





## IN BRIEF

## Man tries to extort doc for money, held

**New Delhi:** A 32-year-old man has been arrested for an alleged extortion attempt on a doctor who runs a private clinic in the Janakpuri area here, the police said on Friday. During the interrogation, the accused, Ashok Kumar, told the police that he was in urgent need of money to purchase a new flat in Delhi and therefore planned to extort money from the doctor, they added.

According to the police, Kumar delivered an extortion letter in the doctor's clinic. He threatened to kill the doctor if he failed to meet his demand and named jailed Haryana gangster Manoj Baba in the letter to create terror to yield the extortion money. "On June 3, a man who was wearing a mask had delivered a letter in the clinic of a doctor in Janakpuri. The man threatened the doctor to kill him if he failed to meet the extortion demand. He also named the jailed Haryana-based gangster Manoj Baba in the letter," deputy commissioner of police Manoj C. said.

Following the incident, an FIR was registered and the case was handed over to the special cell, the DCP said.

## Gangsters grilled in Burger King killing

**New Delhi:** Jailed gangsters Neeraj Bawana and Naveen Dabas alias Bali were interrogated by the Delhi Police's Special Cell in connection with the murder of a man at a food outlet in Rajouri Garden, officials said on Friday.

Bawana and Bali are the associates of fugitive Spain-based gangster Himanshu Bhau. They took responsibility for the killing in a social media post, saying his gang had avenged the killing of Bawana's cousin Shakti Singh in October 2020. On Tuesday, Aman Joon, 26, was killed when he was seated with a woman inside a Burger King outlet in Rajouri Garden's J Block. It is believed that Joon had given a tip-off to gangster Ashok Pradhan about Shakti Singh. The post had mentioned the names of gangsters Naveen Dabas alias Bali, Neeraj Bawana, Kala Kharampur, and Neeraj Faridpur. The killings will continue, it also said.

## Decomposed body of woman found

**New Delhi:** A highly decomposed body of a woman was recovered from a house in Tilak Market area of North Delhi, the police on Friday said. The deceased is yet to be identified but is likely to be around 50-60 years of age, they said. According to the police, they received information regarding foul smell from a house, following which a police team from Lahori Gate police station was dispatched to the spot.

"The premise was found locked from inside," a senior police officer said. The body has been shifted to a mortuary and proceedings under Section 174 of the CrPC are being initiated, the officer added.

## 'NCRTC REDUCING 3,100 TONS OF CO2 EMISSION'

**New Delhi:** The National Capital Regional transport corporation (NCRTC) is making significant strides in renewable energy adoption by installing solar power infrastructure along the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS Corridor, officials said on Friday. The NCRTC generates three-megawatt peak (MWp) in-house solar power leading to an annual reduction of 3,100 tons of carbon dioxide (CO2) emission. "This initiative has transformed stations, depots and receiving substations into centres of clean and sustainable energy. Currently, NCRTC generates a three megawatt peak (MWp) of in-house solar power, leading to an annual reduction of 3,100 tons of carbon dioxide (CO2) emission," a senior NCRTC official said. The official said that the NCRTC's shift from conventional fossil fuel-based power to clean solar energy aligns with its vision of sustainability and operational efficiency. With a target of 11 MW solar power capacity, the NCRTC aims to save around 11,500 tons of CO2 emissions annually, marking a substantial step in combating climate change, official added.

■ 'I will end my fast only when every Delhiite gets the water'

## Atishi begins indefinite fast for more water from Haryana

AVINASH PRABHAKAR JHA  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

Amid persisting water crisis in the national capital, Delhi water minister Atishi on Friday began her indefinite hunger strike in South Delhi's Bhogal to press on her demand for more water from Haryana. Before embarking on "Pani Satyagraha", she visited chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence to meet his family members and thereafter visited Rajghat with Sunita Kejriwal, Sanjay Singh, Saurabh Bharadwaj and other AAP leaders to pay homage to Mahatma Gandhi.

Speaking on the occasion, Atishi said her appeal to the Haryana government and a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for help did not yield any result and Delhi was not getting adequate water. "Delhi's total water supply is 1,005 million gallons per day (MGD). Out of this, 613 MGD of water comes from Haryana. But Haryana is giving only 513 MGD of water for the last two weeks. Delhi is getting 100



Delhi minister and AAP leader Atishi during her indefinite hunger strike in New Delhi on Friday. — PTI

MGD less water from Haryana every day which has led to the water crisis in the city", the water minister said.

Elaborating further, Atishi said one million gallons of water supplies water to around 28,500 people. That means when the Haryana government stops 100 MGD of water for Delhiites, water supply to more than 28 lakh people of Delhi is stopped. This is the reason why there is a water crisis in different parts of Delhi today.

Emphasising that the daily hardships and trou-

bles of the city dwellers are unbearable, Atishi said, "Today I am taking a pledge that till the people of Delhi do not get water, this 'Pani Satyagraha' will continue and I will end my fast only when every Delhiite gets the water as per its right. This hunger strike cannot give me more pain than the suffering that the people of Delhi are going through and the suffering that I am seeing".

Meanwhile, Ms Kejriwal also read out a message from the chief minister, who is currently lodged in Tihar jail, in which he

▶ **ATISHI SAID** one million gallons of water supplies water to around 28,500 people. That means when Haryana government stops 100 MGD of water for Delhiites, water supply to more than 28 lakh people of Delhi is stopped.

expressed hope that 'Atishi's 'tapasya' would be successful. Chief minister in his message said: "This time the whole country is experiencing severe heat. The temperature has gone above 50°C. It is being said that this is the first time in 100 years that this heat has been so intense. This is not in anyone's hands, it is God's will. But on such occasions, one person should help another person, and we can mitigate the problem by joining hands. By the way, it has been our culture that people offer free water to thirsty people in the summer. One gets a lot of virtue by offering free water. You all believe this, but Delhi's neighboring states do not believe this".

## Rain brings relief from intense heat in Delhi

## Waterlogging, fallen trees reported from many areas

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

After weeks of sweltering weather, light rain lashed parts of the national capital on Friday, which brought relief from the intense heatwave in the city. The city's minimum temperature settled at 28.4°C normal for this time of the season, the Met office said.

However, the light downpour accompanied by gusty winds with speeds of 30-40 kmph caused water logging in many areas that led to traffic and incidents of uprooting of trees, according to civic body officials. The city and its adjoining NCR area witnessed light to moderate-intensity rains in several parts during the evening.

The India meteorological department has predicted relief from the searing heatwave in Delhi over the weekend, as well as the sky is likely to remain partly cloudy on Saturday and Sunday.

As per the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, at least 13 areas across the national capital reported waterlogging till 6 pm. Meanwhile, the soaring temperatures in Delhi that kept officials on their toes to roll relief measures, dipped on Friday.

There were nine complaints of uprooting of trees received by the civic body's control room till that time due to the gusty winds, it said.

The areas where waterlogging and incidents of fallen trees were reported include Karol Bhag zone, South zone, Shahdara North and South zone, and Narela, among others.

According to PWD officials, waterlogging calls were received from two areas — Azadpur underpass and Kashmere Gate.

The waterlogging issue at Azadpur underpass was resolved within 10 to 15 minutes while at Kashmere Gate, the issue was resolved within 30 to 35 minutes, they said.

## Heat deaths: 75 bodies received for autopsy in 3 days in Noida

**Noida, June 21:** Amid a severe heatwave, the district health department here has received at least 75 bodies for post-mortem within a period of three days from June 18-20, according to officials. Senior health officials of the Gautam Buddha Nagar said usually the number of bodies received for post-mortem in a day averages around seven or eight and described the fatalities as "unexpected".

The department, however, could not conclusively say if these deaths were directly caused due to the

heatwave.

"There has been an increase in the number of post-mortem cases and this increase is quite unexpected. Normally, there are 7-8 cases per day. On June 18, we received 28 bodies. On June 19, we received 25 bodies and by the evening of June 20, we had received 22 bodies," Gautam Buddha Nagar's chief medical officer (CMO) Dr Suneel Kumar Sharma said.

Of these bodies, he said hospitals had received 20 as "brought dead" and 10 of them were "unidentified". — PTI

## 'World sees yoga as powerful agent for global good'

■ **Continued from Page 1** of the education system in Saudi Arabia and Mongolian. Yoga Foundation is running many yoga schools. He added that, so far, as many as 1.5-crore German citizens have become yoga practitioners and it is gaining popularity in other European countries as well.

The Prime Minister said that meditation, which is part of yoga, can intimidate common people due to its spiritual overtones and that it could be understood easily as concentration and focus on things.

"This concentration and focus can be cultivated with practice and techniques and this kind of state of mind gives great results with the least tiredness and helps to avoid distractions," he said, adding that apart

from the spiritual journey, which will eventually come, meditation is a tool for self-improvement and training.

In his address, Mr Modi said that yoga can help Jammu and Kashmir attract more tourists, which in turn will provide new livelihood opportunities to its residents.

"Recently, I saw a video from Egypt. They organised a competition and awarded the best yoga photographs and videos from iconic tourist places in that country. In the pictures and videos, I saw girls from Egypt standing in front of the iconic Pyramids doing yoga. It was so attractive," he said, adding, "Similarly, yoga can become a centre of attraction for tourists here, thereby becoming a major source of employment in Jammu and

Kashmir."

The Prime Minister further stated that people from all over the world are coming to India in pursuit of learning authentic yoga. "As a result of this, sectors related to hospitality, tourism, apparel, etc. are booming from the huge inflow of people. This is creating new avenues for employment for youth," he said.

Mr Modi praised the people for their participation in large numbers in the IDY celebrations despite inclement weather conditions. He said: "Today's spectacle of enthusiasm and commitment shown by the people of Jammu and Kashmir towards yoga will be immortalised. Our daughters used their yoga mats to protect themselves from the rain, but they did not leave. It

is heartening to see."

After the rain stopped, the Prime Minister took selfies with the participating college girls and their teachers and also interacted with some other participants on the lawns of the SKICC. He later posted pictures of his engagement on X and said, "Post yoga selfies in Srinagar! Unparalleled vibrancy here, at Dal Lake."

In another post on X, Mr Modi said, "Dal Lake in Srinagar provided a wonderful setting for this year's Yoga Day programme, reflecting perfect harmony with nature. The rains did not dampen the spirits of the countless people gathered there. Here are some glimpses."

In yet another post, he asserted, "Yoga brings about oneness of the mind, body and soul."

## Is Kejriwal most wanted terrorist? Sunita asks ED

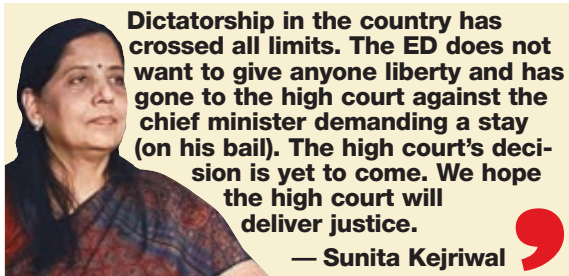
BHASKAR HARI SHARMA  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

Soon after the Enforcement Directorate challenged bail of Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal in high court, his wife Sunita lashed out at the ED and accused the probe agency of acting as if the AAP national convener was the "most wanted terrorist in India".

Ms Kejriwal said dictatorship in the country has crossed all limits. "It was only yesterday your chief minister got bail. In the morning, the order was supposed to be uploaded. Even before the order was uploaded, the ED approached the high court. This happened as if Mr Kejriwal is the most wanted terrorist in India."

"Dictatorship in the country has crossed all limits. The ED does not want to give anyone liberty and has gone to the high court against the chief minister demanding a stay (on his bail). The high court's decision is yet to come. We hope the high court will deliver justice," she added.

The high court on Friday put on hold the trial court order granting bail to the chief minister till it hears the ED's plea



challenging the relief granted to him in the money laundering case linked to the alleged excise scam.

AAP leader Sanjay Singh however accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of making a mockery of the justice system. Mr Singh said the trial court's bail "exposed" the conspiracy of the BJP and the party should apologise to the AAP and Mr Kejriwal.

Taking to X, Mr Singh said in a post in Hindi, "Look at the hooliganism of the Modi government, the trial court's order has not yet come, even a copy of the order has not been received, so Modi's ED reached the high court to challenge which order? What is happening in this country?"

"Modi ji, why are you making a mockery of the justice system? The entire

country is watching you?" the AAP MP said.

Later at a press conference, he termed the trial court order was "historic" and completely "exposed" the role of the BJP government and ED operated by it. "The court order clearly shows that the ED is fabricating facts against us and presenting documents in its favour in the court, statements are taken from witnesses under pressure," he said.

The trial court clearly said that no evidence or money trail was presented by the ED in connection with alleged transactions related to Goa polls, claimed Mr Singh adding that "ED was so rattled by the court order that it reached the high court to challenge it even before the trial court order copy was uploaded on court's website."

## After befriending, 2 men rob woman at home, arrested

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

The Delhi police has arrested two men for befriending women on dating apps and allegedly robbing them at their homes.

The police identified the accused as Vijay Kumar Kamal (28) and Rahul (35), residents of Mohan Garden area in Delhi, they said. The matter came to light on May 31 when a 35-year-old woman filed a complaint that a man, who introduced himself as Jatun on a dating app, robbed her in her house, deputy commissioner of police (Dwarka) Ankit Singh said.

The victim told the police that she and Jatun (alias Vijay Kumar Kamal) used to talk over messages before he and Rahul visited her house on May 30. They tied her hands, tapped her mouth and assaulted her, Mr Singh said.

Both robbed her gold ornaments, mobile phone, and ₹5,000 cash and fled. After receiving the complaint, an FIR was lodged at Dabri police station and an investigation was initiated," the DCP said.

