China Sea, PRC uses man-made islands with advanced weaponry to ascertain its marine border claims. At the same time, Mr Austin stated that further to the west, it is seen that Beijing continues to harden its position along the border that it shares with India.

The USA has expressed concern about the Chinese ongoing construction along the Pangong Tso Lake. The Commander of U.S. Army Pacific, General Charles A. Flynn, who was in India recently, branded the Chinese activity in Eastern Ladakh as "eye-opening" and infrastructure being created in their Western Theatre Command as "alarming."

Recently, PRC expressed its aggressive attitude towards Taiwan, claiming that they would even consider a war if needed. The western countries and their allies condemned this attitude. They have also expressed concern about how PRC is increasing its infrastructure and military presence along the Indian border.

The US Department of Defence, in

their report to the US Congress, analyzed the military and security developments of the PRC. It was stated that despite the ongoing diplomatic and military approaches to reduce border tensions, the PRC took incremental tactical action to assert its claim at the Line of Actual Control (LAC). There were several instances when the People's Liberation Army (PLA), which is the army of PRC, crossed the LAC to launch incursions into the Indian-controlled territory and concentrated troops at several standoff locations.

To prevent such incidents from repeating, the U.S. Department of Defence plans to maintain an active presence across the Indo-Pacific.

As Mr Austin stated in the Shangri-La Dialogue, no Indo-Pacific countries should face any political intimidation, economic coercion, or harassment by maritime militias. The goal is to achieve a region free of aggression and bullying, and for that, the USA promised continuous support for the 2016 Arbitral Tribunal ruling.

PRC has often been involved in clashes with the Indian border force across various sectors. At the Ladakh border, the conflict began in May 2020 and reached its peak in June, 2020 when the armies had a face-off. In the Doklam valley, too, there has been an ongoing conflict. The PRC continues to strengthen its position on the Arunachal Pradesh border too, by building bridges and increasing road connectivity. The USA has warned India officially about this presence and they think that it is a cause enough for worry. The Chinese policy of constant expansion is affecting India to a large extent. The border issue to the north-west, north, and north-eastern fronts, along with a Chinese collaboration on various foreign seaports, is quite worrisome to India. For this reason, an Indo-US collaboration across various fields and agencies can be a way out, which will be mutually beneficial for both the sides to handle the Chinese troubles globally.

What the Rajya Sabha polls show

From the down-to-the-wire Rajya Sabha election on Friday — where, keeping with a trend seen in recent years, a largely anodyne event turned into a thrilling political fight due to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s inclination to take no election for granted — there are four takeaways.

One, the Maha Vikas Aghadi continues to be a work in progress in

Maharashtra, and despite the best efforts of Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar and chief minister Uddhav Thackeray, kinks in coordination (cross voting, the cancellation of one vote) and the inability of two jailed ministers to vote hurt the coalition which has been battling choppy waters and the arrest of senior ministers on corruption charges. Counting in the state, and in Haryana, stretched late into the night after a slew of challenges by both sides but the loss of a seat it expected to win will hurt the unlikely alliance.

Two, for an enfeebled and centralised Congress, the election is yet another lesson in the importance of strong regional leaders. That the party managed to pull through in Rajasthan is almost solely due to Ashok Gehlot, who led the fight from the front. For a party that has been haemorrhaging state-level leaders for a decade, the

results should be an opportunity to pause its protracted leadership crisis and focus on empowering grassroots leaders instead. Three, the fight in Karnataka indicates that politics continues to be fluid in the state. With elections due next year and the Janata Dal (Secular) in some

trouble — its candidate received the lowest votes for the fourth Upper House seat from the state — it appears that

the state election will see a keen contest between the incumbent BJP and the Congress. But as entertaining as the contests in these four states were, they cannot distract from the bigger picture: That, at the end of the day, the BJP has bolstered its hold on national politics and created a smooth glide path for any legislative agenda. The Opposition may have done well to hold on in some states, but its position on the ground has not been strengthened (indeed, it has only managed to win what it should have got automatically due to its assembly strengths and has suffered two embarrassing defeats), and its parliamentary challenge is bound to be even weaker between now and 2024. With the largest arsenal of members in the Upper House in a generation, the BJP is set to, once again, change the contours of Indian politics. That is the fourth, and most important, takeaway from the polls.


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Editor in Chief & Publisher :

Sharanjit Singh Thind

Managing Editor :

Susmita Ghosh

Editor (Political Affairs-India) :

Aruna Singh

(Legal Columnist) Anusha Syed

Special Correspondents:

Gagandeep Singh (India)

(Insider Show Host) Geeta Saxena

Chief Photographer : Vijay Shah

Editorial Intern: Roubin Singh Thind

Web Coordinator : Harpreet Singh

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REGD & MAILING OFFICE :

P.O Box 7005 Hicksville New York 11801

Phone: 917 612 3158

editor@thesouthasianinsider.com, thesouthasianinsider@gmail.com

www.thesouthasianinsider.com

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Why US and China are at loggerheads over Taiwan?

Though tensions between Washington and Beijing have recently escalated over Taipei, experts say there is little cause for concern that a full-blown war will break out

A day after US defence secretary Lloyd Austin accused Beijing of "destabilising" military activity in a speech to the Shangri-La Dialogue security summit, his Chinese counterpart Wei Fenghe hit back in a fiery address at the same event, saying Beijing had "no choice" but to fight if attempts are made to separate Taiwan from China. "We will fight at all cost, and we will fight to the very end," he said. "No one should ever underestimate the resolve and ability of the Chinese armed forces to safeguard its territorial integrity." Austin on Saturday accused China of threatening to change the status quo on Taiwan with a steady increase in provocative and destabilizing military activity near the island. Wei fired back Sunday that the US was not adhering to its one-China policy, saying it keeps playing the Taiwan card against China. "Let's take a closer look why US and China are at loggerheads over Taiwan: Washington's 'strategic ambiguity' ploy. The US is engaging in a delicate balancing act between Taiwan and China. Washington follows a one-China policy, which recognizes Beijing but allows informal relations and defence ties with Taipei.

It provides arms to Taiwan – it is

by far the largest arms dealer for Taiwan – and follows a 'strategic ambiguity' policy about how far it would be willing to go to defend Taiwan in the face of a Chinese invasion. At the same time, it does not support Taiwanese independence. Meanwhile, the relationship between Taiwan and China can best be described as "it's complicated". Taiwan and China split during a civil war in 1949, but China claims the island as its own territory, and has not ruled out the use of military force to take it, while maintaining it is a domestic political issue. Since Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen took office in 2016, Beijing has refused all contacts with her government.

Tsai says Taiwan has no need to make such a declaration since it is already de-facto independent, and has refused to meet China's basic demand that she recognize Taiwan as part of the Chinese nation. She has built up Taiwan's traditionally strong ties with the US, Japan and other allies as she has sought to boost the armed forces' ability to resist a potential Chinese invasion. China allows no independent polling on the question, but public sentiment tends to run strongly in favour of its arguments on

the need for, and inevitability of, unification between the sides. That is solidly in line with the Communist Party's relentless propaganda on the issue and the strongly nationalist tone it has adopted since jettisoning orthodox Marxism.

In contrast, support for unification has fallen to single digit percentages in Taiwanese public opinion polls, with the vast majority favouring a continuation of the status quo of de-facto independence. Most now identify exclusively as Taiwanese, with the government and many social organizations supporting that view. The Presbyterian church, whose parishioners were attacked in the California church, has been closely associated with the pro-democracy movement and promotion of Taiwan's independent identity. Experts say there is little cause for that a full-blown war over Taiwan will break out between the US and China. "There's a lot of rhetoric, but the Chinese have to mind the gap very carefully if they want to launch an invasion of Taiwan, especially so close to the Ukraine crisis. The Chinese economy is far more interconnected with the global economy than Russia's is," William Choong, senior

fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, told BBC.

"Both sides are sticking to their guns on Taiwan. They need to look tough, they don't want to be seen as rolling back or stepping back," Collin Koh, research fellow with the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies, told BBC. "But at the same time they are very mindful about entering an outright conflict. They're looking at each other's rhetoric with eyes wide open, and both sides are trying to temper the risk." However, in recent times tensions seem to have escalated.

China in May made the second largest incursion into Taiwan's air defence zone this year with Taipei reporting 30 jets entering the area, including more than 20 fighters. President Joe Biden raised eyebrows and China's pique last month saying that the US would intervene militarily if Taiwan were attacked, though the White House later said the comments did not reflect a policy shift. Secretary of State Antony Blinken last month said China represented the most serious long-term challenge to the international order for the United States, with its claims to Taiwan and efforts to dominate the strategic South China Sea.

Go Back to Basics! Amid Fear of 4th Wave, Some Important Lessons from 2020 Covid Chapter

India reported 7,240 new coronavirus infections in the last 24 hours, its highest number of daily cases since March 2. State governments have been attempting to enforce Covid-19 norms better after various relaxations provided after the third wave, prompted by the Omicron variant, subsided. But now, with Covid-19 cases on the rise again, authorities are tightening back rules to prevent a surge of the virus again.

In fresh norms shared yesterday, aviation regulator DGCA said airlines must de-board any passenger before departure if they refuse to wear face mask inside an aircraft even after being warned. Airport operators must take help of the local police and security agencies and levy fines on people not wearing face masks in terminals, it also noted.

It is not an uncommon site to witness people without masks on streets, at crowded places now. After two years of the pandemic, while mask fatigue and pandemic fatigue is usual and not unprecedented. A good vaccination coverage in the country along with

bouts of reinfection have slowed spread. Still, one must ensure following these norms, albeit in more sustainable ways, to avoid getting and spreading the infection. When the virus spread first began in India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked people to wear masks, maintain 'do gajj ki doori' (social distancing of at least six feet), and to avoid unnecessarily going out. Now, as most of us have become used to shirking these rules, News18 revisits the most unavoidable ones to stay safe, and why they are important: Masks were one of first defences against Covid-19 when it first emerged two years ago. While N-95 masks are generally agreed to be the most protective against the virus, people also switched to cloth masks to protect themselves.

Why a Mask Though?

Wearing masks, along with other Covid-19 precaution can help combat against the risk of infection. The virus enters through a person's eyes, nose and mouth, and it helps to at least shield two of these areas while entering crowded zones. At the height

of the second wave in India, and for immuno-compromised people, wearing face shields was also common.

What Mask Should You Pick?

According to the Centre for Disease Control in the US, KN95 masks are the most effective in preventing infections. These are mostly used for surgical purposes but have become common for general use through the pandemic. Normal surgical masks are also a good option. Cloth masks are the least preferred but do offer some degree of protection to the user if worn correctly.

Social distancing is also an important rule to prevent spread of the infection. "Social distancing is a non pharmaceutical infection prevention and control intervention implemented to avoid/decrease contact between those who are infected with a disease causing pathogen and those who are not, so as to stop or slow down the rate and extent of disease transmission in a community. This eventually leads to decrease in spread, morbidity and

mortality due to the disease," the Ministry of Health says.

The same logic applies to enforcing lockdown amid heights of waves to limit the interaction of those with Covid-19 with those uninfected.

Six feet is an ideal distance that one can maintain with a stranger in a public environment to limit the risk of Covid-19. One should also ideally make the effort to avoid crowded surroundings, limiting outings. Over the course of the pandemic, various establishments (public and private) have inculcated norms such as separating seats, creating social distancing 'circles' to help people maintain a distance from one another. However, the onus also falls on citizens to make use of these provisions. After the pandemic, experts stressed upon regularly sanitising hands in case one does not have easy access to wash their hands. As the virus can stay on at surfaces for days, it becomes likely to pick it up while touching surfaces. In that scenario, washing our hands regularly becomes the best bet to avoid picking up the infection.

Why is Delhi battling severe water shortage?

Delhi's share of Yamuna water comes from Haryana, which lies upstream. With the river's water level dwindling this year, it has been difficult for water treatment plants in Delhi to draw raw water, and meet the demand



With the river's water level dwindling this year, it has been difficult for water treatment plants in Delhi to draw raw water, and meet the demand.

The DJB has attributed the shortage to receiving inadequate quantities from Haryana. In its notice on June 9, the DJB said that there has been "less receipt" of raw water in the Delhi Sub-Branch (DSB) and Carrier Lined Channel (CLC), and that water would be available at low pressure till the "sufficient water is released by Haryana in DSB, CLC and River Yamuna".

The CLC and DSB carry water from Munak in Haryana to Delhi. From the end of April onwards, the DJB has written to the Haryana Irrigation Department multiple times requesting 150 cusecs of additional water to

meet the demand in Delhi. In its letters, the DJB had also noted that the river has been running dry.

What has water level in the Yamuna dwindled?

With northwest India having recorded an unduly warm summer and a deficit in rainfall over the past few months, the parts of the river bed of the Yamuna are visible as it runs through Delhi.

The deficit in rainfall over northwest India from March to May this year is 63%, and northwest India also recorded its hottest March and April in 122 years. The pond at Wazirabad, from where two of Delhi's WTPs draw water, has witnessed depleting levels. Since some river water from other points was also diverted to Wazirabad, water

production was hit at seven out of nine WTPs in Delhi last week. **What is being done to deal with the crisis?**

To meet the demand, the DJB has been drawing more groundwater from tubewells. The DJB has plans to set up RO plants at six locations in the city to boost drinking water availability. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had said earlier this month that the government is working on recharging groundwater to increase the production capacity in the city. Last week, Kejriwal as well as DJB Vice Chairman Saurabh Bharadwaj had appealed to the Haryana government to release more water. Officials in Haryana have maintained that the water that is due to Delhi is being released.

Delhi has been facing a severe water shortage this summer, with water levels depleting in the Yamuna. The latest notice issued by the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) warning the public of water shortages came on June 9. It said that the DJB had "done rationalization" of water in Delhi and that water will be available

at low pressure from June 10 onwards, till sufficient water is available.

Why is there a shortage of water in Delhi?

The DJB relies on the Yamuna for roughly 40% of the water it supplies. Delhi's share of Yamuna water comes from Haryana, which lies upstream.

When is Presidential election? All you need to know about the polls

The polls will witness 4,809 electors, including MPs and MLAs, voting to elect President Kovind's successor

As the tenure of President Ram Nath Kovind comes to an end on July 24, 2022, an election to fill the position of the 16th President of India will be held on July 18. The polls will witness 4,809 electors, including MPs and MLAs, voting to elect President Kovind's successor.

In the last election in 2017, Ram Nath Kovind became the President after defeating joint opposition candidate Meira Kumar. Kovind polled 7,02,000 votes compared with Kumar's 3,67,000, out of a total of 10,69,358 votes.

When is the presidential election?

The Election Commission on Thursday announced July 18 as the date for the 16th Presidential Election.

"The ECI has fixed the schedule for the election of the office of the President of India. The notification for the election will be issued on June 15, the last date for nomination is scheduled for June 29, while the polls are to be held on July 18. The counting of the votes, if needed, shall be done on July 21," Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said at a press conference in New Delhi. "The commission has decided to maintain all Covid precautions and protocols on polling day," he added. The President is elected by the members of the Electoral College consisting of elected members of both Houses of Parliament, and elected members of the Legislative Assemblies of all States including National Capital Territory of Delhi and the

Union Territory of Puducherry.

However, the nominated members of either Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha or Legislative Assemblies of the states are not eligible to be included in the Electoral College and therefore, are not entitled to participate in the election process. Similarly, members of the Legislative Councils are also not electors for the Presidential election.

Nadda, Rajnath to hold talks with other parties on BJP's behalf

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Sunday authorised its president JP Nadda and Union minister Rajnath Singh to

hold consultations with different political parties, including those in the Opposition, on the President's election, in what is being seen as an outreach by the ruling party to arrive at a consensus on the choice for the top constitutional post.

Going by its strength in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha as well as in many state assemblies, the BJP is in a comfortable position to ensure the victory of the candidate nominated by it in the upcoming election. The two senior leaders will talk to both ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and

opposition United Progressive Alliance (UPA) constituents, besides other political parties as well as independent members, the BJP said in a statement issued by its general secretary Arun Singh.

Mamata to host Opposition meet on June 15

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata

the country". Meanwhile, Senior Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday said party president Sonia Gandhi has asked him to hold talks with all like-minded parties on the possibility of fielding a common candidate for the Presidential polls. Following her direction, Kharge, who is Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha, called on NCP chief Sharad Pawar here to discuss the issue. The government as well as the Opposition is yet to name any candidate for the Presidential poll. However, some leaders have shown interest in throwing their hats into the ring.

The JD(U) has already set the cat among the pigeons by suggesting Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar could be a presidential candidate. JD(U) leader and Kumar's ministerial colleague, Shravan Kumar, had proposed publicly that Kumar "can be a good candidate for the President of India."

Only an official announcement of candidates, including by the NDA of which the JD(U) is a part, may put an end to the current round of speculations. However, since 1997, there has been contest between only two candidates – one of the ruling dispensation and the other supported by the Opposition, after a change of law making it mandatory for 50 MPs to propose the candidate for the election to the highest office in the country and another 50 seconding his candidature.



A backlash against Chinese President Xi Jinping's authoritarian style is unlikely at this point

While Xi's actions at maximising his authority have caused deep concerns within the higher echelons of the CCP, he by no means represents a novelty in Chinese elite politics in his quest for absolute power or his penchant for subverting norms

As the 20th Party Congress of the Communist Party of China (CCP) approaches, the narrative around a perceived intra-party backlash against President Xi Jinping has been gaining traction. A recurrent theme in this paradigm relies upon juxtaposing Xi's power grab and authoritarian style of politics against the more democratic and orderly system of governance established by Deng Xiaoping, and followed by Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao.

While Xi's actions at maximising his authority have caused deep concerns within the higher echelons of the CCP, he by no means represents a novelty in Chinese elite politics in his quest for absolute power or his penchant for subverting norms. Though Deng formulated the rules relating to succession and collective leadership, he also conceived the supra-party body in the form of the Central Advisory Commission to retain paramount control over the CCP. In his pursuit to realise his vision for the party, he removed one chairman and two general secretaries. During the ousting of Hu Yaobang and

Zhao Ziyang, the highest party position Deng held was the Chairman of the Central Military Commission. Therefore, as per the "norms", Deng had no authority to either ask Hu to dismiss the leaders behind the 1986 student protests or to even call the politburo meeting in 1989 that criticised Zhao and pressed for his exit. Further, Deng not only chose his successor but also designated the successor of Jiang Zemin which, going by the "norms", did not fall under his prerogative.

