

India must remain ahead of the curve

THE din of the Lok Sabha elections is over. A duly elected government is in place and it is gearing up to face both domestic and external challenges. Some of these challenges are not new, though they have a different scale and dimension. But some will be novel and unexpected. On balance, the domestic landscape remains relatively more stable. There may be a coalition government at the Centre, but the BJP remains its largest constituent. Prime Minister Narendra Modi may have been politically diminished by the election results, but he remains the most popular and powerful leader. Temperamentally, he is unlikely to significantly alter the modus operandi he has relied upon during the past decade. He is more likely to double down in implementing his political, ideological and economic agendas than in stepping back into a more consensual mode. To the extent that political stability and policy continuity will matter in a world where even the more powerful countries, including the US, are descending into a period of mounting uncertainty, political polarisation and even fragmentation, India will be seen as a more stable and reliable anchor in the international system. That will be an asset it can leverage to advance its interests. If India is able to sustain its current rate of GDP growth of around 7 per cent per annum over the next decade, as it seems likely to do, that, too, will make it an outlier among major emerging economies. The Modi government has been unusually business-friendly and this has improved the investment environment for domestic and foreign entities. It must now shift from a business-friendly to a market-friendly strategy which creates an enabling environment for all businesses to flourish. If it does, the economic transformation of India will become the great story of the next several decades. This could potentially expand the country's diplomatic space. Foreign policy should be harnessed to promoting the interests of Indian businesses rather than those of a few chosen entities.

Unlike the domestic space, the external space will be far more challenging and India's vulnerabilities will be greater. In a rapidly changing and fluid geopolitical landscape, the uncertainties unleashed by continuing and escalating wars in Europe and West Asia and the prospects of dramatic and deeply disruptive departures in the foreign policies of major powers as a fallout of impending elections will require an extraordinary agility and skilful diplomacy on the part of India. There seems to be an assumption that India's value as a countervailing and constraining power vis-à-vis China would not only persist but also be enhanced. But as we had witnessed during the Cold War, the dominant powers often temper their confrontation with significant measures of détente and even collaboration at the cost of those allied or aligned with them. One should not rule out such strategic re-ordering of relations between the US and China which may shrink India's own strategic space and heighten its vulnerability to Chinese pressure. It is also possible that in meeting the China challenge in the Indo-Pacific, the US may attach greater value to its alliance systems and operational arrangements with other partner countries in the region. The US has worked hard to create a truly trilateral military alliance with Japan and South Korea, helping overcome the historical antipathy between Japan and South Korea. The three countries are now sharing intelligence, conducting military drills and coordinating their postures towards China and the region and this is becoming the core of American Indo-Pacific strategy instead of the Quad (India, Japan, Australia and the US). The AUKUS, comprising Australia, the UK and the US, which is a military alliance based on a substantial nuclear submarine force, will also gain in importance as it begins to be rolled out. The revival of the US-Philippines military alliance and the US gaining access to key bases in that country are another link in the American security chain.

Rollout of new criminal laws will be beset with challenges

Alternatives to exams like NEET and NET can evolve only if we are honest and bold enough to realise that what prevails is wrong, academically as well as ethically.



THE three new criminal laws, namely the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA) would come into effect on July 1. Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud has hailed the new laws aimed at digitalising the criminal procedure and called them a significant step towards modernising the Indian justice system. A cross-section of the legal fraternity — including senior advocate Indira Jaising — has, on the other hand, raised serious concerns about the constitutionality of some of the provisions in these laws. Opposition leaders, including Mamata Banerjee, are demanding that the new legislation be kept in abeyance until the newly elected members of the Lok Sabha approve them, arguing that the laws were passed in haste without a meaningful debate in Parliament, as a majority of the Opposition members were under suspension at the time. Expressing concern regarding the validity of the new criminal laws at such a belated stage amounts to nothing more than a statement of missed opportunities. The laws were enacted after a three-year-long consultation process and wide-ranging deliberations with the stakeholders, followed by a thorough examination by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs. Suggestions were also invited from the masses through public notices on two occasions. The government, which is not yielding to any of these demands, seems determined to enforce the laws. Concerns about the unconstitutionality of the new provisions do not hold water in view of the fact that changes in the BNS are mainly a reflection of the

Supreme Court directions in the cases of Navtej Singh Johar vs Union of India (2018), Joseph Shine vs Union of India (2018) and P Rathinam vs Union of India (1994) as well as the Centre's undertaking in the apex court in response to a petition challenging the sedition law, besides addressing long-pending national security issues. The objections to modifications in the BNSS and BSA also appear to be misplaced, as the amendments basically inhere digitalisation of the criminal proceedings and incorporate victim- and people-centric provisions, in addition to re-orienting the criminal procedures to meet the demand of quality investigations and speedy justice. Notwithstanding the different opinions of informed stakeholders, implementation of the new statutes won't be easy, as it involves creating a variety of infrastructure, imparting training, laying down rules and operating procedures, revising standard forms and inter-agency coordination to iron out operational issues. At the same time, what inspires confidence that the laws will be rolled out on time is the existence of an experienced and time-tested criminal justice system that has the tenacity to adapt to and adopt any change and find workable solutions to any problem with limited resources.

Another sign that the new laws would come into force as per the schedule is the fact that the police, prosecutors and the magistracy have undergone massive capacity-building training programmes, which are being sponsored and monitored by the Centre. However, former law enforcers and adjudicators are sceptical. They argue that many crucial areas pertaining

to the successful enforcement of the new laws are yet to be addressed. There are several mandatory procedures in the BNSS, including videography of all searches, seizures and scenes of crimes and photography of case properties, that would require the use of electronics and digital technology at the outset. On the other hand, the investigators and adjudicators are yet to be equipped with appropriate gadgets and trained to use them to generate, secure and store the required digital outputs uniformly and in an admissible form. Additionally, there are many other procedures — such as e-court proceedings and serving of summonses/notices through electronic means — that would need massive digitalisation of the courts, police stations and prisons, standardisation of protocols, recruitment and training of technical and support staff, financial resources and inter-agency coordination. The ground reality is that nothing substantial seems to have been done in this direction so far in most states. Community service has been included in the list of punishments under the BNS. The eventuality of awarding this sentence to petty offenders may arise even on the very first day of the laws coming into force. However, no identified apparatus is in place to execute it. The agencies are not yet clear on the jurisdiction to give effect to this sentence.

In the absence of essential operational protocols, it would be difficult to enforce some important provisions of the BNSS, including those related to witness protection, trial in absentia, serving summonses/notices through electronic means, seizure of the proceeds from a crime and its distribution to victims, a time-bound disposal of case properties and videography of various stages of an investigation, despite the clear mandate of the law for the states to frame rules instantly. All wings of the justice delivery system need to identify areas where operational protocols and rules are to be framed urgently. Recruitment and training of a large number of technicians, law officers and support staff cannot wait further. The upgradation and updating of the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems and other software having an interface with different wings of the justice delivery system and governance have not been completed so far. This cannot be accomplished by the states on their own, as it would require a lot of know-how and coordination with Central agencies.

It is a given that states cannot walk the tricky road of implementing the new laws without the crutches of the Central Government. They would need hand-holding, support and monitoring at every stage. The Central agencies are expected to take the initiative and coordinate with the states, as in ensuring a successful rollout of the laws lies at stake the credibility of the Centre.

Assange released

Wikileaks founder's long ordeal ends

WIKILEAKS founder Julian Assange's release from prison marks the culmination of a long-running saga of international intrigue. An Internet publisher with disdain for government secrets, he gained massive attention for the 2010 release of classified documents relating to the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The material, published on his website, included a video showing civilians being killed by fire from a helicopter in Iraq. One of his collaborators, US Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning, was sentenced to 35 years in prison before then President Obama commuted the sentence. His plea deal with the US comes as a relief for 52-year-old Assange, who has spent the last five years in a British jail, fighting extradition. Earlier, facing charges of rape in Sweden, which he denied, he spent seven years in refuge in Ecuador's London embassy. Assange's activism made his case a cause célèbre among press freedom advocates, who insisted his work



in exposing US military misconduct is exactly what journalists are expected to do. His supporters see him

as a champion of free speech, exposing abuses of power and hypocrisy. In the US, he's projected as a villain for recklessly endangering national security. The British government signed an extradition order in 2022. Last month, two judges said Assange could appeal to address the question of whether, as a foreigner on trial in the US, he would enjoy the protections of freedom of speech under the First Amendment.

Under the plea deal, Assange will plead guilty to a single charge of breaching the espionage law and travel home to Australia, which Canberra has been pushing for. It's difficult to predict how the saga would play out in the coming US presidential elections. In 2016, a Russian hand was suspected when Wikileaks released emails that potentially harmed the electoral prospects of Hillary Clinton and boosted Donald Trump. Ironically, Trump went after Assange.

Transformative defence reforms must have clarity

Two drafts of the National Security Strategy are with the NSA; they only need to be updated.

ON taking charge for the second time as Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh announced his first 100 days' action plan: welfare of veterans, atmanirbharta and increasing defence exports to Rs 50,000 crore by 2028-29. There was no mention of theaterisation, even though he had said last month that it was "progressing, with consensus emerging among the three services". In its election manifesto, the BJP made a commitment to implement theaterisation — without specifying a timeline. On May 10, the Inter-Services Organisation (Command, Control and Discipline) Act was promulgated through a gazette notification. The then CDS, Gen Bipin Rawat, told me days before his death in a helicopter crash in December 2021 that he was tasked to prepare a blueprint for theaterisation in three years, coterminous with his tenure. Gen Anil Chauhan, who was appointed CDS in September 2022, was also given a three-year term and has made progress on theaterisation with a refined Integrated Theatre Command (ITC) plan. The CDS has become synonymous with theaterisation. At a book release event last month, Gen Chauhan said the National Security Policy/Strategy was not needed in a written form, adding that "we have policy processes, otherwise how did we resolve Article 370, did Balakot, handle Covid..." This is the first time anyone from the establishment has said that a written National Security Strategy (NSS) is not needed. The IAF considers the NSS a prerequisite for theaterisation. Early this month, Lt Gen Virendra Vats, Commandant, Defence Services Staff College (DSSC), Wellington, addressing the 80th Staff Course, explained the nuts and bolts of the NSS as a key ingredient of national security. The DSSC is training 40 triservice officers for ITCs and a one-star-rank officer has been posted to an ITC, the location of which is not known. Last week, Gen Chauhan released the triservice Joint Doctrine for Cyberspace Operations.