During the investigation, the police examined the CCTV footage and identified the accused. They found that the accused reached the victim's residence in a Creta car with a fake number plate, the DCP added. "When we were searching for the call details of the accused, we came across another fact that the mobile phone which the accused was using was stolen from another woman in Rohini, who was also robbed in the same manner. Details of

▶ **THE ROHINI-based** victim told the police that she met the accused via a dating app. On March 23, Vijay and Rahul met her at her house. They tied her hands and legs, tapped her mouth and robbed her.

the Rohini-based victim were also obtained," Mr Singh said.

The Rohini-based victim told the police that she met the accused via a dating app. On March 23, Vijay and Rahul met her at her house. They tied her hands and legs, tapped her mouth and robbed her. The accused took the victim's jewellery, cash and mobile phone, he said.

"The analysis of CDR revealed that the mobile used to contact the Rohini-based victim was also snatched by them from the Sagarpur area. CCTV footage of all the crime spots was analysed by the team," DCP Singh said.

On June 18, the police arrested Rahul and interrogated him. Soon, the team also arrested the mastermind Kamal. The duo confessed to their crimes, DCP said.

"With the arrest of the accused, a total of four cases were worked out of Dabri, Dwarka North, South Rohini, and north Rohini of the same nature. Further interrogation is underway to find out other victims, if any, and, for recovery of robbed gold jewellery and mobile phones," Mr Singh said.

The police recovered the stolen jewellery, mobile phones, an SUV car, a stolen scooter and fake vehicle registration plates, Mr Singh added.

## Cong holds protest outside BJP office over Neet issue

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

Delhi Congress workers on Friday held a demonstration near the BJP headquarters over the alleged irregularities in the Neet-UG 2024 examinations.

The demonstration was led by Delhi Congress president Devender Yadav. The party was protesting peacefully for the interest of the youth, and will not rest till lakhs of students who appeared for the Neet-UG exams get justice, Mr Yadav said.

All the Congress workers, who participated in the demonstration under Mr Yadav's leadership, took the pledge that they will strive to ensure that justice was served to the



Congress workers protest in New Delhi on Friday. — PRITAM BANDYOPADHYAY

students, the party said. The Congress workers assembled at the party's state unit office and proceeded to the BJP headquarters but were stopped midway by the police. Barricades were put up by

the police to prevent them from moving ahead, the statement said.

The Police detained Mr Yadav and other Congress workers and took them to different police stations before releasing them.



## SHORT TAKES

## Cong targets Centre over Assam floods

**New Delhi:** Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday hit out at the BJP over flood management in Assam, claiming people have been squarely betrayed by the “double engine Modi-Shah” promise of making Assam flood-free. The flood situation in Assam remained grim on Friday with over four lakh people reeling under the deluge in several districts, officials said. Several major rivers, including Kopili, Barak and Koshiyara, were flowing above the danger level as per reports till Thursday evening. “The flood situation in Assam is grim. Lakhs of people are affected in 15 districts and 36 people have lost their lives, till now. Congress party stands in solidarity with the people of Assam. Our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims,” Mr Kharge said in a post on X. “We hope the double engine government will provide prompt assistance,” he said. — PTI

## Shivakumar rules out bypoll contest

**Bengaluru:** Karnataka deputy chief minister D.K. Shivakumar on Friday ruled out contesting in the Channapatna bypoll. He even wondered aloud why there would be bye-elections in Kanakapura Assembly segment from where he is an MLA. Two days ago, Mr Shivakumar said, “A significant change in my political career happened from Channapatna. I have come to Anjaneya temple in Kengal to start a new chapter in my political career.” This gave rise to speculations that he was willing to contest from Channapatna assembly segment, which fell vacant after MLA H.D. Kumaraswamy won the Mandya Lok Sabha election. BJP MLA and former minister S. Suresh Kumar called the purported “bypoll in Kanakapura” a “Tughlaq like decision” and wastage of public money. — PTI

## State going through tough phase: Biren

**Imphal:** Noting that ethnic strife-torn Manipur was going through a difficult phase, chief minister N. Biren Singh on Friday asserted that his government would lay the path for betterment of the society. Speaking at the state-level International Yoga Day function at Khuman Lampak Sports Complex, Mr Singh said the current situation in Manipur is a turning point for indigenous people and their future and if things are tackled wisely, a safe and secure future is guaranteed. “We shouldn’t allow emotions and politics to drive our actions, and in the process divert from the core issues. We know we are tired... But we have to endure it for a few more days. We cannot be happy without going through a tough phase,” he said. — PTI

## WILL RAISE NEET ISSUE IN PARL, ASSERTS RAHUL

**New Delhi, June 21:** Targeting the Centre over the alleged irregularities in medical entrance exam Neet, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has said he will personally raise the issue in Parliament and the Opposition will put pressure on the government to ensure justice for students. Mr Gandhi shared a video of his meeting with a group of Neet aspirants and their parents on



Rahul Gandhi

Thursday amid the ongoing row over the alleged irregularities in Neet-UG 2024. In his post along with the video, Gandhi said the future of lakhs of students is in limbo due to the “incompetence” of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his ministers. “Met and interacted with students who were harassed by paper leak and cheating in Neet exam. This is the biggest injustice to the aspirations of 24 lakh youth, their parents, who have been working hard for their goal for years,” he said in his post on YouTube in Hindi. This kind of crime has caused loss of precious time, loss of lakhs of rupees spent in preparation for the exam and most importantly, it has affected the mental health of the youth, he said. — PTI

■ Poll body sets July 1 date for update, vows polls in J&K soon  
EC sets ball rolling for state polls, will update voters’ listAGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

After the completion of the general election for Lok Sabha 2024, the Election Commission on Friday has got the ball rolling for Assembly elections in Haryana, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Jammu and Kashmir, with the update of the electoral rolls.

The EC has set July 1 the qualifying date for electoral roll update.

The EC said historic participation in Lok Sabha polls 2024 has prompted it to initiate preparations for J&K Assembly elections, starting with update of electoral rolls.

A letter has been sent to CEOs of Maharashtra, Haryana and Jharkhand

where polls are scheduled later this year.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had on Thursday too said that Assembly elections would be held soon in Jammu and Kashmir and plans are underway to restore statehood to the Union territory in the near future.

In December, the Supreme Court directed the poll panel to hold Assembly elections in J&K by September 30.

The term of the existing Legislative Assemblies in the three states are going to end on 03.11.2024, 26.11.2024 and 05.01.2025, respectively, and elections to these Assemblies are required to be conducted before the completion of their terms.

Besides, election to the

J&K Assembly also will be conducted for constituting a new house after delimitation of constituencies, the EC said on Friday.

The pre-special summary revision (SSR) activities will begin from June 25 to set up the polling stations at locations most convenient to electors in group housing societies, slums, city outgrowths and rural areas.

During SSR, the BLOs will conduct house to house surveys to enroll eligible citizens, make corrections in electoral roll entries and check for multiple entries, dead electors, permanently shifted electors.

With regard to J&K, the EC has decided to accept applications seeking allotment of “common sym-

bols” from registered unrecognised parties with immediate effect.

The Assembly polls in the UT will be the first since August 2019 after abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution and the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union territories.

The last Assembly elections in the erstwhile state of J&K were held in 2014. The state was brought under governor’s rule in the wake of the PDP-BJP coalition government collapse in June 2018.

J&K was split into the Union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh in August 2019, when its special status envisaged in Article 370 was also withdrawn by the Centre.

## Yoga India’s biggest gift to humanity: Shah

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI/AHMEDABAD, JUNE 21

Union home minister Amit Shah on Friday said India has given many things to the entire humankind, but yoga is its biggest gift to the world. He was speaking after performing yoga at a public garden in Ahmedabad this morning on the occasion of the 10th International Day of Yoga.

“This Yoga Day holds special significance, as it has completed ten years. After Narendra Modi became Prime Minister in 2014, he addressed the UN General Assembly and proposed that June 21 should be observed as Yoga Day. His proposal was eventually accepted after over 170 nations agreed to that proposal,” Mr Shah said.

Today, the entire world has not only accepted yoga, people are learning it and teaching it to others too, he said in his address. “India has given so much to humanity. But I personally feel that India’s biggest gift to the world is yoga, which is a medium to connect our inner strength with our soul. Yoga is a remedy to many illnesses prevalent at present. It is the only way to live a medicine-free life as envisioned by our saints,” the home minister said.

In Gujarat alone, nearly 1.25 crore people performed yoga, he added.



Children (clockwise from above) participate in a mass yoga session during the 10th International Yoga Day near Adiyogi Shiva statue in Bengaluru, Indian Army soldiers perform yoga at an undisclosed location and sportspersons perform yoga on the Yamuna river at Sonia Vihar in New Delhi on Friday.

## Rajnath joins jawans in yoga celebrations

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Friday led the armed forces in celebrating the 10th International Day of Yoga by performing various asanas and breathing exercises with soldiers at 1 Corps in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh.

Chief of the Army Staff General Manoj Pande and General Officer Commanding, 1 Corps Lt. Gen. Sanjay Mitra, along with 600 people, including senior officers, Agniveers, families and children

attended the event.

Speaking on the occasion, the defence minister termed the day as a matter of pride for the nation that the world is acknowledging and adopting this great cultural heritage of India with zeal. He credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi for taking Yoga to the world.

On this year’s Yoga Day theme—“Yoga for Self and Society”—Mr Singh said, “Yoga” and “Dhyan” are ancient Indian practices which connect a person with oneself, family and society.”



## SC turns down petition against dialogues of Hamare Baarah

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

Refusing to entertain a plea challenging certain alleged controversial dialogues and scenes in Annu Kapoor-starrer movie *Hamare Baarah*, the Supreme Court on Friday allowed the petitioner to withdraw the plea.

On June 19, the Bombay high court had allowed the release of the movie after its producers agreed to delete certain objectionable portions.

The counsel appearing for the petitioner told a vacation bench of Justices Vikram Nath and S.V.N. Bhatti, “By this writ petition, I have challenged certain controversial dialogues and scenes in the picture.”

The SC said, “The HC has examined it and thereafter, the HC has allowed the movie to be screened. Now, if you are still aggrieved, challenge it.”

The SC said a similar petition had come up before it last week. The Bombay HC has allowed the release of the movie and the petitioner can challenge that order.

The petitioner’s counsel said he had filed the plea before the Supreme Court on June 7, but it could not be listed earlier.

■ Maratha activist accuses govt of creating rift  
OBC activists refuse Shinde govt’s plea to withdraw fastAGE CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI, JUNE 21

A delegation of Maharashtra ministers on Thursday met the OBC activists Laxman Hake and Navnath Waghmare and urged them to end their fast. However, both activists refused to halt their protests till the government gave in writing that the existing OBC reservation will not be disturbed.

Meanwhile, Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange reiterated that the state government was deliberately creating a Maratha-OBC rift and vowed to continue his agitation for Maratha reservation from the OBC category.

The government delegation comprising ministers Atul Save, Uday Samant, Girish Mahajan and MLC Gopichand Padalkar met the OBC activists at the protest site at Wadigodri village in Jalna district. Newly-elected Shiv Sena MP Sandipani Bhumre was also present.

After meeting the activists, Mr Mahajan called up chief minister Eknath Shinde and deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis and made them talk to the protesting activists. However, Mr Hake and Mr Waghmare, who have been fasting since June 13, refused to halt their agitation and instead, demanded a written assurance from the government that the OBC

## Nadda may replace Goyal, become new leader of RS

10 seats vacant in Upper House after LS elections

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

BJP president and Union minister J.P. Nadda could be new Leader of House in Rajya Sabha, as Union minister Piyush Goyal is now a member of the Lok Sabha.

After the recently concluded Lok Sabha polls, the Upper House of Parliament has 10 vacancies after some of its members — also including Mr Goyal — RJD’s Kamakhya Prasad Tasa and Jyotiraditya Schindia, Congress’s K.C. Venugopal among others became members of the 18th Lok Sabha.

Parliament will commence from June 24, when the newly-elected members of the Lok Sabha will



J.P. Nadda

be administered oath by the Protem Speaker and BJP member Bhartruhari Mahtab. The election for the next Speaker is scheduled on June 26. Speculation is rife that Mr Nadda, who was included in Modi government, could continue with the party president post till the coming Assembly elections in Haryana, Maharashtra, J&K and Jharkhand are over. His term was extended earlier this year till the end of

■ **PARLIAMENT WILL** commence from June 24, when the newly-elected members of the Lok Sabha will be administered oath by the pro-tem Speaker and BJP member Bhartruhari Mahtab

June due to the LS polls. However, whether or not Mr Nadda’s term will get another extension will be decided by the parliamentary board.

Mr Nadda was named as the BJP working president in 2019 and the president in 2020, after his predecessor Amit Shah was included in the Modi government as the Union home minister.

He was also part of the first Modi government in 2014.

## C’garh approves excise policy sans licensing system

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY  
RAIPUR, JUNE 21

The new excise policy, declared by the Vishnu Deo Sai government, has done away with the licensing system, leading to elimination of the role of middlemen in the liquor trade in Chhattisgarh.

The state Cabinet, which met here on Thursday under the chairmanship of chief minister Vishnu Deo Sai, gave nod to the new excise policy, a press release issued by the state government said on Friday. “The new excise policy is a bold step taken by the chief minister to ensure a transparent and efficient liquor business in the state. It shows his commitment to rein in corruption and ensure transparency in liquor business”, an official spokesman here said.

Under the new excise policy, the government agency will directly procure liquor from the manufacturers for selling it to the consumers, thus putting an end to the role of middlemen in the trade, the spokesman said.

Absence of the role of the middlemen in the liquor trade will also help the consumers to have access to a wide variety of



Vishnu Deo Sai

liquor brands, he added. “As the government agency will buy and supply liquor directly from the manufacturers, consumers will not be restricted to buy liquor as per preferences of the license holders”, the press release said.

At the Cabinet meeting, the CM said that there were large scale irregularities in the previous system causing immense financial losses to the state and emphasised a clean and transparent business environment. “By taking control of the distribution process, we aim to streamline operations, reduce costs for manufacturers, and enhance consumer satisfaction”, he added.