As a technocrat-politician, Jiang did not exactly bypass the norms but rather held his sway by establishing an alliance of patron-protégé network. Jiang even used his "Shanghai Clique" to maintain his influence within the Hu administration. Therefore, Xi's "power grab" cannot become the core reason for the dissenting voices within the CCP to coalesce into an effective opposition against him. Moreover, Xi is the CCP's own creation. Xi, with his "red" pedigree, was installed at the helm of Chinese politics to deal with the existential threat being faced by the

CCP in the form of corruption. Consolidation of central authority was a necessity not only to tackle corruption but also to prevent the rise of regional power bases like the "Liaoning faction". This alliance comprising Bo Xilai, Zhou Yongkang, and Xu Caihou not only commanded political power but virtually controlled the security apparatus of the country. Therefore, while to outside observers Xi was compromising norms relating to attacking fellow "princelings" and the retired members of the Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC), he had the tacit support of the party elders for these early actions. Furthermore, the popularity of the "Chongqing Model" championed by Bo demonstrates that there was growing disenchantment among the general public with the course the party was taking. And it is here that Xi's efforts to curb the coaching industry, rein in property developers, or his calls for "common prosperity" find resonance with people. Xi's economic misadventures, and his proclivity to muzzle dissent, if

not curtailed, will certainly affect his politics. However, the 20th Party Congress is not likely to be that moment. The recent leadership changes at the Provincial Party Committees also bear out that Xi continues to be in control. Several of the current provincial party chiefs have work-experience in Fujian, Zhejiang, and Shanghai where Xi either served as the party secretary or governor. Further, Xi's aides and party secretaries of Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing, Guangdong, and Xinjiang are the top contenders for the next politburo/ PBSC, along with the political, propaganda, and security arms of Xi. However, in order to neutralise any resistance, Xi will also adopt some tactical measures such as the likely promotion of Hu Chunhua to the PBSC. Factional rivalries are a reality of Leninist systems. However, their impact on a leader's actual power is complex. Therefore, for now, the 20th Party Congress has Xi Jinping's name imprinted on it not only in terms of personnel selection but on the structural norms and the emerging ideological landscape of the CCP.

What is the FATF's grey list, and could Pakistan be taken off it at last?

Grey listing means FATF has placed a country under increased monitoring to check its progress on measures against money laundering and terrorism financing

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the international watchdog monitoring money laundering, terror financing, and other threats to global financial networks, is expected to decide whether to take Pakistan off the 'grey' list at the end of its ongoing plenary session in Berlin.

The four-day FATF plenary will close on June 17. Pakistan has been on the FATF grey list continuously since June 2018, working to comply with the requirements of the watchdog to combat money laundering and terror financing.

The FATF is an inter-governmental body that sets international standards seeking to prevent international financial crimes that aid terrorism. It is a policymaking body that works to generate political will in national jurisdictions for legislative and regulatory reforms in these areas. The FATF was established in July 1989 by a G-7 Summit in Paris, initially to examine and develop measures to combat money laundering. After the 9/11 attacks, the FATF in October 2001 expanded its mandate to incorporate efforts to combat terrorist financing, and in April 2012, it added efforts to counter the financing of proliferation of weapons of mass

destruction. The FATF currently comprises 37 member jurisdictions and two regional organisations (European Commission and Gulf Cooperation Council), representing most major financial centres in all parts of the globe. The FATF has developed the FATF Recommendations, or FATF Standards, which ensure a co-ordinated global response to prevent organised crime, corruption and terrorism. Over 200 jurisdictions around the world have committed to the FATF Recommendations through the global network of nine FATF-Style Regional Bodies (FSRBs) and FATF memberships. India has been a member of the FATF since 2010. It is also a member of its regional partners, the Asia Pacific Group (APG) and the Eurasian Group (EAG). Pakistan has argued unsuccessfully that India is biased and motivated against it. Grey listing means FATF has placed a country under increased monitoring to check its progress on measures against money laundering and terrorism financing. The "grey list" is also known as the "increased monitoring list".

As of March 2022, there are 23 countries

on the FATF's increased monitoring list — officially referred to as "jurisdictions with strategic deficiencies" — that include, apart from Pakistan, Syria, Turkey, Myanmar, Philippines, South Sudan, Uganda, and Yemen.

In essence, in the assessment of the FATF, all these countries have failed to prevent international money laundering and terrorist financing, and are, therefore, on a global watchlist.

To be pulled out of the grey list, a country has to fulfill the tasks recommended by the FATF, for instance, confiscating properties of individuals associated with terrorist groups. If the FATF is satisfied with the progress, it removes the country from the list.

The FATF most recently took Zimbabwe, and before that Botswana and Mauritius, off the grey list. "Zimbabwe has strengthened the effectiveness of its AML/CFT regime and addressed related technical deficiencies to meet the commitments in its action plan regarding the strategic deficiencies that the FATF identified in October 2019," the FATF said. AML/CFT refers to "Anti-Money Laundering/Combating the Financing of

Terrorism".

In the case of Pakistan, it first entered the list in 2008, left it, and then was on it from 2012 to 2015. Since 2018, it has not left the list.

How does grey-listing impact a country? Pakistan's grey-listing by the FATF from 2008 to 2019 may have resulted in a cumulative GDP loss of USD 38 billion as per a working paper by Tabadlab, an Islamabad-based advisory firm.

This is because, although being added to the grey list does not imply any economic sanctions (unlike the black list), it signals to the global financial and banking system about increased risks in transactions with the country in question, according to The Economist Intelligence Unit.

Also, given that major financial institutions like the IMF and World Bank are affiliated with FATF as observers, a grey-listed country "faces complications in accessing international lending instruments," the Tabadlab paper said. One instance is of a USD 6 billion IMF loan contract from July 2019 that emphasised the need for Pakistan to comply with the FATF's action.

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What is Web 5.0-the blockchain-powered digital network Twitter's ex-CEO wants to build?

Being developed by former Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey's Bitcoin business unit, The Block Head, Web 5.0 is aimed at "building an extra decentralized web that puts you in control of your data and identity"



built leveraging the blockchain technology, where people are able to interact with each other without the need of an intermediary. Web 3.0 will be driven by Artificial Intelligence and machine learning where machines will be able to interpret information like humans.

What is Web 5.0?

Being developed by Dorsey's Bitcoin business unit, The Block Head (TBH), Web 5.0 is aimed at "building an extra decentralized web that puts you in control of your data and identity". Talking about the idea on its website, the TBH says: "The web democratized the exchange of information, but it's missing a key layer: identity. We struggle to secure personal data with hundreds of accounts and passwords we can't remember. On the web today, identity and personal data have become the property of third parties." Simply put, Web 5.0 is Web 2.0 plus Web 3.0 that will allow users to

'own their identity' on the Internet and 'control their data'. Both Web 3.0 and Web 5.0 envision an Internet without threat of censorship – from governments or big tech, and without fear of significant outages. Replying to a Twitter question if there was any difference between Web 5.0 and Web 3.0, Dorsey argued that Web 3.0 isn't truly decentralized or owned by its users, but is instead controlled by various "venture capitalists and limited partners".

What are the use cases for Web 5.0?

On its website, the TBT presents two use cases for how Web 5.0 will change things in the future. About changing the "control of identity", it says: "Alice holds a digital wallet that securely manages her identity, data, and authorizations for external apps and connections. Alice uses her wallet to sign in to a new decentralized social media app. Because Alice has connected to

the app with her decentralized identity, she does not need to create a profile, and all the connections, relationships, and posts she creates through the app are stored with her, in her decentralized web node. Now Alice can switch apps whenever she wants, taking her social persona with her." Talking about giving users control over their own data, it cites example of another user, Bob, and describes him as a music lover who hates having his personal data locked to a single vendor as it forces him to regurgitate his playlists and songs over and over again across different music apps. "Thankfully there's a way out of this maze of vendor-locked silos: Bob can keep this data in his decentralized web node. This way Bob is able to grant any music app access to his settings and preferences, enabling him to take his personalized music experience wherever he chooses," it adds.

South Asia remains the world's most polluted region, with India ranking second

In no other part of the world is pollution's devastating impact more obvious than in South Asia, which bears more than half of the world's pollution burden. If the current high levels of pollution continue, residents are predicted to lose around 5 years on average, and more in the most contaminated areas. India has accounted for almost 44 per cent of the global rise in pollution since 2013. Globally, India is the second-most polluted country in the world after Bangladesh, where life expectancy was reduced by 6.9 years in 2020 due to polluted air. India's neighbours, Nepal and Pakistan, are also reeling from air pollution, reducing life expectancies by 4.1 years and 3.8 years, respectively. Bangladesh is now the most polluted country on the planet. The typical Bangladeshi's life expectancy is cut by 6.7 years compared to what it would be if the

World Health Organization (WHO) Some parts of the globe are hit



guidelines were followed. Bangladesh has substantially worse air pollution than the rest of the country, with the most polluted district reducing life expectancy by 8.1 years. Particulate pollution kills more people than communicable diseases like tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, as well as behavioural killers like cigarette smoking and even war.

higher.

What are the health consequences of particulate air pollution?

Particulate matter (PM) refers to solid and liquid particles suspended in the air, such as soot, smoke, and dust. PM particles enter the respiratory system along with the oxygen that the body requires when the air is polluted with them. When PM is inhaled by the nose or mouth, the fate of each particle is determined by its size: the finer the particles, the deeper they penetrate into the body. PM10 particles, which have a diameter of less than 10 micrometres (µm) and are included in estimates of "total suspended matter" (TSP), are small enough to pass through the nasal hairs. They proceed through the respiratory tract and into the lungs, where the metal elements on the particles' surfaces oxidise lung cells, causing DNA damage and raising cancer risk.

Bengal passes Bill replacing Governor with CM as state university Chancellor. What are the constitutional and political issues here?

The move by the Mamata Banerjee government has once again brought to the fore similar disputes playing out in Opposition-ruled states such as Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, which too have curtailed the authority enjoyed by Governors as Chancellors



The West Bengal Assembly on Monday (June 13) passed a Bill paving the way for making the Chief Minister the Chancellor of universities run by the state government, replacing the Governor from the position.

The move by the Mamata Banerjee government has once again brought to the fore similar disputes playing out in Opposition-ruled states such as Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, which too have curtailed the authority enjoyed by Governors as Chancellors.

What is the latest development in West Bengal about?

On Monday, the state Legislative Assembly passed the West Bengal University Laws (Amendment) Bill, which seeks to replace the Governor, Jagdeep Dhankhar, with the CM as the Chancellor of state-run universities. Ironically, the Bill will become law only after it receives Dhankhar's assent.

The government has indicated that even if Dhankhar — who has had a rocky relationship with the Chief Minister — sits on the Bill, an ordinance might be brought to implement the proposal. But that again would be a stop-gap arrangement as ordinances, which can only be brought when the legislature is not in session, cease to operate on the expiry of six weeks from the reassembly of the state legislature.

What options does Dhankhar have?

Dhankhar may give his assent to the Bill, or withhold assent, or send it back to the Assembly for reconsideration. But if the Assembly passes the Bill again, with or without amendments, and sends it back, the Governor will be left with no option but to give his assent.

There is a fourth alternative too

available to the Governor. He may reserve the Bill for the consideration of the President of India. Instead of giving his assent, the President has the option to direct the Governor to send it back to the Assembly for reconsideration. The Assembly may reconsider and send it back with or without changes. But even in that case, the President may choose to withhold his assent, as the Constitution does not impose any time limit on him to take decisions in such cases.

What powers do Governors enjoy as Chancellors?

The appointment of Vice-Chancellors in state government-run universities is among the responsibilities of Governors as Chancellors. Chancellors in most states have the power to annul decisions of the decision-making bodies of universities such as the Executive Council, and to make appointments to these bodies. They also enjoy the power to preside over the convocation of universities. In some states, however, Governors have little or no say in appointing VCs despite holding the post of Chancellor. In Telangana and Gujarat, Governors have no option but to appoint VCs from among the names approved by the state governments. The Gujarat University Act, 1949 states that "the Vice-Chancellor shall be appointed by the State Government from amongst three persons recommended by a (search-cum-selection) committee". The Telangana Universities Act, 1991 states that the search committee shall "submit a panel of three persons to the Government in alphabetical order and the Government shall appoint the Vice-Chancellor from out of the said panel".

How are similar disputes

playing out in other states?

While no attempt has been made to officially designate the CM as Chancellor in any other state, Tamil Nadu in April passed two Bills that seek to transfer the power of the Governor to appoint VCs of 13 state universities to the state government, which is currently run by the DMK. The Bills seeking to amend the process of appointment of VCs in the state universities underline that "every appointment of the Vice-Chancellor shall be made by the Government from out of a panel of three names" recommended by a search-cum-selection committee.

What about Maharashtra and Kerala, two other states ruled by the Opposition?

Last December, the Maharashtra Assembly had cleared a Bill that seeks to amend the Maharashtra Public Universities Act, 2016 by slicing the Governor's role in appointing VCs. Under the unamended Act, the state government has no say in the appointment of VCs. But if the changes cleared by the Assembly take effect, the Governor will be given two names to choose from by the state government, which is currently run by the Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress coalition, following the suggestions of a panel. In Left-

ruled Kerala, the appointment of the VC of Kannur University became a flashpoint with the Governor alleging that it was done against his wishes. The BJD government in Odisha has also tried to bring appointments to state universities under its control. But it has been challenged by the University Grants Commission (UGC).

What do UGC norms suggest?

Firstly, education comes under the Concurrent List, which contains subjects on which both the Centre and the states can legislate. However, Entry 66 of the Union List — "coordination and determination of standards in institutions for higher education or research and scientific and technical institutions" — gives the Centre substantial authority over higher education. The UGC plays that standard-setting role, even in the case of appointments, in the case of universities and colleges. According to the UGC (Minimum Qualifications for Appointment of Teachers and other Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges and other Measures for the Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education) Regulations, 2018, the "visitor/chancellor", which is mostly the Governor in states, shall appoint the VC out of the panel of names

recommended by the search-cum-selection committees. Higher educational institutions, particularly those which receive funds from the UGC, are mandated to follow its regulations. These are followed without any hitch in the case of central universities. However, in the case of state universities, such a top down approach by central government bodies is resisted by the states, especially where non-BJP or non-NDA allies are in power.

What about central universities?

While passing the Bill, the West Bengal government cited the example of Visva-Bharati University where the Prime Minister plays the role of the Chancellor. But Visva-Bharati, which is a central university, is an exception. The Central Universities Act, 2009, lays down that the President of India shall be the Visitor of a Central University. With their role limited to presiding over convocations, Chancellors in central universities are titular heads, who are appointed by the President in his capacity as Visitor. The VCs are also appointed by the Visitor from panels of names picked by search and selection committees formed by the Union government.

India Would Become \$5-trillion Economy by 2026-27, Says CEA Anantha Nageswaran

Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) V Anantha Nageswaran on Tuesday said India would become a USD 5 trillion economy by 2026-27 and USD 10 trillion by 2033-34. Addressing an event organised by UNDP

India, Nageswaran said India is relatively better placed than other emerging economies. "On the face of it, looks optimistic, even ambitious, but if we get to USD 5 trillion by 2026-27. "We are now USD 3.3 trillion, it is not such a difficult target to reach.

Then if you simply assume 10 per cent nominal GDP growth in dollar terms, then you get to USD 10 trillion by 2033-34 and another doubling with the same rate," he said. In 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi envisioned to make India a USD 5 trillion economy and global powerhouse by 2024-25. The CEA said there is a need for

climate tagging of the budget.

"GDP is the worst measure of economic activities but for all others. Because everything else you take, comes with their own limitations

and serious subjectivity," he noted.

The World Bank has cut India's economic growth forecast for the current fiscal to 7.5 per cent as rising inflation, supply chain disruptions, and geopolitical tensions taper recovery. India's economy grew 8.7 per

cent in the last fiscal (2021-22) against a 6.6 per cent contraction in the previous year.

In its third monetary policy of 2022-23, the Reserve Bank retained its GDP growth forecast at 7.2 per cent for the current fiscal, but cautioned against negative spillovers of geopolitical tensions and a slowdown in the global economy.



Imran Khan Challenges Shehbaz Sharif's Coalition Govt To Win Polls



(SAI Bureau) Imran Khan on Sunday challenged Pakistan prime minister Shehbaz Sharif to win the next Pakistan elections. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman said that it was impossible for the coalition to secure victory in the next polls. The cricketer-turned-politician said that his party is wholeheartedly committed to winning the elections and is working in full swing. Khan's comments came during an interview with Pakistan broadcasting agency Geo News. Khan told Geo News that the May 25 'Azadi March' was called off because the Sharif-led government curbed down on those who were speaking against the government. Khan said that the government filed with the aim

of throwing whosoever dissented with the government behind bars. Khan has also faced accusations from the government that he held law and order hostage with his rallies on previous occasions. He criticized the government's move to pass the National Accountability (Amendment) Bill, 2022 on June 9, which had previously been returned by President Arif Alvi. Khan said that his outfit would soon approach the Supreme Court. He further added that Pakistani citizens were "looking towards the institutions to intervene and make things right," reported news agency Dawn in a separate report. Speaking of relations with the United States, Imran Khan said that he enjoyed close relations with US' former president Donald Trump and claimed that current president Joe

Biden is stuck with matters related to Afghanistan which led to deterioration of ties between his party and the US.

He also answered questions regarding the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and said that the Covid-19 pandemic stalled projects in the Balochistan region. Khan's mention of the CPEC comes days after China urged Pakistan to take stronger steps to ensure the security of Chinese citizens living in Pakistan. The Chinese have told the Pakistan Army and the Shehbaz Sharif-led government to ramp up security also for Chinese projects and projects related to the CPEC. Khan said that his outfit would soon approach the Supreme Court. He further added that Pakistani citizens were "looking towards the institutions to intervene and make things right," reported

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After Criticism Over China, UN Rights Chief Declines Second Term



(SAI Bureau) The United Nations human rights chief, Michelle Bachelet, said on Monday that she would not seek a second term for personal reasons, refuting speculation that it was a decision linked to blowback over her trip to China last month.

Bachelet, 70, was criticised by rights groups as well as some Western governments, including the United States, who said the conditions Chinese authorities imposed on the visit did not enable a complete and independent assessment of the rights environment.

"As my term as High Commissioner draws to a close, this Council's milestone fiftieth session will

be the last which I brief," she said in a surprise announcement at the end of a wide-ranging speech to the Geneva-based Human Rights Council.

Later, she said the decision was not related to the trip, adding that she intended to return to Chile and spend time with her family.

"Two months ago, before even going to China, I made a decision and I informed my boss, the Secretary-General (Antonio Guterres). So it has no relationship," she told reporters. Some diplomats said they had expected Bachelet, a 70-year-old former president of Chile, to stay on after her four-year term expires later in August. There was murmuring in the Geneva

Council room when she made the announcement.

In her speech, she said her office was working on an updated assessment of the human rights situation in China's western region of Xinjiang, where there are widespread allegations that mostly Muslim Uyghur people have been unlawfully detained, mistreated and forced to work.

China denies all

accusations of abuse there.

"It will be shared with the government for factual comments before publication," she said of her report, which was due to be published months ago. Asked about the timing, Bachelet said it would be released before her term ends. Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch called her China trip an

"unmitigated disaster" and

criticised Bachelet for using China's term "VETCs", for vocational education and training centres, to describe mass detention facilities in Xinjiang. She repeated the term in her speech on Monday.

