



Hindustan Times

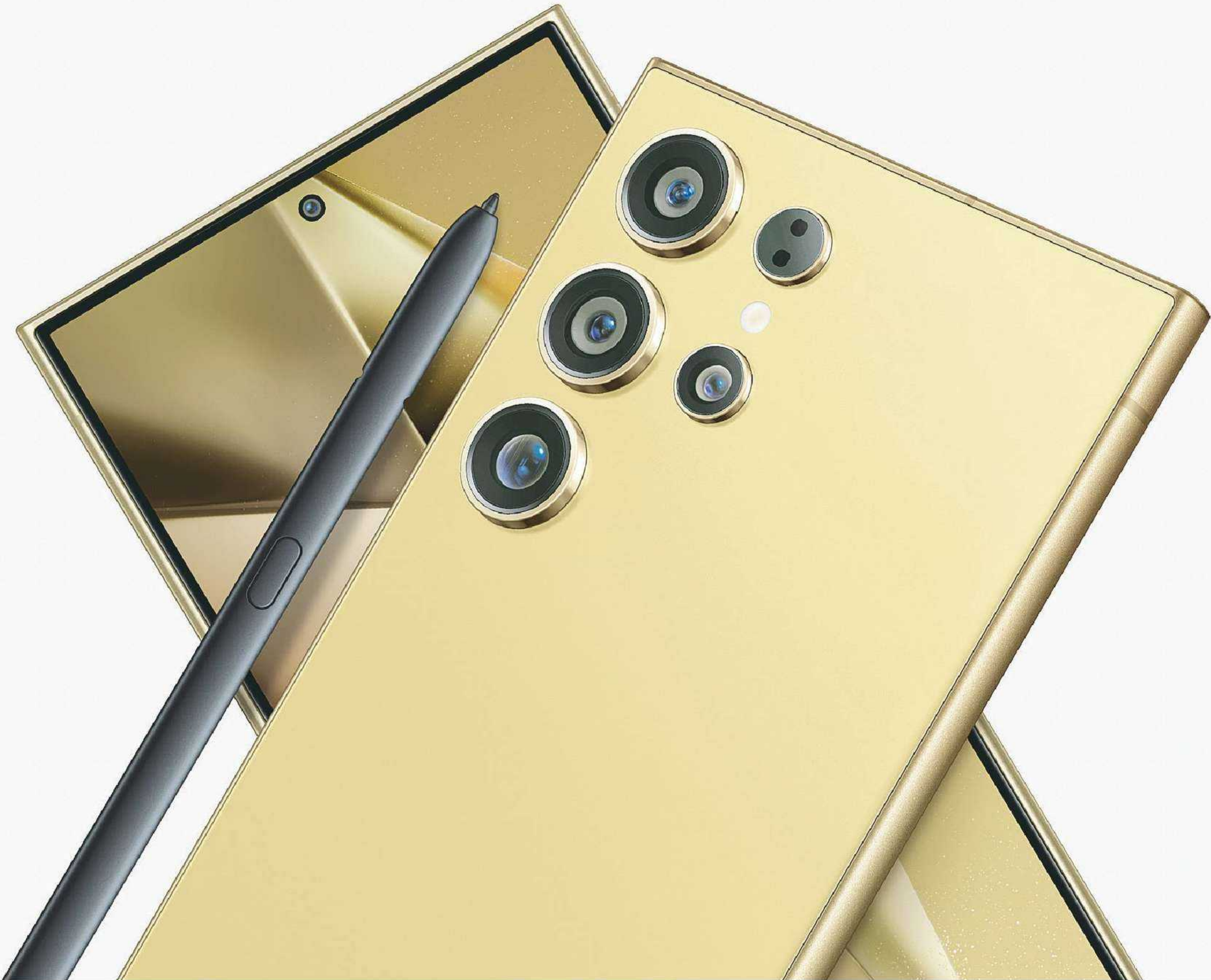
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Hindustan Times

Govt, Oppn all set to spar as 18th Lok Sabha opens today

Smriti Kak Ramachandran
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NEW DELHI: The 18th Lok Sabha will open on Monday morning as the inaugural special session of Parliament commences under a shadow with the government and the Opposition likely to clash over a string of issues, foremost among them the irregularities dogging some of India's premier examinations.

President Droupadi Murmu will administer the oath to Bharatiya Janata Party lawmaker Bhartruhari Mahtab as the pro-tem Speaker of the Lok Sabha, a development that is expected to spark a face-off between the government and the Opposition. Then, all newly elected members of the Lower House including Prime Minister Narendra Modi will take oath.

The two-day oath ceremony will be followed by the election to pick the Lok Sabha Speaker on June 26 and President Murmu's address to the joint sitting of both houses on June 27. The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha will also be picked for the first time in a decade.



The President's Bodyguard rehearse at Vijay Chowk on Sunday ahead of President Droupadi Murmu's address to a joint sitting of Parliament on June 27. The Parliament session begins on Monday. **ANI**

ade. The session will conclude on July 3 and reassemble for the monsoon sitting on July 22.

The session is likely to set the stage for the recalibration of the balance of power between the government and the Opposition,

which will try to corner the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) on issues such as price rise, food inflation, deaths on account of an unprecedented heatwave and the recent instances of irregularities in the conduct of examinations that have made millions of students restive and cast a shadow on the efficacy of institutions mandated to conduct examinations.

On Friday, the CSIR-UGC-
continued on → 6

IMD predicts a cloudy week, extreme heat may not return

HT Correspondent
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NEW DELHI: Parts of the Capital received light rainfall on Sunday, making for another wet day, but prevailing maximum humidity level of 73% ensured it was a sultry day despite the maximum temperature remaining below the 40°C mark, at 39.8°C, for a second day in a row.

The maximum temperature was a degree above normal, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). It was 39.4°C on Saturday and 40.4°C on Friday.

Despite the relatively lower maximum temperature, high humidity made it an uncomfortable day to be out in the open, with the heat index (HI) or "real feel" of temperature recorded at 53°C, the IMD said in its daily weather bulletin, forecasting no heatwave conditions in Delhi for the remainder of the month.

Delhi's wet-bulb temperature, another indicator of the comfort



Parts of Delhi-NCR received light rain on Sunday. **PARVEEN KUMAR/HT**

level outside, was recorded at 30°C on Sunday at 2.30pm, the highest so far this year. It was 28.4°C at the same time on Saturday and 26.6°C on Friday.

According to the IMD, Delhi is now likely to see drizzle to light rain till June 29, making for a wet end to the month, marked by

pre-monsoon showers, with no heatwave conditions expected.

"Parts of Delhi-NCR will see light rain now till the end of the month. This will keep maximum temperature in check, but the humidity will be high," an IMD official said.

→FULL REPORT ON P5

AMIT SHAH CHAIRS A MEETING ON FLOOD SITUATION IN EASTERN INDIA

NEW DELHI: At least 50 large lakes will have to be dug in India's northeast to divert the waters of the Brahmaputra to tackle recurring floods and boost agriculture, irrigation and tourism, Union minister Amit Shah directed on Sunday, also asking the India Meteorological Department and the Central Water Commission to complete re-calibrating all equipment used in forecasting floods at the earliest.

→P7

CENTRE PLANS INTERVENTIONS TO CURB HIGH FOOD PRICES

Zia Haq

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NEW DELHI: The central government is preparing to play a bigger role in regulating markets, both as a buyer and seller, to hold down high food prices that have hurt households, kept retail inflation above the central bank's target of 4% and prevented a cut in the benchmark interest rate.

→FULL REPORT ON P2

DELHI CAB DRIVER WAS MURDERED WHILE TRYING TO RESOLVE DISPUTE

Karn Pratap Singh

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NEW DELHI: The crime branch of Delhi Police arrested three people in connection with the May 30 murder of a cab driver and recovered two pistols and eight cartridges allegedly used in the crime apart from a and a motorcycle from Gokalpuri in north-east Delhi over the past week, police said. The three allegedly stabbed to death the cab driver who intervened when they were trying to settle a financial dispute with another man in Shastri Park. The wife of one of the accused was owed ₹17,000 by the man, and they were planning to abduct him to make him pay up, police said.

→P4

Another 13-yr-old boy apprehended for bomb threat email to airport

NEW DELHI: A 13-year-old boy was apprehended from Pithoragarh in Uttarakhand for allegedly sending an email to the Delhi airport falsely claiming that a bomb had been planted on a Dubai-bound flight on June 17, police said on Sunday.

The boy was apprehended and his custody was later handed over to his parents, deputy commissioner of police (IGI Airport) Usha Rangnani said.

He sent the mail "just for fun" after being influenced by the news of another teenager who made a hoax bomb threat call a few days ago, the DCP said.

According to police, the boy said he created an email

THE BOY SENT THE MAIL 'JUST FOR FUN' AFTER BEING INFLUENCED BY ANOTHER TEEN WHO MADE A BOMB THREAT CALL A FEW DAYS AGO, POLICE SAID

account, sent the threat email and deleted the account. The mobile phone used in the offence, which was purchased by his parents recently to help him study, has been seized.

→P4

TRAIN MURDER SOLVED: WOMAN KILLED AFTER RAPE BID BY 60-YR-OLD

INDORE: A 60-year-old man was arrested in Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh on Sunday for allegedly killing a woman after a failed rape attempt, dismembering her body and dumping the parts in two trains, police said. Accused Kamlesh Patel had lured her to his house when she was sitting at a railway station on June 6, spiked her food and tried to rape her, the official said. Patel murdered her when she raised an alarm, police said.

→P9

{ GLOBAL OUTRAGE }

Israeli military admits 'violation of orders' in strapping of Palestinian man to jeep's bonnet



A video of the incident has gone viral. **REUTERS**

Agencies

letters@hindustantimes.com

JENIN, PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES: Israeli troops tied a wounded Palestinian to a military vehicle during a raid in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin, the army said on Sunday, admitting that soldiers had violated operational procedures.

Footage of the incident, which occurred on Saturday, has gone viral and shows a man strapped horizontally to the bonnet of a

military jeep as it passes through a narrow alley.

Medics identified the Palestinian as Mujahid Raed Abbadi, 24, who lives in the Jenin refugee camp.

The military said a Palestinian man was wounded during a "counterterrorism operation" to arrest wanted suspects in the area of Wadi Burqin, between the town of Burqin and Jenin.

During an exchange of fire between troops and militants in Burqin's Jabriyat neighbour-

hood, a Palestinian was wounded and apprehended, the military said in a statement.

The statement referred to him as a "suspect", but did not specify any accusations against Abbadi, who medics told AFP was being treated at Jenin's Ibn Sina hospital, and not in Israeli custody.

The military said: "In violation of orders and standard operating procedures, the suspect was taken by the forces while tied on top of a vehicle."

continued on → 6

NUMBER THEORY

What do the 2024 results mean for the RJD in Bihar?

By Roshan Kishore and Nishant Ranjan

Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have been the epicentre of what is referred to as Mandal politics in India. These are also states which were pretty much swept by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in 2014 and 2019 elections. The BJP ceded a lot of ground to the Samajwadi Party (SP)-Congress alliance in 2024 in Uttar Pradesh, and the NDA tally came down from 64 to 36 between 2019 and 2024. However, the 2024 results did not bring a similar revival for the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD)-led alliance in Bihar. To be sure, the RJD managed to win four parliamentary constituencies (PCs) this time, compared to zero in 2019. But the NDA, comprising the BJP and the Janata Dal (United), or JD(U), managed to win 30 of the 40 PCs in the state. What do the 2024 results mean for the RJD in Bihar? This question is especially relevant because Bihar will have its assembly polls next year. This two-part data series will try to answer this question in detail. The first part will analyse the results of the 2024 elections from the RJD's perspective. The second will look at historical data to analyse the RJD's current challenges in Bihar.

1 RJD is the party with the largest vote share in Bihar in these elections

The RJD's vote share of 22.2% in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections is the largest among all parties in the state. This, when taken on face value, puts the RJD as the party with the largest popular support in the state. This was not the case in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, when both the BJP and the JD(U) finished ahead of the RJD in terms of vote share. The RJD also had the highest vote share among all parties in the 2020 elections assembly elections. Do back-to-back highest vote share performances mean that the RJD is on a revival path in Bihar?

Vote share in Lok Sabha elections in Bihar (in %)



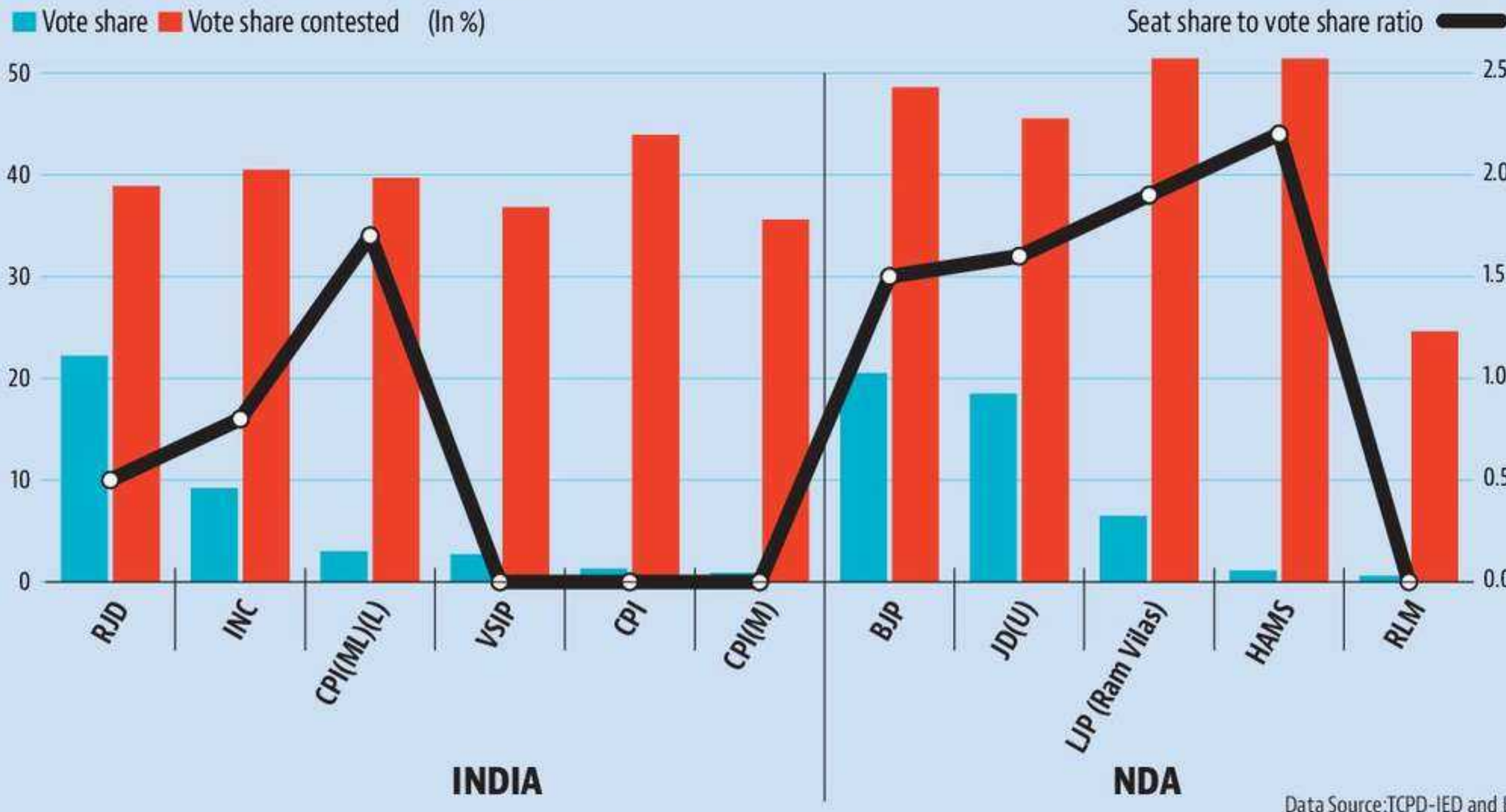
Data Source: TCPD-IED and ECI

2 Contested vote share numbers tell us a different story

While vote shares are the best measure of a party's popular support in a first-past-the-post (FPTP) system, they have to be treated with caution when alliances come into play. This is because if a party decides to enter into an alliance, or have a wider alliance than another party, it will contest more seats and therefore enjoy a natural advantage in terms of overall vote share. This is exactly what seems to have happened with the RJD in the 2024 elections. The party contested 23 PCs, which is the highest among the 11 parties which were a part of the NDA or INDIA blocks. The BJP and the JD(U), other two major parties in the state, contested 17 and 16 seats this time.

If one were to compare the contested vote share of parties in the 2024 elections – they adjust a party's popular support for the number of PCs contested – the RJD drops to seventh rank among the 11 parties that were a part of either the NDA or the INDIA alliance. The RJD is ranked higher ahead of only the Vikassheel Insaan Party (VSIIP), the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Rashtriya Lok Manch (RLM), none of which could win a seat in the state. As is to be expected, contested vote shares have a near perfect correlation with seat share to vote share ratios of parties in Bihar, which measures a party's ability to convert votes into seats in an FPTP system.

Party-wise vote share, contested vote share and seat share to vote share ratio in 2024



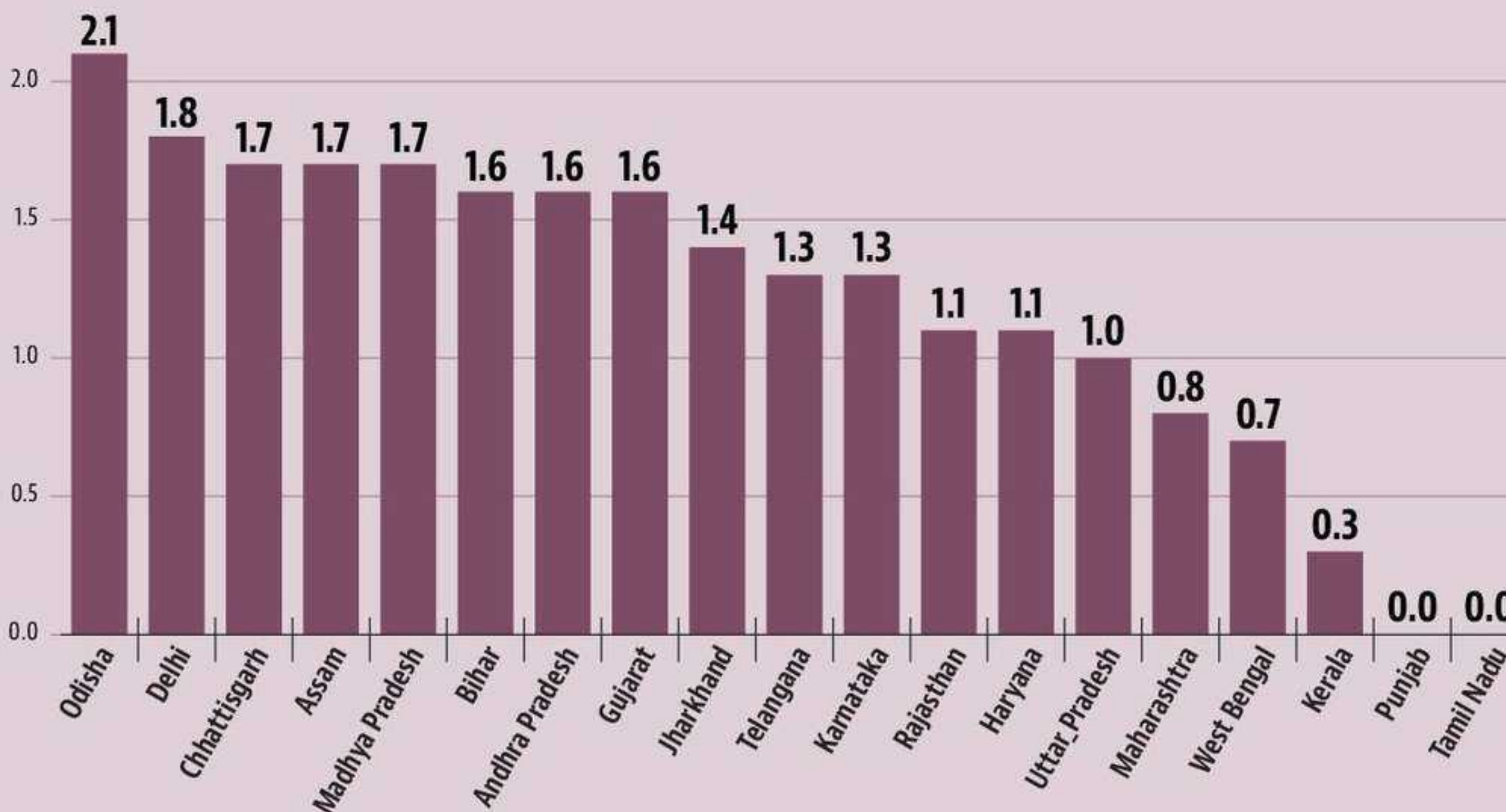
Data Source: TCPD-IED and ECI

3 Bihar was among the better performances of the NDA in converting votes into seats

A simple comparison of seat share to vote share ratio of the NDA in states/Union territories with at least seven parliamentary constituencies (PCs) makes this clear. These states account for 509 out of the 543 PCs in the country and 274 out of the 293 which the NDA has won in these elections. The NDA had a seat share and vote share of 75% and 47.2% in Bihar in these elections. This puts

its seat share to vote share ratio at 1.59. This is the sixth highest among these states which shows that Bihar was among the better performances of the NDA in terms of exploiting the FPTP system. Seen another way, this also shows that the RJD-led Opposition alliance had a strategic disadvantage vis-a-vis the NDA in Bihar.

Seat share to vote share ratio of NDA in 2024 Lok Sabha elections



Data Source: ECI

What can the RJD do to convert its popular support in Bihar, which is far from insignificant, into more seats in Bihar? Answering this question requires going back in Bihar's political history, which is what the second part of this series will do.

This is the first of a two-part series which looks at the RJD's political predicament in Bihar. The second part will look at past election results in Bihar to explain the RJD's challenges



Hindustan Times

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CBI teams rush to Guj, Bihar for NEET probe

Neeraj Chauhan and Fareeha Iftikhar

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NEW DELHI: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Sunday filed a case to investigate a "larger conspiracy" in how the medical college screening test NEET-UG was conducted and dispatched special teams to Gujarat and Bihar, where close to two dozen people have been arrested over suspicion that they had a role in leaking questions or enabling cheating.

The developments came even as officials in the Union education ministry, speaking on the condition of anonymity, stressed that the problems were "localised" and "isolated" incidents, suggesting the government was not inclined to order a complete re-exam that was written by 2.4 million applicants.

"It is not fair to jeopardise careers of lakhs of candidates who cleared the exam rightfully," a senior official said, asking not to be named.

The position holds significance since the government and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are expected to face-off with the Opposition in Parliament in the week starting Monday, with the leaders from parties such as Congress and Trinamool Congress planning to raise the issues of several nationally crucial examinations now being botched up affecting an estimated 3.7 million students.

Sunday's action by the federal agency came a day after the government handed it the probe and following inputs from police in

continued on →6



Police personnel stand guard outside a retesting centre in Jhajjar, Haryana.

HT PHOTO

NEARLY HALF OF 1,563 ASPIRANTS GIVE RETEST A MISS

Fareeha Iftikhar

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NEW DELHI: Only 813 or 52% of the 1,563 candidates who were initially awarded grace marks in the NEET-UG before they were withdrawn last week appeared for a retest on Sunday, NTA said, as affected students, who did not opt for a re-examination, were allowed to retain their actual scores without the grace marks.

→P8

Retest was harder than original exam: Toppers

Leena Dhankhar

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GURUGRAM: The six students from the same Haryana centre, who scored full marks in the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) earlier, took a retest on Sunday and said they found the exam more challenging than the previous iteration, with four of them who spoke to HT saying they were

unsure if they will be able to repeat their perfect scores.

The six were part of a group that had taken the test at Bahadurgarh's Hardayal Public School and their results — a perfect 720/720 — became controversial since all of them were at the same centre, raising fears of possible use of unfair means, and all had attempted a flawed question that earned them up to 140 extra points in grace marks.

→P8

EAM JAISHANKAR REACHES UAE TO CEMENT MUTUAL COOPERATION

NEW DELHI: External affairs minister S Jaishankar on Sunday visited the United Arab Emirates (UAE), one of India's closest strategic partners in West Asia, to assess bilateral relations and chart out new areas for cooperation.

Jaishankar would hold talks with his counterpart Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan on a wide range of issues under the bilateral partnership, the external affairs ministry said in a statement. "This visit will provide an opportunity to review the entire spectrum of (the) comprehensive strategic partnership between India and UAE and regional and global developments," it said.

→P7

MAYAWATI DECIDES TO REINSTATE HER NEPHEW ANAND AS SOLE SUCCESSOR

LUCKNOW: BSP chief Mayawati on Sunday reappointed her nephew Akash Anand as the party's national coordinator and reinstated him as her political heir, less than two months after she dropped the 28-year-old as her successor till he attained "full maturity".

In an official statement issued after the party's national-level meeting in Lucknow, the BSP said that Mayawati has decided to give Anand an opportunity to work with "full maturity".

"He will continue to hold all his posts in the party as before. That is, he will remain Mayawati's only successor along with being the party's national coordinator," the statement said.

→P8

Two jawans killed in IED attack in Sukma

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RAIPUR: Two jawans of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)'s elite guerrilla unit Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) were killed by Maoists in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast in Sukma district on Sunday, Bastar police said.