In April, a triservice conference was organised for "generating fresh ideas, initiatives and reforms for propelling jointness and integration". A triservice



brainstorming session was held in May in the Old War Room, South Block, to assess the state of a transformed theaterised force capable of multi-domain operations. Twelve sub-committees made presentations on ITCs. On May 21, speaking at the United Service Institution of India's annual Maj Gen Samir Sinha Memorial Lecture on 'Jointmanship: The Way Ahead' in New Delhi, Gen Chauhan stated that Operation Tiranga had helped in ironing out differences with service Chiefs over 11 meetings, each three to four hours long.

He spoke about joint culture 2.0 distilled from the best in each service. Operational commands will be independent of administrative functions of 'raise', 'train' and 'sustain', the residual functions of service Chiefs. He said the ITC would lead to the next step in defence reforms like cyberspace, space and artificial intelligence. He noted that there were differences over reforms, without specifying any, but emphasised that

theaterisation was 'imminent'. Some wrinkles have to be ironed out. On the operational side, it's the merging into ITCs of two Integrated Battle Groups created in 9 Pivot Corps and five IBGs (integrated battle groups) in 17 Mountain Strike Corps, raising a new Corps in the Central Command which will be absorbed in the China-specific ITC at Lucknow against the PLA Western Theatre Command, fixing operational ORBAT (order of battle) of the Pakistan-specific ITC at Jaipur, and allotting naval and air assets to the Integrated Maritime Command at Visakhapatnam or Karwar. The IAF's resistance to the division of air assets persists. Following revocation of their operational command, the role of service Chiefs will be limited to training, morale and logistics. Reducing the existing 17 single-service three-star commands into three- or four-star ITCs will require locating eminent slots for the dispossessed. Giving one land-based ITC to the IAF will restore some of its

assets. The CDS is currently wearing multiple hats — Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee; Adviser, National Command Authority; Secretary, Department of Military Affairs; single point of advice to the Defence Minister; head of all triservice institutions and unified commands like the Strategic Forces Command and the Andaman & Nicobar Command; and lead member of the Defence Acquisition Council. He will require a Vice CDS and additional deputies if he is also to figure in the command chain of the ITCs. Significantly, theaterisation will require political guidance, conspicuously absent from the Indian military system. Leave alone any NSS or White Paper, a political directive to the Chiefs of Staff Committee or service Chiefs has rarely been issued. The then Defence Minister's operational directive of 2009 was prepared by the Director General of Military Operations. In his yet-to-be-published memoirs, former Army Chief Gen MM Naravane has reportedly narrated an incident during Operation Snow Leopard on the intervening night of August 29-30, 2020, when he asked the Defence Minister, External Affairs Minister, the National Security Adviser (NSA) and the CDS for clarification on orders to open fire (he was told by the highest authority not to be the first to open fire) against Chinese tanks approaching Kailash heights. No one responded, till two hours later he was informed by the Defence Minister that the PM had said that since it was a military situation, he should do what he thought best. This exemplifies the bane of unwritten operation orders. It is quite inconceivable that transformative defence reforms are in the pipeline without even a Strategic Defence and Security Review and an NSS/NSP. Recently, former NSA Shivshankar Menon said an NSS was prepared not once but thrice during the UPA rule, but was never released due to a lack of political will. Even now, two drafts of the NSS, one prepared by the Integrated Defence Staff and the other by the National Security Council Secretariat in 2021-22, are with the NSA; they only need to be updated.

IIFL Securities Slips 7% Amid Reports Of Sebi Probing Sanjiv Bhasin Over Market Manipulation

New Delhi. Shares of IIFL Securities today fell 7 per cent to a low of Rs 219.45 because of the company's association with Sanjiv Bhasin, who is facing a Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) inquiry for alleged stock manipulation. According to reports, Sebi has been probing allegations of market manipulation and front-running against Bhasin by examining his digital devices as part of the gathered evidence.



Front-running is an unethical practice where a broker or trader takes advantage of pending orders from their clients to engage in advantageous trades. This allows the broker to profit or avoid losses by entering into trades before executing the client's orders. Bhasin's contract with IIFL Securities was terminated after he informed the brokerage of SEBI's investigation. His term was to end on June 30, 2024. However, due to health reasons, his contract was discontinued prematurely with effect from June 17, 2024. Bhasin has represented IIFL Securities on several media platforms and is a regular market guest on a financial news channel.

Bhasin informed us about Sebi's enquiry but the details of the same were not disclosed to us. Hence, we will not be able to comment. Please note that he was not a member of the board of directors of IIFL Securities Ltd or any other group company or affiliates," IIFL Securities said in a statement.

TRAI's Proposed Caller ID Display Service To Start Soon? What We Know

NEW DELHI. The Telecom operators conducted limited trials of call ID presentation in Mumbai and Haryana, which were reportedly successful. Now this facility called 'Calling Name Presentation' (CNP) will reportedly be implemented by Telecom operators nationwide soon in the coming months. In this, the caller's name will be displayed based on the information filled in by the users in the KYC form while buying a SIM card. This move came after constant pressure from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) and the Department of Telecom (DoT) in a bid to curb fake and spam calls in the country. The CNAP service will be similar to Truecaller. Telecom companies first reportedly tested it in limited cities of Mumbai and Haryana to understand the working and feasibility of this feature. The results of the testing were shared with the Department of Telecommunications, so that a practical decision could be taken about the proposed service. As per the Hindi Business, the telecom operators are given a deadline of July 15 to start the CNAP service.

The name of the person who filled in the form at the time of purchasing the SIM card will be visible when a call is made. In case of business calls, the name of the company will be displayed. Telecom companies also believe that this step will help in preventing cybercrime in the country. Apart from this, it will also help in preventing spam calls.

At Delhi's IGI Airport, Customs Officers Nab Man With 73 Cocaine Capsules

NEW DELHI. The airport customs officers have arrested a man named Simon Alfred Ngong, hailing from the Republic of Cameroon, a country in Central Africa. As per the reports, Simon has been arrested at the Indira Gandhi International Airport for smuggling 73 capsules laced with cocaine powder. Reportedly, Simon got off from Ethiopian Airlines flight ET-686, when he got off at the IGI airport. After the flight had landed at the airport, the customs officers became alert and started closely observing all the passengers from Addis Ababa—the capital of Ethiopia. While inspecting the passengers, the officers felt something suspicious about one of the commuters. He was extremely scared and drenched in sweat. After seeing his terrified condition, the customs officers contemplated that something was wrong with this passenger. However, they waited for him to pass the green channel. After he had cleared the green channel, the officers confronted him and asked if there was anything he would like to declare something. The passenger broke down and voluntarily accepted that he had consumed banned drugs. Post this confession, the accused, Simon was admitted to the Safdarjung Hospital, Delhi. As per the reports, this powder weighs about 1096 grams. A senior customs official has revealed these details to the media. As per the official, these capsules were recovered from Simon's stomach after a 7-day-long investigation at the Safdarjung Hospital. The senior customs official also added that the cocaine powdered tablet's value recovered from the possession of an African citizen is estimated at Rs 10.90 crore. According to the reports, Simon has been arrested under Section 43(A) of the NDPS Act, 1985. As of now, the investigation of this case is still underway. Under section 43 (A), any officer of any of the departments mentioned in section 42 may seize in any public place or transit, any narcotic drug or psychotropic substance or controlled substance in respect of which he has reason to believe an offence punishable under this Act has been committed.

Apple Supplier Foxconn Says 25% New Hires Are Married Women, Nearly 70% Workforce Is Women

Apple iPhone maker Foxconn has informed the government that 25 per cent of its new hires are married women and its safety protocol is not discriminatory

New Delhi. Foxconn, the manufacturer of Apple iPhones, has reportedly informed the government that 25% of its new hires are married women. The company also stated that its safety protocol, which mandates that all employees refrain from wearing metal regardless of gender or religion, is not discriminatory.

In an informal note shared with the government following reports that it is not

hiring married women, Foxconn clarified that such stipulations are not part of its policy. According to sources cited by news agency PTI, the company suggested that these claims may have been made by individuals who were not hired. In response to media reports alleging that married women are being barred from working at Foxconn's Sriperumbudur iPhone assembly plant, the Ministry of Labour and Employment requested a detailed report from the Tamil Nadu government's labour department on Wednesday, June 26.

What Foxconn Said?

"Foxconn has clarified that 25 per cent of the latest hires are married women. This would mean nearly one-third of the total women are married. This ratio compares favourably to any factory in this sector currently operating in India," PTI quoted one of the sources as saying. They added that such media reports malign the fast-growing Indian manufacturing sector. The Foxconn factory currently has

about 70 per cent women and 30 per cent men and the Tamil Nadu plant is the largest factory for women employment in the country with the total employment



having touched 45,000 workers during peak periods, they said. The company has also informed that the discussion around Hindu married women being discriminated against for wearing metals (ornaments and jewellery) is "entirely slanted" and wearing metal in such factories is a safety issue, a fact well

recognised by both the industry and the government.

"Any person wearing metals – man or woman – regardless of their status (single or married) and their religion (Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh etc.) are required to remove metals while working in the factory," the source said quoting the company's informal note. For safety reasons, no one wearing metal is allowed to work on the shop floor and this is a prevalent practice in several industries. According to sources, the company has stated that the media report is based on anecdotal comments by 5-10 people or potential job seekers.