On the rights situation in Russia, she said the arbitrary arrest of a large number of protesters there opposed to the invasion of Ukraine was "worrying".

China begins work on planetarium at 'roof of the world' in Tibet

The planetarium, scheduled to be completed in 2024, is expected to receive over 100,000 visitors annually



(SAI Bureau) China has started constructing a planetarium at the world's highest altitude in Tibet for exploration of the universe at

the "roof of the world", the official media reported on Monday. The planetarium, scheduled to be completed in 2024, is expected to receive

over 100,000 visitors annually. China aims to open a window for exploration of the universe at the "roof of the world," the official media here reported. Tibet is mostly open to Chinese tourists and foreigners with special permission. The planetarium will have the region's largest optical astronomical telescope, with a one-meter-diameter lens, and become a major regional base for astronomical research and public science education, the Science and Technology Department of Tibet said.

Row over Prophet remarks is India's internal issue, says Bangladesh minister

Bangladesh Minister Hasan Mahmud has termed the row over remarks against Prophet Muhammad as 'internal issue'

(SAI Bureau) The controversy triggered by remarks made by two former BJP functionaries against Prophet Mohammad is India's "internal issue" and it is not an attention-grabbing matter in Bangladesh unlike in some other Muslim nations, a senior Bangladeshi minister has said, as he dismissed criticism that the country's government is "compromising" on the issue. Information and Broadcasting Minister Hasan Mahmud also "congratulated" the Indian government for taking legal action over the issue and said that any statement against the Prophet should be condemned.

Talking to a group of visiting Indian journalists here, he noted that an FIR has been registered in India on this issue and hoped that further action would also be taken. To a question about the fundamentalists accusing Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina-led government of compromising on the issue, he said, "the Bangladesh government is not compromising over the remarks against

the Prophet and it will never do that. I myself have condemned it...I have condemned the issue in a public meeting."

In the context of the Bangladesh government not officially condemning the issue, Mahmud called it an external matter for his country. "It is not an internal matter (of Bangladesh), but an external issue. This is India's internal issue. Whenever something like this happens in the world, some Islamic parties protest here too and it usually happens," he said. Here in Bangladesh, it is not much an attention-grabbing issue as it is for Arab countries, Pakistan and Malaysia, he said.

"If anything is said against Prophet Mohammad anywhere, it should be condemned. We congratulate the Indian government for taking legal action against those who commented on the Prophet," Mahmud said.

The BJP suspended its national spokesperson Nupur Sharma and expelled its Delhi media head Naveen

Kumar Jindal after their controversial remarks against the Prophet, as it sought to defuse a row over the issue.

Amid protests by Muslim groups over the remarks, the party also issued a statement aimed at assuaging the concerns of minorities and distancing itself from these members, asserting that it respects all religions and strongly denounces the insult of any religious personality. Here in Bangladesh, it is not much an attention-grabbing issue as it is for Arab countries, Pakistan and Malaysia, he said.

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Delhi Police has registered an FIR against Sharma, Jindal and some others in connection with the remarks on the Prophet.

Mahmud said there are some "fanatic" groups in Bangladesh who, despite being very few in numbers and not getting any kind of support, make noises vigorously. He said that sometimes the statements made by these groups manage to grab media attention in India. "The same thing happens here in Bangladesh as well," the minister said, adding that sometimes statements made by leaders in India against Bangladesh and its people due to domestic politics get headlines here.

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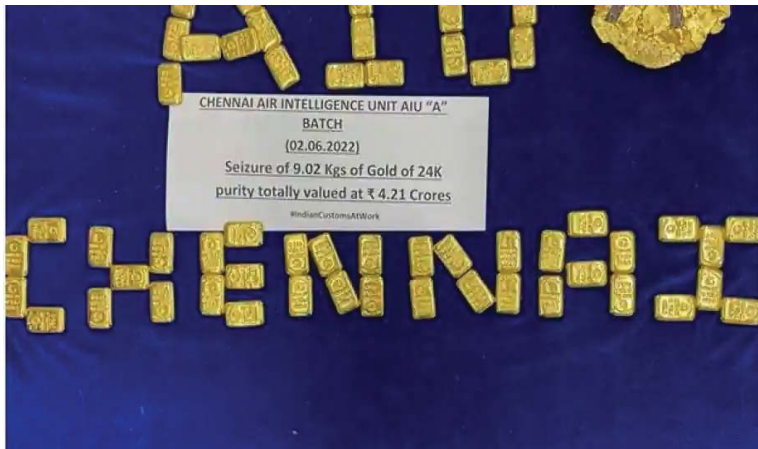
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Indian customs officials and Sri Lankan nationals spar over 'possession' of 7kg gold



(SAI Bureau) A 12-day long "battle for gold" between six Sri Lankan nationals and Air Customs Officials of the Chennai International Airport is expected to reach the Madras High Court. The Lankan passengers have stayed put at the Chennai airport since June 2nd, demanding that Air Customs officials return the gold bars (weighing 7kg) that was allegedly forcibly taken from them. According to the lawyer representing the

Lankans, the six members are transit passengers (on a Dubai-Chennai-Colombo) route and have no Indian Visa. He adds that Indian Customs authorities have no jurisdiction to seize legally purchased gold that was to be taken to Colombo and meant to be declared before Lankan Customs.

According to the Writ Petition shared by the Sri Lankan Nationals' counsel, S. Zahir Hussain, the Sri Lankan passengers had declared the

7kg of gold to Dubai Customs and had received acknowledgement for having purchased the same (based on purchase invoices). It adds that Indian Customs officials had forced the Sri Lankans back into the aircraft at Chennai airport and threatened them of arrest and then snatched nearly 7kg of gold bars from them, during the wee hours of June 2nd. "Sharing the below declaration from #Dubai Customs, the SL nationals say that the Gold was meant to be taken to SL legally & Indian Customs has no jurisdiction with transit passengers Chennai Customs says gold was seized from flight in India, so Indian law applies" twitter.com Later, on June 3rd the Office of Principal Commissioner of Customs, Chennai International Airport issued a statement on having recovered 60 gold bars weighing 9.02kg, valued at

Rs.4.21 crore from the lavatory of Flight 6E-66 and from the arrival hall of the airport. It was mentioned that the Gold was seized under Customs Act, 1962. "Chennai Air Customs recovered 9.02 Kgs of 24K purity Gold valued at Rs. 4.21 Crores from rummaging of Indigo Flight No.6E 66 dt.02.06.2022 arriving from Dubai and restroom of arrival area of Chennai International Airport. The same was seized under the Customs Act, 1962." However, the petition counters the Customs authorities' claims as false and alleges that the 7kg Gold bars were not recovered from the lavatory but were forcibly taken from the Sri Lankans. The counsel representing the foreign nationals has also requested the Court to order the return of the Gold to the foreign nationals and to quash the Customs' claim of gold seizure, analyse CCTV footage of the incidents

and also facilitate safe travel of the foreigners to their home country. Speaking to WION, K.R.Uday Bhaskar, Principal Commissioner of Customs, Chennai International Airport, held firm that the gold was seized from the aircraft lavatory and that their press release was accurate in stating so. "There were about 30 International flights that landed on the said day and based on credible information, our officers recovered gold from this Dubai-Chennai flight 6E-66(on which the Lankan Nationals had flown). If a group of passengers say that the gold belongs to them, they can approach us and provide all necessary documents, get it investigated and follow due procedure to get it back" he said. He maintained that the Indian Customs had jurisdiction over the gold, as it was recovered from an aircraft that had landed on an Indian airport.

These Afghan Ministers, Officials Fled To Their Luxury Homes In The US, Dubai As Citizens Suffered

(SAI Bureau) Several cabinet ministers and high-ranking officials from the Afghanistan government bought real-estate properties in posh localities in the US and West Asia worth millions of dollars when the Taliban was preparing to take over the reign of the nation, a report by the Wall Street Journal said. The report said that when Afghanistan finally fell to the

Taliban, the ministers and officials rushed to these luxurious houses in Dubai, Florida, Los Angeles and Ankara while millions of Afghans remained trapped in their country and several thousands continue to struggle to make ends meet in nations to which they fled. Among those who fled most were members of former Afghanistan president Ashraf

Ghani's cabinet.

The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) report earlier said that Ghani did not flee with millions of Afghan government money as Taliban-affiliated terrorists were waiting to take over the palace but the WSJ report found that the former president's wife selected a private villa for their permanent



Pakistan Could Exit Financial Crimes Watchdog FATF's Grey List

(SAI Bureau) The financial crimes watchdog Financial Action Task Force (FATF) could remove Pakistan from its 'Grey List', news agency India Today said in a report. People familiar with the developments speaking to India Today said that the announcement could be made as early as next week when the plenary is in session.

The announcement will also be shared on the FATF's website. The FATF is also visiting Pakistan to assess the compliance by the country which was earlier categorized under 'Jurisdictions Under Increased Monitoring and High-Risk Jurisdictions' for four years in a row. The official announcement will be made in October, people familiar with the developments told India Today. The people mentioned above also said that Pakistan completed 26 of the 27 action items in its 2018 action plan as advised by the FATF. It released a 2021 action plan of the FATF's Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG) where

Pakistan was given seven targets, six of which have been fulfilled. FATF delegates representing 206 members of the Global Network and observer organizations, including the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations, the World Bank and the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units will sit for the final plenary session under the leadership of Dr Marcus Pleyer from June 14 to June 17 where decision will be taken. The delegates will also discuss assessments of measures to combat money laundering and terrorist financing in Germany and the Netherlands during the three-day meeting. After Dr Marcus Pleyer of Germany who led the two-year German Presidency at the FATF, Singapore's T Raja Kumar will take over the role on July 1 as the new president of the FATF. T Raja Kumar's appointment marks the first time Singapore is taking on the organization's presidency.

residence at a posh area in the UAE. They both said that these were part of humanitarian assistance. Hamdullah Mohib, the former national security adviser of Afghanistan, also moved to a four-bedroom home in Florida. Mohib told the WSJ that he house is owned by his wife's - who is an American - mother and added that he owns no property under his name. His wife owns a small investment property in northeast Washington DC, the report further said. Eklil Hakimi, the president's longtime finance minister, was also found to have purchased at least 10 properties in California in 2018 (when he

was in office) and in the years that followed. His wife, Sultana Hakimi, transferred eight of those properties to a company called Zala Group, of which she remains the owner. The properties are now valued at more than \$10 million. Ghani's minister of economy, Mustafa Mastoor, was also found to be the owner of a condo in a development on the Dubai Marina, according to the Wall Street journal. The governor of the Balkh province Atta Mohammad Noor, was also found to be the owner of an apartment in Dubai's 'The Palms' - a posh and expensive area where a group of artificial islands shaped like a palm tree houses residential buildings.

Vicious cycle of Pakistan's insecurity, Afghanistan's opium trade converges to narco-terror

(SAI Bureau) The illegal narcotics trade constitutes one of the main financial sources of the insurgency groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan, but, more importantly, it feeds narco-terror. The American withdrawal in 2021 means that the countries of the region will have to play a greater role in the management of their borders and confront questions about their capacity to stop potentially destabilising trends emerging from Afghanistan, reported the Afghan Diaspora Network.



Heroin networks and drug lords present a principal impediment to security, state-building, and democratic governance. Beyond the national boundaries, Afghan-originated heroin creates enormous challenges for international security by financing terrorism, instigating corruption, killing nearly 100,000 users worldwide every year, undermining public order, and debilitating

economic development. The devastating impacts of the Afghan heroin trade have spilled over into Southwest Asia, Central Asia, Russia, China, the Balkans, and Europe. The Taliban have long used narcotics as their main source of revenue. Without the poppy crop, they may never have grown to be the massive organisation that they are today that was capable of toppling the

Ghani government, reported the Afghan Diaspora Network. According to the Narco-Insecurity, Inc.s report, The Convergence of the Narcotics Underworld and Extremists in Afghanistan and Pakistan and Their Global Proliferation, this was made possible with the help of Pakistan's ISI, who launched several covert operations with sympathetic jihadist groups, all of whom

relied heavily on narcotics trafficking to fund their operations, expanding the trafficking route even further through their regions, launching the Balkan, northern, and southern routes of the global narco-trafficking pipeline. The most substantial of these was the Haqqani network, a criminal enterprise situated along the Afghanistan/Pakistan border that was founded on

smuggling. The ISI saw the Haqqani network as a key ally, given their location and alliances with numerous jihadist groups, and began investing in their bases while using them as a proxy for engagement with other non-state actors.

A vicious cycle has formed between insecurity and the opium economy. Insecure regions are fertile territory for poppy farming due to a lack of government oversight and a lack of alternative livelihoods. They both attract insurgent groups, who profit off of the opium industry at multiple levels of the supply chain and are created by insurgent groups. Since the recent Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, there has been a knock-on effect on the global narcotics industry. Counter narcotics efforts will need to shift to operate under a new paradigm where direct counter-narcotics efforts in Afghanistan are unlikely to continue.

Amid economic crisis, United Nations provides food vouchers to pregnant women in Sri Lanka

(SAI Bureau) The World Food Programme (WFP) of the United Nations on Thursday (June 16) began providing food aid to thousands of pregnant women in Sri Lanka amid an economic crisis. The body has warned of a potential humanitarian crisis where millions are in need of assistance, claiming that four out of five people began skipping meals because they cannot afford it. The organisation provided 2,000 food vouchers in Colombo's "undeserved" districts. Anthea Webb, the deputy regional director for Asia and Pacific of WFP said, "When they skip meals they're putting their and their children's health at risk." The South Asian country has been in a limited supply of



food, medicines, and fuel owing to diminishing foreign currency reserves and the government's mismanagement. Due to the escalating fuel shortages, the government declared an additional holiday and ordered all

schools to close on Friday to preserve diesel and gasoline. The world organisation's attempts to support three million Sri Lankas suffering due to rising prices, as per the WFP includes the issuance of cash vouchers

worth 15,000 rupees (\$40). The organisation hopes to generate \$60 million for the food aid operation between July and December this year. The WFP says it intends to help a million youngsters to get at

least one meal a school and provide millions of infants and women 'nutritious food.' In addition to this, as per WFP, another million individuals will receive food rations in the form of food, cash or vouchers.

Joe Biden to visit Saudi Arabia in July, plans to meet with Mohammed bin Salman

(News Agency) United States President Joe Biden will be travelling to the Middle East in order to reinvigorate their relations with key partners of the region and he will be meeting Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. According to the Wall Street Journal, Biden will also be visiting Israel for the first time since taking office. A major point of discussion will be the ongoing crisis surrounding the Iran Nuclear Deal. However, the report claimed that a number of people in the Democratic Party

have spoken out against the proposed visit because of the history of human-rights violations against Saudi Arabia. However, according to the travel plan, Biden will meeting Saudi leaders in Riyadh. According to US officials, Biden is looking to work with Saudi Arabia on a number of issues ranging from the rising fuel prices and security concerns in the region. Saudi Arabia signed a truce with Iran-backed forces in Yemen earlier in the year and it played a big role in making the Biden visit possible. Apart from Saudi

Arabia, Biden will be meeting members of Gulf Cooperation Council - Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates - along with Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. "The president appreciates King Salman's leadership and his invitation," White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said in a statement. "He looks forward to this important visit to Saudi Arabia, which has been a strategic partner of the United States for nearly eight decades." The other important part of Biden's visit to the region will be



his meetings with Israel Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and be aimed at "reaffirming his Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas. According to senior state solution"

US wants local companies to buy more fertilizer from Russia

(News Agency) The ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine has been going on for more than 100 days and since the start of the invasion, a number of major countries have imposed strict sanctions on Russia and major Russian personalities. United States have been leading the line when it comes to major sanctions on Russia along with a number of western countries. However, according to a report on Bloomberg, the US has increased efforts to help their companies complete purchases of fertilizers from Russian companies. The global food crisis created by the

Russian invasion of Ukraine is one of the main reasons behind US looking to buy fertilizers for cheap from Russia, the report added. According to Bloomberg, sources confirmed that the government has silently been pushing the companies to increase their purchase order with time. With sanctions being



imposed by the European Union and other major countries, the US are looking to take advantage of the

situation. According to the official data accessed by Bloomberg, fertilizer exports have gone down by almost 24 per cent in Russia and the producers are willing to sell their stock for a much lower price. However, the fertilizers are exempted in the list of sanctions imposed by both US and the EU resulting in a loophole that can be used to continue the trade without causing any major issue. This is also being considered to be a way to keep the supply chains active as the sanctions have severed the ties between the rest of the world and Russia – one of the major suppliers.

New York Drafts Law To Provide Legal Safety To Abortion Providers

(News Agency) New York has expanded legal protections for people seeking and providing abortions in the state under legislation signed by Gov. Kathy Hochul on Monday. The Democratic governor pushed for the laws in anticipation of the US Supreme Court potentially overruling its 1973 Roe v. Wade's decision, which established a constitutional right to abortion. A ruling that could weaken or end abortion protections is expected as early as this week, and abortion providers are worried New York will see a surge in out-of-state residents. "Today, we are taking action to protect our service providers from the retaliatory actions of anti-abortion states and ensure that New York will always be a safe harbor for those seeking reproductive healthcare," Hochul said.

Out-of-state residents accounted for nearly 9% — or 7,000 out of roughly 79,000 abortions — performed in New York in 2019, according to the US Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention. That's up from 5% — or roughly 4,700 out of 93,000 — in 2015. One new law protects abortion providers from arrest,



extradition and legal proceedings in other states by forbidding New York state and local courts and law enforcement agencies from cooperating in most scenarios. Under another law, people could sue for unlawful interference with their right to reproductive health care when other

people or entities bring civil or criminal charges against them for seeking, accessing or providing abortions. And at a time when patients can receive virtual care, another new law will prevent insurers from taking action against New York health care providers who perform reproductive services that are illegal elsewhere.

The state's health commissioner will also study the unmet health needs of pregnant women and the impact of unlicensed centers that offer some pregnancy services and persuade women against abortion. The laws protecting abortion providers and care take effect immediately. In 90 days, another new law will begin allowing abortion providers and patients to participate in an existing state program that lets people shield their address. The National Abortion

Federation says death threats against abortion providers more than doubled from 92 in 2019 to 200 in 2020.

Hochul also plans to give abortion providers \$35 million to expand services and boost security for abortion providers because of the expected Supreme Court ruling. Lawmakers enshrined Roe v. Wade into state law in 2019, and Hochul wants to enshrine it in the state constitution. The state constitution prohibits discrimination based on "race, color, creed or religion." Civil liberties groups and abortion providers have proposed an amendment prohibiting discrimination based on factors ranging from "pregnancy and pregnancy outcomes" to sex and gender identity. The Legislature must approve any amendment in two legislative session years before sending it to voters. Lawmakers would likely need to start the process in August to send it to voters in 2023. "I can't say that'll happen, but I'm open minded," Hochul said Monday.