The move comes after widespread complaints of corruption, spurious and illegal liquor sales and revenue losses amounting to crores of rupees under the previous government, the press release said.

## Yadav’s ₹1K subsidies on millet in MP

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
BHOPAL, JUNE 21

Chief minister Mohan Yadav on Friday unveiled the Centre’s millet promotion scheme in Madhya Pradesh on the sidelines of International Yoga Day celebrations.

He who led the state-level celebration of International Yoga Day here said that the coarse grains, the traditional food of India, are considered healthy.

Mr Yadav detailed subsidies given on the cultivation of millet crops by farmers under the scheme and said that an incentive of ₹1,000 per quintal of coarse grains produced by the farmers would be given to promote millet crops in Madhya Pradesh.

NORTHERN RAILWAY NOTICE INVITING TENDER	
Name of work and its location:-	30-Elect-32-T-2024-25-E3 Electrical work in connection with (i) Repairing and CAMC of VRF AC system installed at cafeteria, Gallery National Rail Museum Chanskayapuri, New Delhi. (ii) Comprehensive Annual Maintenance & operation of 2x35 TR air conditioning plant installed at NRM, New Delhi.
Approx cost of the works in :-	Rs. 25.03 lacs
Address of the office :-	Sr. Divl Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.
Earnest Money :-	Rs. 50100.00
Date & time of submission of tender :-	18.07.2024, 12.00 Hrs.
Opening of tender :-	18.07.2024, 12.00 Hrs.
Website & notice board :-	www.reps.gov.in & Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi. 1875/2024
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	



SHORT TAKES

98 Indian pilgrims lost lives during Haj

**New Delhi:** During the Haj pilgrimage this year so far, 98 Indians have died due to reasons that include natural causes, chronic illness and old age, the MEA said on Friday, adding that 187 Indians had died during last year's pilgrimage. At his weekly briefing, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, "Every year large number of pilgrims from India attend Haj, and some of them unfortunately pass away during the Haj Period. This year, 1,75,000 (1.75 lakh) Indian pilgrims visited Makkah (Saudi Arabia) for Haj. The Haj period is from May 9 to July 22. This year, till now, 98 deaths have been reported. The deaths have been due to natural causes, chronic illnesses, and old age. Six people died on the Day of Arafat and 4 were accident-related deaths. Last year, total deaths (of Indians) in the entire Haj period were 187.

17 Indians hurt in Kuwait fire stable

**New Delhi:** India on Friday said that there are currently a total of 17 Indians in "stable condition" receiving treatment in Kuwait hospitals after they were hurt in the horrific fire-accident in the Gulf nation that had left 45 Indians dead. New Delhi also said both the Kuwait government and the company (that the Indians worked for at the time of the fire-accident) had already announced aid. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, The Kuwaiti government and the firm have declared aid for the deceased and injured. The embassy is in touch with Kuwaiti and the company to work out the modalities". He said Kuwait had declared help of US\$ 15,000 (to the next of kin of each of the deceased) while the NBTC company had declared ₹8 lakhs to next of kin of deceased and injured to receive ₹2 lakhs.

'French scribe's case under consideration'

**New Delhi:** The government on Friday said the re-application by French journalist Sebastian Farcis for renewal of his work permit as a journalist was still under consideration. Mr Farcis has become the second French Journalist this year to leave India in unpleasant circumstances after a reported run-in with Indian authorities. Mr. Farcis, who said he worked as South Asia correspondent for *Radio France Internationale*, *Radio France* and the *Swiss and Belgian Public Radios* and left India earlier this week on June 17, alleged that on March 7 this year, the Union home ministry declined to renew his journalist permit but that he has now applied for a new work permit and hopes it will be accepted. Mr. Farcis had earlier on X said that "no reason has been provided to justify this work ban".

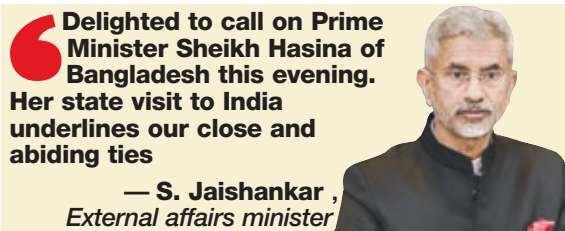
Hasina in India, to meet Modi today, sign pacts to boost ties

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina reached New Delhi on Friday evening on a two-day state visit and will hold talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday after which the two nations are expected to ink several pacts to further boost bilateral ties. External affairs minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar called on Ms Hasina on Friday evening soon after her arrival in the Capital.

The EAM said later, "Delighted to call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh this evening. Her state visit to India underlines our close and abiding ties. Appreciate her guidance on the further development of our special partnership."

MEA spokesperson



Randhir Jaiswal said, "PM Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh arrived in New Delhi on a state visit to India. She was warmly welcomed by minister of state for external affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh at the airport."

"Bangladesh is a key partner and trusted neighbour of India. The visit will give a major boost to this celebrated bilateral partnership."

Observers point out that this comes at a time when China has been trying to increase its influence in South Asia.

So far as economic and

trade ties are concerned, Bangladesh is India's biggest trade partner in South Asia and India is the second biggest trade partner of Bangladesh in Asia. India is Bangladesh's largest export destination in Asia, with approx US\$ two billion of Bangladeshi exports to India in the Financial Year (FY) 2022-23.

Regarding defence cooperation, the two countries share 4096.7 km of border; the longest land boundary that India shares with any of its neighbours. Experts say there is active coopera-

tion between various agencies of both countries working together to cooperate on police matters, anti-corruption activities and combat the issues of illicit drug trafficking, fake currency, human trafficking, among others. The two countries engage in regular bilateral defence interactions and engagements.

Cooperation in power and energy sector has become one of the crucial pillars of India-Bangladesh relations. Bangladesh is currently importing 1160 MW of power from India.

India-Bangladesh friendship pipeline between both countries for carriage of high speed diesel from India into Bangladesh was inaugurated by both PMs in March last year. Further, ONGC Videsh Ltd. (OVL), in a consortium with Oil India Limited, is present in offshore oil exploration.



Married women perform rituals on 'Vat Savitri Puja' festival in Sangli on Friday. — PTI

Unprofessional reporting: MEA on Oz documentary about Indian govt

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

India on Friday lambasted an Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) documentary — that had allegedly said that a few Indian spies were expelled by Australia four years ago — and termed it as "containing blatant untruths, biased and reflects unprofessional reporting", adding, that the documentary "appears to serve a particular agenda to malign India".

At his weekly briefing on Friday, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal also said India "obviously opposes any such attempts to condone, justify and even glorify terrorism".

The ABC had earlier

professionally removed them". The ABC also claimed in its reports that Australian citizens of Indian origin who were pro-Khalistan elements were being threatened

reported that Australia was "unhappy with India's spy operations" in the country in 2020 and that "at least four (Indian) intelligence officers were asked to leave Australia", with "some posing as diplomats in India's high commission".

The ABC had reported that in 2021, Australia's then intelligence chief Mike Burgess, without naming India, had said his agency had investigated a "nest of spies" and that Australia had "confronted the foreign spies, and quietly and

professionally removed them".

The ABC also claimed in its reports that Australian citizens of Indian origin who were pro-Khalistan elements were being threatened.

The ABC had also reported that the "expulsions were done secretly" and that the alleged Indian intelligence officials "left one by one".

It also claimed that "Indian intelligence officers were trying to gain access to sensitive defence technology and airport security protocols" and that "they were targeting former and current politicians as well as a state police service" while also being "accused of monitoring the Indian Australian community".

Hooch toll continues to rise, methanol suppliers arrested

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR and D. SEKAR  
CHENNAI, JUNE 21:

The toll in the Kallakurichi hooch tragedy touched 49 on Friday as more people died in various hospitals without responding to treatment and some of them lost their eyesight on Friday even as the CB-CID, to whom the investigation was entrusted to by chief minister M.K. Stalin on Thursday, started their work by arresting a few persons responsible for the supply of methanol to the bootleggers.

CB-CID personnel were interrogating Muthu, who was arrested from Chennai for supplying methanol to bootleggers, and few others connected with him at the Kachirapalayam police station in Villupuram district. Ten teams have been formed by the CB-CID that started its investigation without delay and is figuring out how the methanol came into the picture. Another methane seller Madhesh is also reported to be questioned

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A pall of gloom descended on the premises of various government hospitals in Kallakurichi, Puducherry JIPMER, Salem and Cuddalore as anxious relatives thronged the places, keen to know about the health condition of those admitted, while political leaders continued to visit Kallakurichi to console the families of the victims and even convey their

views on the tragedy to waiting media persons.

VCK general secretary Thol Thirumavalavan and PMK president Anbumani Ramadoss were among the prominent persons who called on the families of victims on Friday. While Thirumavalavan started to answer the questions of media persons, a woman, calling herself a journalist, raised a question as to what the four MLAs of his party did in the Assembly regarding the tragedy.

Anbumani Ramadoss, who is a medical doctor by qualification, pointed out that those admitted to hospitals had not been given the antidote that would speed up the recovery process. Instead the hospitals were treating them with ethanol, which was okay, he said and warned that death can visit those suffering from methanol poisoning even after two weeks.

'Krishna statue found during Bhojshala dig'

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY  
BHOPAL, JUNE 21

In the fresh finding in the survey of the controversial Bhojshala temple-Kamal Maula mosque complex in Dhar district in Madhya Pradesh, three 'archaeological remains' including an idol of Lord Krishna was found, an activist of a Hindu outfit said on Friday.

Gopal Sharma who was present during the survey of the 13th century monument by ASI as one of the representatives of the Hindu side, told that 3 remains related to Hindu religion were found at the north-east side of the Bhojshala temple during excavation by the ASI on Thursday.

"Three archaeological remains were found during excavation by ASI in the north-east side of the complex on Thursday. They were found barely five feet from the sanctum sanctorum of the Bhojshala temple",

he said. The three fresh findings found in the ASI-protected monument complex included one granite idol of Lord Krishna measuring 1.5 ft long and 0.5ft wide, one idol of a pair of Yakshas (Hindu mythological characters) measuring around one foot and a piece of a pillar. Mr Sharma, coordinator of Bhojshala Mukti Yagna, said.

As per him, the idol of Krishna was in the perfect shape while one of the two Yakshas carved on a hematite stone was found to be damaged.

"ASI has taken in its possession the three remains for preservation", he added. As per Mr Sharma, on June nine, more than 79 "archaeological remains" including idols of Hindu gods such as Ganesh, Bhairava, Mahisasur mardhan, Hanuman and Brahma were recovered during the survey of the complex by ASI.

Dalai revered religious leader: India after US delegation meet

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

In what is being seen as a firm message to China which recently lashed out at the Dalai Lama soon after a US congressional delegation met him earlier this week in Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh, India on Friday reiterated that it has always regarded the Dalai Lama as a "revered religious leader" who is "deeply respected by the people of India".

At his weekly briefing on Friday, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, "A seven-member US Congress delegation paid a visit to India from 16-20 June 2024. The bi-partisan delegation was led by Rep. Michael McCaul, chairman of House foreign affairs committee. They visited Dharamshala on 18-19 June. The CODEL also called on PM Narendra Modi and interacted with EAM.

Arvind Kejriwal to remain in Tihar

Continued from Page 1  
failed to give any direct evidence against the applicant in respect of the proceeds of crime."

The judge said: "This is also noticeable that ED is silent about the facts as to how the proceeds of crime have been utilised in Assembly elections in Goa by the AAP as, admittedly, after about two years, the bigger portion of the alleged amount remains to be traced out."

At the high court, additional solicitor-general S.V. Raju, representing the ED, contended that the trial court's order was "perverse", "one-sided" and "wrong-sided" and that the findings were based on irrelevant facts. The relevant facts, he claimed, were not considered by the special judge.

Mr Raju said: "Material facts were not considered by the trial court. There cannot be a better case for the cancellation of bail than this one. There cannot be greater perversity than this." Seeking a stay on the trial court's order, the ASG contended that the ED was not given adequate opportunity to argue its case.

The plea for stay was opposed by Mr Kejriwal's lawyers Abhishek Singhvi and Vikram Chaudhary. They argued that Article 21 (protection of life and per-

sonal liberty) of the Constitution does not exist for ED, for which the liberty of a person figures low in priority.

Mr Singhvi said the ED argued for 3 hours and 45 minutes before the trial judge.

"This matter lasted for five hours (before the trial court). Nearly 3 hours 45 minutes were taken by Mr Raju and then the trial judge is faulted because she does not repeat every comma and full stop," he said.

Countering Mr Raju's arguments, Mr Singhvi said, "He (the ASJ) says that the order is perverse and therefore limited to one small aspect. Like Alice in Wonderland, ED has its own understanding of perversity."

After the bail order was passed, Mr Raju told the high court that the ED lawyers urged the trial court to keep its order in abeyance for 48 hours to enable them to approach superior courts, but the prayer was not considered.

"I was not allowed to argue fully. I was not given the adequate time of 2-3 days to file written submissions. This is not done. On merit, I have an excellent case. The trial court said that finish off in half-an-hour as it wanted to deliver the judgment. It did not give us full opportunity to argue the

case," Mr Raju contended, adding, "I am making the allegations with full seriousness."

The ASJ argued that Section 45 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act says an opportunity must be granted to the public prosecutor to present his case, but the same was not allowed. He asserted that the trial court did not even look at his reply on the ground that it was bulky and claimed that the trial court came to the conclusion that there was malafide on the ED's part after considering wrong facts and wrong dates.

Mr Raju contended that the trial court has given findings that are contrary to those of the high court while upholding Mr Kejriwal's arrest. "If irrelevant facts are considered, that itself is a reason for the cancellation of bail. There is evidence that Mr Kejriwal demanded ₹100 crores, but it was not considered by the trial court," he argued.