These comments likely came from candidates who did not get the job or no longer work at Foxconn.

Government Took Notice Of The Issue
"Section 5 of the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 clearly stipulates that no discrimination shall be made while recruiting men and women workers.

Bain Capital-backed Emcure Pharma To Float IPO On July 3, Check Issue Size and Other Details

New Delhi. Bain Capital-backed Emcure Pharmaceuticals is set to launch its Initial Public Offering (IPO) on July 3.

The initial share sale will conclude on July 5 and the bidding for anchor investors will open for a day on July 2, according to the Red Herring Prospectus (RHP).

Emcure Pharma IPO Size

The IPO comprises fresh issuance of equity shares worth Rs 800 crore and an Offer of Sale (OFS) of 1.14 crore equity shares by promoters and existing shareholders. Those selling shares in the OFS include promoter Satish Mehta and investor BC Investments IV Ltd, an affiliate of US-based private equity major Bain Capital. Currently, Satish Mehta holds a



41.85 per cent stake in the company and BC Investments owns a 13.07 per cent stake.

Emcure Pharma IPO Objective

Proceeds of the fresh issue will be used

towards payment of debt and for general corporate purposes. The Pune-based firm Emcure Pharmaceuticals is engaged in developing, manufacturing, and globally marketing a broad range of pharmaceutical products across several major therapeutic areas.

Kotak Mahindra Capital Company, Jefferies India, Axis Capital, and JP Morgan India are the book-running lead managers to the issue. The equity shares of the company are expected to list on the BSE and NSE on July 10.

What Is an IPO?

Initial Public Offering is the process through which a private company offers shares to the public for the first time, thereby becoming a publicly traded company.

German Company Bosch Eyes Bid For US Appliance Maker Whirlpool: Report

NEW DELHI. The German engineering company Robert Bosch is considering a bid to acquire the American home appliance maker, Whirlpool. Sources cited by media reports suggest that Bosch is in discussions with advisors regarding this potential acquisition. Whirlpool, with a market capitalization of around \$4.8 billion, would enhance Bosch's position in the home appliance sector if the deal goes through. No official comments have been made by either company yet. Representatives from both Bosch and Whirlpool have stated that they do not respond to "market rumours." Following the report, Whirlpool's stock saw a 12.7 per cent increase in early trading.

Its stock hit a 52-week high after reports about its acquisition by Bosch went viral. In recent years, Whirlpool has been restructuring significantly, including merging its European operations with Turkish competitor Arçelik and divesting its Middle East and African businesses.

Whirlpool, known for its household appliances such as washing machines and refrigerators, has in recent years also launched espresso machines and other kitchen appliances as its traditional products have seen growth slow. The Michigan-based company recently said it would cut about 1,000 jobs to boost profit margins.

Whirlpool has lost about 50 percent of its market value in the past two years. The potential acquisition comes as Bosch, the world's largest automotive supplier, seeks to expand its division that produces large home appliances through acquisitions. Acquiring Whirlpool, which owns brands such as Ariston, Hotpoint, Ignis, and Privileg, would be one of the most significant disclosed deals for the German industrial giant.

Bosch CEO Stefan Hartung mentioned in May to the German business daily Handelsblatt that the company was considering several larger acquisition targets and did not exclude the possibility of entering new business areas or pursuing a global deal. In June, he informed reporters that the group was open to listing some of its divisions on the stock market as a way to explore financing options for these deals, though he did not specify which divisions might be involved.

UltraTech Cement To Buy 23% Stake In India Cements Worth Rs 1,885 Crore

NEW DELHI: UltraTech Cement on Thursday announced that its board has approved picking up a 23 per cent stake in India Cements for Rs 267 per share in a deal valued at around Rs 1,885 crore. India Cements stock rose 14 per cent to a 52 week high of Rs 299 on BSE. Market cap of the firm rose to Rs 9,093 crore. The stock has risen 31.31 per cent in a year and gained 7.58 per cent in 2024. A total of 625.11 lakh shares of the firm changed hands amounting to a turnover of Rs 1,662.34 crore on BSE. On the other hand, shares of UltraTech Cement too rose to their 52-week high of Rs 11,766.25 on BSE. Market cap of UltraTech Cement climbed to Rs 3.40 lakh crore. UltraTech intends to acquire this stake, which is 7.06 crore shares at an average price of Rs 267 per share. The total cost to acquire this stake comes up to Rs 1,885 crore. India Cements Ltd. witnessed a large trade take place in the pre-market block



window. As many as 6 crore shares or 19.4 per cent of the total equity changed hands in the large transaction. The shares changed hands at an average price of Rs 265 per share.

UltraTech is the largest cement player in the country with an overall capacity of 152.7 MTPA. Earlier this year, it had acquired the cement business of Kesoram at an enterprise value of Rs 7,600 crore. At the current market price, India Cements is trading at the financial year 2025 Enterprise Value tp

Primary market all set for mega listings

India's second-largest carmaker, Hyundai Motor India, is set to launch a Rs 25,000 crore IPO this year, which would be the country's largest ever. Then there are mega offerings by Bajaj Housing Finance, Afcons Infrastructure and OLA Election. There is also strong buzz that Tata Group may launch new IPOs this year.

NEW DELHI: With a handful of more IPOs to hit the market this week, India would see more companies going public in the first half of this year than it has seen in nearly 2 decades. As per BSE data, 37 IPOs collectively raising nearly Rs 32,000 crore by June -end 2024. Only in 2007, a year before the collapse of the global finance market, the Indian market saw more listings, 54 to be precise, in the 6 month period. "Primary market has been witnessing a significant surge in the number of IPOs since FY22. The average number of IPOs launching since 2022 has increased to 50-60 IPOs a year and the average size of IPOs has gone up from Rs 240 crore at the beginning of 2000 to Rs 1,270 crore and the overall primary market has grown 3 times bigger than it was at the beginning of the millennium," said Sarjjeet Singh Virk, co-founder &



MD, Shoonya by Finvasia. Bharti Hexagon, which raised Rs 4,275 crore, was the largest IPO in the first half of CY24. It was followed by Aadhar Housing Finance (Rs 3,000 crore). When it comes to total fundraising, this year's figure is only next to H1 of CY22 when 16 firms mopped up about Rs 40,300 crore. A bulk of this came from the market's

biggest-ever IPO of Life Insurance Corporation of India.

Narendra Solanki, head of fundamental research, Investment Services, Anand Rathi Shares and Stock Brokers, said in recent years, equity market has seen a surge in IPO activity which attracted investments from various participants, including participation from HNIs and

retail investors. Secondary market is also on the rise with benchmarks- Sensex and Nifty - gaining 9-10% each so far this year. Solanki believes despite global periodic headwinds, the momentum is likely to continue in H2CY24, led by a rise in domestic liquidity and investor appetite, a rise in diverse set of businesses coming for IPOs, an increase in number of new-age companies, a strong pipeline of upcoming IPOs and sustained economic growth brings much-needed confidence for investors. India's second-largest carmaker, Hyundai Motor India, is set to launch a Rs 25,000 crore IPO this year, which would be the country's largest ever. Then there are mega offerings by Bajaj Housing Finance, Afcons Infrastructure and OLA Election. There is also strong buzz that Tata Group may launch new IPOs this year. Singh believes that the market may mop up as much as Rs 90,000 crore this year. "In H1 CY2024, the IPO market is at its all-time high with 56 companies in the pipeline for SEBI's nod for their IPO launches. Nearly Rs 90,000 crore is to be raised from this IPO this year. The robust primary market conditions can be attributed to the business-friendly economic environment in the country, stable policies, and stability in the government.

Telangana HC Refuses to Quash FIR Against Senior Advocate Accused of Accepting Rs 7 Crore to Bribe Judges

New Delhi: The Telangana High Court has dismissed a petition filed by a senior advocate seeking to quash an FIR lodged against him for allegedly accepting Rs 7 crore from a litigant with the alleged intent of bribing High Court judges to secure a favourable verdict. Justice K Lakshman, presiding over the court, emphasised the severity of the allegations. "The allegations levelled against the petitioner are grave. The allegation that money was obtained to bribe the judges of this court casts a serious doubt on the independence of judiciary and implies that justice is up for sale. Such serious allegations need to be investigated," he stated. As per the case, the complainant, identified as respondent no. 3, alleged that he had engaged the senior advocate as his counsel in a land dispute case. The complainant claimed that the advocate demanded and received Rs 7 crore, assuring him that the money would be used to bribe High Court judges for a favourable outcome, and even reassuring the

complainant by citing previous occasions where favourable orders were secured in this manner. He allegedly even named the judges involved. However, when the promised judgment did not materialise, the complainant demanded his money back. The advocate allegedly failed to return the money and resorted to caste-based insults and threats when confronted. Additionally, the advocate is accused of threatening the complainant's life with the help of an MLA.

The allegations were outrightly denied by the senior counsel, asserting that they were false, baseless, and motivated by malice. He argued that the complaint was vague, lacked specific dates regarding the alleged payment, and had no evidence to support the claims. The advocate further contended that the matter was civil in nature and pertained to an incident from 2005, making the complaint significantly delayed by 19 years. The court, while deciding on the maintainability of the petition,



referenced the judgment delivered by the Allahabad High Court in 'Rama Shankar Shukla v. Rikhab Kumar Jain,' wherein a lawyer allegedly took money from the complainant to influence an Income Tax officer. The accused argued that since the money was for an illegal purpose, criminal proceedings could not be maintained. The High Court, however, rejected this contention stating: "It is not possible to lay

down as a general proposition of law that in each and every case where cheating is based upon a void and illegal agreement, there can be no criminal prosecution for cheating."