The incident took place around 3pm when the personnel were on road opening party (ROP) duty and were advancing from Silger camp towards Teklagudam under the Jagadonga police station area.

"The Maoists planted an IED targeting the security forces at



The incident took place around 3pm when the personnel were advancing from Silger camp towards Teklagudam.

HT PHOTO

Teklagudam road from Silger. The personnel of 201 CoBRA battalion were moving on a motorcycle and a truck when

the blast took place. A jawan who was driving the truck and another jawan (the assistant

continued on →6

Suraj Revanna held in sexual assault case

Arun Dev

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BENGALURU: Karnataka Police on Sunday arrested Janata Dal (Secular) or JD(S) member of legislative council (MLC) Suraj Revanna, brother of suspended lawmaker Prajwal Revanna, for allegedly sexually assaulting a party worker and the state government handed the case to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), even as his father and former minister HD Revanna alleged a "conspiracy".

The developments while Prajwal remains in judicial custody on charges of rape and sexual assault.

On Saturday evening, a case was registered against Suraj at



Revanna in police custody on Monday.

ANI

Holenarasipura in Hassan after a JD(S) worker, in a complaint to the director general of police's office, accused the former of sexually assaulting him at his farmhouse in Ghannikada on June 16. The MLC has rejected the allegations.

→P7

KEJRIWAL MOVES SC AGAINST HC'S ORDER PUTTING HIS BAIL ON HOLD

NEW DELHI: Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal has moved the Supreme Court against the interim stay by the Delhi high court on a trial court's order granting him bail in a money laundering case linked to the alleged irregularities in the now-scrapped excise policy. One of the lawyers for the AAP convenor said that they will seek urgent listing of the petition on Monday. The high court on Friday paused the Kejriwal's release after the trial court granted him bail on June 20. It also issued a notice to Kejriwal seeking his response to the ED's plea challenging the trial court's June 20 order by which he was granted bail.

→P4

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{ MY INDIA } AFTER DAYS OF FIRE

Orange alert for rain sounded in U'khand



An orange alert has been issued for heavy rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms in parts of Uttarakhand over the coming week, IMD's Dehradun centre said on Sunday. It also cautioned residents living close to water bodies in the hills of possible sudden rise in water levels in rivulets and streams due to heavy rain. "Light to moderate rain/thundershower is very likely to occur at many places on June 24 and at most places thereafter over Uttarakhand till June 30", Bikram Singh, director, IMD Dehradun Centre, said. An orange alert has been issued for heavy to intense rainfall (110 to 200 mm), accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds ranging from 40 to 50 kmph at isolated places in Nainital, Champawat, Pithoragarh and Bageshwar districts on June 24 to 26 and June 29, Singh said, adding that heavy rainfall is also predicted in the hills on June 27, 28 and 30.

→P7

{ WORLD } CLIMATE CRISIS

Extreme weather hits millions in US



Millions of Americans prepared to sweat through yet another scorching day, with the potential for rolling storms later Sunday to bring relief from the sweltering heat for at least some. Floodwaters inundated parts of the Midwest, including a town in Iowa evacuated after being submerged up to the rooftops. Across the country in California, daily highs in the state's Central Valley were expected to stay over 37°C into Monday. From the mid-Atlantic to Maine, across much of the Midwest and throughout inland California, public officials cautioned residents sweating through the heat and humidity. In Oklahoma, the heat index was expected to reach 41°C on Sunday. The National Weather Service (NWS) warned of the potential for rare tornadoes in the Northeast later on Sunday.

→P11

{ SPORT } EURO 2024

Belgium salvage campaign, stave off Romania in 2-0 win



Youri Tielemans breathed new life into Belgium's Euro 2024 campaign as the Aston Villa midfielder's goal after just 73 seconds inspired a vital 2-0 win against Romania, days after his team's stunning loss to Slovakia. Domenico Tedesco's side would have been on the brink of elimination if they had suffered a second successive Group E defeat. But Tielemans' second-minute strike in Cologne eased fears of yet another major tournament flop from star-studded Belgium. Kevin De Bruyne wrapped up the points in the closing stages to leave all four teams in the group level on three points. The stage is set for a dramatic final round of fixtures in the battle to reach the last 16. Belgium face Ukraine and Romania play Slovakia on June 26. With 45 runs separating the two nations in FIFA's rankings, third-placed Belgium's 1-0 loss to Slovakia on Monday was the biggest upset in European Championship history.

→P13

{ WORLD } IN RUSSIA

7 dead in shootings at synagogue, churches



Gunmen on Sunday attacked a synagogue and churches, killing a priest and six police officers in Russia's Caucasus region of Dagestan, the national counter-terrorism agency and police said. The attacks took place in Dagestan's largest city of Makhachkala and in the coastal city of Derbent. Russia's Investigative Committee said it had opened criminal probes over "acts of terror". Dagestan is a largely Muslim region of Russia bordering Georgia and Azerbaijan. In all, six police officers had been killed and another 12 wounded in the attacks, the spokeswoman for Dagestan's interior ministry, Gayana Gariyeva, told RIA Novosti. A 66-year-old priest was killed in Derbent, the press secretary of Dagestan's interior ministry, Gariyeva told the agency.

AFP

{ WORLD } TENSIONS WITH CHINA

Won't yield to foreign powers: Philippines



The President of the Philippines said on Sunday his country would not yield to "any foreign power" after Chinese forces injured Filipino navy personnel and damaged at least two military boats with machetes, axes and hammers in a clash in the disputed South China Sea (SCS), but added the Philippines would never instigate a war. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr flew with his top generals and defence chief to the western island province of Palawan, which faces the South China Sea, to meet and award medals to navy personnel who came under assault by the Chinese coast guard last Monday as they attempted to deliver food and other supplies to an outpost. Videos and pictures of the chaotic face-off made public by the military showed Chinese coast guard personnel hitting a Philippine navy boat with a wooden bar and seizing a bag while blaring sirens and using blinding strobe lights.

→P11

Centre plans series of interventions to cool prices of food

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NEW DELHI: The central government is preparing to play a bigger role in regulating markets, both as a buyer and seller, to hold down high food prices that have hurt households, kept retail inflation above the central bank's target of 4% and prevented a cut in the benchmark interest rate.

Many of the measures being planned are aimed at boosting supplies of everyday essentials, while expanding the government's procurement of commodities, an official said.

For instance, agriculture minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has urged state governments to get pulses farmers to enrol for the Centre's programme to buy 100% of tur (pigeon pea), urad (black gram) and masur (lentil) at support prices.

Food prices, which account for half of the consumer price basket, have been sticky in a handful of items like vegetables, cereals, pulses and onion. High food prices hurt poorer households more, who tend to spend more on what they eat as a proportion of their monthly budget.

Anticipating a scarcity, the consumer affairs ministry is considering to restock a 500,000 tonne onion reserve by buying the bulb from the open market so that it can sell to consumers at cheaper rates.

Onion output dropped 20% in 2023 due to irregular rainfall. A patchy monsoon last year cramped production of winter onions in 2024 by another 20% to 19 million tonne, compared to 23.7 million tonne in the previous year.

Winter onion is crucial because it supplies up to 75% of the country's annual supply.

"The pace of onion procurement so far is on course to achieve a target 500,000 tonnes for price stabilization," the official said, declining to be named. Till June 20, the government bought 70,987 tonne of onions, which is roughly comparable with 74,071 tonne procured during the corresponding period last year.

Vegetable supplies generally decline during the summer, but a drought last year and an ongoing heatwave in large parts of the country have significantly hit availability of greens like cabbage, okra, gourd and turnips.

Prices of pulses, the commonest source of protein for most Indians, have also been elevated, rising 17% in May. On June 21, the Centre imposed caps on the quantities of two varieties of pulses — tur and chana — that retail shops and traders can store, a measure known as stockholding limit to boost supplies and curb prices. India imports up to 15% of its pulses annually; it spent nearly \$4 billion on imports in 2023-24 because domestic demand is increasing. The government is also considering sales of public stocks of wheat to contain prices after an interministerial committee headed by home minister Amit Shah reviewed the position of food inventories in state-owned granaries, the official said.

"Extreme weather has been the main reason for high food prices, which are unlikely to come down soon. Once inflation takes hold, it takes a long time to dissipate," said R Mani of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University.

{ PUSHPAK MAKES SUCCESSFUL LANDING }

Isro breaks new ground with reusable launch vehicle

The Indian Space Research Organisation has achieved a 3rd straight success in the Reusable Launch Vehicle Landing Experiment by demonstrating the autonomous landing capability of the vehicle

WHAT THE MISSION ENTAILED

The mission simulated the approach and landing interface and high-speed landing conditions for a vehicle returning from space, reaffirming Isro's expertise in acquiring the most critical technologies required for the development of a Reusable Launch Vehicle (RLV). RLV LEX-03 re-demonstrated the autonomous landing capability of the RLV under more challenging release conditions (cross range of 500m against 150m for LEX-02) and more severe wind conditions

THE WINGED VEHICLE

- Pushpak was released from an Indian Air Force Chinook Helicopter at an altitude of 4.5km from a release point 4.5km away from the runway. Pushpak autonomously executed cross-range correction manoeuvres, approached the runway and performed a precise horizontal landing at the runway centreline
- Due to this vehicle's low lift-to-drag ratio aerodynamic configuration, the landing velocity exceeded 320 kmph, compared to 260 kmph for a commercial aircraft and 280 kmph for a typical fighter aircraft
- After touchdown, the vehicle velocity was reduced to nearly 100 kmph using its brake parachute, after which the landing gear brakes were employed for deceleration and stop on the runway

KEY ACHIEVEMENT

Through this mission, the advanced guidance algorithm catering to longitudinal and lateral plane error corrections, which is essential for the future Orbital Re-entry Mission has been validated, the space agency noted

JOINT MISSION

The mission, led by Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), was a collaborative effort involving multiple Isro centres — Space Applications Centre (SAC), Isro Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network (ISTRAC) and Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR, Sriharikota.

Big battles ahead as Meta AI lands in India

Vishal Mathur

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NEW DELHI: Days after Google finally made artificial intelligence (AI) assistant Gemini available to users in India, it is Meta's turn to unlock Meta AI within WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and Messenger. If you are curious about the timing of Google's and Meta's moves, it has all to do with acquiring active users, as Microsoft builds its Copilot integration across smartphones and newer Windows PCs, alongside Apple's upcoming Apple Intelligence suite for iPhone, iPad, and Mac users.

Meta AI's strengths include searching the web, text to image tools, getting contextual inputs such as organising projects or trip itineraries in group chats, creating stickers, learning more about a post on the feed, and providing suggestions or answers to queries.

"The benefit of the way that we've rolled out Meta AI is that it's available in all of our apps, regardless of the platform. You can access it in WhatsApp, whether it's on Android or iOS. You get it on the web, and we really want to be everywhere that you are. Right now, our apps provide both the biggest distribution and most availability to the end user," Ryan Cairns, who leads engineering for AI at Meta, told HT.

India is Meta's biggest market and makes for a logical port of call. WhatsApp, according to research firm Statista, has 535.8 million users in India, with Brazil in a distant second (118.5 million). Facebook clocks 378.05 million active users here, significantly ahead of the US (193.8 million) and Indonesia (119.05 million). For Instagram, India's contribution of 362.9 million active users surpasses the US (169.65 million) and Brazil (134.6 million).

India holds similar importance for Google. Android, according to research firm StatCounter, has a 94.98% market share in the country — far ahead of a global average of around 69% share, and more than in markets including the US (around 44%) and the UK (around 49%). Gemini, now available on the Play Store, can replace Google Assistant. A Gemini Pro 1.5 model is available to AI Premium (which costs Rs 1,950 per month) subscribers.

"We're unlocking new features in Gemini Advanced such as new data analysis capabilities and file uploads, and also launching the ability to chat with Gemini in Google Messages, starting in English," says Amar Subramanya, who is Vice President, Engineering, Gemini Experiences at Google.

Localisation is important for AI assistants, for the audience



India is Meta's biggest market and makes for a logical port of call. REUTERS

in India. Google's Gemini is proficient in English and 9 Indian languages. Meta AI, for now, only understands English. OpenAI's latest GPT-4o can work with 12 Indian languages.

For Meta, this is a work in progress, but they aren't revealing specifics. Cairns referred to the fact that Meta AI's Llama 3 model is updated every couple of weeks. This means adding languages, alongside fixing hallucinations, improving accuracy, and enhancing safety, may not take much time.

This should tie in well with a push for responsible AI. This week, OpenAI's chief technology officer Mira Murati wrote in a post, "Realizing the potential of AI is not guaranteed. This means putting strong safeguards in place, reducing harmful biases, and proactively dealing with potential negative effects." In May, Google updated their

best practices for responsible use of open models such as Gemma. Earlier this month, Microsoft suffered an embarrassment of having to backpedal on an AI feature called Recall, designed to take screenshots of everything users do on newer generation Copilot+ PCs.

Preparing for an AI future OpenAI's position of strength is unique. It provides an all-important model foundation for Microsoft's Copilot and holds an important role within Apple Intelligence's jigsaw for iOS18, iPadOS18, and macOS Sequia. A smarter Siri, and more apps, will rely on integration of their latest GPT-4o models.

Some of Apple Intelligence's capabilities will include rewriting emails and drafting responses such as RSVPs, changing the tone of text you've written, recording phone calls with transcriptions, fixing

handwriting in notes, picking actionable pointers from web pages, and image generation, including with Genmojis as a language of conversation. Apple's foundation models are trained on the AXLearn framework, an open-source project released in 2023.

While Apple Intelligence is slated for release around October, Apple's making a point to not refer to it as 'artificial intelligence'. Apple CEO Tim Cook described this as a "personal intelligence system". Once it is activated in its entirety, it'll have a scale of integration not seen until now on Android, Windows PCs, or any other platform.

Apple's non-compromising approach to privacy is why it developed Private Cloud Compute servers, for tasks that cannot be done on-device. "Your request to our servers is anonymised, so your IP address is masked. Then it talks to a server that has no permanent storage, cannot log, but most importantly is running software where the image is published for security researchers to audit," explained Craig Federighi, senior vice president for Software Engineering at Apple, to HT.

OpenAI has also detailed privacy measures for queries generated from Apple devices such as when accessing ChatGPT within Siri and Writing Tools. User requests are not stored by OpenAI, and users' IP addresses will be obscured, they say.

RELATED REPORT

→P11

{ A YEAR LATER } PURGES, CHECKS

Since Wagner mutiny, Putin has upped guard, reasserted power

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MOSCOW: On a lazy summer weekend a year ago, Russia was jolted by the stunning news of an armed uprising. The swaggering chief of a Kremlin-sponsored mercenary army seized a military headquarters in the south and began marching toward Moscow to oust the Defense Ministry's leaders, accusing them of starving his force of ammunition in Ukraine.

Yevgeny Prigozhin and his soldiers-for-hire called off their "march of justice" only hours later, but the rebellion dealt a blow to President Vladimir Putin, the most serious challenge to his rule in nearly a quarter-century in power. Prigozhin's motives are still hotly debated, and the suspicious crash of the private jet that killed him and his top lieutenants exactly two months after the rebellion remains mired in mystery.

After Putin invaded Ukraine in 2022, Prigozhin's Wagner Group emerged as one of the most capable of Moscow's fighting forces. But for months in 2023, Prigozhin complained about the military brass denying his forces the needed ammunition in Ukraine.

The defence ministry's order for Wagner to sign contracts with the regular military appeared to be the final trigger for Prigozhin's rebellion on June 23-24. His mercenaries swiftly took

THE ATTEMPTED REBELLION WAS THE MOST SERIOUS CHALLENGE TO PUTIN'S RULE IN NEARLY 25 YEARS

over Russia's southern military headquarters in Rostov-on-Don, reportedly hoping to capture Shoigu and Gerasimov.

Prigozhin ordered his forces to roll toward Moscow, saying it wasn't a military coup but a "march of justice" to unseat his foes. Putin called the rebellion a "betrayal" and "treason."

But Prigozhin abruptly aborted the march hours later in an amnesty deal brokered by Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko.

Some said Prigozhin apparently hoped to persuade Putin to take his side against the military brass — a grave miscalculation. On August 23, two months to the day after the rebellion, a business jet carrying Prigozhin, 62, and his top associates crashed while flying from Moscow to St. Petersburg, killing all seven passengers and a crew of three.

A preliminary US intelligence assessment concluded there was an intentional explosion on board. The Kremlin, however, has denied involvement and rejected Western allegations.

Russian authorities formed a Wagner successor, Africa Corps, using it to expand military cooperation with countries there.

However, "despite the spectacular demise of Prigozhin himself and the problems Wagner got itself into as a result of that, the model is attractive to a lot of people in Russia," said Sam Greene of the Center for European Policy Analysis.

Prigozhin's demise sent a chilling message to Russia's elites. Then, in elections in March, Putin won another six-year term. In a subsequent cabinet shakeup, he dismissed Prigozhin's archfoe, Shoigu, as defence minister, replacing him with Andrei Belousov, an economics expert.

Shoigu, who had personal ties with Putin, was given the high-profile post of secretary of Russia's Security Council. "If Shoigu's new job had been too junior, it would have been humiliating, and could have triggered such criticism of the outgoing minister as to highlight the army's weaknesses: something to be avoided in wartime," said Tatiana Stanovaya of the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center.

At the same time, Shoigu's entourage faced purges. A long-time associate and deputy, Timur Ivanov, and several other senior military officers were arrested on corruption charges, and other senior defence ministry officials lost their jobs.

At 39.8°C, Delhi feels like 53°C as humidity soars

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NEW DELHI: Parts of the Capital received light rainfall on Sunday, making for another wet day, but prevailing maximum humidity level of 73% ensured it was a sultry day despite the maximum temperature remaining below the 40°C mark, at 39.8°C, for a second day in a row.

The maximum temperature was a degree above normal, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). It was 39.4°C on Saturday and 40.4°C on Friday.

Despite the relatively lower maximum temperature, high humidity made it an uncomfortable day to be out in the open, with the heat index (HI) or "real feel" of temperature recorded at 53°C, IMD said in its daily weather bulletin, forecasting no heatwave conditions in Delhi for the remainder of the month.

Delhi's wet-bulb temperature, another indicator of the comfort level outside, was recorded at 30°C on Sunday at 2.30pm, the highest so far this year. It was 28.4°C at the same time on Saturday and 26.6°C on Friday.

The higher the wet-bulb temperature, the more difficult it gets to stay outside and work. A wet-bulb temperature of 32°C or higher makes it difficult for even fit and acclimatised people to work outdoors for long and at a wet-bulb temperature of 35°C—the maximum threshold—humans can no longer regulate body temperatures, leading to heatstrokes and potential collapse.

According to IMD, Delhi is now likely to see drizzle to light rain till June 29, making for a wet end to the month, marked by pre-monsoon showers, with no heatwave conditions expected. IMD classifies a heatwave day as one when the maximum is over 40°C and 4.5 degrees or more above normal.



Visitors at Kartavya Path on a hot, sultry Sunday afternoon.

ARVIND YADAV/HT PHOTO

TRACKING WET-BULB TEMPERATURE: DELHI

30°C WET-BULB TEMPERATURE (AT 2.30 PM)

39.8°C TODAY'S MAX TEMPERATURE

53°C REAL FEEL TEMPERATURE

The wet-bulb temperature measures the heat's impact on human health. The principle is simple: because we cool down by sweating, the more readily sweat evaporates, the less hot you feel. But evaporation becomes harder when the air is heavy with moisture. This is why we tend to feel warmer in a bathroom right after a shower (where the air is humid) than we do once we step out. Scientists measure this by wrapping the bulb of a thermometer in a wet cloth, hence, the term wet bulb.

When the wet-bulb temperature rises, there is so much moisture in the air that sweating stops working as a means to bring down the body's excess heat. This is why prolonged exposure to a wet-bulb temperature anywhere around 35°C can be fatal, even among healthy people.

"Parts of Delhi-NCR will see light rain now till the end of the month. This will keep maximum temperature in check, but the humidity will be high," an IMD official said.

On Friday, Delhi's maximum temperature dipped below 40°C for the first time in 39 days. This was Delhi's longest streak of 40°C or higher days since 1951,

when a streak of 32 days was recorded.

According to IMD data, the Safdarjung weather station recorded 0.6mm of rainfall between 8.30am and 5.30pm. During this period, 6.9mm of rainfall was recorded at the Palam station, "trace" rain at Lodhi Road station, 0.8mm of rain at the Ridge station and

1.2mm at the Ayanagar station. Delhi's minimum was 29.6°C on Sunday, two degrees above normal. It was 28.6°C on Saturday. The minimum is likely to hover between 29°C and 31°C till the end of the month, while the maximum will oscillate between 39°C and 42°C, IMD said.

Delhi recorded three heatwave spells this summer, lasting a total of 27 days, where at least one weather station recorded a heatwave. Of these, Safdarjung, representative of Delhi's weather, recorded a heatwave on 14 days, which was the highest for Delhi in at least 13 years. The previous highest, of 13 heatwave days, at Safdarjung was recorded in 2022.

The first heatwave spell in Delhi lasted four days, from May 17 to May 20. From May 21, moist easterly winds led to a drop in temperature and heatwave conditions abating. A second spell—the harshest of the three so far—lasted for 12 days, between May 25 and June 5, with the maximum touching a high of 46.8°C on May 29. The third spell began on June 9 and lasted till June 20,

Leopard attacks cattle in Sohna

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GURUGRAM: A leopard allegedly killed three cattle and attacked other domestic animals on Saturday near the outskirts of Ghamroj village in Sohna, triggering panic among villagers. The attack is the latest in a string of similar incidents around the Aravalli ranges, villagers said.

A few villagers spotted a leopard on the outskirts of the village reportedly for the third consecutive night on Saturday, prompting them to demand night patrolling by forest department teams.

However, a search operation by a forest department team on Sunday found nothing after spending nearly five hours there. They found some pug marks but only near the leopard habitat.

Mukesh Kumar, a resident of Ghamroj village said that he was returning home at about 1am on Sunday, when he spotted a leopard entering the village. "The vil-

lagers are scared to step out at night. The leopard starts prowling only when there is shortage of water in the Aravallis. We have requested the forest and wildlife department to check if there is sufficient water for them," he said.

The residents of Bhandosi demanded that forest officials start patrolling the area at night. "My cattle were killed on Friday night. We fear for our lives and have stopped going out after dark. Once we are sure that the

leopard has returned to its habitat, life will get back to normal around here," said Ashok Kumar, a resident of Ghamroj village.

The department said they had received at least 10 calls from Bhandosi village over leopard sightings in the past one week.

Rajesh Chahal, inspector, wildlife department said the leopards may have entered the villages as the natural waterbodies in the Aravallis may have dried up.

Heat toll rises to 60 with two more deaths in 48 hours

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NEW DELHI: The toll due to the heatwave in Delhi this summer rose to 60 on Sunday, with public hospitals reporting two more deaths in the past 48 hours, officials aware of the matter said.

Illnesses due to extreme heat have been reported since April in the Capital, but deaths only began emerging in May, according to data shared by hospitals and the state government so far.

Safdarjung Hospital confirmed that two people had died of heat stress on Friday and Saturday.

The hospital admitted one more patient on Saturday, and the total number of people currently being treated for heatstroke at the hospital is 15. Of these, 10 are critically ill and on ventilator support. In total, 91 people were admitted since March, of which 67 were admitted since June 16. The hospital has reported 30 deaths so far this season, according to the data.

"The rain seems to offer some respite. The number of new admissions due to heat-related illnesses has come down significantly in the past two days," said a senior administrative official,

requesting anonymity.

The total number of heatstroke patients undergoing treatment at Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital is 27, of which 15 are critically sick. There have been 75 cumulative hospital admissions and 21 deaths so far this season, the official added.

On Thursday, Delhi health minister Saurabh Bhardwaj said in the past 48 hours, 310 people were admitted to the government hospitals with heat-related illnesses, and 14 have lost their lives owing to complications.

A Union health ministry team visited AIIMS and three other Centre-run hospitals — RML, Safdarjung and Lady Hardinge hospitals — on Thursday to take stock of the preparedness for heatstroke patients and assess the number of deaths.

Atul Goel, director general of health services, Union health ministry, constituted the three-member team on the instructions of Union health minister JP Nadda.

Meanwhile, according to the Centre's database that HT accessed earlier, there have been at least 110 confirmed heatstroke deaths in the country in the past three months. The data pertained to deaths till June 18.

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Water supply improves a bit, MLAs meet LG Saxena

Paras Singh
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NEW DELHI: Delhi's water supply improved marginally on Sunday, to 906 million gallons a day (mgd), from a seasonal low of 888mgd on Friday and 896mgd on Saturday, as water minister Atishi's indefinite hunger strike entered its third day amid the Capital still grappling with a water shortfall of around 94mgd on the day.

On Sunday, a delegation of senior AAP MPs and MLAs also met lieutenant governor VK Saxena seeking his intervention in getting raw water from Haryana for a one-week period, till the arrival of monsoon.