"End-to-end money trail was given by us," he asserted, adding that proceeds of the crime were utilised in the Goa Assembly poll campaign by the AAP.

He said: "We have made the AAP an accused in the money laundering case and the offences thus are covered by Section 70 of the PMLA,

which deals with companies. The ED had likened the AAP to a company and Mr Kejriwal its director."

Mr Singhvi urged the court not to stay Mr Kejriwal's bail order and said it may send him back to jail later if it finds overwhelming and cogent circumstances.

He also questioned the probe agency's "unfortunate" attempt to malign the judge (by claiming she did not give the ED enough time to argue and did not consider material evidence).

"There is a misconception about what a bail hearing should be like. Just because there is political antagonism involved and if all the commas etc are not dealt with by the judge, it gives Mr Raju the right to malign the judge. This whole approach is deplorable and sad. It should never have come from a government authority," Mr Singhvi argued.

Mr Chaudhary submitted that Mr Kejriwal had surrendered to the jail authorities on the expiry of the interim bail period, which showed his bona fide conduct.

"If he is out with conditions imposed by the court, what is the prejudice? He is not a terrorist that he will harm society if he is let out. What will happen if the chief minister of the state comes out on bail?" he argued.

SC refuses to stay re-test of Neet-UG

Continued from Page 1  
Under fire over the lapses in the conduct of NEET and UGC-NET, the NTA, however, is gearing up to conduct on Sunday a retest for the medical entrance exam for 1,563 candidates who were earlier awarded grace marks to make up for the loss of time at six centres after the apex court turned down pleas against retest.

Facing widespread protests, Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan reportedly skipped Delhi University's Yoga Day event, where students held a protest carrying black flags and demanding his resignation and scrapping of NTA.

According to university officials, Mr Pradhan, who was the chief guest for the Yoga Day event, scheduled to begin at 6 am could not attend it due to "some urgent work". The AISA, however, claimed that the minister did not attend the event at the North Campus because of the protests.

A statement issued by the association read: "In response to the sheer audacity of Mr Pradhan to even think of coming to DU while he and his NTA have jeopardised the future of students, AISA activists, along with stu-

dents of Delhi University, raised black flags and protested against his presence in the university."

In solidarity with the agitating students, the Congress also held protests across the country. The party said it will intensify protests till irregularities and corruption in the competitive exams were totally wiped out.

Launching a scathing attack on the Centre, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said the issue has become a national problem under the BJP rule, which has "ruined the future" of crores of youth in the country.

In the Supreme Court, a vacation bench of Justices Vikram Nath and S.V.N. Bhatti said there is a possibility that even the whole exam can be set aside and should therefore await the final outcome. While hearing a clutch of petitions, Justice Nath said, "Nothing will happen now. Everything can be set aside. When there is a chance of setting aside the May 5 main examination, where is this question of (re-test for) 1,563 candidates?"

The counsel for the petitioners sought a stay on the re-test, contending that the NTA had withheld

AS PER university officials, Mr Pradhan, who was the chief guest for the Yoga Day event, scheduled to begin at 6 am could not attend it due to "some urgent work". The AISA, however, claimed that the minister did not attend the event at the North Campus because of the protests.

material information from the court as 753 out of 1,563 candidates had already failed. "They (candidates appearing for the re-test) are thereby getting a second shot at the examinations," the counsel said, adding that it was unjust and unreasonable given that there are qualified candidates who would like to reappear. The candidates reappearing will undergo the stress of taking the examination, the lawyer contended.

Questioning the submission, Justice Nath said, "You worried about them or are you worried about the other candidates or not being allowed to give the examination?"

"Your argument is that some candidates who have failed are being allowed to take the re-test. And now you are saying that those

who are going to appear in the second examination are under stress. There are completely contradictory arguments you are making," Justice Nath said.

The top court issued notices to the NTA, the Centre and others on a petition seeking cancellation of the exam over alleged irregularities in holding it on May 5 and posted the matter for hearing on July 8 along with other pending pleas alleging irregularities in the conduct of the medical entrance.

The counsel appearing for the petitioners urged the bench that the counselling process may be paused for two days as the top court is scheduled to hear all these pleas on July 8.

"I am not seeking any stay on counselling. I am only praying that the counselling that is scheduled to be held on July 6 may be paused for two days only. The reason being that the main matter is listed on July 8," the lawyer argued. "To this, the bench said: "We have been hearing the same statement. Don't think otherwise for interrupting you. Counselling does not mean open and shut. It is a process. That process commences on July 6."



THE ASIAN AGE

22 JUNE 2024

Doubts on exam integrity dampen dismal job scene

Mr Narendra Modi, who is now into his third term as the nation's Prime Minister, often reminds his fellow citizens as well as world leaders about the demographic dividend India is about to harvest in the near future. He has statistics on his side — more than half of India's population is aged below 30, that is, about 70 crore people are ready to be in the service of the nation, awaiting their turn. This is an advantage no other country can claim as its own.

But that's only one side of the story. The other, darker, side is that India is passing through a time when unemployment is at its peak in terms of absolute numbers.

While politicians bandy about figures proclaiming fast growth of the economy, economists are worried about growth in joblessness and surging numbers of the educated unemployed. Surveys had predicted that unemployment would be one of the key issues in the last general election, and the results did stop the BJP from bagging a comfortable majority.

It is in this context that the news reports — of irregularities in competitive examinations conducted — explode in the face of the nation. It was in February this year the Uttar Pradesh government was forced to cancel the recruitment examination for police constables for which 43 lakh appeared. This was after allegations that the question papers were available for a price, ranging from ₹50,000 to ₹2 lakh.

The leak of question papers of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance test (Neet-UG) conducted for admissions into undergraduate medical courses is an event of a scale that is unheard of. So much so that even a shocked Supreme Court had to comment that the integrity of the examination has been compromised. The gravity of the situation can be gauged only when we consider the fact that it was introduced in 2013 to do away with ad hoc mechanisms and arbitrariness in medial admissions and introduce transparency instead.

The cancelling of the National Eligibility Test (NET) for junior research fellowship and teacher qualification has now followed the Neet-UG fiasco. The government continues to be in denial mode saying there is no systemic issue with the National Testing Agency and no proof of wrongdoing yet. However, reports have started appearing from various parts of the country that there is an active market selling question papers.

The consistent failure on the part of the government, which gloats about its demographic dividend, to uphold transparency in the conduct of key examinations for which lakhs of hardworking youth apply is unsettling and difficult to stomach. The government must realise that grandstanding does not offer an alternative to transparency nor does glib talk replace jobs. Instead of using the mass of young people as an opportunity to fuel the nation's growth, it is making its very survival a challenge for it. This is unconscionable.

It will be wrong for those in power to assume that the youth will be content with its pontificating. What if they are heading towards "a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual" as Martin Luther King Jr has presaged?

Fresh twist in Kejriwal drama

There is no immunity from arrest for the chief minister of a state. However, once Arvind Kejriwal was granted regular bail by the trial court which had placed him in judicial custody in the first place, it would have stood to reason that he be enlarged while being answerable to the proceedings relating to the money laundering charges against him and his party.

The drama over Arvind Kejriwal, who defied summons from the Enforcement Directorate for months on end, appears to be endless. He alone was able to secure interim bail on the grounds that he had to canvass for votes in the general election. It is another matter that the public displayed no sympathy for his predicament in his home base of Delhi and voted against his party and its alliance partner in the Lok Sabha polls.

It would appear the trial court judge had realms to say of the way the case is being handled by the prosecutors and yet the ED, on a mission to keep the likes of Kejriwal and former Delhi deputy CM Manish Sisodia in jail for as long as possible, approached the Delhi high court to hold the bail in abeyance.

The ends of justice would be served best were this case to be taken to its logical and just conclusion and the perpetrators of high financial crimes and graft be brought to book, that is if they are guilty. If proved innocent — the onus of such stringent laws as PMLA and PCA is on the defendant to prove his innocence — they are free to continue to operate as the people's representatives.

Instead of pursuing a speedy legal route to prosecution, the government and its Central investigating agencies seem bent on using the process as punishment and keep those charged incarcerated for long periods of time. Considering the speed of the justice delivery system in India, its delays should not be used to punish those charged. Let them be at liberty until their case concludes.

A long history of arrests points to political motivation more than actual prosecution of those in power who do, however, use liquor licences as a convenient vehicle for funds, both official revenue for the government and illegal gratification for parties and individuals. This is a national embarrassment. The point is whether or not Mr Kejriwal is directly guilty of raising funds through corruption.

THE ASIAN AGE

KAUSHIK MITTER

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Farrukh Dhondy  
Cabbages & Kings



"Oh... reason not the need  
Our wants are the lyric  
On what the senses feed  
All victories are Pyrrhic!  
Don't reason with illusion  
Deception of the sight  
Waking and dream in fusion  
The gifts of day and night?"

— From *The Lota Rota*, by Bachchoo

AN OPEN LETTER

Dear Narendrajii,

Pranam! Congratulations on winning a third term in the largest democracy in the world. This thrice-blessed factor puts you in historical parallel with Jawaharlal Nehru.

In the ithihaas that succeeding generations will read, our leaders will not just be remembered for their longevity in office. They will be judged by what they did while there.

Mention Henry VIII, for instance, and the name conjures up a vision of six wives with divorces and a couple of beheadings. Anything else? Yes, converting Britain to Protestantism and the genocide of monks and Catholics. Not positive.

Think then of Herr Hitler, who persecuted Jews, millions of them ordinary working-class Jews, in Germany, Poland and wherever his Nazi armies spread their venom. "Persecution" is a sort of excuse word. He oversaw their execution in the cruellest concentration camps. Six million?

I am sure, Narendrajii, you must be wondering why I begin this open letter to you with these examples of the negative or horrific memories that humanity inherits through historical records.

History gets revised. For centuries that pagan vandal, Alexander of Macedonia, was known as "Alexander the Great!" Only recently have historians realised that that there was no "greatness" attached to plundering and destroying civilisations like the Persian Empire and sacking Persepolis. Alexander the Brute?

But let me, Narendrajii, get to the point. I am absolutely confident that you are preoccupied with the governance of our great Bharat Mata, but perhaps you occasionally give some thoughtful space, now that you are bound to go down in India's history as a thrice-elected PM, to how history will record your tenure.

You are undoubtedly familiar with the names and works of Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Pablo Neruda. They were both great Nobel Prize-winning writers and both of them were brutally persecuted by the dictatorial regimes of Russia and of Chile — the nations some of whose governmental policies they opposed.

These are the martyrs of literature and they will long be remembered for being such, after Videla and Pinochet who exiled and murdered Neruda will be remembered for doing only that. Stalin, who persecuted Solzhenitsyn, will remain, like Hitler, a poisonous villain of history.

Being something of an undistinguished writer myself, I am, you will understand, on the side of Solzhenitsyn and of Neruda. I also know, that putting pen to paper, or fingers to computer keys, may produce analytically critical works, but I truly wonder in my waking hours — and occasionally in my dreams — whether writing ever really has a determining political effect.

For instance, would anything that Solzhenitsyn wrote have caused the overthrow of the Soviet regime? Is the pen really able to undermine the sword, the handcuff and the starvation in Siberia?

Which brings me, Sirji, to an alarming piece of news I came across recently. This is the fact that the Indian writer of some renown, Arundhati Roy, is being investigated under some law about subversive writings 15 years ago, and will now possibly be arrested and tried and face a sentence of imprisonment. What Ms Roy said all those years ago was to do with oppression in Kashmir to which she was, as any civilised person should be, opposed.

Of course, in the case of Kashmir and even of India, religion should never be the force which determines political allegiance. That, in my humble opinion, Modi Sahib, belongs to the medieval era and to states that call themselves this-or-that religious "republic". What you think of the "Islamic Republic" next door is public knowledge.

Narendrajii, perhaps you are unaware of this vic-

timisation of Ms Roy who is universally known for her books and opinions. The point of this letter is to urge you to immediately intervene in this case and ensure that Ms Roy is free from any shadow of persecution and is free to say what she wants in word and print within democratic laws.

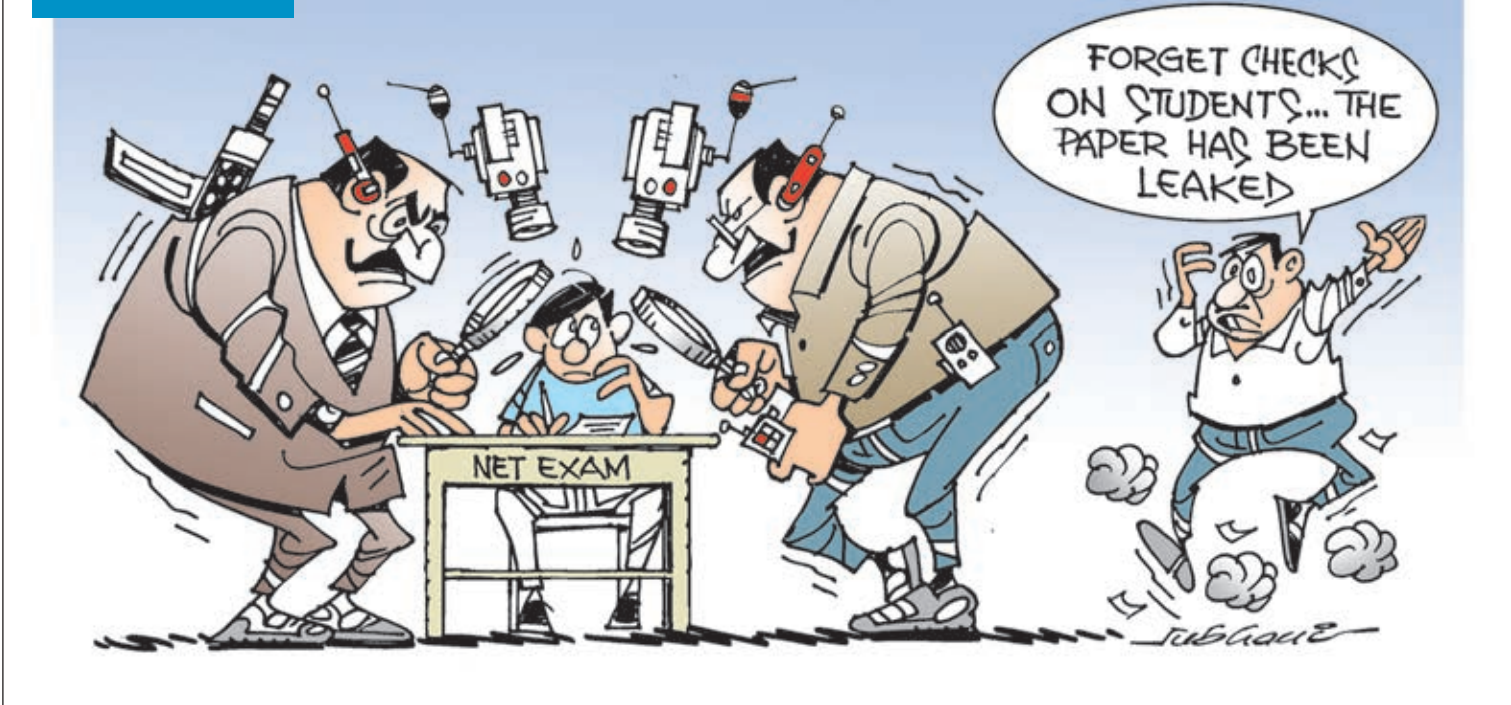
By this I mean that any person who spreads messages of hatred or instigation to attack minorities should surely be prosecuted under your, now historically notable, "third term" regime. My reading of the opinion that Ms Roy seems to be being held to account for does not spread hatred or any instigation to violence. It's an opinion with which you — or even I — may profoundly disagree.