Applying this rationale to the present case, the court emphasised that the criminal complaint against the senior advocate (petitioner) is maintainable even though Respondent No. 3 agreed to pay Rs 7,00,00,000/- to the petitioner for an illegal purpose. The court further underscored that the power under Section 482 of Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), dealing with the provision of inherent powers of the High Court, must be exercised sparingly. Courts should allow the investigation to proceed and should not treat an FIR as an encyclopedia that must disclose all details upfront. The correctness of allegations is to be considered at the appropriate stage, typically not during the investigation.

"The allegation regarding the payment of Rs.7,00,00,000/- by Respondent No. 3

seems exaggerated and its plausibility is doubtful. While it is true that Respondent No. 3 gave no information about how he obtained Rs. 7,00,00,000/- and when it was paid to the Petitioner, the allegations still are worthy of investigation," the court noted.

At the stage of investigation, the proceedings cannot be scuttled and the authorities have to be given an opportunity to unearth the truth," the court said, finding it appropriate to stop the investigation using its power under Section 482 CrPC. However, it deemed it fit to grant protection from arrest to the petitioner. The court highlighted the judgments of 'Lal Kamendra Pratap Singh v. State of U.P.' and 'Hema Mishra v. State of U.P.', wherein the Court held that "where the remedy of Section 438 CrPC (anticipatory bail) is not available and the arrest of the accused is not necessary, the High Courts can protect the accused from arrest exercising their power either under Section 482 CrPC or Article 226."

Youth Congress Members Protest In Delhi Against NEET "Paper Leak"

New Delhi: The Indian Youth Congress on Thursday staged a protest in the national capital against the alleged NEET scam and continued paper leaks in various examinations. The protest, which saw hundreds of IYC members gather in Delhi, was a response to the recent controversy surrounding the NEET-UG exam. Allegations of paper leaks and irregularities have led to significant unrest among students and parents.

Youth Congress Chief BV Srinivas said, "Thousands of IYC workers have come out on the streets of Delhi today, becoming the voice of students suffering from the atrocities of paper leak." The NEET-UG exam, held on May 5, 2024, has been mired in controversy, with allegations of cheating and impersonation. The National Testing Agency (NTA), which conducted the exam, has faced severe criticism, leading to protests and legal actions. The Union Health Ministry has postponed the NEET-PG 2024 examination, with new dates to be announced soon. The government has replaced the chief of the NTA and formed a committee to review and improve its functioning. The Supreme Court is also scheduled to hear petitions related to the issue on July 8.

On Wednesday, the Bihar government handed the investigation over to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which has already taken several accused into custody. Intensifying its probe into alleged irregularities at a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) team on Wednesday visited a school in Hazaribagh in Jharkhand and interrogated the Oasis school staff including the principal. Two persons were released by CBI after questioning in the NEET paper leak case. These individuals are identified as the principal and staff of the Hazaribagh-based Oasis school who were interrogated at the CCL guest house at Charhi, a town in the Hazaribagh district. The Special CBI Court in Patna has sent two accused in the NEET question paper leak case to be placed on CBI remand following a request from the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Wednesday.

iPhone Maker Foxconn's Response After Row Over "Not Hiring Married Women" In India

New Delhi: Apple iPhone maker Foxconn has informed the government that 25 per cent of its new hires are married women and its safety protocol, which requires all employees to avoid wearing metal irrespective of gender or religion, is not discriminatory, sources said.

In an informal note shared with the government after reports suggested it is "not hiring married women", Foxconn stated that such stipulations are not part of its policy and these claims may have been made by those individuals who were not hired, sources told Press Trust of India. They added that such media reports malign the fast-growing Indian manufacturing sector.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Labour and Employment on Wednesday has sought a detailed report from the Tamil Nadu labour department on the issue of married women not being allowed to work at the Foxconn India Apple iPhone Plant, as reported by the media. "Foxconn had clarified that 25 per cent of the latest hires are married women. This would mean nearly one-third of the total women are married. This ratio compares favourably to any factory in this sector currently operating in India," one of the sources told news agency PTI. The Foxconn factory currently has about 70 per cent women and 30 per cent men and the Tamil Nadu plant is the largest factory for women employment in the country with the total employment having touched 45,000 worker during peak periods, they said.

The company has also informed that the discussion around Hindu married women being discriminated against for wearing metals (ornaments and jewelry) is "entirely slanted" and wearing metal in such factories is a safety issue, a fact well recognised by both the industry and the government. "Any person wearing metals - man or woman - regardless of their status (single or married) and their religion (Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh etc.)

In a boost to Bihar tourism, state welcomed over 8 lakh tourists in 2023

New Delhi: The state of Bihar is underlining its presence on the country's tourism map at a very fast pace. According to the state tourism department officials, Bihar welcomed over eight lakh tourists in 2023. "The state is rich in cultural heritage and historical significance, and it has seen an influx of eight lakh tourists in the past year. This surge in tourism can be attributed to the diverse attractions that cater to various religious and cultural interests", said a senior tourism department official. Buddhists from around the world are drawn to Bihar to visit Bodhi Gaya, the place where Gautam Buddha attained enlightenment. The

site is one of the most revered pilgrimage destinations for Buddhists across the world.

Additionally, Sikhs pay visit to Patna Sahib, the birthplace of Guru Gobind Singh, making it a significant spiritual destination. "For Muslims, the Maner Sharif is notable as one of the oldest Sufi mosques in India, attracting devotees and historians alike. Jain pilgrims visit Bihar to honour Mahavir, the 24th Tirthankara, whose birthplace in Vaishali is a focal point of Jain culture. Hindu devotees flock to Gaya for the Pitrapaksh Mela, an annual event where rituals are performed for the salvation of ancestors' souls", he

added. A decline in crimes, better highway and road connectivity, and comfortable and affordable accommodation and transportation facilities that have been created in the last decade, have helped the state excel in the field of tourism. However, officials say that many areas in the state were still underrated and people need to visit them to understand the true history of India. The erstwhile Jagirdar of Jagdishpur estate, Babu Kunwar Singh, was a hero of the 1857 revolution and had conquered large parts of eastern India from the British and died a heroes' death after cutting his own hand that had been shattered due to a bullet wound.

Delhi Minister seeks status report on cutting of 1,100 trees in Ridge area

New Delhi: Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai has ordered the collection of all relevant records and a status report on actions taken so far in connection with the cutting of 1,100 trees without permission in south Delhi's Ridge area.

In the meeting with forest department officials on Wednesday, Gopal Rai asked them to provide the information by 11 am on Thursday. The development came as the Supreme Court, hearing a petition from an NGO regarding the illegal felling of trees by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), directed the Delhi government and the civic agencies to convene a meeting to discuss measures to enhance the city's green cover.

The top court said the people were feeling the heat as tree cover was

lost. The NGO said it was necessary to take permission from the Supreme Court before cutting down trees in the Ridge area. The NGO also pointed out that the forest department did not take any action even after it was informed

the Supreme Court that it had already cut these trees, the NGO said. The NGO accused the DDA of disobeying the orders of the Supreme Court and lying in its affidavit. On Monday, the Supreme Court pulled up the DDA for



felling trees without seeking its permission, observing that brazen acts of tree felling in Delhi cannot be brushed aside lightly. The top court also sought a statement from the DDA vice-chairman about whether trees in the Ridge area were cut on the orders of the Lieutenant Governor.

Delhi Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj, on Tuesday, alleged that it was mentioned in the DDA's records that Lt

Governor VK Saxena went to the Satbari forest area on February 3 and gave instructions to cut 1,100 trees.

Heavy rain in parts of Delhi-NCR brings respite from brutal heatwave

Several parts of Delhi received heavy rainfall on Thursday, bringing a much-needed respite from the sweltering heatwave. Noida and Ghaziabad also woke up to heavy downpours as the India Meteorological Department has forecast more rain in the next three days.

New Delhi: Delhi woke up to heavy rainfall on Thursday, bringing a much-awaited respite from the sweltering heatwave in the national capital. Visuals on social media showed several parts of the city receiving heavy rainfall. Noida, which is part of the National Capital Region (NCR), and Ghaziabad also received downpours.

The India Meteorological Department



(IMD) said that Delhi's weather has fluctuated over the past few days due to a western disturbance, which runs roughly to the north of latitude. It has predicted mainly cloudy skies with light to moderate rain, along with thunderstorms and gusty winds with speed reaching up to 35 km/hour in the next three days. On June 30, the city may see moderate to heavy rain, news agency ANI reported.

Experts said that the rain in Delhi-NCR is pre-monsoon showers, and the monsoon is likely to arrive in the next few days. Though the IMD has not predicted any date for the monsoon arrival in Delhi, it typically enters the national capital between June 27 and 29. Delhi has been reeling from intense heat, recording nine heatwave days in the month so far, against none in 2023 and 2022. In 2021, the

national capital recorded one heatwave day in June, according to the IMD data.

On Wednesday evening, Delhi witnessed overcast skies, with some regions receiving light rain. Palam, Aya Nagar and Ridge recorded 2.3 mm, 1.3 mm and 1.3 mm of rainfall in the evening, PTI reported.

The Safdarjung observatory, Delhi's primary weather station, recorded a temperature of 39 degrees Celsius on Wednesday, two notches above normal.

In its seven-day forecast, the Met department said the national capital's maximum temperature will drop to 34 degrees Celsius in the next few days due to the western disturbance.

The Met department forecast the monsoon to advance further into parts of the north and northwest India, including more parts of Rajasthan, remaining parts of Chhattisgarh, most parts of east Uttar Pradesh, and some more pockets of west Uttar Pradesh, among others, in the next three to four days.