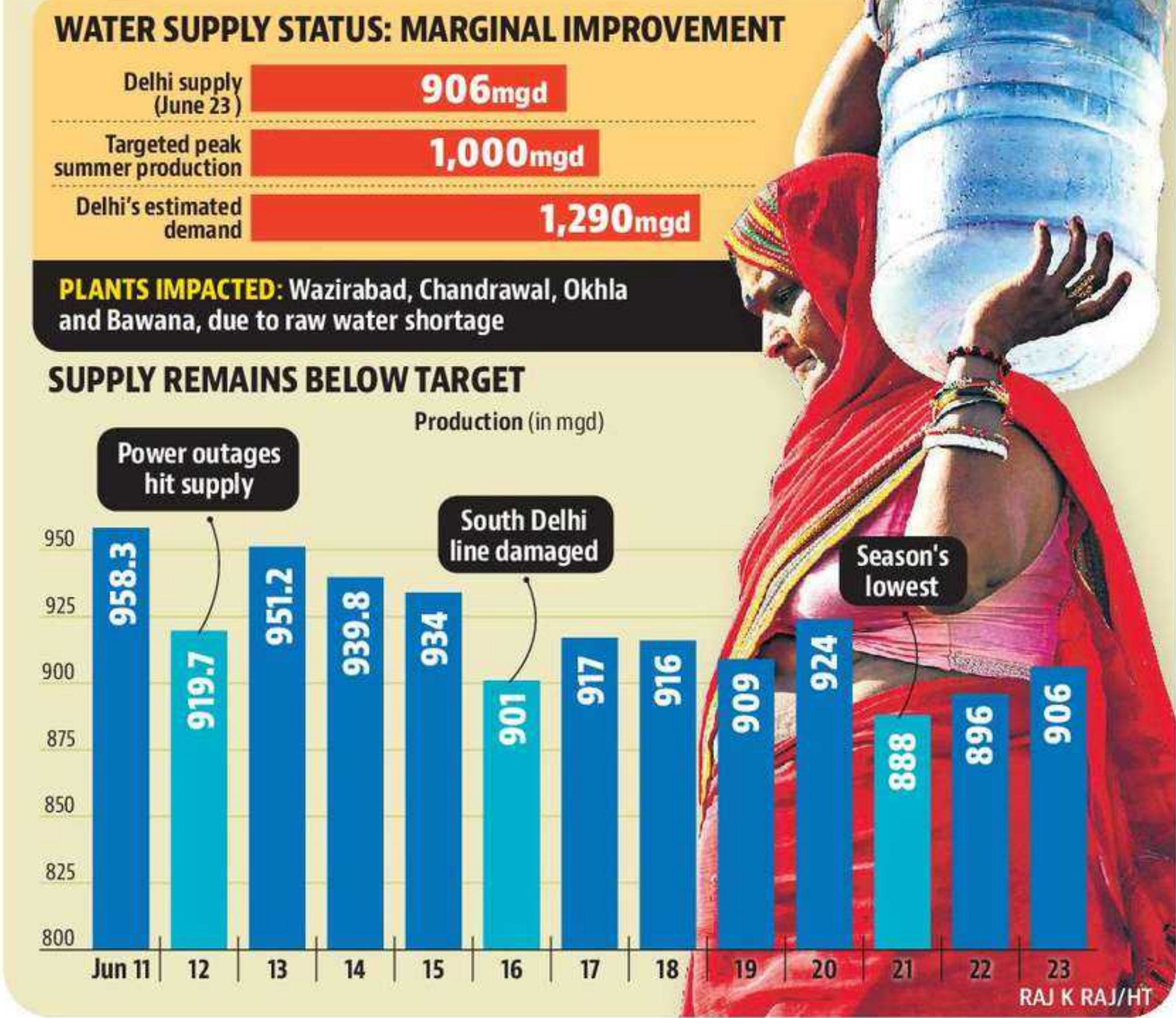
Delhi urban development minister Saurabh Bhardwaj said that the delegation had a positive discussion. "We told LG that there is a shortage of raw water coming from Haryana due to which millions of people in Delhi are facing problems. Rain has started in Shimla and Himachal. So much water will come in the next week that Haryana will not be able to stop it even if it wants to. Now it is just a matter of a week. We have requested LG to talk to the Haryana government. LG has assured that he will talk to the Haryana government," he said.

The LG secretariat, in a statement, said the meeting took place around 12.15pm.

"LG assured that he would take up the matter of release of water on humanitarian grounds with the CM of Haryana, as requested by the AAP delegation. In the meanwhile, a press release was issued by the AAP at around 3.30pm, again resorting to characteristic blame game. However, LG spoke to CM Haryana at around 4pm. The Haryana CM has assured that he would seriously look into the matter and try to help tide over the situation, to the farthest possible extent," LG's office said.

The statement added that the LG observed that share of Yamuna water among Delhi, Haryana Himachal Pradesh and others fixed by the Upper Yamuna River Board was up for renewal in 2025. The LG also said that Delhi should reduce leakages, theft and augment its own water storage capacity.

Water shortage persists



After the meeting, Sanjay Singh said, "We told LG that Delhi is getting the same amount of water today as was allocated for it in 1994. Whereas in the 30 years since, Delhi's population has increased threefold. We told him that ₹500 crore was spent on eliminating the leakage of Munak canal and 12,000 kilometres of pipeline was laid in Delhi. The Delhi government has made a lot of efforts at its level. During this, LG has also given some suggestions, on which it was agreed to work together."

Delhi has been facing varying levels of water shortfall over the past month. Though the first spell clocked towards the end of May, the supply resumed to above 1,000mgd in early June. However, it started falling again from June 8, fluctuating between 900 and 950mgd. It dipped further, hitting the season's lowest level on June 21, when supply shrank to 888mgd. There was also only 901mgd

of supply on June 16, when the main south Delhi supply line was damaged, causing a shortage in tail-end areas, leading to lower supply pressures and curtailed supply timings.

While the matter was taken up at the Supreme Court level, under the Upper Yamuna River Board, Haryana maintained that water was being provided to Delhi based on the 1994 water-sharing agreement.

Delhi water minister Atishi, during her satyagraha, said: "Delhi supply is 1,005mgd water, of which 613mgd comes from Haryana. But over the past three weeks, Haryana has reduced the quantum of water for Delhi. We are only getting 513mgd water, leading to shortage of around 100mgd. This impacts around 2.8 million people. Haryana claims that they don't have water, but pictures show Hathinkund barrage is full of water. The gates leading towards Delhi have been shut."

"I will continue my fast till the gates of Hathinkund barrage are opened," she said.

The AAP, meanwhile, said that doctors recorded a drop in Atishi's blood pressure, weight and sugar level. "Compared to the first day of the fast, the blood sugar level of the Delhi water minister has dropped by 26 units. Also, her diastolic (lower) blood pressure has also reached 56 mmHg. The urine ketone level has also turned positive," AAP said in a statement.

The Delhi Jal Board (DJB) on Sunday said production was less on account of lower water availability of raw water at its treatment plants, with the Wazirabad plant worst impacted, as it was operating at a capacity of 83mgd against a capacity of 134mgd.

Similarly, the largest water treatment plant in the city, at Haiderpur, supplied 218mgd water against a target of 241mgd. This facility supplies water to west and northwest Delhi.

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Kejriwal moves SC against HC halt on release after bail in excise case

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NEW DELHI: Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday filed an appeal in the Supreme Court, challenging the Delhi high court's order that halted his release from prison despite being granted regular bail by a trial court in the excise policy case.

The appeal highlights several procedural irregularities, seeking suspension of the high court's June 21 order so that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief could come out on bail. The high court order had come less than 24 hours after the trial court granted Kejriwal regular bail citing the lack of direct evidence against him and a potential bias in the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) approach during its probe into a money laundering case linked to alleged irregularities in the 2021-22 excise policy case.

In its petition before the top court, Kejriwal's legal team pointed out three main procedural lapses in the high court's handling of the case. It said that the high court stayed the trial court's bail order without thoroughly reviewing the impugned order. The petition went on to add that additional solicitor general (ASG) SV Raju, who appeared for ED in the case, mentioned the matter directly



Arvind Kejriwal

before the vacation bench of the high court, bypassing the protocol of mentioning it before the joint registrar first. The plea also said that although ASG Raju claimed he was not heard by the trial court, the agency had filed a comprehensive 182-page reply before the trial judge.

"The manner adopted by the High Court in staying the bail order is contrary to the said clear dicta of law laid down by this Court and would violate the basic fundamental threshold on which the bail jurisprudence is premised in our country... Petitioner is gravely aggrieved by the impugned order which has rendered justice to be a casualty and the same ought not to be continued even for a moment any further. This Hon'ble Court has repeatedly held that deprivation of liberty even for single day is one too many," said the appeal.

The plea added that Kejriwal cannot be denied the due process of law merely because he is a political figure and opposed to the present dispensation in power in the Centre.

Delhi CM embroiled in legal twists

On Friday, a vacation bench in the Delhi high court stayed the trial court's bail order, delivering a setback to the AAP and changing the legal landscape of the ongoing excise policy case. The vacation bench of justice Sudhir Kumar Jain extended the stay until the pronouncement of a final decision.

Justice Jain said: "I am reserving the order for two to three days. I have to go through the record. Until the pronouncement of the order on the stay application, the operation of the impugned trial court order shall be stayed. I will pronounce it by Tuesday (June 25)."

This legal twist came as a setback to the AAP, which had been buoyed by the previous day's favourable order and was hopeful of the imminent release of its leader, who has been in custody since March 21 following his arrest by ED, apart from a 21-day interim bail in May for Lok Sabha election campaigning.

It was also a key moment for the AAP, which will vie for a

third consecutive term in Delhi in the assembly polls scheduled in eight months. If released, Kejriwal – the face of the party and its tallest leader – will boost the party's campaign.

The case against the CM stems from allegations of irregularities in Delhi's now-scrapped excise policy of 2021-22, which the CBI began probing following a recommendation by Delhi's lieutenant governor in July 2022. Kejriwal was the third AAP leader arrested in this connection. Former deputy CM Manish Sisodia has been in jail since February 2023, and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh was granted bail by the top court in April this year after six months of custody.

The release order by the vacation trial court judge Niyay Bindu on Thursday evening came days after the general elections threw up surprisingly positive results for the Opposition but found the AAP winning no seat in Delhi and only three in Punjab.

No chance given to oppose bail: ED

ED swiftly moved the high court on Friday morning. The agency argued that the trial court's order was passed without giving the agency an adequate opportunity to oppose the bail application and despite judicial acknowledgment of the offence of money

laundering, ED, arguing through ASG Raju, also criticised the trial court for refusing to stay the bail order temporarily to allow for an appeal to a higher court.

Vacation trial judge Niyay Bindu had ordered Kejriwal's release on Thursday, citing a lack of concrete evidence linking him to the case and raising the possibility of an investigating bias on ED's part. The order highlighted that only ₹40 crore of the alleged ₹100 crore was traced, with no clear timeline for the rest. The judge also noted ED's failure to explain how the proceeds of the crime were used in the 2022 Goa assembly elections by AAP, emphasising a significant portion of the alleged amount remained untraced two years later. Challenging this order, ED argued in the high court that the trial court's bail order was "perverse" and "lopsided". The high court, however, noted the need to review the records before making a final decision on ED's plea for interim suspension of Kejriwal's bail. Until then, the high court stayed the bail order.



SIX MEN ARRESTED FOR CYBER FRAUD, IMPERSONATION OF GOVT OFFICIALS

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NEW DELHI: Six men were arrested from Delhi, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra for their alleged involvement in a scam, in which they posed as Customs and police officials and duped people of lakhs of rupees by telling them that their Aadhaar cards were used in illegal activities, Delhi Police officers aware of the matter said on Sunday.

In total, 72 cases were registered against the accused on the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal, they added.

Police said ₹32,065,003 was found credited to the accounts of one of the accused. They were all working at the behest of Chinese nationals and had provided their bank accounts for transactions to earn commission, they added.

DCP (east) Apoorva Gupta identified the accused as Ansh Kumar, 24 and Samarth, 23, Pranjal Kumar Sahni, 24, Satender Dhaker, 29, Vedant Prabhakar, 26, and Vishal Joshi, 25. DCP Gupta said that on April 30, they received a complaint from, Deepanshu Vaid, a resident of Vasundhara Enclave, saying he received a call. "The caller claimed a parcel was booked using his Aadhaar and phone numbers, and contained documents, and drugs. On the pretext of avoiding legal entanglement, the caller duped him of ₹2.49 lakh," Gupta said.

Rajouri murder suspect 'spotted' at railway station

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NEW DELHI: Nearly a week after a 26-year-old man was shot dead inside a Burger King outlet on the main road in Rajouri Garden, the Delhi Police on Sunday said it has formed several teams to look for the woman who allegedly "trapped" the victim Amit Joon to visit the restaurant, where he was shot around 40 times. The incident happened on June 18.

According to police, the woman, identified as Anu (single name), who is her 20s, spoke to a person on a US-based number, her call detail records revealed. "She spoke on a number that has been traced to California. The WhatsApp call was made around 6pm," said an inspector-rank officer aware of the case. Fugitive gangster Himanshu Bhau had claimed responsibility for Joon's murder. Bhau is based in the US.

Woman boarded Mumbai-bound train

While looking for her, investigators found a CCTV footage from Katra where Anu was seen taking a Mumbai-bound train on June 20 around 10am. She is suspected to have boarded in Gujarat. "The Delhi Police is in touch with Katra and Gujarat police for any leads on the woman. In the footage, she was seen wearing a neon green t-shirt paired with black bottoms and covering her head with a scarf. She was carrying a sea green backpack and a blue trolley bag," an officer said.

Investigators said that Anu began speaking to Joon on June 11, befriended him, and met him at least twice in the following eight days. She asked to meet him at the restaurant on the evening of the incident.

Police said Anu fled her home in Rohtak in January. Her family has filed a missing complaint. She came to Delhi and started living in a paying guest accommodation in Mukherjee Nagar. On June 18, she took the Metro from west Delhi to her PG accommodation, which she immediately vacated, saying there was a family emergency, police said.



The eatery where the incident took place. SANCHIT KHANNA/HT

Joon's family said they were not aware of the woman's presence in his life and did not question him coming to Delhi from his residence in Chhochi village, Haryana, as he often came to the state on business visits. On June 18, three men, including the two who shot Joon, waited outside the eatery. The two who shot the victim were identified as Ashish and Vicky Rindhana.

CCTVs revealed that after Joon came and sat across Anu, she took his phone. The three men entered, one of them pointed to Joon and left. The two others, Ashish and Vicky, placed the order, sat behind Joon, and began shooting. The woman left with Joon's phone. Investigation revealed that Anu was associated with the Bhau gang, and was tasked to trap Joon.

They said that on June 18, Joon first left home for Delhi around 6am but returned shortly after saying that he would leave in the evening.

Bhau gang revenge ploy

The Bhau gang has said that Joon's murder was a revenge ploy for the killing of one Shakti Singh allegedly by members of the Ashok Pradhan gang in Chhochi village, in October 2020. Singh was the nephew of former Najafgarh MLA Rambir Shokeen who is gangster Neeraj Bawana's cousin. Police have also taken Bawana and gangster Naveen Bali on custody remand to interrogate them about the murder.

Gangsters believed that Joon had shared details of Singh's presence in the area with members of the Pradhan gang as the two families were neighbours. However, Joon's brother Deepak said that he was not involved in any murder, had no criminal history.

Cabbie in Shastri Park killed in a 'melee', say investigators

Karn Pratap Singh
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NEW DELHI: The crime branch of Delhi Police arrested three people in connection with the murder of a cab driver that took place on May 30 and recovered two pistols, eight cartridges and a motorcycle allegedly used in the crime, from Gokulpuri in northeast Delhi over the past week, police said.

The trio was identified as Akash Mavi, 24, Yogesh Kumar alias Bunty, 24, and Rohit Kumar, 24, who allegedly stabbed to death a cab driver who inter-

vened when they were trying to settle a financial dispute with another man in Shastri Park. Police said the Mavi's wife was owed ₹17,000 by the man, from during their days working together at a call centre, and they were planning to abduct him to make him pay up.

However, upon noticing the group carrying a bag of knives and sticks, the man and his friend fled the spot and the trio was confronted by passersby, including the cab driver. "The cabbie, Jaunar Abbas, began assaulting the three and one of them fell uncon-

scious. When the cabbie turned to Mavi and started hitting him, Mavi took out a long knife and stabbed him multiple times in his chest and abdomen. Abbas suffered at least seven stab wounds, one of which punctured his lungs and claimed his life," a police officer, asking not to be named, said.

DCP (crime) Sanjay Kumar Sain said it was a blind murder case. "The team spent several days doing route mapping of the suspects, activated their human intelligence network, and generated technical information to solve the case," he said.

13-year-old apprehended for hoax bomb threat to Delhi-Dubai flight

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: A 13-year-old boy was apprehended from Pithoragarh in Uttarakhand for allegedly sending an email to the Delhi airport falsely claiming that a bomb had been planted in a Dubai-bound flight on June 17, police said on Sunday.

The boy was apprehended and his custody was later handed over to his parents, deputy commissioner of police (IGI Airport) Usha Rangnani said. He sent the mail "just for fun" after being influenced by the

news of another teenager who made a hoax bomb threat call a few days ago, the DCP said. The boy created an email account, sent the bomb threat email and deleted the account, police said. The mobile phone used in the offence was seized.

Rangnani said that on June 17, the Delhi airport authorities lodged a complaint with the IGI Airport police regarding the bomb threat for the flight scheduled to Dubai on July 18. The Delhi airport was put on a high alert and a full emergency was declared. "The guidelines and protocol laid in the stan-

dard operating procedure (SOP) were properly followed to ensure the safety and security of the passengers. After proper verification, the threat email was found to be a hoax. A case was registered and investigation was taken up," she said.

"Through technical investigation, investigators learnt that the email was sent through a mobile phone and the email account that was deleted immediately after the threat mail was sent. Further probe revealed the location of the sender, a class 9 student, in Pithoragarh," Rangnani said.

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I. NO-4293485A Sep Barela Dinesh Sattarsingh R/O At Post - Vajjapur, Tehsil-Chopda, Dist-Jalgaon, Maharashtra-425107 have changed my son's name from Siddharth to Siddharth Dinesh Barela for all future purposes vide affidavit before Public Notary Delhi dt: 22-06-2024

I. SONIA Verma W/O Late Sh. Vishal Verma R/O WZ-100, first floor, Gali No.1, Old Sahib Puru Sant Gari, New Delhi-110018 have change my name from Neelawati to Sonia Verma after marriage for future, however I declare that Neelawati and Sonia Verma are one and the same person.

I. SURAJ, S/O Chhotu Lal, R/O House No-381 First Floor, Back Side, Ward-4, Ready-made Market, Mehrauli, New Delhi-110030, Have Changed My Name And Shall Hereafter Be Known As Suraj Choudhary.

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1. State NCT of Delhi Through SDM District Shahdara, DC Office, Nand Nagri, Delhi-92 2. Ram Kumar, R/O H. No. N-61, 1/11937, Street No. 4, 6, Near Shiv Temple, Udhampur, Panchsheel Garden, Naveen Shahdara, Delhi-32 3. Geeta Sharma W/o Manoj Sharma R/O 29B, Chandralok, Shahdara, Delhi-32 Respondent
Citation for Publication of Petition Under Section 276 of The Indian Succession Act, 1923, for grant of Probate of the Will dated 10.02.2019 of the deceased Mrs. Gita Devi, W/o Late Sh. Ram Kumar, R/O H. No. N-61, 1/11937, Street No. 4, 6, Near Shiv Temple, Udhampur, Panchsheel Garden, Naveen Shahdara, Delhi-32
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(Seal)
(RAMESH KUMAR-II)
ADJ-01/SHD R/O Courts, Delhi

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Indian Ports Association

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Email: ipa@nic.in

IPA/PGAV/Recruitment-ED/2024

Date: 24.06.2024

Indian Ports Association (IPA) invites applications till 23.07.2024 from eligible candidates for appointment to the post of Executive Director in IPA on deputation basis. The detailed advertisement may be seen on <http://www.ipa.nic.in> under the head-Career.
Chief Administrative Officer(i/c)

INTEGRAL COACH FACTORY, CHENNAI - 38

The following e-tender is published in IREPS website. Firms are requested to login to www.ireps.gov.in and quote against the tender. Manual quotations will not be entertained for the tender.

Open Tender No.	Short Description of the item	Tender Value (Rs.)	QTY	Date of Tender Closing	Date of Tender Opening
2024499211466	Works Contract for Segregation and Disposal of Heterogeneous scrap accumulated behind shop - 32 in Furnishing Division.	31,15,908/-	200 working days	15.07.2024 at 14.45 hrs.	15.07.2024 at 15.00 hrs.

Hindi version of the above Advertisement is available in <https://icf.indianrailways.gov.in/>.
Chief Safety Officer/Fur

INTEGRAL COACH FACTORY, CHENNAI - 38

INDIAN RAILWAYS
TENDER Notice No.ICF/EL/Cons/2024-25 dt. 24.06.2024
For and on behalf of The President of India, The Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer / Maintenance / Shell, Integral Coach Factory, invites E-Tender for the following works:

Tender No.	Name of the Work	Approx. Value in Lakhs Rs.	EMD (Rupees)	Tender Closing Date and time
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
2023245211153R	EL-W-883 Electrical works for improvements to Fire hydrant system in shell factory with GLR and Pump room.	31.19	62,400/-	24.07.2024 at 15.30 hrs.

Website for submission of offer : www.ireps.gov.in
Hindi version of the above tender notification is available in: <https://icf.indianrailways.gov.in>

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of male **Age:** Approx 28-30 years, **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Long, **Built:** Thin, **Height:** 5'5", was wearing Checkdard Shirt, Black Pant and Chappal in feet, was found at Footpath near Mool Chand Metro Station, Amar Colony, Delhi on 18.06.2024. In this regard a **DD No. 33A, dated 19.06.2024, has been lodged at P.S. Amar Colony, Delhi.** His dead body has been preserved in AIIMS Hospital Mortuary, New Delhi. Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone no.

SHO
P.S. Amar Colony, Delhi
DP/7980/SE/2024 **Ph.: 011-26412194, 8750870931**

Theft, vandalism taint public infra

Paras Singh
paras@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Barely a few metres from the newly constructed Parliament building — right outside the ministry of power on Rafi Marg — a series of six EV charging stations are lying unused, as EV charging guns on the modules are missing due to theft and thick copper cables chopped off by those looking to make a quick buck. “India’s first public EV charging station plaza”, as an inauguration plaque dated July 20, 2022, reads, is currently acting as a parking space with charging modules covered in dust and signage warning people “you are under CCTV surveillance”.

But the EV charging station at Rafi Marg is not the only such public installation to have met such a fate. The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has installed around 100 EV charging stations, but charging guns of more than a third of these have been stolen. During a spot check, HT found a major EV charging station near Kali Mandir completely run over by vandals. The three charging stations are missing key components and the shed now serves as a shelter for the homeless, with personal goods and bags hanging from the charging ports.

Vandalism, theft and dysfunctional public street infrastructure are hampering the high-security zone of Lutyens’ Delhi, and similar maintenance problems plague other installations, such as escalators in public spaces, even in heavy-footfall areas like Connaught Place, and water ATMs running dry during the ongoing intense heatwave.

NDMC vice-chairperson Satish Upadhyay bemoaned the “absence of civic sense and public responsibility”, saying the NDMC faced theft and vandalism in escalators, charging stations, nozzles of fountains and flower pots installed ahead of the G20 Summit. Thefts extended to garbage bins and other street furniture too, he said.

EV charging stations

NDMC has over 100 EV charging stations and the civic body plans to expand the number of such



(Above) Non-functional EV charging stations at Gole Market have turned into a homeless shelter, with the charging points acting as placeholders for clothes; (right) A broken EV charging machine near the power ministry building.

ARVIND YADAV/HT PHOTOS

installations to 350. However, maintenance and security pose key problems.

During a spot check, HT found dysfunctional EV charging stations at Rafi Marg outside the power ministry, outside the Chelmsford Club, near Kali Mandir, Gole Market and Jain Bhavan. Each site had similar patterns, of missing parts, stolen charging guns and damaged goods.

A few hundred metres away, another charging station near Jain Bhavan was in a similar state of dysfunction. Radhe Shyam, 42, who works in Gole Market, said that the station was vandalised over seven months ago. “Copper wires are sold in scrap. The charging site has been encroached for parking space,” he said.

To be sure, copper wire theft is not limited to Delhi or Indian cities, with reports of thefts in the US, where there is more widespread use of electric vehi-

cles.

The NDMC has filed complaints of missing charging guns in over 30 such sites.

Gopal Krishan, who heads the New Delhi RWA federation, said that copper is sold at ₹600 per kilogram. “People steal and sell these wires in scrap. They may get ₹400, but the damage caused to infrastructure is much more expensive,” he said.

Connaught Place escalators

The problem of thefts and lack of maintenance is not uncommon even in the heart of the city at Connaught Place.

There are several pedestrian subways around the outer circle of Connaught Place and all the subways were completely revamped under the Smart City mission in 2017-18. However, most of the 22 escalators connecting places such as Super Bazar, Shankar Market, Statesman House, KG Marg, Bara-



khamba and Janpath were found non-functional.

In March, NDMC said that 11 of the 22 escalators were repaired. But during a spot check on June 17, HT found several parts of escalators missing in the sections near Shankar Market, Barakhamba Road and KG Marg.

Chirag Srivastava, 35, a tourist visiting Delhi from Bengaluru, said that he was surprised at the lack of maintenance in the central commercial hub of the Capital. “So many foreign tourists

visit Connaught Place but there is lack of cleanliness, non-functional escalators and even stench due to urination. It was a disappointment,” Srivastava said.

An NDMC official said that more than 70 police complaints have been filed regarding theft of escalator parts.

The spokesperson for Delhi Police did not respond to requests for comment.