But it should be allowed as "free speech". The international reputation of India matters deeply to me as I am sure it does to you. In this year of significant worldwide elections, with those of the UK and the United States pending, history has to record they are, as the cliché goes, "free and fair".

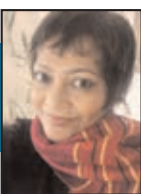
The election in Bharat clearly has been. India has set the tone that even US presidential candidate Donald Trump, much against his obvious inclinations, can't violate.

Mukhya Mantriji, it is clear to me that the persecution on any level of writers and journalists, in immediate view that of Ms Roy, will certainly detract from the reputation of our democracy and will cast a dark blot on our history. I implore you to stop it. Jai Hind!  
Farrukh Dhondy

Subhani



India's scorching heat divide rising, act now



Patralekha Chatterjee

Dev 360

It took a thief in Uttar Pradesh to expose India's scorching heat divide. On an intensely hot day in early June, a man broke into a locked house in Lucknow's Indira-nagar neighbourhood, rummaged through the premises, and picked up valuables. Then, he spotted an air-conditioner. He switched it on, found a snug cushion, lay down, and fell asleep. When the police arrived, the thief was napping. The story generated much mirth in India's scalding summer.

No one is laughing any more. Especially in Delhi/NCR and the vast swathes of the country reeling under a prolonged heat wave. Temperatures are rising above 46 degrees across much of north India, including in UP, Uttarakhand, Bihar and Jharkhand. At least 50 people have died in the current heatwave in the Delhi region, over 50 in UP and Odisha and at least 22 in Bihar. Arguably, intense heat is not unique to India. In the time of climate change, clearly, erratic, and extreme weather are the new norms. Heat stress is affecting people across the world.

But what needs to be sledgehammered is that in many countries, including India, policy response to extreme heat must factor in equity. Extreme heat affects us all, but not equally. That India is a deeply unequal country is no secret. But prolonged heatwaves, including the current one, brutally expose India's deep social, cultural, and economic fault lines.

The Heatwave Havoc report, a new study by Greenpeace India and National Hawkers' Federation, throws up valuable insights on how extreme heat impacts street vendors in Delhi, focusing on risks to health, livelihood challenges and adaptation strategies. According to the report, 49.27 per cent of street vendor respondents

experienced a loss of income during heatwaves, with 80.08 per cent of them acknowledging a dip in the number of customers. 50.86 per cent of interviewees also said they face higher financial burdens due to additional household expenses with an average extra expenditure of Rs 4,896.52 during months of extreme heat.

Extreme heat inflames gender inequalities in health and income, according to recent research by US-based Adrienne Arsht-Rockefeller Foundation Resilience Centre (Arsht-Rock) in three countries — India, Nigeria, and the United States — examining current and projected conditions by 2050.

"Women lose 19 per cent of their paid working hours to heat, costing the Indian economy 0.8 per cent of its GDP, or roughly \$67 billion annually," says the report.

As the number of days of intense heat steadily rise, there can be no real sustainable solution unless we acknowledge this emerging thermal divide between those who can afford or have access to air-conditioned environments and can live and work there a major part of the day, and those who cannot, and must necessarily deal with intense heat for long stretches or risk reduced earnings. The latter make up the bulk of India's informal sector — the mainstay of the Indian economy. Most construction workers, farmers, street vendors, delivery boys, domestic helpers and many others do not have the option of working from home; many live in homes that are not air-cooled. This does not take away from the deep discomfort that everyone, rich and poor, are grappling with. But the degree matters. Sometimes it is a matter of life and death.

The intensity of the heat has renewed discussions on many critical issues, such as accurate data on heat-

As the number of days of heat steadily rise, there can be no sustainable solution unless we acknowledge this emerging thermal divide between those who can afford air-cooled environments and those who cannot

related deaths. Many experts feel the official tally is an underestimate though India now has official guidelines which specifically state that a death must be considered heat-related, even if the patient has pre-existing health conditions which are aggravated by extreme temperatures.

But guidelines are only a starting point. There are many issues which are part of the Indian reality and which must be addressed, alongside the structural problems in classifying heat-related deaths. For example, medical doctors must be trained across the country to diagnose the impact of extreme heat on the body, as Aditya Valiathan Pillai, a fellow at Sustainable Futures Collaborative, points out.

Hospitals must be equipped to deal with heat-related illnesses. Currently, many hospitals in places reeling under extreme heat do not even have enough thermometers to check temperatures of patients with heat strokes, as recent ground reports have pointed out.

Then, one needs to factor in deaths that take place outside the hospital. One way to deal with the situation is to track all-cause mortality during stretches of heatwaves with available data from the past to understand the excess mortality that may have been contributed by intense heat, as Pillai and other scholars suggest. This was done in the case of the May 2010 heat wave in Ahmedabad, which revealed 1,344 excess deaths and led to India's first heat action plan (HAP) in 2013. Since then, many Indian states and cities have come up with their own HAPs. But HAPs are quite often under-funded and not enforced.

In the short term, inevi-

tably, whoever can afford will rush to buy an air-conditioner or an air cooler depending on the terrain, just to survive, or fall very sick. This will only add to the problem, especially in congested cities where the "urban heat island" effect plays out. "Urban heat islands" occur when cities replace natural land cover with dense concentrations of pavement, buildings, and other surfaces that absorb and retain heat.

Extreme heat can destroy human lives and a country's aspirations.

"Because of its large population, India is in absolute terms expected to lose the equivalent of 34 million full-time jobs in 2030 because of heat stress. Although most of the impact in India will be felt in the agricultural sector, more and more working hours are expected to be lost in the construction sector, where heat stress affects both male and female workers," noted a 2019 International Labour Organisation report.

There are plenty of forecasts about the impact of extreme heat on the Indian economy but what is also required, says Pillai, is the granular, hyper-local picture which includes local scientific assessment of heat, localised research which tells you what heat is doing to a specific area in every way. This also means awareness about extreme heat must percolate down to the local administration.

Vulnerability assessments must not only factor in terrain or geography but also the sectors, occupations, and population groups most affected by extreme heat, adds Pillai.

India's heat strategy must tackle core issues like how India's cities are designed, how much greenery is maintained, how society is organised. Who lives, who dies and who falls sick will depend greatly on who has access to regular supply of electricity, to cooling devices and clean water in the coming years. These aren't abstract issues any more.

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

LETTERS

WATERED DOWN

For the past two weeks, around 2.8 million Delhi residents have been suffering from a severe water crisis. In a city like Delhi, the capital of India, which has the residences of the Prime Minister and the President, the public is craving every drop of water. Such a situation is enough to tarnish the country's reputation, despite our desire to see India in a leading position. While every government will eventually come to an end, we patriots must live with pride and be able to say, "I belong to India." It is the government's responsibility to promptly address such crises so that this pride is not watered down.

Jakir Hussain  
Kanpur

MSP HIKE HELPS

THE RECENT increase in Minimum Support Price for several kharif crops in India is expected to have both positive and negative effects. On the positive side, the MSP hikes are likely to spur nascent demand recovery in rural areas, which saw higher inflation than urban areas in FY23, thus ensuring remunerative prices to farmers and encouraging crop diversification. Additionally, higher MSPs boost farmer incomes, leading to increased disposable income and higher sales of consumer goods, vehicles, tractors and fertilisers. However, these hikes could lead to inflationary pressures, raising overall price levels in the economy. Balancing these factors is crucial.

Amarjeet Kumar  
Hazariabagh

POLLS NOT SO FAIR

AS MANY AS 33 polling personnel died from heat stroke in Uttar Pradesh during the seventh phase of the Lok Sabha election on June 1. It is necessary to find out if adequate protective measures like continuous supply of drinking water and ORS, sufficient fans, and clean toilets were provided in all DC/RC and polling booths in Uttar Pradesh. If it is found that some of these essential things were compromised then the authorities should explain the reason for their negligence which has proved criminal and which is tantamount to human right violations.

Sujit De  
Kolkata



## SHORT TAKES

## ONE DEAD DURING TAX PROTESTS IN KENYAN CAPITAL

**Nairobi, June 21:** A man died on the sidelines of mass demonstrations by Kenyan youth against proposed tax hikes, police said on Friday, with protesters calling for a national strike.

A police watchdog said it was investigating allegations that the man was shot by police.

Led largely by young Kenyans who livestreamed the demonstrations, the rallies began in Nairobi on Tuesday before spreading nationwide, with protesters on Friday sharing a poster calling for a national strike on June 25.

## U.S. BAN ON GUNS TO DOMESTIC ABUSERS UPHELD

**Washington, June 21:** The US Supreme Court on Friday upheld a federal law prohibiting domestic abusers from possessing a firearm, the latest legal ruling in the country's fierce battle over gun rights. It was the first gun case to come before the court — where conservatives hold a 6-3 majority — since a major decision issued in 2022 loosening gun restrictions.

"When an individual has been found to pose a credible threat...that individual may be temporarily disarmed," Chief Justice John Roberts wrote.

## MALAYSIAN BEACHES HIT BY S'PORE OIL SPILL

**Kuala Lumpur, June 21:** An oil spill off Singapore has spread to beaches in southern Malaysia, a government official said on Friday, with clean-up operations underway.

Around 25 people were involved in the clean-up of two beaches spanning one kilometre (0.6 miles) in southern Johor state, local government official Ling Tian Soon said.

"Work began today and we hope to complete the task tomorrow. From our observation, marine life or fishermen activities have not been affected," he said.

## TOP GERMAN MIN. IN CHINA TO END TARIFF ROW

**Frankfurt, June 21:** Germany's vice chancellor Robert Habeck will arrive in Beijing on Friday on a last-ditch mission to avoid a damaging trade war with China after the EU threatened to slap additional tariffs on electric cars.

If a compromise is not reached between Brussels and Beijing, the European Commission will impose extra tariffs of up to 38 per cent on Chinese electric vehicles it says have benefitted from unfair subsidies. The higher tariffs would be imposed provisionally, before becoming definitive in November.

## INDIAN DUMPED TO DIE ON ROAD AFTER MISHAP

**London/Rome, June 21:** A 31-year-old Indian casual worker in Italy has died tragically after he was dumped on the road without medical assistance by his employer after his arm was severed by heavy farm machinery, an incident that has shocked the country.

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said Satnam 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 this barbarity will be punished harshly," she said.

## FARM FIRE IN S-E TURKEY LEAVES AT LEAST 11 DEAD

**Ankara, June 21:** A fire that apparently started in crop stubble spread through settlements in southeast Turkey overnight, killing 11 people and leaving dozens of others requiring medical treatment, officials said on Friday.

In neighboring Greece, authorities evacuated several villages south of Athens and in the southern Peloponnese region because of wildfires.

The blaze in Turkey broke out in an area between the provinces of Diyarbakir and Mardin. Fanned by winds, it moved quickly through the villages of Koksalan, Yazcicegi and Bagacik.

## Israel bombs Gaza as Lebanon gets involved

Experts remain divided on prospect of a wider M-E war

**Jerusalem, June 21:** Israel bombed Gaza on Friday as exchanges of fire and threats over the Lebanon border raised fears of a wider war.

Five municipal workers died "during an Israeli bombing" of a garage in Gaza City, said Mahmud Basal, spokesman for the civil defence agency in the Hamas-ruled Palestinian territory. In southern Gaza, AFP TV captured an overnight strike on a residential district of Khan Yunis city. A ball of fire and sparks flared, followed by grey smoke before residents inspected damage in the dusty darkness. Just before midnight Thursday, Israel's army said it had "successfully intercepted a suspicious aerial target that crossed from Lebanon".

Early Friday, Lebanese official media reported fresh Israeli strikes in the country's south. This came after Lebanon's powerful Hezbollah movement said it fired dozens of rockets at Israeli barracks in northern Israel on Thursday in retaliation for a deadly air strike in south Lebanon.

One of the group's operatives was killed in that strike, Israel said.

Hezbollah claimed several other attacks on Thursday.

The Israeli military said its jets had struck Hezbollah sites and had fired artillery "to remove threats in multiple areas in southern Lebanon".