Akhilesh Yadav's party MP wants Constitution to replace Sengol, BJP hits back

New Delhi: Samajwadi Party MP RK Chaudhary stirred a row after he demanded that the Sengol, a historic sceptre, be replaced with the Constitution in the Lok Sabha, inviting backlash from the BJP and other NDA allies. In a letter to pro-tem Speaker Bhartruhari Mahtab, RK Chaudhary called Sengol an "anachronistic symbol of monarchy" in a democratic India. Explaining the rationale behind his demand, Chaudhary said, "Sengol means 'Raj Dand'. It also means 'Raja ka Danda'. After ending the princely order, the country became independent. Will the country be run by 'Raja ka danda' or the Constitution? I demand that Sengol be removed from Parliament to save the Constitution."

The Sengol, installed in the Lok Sabha during the inauguration of the new Parliament building last year, was handed to India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, as a symbol of the transfer of power from the British to Indians.

'SAMAJWADI PARTY HELL BENT ON INSULTING TAMIL CULTURE'

Chaudhary's remarks drew heavy criticism from the BJP, with the party saying the Samajwadi Party was "hell-bent" on insulting an integral part of Indian and Tamil culture. "If it was a symbol of monarchy, then why did the first Prime Minister Nehru accept it? Was he accepting that symbol and monarchy," said BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla. LJP (Ram Vilas) MP Chirag Paswan also hit back, saying Congress and Congress-led governments have always attempted to misrepresent historical symbols.

"These people cannot do positive politics... These people only do politics of division," he said.

'PM DIDN'T BOW BEFORE SENGOL AFTER TAKING OATH'

Amid the row, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav said Chaudhary was only seeking to point out that Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not bow before the Sengol after taking oath in the Lok Sabha. "I think our MP might be saying that because when it (Sengol) was installed, the PM had bowed before it. He perhaps forgot it while taking oath... When the PM forgot to bow before it, maybe he too wanted something else," ANI quoted Akhilesh Yadav as saying. RJD MP Manoj Jha also defended the Samajwadi Party. "The PM has the conduct of the kings - jewellery, dresses, Mangalsutra, Muja.

NEWS BOX

Julian Assange's actions put lives at risk: US as WikiLeaks founder walks free

Hours after Julian Assange landed in Australia to an ecstatic welcome on Wednesday evening, the US State Department said Assange's actions put lives at risk even as the judge who accepted the WikiLeaks founder's guilty plea to resolve his case noted that no victims had been identified. A spokesperson for the State Department, however, preferred not to give any examples of the harm caused by Assange's release, after he was asked by reporters to provide for, if any. The spokesperson said the department's involvement in the resolution of Assange's case was very limited. Assange spent his first night in 14 years as a free man back at home in Australia after pleading guilty to violating US espionage law in a deal that sets him free from a 14-year legal battle.

He had battled extradition to Sweden on sexual assault allegations and to the US, where he faced 18 criminal charges tied to WikiLeaks' release in 2010 of hundreds of thousands of US classified military documents and diplomatic cables. Chief US District Judge, Ramona V Manglona, in the US territory of Saipan accepted Assange's guilty plea to a single criminal count.

While Washington has often called Assange's actions reckless and claimed they put its agents at risk, the judge noted that the United States could not identify any personal victim from them. "There's another significant fact - the government has indicated there is no personal victim here. That tells me the dissemination of this information did not result in any known physical injury," the judge said. The State Department spokesperson reiterated the US position when asked about the judge's comments. "The State Department did an extraordinary amount of work when we found out that these cables were going to be published to get people out of harm's way," the department's spokesperson said.

The State Department said the Justice Department acted independently in the case. The spokesperson added that there was some limited coordination between the State Department and the Australian government recently.

Indian-origin man jailed for over a year for fatal gang brawl in Singapore hotel

Singapore. A 25-year-old Indian-origin man in Singapore was sentenced to more than a year in jail and fined SGD 2,000 for his involvement in a rival gang-inspired brawl at a hotel in 2023 in which one person was killed.

Sharvin Jay Nair pleaded guilty on Tuesday to one charge of voluntarily causing hurt to Mohammad Israt Mohd Ismail, who died following a brawl at a hotel in the tourist belt of Orchard Road, The Straits Times newspaper reported. Nair, who also admitted to other charges, was sentenced to 12 months and eight weeks in jail by a court in Singapore. More than 10 men have been charged over their alleged involvement in the brawl. Among them is another Indian-origin man, Asvain Pachan Pillai Sukumaran, 29, who is facing a murder charge for allegedly killing Israt. Deputy Public Prosecutor Kathy Chu said the two groups involved in the brawl belonged to two rival secret societies. Those convicted of voluntarily causing hurt can be jailed for up to three years, fined up to SGD5,000, or both.

India demands stern action in Indian worker's death in Italy

World India on Wednesday asked Italy to take prompt action against those responsible for the death of a 31-year-old Indian worker, who died after he was dumped on the road without medical assistance by his employer after his arm was severed by heavy farm machinery.

Muktesh Pardeshi, Secretary (CPV & OIA), conveyed to Luigi Maria Vignali, the Director General for Italian Citizens Abroad and Migration Policies, India's "deep concern" about the death of Satnam Singh, the Indian Embassy in Italy said in a post on X on Wednesday. "He called for prompt action against those responsible. Embassy is in contact with the family of Satnam Singh for consular help and transportation of mortal remains", the mission added. During the communications in the Chamber ahead of the European Council, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni on Wednesday recalled "the horrible and inhuman death of Satnam Singh", ANSA news agency reported. When Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni recalled the death of Singh, all the deputies present in the Chamber stood up and applauded. Minister Tajani, after getting up, told the prime minister: "I asked for visas for the family". "Bravo," Meloni replied. Last week, Meloni had said that Singh, one of thousands of Indian immigrants who work the fields in the country, was the victim of "inhuman acts". "These are inhumane acts that do not belong to the Italian people. I hope that this barbarity will be punished harshly", she said following a Cabinet meeting last week. Singh, who was abandoned by his employer after a strawberry wrapping machine severed his arm in Latina, died last week due to "copious bleeding", ANSA reported separately, citing initial results of an autopsy.

He died in a hospital in Rome two days later after being airlifted there when he was eventually found. He died because he lost so much blood that he couldn't recover from his injuries, the Italian news agency reported on Friday. Doctors tried in vain to save Singh's life for two days. The death of the Sikh farm hand has spurred outrage at gangmastering, which is widespread in Italy, especially in the south of the country, and modern forms of slavery.

Singh lost his arm when it was trapped in a plastic fruit wrapping machine. His employer, Antonello Lovato, loaded him and his wife into a van and left them by the side of the road near their home, the report said. Singh's severed arm was placed in a fruit crate.

His employer has been charged with negligent manslaughter. Meanwhile, Singh's widow Soni, who was treated for shock after the incident, received a special 'justice' stay permit to end her illegal status in Italy, Ansa reported on Friday.

Bolivia President thanks people as coup attempt fails, army general arrested

La Paz, Bolivia, Armoured vehicles rammmed the doors of Bolivia's government palace on Wednesday in an apparent coup attempt, but President Luis Arce vowed to stand firm and named a new army commander who ordered troops to stand down. Soon the soldiers pulled back, along with a line of military vehicles, as hundreds of Arce's supporters rushed the square outside the palace, waving Bolivian flags, singing the national anthem and cheering. Arce, surrounded by ministers, waved at the crowd. "Thank you to the Bolivian people", he said. "Let democracy live on". Hours later, the Bolivian general who appeared to be behind the rebellion, Juan Jose Zuniga, was arrested after the attorney general opened an investigation. It wasn't immediately clear what the charges were against him. However, in a twist, Zuniga claimed before his arrest that Arce himself told the general to storm the palace in a political move. "The president told me, the situation is very screwed up, very critical.

It is necessary to prepare something to raise my popularity", Zuniga told reporters. Zuniga said he asked Arce if he should "take out the armoured vehicles?" and Arce replied, "Take them out". Wednesday's rebellion followed months of tensions, with economic hardship and protests growing ever stronger as two political titans — Arce and his one-time ally, leftist former President Evo Morales — battled for control of the ruling party. Still, the apparent attempt to depose the sitting president appeared to lack any meaningful support, and even Arce's rivals closed ranks to defend democracy and repudiate the uprising. The spectacle shocked Bolivians, no stranger to political unrest. In 2019, Morales was ousted as president following an earlier political crisis. As the crisis unfolded Wednesday, military vehicles flooded into the plaza. Before entering the government building, Zuniga, general commander of the army, told journalists "Surely soon there will be a new Cabinet



of ministers; our country, our state, cannot go on like this". Zuniga said that "for now", though, he recognised Arce as commander in chief. Zuniga did not explicitly say he was leading a coup, but in the palace, he said the army was trying to "restore democracy and free our political prisoners". Shortly after, Arce confronted Zuniga in the palace hallway, as shown on video on Bolivian television. "I am your captain, and I order you to withdraw your soldiers, and I will not allow this insubordination", Arce said. Surrounded by ministers, he added "Here we are, firm in Casa Grande, to

confront any coup attempt. We need the Bolivian people to organise". He added in a video message that he would not "allow, once again, coup attempts to take the lives of Bolivians". Less than an hour later, Arce announced new heads of the army, navy and air force amid the roar of supporters, and thanked the country's police and regional allies for standing by him. Arce said the troops who rose against him were "staining the uniform" of the military. "I order all that are mobilised to return to their units", said the newly named army chief José Wilson Sánchez. "No one wants the images we're seeing in the streets". Shortly after, the armoured vehicles roared out of the plaza, tailed by hundreds of military fighters as police in riot gear set up blockades outside the government palace. The incident was met with a wave of outrage by other regional leaders, including the Organization of American States, Chilean President Gabriel Boric, the leader of Honduras, and former Bolivian leaders.

Princess Anne is 'recovering slowly' after horse-related injury, says her husband

London. King Charles III's sister Princess Anne is "recovering slowly" in hospital, her husband said Wednesday, after she suffered a concussion in an incident with a horse at her country estate.