New Delhi Traders Association (NDTA) secretary Vikram Badhwar said that 99% of the escalators in the area are non-

functional and complaints have no effect. “Public money is wasted. It also affects the market image when the maintenance is zero. We start with very high standards while implementing these schemes, but there is no long-term upkeep.”

Badhwar said that traders at Connaught Place pay one of the highest property taxes, but get little in return. “These escalators and subways were revamped around the 2010 Commonwealth Games. They keep getting vandalised and mostly remain non-



(Above) Escalators at the Shankar Market subway are defunct due to theft of key components, with an open section of the same turning into a dump yard; (left) A water ATM on Ashoka Road is shut during peak summer due to lack of a maintenance agency.

operational.”

Non-functional water ATMs in peak summer

Amid an intense heatwave and unprecedented temperature levels in Delhi, scores of water ATMs meant to dispense cold purified drinking water for pedestrians and passersby in markets and key junctions of New Delhi are either lying dysfunctional or gathering dust. NDMC installed 75 water ATMs in various parts of the Lutyens Delhi but most have fallen into disrepair, either suffering from damaged parts or becoming completely non-operational.

Ashok Randhawa, who heads the Sarojini Nagar Mini Market Traders Association, said that the NDMC installed four water ATMs in Sarojini Nagar Market three years ago, but all of them were in poor shape.

During a spot check, HT found that the water ATMs located near Gurudwara Bangla

Sahib, Shankar Market, Pant Marg, Gol Dak Khana and Mandir Marg were found to be out of order. Many units were locked and others had an accumulation of leaves and debris.

Water ATMs face the twin problems of vandalism and a lack of a maintenance agency.

PK Datta, retired professor from JNU, with specialisation in historical and contemporary identity formations in modern India and Indian political and social thought, said: “Civic sense needs to be cultivated by the public authorities, especially in a megapolis like Delhi where there is very rapid pace of migration and urbanisation. Civic sense is not something that will fall from the heavens. For people who are not familiar with the urban street infrastructure in megapolis, civic authorities have to actively work to engage them.”

Upadhyay said that NDMC is making attempts to rectify the situation at multiple sites.

Delhiwale

EXPERIENCE YOUR CITY LIKE NEVER BEFORE

Mayank Austen Soofi



Season’s first rain puddle

A walk along three monuments

{ PUBLIC INTEREST }

The season’s first rain puddle has momentarily transformed into a receptacle for Delhi’s history. The dirty water is reflecting the centuries-old Dilli Gate, one of the 14 gateways punctuating the 5.5-mile-long wall of the Walled City of Shahjahanabad. Most of those stone darwazas succumbed to a violent past, along with much of the wall. But you may visit three of the four surviving gateways over a single afternoon. Strung along Fasil Road, they lie close to each other, their interiors easily discerned from afar. All three are flanked by luscious peepal trees.

An arched edifice composed of turrets, niches, battlements, benches and yards, **Ajmeri Gate** signposted the way to the sufi town of Ajmer. Today it lies trapped between the New Delhi railway station; the GB Road red light and the Hauz Qazi market. Homeless citizens exploit the wide border wall for afternoon siesta. In the long-ago times, dacoits in the wilds that existed right outside the city walls would sometimes end up killing the travellers, dumping the bodies into the canal that used to

come out of Ajmeri Gate.

It is possible to climb **Turkman Gate**, but the access to the staircase is through the police post tucked behind the gateway, next to the sufi dargah that gives its name to the darwaza. Originally, every gateway of the Walled City wall had a police post. The gates would be closed in the evening after the maghreeb prayers, and the armed “nigeban” would guard the various levels of the darwaza all through the night holding their ballan (batons), swords and mashal (torches).

Similar to the two gateways, **Dilli Gate** (see photo) nevertheless looks more beautiful. The dramatic staircase is hailed with the spirit of Elsinore, the famous castle of Shakespeare’s greatest play. The mind’s eye can easily visualise a gloomy Hamlet standing atop the staircase waiting for his father’s ghost to appear.

The gateway is employed as a landing point by pigeons; sometimes they sit motionless for very many minutes, as if they were sculpted stones. Forced to function like a traffic island, the darwaza marks the starting point of a traffic-heavy road that stretches out to the Red Fort, and further beyond to Kashmir Gate, the Walled City’s fourth and final surviving gateway.



READ: For more stories by Mayank Austen Soofi, scan the QR code

GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE

E-TENDER NOTICE

e-Tender (Online tenders) are invited from the manufacturers or their sole authorized distributors/sole agents for the purchase of following items:

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTICE						
Sr. No.	Equipment/Tender Id Ref. No.	Quantity	Department	Earnest Money (in Rupees)	Due date of receipt of EMD & Bid	Due date of Opening of tender
1.	Chlorhexidine Hand Rub (coloured) with dispenser. Contains Chlorhexidine gluconate solution IP 2.5 percent v/v equivalent to chlorhexidine gluconate 0.5 percent w/v plus Isopropyl alcohol IP 70 percent, v/v, 500 ml bottle. 2024_GMCH_80365_1 GMCH/PH-PRO/585-MED/2024	35000 bottles	Pharmacy	112000/-	08.07.2024	09.07.2024
2.	Inj. Antisnake venom serum 10 ml vial IV 2024_GMCH_80356_1 GMCH/PH-PRO/20-MED/2024	3600 vials	Pharmacy	46780/-	08.07.2024	09.07.2024
3.	Anti-Haemophilic Factor VIII Recombinant (monoclonal purified nanofilter) 500 IU 2024_GMCH_80358_1 GMCH/PH-PRO/5288-MED/2024	1200 vials	Pharmacy	214200/-	08.07.2024	09.07.2024
4.	Total Parenteral Nutrition (TPN) (Vinfusion)-Triple chamber bag with each bag containing amino acid solution with all essential and non-essential amino acids 1000 ml (+/- 20ml) 2024_GMCH_80754_1 GMCH/PH-PRO/2024	650 packs	Pharmacy	111610/-	08.07.2024	09.07.2024
TENDER NOTICE						
Sr. No.	Equipment/Tender Id Ref. No.	Quantity	Department	Earnest Money (in Rupees)	Due date of receipt of EMD & Bid	Due date of Opening of tender
5.	Inj. Heparin 25000 IU vial IV 2024_GMCH_80370_1 GMCH/PH-PRO/111-MED/2024	5500 vials	Pharmacy	42675/-	15.07.2024	16.07.2024
6.	Inj. IVIG 5gm (100ml) 2024_GMCH_80367_1 GMCH/PH-PRO/589-MED/2024	350 vials	Pharmacy	106575/-	15.07.2024	16.07.2024
7.	Tab. Hydroxy Chloroquine 200 mg 2024_GMCH_80369_1 GMCH/PH-PRO/MED-432/2024	96000 tablets	Pharmacy	13100/-	15.07.2024	16.07.2024
8.	Tablet Deferasirox 500 mg 2024_GMCH_80368_1 GMCH/PH-PRO/MED(3)-673/2024	45000 Tablets	Pharmacy	20100/-	15.07.2024	16.07.2024
9.	Inj. Vecuronium Bromide 10mg/vial (IV) 2024_GMCH_80360_1 GMCH/PH-PRO/359-MED/2024	15480 vials	Pharmacy	45260/-	15.07.2024	16.07.2024
10.	Sevoflurane 250 ml (Inhalation anesthesia) 2024_GMCH_80357_1 GMCH/PH-PRO/206-MED/2024	1460 bottles	Pharmacy	275940/-	15.07.2024	16.07.2024
11.	Inj. Oxytocin IP 5 IU/ml, 1ml amp (SC,IM, Slow IV) 2024_GMCH_80191_1 GMCH/PH-PRO/173-MED/2024	56000 amps	Pharmacy	18200/-	16.07.2024	17.07.2024
12.	Inj. Carboplatin 450mg (IV) 2024_GMCH_80119_1 GMCH/PH-PRO/552-MED/2024	1000 vials	Pharmacy	68000/-	16.07.2024	17.07.2024
13.	Human Anti-Haemophilic factor IX (plasma derived) 1200 IU 2024_GMCH_80335_1 GMCH/PH-PRO/622-MED/2024	60 vials	Pharmacy	32054/-	16.07.2024	17.07.2024
14.	Inj. Oxaliplatin 50 mg (IV infusion) 2024_GMCH_80351_1 GMCH/PH-PRO/516-MED/2024	2500 vials	Pharmacy	28613/-	16.07.2024	17.07.2024
15.	Cap Ferrous fumarate plus Folic Acid (elemental Iron 100 mg plus 1.5 mg folic acid) 2024_GMCH_80409_1 GMCH/PH-PRO/MED-88/2024	1080000 caps	Pharmacy	33300/-	16.07.2024	17.07.2024
16.	Inj. Normal Saline 3 ltr. Pack (Irrigation fluid) 2024_GMCH_80461_1 GMCH/PH-PRO/168-MED/2024	3750 bottles	Pharmacy	16360/-	16.07.2024	17.07.2024
17.	Tab. Propranolol long acting /SR 40 mg 2024_GMCH_80460_1 GMCH/PH-PRO/MED-480/2024	150000 tablets	Pharmacy	13450/-	17.07.2024	18.07.2024
18.	Lignocaine Jelly 2 percent, 30 gm tube 2024_GMCH_80466_1 GMCH/PH-PRO/MED-335/2024	25400 tubes	Pharmacy	15000/-	17.07.2024	18.07.2024
19.	Hydroxyethylstarch (130/0.4) 6 percent w/v, 500 ml 2024_GMCH_80541_1 GMCH/PH-PRO/464-MED/2024	1800 amps	Pharmacy	27000/-	17.07.2024	18.07.2024
20.	Inj. Vancomycin 1 gm IV infusion 2024_GMCH_80683_1 GMCH/PH-PRO/389-MED/2024	3165 vials	Pharmacy	14630/-	17.07.2024	18.07.2024
21.	Tab. B Complex (Thiamine 10 mg, Riboflavin 10 mg, Pyridoxine 3 mg, Niacinamide 45 mg, Calcium pantothenate 50 mg and Cyanocobalamin 15 mcg) 2024_GMCH_80692_1 GMCH/PH-PRO/MED-234/2024	785000 tablets	Pharmacy	22000/-	17.07.2024	18.07.2024
22.	Well Type Ionization Chamber alongwith Electrometer 2024_GMCH_80758_1 GMCH/PH-PRO/V3/42	01 No.	Radiation Oncology	70000/-	15.07.2024	16.07.2024

Terms & Conditions:

- Tender documents for the above item can be obtained from website.
- The Competent authority reserves all rights to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason.
- Tender Document of GMCH, after duly signed & stamped, along with original brochure of the manufacturer and EMD, in the shape of FDR /DD /Bankers Cheque/bank Guarantee, (separate for each item), must be submitted in physical form, in the office of Procurement Branch, Room No. 228, Block - D, First Floor, GMCH, Sector 32, Chandigarh on or before the dates as noted against each item by 1400 hours on any working day. Tenders without submission of EMD and Tender Document in physical form shall be rejected straightway.
- The tenders must be submitted online on or before the dates as noted against each item by 1400 hours. The bid guarantee and technical bid will be opened on due date for Sr. No. 1 to 21 at 1100 hours and for Sr. No. 22 at 1500 hours. No tender shall be accepted in physical form.
- Opening of Price Bid to be intimated to all the qualified bidders separately.
- The tenderer can approach the Computer Programmer-cum-Nodal Officer, e-tendering, GMCH-32, Chandigarh on any working day, in case any query/clarification regarding e-tendering process (Ph. No. 0172-2601023-27 Extn, 2112) or (Ph. No. 0172-2740641) of IT Dept., UT, Chandigarh.
- The information regarding these tenders are also available at the following web sites:-
<http://gmch.gov.in> <http://etenders.chd.nic.in/nicgep/app>

Medical Superintendent
For Director Principal
Govt. Medical College Hospital, Chandigarh

SECTOR 32, CHANDIGARH

Prajwal's brother arrested over sexual assault charge

Arun Dev
letters@hindustantimes.com

BENGALURU: The police in Karnataka on Sunday arrested Janata Dal (Secular) or JD(S) member of legislative council (MLC) Suraj Revanna, brother of suspended lawmaker Prajwal Revanna, for allegedly sexually assaulting a party worker, even as the accused's father and former minister HD Revanna alleged a "conspiracy" and said he has "faith" in the judiciary.

The case was later handed over to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) for a detailed probe. The development came at a time when Suraj's brother, Prajwal, is also in judicial custody on charges of rape and sexual assault.

On Saturday evening, a case was registered against Suraj at Holenarasipura Rural Police Station in Hassan after a JD(S) worker, in a complaint to the director general of police's office, accused the MLC of sexually assaulting him at his farmhouse in Ghannikada on June 16.

"Suraj has been arrested. Later in the day, the Karnataka government transferred the case to CID, following which he was taken to the agency's office in Bengaluru for probe," police



Suraj Revanna leaves the hospital after a medical test, in Hassan on Sunday.

said. The FIR against Suraj on Saturday was lodged a day after the complainant JD(S) worker was booked for allegedly trying to extort ₹5 crore from the party leader, by threatening to file a "false" sexual assault complaint against him.

According to Hassan superintendent of police (SP) Mohammed Sujetha, Suraj has booked under sections 377 (unnatural offences), 506 (criminal intimidation), 342 (wrongful confinement), and 34 (acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention) of the Indian Penal Code.

On Saturday, Suraj rejected

the allegations, saying: "They are part of a political conspiracy. An FIR has also been lodged against the complainant."

In his complaint, the JD(S) worker alleged he was invited to Suraj's farmhouse on the pretext of discussing political growth and opportunities but was sexually assaulted instead.

"We exchanged phone numbers during the Lok Sabha poll campaign. Suraj later invited me to his farmhouse in Ghannikada on June 16. Suraj touched me inappropriately and promised political favours in exchange for my cooperation. Despite my objection, he proceeded with the

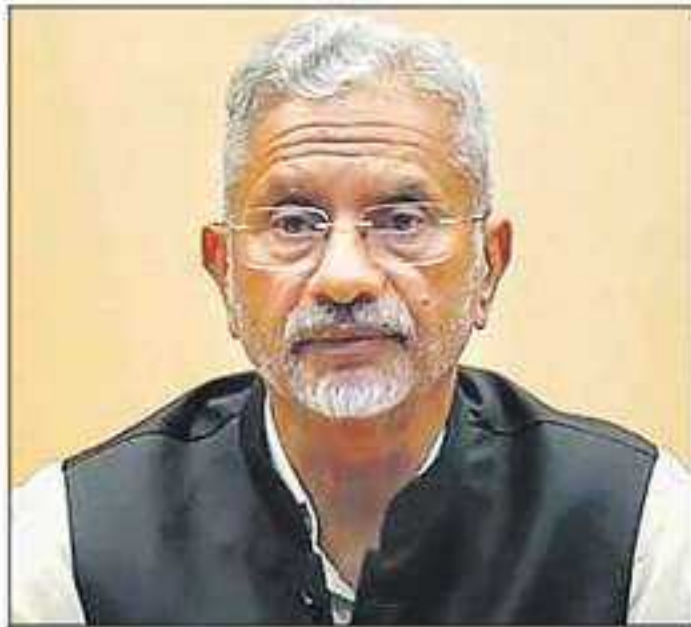
assault, threatening me throughout the ordeal," the FIR, seen by HT, said.

The victim also alleged that he was threatened by a close aide of Suraj, offered a job and ₹2 crore to stay silent on the matter.

However, according to the complaint filed by Suraj's aide HL Shivakumar on Friday, the JD(S) worker met the MLC six months ago and again in June, seeking a job. Suraj said that it won't be possible for him to help the man get a job at present "but it might be considered in the future", the complaint said, adding that the man then demanded ₹5 crore from Suraj and threatened to accuse the MLC of sexually assaulting him if the money was not paid.

Suraj's father HD Revanna termed the allegations against his eldest son as a "conspiracy" and said he has faith in God and the judiciary. "I won't react to anything. Let the (CID) do it (investigation)," he said.

State home minister G Parameshwara, however, dismissed the allegation of a "conspiracy". "There is no conspiracy involved. There was a complaint, and on that basis, they summoned Suraj Revanna. They inquired and found there may be some truth in it," he said.



S Jaishankar
JAISHANKAR TO REVIEW STRATEGIC TIES DURING UAE VISIT, SAYS MEA

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: External affairs minister S Jaishankar on Sunday visited the United Arab Emirates (UAE), one of India's closest strategic partners in West Asia, to assess bilateral relations and chart out new areas for cooperation.

Jaishankar would hold talks with his counterpart Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan on a wide range of issues under the bilateral partnership, the external affairs ministry said in a statement. "This visit will provide an opportunity to review the entire spectrum of (the) comprehensive strategic partnership between India and UAE and regional and global developments," it said.

The Israel-Hamas conflict and its fallout on the extended region were expected to figure in Jaishankar's discussions, people familiar with the matter said on condition of anonymity.

The two nations elevated their relations to a strategic partnership in 2015 and signed a comprehensive economic partnership agreement in February 2022. The trade deal is expected to increase bilateral shipments to \$100 billion within five years.

India's main exports to the UAE include precious metals, jewellery, minerals and refined petroleum products, food items such as cereals, sugar, fruits, vegetables, tea, meat and textiles. India's key imports from the UAE include oil and petroleum products, precious metals and chemicals. India imported 21,664 million tonnes of crude oil from the UAE in 2021-22.

Cong calls meeting of MPs to forge strategy

Saubhadra Chatterji
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NEW DELHI: The Congress has called a meeting of its Lok Sabha lawmakers at 10am on Monday to discuss strategy for the Parliament session, party leaders said on Sunday.



The Congress meet will be an hour before Lok Sabha session

The entire Opposition, meanwhile, has decided to meet at the previous location of the Mahatma Gandhi statue -- the statue has now been moved to a new site named Prerna Sthal -- before entering the Lok Sabha as a mark of protest against the relocation.

The exclusive meeting of the Congress's Lok Sabha MPs on Monday will come an hour before the first session of the 18th Lok Sabha starts at 11am. Even as the first two days are earmarked for oath-taking of the members, a section of the party might launch a protest against the NEET fiasco from Monday itself.

The government has taken a number of steps, including initiating a CBI inquiry and shunting out the director general of the NTA, the organisation responsible for conducting the exams, but Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said that "in the NEET scam, the buck stops at the doorstep of the top echelons of the Modi government", indicating that the Opposition will target the NDA brass.

"In the NEET Scam, the buck stops at the doorstep of the top echelons of the Modi Govt. Shuffling the bureaucrats is no

solution to the endemic problem in the Education system rotted by the BJP. NTA was projected to be an autonomous body, but in reality was made to serve the devious interests of the BJP/RSS. For students to get Justice, Modi Govt must be held accountable," Kharge posted on X.

The Congress president said, "Now, NEET-PG Exam has been postponed. 4 examinations have been either cancelled/ postponed in the past 10 days. Paper Leaks, Corruption, Irregularities and Education Mafia has infiltrated our Education system. This belated white-washing exercise is of NO consequence as countless youth continue to suffer!"

Many Opposition MPs have also decided to carry the now-famous pocket version of the Constitution with them in the Lok Sabha on Monday after the

edition was widely used by senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during the 2024 Lok Sabha election campaign. The Opposition's plan might also include going to the Gandhi statue at Prerna Sthal before entering Parliament, people familiar with the matter said.

With the Rajya Sabha set to begin only on Thursday, no meeting of the INDIA bloc has been planned yet. But the leaders will have to take a call on whether the Opposition will field its candidate for the Lok Sabha speaker's election on June 26.

"It is clear the BJP is not going to give the deputy speaker's post to the Opposition. In that case, we have to consider if we should field our candidate for the election to the speaker's post," said a senior Congress strategist. A Left leader, aware of the developments said, no final decision has been taken yet. "It has to be decided by the floor leaders of the INDIA group," the leader said.

For many decades, the Lok Sabha speaker has been elected unanimously without any election.

The Opposition has reminded the ruling establishment that the deputy speaker's post -- which was not filled up in the 17th Lok Sabha -- should go to the Opposition. But Opposition leaders indicated that the BJP might give it to its ally TDP. "In this case, we have to decide if we want to fight the speaker's election," said a senior leader.

Vaishnav asks rail staff to speed up Kavach installation

Neha LM Tripathi
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NEW DELHI: Five days after the train accident in West Bengal, railways minister Ashwini Vaishnav on Saturday held a review meeting and asked his team to speed up the installation of Kavach, an automatic train protection system that could have helped prevent the collision that killed 10 people and injured over 40.



Ashwini Vaishnav

"The minister reviewed the progress of Kavach on Saturday in which officials presented the progress of version 4.0 of Kavach," an official close to the development said on condition of anonymity.

After the development of Kavach 4.0 and its certification, Indian Railways will scale up installation rapidly, a second official said. More manufacturers are developing the system, which is in various stages of development, he said.

"The Indian Railways will complete installing Kavach on Delhi-Mumbai and Delhi-Howrah route by March next year. Tenders for another 6,000 km route are expected to be floated by December," he added, wishing to remain unnamed.

On June 17, a stationary Kanchanjunga Express bound for Sealdah station in Kolkata was hit by a goods train in northern Bengal, smashing into the rear of the passenger train, killing 10 people and injuring at least 41. The accident could have been avoided if Kavach was installed on the route.

Out of the railway network of over 68,000km, Kavach is installed in 1500km. The national transporter started installing the system

in 2016.

Kavach can trigger automatic application of brakes in case of an emergency when the train driver fails to act in time, ensuring safe operations even in bad weather. The system works whenever two trains are on the same track.

The railways is looking for more manufacturers for faster installation of the system, officials said. The three approved manufacturers are in advanced stages of testing Kavach version 4.0, the second official said. "In the review meeting, Vaishnav directed that Kavach installation should be taken up in a planned manner in mission mode on all locos as soon as it is ready," he added.

The current system, Kavach 3.2, will be upgraded to Kavach 4.0, officials said. Most major railway systems in the world moved to automatic train protection systems in the 1980s. Indian Railway, however, started this journey with approval of the first version of the system in 2016. It tested to achieve SIL4 in 2019, the highest level of safety certification. The system was approved as a national protection system in 2020. Despite the pandemic, further testing continued, and in 2021, version 3.2 of the system was certified and adapted

{ RAHUL GANDHI } CONGRESS LOK SABHA MP

When I faced abuse, your love protected me. You were my refuge... I never felt for even a moment that you doubted me.

-In a letter to people of Wayanad

Shah calls for creation of lakes, use of Isro data for flood control

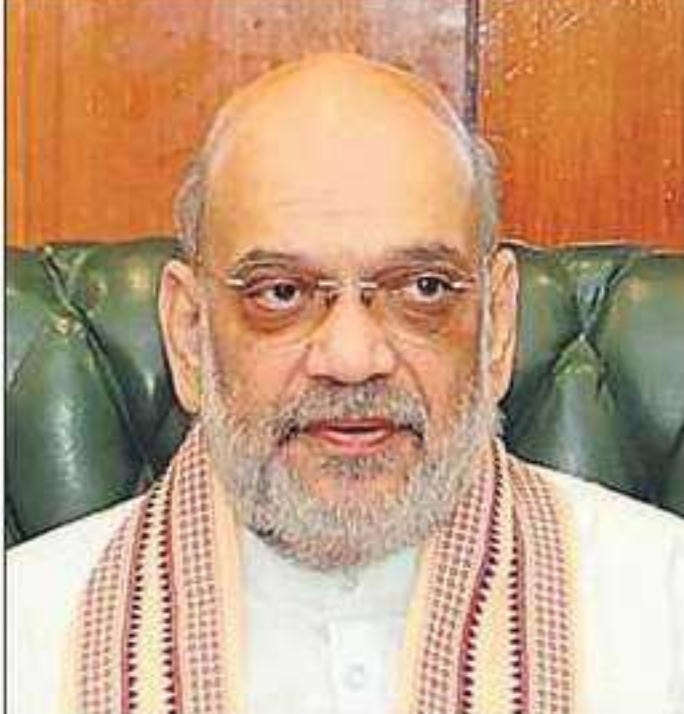
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NEW DELHI: At least 50 large lakes will have to be dug in India's northeast to divert the waters of the Brahmaputra to tackle recurring floods and boost agriculture, irrigation and tourism, Union home minister Amit Shah directed on Sunday, also asking the India Meteorological Department and the Central Water Commission to complete re-calibrating all equipment used in forecasting floods at the earliest.

Chairing a review meeting on flood preparedness during the monsoon, Shah emphasised on optimum use of satellite imagery provided by the Indian Space Research Organisation for flood and water management.

He also took stock of preparations to deal with glacial lake outburst floods.

The meeting was attended by Union Jal Shakti minister CR Paatli, junior home minister Nityanand Rai, secretaries and officials of ministries and



Amit Shah

departments of river development and Ganga rejuvenation, earth sciences, environment, forest and climate change, road transport and highways, National Disaster Management Authority, National Disaster Response Force, among others.

"The home minister said efforts should be made to upgrade the forecast system of water level of rivers for better flood management. He said at least 50 large ponds should be created in the northeast so that the water of the Brahmaputra can be diverted and stored in

these ponds," the home ministry said in a statement.

This "will help develop agriculture, irrigation and tourism in those areas at a low cost and also help tackle floods, eventually benefiting the local economy", the statement said.

Recurring flooding of the Brahmaputra is a major problem in Assam and the northeast region as it claims scores of lives, damages property and inundates thousands of hectares of land every year.