Top US, Chinese national security figures hold 'candid' talks

Jake Sullivan, one of President Biden's closest aides, and Yang Jiechi, who is also the director of the office of the foreign affairs commission in China, have emerged as the two central figures in continued high-level engagement between the two countries

(News Agency) US national security adviser Jake Sullivan on Monday met top Chinese official and Politburo member Yang Jiechi for "candid, in-depth, substantive and productive" talks in Luxembourg, continuing their high-level engagement which has intensified since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The conversation lasted for four-and-a-half hours and in a press briefing, White House press secretary Karin Jean-Pierre said that the "candid, substantive and productive" conversation covered "a number of regional and global security issues, as well as key issues in US-China relations".

When asked if this would lead to a meeting between US President Joe Biden and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping, the press secretary said, "Interactions are planned at a range of officials across the US government, but nothing to announce on a POTUS-Xi meeting at this time. They last

talked on the phone on March 18th. We will continue to maintain open lines of communication with China."

Sullivan, one of Biden's closest aides, and Yang Jiechi, who is also the director of the office of the foreign affairs commission in China, have emerged as the two central figures in continued high-level engagement between the two countries. They met in Rome in March for a seven-hour long meeting, following which Biden and Xi held a phone call. Sullivan and Yang then spoke on the phone again on May 18. A White House readout of Monday's meeting, said, "Mr. Sullivan underscored the importance of maintaining open lines of communication to manage competition between our two countries."

The intensified US-China engagement comes in the backdrop of a set of external and domestic events in

America.

On the global platform, the US has sent a clear and public message to China not to actively support Russia and warned it against circumventing



sanctions. US officials have said, in recent weeks, that while they continue to keep a close watch on Beijing, they have not received any indication so far that China is actively seeking to subvert sanctions. Experts believe that Beijing, which is far more closely integrated with the global economy than Russia, is wary of facing any secondary sanctions. At the same time, within the US, which is facing record inflation, a powerful

policy constituency is advocating the lifting of a series of tariffs imposed on China during the administration of former president Donald Trump.

Treasury secretary, Janet Yellen, told the US Congress last week that the administration was looking to "reconfigure" tariffs to make them "more strategic".

"Tariff reductions could help to bring down the prices of things that people buy that are burdensome," she said.

But, while Yellen and commerce secretary Gina Raimondo - who has said it may "make sense" to reduce tariffs to battle inflation - appear to be in favour of revising Washington's tough economic approach to China, US trade representative, Katherine Tai, has spoken of the leverage that tariffs provide at the negotiating table. These developments also come just weeks after US secretary of state Antony

Blinken laid out the administration's China strategy that categorised China as the only country which both wished to reshape the international order and increasingly had the economic, military, diplomatic and technological power to do so. The current US strategy is framed around the principles of "invest, align and compete": invest in boosting US capabilities and strength, align with a set of allies and partners, and compete with China. But the strategy also has kept open the doors for cooperation with China on issues such as climate, health security, non proliferation and arms control, countering narcotics, food security, and global macroeconomic coordination. Administration officials claim it is this mixed strategy -- competing while also keeping channels of communication open to find common ground -- that appears to be guiding the frequent Sullivan-Yang exchanges.

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The first signs of global warming are now clearly visible. We urgently need to limit greenhouse gas emissions. Nothing and no-one will be spared from climate change. This warning is therefore to all people, all countries and, in particular, to the Belgian Council of Ministers who, on the weekend of March 20 and 21, will have to decide what action to take regarding essential measures linked to the Kyoto Protocol.



US Embassy dismisses reports claiming military deal with Nepal



(NewsAgency) After some news it is 'fake'. In a series of outlets reported on an tweets, the embassy said, "The agreement reached between Nepal and the US army, the US Embassy in Nepal on Tuesday dismissed the reports and said, United States and Nepal is fake.

By policy, the United States does not ask countries to join the State Partnership Program and only responds to requests to do so." This comes after various local media reported on a possible agreement reached between Nepal and US Army on State Partnership Program (SPP), which has raised controversies. "The SPP is an exchange program between an American state's National Guard and a partner foreign country. The U.S. National Guard domestically supports U.S. first responders in dealing with natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, and

wildfires," the embassy said. Stating that SPP has existed for over 25 years and includes over 80 partnerships with over 90 countries, the embassy said, "In the event of natural and other disasters, ranging from hurricanes to earthquakes, floods, and fires, the United States seeks to share the best practices and capabilities of our National Guards — our first-line responders." "SPP can be an effective means of facilitating this type of cooperation," it said. In their recent engagements here, reports say, the US officials are putting pressure on Nepali counterparts

to sign the agreement at the earliest. It is said during, US Army Pacific Commander General Charles Flynn's recent visit, Nepal was asked to finalise the deal. However, sources have said say it could be signed during Nepal Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's US visit expected to be held in mid-July. After the MCC Nepal Compact, the US is now seeking cooperation with Nepal on the military program. High-level visits are currently being made from the United States to mark the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and the US.

'Freedom at last': Man who shot at Ronald Reagan granted full freedom

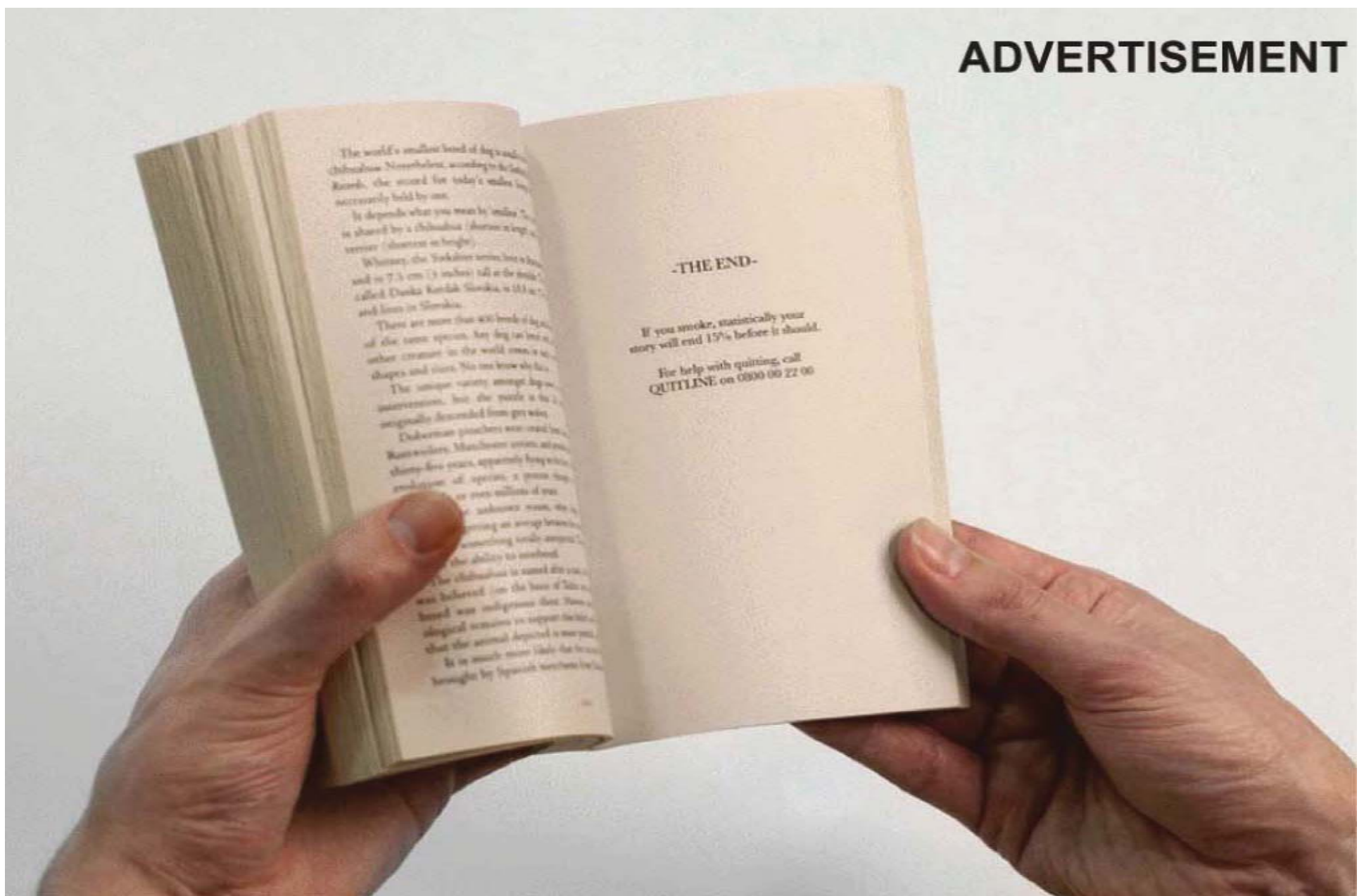
(NewsAgency) John Hinckley, the man who shot at former US president Ronald Reagan in 1981 was given full freedom on Wednesday (June 15). This step was taken six years after he was released from a psychiatric hospital. A court in Washington had ruled earlier this month that after decades of treatment and psychiatric reviews, Hinckley no longer presented a threat "After 41 years 2 months and 15 days, FREEDOM AT LAST!!!" he tweeted in celebration on

Thursday. Hinckley, now 67, shot Reagan and three others with a revolver outside a Washington hotel on March 30, 1981. Hinckley said he wanted to impress actress Jodie Foster, with whom he became obsessed after watching her in the film "Taxi Driver." All four people he shot survived, although Reagan press secretary James Brady was left partially paralyzed and forced to use a wheelchair. Hinckley was declared not guilty on grounds of insanity. He

was then admitted to St. Elizabeth Hospital, a psychiatric institution in Washington, for 34 years. He was released in September 2016 but required to live with his elderly mother in a gated community in Williamsburg, Virginia under a long list of restrictions. Those included controls on his movements and monitoring of his electronic devices and online accounts. He was also forbidden to contact Foster or travel to any area where a current or

former president, vice president or member of Congress would be present. Nor could Hinckley speak to the media or post any writings or memorabilia on the internet, or display them in person without authorization. A government report on his status filed to the court on May 19 said his mental health had "remained stable" and that his psychiatric illness had been in "full and sustained remission for decades."

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The 'war on drugs' and how the world is re-adjusting its response

Canada's move is the latest among the series of policy tweaks that are being either contemplated or executed by different countries to re-adjust their response in the ongoing global 'war on drugs'

(By Staff Reporter) The Canadian government has decided to allow the province of British Columbia (BC) to decriminalise the possession of a small amount of illicit drugs for 3 years on an experimental basis. The pilot project begins from Jan 31, 2023. With rising overdose deaths in the province, it is hoped that by eliminating criminal penalties, there will be a reduction of fear and shame for users that need medical help. Canada's move is the latest among the series of policy tweaks that are being either contemplated or executed by different countries to re-adjust their response in the ongoing global 'war on drugs'.

What is the 'war on drugs'?

In 1971, then US President Richard Nixon held a press conference and declared drug abuse, public enemy number one. He said that "a new, all out offensive" was required, that would be "worldwide" in nature. Ten years earlier, the UN had passed the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs which sought to prohibit the production and supply of various substances through international cooperation.

This marked the beginning of a global campaign to eradicate the use of illicit drugs and its production, called the 'War on Drugs'.

At the heart of this campaign lay the notion that prohibition of drugs would reduce consumption. By criminalising drugs and initiating harsh punitive action against people involved in the use, production and dissemination, the world would effectively be rid of drugs.

Who is winning this war?

Over the past decades, there has been a growing sentiment that the war on drugs has failed at curtailing the supply or consumption of drugs.

In a 2011 report, the Global Commission on Drug Policy stated, "The global war on drugs has failed, with devastating consequences for individuals and societies around the world." The report claimed that in the period that such a campaign has been in play, the global market of illegal drugs has not been curtailed, but in reality has grown. In data collected by the United Nations, global consumption of opiates, cocaine and marijuana increased by 34.5%, 27% and 8%



respectively, between 1998-2008.

The sentiment was repeated in a 2018 report by the International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC). The report stated that between 2008 and 2018, drug related deaths had increased globally by 145%.

There has also been a steady increase in mass incarceration and disproportionate punishments. According to the same 2018 IDPC report, 1 in 5 prisoners worldwide are arrested for drug offences, of whom 83% are in prison for drug use or possession for personal use.

How is the world re-adjusting its response?

Over the past few years, several countries have been turning away from prohibitionist drug strategies and are introducing alternative policies instead.

There has been a shift in attitude around the world towards marijuana, with many believing it to be less harmful than imagined before.

Uruguay and Canada for example, legalised the recreational use of marijuana in 2013 and 2018, respectively.

Others have tried to decriminalise drug use by removing criminal sanctions against different illicit substances by prescribing specific amounts.

In 2001, Portugal changed the status of illegality for possession of drugs for personal use from criminal to administrative. Rather than facing arrest, users, it was decided, would be given a warning, a small fine or will be taken to a doctor or social worker for treatment and harm reduction, as reported by The Guardian.

In 2016, Canada's British

Columbia declared a public health emergency due to skyrocketing drug overdose deaths. As per the BBC, over 9,000 people have died of overdoses in BC since 2016. Now, the province wants to experiment with legalising personal use of all drugs for 3 years. While the illicit substances will not be legalised, adults possessing a total amount of 2.5 gm of cocaine, methamphetamine, opioids and MDMA will not be arrested, charged or have their drugs seized.

Calling substance abuse a public health issue and not a criminal one, Sheila Malcolmson, BC's Minister of Mental Health and Addictions last month said, "By decriminalising people who use drugs, we will break down the stigma that stops people from accessing life-saving support and

service."

As it battles the Russian invasion, Ukraine has approved a draft bill (on June 7) to legalise cannabis use for medicinal purposes to help its citizens fight "a massive increase in psychological harm and distress".

On June 9, Thailand legalised cultivation of marijuana in an attempt to turn cannabis into a cash crop. With its well developed medical tourism industry and tropical climate ideal for growing cannabis, Thailand, according to an AP report, is trying to make a splash in the market for medical marijuana.

What about India?

In India, drug consumption or possession is a criminal offence. The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act of 1985 is the main

legislation dealing with drugs and their trafficking.

Currently, the NDPS Act only adopts a reformative approach towards addicts. It gives addicts immunity from prosecution and imprisonment (if found guilty) if they volunteer to undergo treatment and rehabilitation. However, there is no provision for relief or exemption for, say, first-time users or recreational users. Section 27 of the NDPS Act prescribes imprisonment of up to a year or a fine of up to Rs 20,000, or both, for consumption of any narcotic drug or psychotropic substance. It makes no distinction between addicts, first-time users and recreational users. This was the section invoked in the recent arrest of actor Shah Rukh Khan's son.

Critics of the Act point out that while the NDPS requires law enforcement to target drug trafficking, it is the end-users who are affected more.

According to a report published by Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy in 2020, arrests for personal consumption accounted for 97.7% of NDPS cases in Maharashtra in 2017, and 97.3% in 2018. Last year, the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment had recommended a more humane approach, avoiding prison, for drug users and addicts. This was suggested after the Department of Revenue – the NDPS Act's nodal administrative authority – had asked several ministries and departments to suggest changes to the law.

Countries Blame China at UN Over Xinjiang 'Abuses'

Delivering a joint statement on behalf of 47 countries, he pointed to a number of "credible reports" — vehemently denied by Beijing — indicating that more than one million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities have been arbitrarily detained in the region. "There are reports of ongoing widespread surveillance, discrimination against Uyghurs and other persons belonging to minorities," he said. There were also reports of "severe restrictions on Uyghur culture and the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms", he added. The joint statement also voiced concern about "reports of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, forced sterilisation, sexual and gender-based violence, forced labour, and forced separation of children from their parents by authorities". The countries, he said, "repeat our call on China to urgently address these concerns," and to "end the arbitrary detention of Muslim Uyghurs and persons belonging to other minorities". They also called on Beijing to provide UN investigators and experts "meaningful and

unfettered access" to independently observe the situation on the ground. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet was granted access to visit last month — marking the first visit by a UN rights chief to China in 17 years. But she faced harsh criticism for not speaking up more forcefully against China's alleged abuses prior to and during the trip, which is believed to have been heavily controlled by Chinese authorities. In Tuesday's joint statement, the countries asked for "more detailed observations, including on the restrictions the Chinese authorities imposed on the visit". The UN rights chief has also faced growing pressure to release a long-delayed report on the rights situation in Xinjiang, which diplomats say has been ready for months. Bachelet, who announced Monday that she will not be seeking a second term, vowed that the report would be published before she steps down on August 31. Tuesday's joint statement urged the report's "prompt release", asking Bachelet to provide "further information on the timeline."

Sri Lanka official who alleged pressure to award project to Adani Group resigns

"I have accepted the letter of resignation tendered to me by the CEB Chairman Mr MMC Fernando. Vice Chairman Nalinda Ilungaakoon will take over as the New Chairman CEB." Fernando told a parliamentary committee on Friday that Rajapaksa had asked him to give a 500-megawatt renewable energy project in the island nation's northern Mannar district to the Adani Group. Addressing the Committee on Public Enterprises (COPE), Fernando had claimed that Rajapaksa "summoned" him on November 24, "and said that India's Prime Minister Modi is pressuring him to hand over the project to the Adani Group". Rajapaksa "insisted that I look into it", he told the panel, adding that he then "sent a letter that the President has instructed me and that the Finance Secretary should do the needful. I pointed out that this is a government-to-government deal." He also said that CEB had never given unsolicited proposals in the past, even on a government-to-government basis.

But, in a letter sent to the Sri Lankan Finance Ministry on November 25, a day after his reported meeting with Rajapaksa, Fernando did not mention any pressure from Modi. He only stated that the President

had asked him to "facilitate" the projects to the Adani Group as it had agreed to make "substantial" foreign investment in the country. The Adani Green Energy's proposal for "investment in renewable sector" was a matter of discussion, "where in pursuance of directive of HE the President, joint inspection was carried out" with representatives of CEB and the corporate group, said the letter. "As per this joint inspection, followed by the meeting with Hon. Prime Minister (Mahinda Rajapaksa)... it was the direction to me by the Hon. Prime Minister to recognise the proposal of M/s Adani Green Energy as a proposal from Indian Government to the Government of Sri Lanka, as both heads of countries are in agreement to realise this investment in Sri Lanka, to meet the present day FDI crisis," it said. "Immediately after the progress review meeting on renewable energy with HE the President held on 16.11.2021 at the Presidential Secretariat, I was directed by HE the President to facilitate M/s Adani Green Energy to develop 500 MW wind and solar, renewable energy project in Mannar and Punarín, as he has already agreed to invest substantial amount of FDI in Sri

Lanka. As per the directive, I assumed that this is a proposal of an investor backed by the Government of India on the basis of the bilateral discussion between two heads of states," Fernando said in the letter.