"She'll be out when she's ready," Tim Laurence also told reporters outside Southmead Hospital in Bristol, western England, where Anne was taken on Sunday. Anne, 73, suffered concussion and minor head injuries at Gatcombe Park on Sunday evening and was airlifted to hospital. It is believed she was struck by a horse as she was walking within the protected perimeter of the sprawling estate, which hosts equestrian events. The princess's medical team said her injuries are consistent with a potential impact from a horse's head or legs. British media reported Wednesday that Anne's concussion meant the precise details of what happened are not clear. The Princess Royal, as she is also known, is a skilled horsewoman who competed at



the 1976 Montreal Olympics, and has a reputation as the hardest-working royal. She has stepped in to represent King Charles while he postponed public engagements during his cancer treatment, and rode at his official birthday parade this month.

But the accident forced her to withdraw

from an appearance at a state banquet on Tuesday evening for visiting Japanese Emperor Naruhito, and cancel an upcoming trip to Canada.

Buckingham Palace said Anne was in hospital "as a precautionary measure for observation and is expected to make a full and swift recovery".

14 killed in Nepal as heavy rain triggers landslides, floods

Kathmandu. At least 14 people have been killed in Nepal due to landslides and flash floods triggered by torrential rainfall and lightning in the past 24 hours.

According to news agency ANI, at least eight people were killed due to landslides, while another five lost their lives due to lightning and one was killed due to floods. Landslides swept away three houses overnight in Lamjung district, about 125 km west of Kathmandu, killing four people, including two children, district administrator Buddha Bahadur Gurung told media. "We recorded a total of 44 incidents on June 26. In those incidents, 14 people have lost their lives, eight were due to landslides, five due to lightning and one in flooding. Two people are still

unaccounted for in a landslide incident while 10 people have sustained injuries," National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRMA) spokesperson



Dijan Bhattarai told ANI.

According to the country's Home Ministry, at least 27 people have died in the Himalayan nation since the beginning of the monsoon season. In

Heavy rainfall triggered landslides and flash floods in Nepal, killing at least 14 people in the past 24 hours. The Himalayan faces rain-related incidents every year due to its treacherous geology.

In addition, another 13 people were killed due to lightning in the same period. Thirty-three districts have been affected due to the monsoon, recording 147 rain-related incidents in 17 days. Every year, hundreds of people die in Nepal due to floods and landslides, which are common in mostly mountainous regions of the country during the monsoon season from mid-June to mid-September.



victims questions that would be of interest to the Russian state. In Wednesday's video, the authenticity of which Reuters could not independently verify, Cameron is seen and heard talking about sensitive Ukraine-related topics.

LOBBYING TRUMP

In particular, he is heard talking about a private dinner he had with US presidential candidate Donald Trump in April, during which he lobbied Trump to allow Republicans to vote in favour of US military aid for Ukraine. Cameron is heard saying that the Republican party is split on Ukraine and that he had told Trump that he was wrong if he thought Putin just wanted Crimea, which Russia unilaterally annexed in 2014, as well as the Donbas area comprising Donetsk and Luhansk, two of four Ukrainian regions that Moscow claimed in 2022 as part of Russia.

Netherlands' PM Mark Rutte picked as new Nato chief

Brussels Nato's 32 nations on Wednesday appointed outgoing Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte as the alliance's next chief, handing him the job at a crucial moment with Russia on the march in Ukraine and US elections looming. Rutte will take over from Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg on October 1 after major powers -- spearheaded by the United States -- agreed on his nomination ahead of a summit of Nato leaders in Washington next month. Mark is a true transatlanticist, a strong leader and a consensus-builder," Stoltenberg said on social media after Nato ambassadors approved the appointment. "I know I am leaving Nato in good hands," he said.

Rutte said it was a "tremendous honour" to take over from Stoltenberg once his decade at the helm of Nato ends.

"The alliance is and will remain the cornerstone of our collective security. Leading this organisation is a responsibility I do not take lightly," he posted online. The seasoned Dutch leader, whose 14-year tenure leading the Netherlands is set to end within weeks, is seen as a safe pair of hands capable of stewarding Nato through perilous times.

His appointment was welcomed by leaders across the 75-year-old alliance, including British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who called it "a good choice for freedom and security". The White House said US

President Joe Biden believed Rutte "will make an excellent secretary general". While the 57-year-old faces the possibility of a possible return by former US president Donald Trump to the White House, who has long criticised the alliance, Rutte will also have to grapple with the threat posed by Russian leader Vladimir Putin. After staking a claim for the Nato post following the collapse of his Dutch coalition government last year, Rutte had to use all his diplomatic skills to win over reluctant allies Turkey and Hungary. He finally clinched the race last week when his sole challenger, Romanian President Klaus Iohannis, dropped out.

Back Ukraine, tame Trump?

A staunch supporter of Ukraine, the straight-talking Dutchman has spearheaded a push to give Kyiv F-16 fighter jets to help beat back Russia's invasion. As Nato chief, he will play a key role in marshalling allies to keep backing the war-torn country -- while treading a fine line over Kyiv's push to join the alliance. "We anticipate that our joint work to ensure the protection of people and freedom throughout our entire Euro-Atlantic community will continue at good pace," Ukraine's President Volodymyr



Zelensky wrote on social media. The Kremlin's 2022 assault on Ukraine has reinvigorated an alliance that often struggled for purpose after the end of the Cold War, and pushed European nations to increase their defence spending.

Rutte will now have to ensure Nato is fighting fit to deal with the threat Moscow could pose for years to come, and also keep a keen eye on the growing might of China. Most testing, however, could be the challenge of keeping the alliance together if Trump reclaims the presidency. Trump reportedly mulled pulling the military superpower out of Nato during his first term, only to be

talked down by leaders including Rutte. On the campaign trail this time around, the volatile former reality TV star has rattled allies by saying he would encourage Moscow to attack countries not spending enough on defence. It is not just the United States that is facing political uncertainty, as crunch elections are also coming up in other key countries like France. Rutte will look to learn from his predecessor Stoltenberg, who has headed Nato through its most consequential decade since the Cold War ended. The unflappable former Norwegian prime minister won plaudits for maintaining unity and strengthening Nato through a tumultuous period. Nato had to extend Stoltenberg's tenure twice as it struggled for two years to replace him, with many allies initially hoping to name a woman and someone from Eastern Europe to take over.

Rutte will be the fourth Dutchman to head the alliance since it was founded upon the ashes of World War II to face off against the Soviet Union.

NEWS BOX

Trott slams Trinidad pitch after Afghanistan's exit: Not a World Cup semi-final track

New Delhi. Afghanistan coach Jonathan Trott has slammed the pitch that was used in Trinidad for the South Africa vs Afghanistan match, claiming that it wasn't one that was fit to host a T20 World Cup semi-final. Afghanistan were on the receiving end of a drubbing from the Proteas as they were bundled out for just 56 runs, the lowest total ever by a side in a T20 World Cup semi-final.

The South African bowlers were n the money from the get-go, but were definitely aided by the pitch in Trinidad with some uneven bounce and lateral seam movement. This was the case in the second innings as well, as the Proteas batters had to deal with the same issues, but eventually got the 9-wicket win. Speaking at the press conference after the game, Trott said he didn't want to sound like it was a case of 'sour grapes' but felt the track wasn't a good one and wanted a fair contest to happen between bat and bowl.

Trott said T20 cricket shouldn't be about surviving and should have something in for both batters and bowlers. "I don't want to get myself into trouble. But I also don't want to sound a bit like 'sour grapes' but that's not the pitch that you want to have a semi-final of a World Cup on. Plain and simple. It should be a fair contest. I'm not saying it should be completely flat with no spin and seam movement, you shouldn't have batters worrying about moving forward and having the ball fly over their head. You should be confident in getting through the line or use their skills. And T20 is all about attacking and scoring runs and taking wickets. Not looking to survive," said Trott. "If the opposition bowled well and gets you into a position after bowling well and through skill, then it's fine to them. Then it's about adapting."

"If we had bowled the way South Africa had, you could have seen a different second half." Afghanistan incredible journey came to an end with the game and South Africa have now reached a World Cup final for the first time.

England are prepared for Virat Kohli: Matthew Mott wary of 'destructive' batter in semis

New Delhi. Head coach Matthew Mott said that England are wary of the threat Virat Kohli may pose to them in the T20 World Cup 2024 semi-final on June 27 at the Providence Stadium in Guyana. Kohli has been going through a rough patch of form, having scored only 66 runs from 6 games at an average of 11 and a strike-rate of 100 with a top score of 37 to his name. Mott said that the Three Lions respect Kohli and the aura that he carries. He said that Kohli is someone who would not take much time to get into his groove. Kohli bagged a duck in India's last Super 8 match against Australia, but Mott said that he has every chance of stepping up in big matches given his past records.

'Virat Kohli is a key player for India'

"Virat has proven his class over a very long period of time. He's one of the players we've prepared well for. We know how he can play; we know how destructive he can be and we also know his game smarts," Mott said in the pre-match press conference. Mott said that the Three Lions respect Kohli and the aura that he carries. He said that Kohli is someone who would not take much time to get into his groove. Kohli bagged a duck in India's last Super 8 match against Australia, but Mott said that he has every chance of stepping up in big matches given his past records.

'Virat Kohli is a key player for India'

"Virat has proven his class over a very long period of time. He's one of the players we've prepared well for. We know how he can play; we know how destructive he can be and we also know his game smarts," Mott said in the pre-match press conference.