Experts are divided on the prospect of a wider war, almost nine months into Israel's campaign to eradicate Iran-backed



Palestinians gather at the edge of a crater after an Israeli airstrike in an area where displaced people are sheltered at, in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip on Friday. — AP

## ARMENIA OFFICIALLY RECOGNISES PALESTINIAN STATE

ARMENIA has officially recognised a Palestinian state, the Armenian foreign ministry said on Friday. Spain, Ireland and Norway are among Western countries to have done the same recently.



A DAILY "PAUSE" the Israeli military declared in Gaza over the weekend to facilitate aid flows has not resulted in increased deliveries of desperately needed aid, the UN's health agency in Palestine said on Friday.



German foreign minister Annalena Baerbock will visit the Middle East next week. She is expected to hold talks with Palestinian prime minister Mohammed Mustafa in Ramallah, in the occupied West Bank.



Lebanon must not turn into "another Gaza" because of the fighting between Israel and Hezbollah, UN S-G A. Guterres said.

Hezbollah's ally Hamas, the Palestinian militant group in Gaza.

Exchanges between Hezbollah and Israel have escalated in recent weeks

and the Israeli military said Tuesday that plans for an offensive in Lebanon "were approved and validated".

Hezbollah chief Hassan

Nasrallah said "no place" in Israel would "be spared our rockets" in a war, and also threatened nearby European Union member Cyprus. — AFP

## Tourist hanged in public for burning Quran in Pak

**Peshawar, June 21:** An enraged mob in the picturesque Pakistani town of Swat has gunned down a tourist, dragged him through the town and later hanged him in full public view for allegedly committing desecration of the Quran.

The incident happened on Thursday night when Muhammad Ismail, a resident of Sialkot in Punjab province, was visiting the northwestern Pakistan hill resort town of Swat and was accused of hav-

ing burnt the pages of Islam's holy book in Madyan tehsil of Swat district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

District police officer, Swat, Zahidullah said that initially the police had taken Ismail in custody and locked him up in the police station when the alleged desecration incident was reported.

However, the incident was announced from mosques through loudspeakers in the market, prompting thousands of

people to gather outside the police station.

Soon after, the angry mob demanded that the police hand over the suspect to them.

On refusal, a fierce exchange of fire took place between the local people and the police in which eight persons were injured, *The Express Tribune* newspaper reported.

After that the mob torched the police station, forcing the cops on duty to flee for their lives. — PTI

## Friday prayer in Iran



Iranian worshippers listen to Friday prayer sermons at the Imam Khomeini Grand Mosque, a week before presidential election in Tehran, Iran on Friday. Former president Ebrahim Raisi was killed in a helicopter crash on May 19. — AP

## DIGITAL THREAT

Quantum computing can decimate entire systems with its ability to breach encryption: UN chief

## Cybercrimes rising from state, non-state actors: UN

**United Nations, June 21:** The United Nations chief has warned that the perils of weaponising digital technologies are growing by the year and malicious activity in cyberspace is on the rise by governments, non-government actors and criminals.

At the same time, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said, the misuse of digital technology is becoming more sophisticated and stealthy, malware, wipers and trojans are proliferating and cyber operations enabled by artificial intelligence

are multiplying the threat. In addition, he warned the UN Security Council that quantum computing could break down entire systems with its ability to breach encryption.

On the positive side, Guterres said digital advances are revolutionising economies and soci-



eties, not only bringing people together but delivering news, information and education and enabling citizens to access government services and institutions.

But instant connectivity that powers enormous benefits is also leaving people, institutions and

governments vulnerable, he said.

Guterres said cybersecurity incidents have become disturbingly common from disruptions to health, banking and telecommunications services to relentless illicit activity including by criminal organisations and so-called cybermercenaries.

The secretary-general also pointed to a legion of hate merchants littering the information superhighway with fear and division and the increasing use of cyberspace as a weapon in conflicts. And

## PIO tycoon found paying pittance to staff

## UK's richest Hinduja get 4-yr jail sentences

**Geneva, June 21:** A Swiss court handed jail sentences to four members of Britain's richest family on Friday, branding them "selfish" for exploiting Indian staff at their Geneva mansion.

The Hinduja were acquitted of human trafficking, but convicted on other charges in a stunning verdict for the family, whose fortune is estimated at 37 billion pounds (\$47 billion) by the *Sunday Times*.

Prakash Hinduja and his wife Kamal Hinduja each got four years and six months, while their son Ajay and his wife Namrata received four-year terms, the presiding judge in Geneva ruled.

They were found guilty of a charge of "usury" for taking advantage of their vulnerable immigrant staff to pay them a pittance.

"The employees' inexperience was exploited. They had little education or none at all and had no knowledge of their rights," presiding Sabina Mascotto said.

"The defendants' motives were selfish," she said, adding that the Hinduja were motivated "by the desire for gain".

Lawyers for the members of the Swiss-Indian family — who were not



Prakash Hinduja

present in court — said they would appeal the verdict. The court acquitted them of the more serious charge of human trafficking, on the grounds that the workers had travelled to Switzerland willingly.

During the trial the family was accused of bringing servants from their native India and confiscating their passports once they got to Switzerland.

Prosecutor Yves Bertossa accused the Hinduja of spending "more on their dog than on their domestic employees". The Hinduja paid the household staff a salary between 220 and 400 francs (\$250-450) a month, up to 90 per cent less than the going rate, the court heard.

"The four Hinduja defendants knew the weak position their employees were in and knew the law in Switzerland," Mascotto said. The family denied

the allegations, claiming the prosecutors wanted to "do in the Hinduja".

The family had reached a confidential out-of-court settlement with the three employees who made the accusations against them.

Despite this, the prosecution decided to pursue the case due to the seriousness of the charges.

Following the verdict, Bertossa requested an immediate detention order for Ajay and Namrata Hinduja, claiming a flight risk.

The defence denied the risk on the grounds that Kamal Hinduja is hospitalised in Monaco and the three other family members were at her bedside.

Aged 78 and 75 respectively, both parents had been absent since the start of the trial for health reasons.

It was not immediately clear whether the four would be extradited from the principality to serve their sentences.

The defence argued the three employees received ample benefits, were not kept in isolation and were free to leave the villa. "We are not dealing with mistreated slaves," Nicolas Jeandin told the court. The employees "were grateful to the Hinduja", his fellow lawyer Robert Assael argued. — AFP

## Trump promises Green Cards for foreign graduates

**Washington, June 21:** Softening his stance on immigration, former US President Donald Trump has promised to give automatic green cards to foreign students who graduate from US colleges to prevent them from returning to their home countries like India and China where they become multibillionaires.

Trump's departure from the anti-immigrant rhetoric comes ahead of the November presidential election in which immigration and deportation of illegal immigrants are among the key issues.

Trump, however, always supported a merit-based legal immigration system.

"What I want to do and what I will do is — you graduate from a college, I think you should get a Green Card automatically as part of your diploma, a Green Card to be able to stay in this country. And that includes junior colleges too," Trump, 78, said in the 'All-In' podcast.

A Green Card, known officially as a permanent resident card, is an identity document showing a person has permanent residency in the US.

The podcast was hosted by four venture capitalists: Chamath Palihapitiya, Jason Calacanis, David Sacks, and David Friedberg, three of whom are immigrants.

Trump's remarks came as he was pressed by Calacanis to promise you will give us more ability to import the best and brightest around the



Donald Trump

world to America.

Trump, the presumptive candidate from the Republican Party, also lamented stories where people graduated from a top college or from a college, and they desperately wanted to stay here, they had a plan for a company, a concept, and they can't they go back to India, they go back to China, they do the same basic company in those places. "...and they become multi-billionaires employing thousands and thousands of people, and it could have been done here," he said.

## TRUMP DWARFS BIDEN IN LATEST FUNDRAISING

Donald Trump's campaign out-raised President Joe Biden by more than \$60 million last month, according to federal filings that detailed the Republican fundraising explosion sparked by Trump's felony convictions. Biden's campaign and the Democratic National Committee together raised a robust \$85 million in May and reported \$212 million in the bank at the end of the month. — Agencies

## 'CANNOT BE SELECTIVE': INDIA REJECTS UNHRC CRITICISM

**United Nations/Geneva, June 21:** India has rejected a comment by the UN's top human rights official on foreign influence laws, saying principles of transparency and accountability cannot be applied selectively.

India's permanent representative of India to the United Nations and other international organisations in Geneva ambassador Arindam Bagchi, said he "humbly disagrees" with the brief reference to India made by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk in his Global Update 56th session of the Human Rights Council this week.

Turk had said in his global update that a worrying trend in terms of civic space is the consideration or adoption of so-called transparency or foreign influence laws in over 50 countries, including in the Republika Srpska entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, India, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Slovakia and Türkiye. These laws risk having serious chilling effects on the work of civil society, freedom of expression and of association.

Bagchi said democratic nations across the world, including India, have had regulations for many decades to guard against legitimate concerns about the misuse of foreign funds.

Principles of transparency and accountability cannot be applied selectively. Illegal foreign funding is also a disservice to India, he pointed out. — PTI

## DATA FROM LONDON HOSPITALS CYBERATTACK PUBLISHED ONLINE

**London, June 21:** Sensitive data from a ransomware attack that led to major disruption at London hospitals has been published online, UK health authorities said on Friday.

The cyberattack earlier this month on service supplier Synnovis particularly hit blood transfusions, and hundreds of appointments and operations are still being cancelled.

The attack affected some

of the UK's biggest hospitals — King's College Hospital and Guy's and St Thomas' in the centre of the British capital.

According to the BBC, Russian cyber criminal group Qilin shared almost 400 gigabytes of data — including patient names, dates of birth, NHS numbers and descriptions of blood tests — on the dark-net and Telegram. — AFP



quick  
BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	77,209.90	-0.35
Nifty 50	23,501.10	-0.28
S&P 500*	5,464.28	-0.16
Dollar (₹)	83.54	0.14
Pound Sterling (₹)	105.70	0.54
Euro (₹)	89.38	0.38
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	72,732	146 0.20
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	86.17	0.54
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.973	-0.003
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	4.226	-0.028

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

Sun, Takeda ink pact to work on novel drug

Sun Pharmaceutical Industries on Friday said it has inked a licensing pact with Takeda Pharmaceutical Company to commercialise a novel gastro-intestinal drug in India. The company has entered into a non-exclusive patent licensing agreement with Takeda to commercialise Vonoprazan tablets in strengths of 10 and 20 mg in India, the Mumbai-based drug major said in a statement.



Avanse Financial files papers with Sebi for IPO

Avanse Financial Services, an education focused non-banking finance company, has filed draft red-herring prospectus with securities and exchange board of India for ₹3,500 crore initial public offering, first such IPO filing by an education focused financing company. The IPO comprises a fresh issue of equity shares of up to ₹1,000 crore with a face value of ₹5 each and an offer for sale of up to ₹2,500 crore.

Emcure secures nod for initial public offering

Emcure Pharmaceutical has received market regulator Sebi's observations for an initial public offering. The Emcure public offer comprises a fresh issue of ₹800 crore and an offer for sale of 1.36 crore equity shares by promoters and existing shareholders to fresh draft red herring prospectus filed last week. The proceeds from fresh issue will be used towards payment of debt and for general corporate purposes.

Vraj Iron's ₹171-cr public offer to open on June 26

Chhattisgarh-based Vraj Iron And Steel announced ₹171 crore initial public offering in the price band of ₹195 to ₹207 per equity share of ₹10 face value. The public offer, which is entirely a fresh issue of shares, opens on June 26 and closes on June 28. The company proposes to utilise the net proceeds from the issue towards funding the expansion project at Bilaspur plant estimated to be ₹164.50 crore.

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High food prices do not allow rate change: RBI

Retail inflation may moderate to 4.5 per cent in 2024-25: Das

FALAKNAAZ SYED  
MUMBAI, JUNE 21

The Monetary Policy Committee of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) should continue with its disinflationary policy stance to ensure that inflation durably aligns to the target of 4 per cent said the RBI governor Shaktikanta Das while voting for a status quo in policy rates and stance earlier this month, showed the minutes of policy meeting released on Friday. The MPC voted 4:2 in favour of retaining the benchmark repo rate at 6.5 per cent for the eighth time in a row.

“With persistently high food inflation, it would be in order to continue with the disinflationary policy stance that we have adopted. Any hasty action in a different direction will cause more harm than good.



● A NORMAL monsoon may ease the price pressures in key food items. Large favourable base effects could lead to a temporary and one-off undershoot of inflation to below the target rate in Q2.

It is important that inflation is durably aligned to the target of 4.0 per cent. Price stability is the bedrock for high and sustainable growth,” said Das.

According to Das, retail inflation would moderate to 4.5 per cent in 2024-25, higher than the mandate of 4 per cent. Members of MPC also raised concerns relating to price worries in the coming months owing to exceptionally warm summer months on the output of “certain perishables; a likely rabi production shortfall in pulses and vegetables.”

A normal monsoon may ease the price pressures in key food items. Large favourable base effects could lead to a temporary and one-off undershoot of inflation to below the target rate in Q2, before rising again in Q3 and Q4 of 2024-25 said Das.

Food prices have a weight of 45.9 per cent in the CPI. In April, food prices contributed nearly 75 per cent to the headline inflation up from 40 per

cent a year ago. The consumer price index inflation (CPI) softened to 4.7 per cent in May – the lowest in the last 12 months, however; food inflation (y-o-y) remained unchanged at 7.9 per cent in May.

The RBI has hiked policy rates by 250 basis points between May 2022 and February 2023, since then it has kept the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent.

Two external members of six member MPC namely Jayanth Varma and Ashima Goyal both voted for a cut in repo rate and change in policy stance from withdrawal of accommodation to neutral.

Goyal said that if headline inflation approaches target (of 4 per cent) and core inflation is below the target, it implies that India's growth is below potential which makes the case for real policy rates to fall safely.