Based on the "directives" from the President and Prime Minister, he wrote, he recommended the Treasury to proceed with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding for the project. The letter was addressed to Treasury Secretary "S R Atigala" (S R Attygalle).

Responding to the controversy, an Adani Group spokesperson said on Monday: "Our intent in investing in Sri Lanka is to address the needs of a valued neighbour. As a responsible corporate, we see this as a necessary part of the partnership that our two nations have always shared... We are clearly disappointed by the detraction that seems to have come about. The fact is that the issue has already been addressed by and within the Sri Lankan government." While the Indian government has not responded to the charges, senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi tweeted on Sunday: "BJP's cronyism has now crossed Palk Strait and moved into Sri Lanka."

Rajapaksa had issued a swift denial over the weekend when Fernando's statement first became public. His office "vehemently denied" influencing anybody in awarding the project. The statement said Rajapaksa "categorically stated that he had not at any time given authorisation to award a wind power project in Mannar to any person or any institution."

The controversy comes just days after Sri Lanka changed its laws to do away with competitive bidding for energy projects. The Opposition Samagi Jana Balawegaya party alleged in Parliament, during the passage of the amendment, that the change was made with the intention of regularising the award of the Mannar contract to the Adani Group. Last year, the Adani Group bagged a contract to develop and run the strategically significant Western Container Terminal of Colombo Port, with a 51 per cent stake. In May, protests broke out across the country against the ruling Rajapaksa family for their mishandling of the economy, forcing Mahinda Rajapaksa, Gotabaya's brother, to step down as Prime Minister. India has provided US\$ 3 billion assistance since January, through credit lines, currency swaps and other mechanisms.

Boris Johnson says UK government 'not deterred' by criticism of Rwanda deportation policy

(By Staff Reporter) The UK government would not be "deterred or abashed" by criticism and legal challenges against its Rwanda immigration plan ahead of the first scheduled flight on Tuesday said British Prime Minister Boris Johnson. The flight to take asylum seekers to Rwanda was due to depart on Tuesday, with the government warning that anyone who avoided it through last-minute legal challenges would be put on a later flight anyway.

Johnson said, "The objective is to ensure that we make that clear distinction that I think everybody can see is fair and reasonable, between legal immigration to this country by safe and legal routes, that we support and uphold and protect because we all understand the benefits that it brings. And distinguishing that from dangerous and illegal cross Channel migration which we intend to stop." Britain has struck a 120-million-pound (\$148 million) deal with Rwanda to send some migrants, who had arrived illegally by crossing the Channel in small boats from Europe, to live in the landlocked African country. The government says the deportation strategy is needed to stem the flow of migrants risking their lives in channel crossings and smash

the people-smuggling networks.

"What we see now is our policy, the Economic and Migration Partnership with Rwanda, that we have engaged upon, now under a huge amount of attack," Johnson told a meeting of his cabinet ministers on Tuesday. The plan has horrified political opponents, charities and church leaders who say it is inhumane. The United Nations refugee chief called it "catastrophic," and the entire leadership of the Church of England denounced it as an "immoral policy that shames Britain."

"My message today is that we are not going to in any way deterred or abashed by some of the criticism that has been directed upon this policy - some of it from slightly unexpected quarters - we're going to get on and deliver," Johnson told ministers.

UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said, "It's important that we follow through on this policy." She also spoke about a potential legal fight with the EU over London's plan to override some post-Brexit trade rules. "I want that negotiated solution, but we do need the EU to be prepared to change the text," Truss said on Tuesday morning.



FBI TEN MOST WANTED FUGITIVE

BHADRESHKUMAR CHETANBHAI PATEL

Unlawful Flight to Avoid Prosecution - First Degree Murder, Second Degree Murder, First Degree Assault, Second Degree Assault, Dangerous Weapon with Intent to Injure



Photograph taken April 2015

DESCRIPTION

Alias: Bhadreshkumar C. Patel	Place of Birth: Kantrodi Ta Viramgam, Gujarat, India
Date(s) of Birth Used: May 15, 1990	Eyes: Brown
Hair: Brown	Weight: 165 pounds
Height: 5'9"	Occupation: Employee of donut shop
Sex: Male	
Nationality: Indian	

REWARD

The FBI is offering a reward of up to \$100,000 for information leading to the arrest of Bhadreshkumar Chetanbhai Patel.

REMARKS

Patel was last known to be in the Newark, New Jersey, area.

CAUTION

Bhadreshkumar Chetanbhai Patel is wanted for allegedly killing his wife by striking her multiple times with an object while they were both working at a donut shop in Hanover, Maryland, on April 12, 2015. A local arrest warrant was issued in the District Court of Maryland for Anne Arundel County on April 13, 2015, and Patel was charged with first degree murder, second degree murder, first degree assault, second degree assault, and dangerous weapon with intent to injure. A federal arrest warrant was issued in the United States District Court, District of Maryland, Baltimore, Maryland, on April 20, 2015, after Patel was charged with unlawful flight to avoid prosecution.

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If you have any information concerning this person, please contact your local FBI office or the nearest American Embassy or Consulate.

Field Office: Baltimore

First India, Israel, US, UAE or West Asian Quad leaders' Summit next month

((By Staff Reporter)) The first meeting of the India, Israel, US and UAE leaders' summit will take place next month during President Biden's in person visit to Israel. The US President will be in West Asia from July 13th to July 16th with stops in Israel, the West Bank, and Saudi Arabia. The new grouping of the 4 countries is known as I2U2 with I standing for India, Israel and U for US, UAE. The grouping is sometime referred to as the West Asian Quad. A senior US administration official said, "President will hold a virtual summit with the I2U2 heads of

state for discussions of the food security crisis and other areas of cooperation across hemispheres where UAE and Israel serve as important innovation hubs". The official added, "President looks forward to this unique engagement with Prime Minister Bennett of Israel, with Prime Minister Modi of India, and President Mohammed bin Zayed of the UAE. 'So far, the I2U2 has met only at foreign minister's level. The first meet took place during EAM Jaishankar's Israel visit in October of last year. During that visit, United Arab Emirates Foreign Minister

Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed and US Secretary of state Antony Blinken joined virtually while Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid and Indian EAM were together in person. One of the key focus areas of the grouping has been issues like trade, climate, and maritime security. The Quad meeting is seen as one of the key dividends of the Abraham accords that saw the normalization of ties between Israel and the United Arab Emirates. UAE was the first country in the Persian Gulf to normalize ties with Israel. India has strong ties with both Israel and UAE in

West Asia and since the accords were signed, they have worked in a trilateral arrangement. PM Modi will be traveling to UAE later this month as part 2 nation visit, which includes his visit to Germany. The summit level meet of West Asian Quad comes even as the Quad between US, India, Japan and Australia has seen increased engagement. Last month Quad met for the 2nd time in-person in Tokyo. While the first in person meet took place in Washington in 2021, Australia will hold Quad summit in 2023, followed by India in 2024.

All you need to know about India's first privately run Bharat Gaurav train

"The Bharat Gaurav Train from Coimbatore North to Sainagar Shirdi will commence at 18:00 hours on 14th June 2022 (Tuesday) and reach Sainagar Shirdi at 07:25 hours on 16th June 2022 (Thursday) with stoppages at Tiruppur, Erode, Salem, Yelahanka, Dharmavaram, Mantralayam Road and Wadi," the Ministry of Railways said in a statement

(News Agencies) The Indian Railways' southern zone Tuesday flagged off the country's first privately-run train under the Bharat Gaurav scheme. Around 11,00 passengers boarded the maiden round trip service from Coimbatore to Shirdi.

"The Bharat Gaurav Train from Coimbatore North to Sainagar Shirdi will commence at 18:00 hours on 14th June 2022 (Tuesday) and reach Sainagar Shirdi at 07:25 hours on 16th June 2022 (Thursday) with stoppages at Tiruppur, Erode, Salem, Yelahanka, Dharmavaram, Mantralayam Road and Wadi," the Ministry of Railways said in a statement.

The Bharat Gaurav policy, launched in November last year, allows private players to operate trains on theme-based circuits.

Who operates the first Bharat Gaurav train?

South Star Rail is the registered service provider that operates this train. The Coimbatore-based entity is a registered company and is part of the group — Future Gaming & Hotel Services Pvt Ltd. The service provider has paid Rs 1 crore as security deposit to Southern Railway for the rake with a composition of 20 coaches. "Besides, the company has paid Rs 27.79 lakh for annual Right to Use charges and quarterly fixed haulage charges of Rs 76.77 lakh. In addition, variable haulage charges of Rs 38.22

lakh also have been collected towards the current round trip. All these charges are excluding GST," the ministry said.

What does the train ride offer?

The trains under the scheme have one first AC coach, three 2 Tier AC coaches and eight 3-tier coaches along with five sleeper class coaches. There will also be a doctor on board to attend any emergency along with private security engaged along with the Railway Police Force.

"The registered service provider has refurbished the interiors of the coaches and

all the coaches will be manned with round-the-clock cleaning staff and a whole team of service professionals to offer passengers a wholesome experience. Public address system has been provided in all coaches for regular communication, playing of devotional songs and mantras," the ministry said.

It added that the registered service provider "also offers a package fare which includes transportation from Coimbatore to Shirdi and back, VIP

darshan, bus arrangement, air-conditioned accommodation, facilitation by tour guide".

What is the Bharat Gaurav policy?

According to the Bharat Gaurav policy, any operator or service provider, or virtually anyone, can lease trains from Indian Railways to run on a theme-based circuit as a special tourism

passengers stop over at a place, stay at hotels, undertake sightseeing, etc. — all organised by tour operators.

The Bharat Gaurav operator will also have to propose a similar business model wherein it takes care of local transport, sightseeing, food, local stays, etc. along with operating the trains.

Anyone can approach Railways to lease the 3,033 conventional Integral Coach Factory-design coaches earmarked for this segment. In fact, if the operator finds it feasible, then it can even purchase rakes from Indian Railway production units and run them. Each train will have between 14 and 20 coaches (including two guard coaches or SLR). The operator has to, however, take care of end-to-end, comprehensive service like hotel stay, local arrangements, etc. These trains cannot be used as ordinary transport trains between an origin and destination.

What is the Indian Railways' role under the policy?

It will provide staff to drive the trains, guards and also maintenance staff on board for the coaches. Other staff, like housekeeping and catering, etc, will be deployed by the operator. It will also ensure that its entire infrastructure is in place to safely and efficiently host the train in its network. It will also give these priority in its paths, like the Rajdhani and premium trains, so that these trains are not held up or sidelined to make way for regular trains.



US Midterm election 2022: Why it is very important

President Joe Biden's Democratic Party is up for another test as the United States is gearing up for the midterm elections on November 8. But, what are midterms and why are they important? Let's dive in



Election season is back in the United States, and President Joe Biden-led Democrats are up for a big test as America gears up for the midterm polls on November 8, 2022. Their biggest contender remains Donald Trump, who is still the face of the Republican party amid the January 6th committee hearings centered around his attempts to overthrow the government.

Unlike India, where elections are ongoing in one state or the other every year, the American elections to the Senate are divided into two phases, the midterms, and the Presidential elections.

As Biden faces Trump's Republican Party in a highly divided American society, we try to break down the polls that could decide the fate of the oldest democracy in the world.

WHAT ARE THE US MIDTERM ELECTIONS?

US midterms, like the name suggests, are held near the midpoint of a president's four-year term in office.

Like the Indian Parliament, America's Congress has 535 members who are responsible for making the law of the land. Congress is divided into two chambers, the Senate and the House of Representatives. There are 100 members in the senate elected for a six-year term and every two years a third of the Senate is up for re-election. Similarly, the House of Representatives has 435 members for a two-year term after which every seat is up for re-election.

WHAT'S AT STAKE IN 2022?

The control of the House of Representatives is at stake. This time, all 435 seats in the House of Representatives and a third of Senate seats (35) are going to the polls. A political party needs 51 seats to have control in the Senate, while 218 are required to achieve a majority in the

House.

Winners of midterm elections are determined by popular vote, as opposed to the electoral college system that is used to elect the president.

IMPORTANCE OF MIDTERM ELECTIONS

Midterm elections affect state representation in Congress. And what is Congress in the United States? As per the Constitution, Congress is a legislative body that has the authority to make laws. So, if Democrats lose, Republicans will make sure that they have a tough time getting legislation passed. Remember, It will be a split Congress.

So, can voters change the party in power during midterm elections? Well, midterm elections have no bearing on who the head of state is, but they can change the party in power in the Senate, thereby affecting the passing of legislatures and a president's ability to impose his mandate.

The president, obviously, does not change, but the midterm election

results do give an idea about the chances of a party getting reelected in the next general elections, as they tell us how Americans think the president is doing halfway through his term.

In short, if the Republican Party takes control of either or both chambers, they have more power to block Biden's plans.

CURRENT STATUS

Currently, the Democrats control both chambers, but by very slim majorities. The House is controlled by the Democrats with 221 seats and the Senate is equally split where the Republicans hold 50 seats, while Democrats hold 48. There are two independent legislatures who favour Biden. The Democrats are nominally in control as Vice President Kamala Harris has a tiebreaker vote.

WHO WILL FIGHT WHOM?

Who will fight against whom on November 8? To decide this, there are primaries. A primary is a fight between candidates of the same party in a particular area to determine who will fight the upcoming important election. In this case, the candidate who wins the primaries will be the party's candidate in the midterm elections.

WHAT IF PRESIDENT'S PARTY LOSES?

If the president's party loses, the Republican Party (GOP) will get the control of the House back. In this case, it will be a divided Congress, meaning the parties in House and Senate will be different.

WORRIES FOR BIDEN

While the general public already seems unhappy with Biden, history, too, hints that the Democrats could have a tough

battle at hand. Why? Historically speaking, during midterms, the president's party often loses the House seats, especially when the president is less popular and the economy is troubled.

Democrats lost the House in 2010 after two years of Barack Obama's presidency; Republicans lost the House after two years of Donald Trump. Not to forget, Biden is quite unpopular right now, with an approval rating stuck at less than 50% since last August.

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW?

The Primaries. So, 17 states are holding elections this month to nominate candidates for November. The primaries take the power of candidate nomination from party leaders and give it to the people.

VOTERS & VOTING PROCESS

Everybody knows that the US midterm elections are not that exciting and the voter turnout is mostly way less than in the general elections. For example, while general elections have had turnouts of about 50-60% over the past 60 years, midterms see only about 40% voter turnout. With only 36.4% casting a ballot, the 2014 midterm election registered the lowest voter turnout in a US federal election since World War II. According to the US Census Bureau, the 2018 midterms, however, boasted the highest turnout in the previous 40 years at 53%.

To vote, eligible Americans can register online or visit the county board of registrars to request a voter registration application, fill it out and submit it at the office.



Cases where death penalty is 'mandatory', and what is about to change in Malaysia

In Malaysia, terrorist acts, murder, and rape resulting in death carry the mandatory death penalty

Malaysia's government, in a statement released on June 10, has said it will abolish the 'mandatory' death penalty — the required execution of individuals convicted of certain crimes. Once the government's decision comes into effect, lesser punishments can be given for these crimes.

Capital punishment in Malaysia is given mostly to drug offenders. As of February 2022, of the more than 1,000 people on death row, 905 have been convicted of charges related to drug trafficking, according to government data. Once the death penalty ceases to be mandatory, Malaysia will join a large number of "abolishment" countries that have stopped the punishment either in law or in practice over the last few decades.

India is among the countries that persist with the death penalty as the maximum punishment, but it is not

mandatory for any crime.

What is the mandatory death penalty?

In some countries (like Malaysia until now), the death sentence is imposed as the mandatory or only punishment for certain crimes. A judge does not have the discretion to give a lesser punishment, or to consider aspects such as the circumstances in which the crime was committed or of the defendant before handing out the sentence. In Malaysia, terrorist acts, murder, and rape resulting in death carry the mandatory death penalty. The Malaysian government had made a similar announcement on ending the mandatory death penalty in 2018, but had failed to follow through, Reuters reported. The recommendation last week came from a government committee reviewing alternative punishments. But no details have been provided on when the recommendation would translate into

law.

Which countries have the mandatory death penalty?

Barring a few exceptions and certain specific offences, most countries allow capital punishment to be reduced to a life sentence or alternative sentences. Some Islamic nations have the punishment for blasphemy, the offence of contempt against God or other sacred objects or people in a faith.

In Pakistan, a court order in 1991 made blasphemy mandatorily punishable with death, which made the country's blasphemy laws stricter than in Saudi Arabia and Iran, which execute more people than Pakistan, but where judges have wider powers in awarding other punishments. Drug offences, as in the case of Malaysia, also carry mandatory death penalty in a few other countries, especially in Southeast Asia. Singapore prescribes it for manufacturing, importing

and exporting specific drugs.

In 2022, UN human rights experts said capital punishment for drug-related crimes ran contrary to international law. "States that have not yet abolished the death penalty may only impose it for the 'most serious crimes'. Under international law, only crimes of extreme gravity involving intentional killing can be considered as 'most serious'. Drug offences clearly do not meet this threshold," they said.

Studies have shown that public support for retaining the penalty is significant in Singapore, with people believing that it helps make the country safe. According to the government of Singapore, the death penalty is applicable only to a "very limited number of offences, involving the most serious forms of harm to victims and to society, such as intentional murder and trafficking of significant quantities of drugs".

Men are bigger contributors to air pollution than women, says study

A study by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) has suggested that men contribute more to air pollution compared to women. The study, "Understanding the mitigation potential of sustainable urban transport measures across income and gender groups", observed that men tend to use personal transport more than women when their income rises.

The aim of the study is to evaluate the mitigation potential of eight income-gender groups to climate change mitigation policy bundles for the urban transportation sector. In the study, the researchers further found that men contributed more to emissions due to a higher number of car trips, but their mitigation contribution is comparatively less than female groups. "This scenario is more prominent in high-income male groups," found the researchers, reports New Indian Express newspaper. The study, which has been published in the Journal of Transport Geography, observed that carbon dioxide emission reductions were high in high-income groups and PM2.5 emissions (emissions of particulate matter lesser than 2.5 microns) reductions were high in the low-income and lower-middle-income groups. It was further found that women from high-income groups preferred to use Metro trains if the services become attractive and reliable, while those from the lower income preferred buses because of the cost aspect, according to the research.

Women also walk more as the network connectivity for transport is not better linked. So, to get to the



public transport they prefer to walk, the study said. Notably, the study done by the IISc institute corroborates the research by Sweden experts that men had a higher carbon footprint than women. The study published in the Journal of Industrial Ecology in 2021 stated that men were more likely to spend money on high-emitting categories, such as gasoline for cars, 70% more than women on that expenditure. Whereas Women spent more on health care, clothing and furniture — consumer categories that were less emitting.