Turkey edge into Euros last 16 with tense win over Czechs

HAMBURG. Turkey reached the knockout phase at a major tournament for the first time in 16 years after a bad-tempered 2-1 win over a battling 10-man Czech Republic at Euro 2024 on Wednesday. Vincenzo Montella's Turkey finished second in Group F behind Portugal to progress, as the Czechs were eliminated despite a brave performance on a sweltering night in Hamburg. "Tonight we just want to celebrate, we deserve it," said Italian Montella. "But starting tomorrow we want to continue to make history." Georgia also went through as one of the best third-placed teams after a stunning 2-0 win over Portugal in the group's other final game, eliminating Hungary. Turkey will face Austria in the last 16 in Leipzig on Tuesday, their first major tournament knockout match since the Euro 2008 semi-finals, when they were beaten by Germany. The Czechs were reduced to 10 men in the 20th minute when Antonin Barak was given the earliest red card in Euros history, beating the unwanted record set by France's Eric Abidal in 2008. Barak's pair of bookings were two of 18 yellow cards shown in total, with Tomas Chory also shown red after the final whistle in ugly scenes. Hakan Calhanoglu powered Turkey into a 51st-minute lead, but Tomas Soucek lashed in an equaliser midway through the second half. A frantic finale to the game ensued as the Czech Republic pushed for the winner that would take them through, but Cenk Tosun ended their hopes on the counter-attack in added time. There were ugly scenes at the final whistle as fans ran onto the pitch, with Czech forward Chory brandished a red card in the aftermath. "We are upset, everyone wanted to advance, we had the right mindset," said Soucek. "It was terribly hard with 10 men, we didn't want to concede, then we did, we levelled and pushed them until the last minute but then we conceded another." The Czechs started strongly despite the tens of thousands of Turkey fans jeering their every touch, with Lukas Provod forcing Mert Gunok into an early save with a deflected shot.

Rohit Sharma vs Jofra Archer and more: Key battles in IND vs ENG T20 World Cup semis

India take on England in the T20 World Cup semi-final 1 on June 27

The clash will be a rematch of the 2022 T20 World Cup

The fixture will feature multiple big-name clashes like Rohit vs Archer

New Delhi. The moment of decisiveness beckons, when millions of Indian cricket fans will once again pin their hopes on finally seeing their team lift an ICC trophy. After a 13-year wait, Rohit Sharma-led India are looking more and more poised to earn the title of "World Champions", on top of what has been quite an effective 2024 T20 World Cup campaign. However, the side's semi-final challenge comes against the same side which ended their trophy-bound run at the same stage in the 2022 T20 World Cup, a dangerous and aggressive-cricket focused England. Having already completed their 2023 ODI World Cup final revenge against Mitchell Marsh-led Australia, the fans have their fingers crossed on both hands to see the

Men in Blue make this the season of their comeback. However, the star-studded England side poses a tough challenge for Rohit Sharma's men. While India has the likes of Rohit, a yet to fire Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav and a feisty-minded Rishabh Pant handling their batting prowess with quite some panache throughout the tournament, England also has the likes of Phil Salt, skipper Jos Buttler and Jonny Bairstow in their batting arsenal. On the other hand, bowlers from both sides have also taken this tournament by storm. The highly-anticipated clash will feature the likes of Jasprit Bumrah, Arshdeep Singh and Kuldeep Yadav handling the majority of the bowling charge for India. Similarly, the likes of comeback hero Jofra Archer, Chris Jordan and the in-form Adil Rashid will also give a tough challenge for India batters. One thing is for sure, it is going to be a clash of big names at the Providence Stadium in Guyana.

Rohit Sharma vs Jofra Archer - The Big One

The biggest for the top spot on the list. India fans will be hoping for the captain to showcase some of the same scenes from their Australia clash, where he ran an onslaught against big-name pacers like Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins. However, this time Rohit will have to face off against the man who is eager to announce his comeback to the list of



lethal pacers in T20I cricket - Jofra Archer. In all the India matches in this T20 World Cup, we have seen Rohit target pacers in full-aggressive gear from the very get-go of a fixture. To highlight this trait further, Rohit hit Starc for 29 runs in his very first over of the crucial Super 8 clash on June 24. Meanwhile, Archer has been considerably dangerous with the new ball, which has seen the 29-year-old pick 9 wickets in England's 7 matches so far in this T20 World Cup. In his brilliant 3/40 spell against a batting-heavy South Africa side, Archer showed that he might go for runs, but he also knows how to slow an innings down from a crucial stage.

Suryakumar Yadav vs Rashid Ali - Guyana pitch special
Jos Buttler has consistently used the spin prowess of Adil Rashid, whenever he has

noticed even a hint of turn on the pitch, and doing the same against India's batting attack is most likely on the cards because of the amount of rain that Guyana, the match venue, is receiving. While Rohit has been sensational against pace, his approach against spinners has been focused on the whole "seeing through" approach. This is exactly the kind of point where fans would expect Suryakumar Yadav to take charge. Suryakumar has been in some brilliant big-hitting touch for India in this T20 World Cup, where

he has either brought big scores with his aggressive intent, or has seen the same get him out early. In India's clash against Afghanistan, Suryakumar's explosive 53 off 28 balls knock saw him effectively handle the spin brilliance of an in-form Rashid Khan and Noor Ahmed, specifically with his slog-sweeping tactics. Whether Suryakumar takes the Adil Rashid pressure off the other batters in his side or not, that is one answer we will get on June 27.

Arshdeep and Bumrah vs Buttler, Salt - Pace vs Panache

The battle at the top will be between India's pace attack comprising the in-form duo of Jasprit Bumrah and Arshdeep Singh, against the fiery England opening duo of Jos Buttler and Phil Salt.

Aiden Markram 'happy to be not playing again in Trinidad' after AFG vs SA pitch debacle

New Delhi. Aiden Markram reflected on the much-discussed pitch of the Brian Lara Stadium in Trinidad after South Africa stormed into the final of the T20 World Cup 2024. He mentioned that the South African team would be pleased to not play on the tricky pitch again as the final will be played at the Providence Stadium in Guyana on June 29, Sunday. The pitch became a taking point as it had uneven bounce on offer and was not the easiest of the tracks to bat on. The spicy and tricky pitch saw Afghanistan getting bundled out for just 56 runs, which is the lowest total by a team in the semi-final of the T20 World Cups. Markram became the first-ever South African captain to lead the Proteas to their maiden World Cup final. The Afghanistan batters struggled to get going against the South African bowlers as they fell like a pack of cards. Even the South African batters struggled initially in the powerplay with plenty of seam movement. However, Markram and Reeza Hendricks helped South Africa chase down the target of 57 runs within 8.5 overs. Aiden Markram reflected on the much-discussed pitch of the Brian Lara Stadium in Trinidad after South Africa

stormed into the final of the T20 World Cup 2024. He mentioned that the South African team would be pleased to not play on the tricky pitch again as the final will be played



at the Providence Stadium in Guyana on June 29, Sunday. The pitch became a taking point as it had uneven bounce on offer and was not the easiest of the tracks to bat on. The spicy and tricky pitch saw Afghanistan getting bundled out for just 56 runs, which is the lowest total by a team in the semi-final of the T20 World Cups. Markram became the first-ever South African captain to lead the Proteas to their maiden World Cup final. The Afghanistan batters struggled to get going against the South African bowlers as

they fell like a pack of cards. Even the South African batters struggled initially in the powerplay with plenty of seam movement. However, Markram and Reeza Hendricks helped South Africa chase down the target of 57 runs within 8.5 overs. But having said that, still taking the positives we can. Wickets are tough. Wickets are the same for both teams on the night. So, finding a way to win is probably the most important thing."

Markram credits SA pacers

Markram credited the South African bowlers for making full use of the conditions and put South Africa in winning position. Tonight was an exceptional performance by the whole bowling unit and the pitch was obviously quite challenging as we saw and like I said you do still have to get the ball in the right area, so you give credit to your bowlers. They've used the conditions really well and managed to get us into a winning position," Markram added. Marco Jansen was awarded as the Player of the Match for his figures of 3-0-3-16 against Afghanistan. Tabraiz Shamsi also picked 3 wickets alongside Keshav Maharaj and Anrich Nortje, who picked 2 wickets each.

Afghanistan skipper Rashid Khan promises to be back with 'more grit' after semis exit

NEW DELHI Rashid Khan has vowed that the Afghanistan team would return with more grit in the next tournament after their run in the T20 World Cup 2024 came to an end at the hands of South Africa on June 27, Thursday. The Proteas put in a dominant performance with the ball as they bundled out Afghanistan for just 56 runs in Trinidad. South Africa were able to secure the win within the 9th over and progressed to the final. Despite the loss, Afghanistan had a lot of things to be proud of given their inspiring run in the competition. Rashid took to social media to put out a post praising his side for their efforts. The Afghan skipper said the team would always remember the T20 World Cup and praised his teammates for the fight they showed. Rashid promised the fans



that they would continue to build on from their performance in the tournament for the ones in the future. The star spinner also thanked the fans for believing in them and giving them motivation to fight on during the T20 World Cup. "The fight put ahead by each and every one of this team is

commendable and I'm really proud of all of us!" "We will continue to build from here and comeback with more grit in the next one. Thank you to each and everyone who believed in us and helped us to keep the fight on," said Rashid. How well did Afghanistan perform in the T20 World Cup 2024? Afghanistan certainly captured the imagination of the cricketing world with their performance during the T20 World Cup 2024. They finished as the second-best Asian team in the competition behind India and ahead of the likes of Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Afghanistan also scored wins against New Zealand in the group stage and Australia during the Super 8 and knocked the 2021 champions out of the competition.



conversations with my family and with a heavy heart, I feel it is now time for me to return home and spend some quality time together," Silverwood said in a statement released by Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC).

"I would like to thank the players, coaches, backroom staff, and management of the SLC for their support during my time in Sri Lanka. Without your support, none of the success would have been possible." It has been a real honour for me to be part of Sri Lanka Cricket and I will be taking away many fond memories," Silverwood added. Sri Lanka, the 2014 champions, did not have the best of times in the World Cup. They started their campaign losing to South Africa after which they lost to Bangladesh as well. Their match against Rohit Paudel's Nepal was called off due to rain in Florida.