New orders push June job creation to 18-month high

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 21



● INPUT COST inflation eased slightly in June, but remained elevated with panellists citing increases in labour and material costs. The output price index suggests manufacturing firms were able to pass on higher costs to customers.

Indian businesses, both in the manufacturing and services sectors, expanded at a faster pace in the month of June than the previous month.

Besides, there was a substantial upturn in aggregate employment amid robust expansions in total new order intakes and international sales as price pressures receded in the month. The job creation was at its strongest pace in over 18 years, a private survey showed on Friday.

According to the survey carried out by the global banker HSBC Flash India PMI, the headline flash composite Purchasing Managers' Index or PMI figure rose to 60.9 in June, compared to a downward revised figure of 60.5 in May, while India services sector PMI rose to 60.4 in June from 60.2 in May and manufacturing PMI 62.1 in June from 61.1 in May.

“The composite flash PMI ticked up in June, supported by rises in both the manufacturing and service sectors, with the former recording a faster pace of growth. New orders gained growth momentum for both sectors, with a faster upturn among manufacturers. Meanwhile, new export orders slowed slightly in June, although the rate of expansion was the second fastest since the beginning of the series,” said Maitreyi Das, global economist at HSBC.

The survey also showed

that manufacturers saw a quicker improvement in the overall health of the sector at the end of the first fiscal quarter, with the HSBC Flash India Manufacturing PMI rising from 57.5 in May to 58.5 in June. “There were stronger contributions from all of its five sub-components,” it noted.

“As a result, capacity pressures became evident in June, leading firms to increase their staffing levels to the greatest extent in over 18 years. Input cost inflation eased slightly in June, but remained elevated with panellists citing increases in labour and material costs. The output price index suggests manufacturing firms were able to pass on higher costs to customers. Overall, optimism about future output weakened in June, but remained above the historical average,” Das said.



PENSION FUND BODY PLANS NEW LIFECYCLE FUND OPTIONS FOR NPS

New Delhi, June 21: Pension fund regulatory and development authority (PFRDA) chairman Deepak Mohanty on Friday said the regulator would introduce new life cycle fund options by September for NPS (non-government) subscribers.

The tapering age will be increased to 45 years from the existing 35 years and some more changes will be adopted to provide greater exposure to equity markets, Mohanty said.

The new scheme would be effective in the next quarter, maybe in August and September, he said.

Currently, there are three life cycle fund options named LC 75, LC 50 and LC 25, which are also known as aggressive auto choice, moderate auto choice and conservative auto choice, respectively.

Life cycle fund provides an option of investment to subscribers and allocation of equity and debt depends on the option chosen by them.

There are different investment choices (auto/active) for tier I and tier II NPS accounts.

With regard to Atal Pension Yojana (APY), Mohanty said, 1.24 crore new subscribers were added in FY24 with 52 per cent of them being women. Since its inception 6.6 crore subscribers have been added under APY, he said — PTI

Do not promote Ulips as investment products: Irdai

New Delhi, June 21: The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) has issued a master circular barring the promotion of unit linked insurance plans (ULIPs) as “investment products”.

Unit-linked insurance products shall not be advertised as “investment products”, Irdai said.

Insurers will have to state that market-linked insurance plans are different from traditional endowment policies and carry risks. Likewise, participating (with bonus) endowment policies will have to state upfront that the bonuses projected in benefit illustrations are not guaranteed.

All the advertisements of linked insurance products and annuity products with variable annuity payout option shall disclose the risk factors, it said.

“All insurers shall advertise the launch of unit-linked funds or index-linked funds under existing insurance products or new insurance products, only with reference to the underlying life insurance

coverage and the products associated with it.

“Further, no press release or statement shall be issued by the insurer without making a reference to the life insurance coverage and the associated products,” it said.

Besides, advertisements for all linked and annuity products with variable payouts comply with the standards set by Advertising Standards Council of India, it added. — PTI

● ALL THE advertisements of linked insurance products and annuity products with variable annuity payout option shall disclose the risk factors.



DELIVERY PLATFORM ZEPTO SECURES FUNDING OF \$665 MN

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, JUNE 21

Quick commerce company Zepto has raised \$665 million at a valuation of \$3.6 billion.

In its Series F round, the start-up received funding from new investors Avenir, Lightspeed, and Avra, among others. Existing investors Glade Brook, Nexus, and StepStone co-led the round.

The Mumbai-based company turned unicorn in August last year after raising \$200 million in a Series E round led by venture capital firm StepStone. It also raised \$35 million more in the same round.

As per the company, it has been valued at \$3.6 billion in the current round, up from \$1.4 bn during the last round. The firm has raised more than \$1.2 billion till date.

Zepto saw a 14-fold jump in its revenue to ₹2,024 crore in FY23 while its losses widened to ₹1,272 crore from ₹390 crore in the previous fiscal year.

Alexa may get AI power, users to pay \$5 a month

San Francisco, June 21: Amazon is planning a major revamp of its decade-old money-losing Alexa service to include a conversational generative AI with two tiers of service and has considered a monthly fee of around \$5 to access the superior version, according to people with direct knowledge of the company's plans.

Known internally as “Banyan,” a reference to the sprawling ficus trees, the project would represent the first major overhaul of the voice assistant since it was introduced in 2014 along with the Echo line of speakers. Amazon has dubbed the new voice assistant “Remarkable Alexa,” the people said.

Amazon has pushed workers towards a deadline of August to prepare the newest version of Alexa, three of the people said, noting that CEO Andy Jassy has taken a personal interest in seeing Alexa reinvigorated. In an April letter to shareholders, Jassy promised a “more intelligent and capable Alexa,” without providing additional details.

The company's plans for Alexa including pricing and release dates could be altered or cancelled depending on the progress of Project Banyan, the people cautioned.



“We have already integrated generative AI into different components of Alexa, and are working hard on implementation at scale - in the over half a billion ambient, Alexa-enabled devices already in homes around the world - to enable even more proactive, personal, and trusted assistance for our customers,” said an Amazon spokeswoman in a statement.

The service - which provides spoken answers to user queries, like the local weather, and can serve as a hub to control home appliances - was a pet project of Amazon founder Jeff Bezos who envisioned a technology that could emulate the fictional voice computer portrayed on television's Star Trek series.

For Amazon, keeping up with rivals in generative AI is critical as Google, Microsoft and OpenAI have garnered more attention. — Reuters

YOGA HAS SOLUTIONS TO ALL PROBLEMS, SAYS RAMDEV

FC CORRESPONDENT  
HARIDWAR, JUNE 21:

Yoga is part of our daily life and the solution to all our life's problems and the solution to all industrial problems, life is inherent in yoga, said Swami Ramdev at a yoga event organised by Patanjali.

Ramdev said that yoga is not just for the self and the society but for the universe. That a yoga-infused life is also the solution to global ideological, political, and economic struggles and challenges, he added.

He said that yoga practice is not merely physical exercise or breathing techniques but a life philosophy that offers solutions to all issues of the body, mind, life.

Bajaj Auto plans to sustain biz momentum, up exports

New Delhi, June 21: Bajaj Auto looks to sustain momentum in its domestic business and expand production capacity for new businesses as it expects demand to remain robust in the current fiscal, according to its chairman Niraj Bajaj.

Addressing shareholders in the company's Annual Report for 2023-24, he noted that the company would also aim for recovery in export volumes.

“It is anticipated that India, now the fastest growing economy in the world, will achieve upwards of 7 per cent real GDP growth in FY2024, and various forecasts expect this buoyancy to continue in FY2025,” Bajaj said.

With stable CPI inflation



at around 5 per cent, the company envisages double-digit nominal GDP growth, he added.

“In such a milieu and barring any unforeseen event, I would expect domestic demand to continue to pave the way for another year of growth up ahead,” Bajaj said.

Elaborating on the focus areas, he noted that the company aims to sustain momentum in its domestic business and continue to drive growth across all segments.

Bajaj Auto also plans to expand capacity, capabilities and network for its new businesses, the chairman informed the shareholders.

Commenting on the last fiscal, Bajaj noted that a strong domestic performance more than made up for muted exports which continued to be impacted by the challenging context in overseas markets.

Bajaj stated that the balance sheet of the company remains very healthy with surplus cash and cash equivalent as on March 31, 2024, standing at ₹16,386 cr this after making capital investments of ₹800 crore and paying a significant ₹8,900 crore to shareholders between dividend and the share buyback. — PTI

Young population is India's strength: HUL

New Delhi, June 21: India is well poised to leapfrog and become one of the world's leading economies but should focus on building human capital to realise the nation's growth potential, HUL chairman Nitin Paranjpe said on Friday while addressing the AGM of the leading FMCG maker.

India's young and growing working-age population

could prove to be the country's greatest asset in its future growth journey, he said, adding that thoughtful nurturing and development can unlock incredible rewards.

The country has to ensure that it not only progresses economically but also on social indices, he said in his speech titled, ‘Developing Human Capital for a Growing

India’.

“Armed with technological prowess, innovative acumen, increasing affluence and growth-centric policies, the country is often referred to as the new land of opportunities,” said Paranjpe.

To leverage these opportunities in India and realise the nation's growth potential, it will need a single-minded

focus on building human capital.

“While in the last decade, India's growth has primarily been productivity-led, going forward, we will need to ensure that we create meaningful employment and livelihood opportunities for the millions entering the workforce each year,” said Paranjpe. — PTI

SMART | TOOLS

Firm to deploy \$100 bn into AI-related chips project dubbed Izanagi

Huawei's Harmony OS used in 900 mn devices

Shenzhen (China), June 21: China's Huawei Technologies said on Friday it had made breakthroughs in fields from operating systems to artificial intelligence (AI), and that it had taken the company 10 years to do what the United States and Europe took 30 years to achieve.

Richard Yu, chairman of Huawei's Consumer Business Group, was speaking at the opening of a three-day developer conference, where he said the company's Harmony operating system was now

available on more than 900 million devices.

“Harmony has made major breakthroughs. You can say in 10 years we've achieved what it took our European and American counterparts more than 30 years to do, in terms of building the core technology of an operating system,” Yu said.

The company's Ascend artificial intelligence infrastructure was now the second most popular after Nvidia, which dominates the market for AI chips, Yu added. — Reuters

Tokyo, June 21: SoftBank Group's founder Masayoshi Son is back, this time with plans to bring about an era of artificial super-intelligence.

Son sketched out ambitions to help create AI thousands of times smarter than any human, making his most grandiose pronouncements since the Japanese conglomerate began taking steps to shore up its finances following a series of ill-timed start-up bets.

Son talked Friday about a future when Arm Holdings chips support a

thriving ecosystem of robots and powerful data centres that can collectively cure cancer, clean houses and play with children.

Son talked about how he wanted to change the world before he left it for good. The 66-year-old invoked his late friend Steve Jobs, saying their frequent conversations often left him in tears when he realised his legacy would pale in comparison with the Apple co-founder's.

“We've done many things, but all that's been a warm-up for my dream



to realise ASI,” Son told shareholders gathered at an annual meeting.

SoftBank is working on a plan to deploy some \$100 billion into AI-related chips in a project dubbed

● A FUTURE when Arm Holdings chips support a thriving ecosystem of robots and powerful data centres that can collectively cure cancer, clean houses and play with children.

Izanagi. When a shareholder asked about Izanagi, Son said he's committed to obtaining results and that he will work hard to achieve his goals, without elaborating.

Son's exposition and his goals have grown grandiose in proportion to SoftBank's share price, which has ridden Arm's AI-driven rally in 2024, and its cash pile.

SoftBank's net asset value hit ¥34 trillion (\$214 billion) as of Thursday, bolstered by Arm's rally.

Chief financial officer Yoshimitsu Goto told investors during an earnings briefing last month that SoftBank is now in a position where it needs to take more risk, particularly as AI development accelerates. — Bloomberg



## CRICKET

ICC MEN'S  
T20 WORLD CUPPAGE  
8

## SHORT SINGLES

Windies face USA  
in crunch clash

West Indies cannot afford another misstep as they take on a tenacious USA outfit in the Super Eights of the T20 World Cup in Bridgetown, Barbados, seeking to revitalise their quest for an unprecedented third title. After remaining unbeaten in the group stage, the West Indies slumped to an eight-wicket loss to defending champions England in their opening Super Eight fixture, paying the price for playing out as many as 51 dot balls and failing to rotate strike.

The heavy defeat to England has not only pushed Ravman Powell and his men to the bottom of the group but they now have -1.343 net run rate and need to win big to keep their hopes of lifting the title at home alive.

USA, on the other hand, haven't won any game since their win against Pakistan earlier this month. But they gave a good account of themselves against India and almost shocked South Africa, falling just 18 runs short of the Proteas' 194/4 against a high-quality bowling attack.

No halal meat, no  
problem for Afs

For the Afghanistan cricketers, it was a meatball-sized problem to fork through!

The non-availability of halal meat, a must-have in their menu, in their Bridgetown hotel forced them to temporarily wear a chef's apron.

For the Afghans, who descended to this beautiful seaside town for their T20 World Cup Super Eights match against India, it was a different experience after tasting the overflowing Indian hospitality during last year's 50-over showpiece.

"Halal meat is not available in our hotel. Sometimes we cook on our own or sometimes we go out. In the last World Cup in India, everything was perfect. Halal beef is an issue here.

"We had it in St. Lucia but it is not there at all venues. A friend arranged it for us and we cooked on our own," a player said.

Pak team draw flak  
for taking families

Pakistan's disastrous T20 World Cup campaign in the USA has expectedly triggered a backlash against the players, who are being criticised for taking their families along, even as their beleaguered cricket board mulled invoking a new defamation law to tackle "unsubstantiated claims and reports".

According to a local media report, apart from the nearly 34 players, support staff and officials who were part of the national squad in the United States, the team hotel was teeming with around 26 to 28 family members of the players.

These included their wives, children, parents and even siblings in some cases. Pakistan were eliminated after losing to India and debutants USA in their group league stage matches held in New York.