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Tesla India executive quits after company puts entry plan on hold

Manuj Khurana, policy and business development executive at Tesla in India, was hired in March 2021 and played a key role in forming a domestic market-entry plan for the US carmaker in the country

A key executive who was leading Tesla's lobbying effort in India has resigned, weeks after the U.S. carmaker put on hold plans to sell electric cars in the South Asian nation, two sources aware of the matter told Reuters.

Manuj Khurana, policy and business development executive at Tesla in India, was hired in March 2021 and played a key role in forming a domestic market-entry plan for the U.S. carmaker in the country.

He lobbied the Indian government for more than a year to slash the import tax on electric cars to 40% from as high as 100%, a move Tesla said would allow it to test the market with imports from its production hubs like China before investing in a factory.

But Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government insisted Tesla must first commit to manufacturing cars locally before it can offer any concessions. With talks deadlocked, Tesla put its plans to sell cars in India on hold,

reassigned some of the domestic team and abandoned its search for showroom space.

Neither Khurana, the company's first employee in India, nor Tesla responded to requests for comment. An email sent to Khurana generated an automated reply saying the address was no longer valid and future emails would not be received. The sources wished to remain anonymous because the resignation had not yet been made public.

Tesla Chief Executive Elon Musk said on Twitter last month that the company would not set up manufacturing in any location where it was not allowed first to sell and service cars.

The carmaker has also shifted its focus to other markets in Southeast Asia, like nickel-rich Indonesia, where it is looking at a potential battery-related investment, as well as Thailand, where it recently registered a local unit to sell cars.

Researchers find 'abnormal' dinosaur eggs in Madhya Pradesh. They have bird-like features

The Dhar region of Madhya Pradesh has been known for its dinosaur fossil discovery. A team of researchers have now found unique dinosaur eggs from the district

A team of researchers from Delhi University has discovered 10 dinosaur eggs in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar district. Among the mix is a unique egg which indicates that the species in India reproduce like birds. The eggs were discovered in Dinosaur Fossil National Park and belong to a species of titanosaurs, a group of sauropod dinosaurs. The eggs have been found to be one within the other, a condition known as ovum-in-ovo or multi-shelled eggs. The findings of the discovery have been published in the journal Scientific Reports. "The discovery of ovum-in-ovo egg from a Titanosaurus dinosaur nest suggests that their oviduct morphology was similar to that of birds,

opening up the possibility for sequential laying of eggs in this group of sauropod dinosaurs," researchers said in the paper.

The Dhar region made news in 2007 when the first evidence of titanosaur species roaming in the area was discovered. Since 2007, conservation work has been going on in the area. Researchers said that the new find indicates that the ovum-in-ovo pathology is not unique to birds and sauropods share a reproductive behavior very similar to that of other archosaurs. The team of scientists found 52 nests of titanosaur sauropods near the national park during their dig. Paleontologists have said that bird-like

behavior has been observed in the fossil record of dinosaurs in the form of nest construction and evidence of parental care especially in derived theropods, while other dinosaurs, such as hadrosaurs and sauropods, spent their time building communal nests and excavated bowl-shaped clutches. The eggs were found in the sandy limestone/calcareous sandstone in the lower Narmada valley. Meanwhile, during multiple field works conducted by the authors in the Bagh-Kukshi areas of the Dhar District of MP, 108 titanosaur nests were identified, which included intact clutches, isolated eggs, and several eggshells fragments.

Omicron infection doesn't provide immune boost against Covid re-infection: Study

Covid pandemic may have relatively loosened its grip on the world but it is definitely not a time to become complacent. Cases have been on the rise again, particularly in the UK. Researchers at Imperial College in London have made a discovery in their study that infection by Omicron COVID virus does not guarantee protection against re-infection. Researchers from the college studied blood samples from health workers as they arrived at the conclusion. These health workers had received three doses of mRNA vaccine and had different infection histories. Researchers found that those health workers (with three doses of vaccines) who were not infected previously got no immune boost after getting infected by Omicron. Immune boost was seen only against alpha, beta, gamma, delta and the original strain, but not against Omicron. "The message is a little bleak. Omicron and its variants are great

at breakthrough, but bad at inducing immunity, thus we get reinfections ad nauseam, and a badly depleted workforce," said Professor Danny



Altmann. He is from Imperial's department of immunology and inflammation. Prof Altmann was quoted by The Telegraph. Not only can it break through vaccine defences, it looks to leave very few of the hallmarks we'd expect on the immune system – it's more stealthy than previous variants and flies under the radar, so the immune system is unable to remember it," he added.

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China Lifts Two-year Covid Visa Ban on Indians; to Allow Return of Stranded Indian Professionals, Families

China has announced plans to provide visas to Indian professionals and their families stranded in India for over two years following the strict visa restrictions imposed by Beijing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Separately, China is also processing requests of thousands of Indian students studying in Chinese universities who have conveyed their interest to re-join their colleges and universities.

On Monday, the Chinese Embassy in India updated its COVID-19 visa policy after over two years to accept visa

applications of foreign nationals and their accompanying family members wanting to go to China for resumption of work in all fields. It is a big relief for hundreds of Indian professionals and their families who are stuck back home since 2020.

Last month, a number of Indian professionals based in China urged External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to press Beijing to allow their stranded families to return. Besides the Indians, the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi said family members of Chinese citizens and foreigners with Chinese permanent residence

permits going to China for family reunions or visiting relatives can apply for visas. Besides Indians some of whom have Chinese spouses, many Chinese employees working for various companies were also stranded in India due to Beijing's blanket visa bans and flight cancellations. However, visas for tourism and private purposes remain suspended, the Chinese Embassy announcement said. In April, after prolonged representations from India, China agreed to permit the return of some "stranded Indian students and asked the Indian Embassy here to collect the details of the students wanting to return. As per earlier reports, over 23,000 Indian students, mostly studying medicine in Chinese colleges, are stuck in India after they returned home as the coronavirus broke out in China in December 2019. They could not return to China due to the restrictions imposed by the Chinese government to arrest the spread of the contagion. Over 12,000 Indian students have



reportedly expressed their wish to return and their details have been forwarded to the Chinese government for processing. China is yet to come up with a criterion to permit the return of the students as Beijing is reluctant to allow such large number of people to return at once in view of the recent spike in COVID-19 cases in the country. While opening visa services to Indians, China is yet to announce plans to open flight

facilities between the two countries. Currently, only diplomats between the two countries travel through the expensive third-country flight routes. However, China's visa announcement has created hope that flight services too may be resumed between the two countries soon. In recent months, China has been permitting students from some friendly countries like Pakistan, Thailand, Solomon Islands and recently Sri Lanka to return.

Mumbai is sinking in the sea, says a study



A study published in a scientific journal has rung alarm bells for Indian megacity Mumbai. The study says that the coastal city is sinking into the sea. And though the rate of 2 mm per year may seem small, the report has recommended that urgent remedial measures should be taken in order to avoid increased flooding in future.

The study has been published in Geophysical Research Letters journal. It said that sinking of Mumbai city was due to a phenomenon called land subsidence. The study, carried out by researchers at University of Rhode Island is titled Subsidence in Coastal Cities Throughout the World Observed by InSAR. It studied land subsidence in 99 countries in the world.

It found that Tianjin in China was the fastest sinking city in the world. The city is sinking at the rate of 5 cm per year. Land subsidence is downward, vertical movement of the earth. Land subsidence is permanent and irreversible. This is why it is critical to prevent it rather than try for measures afterwards.

The study has found that Tianjin is the fastest sinking city in the world. These are the cities that find place on the list next.

Semarang (3.96cm per year) and Jakarta (3.44cm per year) in Indonesia, Shanghai (2.94cm year) in China, and Ho Chi Minh (2.81mm per year) and Hanoi (2.44cm per year) in Vietnam.

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Classified Name change

Vikramjeet, resident of 5 Stafford lane Hicksville NY11801, changed name to Vikramjeet Singh



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Petrol, Diesel Price Cut Brings Down Households' Inflation Expectations By About 2%



period increased by 40 basis points (bps) when compared to March 2022 round of the survey, whereas it increased by 10 bps and 30 bps for three months and one year ahead periods, respectively," according to the Households' Inflation Expectations Survey.

The survey was conducted during May 2 to 11, 2022 in 19 major cities. The results are based on responses from 6,062 urban households.

It added that a majority of the households expect general prices and inflation to remain high over three months and one year ahead horizons. Expectations for overall price and inflation over next one year were in sync with those for non-food products and cost of services, while three months ahead expectations were generally more aligned to those for food products and non-food commodities.

"In view of the cut in the prices of petrol and diesel on May 21, 2022, a limited follow-up survey (hereinafter called the 'extension survey') was conducted during

May 24-28, 2022, which covered around half of the households who had responded in the regular survey round. In all, 3,036 households gave their revised expectations of inflation (quantitative) in the extension survey," the RBI said.

In the extension survey round, inflation expectations for three months and one year ahead declined by 190 bps and 90 bps, respectively, when compared with the regular round.

In the monetary policy statement, Shaktikanta Das also said there are growing signs of a higher pass-through of input costs to selling prices. "The Monetary Policy Committee noted that inflation is likely to remain above the upper tolerance band of 6 per cent through the first three quarters of 2022-23." The retail inflation in India stood at an eight-year high of 7.79 per cent in April. The RBI has revised upwards its inflation forecast for 2022-23 to 6.7 per cent, compared with the 5.7 per cent projected earlier. The RBI said consumer confidence has been consistently improving

since July 2021; the sentiments on the key parameters like employment and household income improved further in the latest round of the survey, though they remained in pessimistic zone. "One-year ahead outlook of households remained in growth terrain despite marginal moderation in sentiments in the latest survey round," it added.

Households assessed a rise in their current spending and expected it to increase further over the next one year; they expected higher essential spending whereas the sentiments on non-essential spending remained downbeat, the RBI said in the survey.

The Consumer Confidence Survey obtains current perceptions (vis-à-vis a year ago) and one year ahead expectations on general economic situation, employment scenario, overall price situation and own income and spending across 19 major cities. The latest round of the survey was conducted during May 02 to May 11, 2022, covering 6,027 responses.

(News Agency) The household inflation expectations increased for both three-month and one-year ahead periods by 10 bps and 30 bps, respectively. However, the RBI said that the survey done after the excise duty cut on petrol and diesel was announced showed inflation expectations decline by 190 bps and 90 bps, respectively, as compared with the survey done before the tax reduction.

In the regular round of survey before the excise duty cut on petrol and diesel, households' three-month ahead expectation and one-year ahead expectation

of inflation were 10.8 per cent and 11.1 per cent. However, in another round of the survey (May 24-28) after the excise duty cut, households' three-month ahead expectation and one-year ahead expectation of inflation stood at 8.9 per cent and 10.1 per cent.

The central government had cut excise duty on petrol by 8 per litre, and 6 rupees per litre on diesel on May 21. Later, several states including Kerala, Rajasthan and Maharashtra followed the suit by cutting value-added tax. Households' median inflation perception for the current

What is digital lending and its future

Digital Lending involves lending through web platforms or mobile apps, utilizing technology for authentication and credit evaluation

(News Agency) Historically, lending has been a transaction in which the lender gives money to the borrower in exchange for a return (interest) on the money. While there are a variety of complex lending and financing instruments, lending is always centred on one thing: the ability to get the money back.

Traditionally, this sector was highly disorganized. It has evolved over time from pawnbrokers lending money in exchange for collateral to a more structured procedure involving banks and/or financial institutions. Rapid advancements in cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and blockchain, as well as faster and more affordable internet connectivity, have fuelled the rise of FinTech start-ups, and lending has also transformed and become "digital."

DIGITAL LENDING

Digital Lending involves lending through web platforms or mobile apps, utilizing technology for authentication and credit evaluation. Lending is always about trying to get a strategic edge. How can fraud be found more easily, decisions about underwriting made more accurately, or the universe of targets grow more quickly than competitors? India still has the second-

largest number of people who don't have a bank account.

Over 190 million Indian adults don't have any kind of bank account thereby representing a huge opportunity. Over the years, the digital lending market in India has significantly expanded. The value of digital lending rose from USD 33 billion in FY15 to USD 150 billion in FY20 and is projected to reach USD 350 billion by FY23. In the past few years, machine learning has transformed conventional lending. The operations of lending institutions are governed by governmental financial regulatory bodies, which provide various regulatory guidelines and compliance is a must.

ML AND DIGITAL LEARNING

Using the power of machine learning, financial institutions can now make quicker and more accurate decisions by shifting from an analysis of individuals to an analysis of patterns and trends. The global market for digital lending platforms is anticipated to reach \$20 billion by 2026, representing a compound annual growth rate of 19.6 per cent over the previous seven years.

As a result of the advantages of a

transformed lending process, such as improved decision-making, happier customers, cost optimization, etc., machine learning provides lenders with a variety of ancillary leverage points, such as -Enhanced operational effectiveness, Improved precision, simplified compliance, and Effective analysis of large volumes of data. From accelerating the underwriting process to improving portfolio composition and optimization, robo-advising, model validation, and alternative credit reporting, machine learning aids the lending industry by automating processes that previously required extensive manual paperwork. It accomplishes this by analyzing unprocessed data sets and deriving meaningful insights in order to provide accurate decisions. The system then uses this information to solve complex, data-rich problems that are crucial to the banking and finance industry.

FUTURE OF LENDING IS DIGITAL

The industry has been alerted by Covid-19 to the tremendous potential of digital transformation. As customer demand for contactless transactions rises, more lenders will adopt technology to provide borrowers with maximum convenience.

Even traditional banks and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) are realizing the need to digitize processes such as customer onboarding, risk assessment, loan underwriting, disbursement, and repayment in order to reduce operational costs and enhance the customer experience. With services such as video-KYC, Aadhaar-based KYC, and websites and applications with cutting-edge functionalities, loan application procedures will become more efficient and less cumbersome. Additionally, the traditional credit underwriting procedure will undergo a radical transformation. Lenders will increasingly utilize cutting-edge technologies such as AI, ML, and big data analytics to collect and evaluate data from multiple sources in order to evaluate the creditworthiness of an applicant more quickly and efficiently. With the technology that enables alternative credit scoring, lenders can extend credit to a greater number of individuals, thereby advancing the cause of financial inclusion. In the coming years, technology will continue to disrupt the digital lending ecosystem, with a renewed emphasis on delivering an improved end-to-end customer experience.

India's retail inflation eases to 7.04%

India's retail inflation in the month of May eased to 7.04 per cent, according to the government data

(News Agency) The retail inflation in May was estimated at 7.04 per cent, according to government data released on Monday. The inflation has eased from a near eight-year high of 7.79 per cent recorded in April.

Inflation in the food basket was 7.97 per cent in May this year, marginally lower than 8.31 per cent in the previous month, as per the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO). This came after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) last week upped its inflation projection for the current fiscal to 6.7 per cent from 5.7 per cent forecast in April. Meanwhile, a rise in price across all items from fuel to vegetables and cooking oil pushed WPI or Wholesale Price Inflation to a record high of 15.08 per cent in April and retail inflation to a near eight-year high of 7.79



per cent. RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said the upside risk to inflation persists and the recent spike in tomato prices would fuel food inflation. Also, high global crude oil prices would

add to the upside pressure on inflation. The upward revision in inflation projection comes as domestic retail inflation has remained above RBI's comfort level of 6 per cent for four months

in a row, mainly due to the Russia-Ukraine war which has impacted the prices of commodities across the globe. In the bi-monthly monetary policy, Das upped the inflation projection

for the ongoing fiscal to 6.7 per cent.

It projected inflation to be 7.5 in June quarter (Q1) and 7.4 per cent in September quarter (Q2). Inflation is expected to come down to 6.2 per cent in December quarter (Q3) and further reduce to 5.8 per cent in March quarter (Q4) of this fiscal. Das said normal south-west monsoon would boost kharif sowing and agri output. However, global geo-political situation remains fluid and commodity market remains on the edge.

RBI, in its monetary policy in April, had projected inflation to be 5.7 per cent in the current fiscal, with 6.3 per cent in Q1; 5.8 per cent in Q2; 5.4 per cent in Q3 and 5.1 per cent in Q4. RBI has the mandate to keep inflation at 4 per cent with a bias of 2 per cent on either side.

RBL Bank Shares Fall 23% Today: What Led to this Drop and What's Next?



(News Agency) The stock price of RBL Bank hit a record low of Rs 87.60 as it tumbled nearly 23 per cent on the BSE in Monday's intra-day trade after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) approved R Subramaniakumar's appointment as the managing director & chief executive officer (MD & CEO) of the private sector lender. "...A meeting of the Board of Directors will be convened to approve the appointment of Mr. R Subramaniakumar as an Additional Director and as the Managing Director & CEO of the Bank and the approval of the shareholders shall be obtained thereafter," the Bank said in its stock exchange filing on Saturday.

Previously, Subramaniakumar was the former managing director and chief executive director of the state-run Indian Overseas Bank.

He was also appointed as the administrator of Dewan Housing Finance Co Ltd after the mortgage financier's board was superseded. "Given his profile, he comes across as a troubleshooter with decent success at IOB/DHFL. However, his selection as MD & CEO of a private bank, despite interim management's assurance on asset quality and plans to reorient the bank on the path of growth, is a little surprising," said analysts at brokerage Emkay in a note. Last year in December, RBL's then MD & CEO Vishwavir Ahuja went on indefinite leave. Executive director Rajeev Ahuja was appointed as the interim Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer. Ahuja's departure had come after the RBI appointed one of RBL's chief general managers, Yogesh

Dayal, on the lender's board as an additional director.

According to analysts at Kotak Institutional Equities, RBL Bank has addressed one concern, however, issues on the strategy of the bank given its reliance on high-yielding product segments, employee retention, and recovery in return ratios and growth remain unclear. "We need to have clarity (1) Construct of the loan mix. The bank's key profit pool comes from the credit card and MFI business. Any changes to this model would hurt the near-term prospects on growth and profitability. (2) Employee retention/hiring strategy. ESOPs usually tend to

play a critical role in retaining talent and RBL Bank's price performance since listing has not been impressive. (3) Normalization of the RoE journey could be longer. The path to RoE needs more clarity and there could be a lot of changes that could happen in the next few years and the bank may need more time to get to a higher RoE from current levels," they said in a report dated June 13.

RBL Bank: Stock Price History In the past six months, the market price of the bank has more-than-halved (down 52 per cent) against a 9 per cent decline in the S&P BSE Sensex. RBL

Bank has faced multiple issues in the last couple of years on the growth front starting from the corporate book blow-up till the recent Covid impact on its microfinance institutions (MFI) and cards business.

What Should Investors Do Now? "Amid the uncertainty, we downgrade the stock to Hold from Buy, with a revised target price of Rs 110 (Rs 140 earlier). We expect the stock to remain under pressure in the near term, as investors would like to wait for the new management's business strategy, including near-term growth/asset-quality movement," the note stated.