The natural drainage system should be an integral part of the design of road construction to deal with their inundation in case of floods, Shah said. He instructed the departments concerned to conduct a detailed study of the recent floods in Sikkim and Manipur and submit a report.

Apart from floods, the Union home minister also spoke about the forest fires in the meeting and instructed the NDMA and the Union environment ministry to take precautionary measures to prevent wildfires.

Forces kill Maoist in Chhattisgarh gunfight

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RAIPUR: A suspected Maoist was killed in an encounter with security forces in Chhattisgarh's Dhamtari district on Sunday, police said.

Superintendent of Police (SP), Dhamtari, Anjneya Varshney said that the encounter broke out around 3:30pm and lasted for an hour in a forest near Muhkot-Aamjhar villages under Kharali police station limits.

"A team of District Reserve Guard (DRG) was out on an anti-naxal operation and when the patrolling team was cordoning off Muhkot-Aamjhar, the exchange of fire broke out between the two sides. Initially, the Maoists escaped into the jungle but later after search, one body was found from the spot," SP Varshney said, adding, "We have also recovered a self-loading rifle (SLR), Maoist literature and daily use items from the spot. The identity of the suspected Maoist is yet to be ascertained."

With this incident, the number of Maoists killed in separate encounters with security forces in the state so far this year has reached 133.

Of them, 131 were gunned down in Bastar division, comprising seven districts, while two others were killed in Dhamtari district which falls under Raipur division.

A SELF-LOADING RIFLE AND DAILY USE ITEMS WERE RECOVERED FROM THE SPOT, SP SAID, ADDING THAT THE MAOIST'S IDENTITY IS NOT YET KNOWN

Earlier in the day, two jawans of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)'s elite guerrilla unit Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) were killed by Maoists in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast between Silger and Tekulagudem, under the limits of Jagarunda Police Station in the Sukma district of Chhattisgarh.

Since December, 2023, there has been a clear uptick in aggression from security forces, which have created 17 new forward camps in what were thus far thought to be core Maoist-controlled areas.

Earlier on June 15, eight Maoists and an STF (special task force) constable were killed in an encounter in the Narayanpur district of Chhattisgarh.

On June 7, seven Maoists were killed in Narayanpur in an encounter with security forces, while on May 23, seven others were killed in Narayanpur-Bijapur inter-district border. On May 10, 12 Maoists were killed in an encounter in Bijapur district.



Haryana revises income limit for OBC creamy layer
CHANDIGARH: Haryana chief minister Nayab Singh Saini on Sunday announced that the annual income limit for identifying persons in the 'creamy layer' among Other Backward Classes (OBCs) for the purpose of reservation in public employment and educational institutions has been increased from ₹6 lakh to ₹8 lakh by the state government. Saini said this is similar to the Centre norm and income from salary and agriculture will not be included in this limit. Saini announced the fresh criteria at OBC Morcha Sarv Samaj Samrasta Sammelan in Gurugram on Sunday.

Body of terrorist killed along LoC recovered in J&K
SRINAGAR: Security forces on Sunday recovered body of a terrorist killed in an anti-infiltration operation along the Line of Control in Uri sector of Jammu and Kashmir. "One terrorist has been killed in the ongoing anti-infiltration Operation that was launched on 22 Jun in the Uri Sector; Operations are continuing," Srinagar-based Chinara Corps said in a post on X.

UP DSP demoted as constable over extramarital affair with colleague

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LUCKNOW: The Uttar Pradesh Police has demoted a deputy superintendent of police (DSP) to his initial rank of a constable over his alleged extramarital affair with a subordinate, a senior officer said, adding the "rarest of rare" action aimed at sending a strong message to the disciplined state police force.

KRIPA SHANKAR KANNAUJIYA WAS CAUGHT WITH A WOMAN CONSTABLE IN A KANPUR HOTEL ON JULY 6, 2021

The demotion order against Kripa Shankar Kannaujiya on Saturday came after he was found guilty in a departmental inquiry nearly three years after he was caught with a woman constable in a Kanpur hotel.

"The police department had recommended major punishment for the DSP and further decisions were taken by the state authorities," Uttar Pradesh director general of police (DGP) Prashant Kumar said, adding the "rarest of

the rare action" will send a strong message to anyone who is part of the disciplined UP police force.

Following the order issued by the UP police additional director general (ADG), administration, Kannaujiya was demoted to his original rank of a constable in a Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) in Gorakhpur.

A senior police officer, requesting anonymity, said: "The DSP was then posted as circle officer (CO) of Bighapur police in Unnao when he suddenly disappeared after taking leave from the then

11-YR-OLD OBJECTS TO HIS SISTER'S MOLESTATION IN UP, KILLED: POLICE

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BALLIA (UP): An 11-year-old boy was murdered allegedly by a man who used to molest his teen sister, police officers familiar with the matter said on Sunday.

The body of the boy was found near a school under Ubhaon police station area, the officers added on condition of anonymity.

On the basis of a complaint filed by the victim's father, a case of murder has been registered against Himanshu Yadav, a resident of Bhadaura Tarchharpur village, and his unknown companion, the police officers said. According to the officers aware of the developments, Yadav killed the boy after he opposed the molestation of his 16-year-old sister. It was not immediately clear if Yadav and his associate have been arrested.

IMD issues rain alert for Uttarakhand, cautions those living near water bodies

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MUSOORIE: An orange alert has been issued for heavy rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms in parts of Uttarakhand over the coming week, India Meteorological Department (IMD) Dehradun centre said in its weekly forecast on Sunday.

The weather forecaster also cautioned residents living close to water bodies in the hills of possible sudden rise in water levels in rivulets and streams due to heavy rain.

"Light to moderate rain/thundershower is very likely to occur at many places on June 24 and at most places thereafter over Uttarakhand till June 30," Bikram Singh, director, IMD Dehradun Centre, said.

An orange alert has been issued for heavy to intense rainfall (110 to 200 mm), accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds ranging from 40 to 50



People take a stroll during a drizzle in Mussoorie on Sunday.

kmph at isolated places in Nainital, Champawat, Pithoragarh and Bageshwar districts on June 24 to 26 and June 29, Singh said, adding that heavy rainfall is also predicted in the hills on June 27, 28 and 30.

According to IMD Dehradun centre, minor landslides and falling of rocks triggered by heavy rain at isolated places could result in roadblocks, washout of highways and link roads, impacting those living in vulnerable areas. A sudden

increase in water levels in rivulets and streams in isolated places in hills could prove risky for settlements near such water bodies, Met department said.

In the past 24 hours, the state has recorded 2.1mm of rainfall, with Nainital recording the highest 10.7mm of rain followed by 6.8mm in Haridwar and 4.2mm in Bageshwar district, IMD officials said.

Mussoorie recorded a light spell of rain on Sunday, bringing down the temperatures.

Another bridge collapses in Bihar, third in a week
MOTIHARI: An under-construction small bridge collapsed in East Champaran district on Sunday in third such incident in Bihar in less than a week, officials said, adding no casualty was reported. The 16-metre-long bridge in Motihari was being built by the rural works department (RWD). "A departmental inquiry has been ordered," RWD additional chief secretary Dipak Kumar Singh told news agency PTI.

48% of 1,563 students who got grace marks skip NEET retest

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NEW DELHI: Only 813 or 52% of the 1,563 candidates who were initially awarded grace marks in the National Eligibility Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) before they were withdrawn last week appeared for a retest on Sunday, the National Testing Agency (NTA) said, as affected students, who did not opt for a re-examination, were allowed to retain their actual scores without the grace marks.

While none of the two candidates from Chandigarh appeared for the exam, 219 out of 602 sat for the retest in Chhattisgarh, one (sole eligible candidate) in Gujarat, 287 out of 494 in Haryana and 234 out of 464 in Meghalaya.

The data was provided by NTA in a statement after the exam was conducted across seven centres in the five states and Union territory.

The retest for the 1,563 students was held days after the Centre scrapped the grace marks awarded to them, taking the first step in dispelling the chaos engulfing India's premier medical entrance examination that threatens to jeopardise the futures of hundreds of thousands of children amid allegations of paper leaks.

The grace marks were awarded to the candidates on account of loss of time during the May 5 exam.

On June 13, the Centre took the Supreme Court that it proposed to withdraw the scorecards issued to 1,563 students and allow them to either appear for a fresh exam or retain their actual scores without the grace marks.

The chaos over the crucial medical exam has sparked sweeping protests across India as thousands of students have hit the streets against this year's examination process and opposition parties have called for scrapping of the examination and a Supreme Court-monitored probe into the allegations of paper leak.

However, a senior official in the Union education ministry, who did not wish to be identified, on Sunday said that incidents of malpractices are "localised" or "isolated" and it is not fair to jeopardise careers of lakhs of candidates who cleared the exam rightfully.

Last week, Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan rejected the allegations of paper leak and reiterated the government's commitment to safeguard the interest of students.

On Saturday, the Centre removed NTA director general Subodh Kumar Singh and appointed IAS officer Pradeep Singh Kharola. A seven-member committee formed to probe the case will hold its first meet on Monday.

Meanwhile, NTA debarred 17 students, who appeared for the medical exam on May 5 in Bihar, over suspicion of malpractices, following a report from the state police's Economic Offences Unit.



Students protest against NEET-UG retest in Rajkot on Sunday.

ANI

'Perfect scorers' say new exam tougher, unsure of topping it

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GURUGRAM: The six students from the same Haryana centre, who scored full marks in the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) earlier, took a retest on Sunday and said they found the exam more challenging than the previous iteration, with four of them who spoke to HT saying they were unsure if they will be able to repeat their perfect scores.

The six were part of a group that took the test at Bahadurgarh's Hardayal Public School and their results, a perfect 720/720, became controversial since all of them were at the same centre – raising fears of the possible use of unfair means – and all had attempted a flawed question that earned them up to 140 extra points in grace marks.

Sunday's retest was held for all 1,563, who were awarded those grace marks following a direction from the Supreme Court.

One of the students, a resident of Jhajjar, who was among the six, expressed frustration over the exam's increased difficulty. "The exam was tougher compared to previous years. The chemistry section was particularly challenging, and I could not finish it, leaving two questions unanswered, which will impact my overall percentage," he said. He now expects his score to drop to around 650.

He described the situation as "one of those nightmares"

I am not confident about scoring full marks. One of the major reasons was the pressure that affected my performance

ONE OF THE TOP SCORERS

where achieving a perfect score and securing a direct medical seat could potentially lead to a lower ranking due to the exam's difficulty.

Another top scorer, also from Jhajjar, was uncertain about achieving a perfect score again as well. "I have performed well, but am not completely confident about scoring full marks. One of the major reasons was the tension and pressure that affected my performance and confidence," she said. She added that she would be content with an overall score of 700.

A third top performer from Jhajjar said that he found the physics and biology questions particularly challenging.

Despite this, he remained optimistic about his performance. "I am not sure about my score yet, but I feel I did better than last time. Even without grace marks, I hope to be close to it," he said.

A 17-year-old resident of Kheri Hosdarpur village, who previously scored 720/720, also expressed dissatisfaction with his performance.

"I am unsure about my score. Although I performed well, I anticipate a decrease due to the difficulty of the physics and chemistry sections," he said, asking not to be named.

He added that he would consider taking a gap year to prepare again if necessary.

The students appeared for the retest at two different centres in Jhajjar. Officials reported that 312 students took the exam at DAV Public School and 182 at Kendriya Vidyalaya.

Family members revealed that the decision to retake the exam was imposed under the threat of losing grace marks.

The mother of a top performer highlighted the undue pressure on the young aspirants, saying, "Tough times have hit us, through no fault of our children."

Parents accompanied their children to the exam centres, anxiously waiting outside. The atmosphere was tense, with heavy police deployment and extra staff monitoring the exam centres. Union education ministry officials said later in the day that nearly half of the 1,563 students did not appear for the retest and their old scores will be retained but without the grace marks. Those who did take the test will be scored based on their performance on Sunday.

OPPN TARGETS PM OVER EXAM CHAOS, SEEKS APOLOGY FOR ASPIRANTS

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NEW DELHI: Opposition parties on Sunday targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the conduct of the National Eligibility Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) and cancellation of other competitive examinations, saying lakhs of students deserve an "apology" from him and "justice" from the Union government.

The Opposition, which has been demanding Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation over the controversy around alleged paper leaks, also said a rejig in the National Testing Agency (NTA), which conducts the competitive exams, is "no solution to the endemic problem in the education system rotted by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)".

On Saturday, the Centre removed NTA director general Subodh Kumar Singh and appointed IAS officer Pradeep Singh Kharola for the role.

In a post on X on Sunday, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge said: "In the NEET Scam, the buck stops at the doorstep of the top echelons of the Modi Govt. Shuffling the bureaucrats is no solution to the endemic problem in the Education system rotted by the BJP."

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi also took to X and said that under the BJP rule, the entire education system has been handed over to the mafia and the corrupt.

Tamil Nadu chief minister M K Stalin said the cancellation of NEET-PG examination and the UGC-NET were not one-off events "but the final nails in the coffin of an incompetent and broken system of centralised selection".

AJIMM chief Asaduddin Owaisi said the youngsters of the country deserve an apology from Modi and "justice" from the government.

While there was no immediate reaction from the Bharatiya Janata Party on the latest remarks, the Centre had earlier accused the Opposition of "spreading lies on a sensitive issue without knowing the facts".

Shuffling the bureaucrats is no solution to the endemic problem

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE,
Congress chief

{ **BIHAR** } FOUR ARRESTED

CBI officers probing paper leak attacked

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PATNA: A Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) team probing the Union Grants Commission-National Eligibility Test (UGC-NET) paper leak case was allegedly attacked by residents in a village in Bihar's Nawada district, police said on Sunday, adding four people were arrested following a complaint from the federal agency.

The incident occurred on Saturday evening when a four-member team of CBI from New Delhi led by an inspector-rank officer had gone to Kasiyadh village under Rajaouli police station to investigate the UGC-NET paper leak case. As soon as the team reached the village, local residents heckled the CBI sleuths and vandalised their vehicles, suspecting them to be "fake" officers, a police officer said.

"A CBI team reached Nawada on Saturday evening to investigate the UGC-NET paper leak case. Without informing the local police, they reached the village where they were attacked by villagers who mistook them for fake officers," Rajesh Kumar, station house officer (SHO), Rajouli police

LOCAL RESIDENTS HECKLED THE CBI SLEUTHS OVER SUSPICION THAT THEY WERE 'FAKE' OFFICERS, POLICE SAID ON SUNDAY

station, said. "As we came to know about the incident, police reached the spot and pacified people."

Based on a complaint from the federal agency, local police arrested four people and registered a first information report (FIR) on charges of causing disruption in government work and assault, among others, Kumar said. In a statement on Sunday evening, Nawada superintendent of police (SP) Ambrish Rahul said: "The CBI team came without any information. We got a message around 4.30 pm (on Saturday) that a CBI team has been surrounded by local villagers and there has been exchange of blows. A local police team reached there in 8-10 minutes and took control of situation..."

Another police officer said the

CBI team had come to Nawada tracking some suspects based on the location of cell phone numbers allegedly involved in the UGC-NET paper leak case.

"The investigation on the basis of mobile numbers is going on. People involved in the case will be arrested," the officer said, requesting anonymity. Police remained tight-lipped about the suspects the CBI team had come looking for in Nawada.

CBI registered an FIR into UGC-NET paper leak case on Thursday against unidentified people on the recommendation of the Union education ministry.

The UGC-NET, which determines the eligibility for the award of junior research fellowship and admission to PhD in Indian universities and colleges, was conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) on June 18 across the country. Around 900,000 students had appeared for the prestigious national exam held twice every year. The very next day, however, the education ministry cancelled the exam saying the integrity of the exam might have been compromised, citing reports from cybercrime agencies.

J'khand exam centres under Bihar cops' radar amid probe

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RANCHI: Five Jharkhand schools, which served as examination centres for the National Eligibility Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG), have come under the scanner of Bihar Police over their possible involvement in paper leaks, officials said on Sunday.

While Oasis School in Hazaribagh in Jharkhand is on the top of the list of suspected centres, St Xavier's School, DAV Public School, Holy Cross School and Vivekananda Central School – all in the city – are also under the radar.

The development comes a day after the Economic Offences Unit (EOU) of Bihar Police, which is probing alleged irregularities in the conduct of the crucial medical exam, detained five people, including a key suspect, from Bihar in Deoghar in Jharkhand.

A total of 18 people have been arrested by the EOU in connection with the case that has escalated the controversy over allegations of paper leak, malpractice, manipulation of examination centres, and discrepancies in declaration of results in the premier medical entrance examination across the country this year. One of the arrested persons had earlier confessed to receiving a leaked question paper, police said.

"The EOU team suspects that the paper leaked from one of the



Economic Offences Unit officials leave with the accused arrested in the NEET paper leak case, in Patna, on Sunday.

PTI

five schools where NEET-UG was held and is probing in that direction. The schools are Oasis school, St Xavier's School, DAV Public School, Holy Cross School and Vivekananda Central School in Hazaribagh. Oasis is on top of the suspicion list but nothing concrete has been found so far," a police officer in Hazaribagh said, seeking anonymity.

An EOU officer, who did not wish to be identified, said: "The principal of Oasis School in Hazaribagh told the probing team that the digital locks (of lockers where question papers were kept) were opened after getting the consent of senior officials authorised by the National Testing Agency (which conducts the exam)."

Besides, the mode of medical students at the Ranchi Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) in the

alleged paper leak is also being probed, the officials said. "Our team also visited RIMS to ascertain if any student from the institute was hired to solve the questions," the officer said.

Ranchi superintendent of police Chandan Kumar Sinha said the EOU team also visited the office of a courier agency, under Sadar police station area, which was assigned to deliver the question papers to designated banks.

On Saturday, EOU had submitted a detailed investigation report on the NEET-UG paper leak case to the Union education ministry, providing information on the probe conducted in Bihar and neighbouring states up to June 21. It named those arrested and the gangs involved in the leak, without offering personal opinions, people aware of the details earlier said.

Mayawati reinstates nephew Akash as her political successor

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LUCKNOW: Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati on Sunday reappointed her nephew Akash Anand as the party's national coordinator and reinstated him as her political heir, less than two months after she had dropped the 28-year-old as her successor till he attained "full maturity".

In an official statement issued after the party's national-level meeting in Lucknow, the BSP said that Mayawati has decided to give Anand an opportunity to work with "full maturity".

"BSP's national president Mayawati has once again given Akash Anand a chance to work in the party with full maturity. He will continue to hold all his posts in the party as before. That is, he will remain Mayawati's only successor along with being the party's national coordinator," the statement said.

The statement quoted Mayawati as saying that she was hopeful of Anand now emerging as a "fully mature" leader. "I am hopeful that now he (Anand) will definitely emerge as a fully mature leader at every level in the interest of his party and the movement. The people of the party will also now encourage him by giving him more respect and honour than before. So that now he can live up to all my expectations in the future," the statement said.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, a senior BSP leader said that apart from monitoring the party's campaign in the election-bound states of Maharashtra, Haryana and Jharkhand as well as the



Akash Anand

assembly bypolls in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Punjab, Anand has also been given the responsibility of strengthening the party's organisational structure.

At a national-level meeting of party leaders and office bearers in Lucknow last December, Mayawati declared Anand as her successor just ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. However, on May 7, when different parts of the country voted during the third phase of LS polls, she revoked her decision. "Along with promoting other people in the party, I had declared Shri Akash Anand as the National Coordinator and my successor, but in the larger interest of the party and the movement, he is being divested of both these important responsibilities until he attains full maturity," she said in a post at the time.

Akash had launched the party's campaign on April 6. On April 28, he was booked along with four others for allegedly using objectionable language at a rally in Sitapur. He was booked under sections IPC 171C (undue influence at elections), 153B (imputation, assertions prejudicial to national integration) and 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) and section 125 of Representation of People Act.

{ GREENPIECE } POTTED PLANTS OFFER JOY TO ONLY US, NOT THE PLANET

NEW DELHI: I've been plagued by guilt for the last month and a half. Like many urban Indians, I also nurture over a hundred potted plants. Some are over a decade old. During the ongoing heatwave, I've had to water them twice a day. I am bothered by the simple fact that I am pouring one of the most precious resources, water, into creatures with low ecological value.

Potted plants are primary ornamental, and exotic-from other countries, not yet naturalized in India. They offer some shade, dust traps, the occasional space for a small nest. Plus beauty and joy. This isn't the same value as a plant that is native, able to hold soil, support fungi and become part of a larger whole by participating in a botanical family comprising grasses, creepers and more. Potted plants offer joy to only us, not the planet. And the take up a lot of water over their lifetime.

The Masterplan of Delhi, 2041, allocates each citizen 50-50 gallons, or about 12 to 15 mid-size buckets of water daily. Given the plants I currently have, at least six buckets go to water these beauties without much function. We're in a climate crisis, conflated with a water crisis. Most urban poor buy water for their frugal but essential needs. My six buckets would be more than welcomed by them. Should the haves permanently give up their plant pets? I say yes. We should still enjoy native plants, but the summer of 24 should nudge us to value new ideas of sharing and sacrificing. **BHARATI CHATURVEDI**

(The writer is the founder and director of Chintan Environmental Research and Action Groups)

Kin of excavator driver camp at Mumbai cave-in site

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MUMBAI: Balchandra Yadav has not slept a wink for 25 days. Despite the onslaught of the scorching sun and heavy rains, the 65-year-old has held vigil beneath the Versova bridge on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad Highway in Mumbai, the spot where his son Rakesh Yadav, an excavator driver, disappeared after a tunnel collapse on May 29.

"Hope is everything. It will be enough even if I get to see one of my child's bones and take him home for a proper cremation," said Balchandra, who rushed to Mumbai from Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh.

Rakesh was working on the Mumbai Metropolitan Region

Development Authority's (MMRDA) ₹1,600-crore Surya scheme. He was employed under a contractor engaged by Larsen & Toubro (L&T), the implementing agency for the project. L&T did not respond to requests for comment on the matter.

He was digging a tunnel shaft 60-feet below the earth around 9.30pm when the ground above him collapsed, trapping him. The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) dug through the debris for two days to locate Rakesh. But the operation was called off, reportedly because they were finding it difficult to penetrate the ground owing to the presence of strong sea currents.

The government has allotted Balchandra and other members of Rakesh's family – his wife Sush-



Rakesh Yadav's family at the site of the accident.

ila, their two adolescent children, and his brother Durgesh, who also arrived from Azamgarh after hearing about the accident – a room at a nearby lodge. But they have spent all their days and nights at the site, in the hope of finding something, anything that may point to Rakesh's whereabouts.

Their hopes received a fresh lease of life on June 14, when

TN hooch toll rises to 56, bodies buried without autopsy exhumed

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CHENNAI: The toll in the hooch tragedy in Kallakurichi district of Tamil Nadu increased to 56 after one more person died in the hospital on Sunday, even as officials exhumed the bodies that were buried without a post-mortem examination to confirm consumption of spurious liquor as the cause of death for providing ex gratia, people familiar with the matter said.

A total of 216 patients are currently undergoing treatment in various hospitals, officials said. Hundreds of people, mostly men, consumed the spurious liquor, sold as packet arrack, at Karunapuram village in Kallakurichi on June 18. The next



Relatives mourn near mortal remains of the deceased.

day, as the illicit liquor, allegedly mixed with toxic methanol, started taking effect, many people complained of vomiting, dizziness and sudden loss of vision and hearing, officials said.

While some of them died at their houses, many were rushed to the Kallakurichi Government Medical College Hospital as well as hospitals in Salem, Tiruvannamalai and Puducherry.

On Sunday, the Kallakurichi district administration along with a team of doctors were seen exhuming the bodies of those who died after consuming illicit liquor to conduct autopsy.

Victims were 'careless', says Kamal Haasan

Actor-politician Kamal Haasan on Sunday said the victims of the hooch tragedy were "careless" and "exceeded their limit."

"I cannot say I have no sympathies for these victims. But it needs to be understood that exceeded their limit, and they have been careless. They have to be careful, they have to take care of their health," he said. "It has to be occasional drinking, social drinking, if at all."