The report said players like Babar Azam, Haris Rauf, Shadab Khan, Fakhar Zaman, and Muhammad Amir were among those who had family members travelling with them.

Babar, who is not married, had his father, mother and brothers staying in the team hotel.

## BANGLADASH

## Racy Blues look to sprint into semifinals

MOSES KONDETY  
NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA),  
JUNE 21

Confident India will have an eye on the semifinals as they size up struggling Bangladesh in their second Super Eight match at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium here on Saturday.

Rohit Sharma & Co. will walk into the game with aplomb — they have won 12 of the 13 T20s played against their rivals. Another win here would mean a foot in the Last Four stage of the T20 World Cup. For Bangladesh, it's a matter of survival after being hammered by Australia on Thursday.

Talking of reliance, Rishabh Pant has been heart-warming, with the bat as well as gloves. Apart from his useful knocks, the 10 catches make him the wicketkeeper with most dismissals at the tournament. The left-hander is also India's leading scorer with 116 from four innings at an average of 38.66.

Suryakumar Yadav is a close second with 112, and his elegant half-century against Afghanistan in Barbados on Thursday should do his confidence a world of good.

However, the big two — Rohit and Virat Kohli — are yet to fire in unison. Rohit though has scored a half-century against Ireland in the first group match in New York. Virat has 29 runs from four innings at a below-par average of 7.25.

But India bat deep, right till No.8 with Hardik Pandya, Ravindra Jadeja and Axar Patel coming lower down.

On the bowling front, Jasprit Bumrah has been



Rohit Sharma and the team are ready to face Bangladesh in their second Super Eight clash at Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in North Sound, Antigua, on Saturday. India started the Super 8 stage with a win over Afghanistan. — PTI

class. His incisive spells have been just too good and contributed greatly to India's success in the tournament, at which they have a clean slate. Among those who bowled more than four overs, the right-armers are third best on the economy list at 3.46 runs per over in the 15 he has sent down so far in four games.

Arshdeep Singh has been playing perfect second fiddle to Boom. He is third on the wicket takers list in the tournament with 10 to his credit.

India are unlikely to change the playing XI and

will go with three left-arm spinners in Axar, Kuldeep Yadav and Jadeja with Pandya's mediumpace completing the attack.

Towhid Hridoy, Shakib Al Hasan and Mahmudullah have been Bangladesh's batting mainstays even as captain Najmul Hasan Shanto and opener Liton Das are yet to get into the groove.

Their bowlers have done much better though. Right-arm pacer Tanzim Hasan Sakib is the sixth best with 9 wickets against his name, so also leg-spinner Rishad Hossain. Left-armer Mustafizur

Rahman features among the top 10 when it comes to economy.

Allrounder Shakib is the overall leading wicket-taker in T20 World Cup history with 49. The left-arm spinner is one short of becoming the first player to reach the 50 milestone. He is also among the top 10 when it comes to all-time run-getters at the Cup with 834 from 40 innings.

He will have to contribute big, both with the bat and ball, if Bangladesh are to sink India and stay afloat in the Caribbean carnival.



## Cummins hat-trick in Oz win

North Sound (Antigua), June 21: Premier pacer Pat Cummins grabbed the tournament's first hat-trick and spinner Adam Zampa showcased his artistry to fashion Australia's 28-run win over Bangladesh via the Duckworth Lewis (DLS) method in their Super Eights fixture of the T20 World Cup here.

If Zampa (2/24) operated with precision in the middle overs, Cummins (3/29) claimed three wickets off successive balls at the back end, as Australia restricted Bangladesh to 140/8 after Mitchell Marsh opted to bowl first in the rain-interrupted game.

Veteran opener David Warner (53 not out off 35 balls) then hit a scintillating half-century, a knock that was studded with five

## SCOREBOARD

**Bangladesh:** Tanzid Hasan b Mitchell Starc 0, Litton Das b Zampa 16, Nazmul Hossain Shanto lbw b Zampa 41, Rishad Hossain c Zampa b Maxwell 2, Towhid Hridoy c Hazlewood b Cummins 40, Shakib Al Hasan c and b Stoinis 8, Mahmudullah b Cummins 2, Mahedi Hasan c Zampa b Cummins 0, Taskin Ahmed not out 15, Tanzim Hasan Sakib not out 4. Extras (lb-3, w-11) 14. **Total (for 8 wickets in 20 overs) 140.**

**Fall of wickets:** 1-0, 2-58, 3-67, 4-84, 5-103, 6-122, 7-122, 8-133.

**Bowling:** Mitchell Starc 4-0-21-1, Josh Hazlewood 4-1-25-0, Pat Cummins 4-0-29-3, Adam Zampa 4-0-24-2, Marcus Stoinis 2-0-24-1, Glenn Maxwell 2-0-14-1.

**Australia:** David Warner not out 53, Travis Head b Rishad Hossain 31, Mitchell Marsh lbw b Rishad Hossain 16, Glenn Maxwell not out 14. Extras (lb-1) 1. **Total (for two wickets in 11.2 overs) 100.**

**Fall of wickets:** 1-65, 2-69.

**Bowling:** Mahedi Hasan 4-0-22-0, Tanzim Hasan Sakib 1-0-9-0, Taskin Ahmed 1.2-0-22-0, Mustafizur Rahman 2-0-23-0, Rishad Hossain 3-0-23-2. **(DLS method)**

fours and three sixes.

"I've had a few (hat-tricks) in juniors, never for Australia. (Ashton) Agar and (Nathan) Ellis, on the bench, have hat-

tricks, joined their club. It's pretty awesome to tick that off," player of the match Cummins said. Australia were in a hurry to finish the game

with openers Warner and Travis Head (31) going hammer and tongs from the very first ball.

The pair raced to 60/0 before rain interrupted play. Once play resumed, the Aussies lost a bit of momentum as Rishad Hossain (2/23 in 3 overs) got into the act.

The young leg-spinner removed Head and Mitchell Marsh (1) in quick succession.

Despite the twin blows however, Australia never looked in trouble as Warner went about his business. Playing his last T20 World Cup, he brought up his fifty with a majestic six. When rain stopped play for the second time, Australia were 100 for two in 11.2 overs, 28 runs ahead of the DLS par score of 72. — PTI

De Kock, bowlers power  
SA to win over England

## SCOREBOARD

**South Africa:** Reeza Hendricks c Brook b Ali 19, Quinton de Kock c Buttler b Archer 65, Heinrich Klaasen run out 8, David Miller c Brook b Archer 43, Aiden Markram b Rashid 1, Tristan Stubbs not out 12, Marco Jansen c Curran b Archer 0, Keshav Maharaj not out 5. Extras (b-1, lb-3, w-6) 10. **Total (for 6 wickets in 20 overs) 163.**

**Fall of wickets:** 1-86, 2-92, 3-103, 4-113, 5-155, 6-155.

**Bowling:** Reece Topley 4-0-23-0, Moeen Ali 3-0-25-1, Jofra Archer 4-0-40-3, Sam Curran 3-0-29-0, Adil Rashid 4-0-20-1, Mark Wood 2-0-22-0.

**England:** Phil Salt c Hendricks b Rabada 11, Jos Buttler c Klaasen b Maharaj 17, Jonny Bairstow c Nortje b Maharaj 16, Moeen Ali c Maharaj b Bairstown 9, Harry Brook c Markram b Nortje 53, Liam Livingstone c Stubbs b Rabada 33, Sam Curran not out 10, Jofra Archer not out 1. Extras (lb-2, nb-1, w-3) 6. **Total (for 6 wickets in 20 overs) 156.**

**Fall of wickets:** 1-15, 2-43, 3-54, 4-61, 5-139, 6-150.

**Bowling:** Marco Jansen 4-0-31-0, Kagiso Rabada 4-0-32-2, Keshav Maharaj 4-0-25-2, Ottneil Baartman 3-0-27-1, Anrich Nortje 4-0-35-1, Aiden Markram 1-0-4-0.

De Kock made 65 (38b, 4x4, 4x6), while David Miller (43, 28b, 4x4, 2x6) gave the South African

## SUPER EIGHT

GROUP 1						
TEAMS	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NR
AUSTRALIA	1	1	0	0	2	+2.471
INDIA	1	1	0	0	2	+2.350
AFGHANISTAN	1	0	1	0	0	-2.350
BANGLADESH	1	0	1	0	0	-2.471

GROUP 2						
TEAMS	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NR
S. AFRICA	2	2	0	0	4	+0.625
ENGLAND	2	1	1	0	2	+0.412
USA	1	0	1	0	0	-0.900
WEST INDIES	1	0	1	0	0	-1.343

Spin trio steps  
up for Indians

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
BRIDGETOWN (BARBADOS),  
JUNE 21

Axar Patel is gradually turning into a key player for India at the T20 World Cup. The allrounder has been promoted up the order to get some quick runs, also batted at his usual No. 8 position and also been handy with the ball.

The left-arm spinner delivered a fine spell in the win over Afghanistan on Thursday. His only wicket while conceding 15 runs in three overs tightened the screws right at the top. The battle is won in the mind, he says. "In T20s it is very important for you to think ahead of the batsman, where he is planning to hit you for runs, and where he can hit me on my strength. So, I cover all those bases and bowl."

Coming into the attack right after someone like Jasprit Bumrah should boost the morale. "Yes, Bumrah is a world class bowler, and you know that with the quality of bowlers we have in our side — we can get out of a tough situation. So, at that time you have to think about what you have, what is your

strength, what are your weaknesses? We do bowl in partnerships," Axar said.

With three left-arm spinners — Kuldeep Yadav and Ravindra Jadeja being the other two — what is the thought process in the team? "Two are finger spinners and one is a wrist spinner. I think the combination of the three of us is an advantage. Whoever comes to bowl first, we communicate what is working and what is not. I think that is very important as a bowling unit," Axar said.

"I know my role well. The captain can call me to bowl in the powerplay, middle overs or towards the end, in the 16th or 15th over. My plan is to know what the team needs at that time. If I feel that I need to take wickets, then I will attack, sometimes, like in the group game against Pakistan when I bowled the 16th over it is about containing the score," the 30-year-old said.

"At the debriefing, it is these crucial moments that are discussed — who has done well in one or two overs that swung the game which is the key in T20 cricket," he added.

SOONER AIFF PREZ LEAVES, BETTER  
IT IS FOR INDIAN FOOTBALL: STIMAC

New Delhi, June 21: Ousted India football coach Igor Stimac on Friday launched a stinging attack on AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey, saying the sooner he leaves the post, the better it would be for the future of football in the country where the globally-loved sport is not growing at all.

Stimac was on Monday sacked as head coach following the team's failure to reach the third round of the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers. A day later, the Croat threatened to file a lawsuit against the AIFF in the FIFA Tribunal if his outstanding dues were not cleared in 10 days.

During a lengthy online press conference on Friday, Stimac said Indian football is "imprisoned" and blamed Chaubey for most of the problems besetting the game. He also said that he was "fed up of the lies and unfulfilled promises" during his tenure.

"The sooner Kalyan Chaubey leaves AIFF, the better it is for Indian football," Stimac said.

"Kalyan only cares about being popular — recent media meets shows that. You say he is a politician, no one knows him even in Kolkata. We need someone strong, influential and with backing to lead Indian football. Kalyan's priority is to get photographed with famous players instead of thinking about the wellbeing of Indian football.

"Football is the most popular sport in the world, but India is the only place where football is not growing," he added.

Stimac was appointed as the head coach following the departure of his predecessor Stephen Constantine in March 2019. A few days after India suffered a defeat against Qatar in the final second round match of World Cup Qualifiers earlier this month, the AIFF sacked Stimac. — PTI

## Spain beat Italy to reach Euro knockouts

Gelsenkirchen, (Germany), June 21: Spain secured a spot in the knockout stages of Euro 2024 with a 1-0 victory over Italy in their heavyweight clash on Thursday, after England struggled to show their credentials in a 1-1 draw with Denmark.

Three-time winners Spain got the better of reigning champions Italy at the Arena AufSchalke in Gelsenkirchen as Riccardo Calafiori bundled the ball into his own net 10 minutes after half-time to decide the encounter.

A second win in as many matches for Spain is enough for them to secure top spot in Group 'B' with a game to spare, meaning they already know they will play their last-16 tie in Cologne on June 30 against one of the best third-place finishers. Italy, meanwhile, are not



Ukraine's Roman Yaremchuk (right) celebrates after scoring against Slovakia during their Group 'E' match at the Euro 2024 tournament in Duesseldorf on Friday. — AP

through yet but a point against Croatia in Leipzig on Monday will clinch second place in the group for Luciano Spalletti's team.

Earlier, England could have secured a last-16 spot as well as they took on Denmark in Frankfurt in Group 'C' but produced an

underwhelming performance that leaves more questions over their chances of becoming European champions for

the first time in history.

YAREMCHUK THE HERO  
IN UKRAINE WIN

Roman Yaremchuk emerged from the bench to score the winning goal as Ukraine produced a stirring fightback to beat Slovakia 2-1 and kickstart their Euro 2024 campaign on Friday.

Slovakia knew victory in Duesseldorf would take them through to the knockout stage with a game to spare and they went ahead on 17 minutes thanks to Ivan Schranz, who netted the winner in the shock victory over Belgium in their opening game.

Ukraine came into this match reeling after losing 3-0 to Romania last time out but they dug deep here and equalised through Mykola Shaparenko nine minutes after half-time. — AFP

GANGJEE TAKES  
FIVE-SHOT LEAD

Selangor (Malaysia) June 21: India's Rahil Gangee shot a three-under-67 to take a massive five-shot lead after the third and penultimate round of the Selangor Masters.

Gangee has two wins on the Asian Tour — at the Volkswagen Masters in 2004 in China and then 14 years later in Japan at the Panasonic Open. Gangee is making a comeback from an injury and showing better form with each round. — PTI

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