Cryptocurrency market value slumps under \$1 trillion

The global cryptocurrency market has lost \$1 trillion in value in the last two months alone

(News Agency) The value of the cryptocurrency market on Monday fell below \$1 trillion for the first time since January 2021, according to data site CoinMarketCap, reaching as low as \$926 billion. The global cryptocurrency market peaked at \$2.9 trillion in November 2021, but it has faltered so far this year. It has lost \$1 trillion in value in the last two months alone as investors ditched riskier assets in the face of high inflation and fears that interest rate raises by central banks will hamper growth. The largest cryptocurrency, bitcoin, was

down more than 10 per cent on the day, falling to an 18-month low of \$23,750. It is down by around 50 per cent so far this year. Smaller coin ether fell over 15 per cent to \$1,210. "As inflation proves to be an even trickier opponent to beat than expected, Bitcoin and Ether are continuing to get a severe bruising in the ring," said Susannah Streeter, senior investment and markets analyst at Hargreaves Lansdown. "They are prime victims of the flight away from risky assets as investors fret about spiralling consumer prices around the world."

Will WHO take the monkey out of monkeypox?

WHO is working on a new name for monkeypox amid calls for changing the nomenclature of the virus that has now been reported in over 30 countries

(By SAI Bureau) As the World Health Organisation (WHO) convenes an emergency committee to determine if the expanding monkeypox outbreak should be considered a global health emergency, it is also looking into changing its name. The development comes amid calls from scientists for a “non-discriminatory and non-stigmatising” name.

WHO chief Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that it is working on the matter. “WHO is also working with partners and experts from around the world on changing the name of #monkeypox virus, its clades, and the disease it causes. We will make announcements about the new names as soon as possible,” he said.

WHY IS WHO CHANGING THE NAME OF MONKEYPOX?

The decision to look into a new name

comes days after a group of 30 scientists from Africa and around the world called for changing the name. In a paper, the group pointed out the continuous use of photos of African patients to depict pox lesions in the mainstream media.

The WHO lists the virus under two distinct strains: the Central African (Congo Basin) clade and the West African clade. “Although the origin of the new global outbreak is still unknown, there is growing evidence that the most likely scenario is that cross-continent, cryptic human transmission has been ongoing for longer than previously thought. However, there is an increasing narrative in the media and among many scientists that are trying to link the present global outbreak to Africa or West Africa, or Nigeria,” scientists said.

They said that a nomenclature that is neutral, non-discriminatory, and non-

stigmatising will be more appropriate for the global health community.

WHAT DO SCIENTISTS WANT?

Scientists have proposed a new way to name the viral outbreak under clades 1, 2, and 3, in order of detection. These include viral genomes from Western Africa, Central African, and localized spillover events in global north countries and from both human and non-human hosts.

They have proposed clade 1 to be of the Congo Basin clade, and clades 2 and 3 correspond to the prior “West African clade”. “The entire epidemic of MPXV regardless of the location, needs to be halted, not just this Northern hemisphere outbreak. A practical and neutral system of nomenclature allows efficient communication without the risk of further misconceptions, discrimination, and stigmatisation,” the group said in its

paper.

AN INTERNATIONAL EMERGENCY?

The WHO is working on identifying if the outbreak is indeed a global emergency as more than 1,600 cases and nearly 1,500 suspected cases have been reported this year in 39 countries.

Declaring monkeypox to be an international health emergency would give it the same designation as the Covid-19 pandemic and mean that WHO considers the normally rare disease a continuing threat to countries globally. “With the advice from the emergency committee, we can be in a better position to control the situation. But it doesn’t mean that we are going straight to a public health emergency of international concern. We don’t want to wait until the situation is out of control to start calling the emergency committee,” Dr. Ibrahima Soce Fall, WHO’s emergencies director for Africa said.

The corporate life is affecting your health? It’s time for selfcare

From having early dinner to snacking healthy to exercising every day, here are a few health tips for corporate employees to lead a healthy lifestyle

(By SAI Bureau) The corporate life eventually gets to us. The rat-race, the long hours of sitting in front of the screens, the non-stop work, the deadlines, the stress of meeting expectations, and the late nights – everything eventually starts impacting our health adversely. The corporate employees are often spotted going through a range of health issues that appear over a period of time wing to the work pressure and the stress at work. Nutritionist Anjali Mukerjee, a few days back, addressed the issue of corporate work culture and how

it impacts the body negatively. “Working non-stop and late hours has seriously messed up your health? You’re not alone. Waking up at 7am and coming home at 9pm from work, only to feel physically and emotionally exhausted at home with family is common today. Common, not healthy,” read an excerpt of her post. She further added that stress at work impacts our health in more ways than we can fathom – from mental health to our hormones leading to unhealthy eating and sleeping habits. “A stressful life can harm you in more

ways than you think, impacting both your mental state and your hormones, diet, weight, sleep and the list goes on. This especially leads to unhealthy eating habits and easy weight gain,” she wrote. **De-stress:** The anxiety and the panic of meeting deadlines become a habit for corporate employees over time. However, this can affect the health. It’s important to practice deep breathing at least for 5 minutes, twice, while travelling to and back from work.

Healthy snacks: Snacks such as peanuts and roasted chana



helps in providing the body with nutrients such as fibre, protein and minerals.

Breakfast: Do not skip breakfast.

Instead make it a combination of fibre, protein and other essential nutrients to start the day on a healthy note.

Home food: Healthy food items help in preventing unnecessary weight gain and mood swings. Home food also consists of the necessary hygiene and nutrients.

Antioxidants: Anjali suggested a glass of carrot juice or tomato juice before breakfast can do wonders for the body.

Hydrate: Drinking adequate amounts of water is mandatory for good health. Corporate employees should also switch to green tea from tea or coffee.

Light dinner: A light dinner by 8pm is a good practice.

Exercise: Physical activities such as brisk walking, for at least 30 minutes in a day can help in contributing to better health.

High Fructose Corn Syrup May Raise the Risk of a Certain Type of Liver Disease

(By SAI Bureau) Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) is a broad term used to describe a wide range of liver conditions that affect those who drink little to no alcohol. This is opposed to alcohol-related liver disease (ARLD), which is the damage done to the liver from years of excessive drinking. Now, new research is showing that people who consume a higher amount of high fructose corn syrup also may be at higher risk of liver disease. The research was presented at ENDO 2022, the Endocrine Society’s annual meeting. In the study, researchers analyzed data from 3,292 participants enrolled in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey Trusted Source between 2017 and 2018. The study hasn’t been peer-reviewed or published yet.

In their findings, the researchers reported that the highest proportion of those who consumed the most fructose were Mexican Americans (48 percent) and non-Hispanic Black Americans (44 percent). Non-Hispanic whites had a reported percentage of 33 percent. The highest prevalence of NAFLD was among Mexican Americans, who consumed the most fructose at 70 percent. The prevalence of NAFLD in Mexican Americans who consumed low amounts of fructose was reduced at 52 percent. Overall, the researchers found that people who consumed high levels of fructose were more likely to develop NAFLD than individuals who consumed lower levels. They noted that this effect was particularly true in Mexican Americans and non-Hispanic whites.

Fructose is a natural sugar found in fruit, fruit juices, certain vegetables, and honey. While it’s a naturally occurring sugar, it is also an ingredient in high fructose corn syrup, a component in a number of unhealthy foods. In addition to being a contributing factor to obesity and diabetes, researchers suggest that high-fructose corn syrup may also be a contributing factor to NAFLD. “An analysis of the deleterious effect of high fructose corn syrup on the development of fatty liver disease presented at the Endocrine Society meeting confirms the importance of controlling the intake of this harmful ingredient found in most sodas and candies,” Dr. Hillel Tobias, the director of hepatology at the Concorde Medical Group in New York, told Healthline. “



'Heart diseases, infection leading killers in Delhi'

Heart disease and stroke accounted for 19.25% of all deaths in 2017, which is a 1.6 percentage points increase over reported deaths in 2016. Infectious and parasitic diseases caused 14.78% of all deaths; followed by respiratory ailments, which led to 8.405% of deaths.

(News Agency) Cardiovascular diseases, infections and respiratory diseases accounted for two in every five deaths recorded in Delhi in 2017, the state government's Annual Report on Registration of Births and Deaths which is based on reports of the city's three corporations, said.

The report says there were three plague deaths and five deaths due to cholera.

Heart disease and stroke accounted for 19.25% of all deaths in 2017, which is a 1.6 percentage points increase over reported deaths in 2016. Infectious and parasitic dis-

eases caused 14.78% of all deaths; followed by respiratory ailments, which led to 8.405% of deaths. "This is the trend that we see across the country; now fewer people are dying of infectious diseases and increasing longevity is leading to more deaths from lifestyle-related diseases. Heart diseases and strokes are accompanied with diabetes and hypertension, so it is important to address them," said Dr Dilip Kumar, senior consultant of medicine, Safdarjung hospital.

In 2017, sixteen deaths were also reported from neonatal

tetanus, which was eliminated (less than one case in every 1,000 live births) in India in 2015.

Sex ratio at birth rose to 913 in 2017, compared to 902 the previous year. "It is good to see the increase, but it is important to implement the PC-PNDT law properly to ensure that the gains made are maintained and Delhi can do better in the future," said Sabu George, an activist who has been working to prevent female foeticide for over three decades. The Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCP-NDT) Act, 1994,

bans sex-determination of the foetus.

In infants under the age of one year, slow growth of foetus, foetal malnutrition and immaturity were the highest causes of death in 2017, with the numbers increasing threefold over 2016. In 2016, slow foetal growth, foetal malnutrition and immaturity killed 426 (5.31% of all infant deaths) newborns as compared to 1,268 (16.75%) in 2017.

In 2016, the highest newborn deaths were from suffocation from lack of oxygen and other respiratory symptoms, which accounted for

1,358 or 16.94% of all infant deaths.

"Malnutrition is always a factor for foetal malnutrition and slow growth, but it has always been a problem in India. So, for finding reasons for the sudden jump, we need to examine other reasons such as environmental toxins, pollutants or other such reasons.

The other explanation for the rise could be improved diagnosis because of better imaging techniques and more people getting tested," said Dr Subhashish Roychaudhary, professor of paediatric surgery at Lady Hardinge Medical College.

Spice it up: A healthy, flavourful way to enjoy good food

Spices add flavour, fragrance and good health to food. Follow your grandmother's century old recipe, right down to the last spice to savour every bite.

(News Agency) Good cooks will swear by their spices right down to the last pinch. And food lovers will turn up their noses at dishes that don't have that little bit of dalcini or garam masala.

The latest to join the spice bandwagon are food scientists and nutritionists, who are acknowledging the fact that spices have a whole lot more than taste and tang. They possess medicinal qualities and micro nutrients that can make a difference to body health.

Cardamom: A steaming mug of elaichi tea works wonders for the sagging spirit, especially on a dull, rainy day. A native of southern India, Sri Lanka and Malaysia, it is an international favourite. Use the seeds powdered or whole, it lends a distinct flavour to milk, tea, curries, Indian sweets and desserts. It is even used for its fragrance in cosmet-

ics like soap lotions and perfumes.

Health Benefits: It works as a carminative (relieves flatulence) and digestant (aids digestion). It stimulates the stomach to produce more acids, which in turn improves digestion. And of course after a meal of garlicks and onions, it works as a wonderful mouth freshener!

Cloves: Hand in glove with cardamom, the innocuous looking laung is a native of India, Indonesia, Brazil, Madagascar and Philippines. These unopened flower buds are used to spice up curries. They are also used in dental products and cosmetics like soaps, perfumes and body lotions.

Health Benefits: Dadimaa was right! Clove oil is a great pain reliever, especially for toothaches. This tiny spice packs in a load of benefits. It combats nausea and

when taken at tea it eases digestion problems and parasitic infections. Clove oil is also a potent antibiotic. When you have a toothache, apply a few crushed cloves to the aching tooth.

Pepper: Kali Mirchi, ground or whole, can pep up a bland meal in a jiffy. Grown extensively in India have it in salads, sprinkle it over freshly cut fruits, add it to soups, fruits shakes and curries. Health Benefits: These tiny balls are an incredible powerhouse of medicinal qualities. Pepper works as a diaphoretic (induces sweating), diuretic (Prevents water retention) and carminative. It stimulates the taste buds which in turn increases the production of stomach acids. All this improves digestion. It also has antioxidant and antibacterial properties. The outer layer of peppercorn helps in breaking down of fat cells. So make sure that the



pepper cellar is full and within hands reach at meal times!

Cinnamon: Dalcini is the dried inner bark of an evergreen tree native to South West India, South Asia and Srilanka. This aromatic spice is used to flavour vegetables, curries and desserts. It is also used in incense and pharmaceutical, cosmetic and health products.

Health Benefits : Research has confirmed that cinnamon has the following qualities:- sedative anticonvulsant (reduces the severity of fits as in epilepsy) antibiotic, diaphoretic, diuretic and antiulcerative. It is useful in treat-

ing common colds. When you feel you have a cold coming up make sure you have a cup of cinnamon and ginger tea with a dash of lime. It will warm you up and make you feel good.

Saffron: The queen of spices, kesar doesn't come cheap by any standards. And certainly not when it takes nearly 70,000 saffron flowers to produce a mere kilo of saffron! These delicate dried threads of the saffron flower are found in the cooler climates of northern India. A natural food colorant, it imparts a typical flavour to rice dishes, Indian sweets, vegetables and curries.

This black hole is wandering aimlessly in space. It's so fast it can travel from Earth to Moon in 3 hrs

Astronomers have spotted the first of its kind wandering black hole in space. The findings open a new window into these dark objects, which can't be seen any other way



Astrophysical Journal Letters. Astronomers speculate that the object could be a neutron star instead of a black hole. Neutron stars are dense, highly compact objects, but their gravity is balanced by internal neutron pressure, which prevents further collapse of a black hole.

"This is the first free-floating black hole or neutron star discovered through gravitational microlensing. With microlensing, we're able to probe these lonely, compact objects and weigh them. I think we have opened a new window onto these dark objects, which can't be seen any other way," Jessica Lu, a UC Berkeley associate professor of astronomy, and lead author said in a statement. Astronomers estimate that there should be 100 million black holes roaming among the 100 billion stars in our

galaxy. But since black holes emit no light of their own, they are extremely difficult to detect. The findings are the result of nearly six years of work with observations by the Hubble space telescope. The wandering black hole lies about 5,000 light-years away, in the Carina-Sagittarius spiral arm of our galaxy. However, its discovery allows astronomers to estimate that the nearest isolated stellar-mass black hole to Earth might be as close as 80 light-years away. While the Berkley team observed the microlensing event, so did a team of astronomers from the Space Telescope Science Institute (STScI) in Baltimore. A paper describing the analysis by the STScI team, led by Kailash Sahu, has been accepted for publication in The Astrophysical Journal. Sahu's

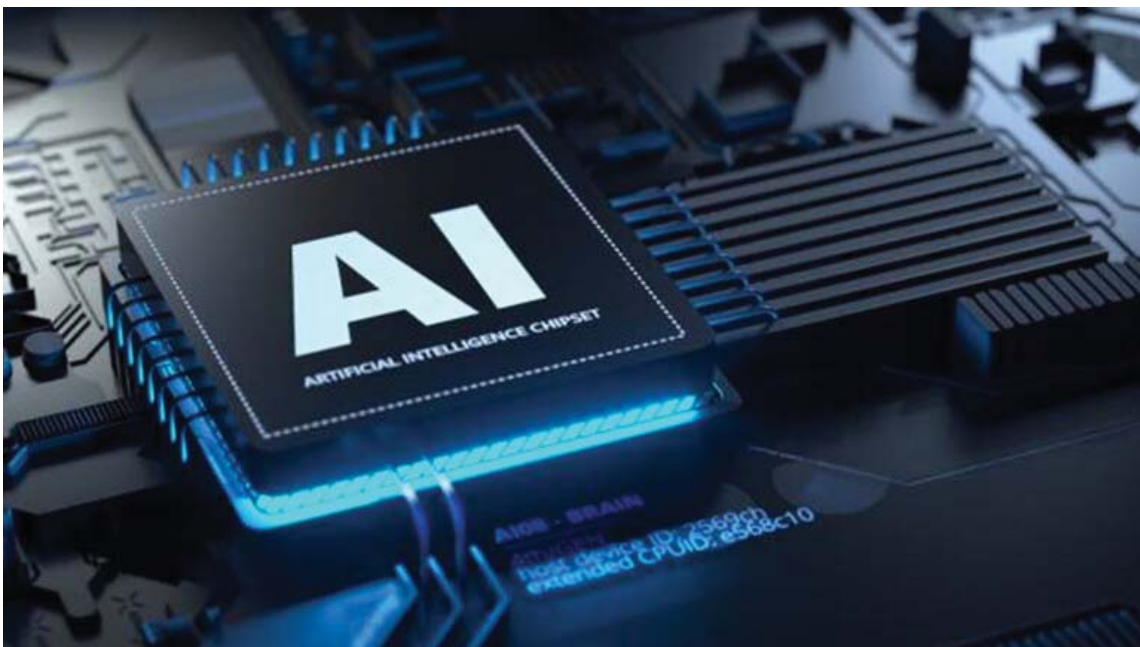
team estimates the isolated black hole is traveling across the galaxy at 1,60,000 kilometers (fast enough to travel from Earth to the Moon in less than three hours). That's faster than most of the other neighboring stars in that region of our galaxy. And since both microlensing surveys caught the same object, it has two names: MOA-2011-BLG-191 and OGLE-2011-BLG-0462, or OB110462, for short. "Whatever it is, the object is the first dark stellar remnant discovered wandering through the galaxy unaccompanied by another star," Lam added. Astronomers used the Hubble telescope to measure the amount of deflection of the background star's image by the black hole. "Detections of isolated black holes will provide new insights into the population of these objects in our Milky Way," said Sahu.

(News Agency) Nearly a month after the Event Horizon Telescope snapped the first image of the black hole at the center of the Milky Way galaxy, astronomers have found a unique object in the universe — a free-floating black hole. Astronomers using gravitational microlensing spotted the phenomenon wandering in deep space. Gravitational microlensing is a process where

astronomers observe the light from a star far behind the black hole, which is momentarily brightened and deflected by an object passing in front of it. The object is the black hole. Astronomers from UC Berkeley estimate that the mass of the invisible compact object is between 1.6 and 4.4 times that of the sun. The findings are set to be published in the

Artificial Intelligence successfully predicts complications after surgery

In a new match of medical science and machine learning, a new Artificial Intelligence platform can successfully predict post-surgery complications in patients



(News Agency) Post-surgery complications are a big risk and have been an issue for both physicians and patients worldwide, but a new Artificial Intelligence (AI) platform could now ease their worries. The AI has successfully identified postoperative complications by automatically acquiring patients' medical data and delivering it to doctors' mobile devices. The

system, named MySurgeryRisk, extracts clinical data in real-time, creating an "analytic pipeline" that pushes valuable results to surgeons' mobile devices. The findings have been published on Jama Network Open after a study conducted over 74,417 inpatient surgical procedures involving 58,236 adult patients. "The automated real-time predictions of postoperative

complications with mobile device outputs had good performance in clinical settings with prospective validation, matching surgeons' predictive accuracy," researchers said in the paper.