T20 World Cup 2024 semi-final: Beware England. This 'new' India can't be bullied again

NEW DELHI. England had smelled blood in Adelaide. They won the toss and opted to bowl first in the semi-final of the T20 World Cup, knowing fully well that they could bully India. And they did. Former England captain Paul Collingwood recently revealed that England were aware that their best option of beating India would be to bowl first and take advantage of the opposition's lily-livered approach. India managed 168. Rohit Sharma hit 27 off 28 balls. Virat Kohli scored 50 off 40 balls. India managed 168 in 20 overs. England chased the target down in 16 overs without losing a wicket. That evening in Adelaide exposed the gulf in mindset between India and eventual champions England. Despite the big names in the side, India were playing catch-up. England were playing a different brand of T20 cricket -- a slambang approach that was pioneered by Eoin Morgan in the ODI World Cup in 2019. Cut to June 2024, India and England are heading into another T20 World Cup semi-final, this time in Guyana. And the England camp is fully aware that India can't be bullied this time. England coach

Matthew Mott spoke about being wary of a 'different' India when he addressed the press on the eve of the semi-final.

T20 World Cup 2024, IND vs ENG semi-final 2: Report

"Probably the only thing that we've discussed is that we feel that they're a very different team to that semi-final. I think the way that they've approached it in the last couple of years is certainly taking the game on extremely hard in the powerplay," Mott said. When pressed harder, he explained: "Well, I think when we go back to that semi-final, obviously on a good pitch in Adelaide, we put India in and that was a risk. But I thought we felt they weren't sure what a good score was. I think the approach now is they would come at us hard and try and maximise that, maybe try and put it out of our reach," he added. India have scored at a rate of 8-and-a-half runs in the powerplay in T20 internationals since the start of 2023 - a marginal, but significant increase (8.12 to 8.30) in the scoring rate from 2022. In the T20 World Cup in the



USA and the West Indies, India have been refreshingly positive in the powerplay. Take the Super 8 match against Australia for instance - Mitchell Marsh and his men tried to put pressure on India by winning the toss and opting to bowl in St Lucia. They got the big wicket of Virat Kohli for 0. The old Indian side would have played it safe after losing their best batter as early as the second over of the World Cup contest. However, this was a new Team India. This was Rohit Sharma's ruthless India. The captain led from the front. In the

very next over, he hit Australia's best bowler - Mitchell Starc for four sixes in a 29-run over. Rohit taking down Starc was more than just a counter-attack. It was a message to the cricket world that India plays a different cricket brand in T20Is. India went on to post 205 -- the highest total against Australia in the T20 World Cup history -- and it proved too much in the end for Australia.

ROHIT SPEARHEADS CHANGE IN TEAM INDIA

Rohit Sharma has spearheaded the change. The Adelaide defeat seems to have stung him. The no-holds-barred approach was evident in the ODI World Cup in 2023. Rohit scored 597 runs at a strike rate of 125. No other batter with more than 400 runs had a strike rate closer to Rohit's 125. Yet, India were not able to lift that coveted trophy. In the final, familiar problems returned to haunt India after Rohit Sharma's whirlwind knock ended prematurely. India's batting unit froze on November 19 in Ahmedabad.



Richa Chadha

To Shoot Comedy Movie After Welcoming Baby: 'I Can Handle Both Duties Effectively'

Actress Richa Chadha is set to challenge traditional norms as she embraces the dual roles of working as a professional and mother. While many actresses in the industry choose to take a hiatus from their careers to focus on motherhood, Richa is determined to continue her work without interruption. The actress has already signed her next, and the work on the untitled film is set to begin soon. The script of the film which is a comedy genre is already ready and has been written by Amitosh Nagpal, and is set in North India. Commenting on her work had maternity break, she shared, "While I can't speak for all women, because it depends on each individual what their journey is like, I am determined to get back to work as soon as possible, and not take a long break, as I have pending commitments." She further added, "I take immense inspiration from my own mother, who managed both roles with grace and efficiency. I believe I can handle both duties effectively as well, because it depends on the kind of support system you have around you and how hands-on your partner is. In my case, I feel blessed to have both those things figured out. I also don't think it is out of the ordinary. I have seen the badass women of Mumbai take local trains well into their 9th month, heading to work, looking perfectly groomed with their gajras intact. I am very inspired by the average Indian woman and don't want this to be treated as a medical condition, it is not. It is a natural part of life".



The source close to the production of the film, said, "Richa has loved the script and it's a really fun concept. The pre production work is set to take place in August and will go on floors in October. The film is meant to be shot at the brink of winters in the north". As Richa prepares for this new chapter in her life, she remains dedicated to her upcoming projects, assuring her fans that her passion for acting and storytelling will not waver.

Telugu Actress Sreelu Serves Back-to-back Stylish Looks In Black Dresses



Actress Sreelu has made her debut in Telugu cinema with this year's film Kotha Rangula Prapancham, directed by her father and actor Prudhvi Raj. Besides her debut project, Sreelu has also hit the headlines for her impeccable sartorial choices. Some photos of Sreelu treating her followers to her pictures in different outfits are going viral on the internet. In one of these photos, she can be seen flaunting her toned figure in a black strappy mini dress. Opting for open hair and glowy makeup, Sreelu looked stunning in the photo. In another set of images, Sreelu strikes a pose and can be seen donning an embellished black bodycon dress. She looks like a sight to behold with her well-sculpted legs. Sreelu aced her fashion game in a saree as well and looked glamorous, while posing for the cameras. Her makeup and statement jewellery added further allure to the photo. Sreelu is about to tie the knot soon, as revealed by Prudhvi Raj during the interview. According to reports, in this interview, one of the reporters asked some questions related to Sreelu's personal life. The reporter asked whether his daughter was in love with anyone. Answering this question, Prudhvi said that Sreelu is soon to tie the nuptial knot and will become the daughter-in-law of a star's house. The veteran actor also revealed many aspects of her daughter's life, while Sreelu was embarrassed by this question. After this news went viral, social media users were curious to know with whom Sreelu was going to tie the knot. As of now, there are no reports regarding whom Sreelu will marry. Information regarding Sreelu's other projects is not known in the public domain. Meanwhile, she keeps sharing videos on Instagram on different popular tracks. Sreelu's latest video is a track from the film Kundanapu Bomma, directed by Vara Mullapoodi. She looks drop-dead gorgeous in a red saree which she paired with a velvet blouse. She accessorised her looks with heavy jewellery, red lips and glowy makeup with black eyelashes and pink eyeliner. Social media users showered heart emoticons in the comment section, signifying their appreciation for Sreelu's outfit.

Meet Vikram Singh Rajput, A Salman Khan Fan Who Shares Uncanny Resemblance With His Idol



For the last 3 decades, Salman Khan has been one of the leading names in Bollywood, amassing such fame that many could even dream of. So, such a famous face is bound to have lookalikes. This is about a huge fan of the superstar, who also happens to be his doppelganger, Vikram Singh Rajput. Vikram Singh Rajput is a popular name on social media, who regularly gains attention on the internet for his uncanny resemblance to Salman Khan. In each of his videos, he sports a similar expression and even style to the superstar, which is loved by the netizens.

The young man is adored by an impressive 194,000 followers on his Instagram handle. One of his most recent videos shows him enacting the small gestures of the superstar, unsurprisingly popular among his fans. The clip shows Vikram capturing himself sporting stylish shades and a yellow shirt. He shows off his shockingly similar looks to Salman Khan. Especially his eyes, which look almost exactly like the actor's. Users react to the video in the comment section, with most of them flooding it with heart and fire emoticons. While a user wrote, "Wow superhero." And another shared, "Wow Stunning Expression." An active user of social media, Vikram Singh Rajput's videos frequently go viral among the fans, amassing thousands of likes and views. His idol Salman Khan is busy the shooting of his upcoming film, titled Sikandar. Back in April, the actor announced the film through his official Instagram handle, with a post. He wrote in the caption, "Iss Eid Bade Miyan Chote Miyan aur Maidaan ko dekho aur agli Eid Sikandar se aa kar milo.... Wish you all Eid Mubarak! (This Eid watch Bade Miyan Chote Miyan and Maidaan, in the next come and meet Sikandar)." As per the information, the film is being helmed by AR Murugadoss, who is also its writer. The cast of the film also includes Rashmika Mandanna, Suniel Shetty and Prateik Babbar. It is being produced by Sajid Nadiadwala.

Aishwarya Rai

AVOIDS Cameras, Zooms Past Paparazzi As She Steps Out in Mumbai

Bollywood actress Aishwarya Rai was spotted out and about in Mumbai but it seems like she did not want to be photographed. Paparazzi spotted Aishwarya in Mumbai's Bandra area, running an errand. The actress was spotted stepping out from the building she was visiting and diving into the car instead of photos for the cameras. As she exited the venue, she did not stop for the paparazzi. Despite her efforts of not getting clicked, the paparazzi managed to get a glimpse of her in the car. Aishwarya was seen wearing a white outfit and even turning her face away when the cameras photographed her. Check out the photos below: Aishwarya Rai is not known to make often media appearances. The last time she was spotted out and about was earlier this summer



when she was at home. The incident took place on May 11. Aishwarya reportedly fractured her wrist after she had a bad fall at her Mumbai residence. The report added that she decided to complete her work assignments while the wrist swelling reduced. Once she is cleared by the doctors, she is expected to undergo surgery. "Two days after her fall, she did her costume fittings with her designers, and only requested that they ensure that the venue was spacious and comfortable so that she could avoid another injury. The brand was thankful and appreciative that she met her share of the deal despite being in pain," a source told Mid-Day. Her doctors had stated that she could undergo surgery after the swelling had subsided, and had granted permission to travel for the festival. She is likely to be seen in a splint for a month, and will subsequently undergo physiotherapy to regain her strength," the insider added. On the work front, Aishwarya was last seen in Ponniyin Selvan 2 in 2023. She hasn't announced a film since