{ **BY UAPA TRIBUNAL** }

LTTE issued notice over ban extension

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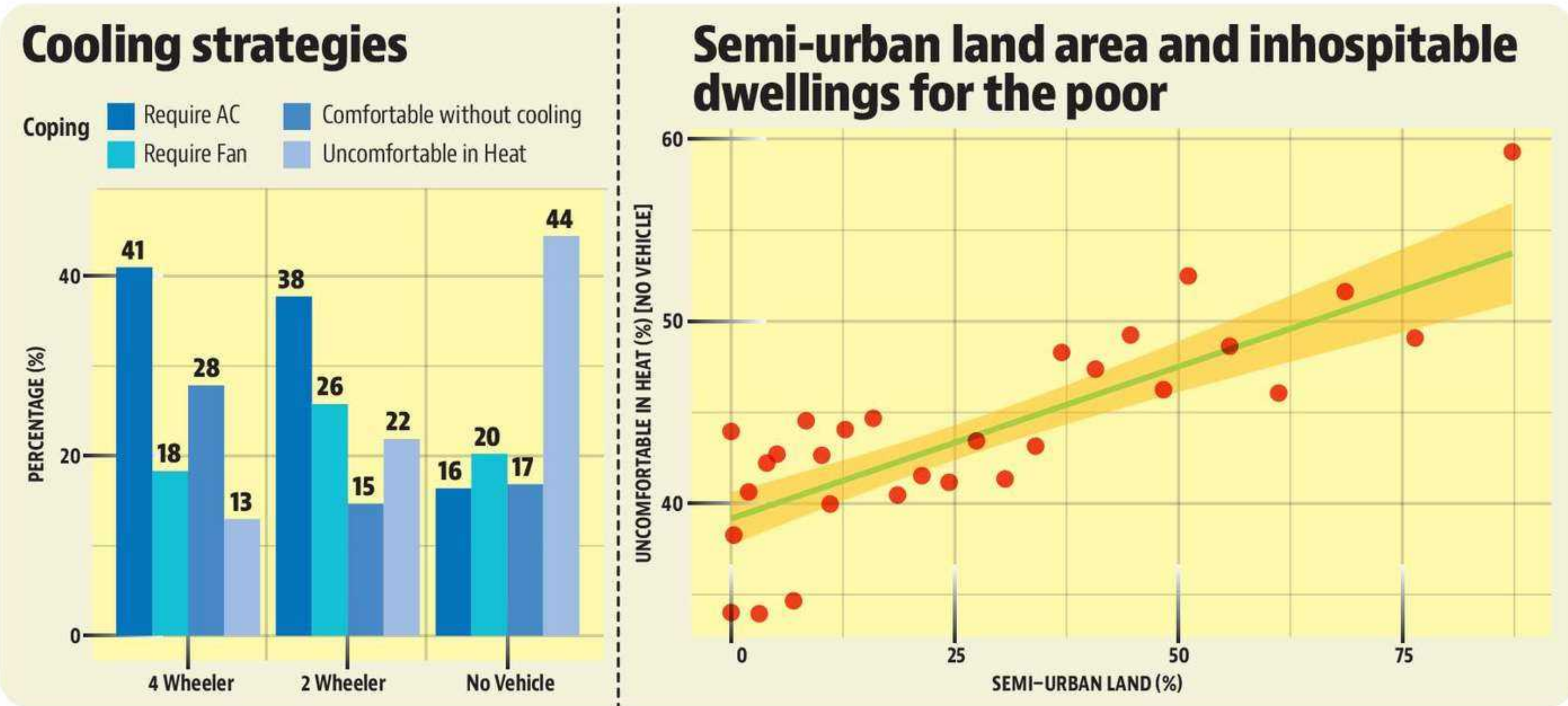
NEW DELHI: An unlawful activities (prevention) act (UAPA) tribunal has issued a show cause notice to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), asking the Sri Lanka-based outfit as to why it should not be declared "unlawful" and why the recent extension of five-year ban on it by the Union government should not be confirmed.

The tribunal, comprising Justice Manmeet Pritham Singh Arora of the Delhi high court, has sought a written response from LTTE within 30 days, according to the show cause notice issued by the tribunal on

June 14 and published by the ministry of home affairs (MHA).

Extending the five-year ban on the organisation on May 14, the MHA in a notification said LTTE's objective for a separate homeland (Tamil Eelam) for all Tamils threatens the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India, and falls within the ambit of unlawful activities.

"The pro-LTTE groups/elements continue to foster a separatist tendency amongst the masses and enhance the support base for LTTE in India and particularly in Tamil Nadu, which will ultimately have a strong disintegrating influence over the territorial integrity of India," the notice said.



How economic inequality magnifies exposure to crippling, extreme heat

Neelanjana Sircar
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NEW DELHI : A prolonged heat spell baking large swathes of northern India has finally subsided a bit. But this should not make anyone forget the challenges posed to Indian society by extreme temperatures. This is not a one-time occurrence. In 2021, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a global body convened by the United Nations, concluded that South Asia is particularly vulnerable to more frequent heatwaves and extreme temperatures, where “working conditions will be exacerbated and daytime outdoor work will become dangerous.”

The previous article in this series discussed the role of heat on health outcomes, but equally important is the question of how citizens cope with heat — i.e., their capacity to mitigate the negative impacts of extreme temperatures.

To ascertain how people are coping with rising temperatures, Artha Global's Centre for Rapid Insights (CRI) conducted a nationwide survey reaching 13,326 respondents across 421 of India's 543 parliamentary con-

stituencies between 6th and 8th June. We asked the following question: “In the afternoon, when it is hot outside, is the inside of your home comfortable?” Respondents were able to answer whether the inside of their home was comfortable or uncomfortable, as well as the strategy (air conditioner (AC)/cooler or fan) used, if necessary, to make the home comfortable. Overall, about 32% of the sample said that their home is hot and uncomfortable, displaying wide-spread lack of capacity to deal with extreme temperatures in India

Among those who can make the inside of their home comfortable, 42% require an air conditioner or cooler — suggesting that coping with the heat often requires energy intensive and cost intensive cooling strategies.

We also analyse the relationship between coping with heat and asset wealth based on vehicular ownership (whether the person owns a four-wheeler such as a car, two-wheeler such as a scooter, or no vehicle). We find that only about one in eight people who own a four-wheeler find their home uncomfortable in extreme heat, while nearly

half of those with no vehicle find the inside of their home to be uncomfortable. On the flip side, approximately 40% of people who own either a two-wheeler or four-wheeler require an AC or cooler to keep their homes comfortable, whereas only about 16% of those without a vehicle use either an AC or cooler. The data points to the extreme heat exposure faced by the poor, even without direct sun exposure in their own homes. The sheer number of people with two-wheelers or four-wheelers who require an AC or cooler to make their homes comfortable speaks to the cost prohibitive nature of coping and cooling strategies in India.

The role of urban spaces and dense, built up area in exacerbating heat is well-known. The IPCC notes that dense, South Asian cities are particularly vulnerable, as cities can create “heat islands” that are 2°C hotter than surrounding areas.

To put some data to the problem, we ran a statistical model to estimate our results down the assembly constituency level and paired this with satellite data prepared and shared by the European Space Agency's (ESA)

Global Human Settlement Layer (GHSL) program on the built up area inside the assembly constituency.

Of particular interest is semi-urban land (a combination of semi-dense and suburban settlements) as these are less likely to be planned areas, and thus particularly vulnerable to heat exposure. In the figure, we restrict the sample to our poorest respondents (those with no vehicle) and assess the relationship between the percentage of semi-urban land in an assembly constituency and the percentage of people who find their homes to be hot and uncomfortable in the assembly constituency. The figure shows a strong relationship between the two: our model predicts that moving from 5% semi-urban land area (25th percentile) to 50% semi-urban land area (80th percentile) increases the likelihood of living in an uncomfortable home by 20% for the poorest in our sample.

These data point to an urgent need to invest in infrastructure (particularly urban infrastructure) that reduces the burden on the most vulnerable citizens to find cooling strategies. This includes investing in trees and

green cover, updating and enforcing building codes on proper roofing and heat resistant insulation, and developing open spaces. Furthermore, as episodes of extreme heat become more frequent and incomes grow, AC usage is certain to increase — generating huge energy demand and further climate impacts. With such major challenges, and dire consequences for failing to address them, the need of the hour is to put planning for a more sustainable climate future near the top of our policy and political agenda.

This is the second instalment in a new series that uses insights from rapid polling across the country on topical issues. The polls are run by Artha Global's Centre for Rapid Insights. Neelanjana Sircar is its director. The polls cover thousands of households across India. NFHS data is then used to re-weight the data to be representative of households with mobile phones down to the assembly constituency level. The estimations themselves are done using the technique of multilevel modelling, which helps account for different caste, wealth, and spatial demographics in the measurement.

Unravelling implications of LS polls on politics and policies

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The 2024 Indian general election has redrawn India's political map, but its consequences on policy are far from clear. Two veteran observers, Sadanand Dhume and Tanvi Madan, spoke about the implications of the elections on domestic politics, the economy, and foreign policy on last week's episode of Grand Tamasha, a weekly podcast on Indian politics and policy co-produced by HT and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Dhume, a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and a columnist for the Wall Street Journal, said the biggest political takeaway of the elections for him was that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is no longer viewed as invincible and the Opposition is not seen as totally hapless.

“Anti-incumbency as a phenomenon in Indian politics is not over,” said Dhume. “Even though Prime Minister Modi has come back, and he's won a third successive term, he's come back with fewer seats. The BJP no longer has a single party majority and the idea that [Modi] was somehow this politi-

cal figure who could magically keep winning elections with larger and larger mandates every time—that is obviously not the case.” Dhume added that the verdict has “brought Modi down to Earth.”

Madan, a well-known foreign policy scholar at the Brookings Institution, highlighted the internal dissent within the BJP and Sangh Parivar in the wake of the results. “There are frictions within the Sangh Parivar writ large,” she said. “It tells me that the RSS wants it known-it wants the narrative to set in—that they are indispensable, and they cannot be taken for granted.” Whether this is true or not will depend on a full accounting of why the BJP suffered losses in some areas but made gains in others. She cautioned that the lessons learned exercise the party typically conducts after elections will be crucial and can “tell us a bit more about how the dynamics unfold.”

On the economy, Dhume suggested that the BJP's reduced seat tally in the Lok Sabha will not necessarily change the outlook for economic reforms. “The Modi government over the last ten years—I don't think any-

one can reasonably say it was a dramatically reformist government even when it did enjoy a single party majority on its own,” he commented. This is not to say they have not done good things, Dhume continued, citing the infrastructure build-out, the cleanup of public sector banks, and more efficient welfare delivery. “But I don't see policy changing dramatically. It is not as if they were dramatic free-market reformers and suddenly they won't do that.”

On foreign policy, Madan offered that there's been a business-as-usual approach in many Western capitals, citing the recent G7 outreach meeting in Italy which PM Modi attended. The PM himself is trying to convey nothing has changed, remarked Madan. “The structural factors that made India important for [India's partners] have not changed,” she declared. But there are some lingering questions about what a return to genuine coalition governance might mean for politics and policy.



Scan the QR code to listen to the latest episode of the Grand Tamasha podcast.

60-year-old held for dismembering woman, putting parts in two trains

Press Trust of India
letters@hindustantimes.com

INDORE: A 60-year-old man was arrested in Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh on Sunday for allegedly killing a woman after a failed rape attempt, dismembering her body and dumping the parts in two trains, a police officer said.

Accused Kamlesh Patel had lured her to his house when she was sitting at a railway station on June 6, the officer said.

“The woman had left her home on June 6 after a fight with her husband. The woman was sitting at Ujjain railway sta-

ACCUSED KILLED THE WOMAN AFTER A FAILED RAPE BID, DISMEMBERED HER BODY AND THEN DUMPED THE PARTS IN TWO TRAINS, COPS SAID

tion to go to Mathura when Patel lured her to his house and spiked her food with sleeping pills. He tried to rape her but she got up and raised the alarm.” Railway superintendent of police (SP) Santosh Kori said.

“Patel strangled her, cut her body into pieces and placed it in the Indore-Nagda and Indore-Dehradun passenger trains. The hands and legs of the 37-year-old victim were found in a train in Rishikesh in Uttarakhand on June 10, while the rest of the body was recovered from a train in Indore on June 9,” he said.

Meanwhile, a missing person complaint was filed by her kin in Bilpank police station in Ratlam district on June 12, Kori said.

Patel was held from Ujjain and the knife used in the crime has been recovered along with other evidence, the SP added.

DEFENCE SERVICES OFFICERS INSTITUTE (DSOI)
H-Block, Palam Vihar, Gurgaon-122017

SPLIT AC VRF/VRV SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION WORK
Cassette Split ACs VRF/VRV Supply and Installation work will be carried out at Rezagangla, URC, DSOI, PV, Gurgaon - 122017. The same can be inspected from 26 Jun 2024 to 05 Jul 2024. Tenders are invited in two bid system (Technical and Commercial Bid) from reputed firms to carry out the above works. Application Forms (RFP) indicating terms & conditions will be available at the DSOI Office on all working days except Tuesdays between 1000 to 1600 hrs on payment of Rs 1,000/- + GST from 26 Jun 2024 to 05 Jul 2024.
Application form duly completed in all respect should reach DSOI Office by 05 Jul 2024 latest by 5:00 PM. Pay Order/Demand Draft of Rs 50,000/- on account of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) for above work of any Scheduled Bank to be raised in favour of DSOI, Gurgaon.

For any query contact 0124-4554700 & 2365228

BUREAU OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY
(A Statutory body under Ministry of Power, Government of India)
4th Floor, Sewa Bhawan, R K. Puram, New Delhi - 110066
Website: www.beeindia.gov.in, Ph. 011-26766700

REFRESHER COURSE FOR RENEWING ENERGY MANAGER CERTIFICATE

Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) has issued “Energy Manager Certificate” to candidates, who have passed the National Certification Examination (NCE).
As per clause 10 of The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (Certification Procedures for Energy Managers) Regulations, 2010 dated 15.10.2010 this certificate shall be valid for a period of five years and renewable after every five years by attending a short-term refresher training course conducted by BEE.
Accordingly, all holders of “Energy Manager Certificate”, who have received their certificate on or before September 2017 (i.e., Candidates qualified from 1st to 18th NCE), are hereby advised to register their willingness for attending refresher course by visiting the website <http://www.refreshercourse.in>.
CBC 34106/12/0005/2425

Secretary

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of an unknown male **Age:** Approx 45 years, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Height:** 5'6", **Face:** Round, **Built:** Medium, was wearing Black colour T-Shirt and Grey colour Pant, was found in unconscious condition near Delhi Gate, and further taken to LNJP Hospital where doctor declared him dead during the examination. In this regard a **DD No. 12A U/s 174 CrPC, Dated 19.06.2024, has been lodged at P.S. Darya Ganj, Delhi.** His dead body has been preserved in MAMC Hospital Mortuary for 72 Hrs. Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.
SHO
P.S. Darya Ganj, Delhi
DP/7962/CD/2024 Ph.: 011-23279331, 8750870421

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of an unknown male **Age:** Approx 35-40 years, **Complexion:** Fair, **Height:** 5'6", was wearing only Blue colour Pant and Bare feet, was found at Labour Chowk, Chandani Chowk, Delhi at 8:42 AM on 22.06.2024. In this regard a **DD No. 19A, dated 22.06.2024 has been lodged at P.S. Kotwali, Delhi.** Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.
SHO
P.S. Kotwali, Delhi
DP/7954/N/2024 Ph.: 011-23977100, 8750870121

SHABANA AZMI: I ONLY HAD A THREE-MEMBER TEAM

CHECK OUT TODAY'S EDITION

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता
अलीगढ़ वृत्त, लोक निर्माण विभाग, अलीगढ़

ई-टेंडरिंग निविदा सूचना

पत्रांक : 2802 / कैशियर(P.D.A.)-अ००७०/२०२४-२५ दिनांक : 12.06.2024

महामहिम राज्यपाल उत्तर प्रदेश की ओर से अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, अलीगढ़ वृत्त, लो.नि.वि., अलीगढ़, द्वारा निम्न तालिका में अंकित विवरण के अनुसार लोक निर्माण विभाग में कार्य हेतु सुसंगत श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदार से आइटम दर के आधार पर ऑन लाईन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदादाताओं को सलाह दी जाती है कि निविदा डालने से पूर्व निविदा के लिए न्यूनतम अर्हता हेतु बिन्दु 4 का ध्यानपूर्वक अध्ययन कर लें।

क्र.सं.	विवरण	अनुमानित लागत (लाख ₹ में)	अंशजित फरसति (लाख ₹ में)	निविदा प्रारंभ (मूल्य ₹ में)	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि	अधीक्षारी अभियन्ता का पता	अधीक्षण अभियन्ता का पता	मुख्य अभियन्ता का पता
1	विद्युत वर्ष 24-25 में स्मार्ट सिटी के अन्तर्गत अलीगढ़ शहर बाईपास मार्ग के बीज 18.450 कि.मी. से 20.850 कि.मी. तक मार्ग के चौड़ीकरण सुदृढीकरण एवं स्ट्रीट लाइटिंग का कार्य (सूचमाल चौड़ाई से नादा पुल तक मार्ग)	2079.00	31.20	Rs. 2000.00 STC +300.00 TC= 54.00GS T= 2354.00	15 माह	अधीक्षारी अभियन्ता, सारणी, खण्ड, लोनिवि, अलीगढ़	अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, अलीगढ़ वृत्त, लोनिवि, अलीगढ़	मुख्य अभियन्ता, अलीगढ़ वृत्त, लोनिवि, अलीगढ़
2	विद्युत वर्ष 23-24 में स्मार्ट सिटी के अन्तर्गत दिल्ली-काणपुर (दूरान सड़क मार्ग-34) के अलीगढ़ शहर मार्ग के कि०मी० 126, 127, 128, 129, 130(700) का चार लेन चौड़ीकरण सुदृढीकरण एवं स्ट्रीट लाइटिंग का कार्य (भाकरी आडिगासी से सुतुली तक मार्ग)	4607.00	50.00	Rs. 2000.00 STC +300.00 TC= 54.00GS T= 2354.00	15 माह	अधीक्षारी अभियन्ता, सारणी, खण्ड, लोनिवि, अलीगढ़	अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, अलीगढ़ वृत्त, लोनिवि, अलीगढ़	मुख्य अभियन्ता, अलीगढ़ वृत्त, लोनिवि, अलीगढ़

- वेबसाइट <http://etender.up.nic.in> पर (http://wms.up.gov.in/Prahari) पर निविदा से सम्बन्धित सार्वजनिक विवरण एवं विवरण तालिका देखे जा सकते हैं। निविदा दिनांक 02.07.2024 से 09.07.2024 तक ऑनलाइन देखी जा सकती है। ऑनलाइन बिड दिनांक 09.07.2024 का दोपहर 12:00 बजे या इससे पूर्व ई-निविदा <http://etender.up.nic.in> पर अनिवार्य रूप से ऑनलाइन जमा कर दी जाये एवं ऑनलाइन प्राप्त समस्त टेक्निकल बिड दिनांक 09.07.2024 का दोपहर 12:30 बजे खोली जायेगी।
- कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि 15 माह है।
- निविदा केवल ई-टेंडरिंग के माध्यम से <http://etender.up.nic.in> पर जमा की जाये।
- वृक्षकृषि निविदादाता विभागे धन विजिलेंस सिस्टम पर सर्टिफिकेट (DSC) नहीं है, वह इसे निविदा जमा करने से पहले अडिड एजेंसी से प्राप्त कर सकते हैं।
- निविदादाता द्वारा दरे जीएसटीडीसी रहित अंकित की जाती है। गुगल का समय लागू, दरे पर जीएसटीडीसी देय होगी।
- किये गये कार्य का डिफेक्ट लाइमिटिडी पीरियड तीन बरस होगा।

अधीक्षारी अभियन्ता
प्रान्तीय खण्ड, लोनिवि, अलीगढ़।
उ०प०: 216430 दिनांक: 22.06.2024
Website: www.upgov.in

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अलीगढ़ वृत्त, लोनिवि, अलीगढ़।

Prayagraj Nagar Nigam
1, Sarojini Naidu Marg, Prayagraj-211001, Uttar Pradesh

Expression of Interest-2nd call
ENV /2024

Nit No/189 Date: 22/06/ 2024

This is to inform to all prospective bidders having the required qualification mentioned in the EOI document that Municipal Corporation Prayagraj invites Expression of Interest for Processing of Backlog Waste of MSW Processing Facility at Baswar, Prayagraj

Schedule For EOI

S.No	Activity	Date	Time
1	EOI Document Availability	24/06/2024	14:00 hrs onwards
2	Last date of Proposal submission	01/07/2024	up to 15:00 hrs
3	EOI opening Date	01/07/2024	16:00 hrs onwards

For more details, please visit the website at <http://www.etender.up.nic.in>.
(Uttam Kumar Verma)
Environment Engineer
Prayagraj Nagar Nigam

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THE WEEK THAT WAS

A quiz on the week's development.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER CPD-02-2024-25

Mahatransco State Electricity Transmission Co. Ltd.

Tenders are invited through e-Tendering in SRM system from the registered vendors for Supply of following:

Tender No. & Description of Material	Estimated Amount (in Rs. Lakhs)	Due Date & Time (Hrs.) for Submission & Opening of Tender
SP/P&CT-02/0624[RFX No.5000001235] (Two Bid System) Procurement of Van Mounted Ground EHV Cable Fault Locator System.	3295 Lakhs 25000.00	22.07.2024 Up to 16.00 Hrs. At 16:10Hrs.

Contact Person: Office of the Executive Engineer (Gr.P&C)
Tel. No. : 022- 69852720/69852717/08329909813
Email: eeepc@mahatransco.in
For further details visit our website <http://www.srmetender.mahatransco.in>
Any further amendments will be published on the MSETCL website www.mahatransco.in. So bidders are requested to check the website.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer (P&C)

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of a male **Age:** 35 years, **Complexion:** Dark, **Height:** 5'6", was wearing Blue colour T-Shirt and Grey colour Half Pant, was found due to accident at NH-48 Opposite MCD Toll near Subway Rajokri, in the area of P.S. Vasant Kunj South, New Delhi. In this regard a **FIR No. 304/2024, dated 12.06.2024 has been registered at P.S. Vasant Kunj South, New Delhi.** Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.
SHO
P.S. Vasant Kunj South, New Delhi
DP/7974/SW/2024 Ph.: 011-26139361, 8802428689

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of a male **Age:** Approx 55years, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Height:** 5'5", **Face:** Long, **Built:** Thin, **Hair:** Black- Brown, was wearing Blue colour Underwear, was found dead in front of Fatehpuri Masjid, Chandni Chowk main Road Divider, Lahori Gate, Delhi. In this regard a **DD No. 19A, dated 19.06.2024 has been lodged at P.S. Lahori Gate, Delhi.** His dead body has been preserved in Subzi Mandi Mortuary, Delhi. For Identification. Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.
SHO
P.S. Lahori Gate, Delhi
DP/7967/N/2024 Ph.: 011-23953776, 8750870122



OPINION

The
Hindustan Times
ESTABLISHED IN 1924

{ OUR TAKE }

Friends in the
neighbourhood

Greater integration with region will help India counter the Chinese overtures in South Asia

The first two major bilateral engagements of the new government in New Delhi — hosting Bangladesh Prime Minister (PM) Sheikh Hasina for the first incoming bilateral visit and sending external affairs minister S Jaishankar to Sri Lanka — were a signal that the Neighbourhood First policy remains a priority for India at a time when contestation with China across the region is on the rise. Both engagements were also meant to signal a theme of continuity following the formation of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government.

Bangladesh remains India's most significant partner in the neighbourhood, and a raft of initiatives to bolster physical, energy, and financial connectivity have laid the foundation for closer integration of the economies of the two countries. Hasina's visit led to further steps in this direction, including the launch of new rail and bus services and an e-visa facility for Bangladeshi nationals coming to India for medical treatment. However, the most important development was India's decision to formally signal its interest in the \$1-billion project to restore and develop the Teesta basin in Bangladesh. China has had its eye on this mammoth project for years, and the Indian initiative will allow Hasina to deflect the pressure she is likely to face from Beijing when she visits China in the near future. In Sri Lanka, Jaishankar and President Ranil Wickremesinghe jointly launched a Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) that was established for the Sri Lankan Navy in Colombo with an Indian grant. This will strengthen maritime security cooperation between the two sides months after Sri Lanka acknowledged the concerns of India and the US and blocked visits by Chinese surveillance vessels through a year-long moratorium on port calls by foreign research ships.

The relationship between India and China remains fraught, and Beijing has signalled through several steps that it is in no hurry to resolve the military standoff on the Line of Actual Control, which is into its fifth year. China's aggressive behaviour across the region, especially in the context of several border disputes, makes it imperative for India to speed up efforts to build closer relations within its neighbourhood and beyond, especially through steps that enhance maritime security cooperation and foster greater integration with regional economies. Such measures, as the leaders of the Quad nations have pointed out more than once, will increase the range of options available to democratic countries and greatly reduce the possibility of coercion being used as a tool of statecraft.

Illicit liquor economy
points to social crisis

The tragedy of over 50 people dying after consuming illicit liquor in Kallakurichi in Tamil Nadu has turned the spotlight on alcohol consumption in the state. Excise revenue is a major contributor to state finances, and the government controls wholesale and retail vending of alcohol through state-run (TASMAC) utilities. This dependence on alcohol to fund state expenses has been criticised by civil society members and the Opposition in light of the deaths.

The easy solution prescribed by many to curtail illicit liquor deaths is prohibition. But does it really work? Prohibition ends up criminalising the production and distribution of liquor, and invariably facilitates a black economy that enables rent-seeking by criminals and their political patrons. Tamil Nadu has experimented with prohibition from 1937 onwards, only to realise that the moral claim that it is a pro-poor measure is false. It has found, instead, that it is the poor who suffer the most under prohibition.

In Kallakurichi, the bulk of producers and consumers were from the lowest strata of the society. Illicit brewing flourished because it contributed to the political economy. The consumers were mostly wage labourers, including conservancy workers with no surplus income or avenue for leisure, and could not afford the Indian-made foreign liquor (IMFL) sold in TASMAC shops. Better regulation through policing may help to stop the production and sale of illicit brew. However, the problem needs to be understood as a social crisis, and measures ranging from de-addiction and temperance interventions to the availability of cheaper but safe local brews need to be discussed. Moral outrage and an over-regulating State are unlikely to resolve this problem.

Sowing the seeds of
farm-growth revival

Centre should focus on expanding land under irrigation, pushing greater adoption of horticulture by farmers, and raising agri-R&D spending in the country

The provisional estimate of the real gross value added for the agriculture sector in FY24 is just 1.4%. This has been attributed to the erratic monsoon last year, on account of the El Nino effect.