The platform is powered by machine learning and has been developed using nearly seven years of data from more than 74,000 procedures. The system was consistently able to match

surgeons' accuracy in predicting surgical outcomes and can benefit both doctors and patients by augmenting medical decision-making and reducing complications. "This is really exciting because we validated the algorithms that we developed prospectively. It was important to show that we achieved good predictive performance," Tezcan Ozrazgat-Baslanti, a research assistant professor of medicine and co-developer of MySurgeryRisk said in a statement. Azra Bihorac, senior associate dean for research affairs at the UF College of Medicine and a lead researcher on the MySurgeryRisk project developed the system by using massive amounts of anonymized data from patients' electronic medical records, including medications, lab results, and sociodemographic data, up to one year before surgery. The machine also collected data such as vital signs during the surgical procedures and produced fast, accurate

predictions of prolonged intensive care unit stays and mortality risk after procedures. The researchers also claimed that the AI calculated the risk of eight major postoperative complications, including sepsis, acute kidney injury, and cardiovascular and neurologic issues. "An AI system like MySurgeryRisk is meant to augment surgeons' skill and experience as well as expedite their decision-making. While planning a surgery, the discovery of higher risks could prompt a doctor-patient conversation about whether surgery is truly appropriate," Bihorac said in a news release. The University of Florida Health said that the system is also unique and valuable in the way it collects data and distributes real-time information to physicians. In an operating room, thousands of data points that are potentially relevant to surgical complications — such as information from ventilator monitors and anesthesia devices — now go uncollected.

Europe's largest meat-eating dinosaur that lived 125 million years ago found

Spinosaurus had elongated skulls reminiscent of crocodiles with lots of conical teeth - perfect for grasping slippery prey - as well as strong arms and big claws



(News Agency) Fossilized bones discovered on a rocky seashore on England's Isle of Wight are the remains of a meat-eating dinosaur that may be larger than any other known from Europe, a beast that was a cousin of the biggest carnivorous dinosaur species on record. Paleontologists said they have found parts of the skeleton of the dinosaur, which lived about 125 million years ago during the Cretaceous Period, including bones of the back, hips and tail, some limb fragments but no skull

or teeth. Based on the partial remains, they estimated that the dinosaur exceeded 33 feet (10 meters) long and perhaps reached much more.

"The size of the specimen is impressive. It is one of the biggest - and possibly the biggest - known land predator ever to stalk Europe," said Chris Barker, a University of Southampton doctoral student in paleontology and lead author of the study published in the journal PeerJ Life & Environment.

Based in part on a series of small

grooves on the top of the tail vertebra, they concluded that it belonged to a group of dinosaurs called spinosaurs that included Spinosaurus, which lived about 95 million years ago and at about 50 feet (15 meters) long is considered the longest-known dinosaur predator

Spinosaurus had elongated skulls reminiscent of crocodiles with lots of conical teeth - perfect for grasping slippery prey - as well as strong arms and big claws. They fed upon aquatic prey as well as other dinosaurs.

Because of the incomplete nature of the remains, the researchers have not yet given the newly described dinosaur a scientific name, but are calling it the "White Rock spinosaurid" based on the geological layer where the bones were found. They believe it is not a member of any previously identified species. Meat-eating dinosaurs belonged to a clade called theropods, with each

continent producing immense examples. They were bipedal and the largest had massive skulls and strong teeth.

Spinosaurus was Africa's largest. Tyrannosaurus rex, approaching 42 feet (13 meters), was North America's king, while the similarly sized Giganotosaurus reigned in South America and the slightly smaller Tarbosaurus in Asia. The largest-known named theropod from Europe was Torvosaurus, at about 33 feet (10 meters). read more The newly described dinosaur might turn out to be as long as T. rex, according to University of Southampton paleobiologist and study corresponding author Neil Gostling. "This one is really big," Gostling said. "Let's hope more fossils turn up. We would love a skull or teeth." Looking at the teeth could help researchers better understand this dinosaur's position on the spinosaur family tree. The fossils were spotted on

the surface along Compton Bay on the southwestern coast of the Isle of Wight. The dinosaur inhabited a lagoon environment also populated by various plant-eating dinosaurs and flying reptiles called pterosaurs. At the time, sea levels were much higher than today and large parts of Europe were submerged.

The Isle of Wight has become one of Europe's richest locales for dinosaur remains. The same team of researchers last year announced the discovery of two other Isle of Wight Cretaceous spinosaurs, both measuring about 30 feet long (9 meters). read more Those finds combined with the latest one buttress their hypothesis that spinosaurs as a group originated and diversified in western Europe before expanding elsewhere.

"This new material corroborates our previous work that highlights Europe as an important region for spinosaur diversification," Barker said.

Gaia reveals DNA of stars: European probe peers into two billion of them in Milky Way

In its latest data dump, the Gaia spacecraft, credited for making the most accurate map of our galaxy, has peered into the soul of two billion stars.

years, and to better understand the lifecycle of stars and our place in the Universe.

WHAT'S NEW?

The new data includes improved details for almost two billion stars in our galaxy, including new information about their chemical compositions, stellar temperatures, colours, masses, ages, and the speed at which stars move towards or away from us. "Much of this information was revealed by the newly released spectroscopy data, a technique in which the starlight is split into its constituent colours (like a rainbow). The data also includes special subsets of stars, like those that change brightness over time," ESA has said in a statement. The data also contains the largest catalogue yet of binary stars, thousands of Solar System objects such as

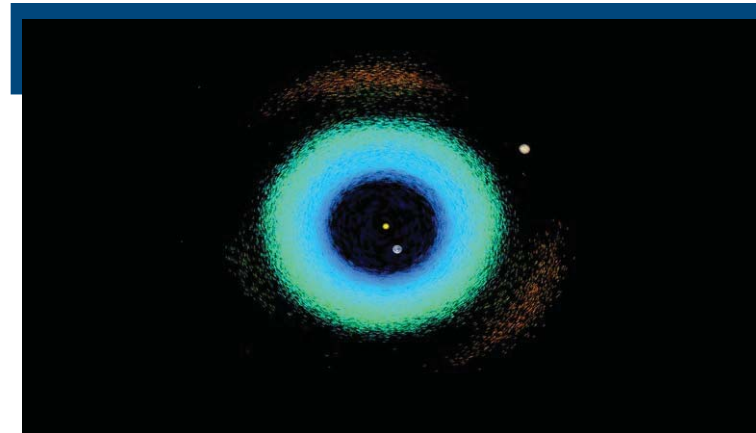
asteroids and moons of planets, and millions of galaxies and quasars outside the Milky Way. The spacecraft observed starquakes -- tiny motions on the surface of a star that change the shapes of stars. "Starquakes teach us a lot about stars, notably their internal workings. Gaia is opening a goldmine for 'asteroseismology' of massive stars," Conny Aerts of KU Leuven in Belgium, who is a member of the Gaia collaboration said in a statement. The probe, launched in 2014, also looked into the DNA of stars to track their journey through space. "What stars are made of can tell us about their birthplace and their journey afterwards, and therefore about the history of the Milky Way. With today's data release, Gaia is revealing the largest chemical map of the galaxy

coupled to 3D motions, from our solar neighbourhood to smaller galaxies surrounding ours," ESA said in a statement.

WHAT HAS IT SEEN BEFORE?

Gaia has in the past released two sets of data, in 2016 and 2018, and a subset of the third data set in 2020. These data releases contained stellar positions, distances, motions across the sky, and colour information, among others. The mission was first launched in 2013.

The spacecraft not only maps the stars in our galaxy but also what is in between the stars, the interstellar medium, consisting mostly of dust and gas. The spacecraft has been providing us with details to make a 3D map of the dust in the Milky Way, identify how much of the starlight is blocked by dust, and explore mysterious macromolecules in the gas.



(News Agency) The European Space Agency on Monday released a new trove of data collected from the Gaia spacecraft that could further enhance the most accurate map of our Milky Way galaxy. The spacecraft has new details about almost two billion stars in our galaxy.

Nestled nearly 15,00,000 kilometres away from Earth at the second Lagrange point, the spacecraft has been observing the vast corners of the galaxy.

The new data release includes stellar positions, distances, motions across the sky, and colour information, among others. The new data could give new insights into strange 'starquakes', stellar DNA, and asymmetric motions. The spacecraft aims to make the most accurate multi-dimensional map of the Milky Way.

The spacecraft allows astronomers to reconstruct our home galaxy's structure and past evolution over billions of

Shah Rukh Khan poses for pic with AR Rahman and his son AR Ameen, fans are reminded of Dil Se

Shah Rukh Khan posed for a picture with AR Rahman and his son AR Ameen. Fans became nostalgic as they were reminded of Dil Se



(News Agency) Actor Shah Rukh Khan met musician AR Rahman and his son AR Ameen recently and also posed for pictures with them. Taking to Instagram, AR Rahman shared a photo as the trio smiled for the camera. The picture was seemingly clicked at actor Nayanthara and director Vignesh Shivan's wedding in Chennai. In the picture, Shah Rukh wore a white shirt and black pants while AR Rahman wore a green ethnic outfit and AR Ameen opted for a navy blue outfit. For the picture, Shah Rukh stood in the middle with the musician on one side and Ameen on the other. Reacting to the post, Jonita Gandhi wrote, "3 dapper boys." A fan wrote, "3 Dons." Another person said, "Alexa, play Dil Se re!" "Dil se re, Indian Music industry peaks here," read a comment. "Omggggg.....my two biggest favourites...Shahrukh and ARR Sir in one frame," another fan commented. A fan also said, "Dil se + Swades + Jab tak hai jaan." Another comment read, "Men who took India internationally." Dil Se (1998) is a romantic thriller film written and directed by Mani Ratnam. The film stars Shahrukh Khan, Manisha Koirala, and Preity Zinta among others. The music in the film is by AR Rahman. Shah Rukh attended Nayanthara and Vignesh's wedding, which was an intimate ceremony. Apart from Shah Rukh, Rajinikanth, Boney Kapoor, Ajith, and Vijay also attended the wedding. Earlier, Shah Rukh's manager Pooja Dadlani had shared pictures of Shah Rukh on Instagram, ahead of the celebrations. She captioned the post, "For Nayanthara's Special Day!!" Filmmaker Atlee also shared a photo featuring himself, Shah Rukh and Pooja. He had written, "Darling Nayan & @wikiofficial wedding diaries @iamsrk sir chief & @poojadadlani02." Shah Rukh will be seen next in Pathaan, following which he will see the release of Atlee's Jawan. As per reports, Nayanthara is also a part of the project. Shah Rukh recently unveiled the film's poster which showed him in a tough, and angry aura, against a rugged background. Seemingly, he is wounded, as his face remains almost completely wrapped in bandages. Jawan is a film produced by Gauri Khan and presented by Red Chillies Entertainment. The film stars Shah Rukh in his first pan-India film. It will release on June 2, 2023, across five languages—Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada. Shah Rukh is currently busy with two other projects. He has Siddharth Anand's Pathaan starring Deepika Padukone and John Abraham in the pipeline. Fans will also see him in Rajkumar Hirani's Dunki opposite Tapsee Pannu.

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Kartik Aaryan talks Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 with street kids while out on walk with his pet, fans praise his humility



A video of Kartik Aaryan interacting with street kids has been doing rounds on the internet. The video also features Kartik's pet dog Katori

(News Agency) Actor Kartik Aaryan is currently basking in the success of his film Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2. Now a video of Kartik with his fans have been shared online. In the clip, the actor is seen talking to street kids, where they tell him about his film. The video also featured Kartik's pet dog Katori. In the video, Kartik is seen holding Katori in his arms, while talking to the street kids. A little girl is seen telling Kartik about the film. A little girl recounts a scene from the film which involved Kartik as the actor listens with a smile. After this, he asks "Maza aaya na film dekh

ke? Taali bajaya na (Did you guys enjoy the film? You guys clapped)?" As the kids say they enjoyed the film, Kartik thanks them with folded hands before Sharing the video, the fan wrote, "This is the most epic and cute video on Internet today. Kartik Aaryan is one of the most humble superstar. He chats with street kids - who are also his fans. Truly masses hero." Kartik's film Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 is a follow-up to Bhool Bhulaiyaa, which was directed by Priyadarshan and featured Akshay as a psychiatrist tasked with uncovering the truth of an ancestral palace believed to

be haunted. The sequel, directed by Anees Bazmee, stars Kartik playing a character similar to Akshay's. The film has been a massive success, raking in over ₹175 crore in India alone. Kartik's film Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 is a follow-up to Bhool Bhulaiyaa, which was directed by Priyadarshan and featured Akshay as a psychiatrist tasked with uncovering the truth of an ancestral palace believed to be haunted. The sequel, directed by Anees Bazmee, stars Kartik playing a character similar to Akshay's. The film has been a massive success, raking in over ₹175 crore in India alone.

Ranbir Kapoor urged Karan Johar not to invite him on Koffee with Karan: 'I'd have to pay the price for too long'

(News Agency) Karan Johar is all set to make a comeback with his chat show, Koffee with Karan. The popular show features the filmmaker chatting with new celebrity faces every episode and has been known for celebs dropping scandalous gossip and opinions on air. Karan has now revealed that Ranbir Kapoor has already shared his reasons of not wanting to appear on the latest season of the show as a guest. Ranbir is gearing up for the release of his much-awaited film Brahmastra. Directed by Ayan Mukherjee, the film also stars Alia Bhatt, Mouni Roy,

Nagarjuna and Amitabh Bachchan. Karan was speaking with Film Companion when he said, "Ranbir Kapoor has already told me 'I am not coming on your show'. He is like, 'I'd have to pay the price for too long. I should not do this to myself'." Imitating Ranbir, the filmmaker added, "Mujhe please show pe mat bulao (Please do not invite me to your show)." Karan will be back with Koffee with Karan season 7. The show will now stream on Disney+ Hotstar, instead of being telecast on Star World. Earlier in 2017, Ranbir had said similar

things about the chat show. Soon after doing the film, Ae Dil Hai Mushkil with Karan, Ranbir said on the AIB Podcast, "I am (tired). I was forced this season. I told him 'I don't wanna come'. Me and Anushka (Sharma, his co-star in Ae Dil Hai Mushkil) were actually going to protest and bring the entire film industry together because it's not fair." Ranbir added that he was referring to the controversial statements that celebs often made on the show and Karan profited from the resultant viewership. However, the burden of bearing repercussions of their own statements remained with the guests.

Neena Gupta meets Kabir Bedi, Parveen Dusanj in Italy 'by chance' during solo trip, shares funny video

Neena Gupta met Kabir Bedi and his wife Parveen Dusanj in Italy 'by chance' during her solo vacation. Mahima Chaudhry has reacted to her recent video with the couple

(By SAI Bureau) Actor Neena Gupta, who is currently on a solo trip in Italy, on Wednesday shared a video as she 'by chance' met actor Kabir Bedi and his wife Parveen Dusanj. Taking to Instagram, Neena posted a clip in which she posed with Kabir and Parveen at the Piazza del Popolo in Rome. For her outing, Neena wore a light brown outfit and sandals. Kabir was dressed in a white shirt, blue denims, jacket and shoes. Parveen opted for a black dress and heels.

As the video started, Neena asked Kabir, "Ok so we are where?" After Kabir said Piazza del Popolo, Neena said, "By chance mil gaye humko Kabir aur Parveen. Aur kya maza aaya. Mera solo jo holiday tha sab theek hogaya (I met Kabir and Parveen by chance. We had so much fun. My solo holiday



turned out all right)." They all laughed as Neena signed off saying, "Thank you so much." Sharing the post, Neena captioned it, "Ladki akeli nahin rahi (The girl is no longer alone). Thank you @ikabirbedi

@parveenhq." Reacting to the post, Mahima Chaudhry commented, "Lovely! Small world." Achint Kaur dropped red heart emojis. Neena has been sharing pictures and videos on Instagram from her travel in Italy.

Recently she visited a chapel in Rome and posted a video. She wrote, "Want to share my excitement with you. Kya karoon (What to do)?!" She also posted photos and videos from Porto Cervo in Sardinia. She

captioned the post, "Beautiful Porto Cervo." Visiting a restaurant she gave fans a glimpse of her breakfast and wrote, "Neena at Cafe Nina." Meanwhile, Neena has several projects in the pipeline. She will be seen with Amitabh Bachchan in the upcoming movie Goodbye. Neena will also play a pivotal role in the Sooraj Barjatya film Uunchai. She also has Avishek Ghosh's directorial debut Ishq-E-Nadaan. The romantic drama, set in a crowded metropolis, traces the journeys of its protagonists through companionship and unconditional love. It also features Mohit Raina, Lara Dutta, Kanwaljit Singh, Shriya Pilgaonkar, Suhail Nayyar and Mrinal Dutt. Neena is also part of Anupam Kher-starrer The Signature, directed by Gajendra Ahire Ghoda.

Preity Zinta posts old video of her dance with Bobby Deol in Jhoom Barabar Jhoom, Abhishek Bachchan reacts

On Jhoom Barabar Jhoom's 15th anniversary, actor Preity Zinta shared a video of the song Kiss Of Love from the film. It features her and actor Bobby Deol dancing together

(By SAI Bureau) Filmmaker Shaadi Ali's Jhoom Barabar Jhoom turned 15 on Wednesday. To mark the occasion, Preity Zinta, who was one of the lead actors in the film, shared a video on Instagram. The clip was a part of the film's song Kiss Of Love, in which Preity danced with actor Bobby Deol. Sharing the video, Preity wrote, "Jhoom Barabar Jhoom turns a year older today & I cannot stop smiling & thinking of all the mad scenes we shot & how much we laughed. Everyone was exhausted after all the dance sequences but that did not stop us from having a blast. This movie is a constant reminder of how friends make every situation adventurous & fun. #jhoombarabarjhoom #Memories #friendship #ting." Actor Abhishek Bachchan, who played Preity's love interest in the film, dropped a heart emoji in the comments section. One fan wrote, "I love this movie so much especially you." Another one said, "15

years and it still feels like yesterday! What an underrated gem this movie is." Complimenting her, one person wrote, "You look so beautiful in this movie and those dance moves are to die for." Jhoom Barabar Jhoom was released in 2007. The film featured Abhishek Bachchan, Preity Zinta, Bobby Deol and Lara Dutta. Amitabh Bachchan made a guest appearance in it. The film received a mixed response from critics and audience. Preity made her acting debut with a small role in Mani Ratnam's Dil Se. She has starred in a number of films since then, including Soldier, Dil Chahta Hai, Koi Mil Gaya, Kal Ho Naa Ho, Veer-Zaara, and Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna. In 2013, Preity turned producer with Ishq in Paris, in which she also acted. However, the film fared poorly at the box office. After its release, she made cameo appearances in Happy Ending and Welcome to New York.



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