Against this backdrop, the appointment of Shivraj Singh Chauhan as the new minister for agriculture has been widely welcomed. The reason is that the agriculture Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Madhya Pradesh (MP), during his tenure as chief minister from 2005-06 to 2022-23, witnessed an average annual growth rate of 7% against the all-India showing of 3.8%. Since agriculture is mainly a state subject, the new agriculture minister will have to take the states along if much-needed reforms in the sector are to materialise. The agriculture sector needs to grow consistently at an annual 4%.

The ministry he presides over does not include the department of animal husbandry and dairying and department of fisheries. So, the fastest growing and most promising sectors of the farm economy are not in his

domain. However, he has the experience to influence the running of these two departments, too.

As per the Situation Assessment of Agricultural Households and Land and Holdings of Households in Rural India, 2019, agri-households earned only 37% of their income from cultivation, while 15% came from livestock activities and 40% from wages and salaries. Thus, the real challenge before Chauhan will be increasing income from cultivation. Even though the monsoon has been deficient by 18% till June 20, the good news for him is that the monsoon this year is predicted to be normal. So, his first year in office may bring good tidings. There are three areas where his experience in MP may prove useful.

There are numerous recommendations made by expert committees, including the Ashok Dalwai Committee, on doubling farmer income. Here are three important areas that Chauhan can focus on.

The first is to bring more area under irrigation. In 2015-16, the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) to expand the cultivable area under assured irrigation and use water more efficiently by following sustainable water conservation practices, among other goals. By

December 2023, out of the 99 priority projects identified under PMKSY-Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme in 2016, only 54 projects had been completed. Another 21 projects recorded progress of more than 90%, while 13 others recorded 80-90% progress. Chauhan has direct experience in pushing irrigation projects in his home state. It would be a significant contribution to Indian agriculture if he could work with the states and complete the unfinished projects. An independent evaluation of all 99 projects may also help in ascer-



Siraj Hussain



Shweta Saini

taining whether the command area in the completed projects has actually received water. This is necessary as the benefits to agriculture come only when irrigation water reaches the farms. For this, the completion of canal works is critical. Micro-irrigation has remained confined to Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka. Chauhan must enhance its use in central and north Indian states as well. This would not only help in the prudent management of precious water resources that can result in productivity gains.

For Punjab and Haryana, diversification from paddy to other less water-consuming crops has been under discussion for decades. If the new agriculture minister can convince the finance minister to support Punjab and Haryana's crop diversifi-



The new agriculture minister must convince the finance minister to support states' crop diversification plans (HT PHOTO)

cation incentive plans so that the area under non-basmati paddy is strategically reduced, it would be a landmark contribution to the country's agriculture sector. Business as usual in Punjab and Haryana may be highly detrimental to the future of India's food security.

The second area of importance is horticulture. Since the launch of the National Horticulture Mission (NHM) in 2005, India's horticulture production has gone up from 170.8 million tonnes (mt) to 352.23 mt. Madhya Pradesh has been a beneficiary of and contributor to the horticulture revolution in India. To illustrate, in 2004-05, it produced 0.535 mt of onion which rose to 5.1 mt by 2022-23. The state is the second-largest producer of onion after Maharashtra. Due to a crash in prices, MP experimented with a price deficiency payment scheme in 2018, which didn't prove successful. The biggest challenge in horticulture is the high fluctuation in prices and supply-chain losses. If these can be addressed, the consumption of fruits and vegetables can go up, and India's exports in these agri-commodities can be more reliable. Farmers, too, can earn more

than they do from cereals. The need for a robust cold chain network for perishables is well understood. However, private investment in creating pre-cooling facilities is not adequate. This must be sufficiently incentivised.

The third area that Chauhan must make a priority is the threat from the climate crisis, which can lead to lower yields in several crops. To address this challenge, investment in research and development (R&D) to generate climate-resistant varieties must be drastically raised, and farmers must be made aware of the need to shift to these varieties. India spends just about 0.6% of agri-GDP on research. Investment in agri R&D under the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) system boosted the country's capacity in rice, sugar, grapes, pomegranates and onion. If self-reliance and food security are to be achieved for 1.6 billion Indians, higher investment in R&D, both by the government and the private sector, is a must.

Siraj Hussain is a former Union agriculture secretary, and Shweta Saini is an economist. The views expressed are personal

A behaviour code to run
a House without discord

The new Parliament, meeting today, will see a coalition government headed by the same team that wielded untrammelled powers during the past two terms because of having a formidable majority in the Lok Sabha. That situation has changed. A political party that does not have a majority of its own will face serious challenges from the Opposition and, in exceptional situations, from its own allies. At times, there may be a snap vote in the House, which can take the treasury benches by surprise.

The Opposition Members of Parliament (MPs) who have been returned may harbour unpleasant memories: Mass suspensions, privilege cases, expulsions, and the denial of opportunities were common threads in the last House. With a formidable number on their side, the Opposition in the 18th Lok Sabha is likely to pose a major challenge to the government and, in particular, the Speaker. The government will have to change the way it deals with the Opposition. With over 234 members arrayed against the treasury benches, disciplinary methods followed in the past can be counterproductive. The Speaker will have an unenviable task.

Parliament works with greater efficiency when there is consensus on major issues. In competitive politics, it is very difficult to always build a consensus. A formidable majority often breeds arrogance and an insatiable desire to rub the adversaries up the wrong way. The parliamentary system will shrink in such an environment, like plants in extreme summer.

The millions who voted have conveyed an unmistakable message to the political class that crossing some lines has its perils. Winston Churchill famously said, "At the bottom of all tributes paid to democracy is the little man walking into a little booth with a little pencil making a little cross on a little bit of paper — no amount of rhetoric or voluminous discussion can, possibly, diminish the overwhelming importance of the point". The overwhelming importance that Churchill referred to for the decision of those little men should not be lost on the leaders.

The question on everyone's mind today is how the new Lok Sabha will be run. This House is almost evenly divided between the treasury benches and the Opposition. People who have enjoyed the comfort of a stable, huge majority may find this situation uncomfortable. But they will benefit if they look at the past.

The Indian Parliament owes much to Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister (PM), who nurtured the institution with care and passion. He would be present in the House during question hour on all days and inter-

vene in debates whenever necessary, thereby creating a very healthy tradition. He sometimes supplemented the replies given by the ministers when he felt the House should be given more information and sometimes corrected the ministers when he felt the correct angle of the issue was not being highlighted by them. He attended Parliament when important issues were discussed and, in fact, he requested the Speaker to give more time to the Opposition because he believed his party members only praised him and it was the Opposition that told him what was happening on the ground.

An interesting incident involving the first Speaker of the Lok Sabha, GV Mavalankar, is part of the institutional memory of the Lok Sabha and is discussed as a measure of the highest esteem in which Nehru held the office of the Speaker. Once, Mavalankar sent Nehru a slip of paper saying he would like to meet Nehru in his office. Instead, Nehru rushed to the Speaker's chamber and told him that the Speaker, being the highest authority in Parliament, should never visit the PM. Nehru would meet the Speaker in his chamber whenever the latter sought his presence. This was his way of establishing good parliamentary traditions.

The smooth running of Parliament, at any time, is more likely if the House elects a wise Speaker and the government appoints a seasoned parliamentary affairs minister. While the Speaker has to ensure the timely completion of government business in the House, he is also supposed to protect the interests of the Opposition. A wise Speaker will conduct the House to the satisfaction of both sides of the House. The members of the Opposition benches should be able to leave the House feeling that the Speaker was fair to them.

The parliamentary affairs minister is the bridge between the government and the Opposition. In this context, old timers may remember K Raghuramaiah, the parliamentary affairs minister under PM Indira Gandhi (1969-76). Although she had a two-thirds majority in the Lok Sabha, Raghuramaiah would always be seen in the Opposition benches coaxing and cajoling the MPs to gain their support for running the House smoothly. Stalwarts such as AK Gopalan, Atal Behari Vajpayee, Hiren Mukerjee, Shyamamandan Mishra, Indrajit Gupta, Piloo Modi, Madhu Dandavate, and Madhu Limaye adorned the Opposition benches in those days. These great and often difficult men used to be brought around by a tactful Raghuramaiah.

Dialogue between the government and the Opposition is essential for the smooth running of the House. Such dialogue smoothens the wrinkles in the relationship between the two sides. To listen to others and to try and convince them is the surest way to promote the democratic culture. Parliament is the most powerful platform where this exercise is conducted. From the rough and tumble of India's electoral politics, the people's representatives need to move into the realm of mutual respect.

Vajpayee, an outstanding parliamentarian for all times, used to say "vichaaron ka sang-harsh" (clash of ideas) is the essence of parliamentary democracy. All members of the House should keep this thought as the 18th Lok Sabha begins work.



PDT Achary

PDT Achary is a former secretary general, Lok Sabha. The views expressed are personal

{ JOSEP BORRELL FONTELLES }
FOREIGN POLICY CHIEF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION



In the West Bank an economic
collapse is looming & violence
intensifying. Blatant disregard
for @CIJ_ICJ rulings & UNSCR
2735 continues

(After Saturday's attack on Gaza by Israel)



{ STRAIGHTFORWARD }

Shashi Shekhar



Ganga needs a joint effort
to regain its old strength

A few days ago, I was at the Ganga Dussehra. As I stood there, chanting lines from Pandit Jagannath Shastri's *Ganga Lahri*, an incident returned to memory. I was on board an Assam-bound Rajdhani Express crossing the bridge connecting Garhmukteshwar and Gajraula. When the coach I was in reached the middle of the bridge, I offered prayers to Ma Ganga.

When I was done with the prayers, my co-passengers, a White couple, wanted to know what I was doing. I told them the river was the Ganga and that I had been offering my prayers to it. The man seemed taken aback. "Ganges, the great Ganges," he asked in amazement, while his companion made a statement that I will not repeat here for it pained me and may hurt the religious sentiments of others, too.

For ages, the Ganga for us has been a source of life, and salvation. When I see a river anywhere in the world, it reminds me of the rivers that run through Prayagraj, Kashi, and Mirzapur, where I spent my childhood. I see the Ganga as a metaphor of the purity of childhood.

However, the river is no longer considered pure and pious in scientific terms.

According to studies on pollution in the Ganga conducted by BD Joshi, a professor at the Indian Academy of Environment Science in Haridwar, the river's current Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) level is 7 mg/l, which is extremely unhealthy. Also, solid waste content in the river when it reaches the foothills, was found to be 1,460 mg/l, which exceeds the threshold. The rise in solid waste has reduced the Ganga's transparency to 5%. Another study found that plastic trash in the river rose 25% between May and June 2024. From Rishikesh to Haridwar, fish numbers have dropped to 80%, and the number of species fell dramatically from 89 to 66. Crocodile populations have also fallen.

People typically blame the growing number of tourists and pilgrims for the Ganga's woes, but there are other causes for this, too. These should be thoroughly debated in Parliament so that the government can develop an action plan.

At locations such as Kaushambi, just before Prayagraj, people can now cross the Ganga on

foot. This is happening even after the Yamuna, with all its waters, has been subsumed into the Ganga. Only 7,000 cusecs of water from the Ganga and the Yamuna together currently flow forward. Though several other rivers join the Ganga downstream, its water flows are dismal. This is why I dread the fate of Kashi, where I spent my childhood playing on the Assi Ghat. Mounds of sand have started appearing between Dashaswamedh and Sakka ghats. If the heatwaves continue, the situation could worsen. One reason behind this state of the Ganga is that it has not been dredged for quite some time.

This river requires regular, phased dredging from Haridwar to Ganga Sagar.

A lot of money has been spent to clean the Ganga at Varanasi, but what are the conditions today? Only 70-75 million litre per day (MLD) of the 467 MLD of sewage released by the city enters the Ganga untreated. But the Varuna river, the tributary from which Varanasi derives its name, brings with it 67 MLD of sewage discharged into it into the Ganga.

According to research conducted by a team from the Kashi Hindu University, all fish in the Ganga between Prayagraj and Buxar have been affected by pollution. Furthermore, vegetables and grains grown in the doab area (land between two rivers) irrigated by its waters are also contaminated. Hundreds of people, including myself, used to cross a pontoon Bridge to reach Ramnagar, which used to be a good market to buy fresh vegetables and watermelons cultivated on the banks of the Ganga.

A lot can be written on this topic, and much has already been documented. About 40 years ago, I wrote a cover story on the Ganga for a famous magazine, and even then, the figures were similarly appalling. Nature has been sounding the alarm for a long time, urging us to wake up. The fertile land of North India is unimaginable without the Ganga, the Yamuna, and their tributaries. Yet, despite changes in government, the situation has continued to deteriorate. The Ganga will be protected not by slogans, but by the collective efforts of society and the political system.

Shashi Shekhar is editor-in-chief, Hindustan. The views expressed are personal

Philippines says it won't back down amid row with China

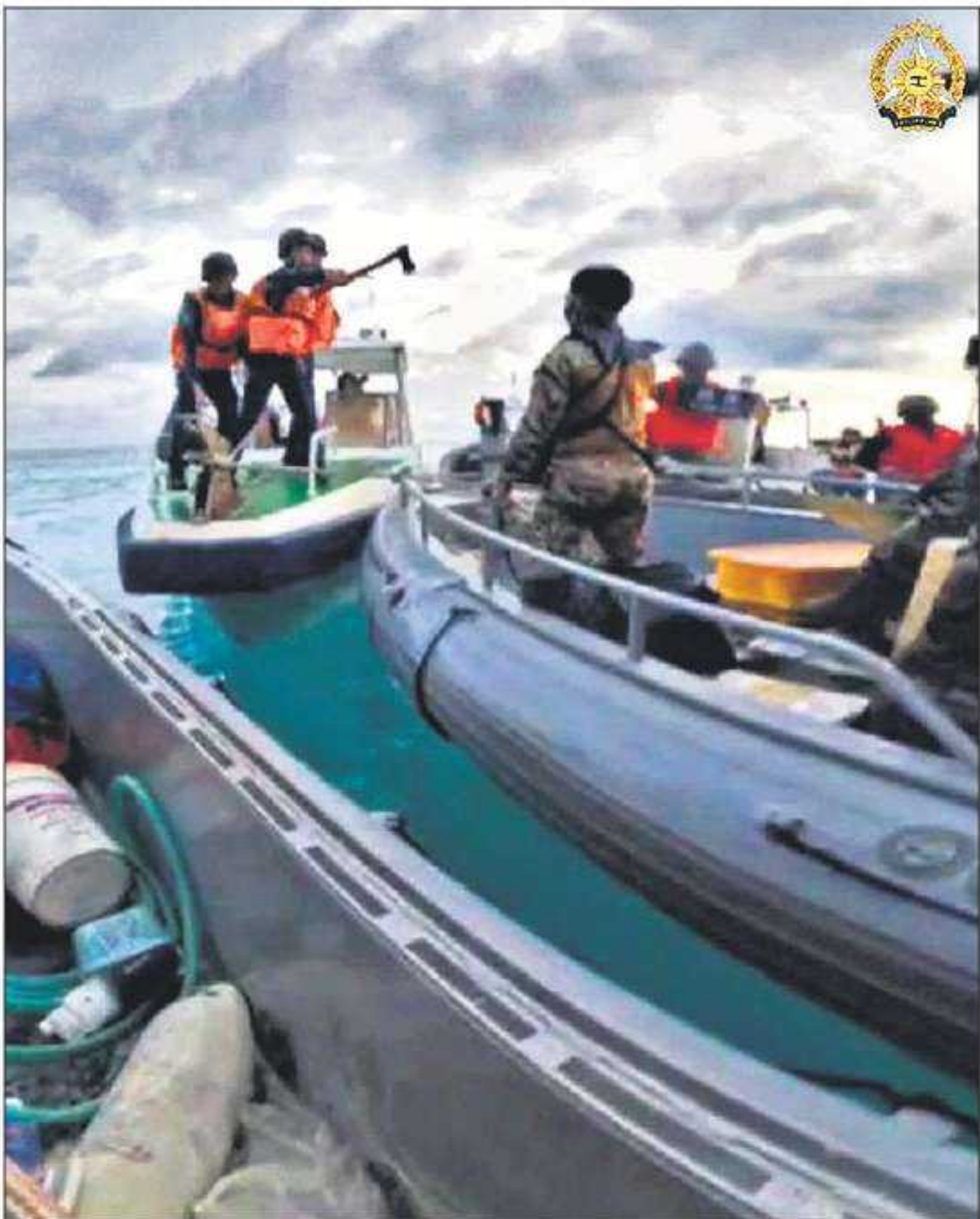
Chinese coast guard injured Philippines' navy personnel and damaged at least two military boats with machetes, axes and hammers in a clash in the disputed South China Sea last week

Agencies
letters@hindustantimes.com

MANILA, PHILIPPINES: The president of the Philippines said on Sunday his country would not yield to "any foreign power" after Chinese forces injured Filipino navy personnel and damaged at least two military boats with machetes, axes and hammers in a clash in the disputed South China Sea (SCS), but added the Philippines would never instigate a war.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. flew with his top generals and defence chief to the western island province of Palawan, which faces the South China Sea, to meet and award medals to navy personnel who came under assault by the Chinese coast guard last Monday as they attempted to deliver food and other supplies to an outpost on the hotly contested Second Thomas Shoal.

Videos and pictures of the chaotic face-off made public by the military showed Chinese coast guard personnel hitting a Philippine navy boat with a



Chinese Coast Guards hold an axe as they approach Philippine troops on a resupply mission in the Second Thomas Shoal at the disputed South China Sea on June 17.

wooden bar and seizing a bag while blaring sirens and using blinding strobe lights. The Chinese government said that its coast guard had to take action after Filipino forces defied warnings not to stray into what China calls its own offshore territory, a claim long rejected by rival claimant governments and international arbitrators.

The violent confrontation

sparked condemnation and alarm from the US, the European Union, Japan, Australia and other Western and Asian nations, while China and the Philippines blamed each other for instigating it.

Marcos's key advisers said on Friday that his administration has no plan to invoke the country's mutual defence treaty with the United States.



Ferdinand Marcos Jr., Philippines president

We stand firm. Our calm and peaceful disposition should not be mistaken for acquiescence.

FERDINAND MARCOS JR.,
Philippines president

"We are not in the business to instigate wars," Marcos told Filipino forces. "In defending the nation, we stay true to our Filipino nature that we would like to settle all these issues peacefully."

In Monday's face-off at the shoal, Marcos said "we made a conscious and deliberate choice to remain in the path of peace". The Filipino navy special operations group personnel who came under attack used only their bare hands to push back

the Chinese, some of whom pointed knives at them, said Philippine military chief Gen Romeo Brawner Jr.

Marcos said, "History itself can tell that we have never, never in the history of the Philippines yielded to any foreign power."

Chinese officials in Manila and Beijing did not immediately comment on Marcos's remarks.

Marcos praised about 80 officers and personnel involved in Monday's supply mission, including one who lost his right thumb during the high seas confrontation, saying they "exercised the greatest restraint amid intense provocation." He issued an appeal: "Continue to fulfil your duty of defending the nation with integrity and respect as you have done so far."

China claims almost the entire South China Sea, a conduit for more than \$3 trillion of annual shipping commerce, including parts claimed by the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei.

In 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague said China's claims had no legal basis, a decision Beijing has rejected.

Washington has repeatedly warned that it is obligated to defend the Philippines, its oldest treaty ally in Asia, if Filipino forces are attacked, including in the South China Sea.

Indonesian forces have also opened fire on Chinese fishing boats in past confrontations in waters off the Natuna islands on the fringes of the South China Sea.



People protest against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government and call for the release of hostages held in the Gaza Strip, in Tel Aviv, Israel, on Saturday.

US arms delay row to be resolved soon: Israeli PM

Agencies
letters@hindustantimes.com

JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday a row with the United States over weapons delays relating to the Gaza war would be resolved soon, amid simmering tensions between the allies.

"About four months ago, there was a dramatic drop in the supply of armaments arriving from the US to Israel. We got all sorts of explanations, but... the basic situation didn't change," he told a Cabinet meeting. "In light of what I have heard in the last day, I hope and believe that this issue will be resolved in the near future," he added.

He said top Israeli officials lobbied their US counterparts at "the highest levels... at all levels" for speedier weapons deliveries.

"After months of no change in this situation, I decided to give it a public expression," he said.

Netanyahu's latest comments came as defence minister Yoav Gallant flew to Washington for talks about the Gaza war.

Netanyahu irked Washington with a video statement last week accusing it of "withholding weapons and ammunition to Israel".

On Thursday, the prime minister said Israel needed American ammunition to fight a "war for its existence" as it battles Hamas militants in Gaza and trades fire with Lebanese Hezbollah on its northern border.

Israeli strike kills eight at Gaza aid centre

Eight Palestinians were killed on Sunday in an Israeli airstrike on a training college near Gaza City being used to distribute aid, Palestinian witnesses said, as Israeli tanks pushed further into the southern city of Rafah.

The strike hit part of an industrial college run by the UN Palestinian refugee agency UNRWA now providing aid to displaced families, the witnesses said. UNRWA and the Israeli military did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Hezbollah targets Israeli military positions

Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group said on Sunday it had targeted two military positions in northern Israel with an armed drone in response to the killing of an Islamist commander.

Israel and the powerful Iran-backed Hezbollah, a Hamas ally, had already been exchanging near-daily cross-border fire since the Gaza war erupted on October 7.

Hezbollah's announcement of the latest cross-border attacks came hours after it published a video excerpt purporting to show locations in Israel along with their coordinates.

On Saturday, another armed group, Jamaa Islamiya, announced the death of one of its commanders, Ayman Ghotmeh, saying he was killed in a "Zionist raid" in Khiaara, in Lebanon's eastern Bekaa area near Syria.

DRONE ATTACK DAMAGES MERCHANT SHIP IN RED SEA

Agence France-Presse
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DUBAI: A drone attack damaged a merchant ship in the Red Sea near Yemen early Sunday morning, though no injuries were reported, according to a British maritime security agency.

Vessels in and around the Red Sea, which is vital to world trade, have come under repeated attack for months by Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen. The rebels say they are acting in support of Palestinians during the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.

The attack occurred about 120 kilometres west of the Yemeni port city of Hodeida, said the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO), which is run by the Britain's Royal Navy. "The Master of a merchant vessel reports being hit by uncrewed aerial system (UAS), resulting in damage to the vessel. All crew members are reported safe, and the vessel is proceeding to its next port of call," said a bulletin from the agency.

Later on Sunday, UKMTO said it received a distress call from a second vessel, this one off Yemen's southeastern coast, that had "suffered flooding that cannot be contained", without specifying what caused the incident.

Apple and Meta discuss AI partnership: Report

Reuters
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WASHINGTON: Facebook parent Meta Platforms has discussed integrating its generative AI model into Apple's recently announced AI system for iPhones, the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) reported on Sunday.

AI startup Anthropic has been in discussions with Apple to bring its generative AI to Apple Intelligence, WSJ reported, citing people familiar with the matter.

Apple, Meta, and Anthropic did not respond immediately to requests for comment outside business hours.

The discussions have not been finalised and could fall through, WSJ reported, adding that deals with Apple would

help AI companies to obtain a wider distribution of their products. The size of potential financial windfall is unclear, but the talks involved AI companies selling premium subscriptions to their services through Apple Intelligence, the report said.

AI search startup Perplexity has also been in discussions with Apple about bringing its generative AI technology to Apple Intelligence, a source familiar with the matter told Reuters.

The iPhone maker announced long-awaited AI strategy this month, saying it would integrate new Apple Intelligence technology across its suite of apps, including Siri, and bring Microsoft-backed OpenAI chatbot ChatGPT to its devices.

Flooding wreaks havoc in Iowa



A drone view shows a flooded area following heavy rainfall in Rock Valley, Iowa state, US, on Saturday. Floodwaters forced thousands of people out of their homes in parts of Iowa, the result of weeks of rain, while much of the United States longed for relief on Saturday from yet another round of extraordinary heat. In neighbouring South Dakota state, Governor Kristi Noem declared an emergency after the southeastern part of the state received heavy rainfall.

23 arrested for involvement in tourist's lynching in Pakistan

Press Trust of India
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ISLAMABAD: Pakistan police have arrested at least 23 people for alleged involvement in the lynching of a tourist in the picturesque town of Swat for allegedly desecrating the Quran, media reports said on Sunday.

Muhammad Ismail, a 40-year-old resident of Sialkot in Punjab province, was gunned down by an enraged mob which

dragged him through the town and later hanged him in full public view in Madyan tehsil of Swat district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Thursday.

The mob had also set the Madyan police station ablaze.

Ismail was accused of having burnt the pages of Islam's holy book. Five police personnel and 11 locals were injured in the incident.

Police arrested 23 people for alleged involvement in Ismail's

lynching and the arson attack on the Madyan police station, Geo News reported.

Those arrested were shifted to an undisclosed location while efforts were underway to arrest others involved in the incident, police said.

Members of the mob had been identified, and "efforts for their arrest are underway", the report said, quoting Swat District Police Officer (DPO) Syed Zaman Shah.



Passengers queue outside Terminal 1 after an overnight power cut led to disruptions and cancellations at Manchester Airport in Manchester, Britain, on Sunday.

Flights delayed, cancelled at Britain's Manchester airport after power cut

LONDON: Flights at the UK's third-busiest airport were being delayed or cancelled on Sunday after a major power cut, the Manchester Airports Group, which also operates London Stansted and the East Midlands airports, said Manchester Airport had been "affected by a major power cut in the area earlier this morning".

Power has now been restored at the international airport in the north of England, but passengers due to travel from Terminals One and Two were told to "not come to the airport" as all flights were cancelled "until further notice".

Passengers for Terminal Three were told to come to the airport as normal, but were warned they "could be affected by delays".

The airport operator said that while passengers already

checked in were scheduled to depart as planned, the disruption meant "some baggage may not be on those flights".

"We will work with airlines and handling partners to reunite affected passengers with their luggage as soon as possible", the group added.

The airline Jet2 — which operates from both terminals — said that as well as cancelling dozens of flights, it was unable to load bags onto planes as the airport's baggage system remained "inoperable".

Airline easyJet, which operates flights from Terminal One, warned of "very long queues" for security, and said passengers could only board flights with cabin bags. In addition, some arriving flights were being diverted to other airports according to the airport statement, including London Heathrow and Birmingham.

Trump picks vice-prez nominee but won't reveal it yet

Agencies
letters@hindustantimes.com

WASHINGTON: Former president Donald Trump said he's made up his mind on who he'll select as his vice-presidential nominee — but hasn't told the Republicans vying for the position his decision yet.

Trump said during a stop on Saturday at a cheesesteak restaurant in Philadelphia that his running mate would be attending this Thursday's presidential debate in Atlanta, according to an NBC News reporter at the event.

While his showdown with President Joe Biden doesn't have an audience, many of the top vice-presidential contenders — including North Dakota Gov-

ernor Doug Burgum, Senator Marco Rubio of Florida, and Senator JD Vance of Ohio — are expected to attend a watch party hosted by Trump's campaign.

The presumptive Republican presidential nominee has previously said he would announce his choice at or shortly before the Republican National Convention, which begins on July 15 in Milwaukee.

But Trump may decide to make the announcement earlier, in part to distract from coverage of his July 11 sentencing on 34 felony counts in a New York hush money case.

The campaign has ratcheted up preparations for after Trump's running mate is chosen. It has rented a private jet



Donald Trump

for the vice-presidential candidate between July to November, according to a person who requested anonymity to discuss the efforts.

Ex-president woos Christian supporters

Donald Trump made two speeches on Saturday, urging Christian supporters to go to the polls for him one last time and courting Black voters in Philadelphia by promising to fix a city "ravaged by bloodshed" even as data shows a decline in violent crime.

If elected in November, the Republican presidential candidate told a rally of several thousand at Philadelphia's Temple University, he would give police "immunity" to do their jobs and "surge" federal resources to cities battling violence.

Trump dismissed as "fake" FBI statistics that showed a continued drop in levels of violent crime and murder across the

country in the first three months of 2024, and accused Democratic President Joe Biden of lying about the data.

"Under crooked Joe Biden the City of Brotherly Love is being ravaged by bloodshed and crime," Trump said in an arena in a historically Black neighbourhood, addressing an audience more diverse than a typical rally, but still largely white. "Under the Trump administration we are going to bring law and order and safety back to our streets."

Trump, who has falsely claimed that systematic cheating cost him Pennsylvania in 2020, told the crowd, "Philadelphia was one of the most egregious places anywhere" for voter fraud. "We are not going to let it happen again."



Saudi says 1,301 deaths during Haj this year

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia said on Sunday that 1,301 pilgrims died during the Haj pilgrimage which unfolded during intense heat. "Regrettably, the number of mortalities reached 1,301, with 83% being unauthorised to perform Haj and having walked long distances under direct sunlight, without adequate shelter or comfort," the official Saudi Press Agency reported.

French far-right party forges ahead of Macron: Poll

PARIS: France's National Rally continued to cement its lead in opinion polls a week before the country's snap parliamentary election, largely at the expense of President Emmanuel Macron's centrist bloc. Support for Marine Le Pen's far-right party was pegged at 36% in a survey by Elabe published on Sunday in La Tribune Dimanche.

Lanka hails UK's move to keep LTTE under banned list

COLOMBO: Sri Lankan foreign minister Ali Sabry has hailed the decision of the UK government to continue to maintain the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam's (LTTE) under the proscribed list, saying that the move will thwart every plan of the former armed group to revive itself in the island nation.



Hungry Belgium revive campaign



Belgium's Kevin De Bruyne (L) celebrates with Yannick Carrasco after scoring against Romania. AP

Goals by Tielemans and De Bruyne get the Red Devils campaign back on track after loss against Slovakia

Ashish Magotra
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NEW DELHI: The buzz going into the Belgium versus Romania fixture was about the manner in which the Red Devils would respond after their 0-1 defeat against Slovakia in their opening Group E fixture on Matchday 1 at Euro 2024. Would the remnants of a golden generation find inspiration with their tournament on the line against a young, talented Romanian side?

All those doubts were quickly set to rest when Youri Tielemans — one of four players brought in for this game — finished off a move he started in midfield after just 73 seconds in Cologne on Saturday. It was the third-fastest goal in the history of Euro.

The early goal changed the complexion of the game because it took the pressure off Belgium, and secondly, it meant Romania, a side that was brilliant on the counter against Ukraine in their first game, were forced to go

TODAY'S MATCHES

GROUP B

Albania vs Spain

Time: 12.30AM (Tuesday)

Venue: Dusseldorf

GROUP B

Croatia vs Italy

Time: 12.30am (Tuesday)

Venue: Leipzig

RESULT

Belgium 2

(Tielemans 2', De Bruyne 80')

Romania 0

looking for a goal. Tactically, it became a very different contest.

Constant attack
Belgium didn't rest on their goal either — pushed by captain Kevin De Bruyne, they kept going forward; kept creating chances. It was crucial they did because Romania had shown enough in their first game to suggest that they had the equaliser in them.

On the day, it turned out they didn't and Belgium added another goal through De Bruyne in the second half. It was just reward for the better team.

Koen Casteels had to make

some good saves in the Belgium goal with Radu Drăgușin and Dennis Man testing him, but Romanian goalkeeper Niță had a far busier night.

A lot of that work came courtesy of Jeremy Doku, who was once again a menace for the opposition. His bag of tricks and pace allow him to get into dangerous areas and the only thing lacking at this point is the finishing touch.

The game also showed how important it is for De Bruyne to get involved for Belgium. When the game is flowing through him, the Red Devils become a different side.

"After the first game, I wasn't concerned," said De Bruyne later. "I don't think we played badly per se. Obviously, we made some mistakes but we created chances, even if we couldn't find the back of the net. We played well during the game [tonight] and I think we deserved the win, so I'm happy. What's important is that we're creating chances and those situations."

What Belgium have done over the first two games is create chances, and as long as you create chances, you will have a chance to score goals, as long as you have a chance to score, you have a chance to win. In the end, that is what football boils down to.

Some might argue that Belgium should have got even more goals but the performances will give Domenico Tedesco's team a lot of confidence going forward. It will reaffirm the faith they have in their talent and show that a hungry Belgium are a different proposition.

"They're a team with lots of quality, they have speed, they have explosiveness, power," said Romania coach Edward Iordanescu.

"They are a complete team. They are candidates to win the title. We never gave up, we fought very hard. In the second half, we were better. With a bit of luck we could have got a point. We had chances to equalise."

Lukaku continued to miss chances galore and he even had one goal ruled out by VAR (by the smallest of margins) but that is par for the course. Maybe, just maybe, he is saving all the goals for the second half of the tournament.

All four teams in Group E now sit on three points and it is, at this stage, impossible to predict which teams will go through. Belgium, on current form, should beat Ukraine while the Romania vs Slovakia match is tough to call. For neutral fans, with everything to play for going into the last round of matches, it simply doesn't get better.

GROUP A									
TEAM	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts			
GERMANY	2	2	0	0	6	6			
SWITZERLAND	2	1	1	0	2	4			
SCOTLAND	2	0	1	1	-4	1			
HUNGARY	2	0	0	2	-4	0			

GROUP B									
TEAM	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts			
SPAIN	2	2	0	0	4	6			
ITALY	2	1	0	1	0	3			
ALBANIA	2	0	1	1	-1	1			
CROATIA	2	0	1	1	-3	1			

GROUP C									
TEAM	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts			
ENGLAND	2	1	1	0	1	4			
DENMARK	2	0	2	0	0	2			
SLOVENIA	2	0	2	0	0	2			
SERBIA	2	0	1	1	-1	1			

GROUP D									
TEAM	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts			
NETHERLANDS	2	1	1	0	1	4			
FRANCE	2	1	1	0	1	4			
AUSTRIA	2	1	0	1	1	3			
POLAND	2	0	0	2	-3	0			

GROUP E									
TEAM	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts			
ROMANIA	2	1	0	1	1	3			
BELGIUM	2	1	0	1	1	3			
SLOVAKIA	2	1	0	1	0	3			
UKRAINE	2	1	0	1	-2	3			

GROUP F									
TEAM	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts			
PORTUGAL	2	2	0	0	4	6			
TURKEY	2	1	0	1	-1	3			
CZECH	2	0	1	1	-1	1			
GEORGIA	2	0	1	1	-2	1			

Out there and running, Kante back in business

Dhiman Sarkar
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KOLKATA: Nine minutes in, William Saliba had checked Memphis Depay by preventing the Dutch striker from turning but the ball remained in an area goalkeeper Mike Maignan could not reach. Before any one from Netherlands could, N' Golo Kante mopped up things and a move that could have stretched France petered out.

Two games into the Euro 2024 and it is evident that the Kante on show is of the Chelsea vintage which was an improved version of the player who had won the Premier League with Leicester City in 2015-16. After Friday night's matches, no player had covered as much distance as Kante's 22.8km. If Kante had 73 touches against Austria, he improved it by one in the 0-0 draw against Netherlands.

He also created three chances, one of them for Antoine Griezmann who couldn't keep the shot on target. France are struggling for goals but with Kante around, the chances will come. Four touches in the opposition box and four duels won explained why Kante was adjudged player of the match for the second straight time. In a match full of attacking talent, it was this tireless box-to-box midfielder who was picked as the best.

Didier Deschamps is known for many things: beaver in midfield so that the stars around him twinkled for club and country, moulding France into a team that has grown, won the World Cup, Nations League and transitioned without impacting performance are but two of them. On Friday, after the match, he also showed a wry sense of humour. "N'Golo is still out there running," said the France coach.

And then he got serious. "But he doesn't only run. He also has a capacity to carry the ball up the field, which is important to complement our other players in midfield so we have variety and we are not predictable."

Kante was known to do that till a hamstring injury got him to miss the 2022 World Cup finals. When he moved to Saudi Arabia's Al-Ittihad, it looked like a wonderful career in which Kante won the Champions League, Premier League and the World Cup — in Russia, the French fans never forgot to sing that he had stopped Lionel Messi — was winding down to a quiet finish.

It would have been perfect. Not too long ago, the boy from the Paris suburb of Rueil-Malmaison, nearly 13km from city centre was sorting garbage. "Five years ago, I wasn't even professional," Kante had said after winning the English football

writers' association award in 2017.

And then Deschamps got him back. Like Murat Yakin and his punt of using Kwadwo Duah and Xherdan Shaqiri, Deschamps's backing Kante has worked. Like a charm.

Kante hadn't played for France for two years and the intensity of Saudi Pro League would be significantly less than Euro 2024, it was pointed out. But like Roberto Martinez and Cristiano Ronaldo, Deschamps stayed firm.

Initially, Kante wasn't sure. "It's important (to make a good impression), especially when you come back to the national team," he said. Mbappe too wasn't convinced. A couple of sessions in and the France captain needed no more convincing. "He has a thousand lungs," Mbappe told "Ouest-France". Feels like you are against three players, said Marcus Thuram. When Mbappe had his nose bloodied, he gave the armband to Kante.

Players around Kante have changed. Gone was Paul Pogba with whom he ruled the midfield with in Russia. In came Aurélien Tchouaméni on Friday and Adrien Rabiot in the first game but if anything, Kante has slotted into his role without missing a beat. He averaged 10.4km in Russia in the group stage and has gone over 11km in Euro 2024. And he worked up speed of 34.5km against Austria. Only Mbappe was faster.

"Perfect example of an all-round midfielder," said Wayne Rooney. "He defends really well but makes forward runs too." At Leicester City, it used to be said the 70% of the planet has water, the rest is covered by Kante.

At 33, Kante is not slowing down. Because France need him to run.



YOUNG GUNS FIRE ON BIG STAGE

LAMINE YAMAL (Spain)

CLUB: BARCELONA | AGE: 16 | POSITION: FORWARD

Minutes played157

Top speed31.6 kph

Passing accuracy81.5%

Assists1

At 16 years and 339 days, the Barcelona winger became the youngest player to play in the Euros when he was named in the Spain XI to face Croatia in their opening match. He bettered the record of Poland's Kacper Kozłowski, who set the mark in the 2021 edition at 17 years and 264 days. In this Euro, Yamal with magic in his boots has troubled defenders on the right wing along with Nico Williams on the left.

"Lamine Yamal will mark an era," Gerard Piqué, former Barca defender

ARDA GULER (Turkey)

CLUB: REAL MADRID | AGE: 19 | MIDFIELDER

Minutes played99

Top speed29.5 kph

Passing accuracy91.5%

Goal 1

The Real Madrid teenager could give club coach Carlo Ancelotti a selection headache if he continues to light up Euro 2024 for Turkey. "He is becoming a great player before our eyes," former Turkey and Barcelona winger Arda Turan told AS when quizzed on Arda Guler's meteoric rise to prominence in May. Guler inspired Turkey to victory against Georgia.

NICO WILLIAMS (Spain)

CLUB: ATHLETIC BILBAO | AGE: 21 | FORWARD

Minutes played145

Top speed34.7 kph

Passing accuracy87.5%

It was Williams' second-half cross, flicked on by Alvaro Morata, which Italy defender Calafiori turned into his own net as Spain made it to the round of 16 with a game to spare. "Luis de la Fuente gives me more freedom to take people on; with Luis Enrique it was more about combinations," he says. "A dribble is like playing back in the park when you're a kid." And take on he did, repeatedly. Ask Italy's Giovanni Di Lorenzo.

JAMAL MUSIALA (Germany)

CLUB: BAYERN MUNICH | AGE: 21 | FORWARD

Minutes played146

Top speed33.2 kph

Passing accuracy93.5%

Goals 2

Jamal Musiala is running riot at Euro 2024. The 21-year-old attacking midfielder has two goals in two games for Germany and is dazzling with every touch on the pitch. "Musiala is virtually impossible to get off the ball and he can beat an opponent from a standing start," former Germany captain Philipp Lahm wrote about him. "When the opposing teams have parked the bus and lined up their players in front of goal, he is able to find solutions." He is Germany's most exciting young talent without a doubt.

JUDE BELLINGHAM (England)

CLUB: REAL MADRID | AGE: 20 | FORWARD

Minutes played176

Top speed33.5 kph

Passing accuracy91%

Goal 1

England failed to beat Denmark, but their opening game against Serbia saw Bellingham score the match-winning goal. "Jude is very special. I don't think I have ever seen a player like this before. His talent is very special, and his mentality is even more so. This is very special and rare. He can play in many positions, and score. He defends and passes. He does everything," former Bayern Munich and Man United star Owen Hargreaves said.

SOURCE: UEFA.COM, GOAL.COM

Croatia's golden generation faces early exit against Italy

Agencies
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LEIPZIG: Group B was dubbed Euro 2024's 'Group of Death' but while Spain soared through with a game to spare, heavyweights Italy and Croatia meet on Monday fighting to stay in the competition.

Both sides were outclassed by Spain, and while reigning champions Italy edged Albania 2-1, Croatia could only draw 2-2 with them. It gives Italy the upper hand ahead of their clash in Leipzig, with Croatia's golden generation at risk of a disappointingly early exit if they fail to win.

Croatia, who reached the 2018

and 2022 World Cup final and semi-final respectively, may make several changes as they scrap for Euros survival.

Midfielder Marcelo Brozovic, playing in Saudi Arabia, has come in for criticism after sub-par outings in the first two matches, while Real Madrid's Luka Modric, 38, has also struggled. Full-back Ivan Perisic has looked a shadow of himself, still to find his footing after a long injury lay-off.

"It makes me cry when I watch (Modric) on the pitch, he is giving his last atoms of strength... but he is not (the Modric) we are used to seeing," read one column in Croatian newspaper Jutarnji List.

Youngster Luka Sucic could replace Brozovic, as he did at half-time against Albania.

Striker Bruno Petkovic, who



Italy players during a training session. AFP

missed a penalty in the 3-0 beating by Spain, called on Croatia to deliver for their vast support in Germany.

"The responsibility is on us, we owe it to our fans to show more,"

he said.

"I expect us to beat Italy, and I hope it's going to happen. We are aware of everything we did or didn't do in the first two matches, and we need to fix that."

Coach Zlatko Dalic complained ahead of the game he was not being given credit when Croatia did well but was immediately criticised when they struggle.

"I have learned some things in these seven years where there have been far more successes than failures," he said.

Croatia goalkeeper Dominik Livakovic was positive ahead of the clash with the Euro 2020 winners.

"We control our own fate -- that's a good thing," said the stopper, who shone at the Qatar World Cup, saving a penalty in a shoot-out against Brazil to take Croatia to the semis.

Italy need a draw against Croatia to claim second place but after being thoroughly outplayed in their 1-0 loss to Spain, expectations

are not high for the Azzurri.

Newspaper Gazzetta dello Sport labelled them "Little Italy", a far cry from the steely team which beat England at Wembley.

Veteran defenders Leonardo Bonucci and Giorgio Chiellini have since retired, while coach Luciano Spalletti left out Marco Verratti, now playing in Qatar.

The coach could also ring the changes with striker Matteo Retegui in contention, along with defender Matteo Darmian, who could replace Giovanni Di Lorenzo after a torturous night against Spain's Nico Williams.

Even Italy's opening victory over Albania was not without its challenges -- Sassuolo's Nedim Bajrami put Albania ahead with the fastest goal Euros history on 23 seconds.

SPORT

Chance for India to deal a finishing blow to Australia

Unlike recent games between these two teams at ICC events, this match won't be about the trophy

Ashish Magotra

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NEW DELHI: No one was quite expecting this game to become one that could knock Australia out of the T20 World Cup. The International Cricket Council has tried hard to ensure through trick and treat that the top teams usually find their way into the semis at least, but such is the nature of sport that an upset can never be predicted or denied.

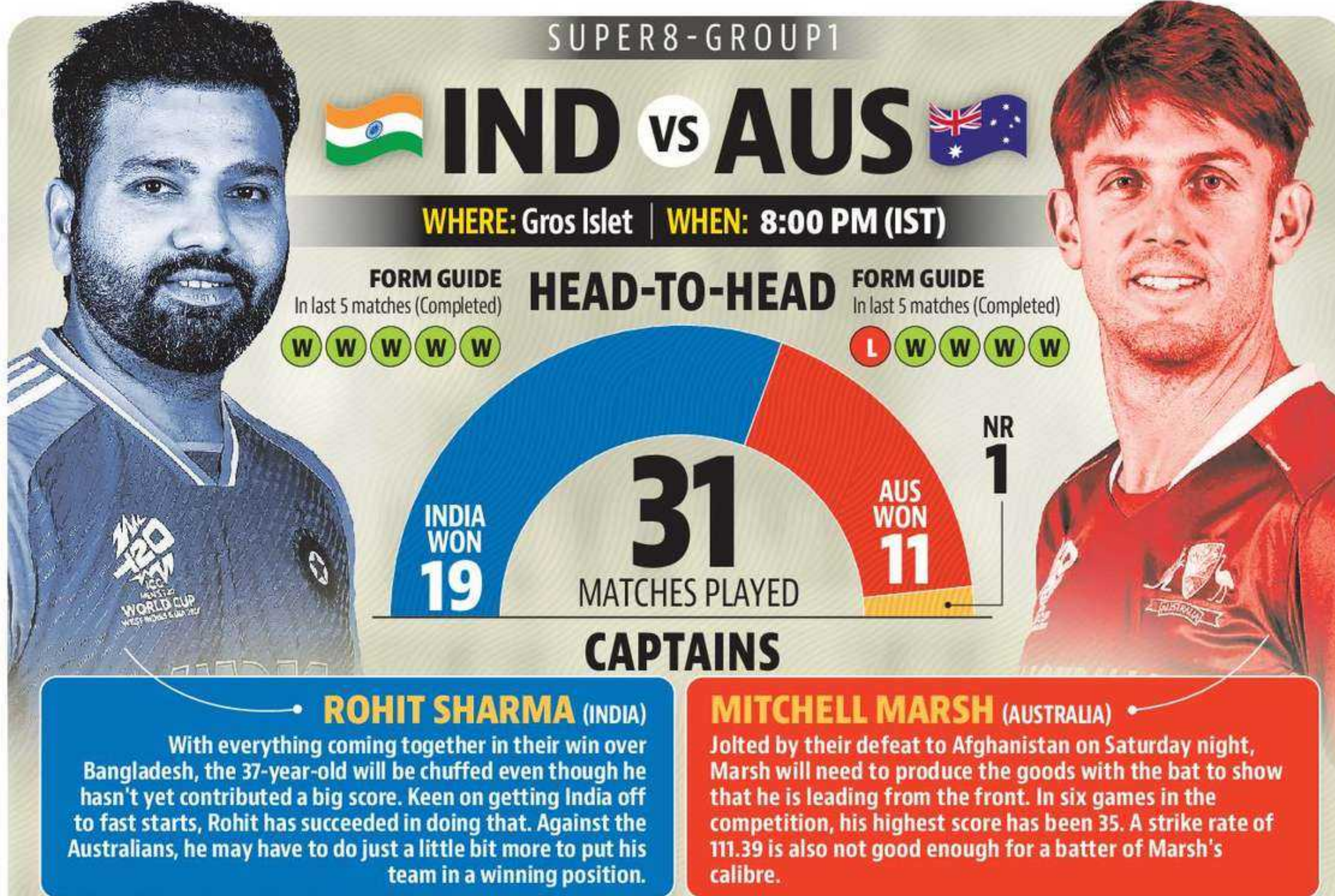
Afghanistan's epic win against Australia on Sunday morning (India time) has ensured that India run into their fierce rivals with a chance to land the finishing blow and knock them out of the World Cup.

Whenever India and Australia have met in ICC tournaments of late, the stakes have been high. A brilliant run for Rohit Sharma's men in the ODI World Cup last year came to end in the final with Travis Head going bonkers. A lengthy ICC Test Championship campaign also ended in the final against the same opposition with Head once again making the big play.

But this match isn't going to be about the trophy. Rather it is going to be about survival. To keep things simple, Australia need to beat India to ensure they make the semi-final. A defeat will mean their future might depend on a slice of luck.

India's openers Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli haven't clicked into top gear yet. They have had a few cameos but nothing of the kind that has helped their side blow the opposition away. And there's nothing like a match against Australia to help them switch on and find their focus. The rest of the batting has come along well — Suryakumar Yadav has had a good knock, Rishabh Pant has played a few crucial innings, Hardik Pandya has had his moments and Shivam Dube, at long last, seemed to find his six-hitting range against Bangladesh.

On the bowling front, Arshdeep Singh has been brilliant with the new ball while the genius of Jasprit Bumrah has meant that teams have just not been able to take him on. Those that have tried have failed quite miserably. With the matches shifting to the Caribbean, the left-arm wrist spin of Kuldeep Yadav is becoming a force to reckon as well, and as such there are few



KEY PLAYERS

JASPRIT BUMRAH (INDIA)

India's pace spearhead has been exceptional right through this tournament. He has taken 10 wickets in five games at an economy of 3.42. He is likely to face a sterner test against Australia's batters, but the Indian team will count on Bumrah to be just as good as he has been in the previous five matches.



TRAVIS HEAD (AUSTRALIA)

The Australian left-hander has had a happy knack of firing in games against India. Be it the World Test Championship final or the ODI World Cup final, Head proved to be the match-winner with attacking hundreds. While he was out for 0 against Afghanistan, Australia will want Head to set the tempo at the start.



QUALIFICATION SCENARIOS IN GROUP 1

INDIA Beat Australia and they will be through to the semis as the top team in Group 1 with three wins. If India lose, they will hope that Afghanistan also lose to Bangladesh for their safe entry into semis

AUSTRALIA They have to beat India and hope that Afghanistan lose to Bangladesh to advance. In case they lose, a three-way tie on two points is possible provided Afghanistan also lose

AFGHANISTAN They need to beat Bangladesh while hoping that Australia lose to India. If they win and Australia also win, three teams will have four points each, bringing NRR into play

BANGLADESH Chances are bleak. They have to beat Afghanistan and hope Australia lose to India by a big margin

GROUP 2 MATCH
West Indies
vs
South Africa
Time: 6AM (IST)
Venue: North Sound

gaps in the line-up for the opposition to exploit.

Some might argue that the Indian batters haven't quite found their best form but such is the nature of the format that the team management would rather have lots of batters spending time in the middle than just a few at the top of the order. With most having had a decent knock, India seemed primed to take on whatever challenge the opposition can throw at them. "First things first, recover," said Australia skipper

Mitch Marsh when asked about how they will get ready for India in St Lucia. "We have a lot of belief in our group. We are a very good cricket team. Yes, tonight we had an off night but I guess there's also a positive in the fact that in 36 hours we go again. It's a big game, it will be against India and it's a must-win game. If you look

back at the short history of this team, I know for a fact that it brings out the best in our guys, so the boys will certainly be up and about for it."

Then again, there is nothing like a challenge to fully rouse this Australian team — the tougher the odds, the more likely they are to turn up. They made a lot of uncharacteristic errors against Afghanistan. The fielding was poor, and less said about the batting the better. So, the need to tighten their game with be pretty obvious.

A lot though might depend on the nature of the pitch that the match will be played on. If there is enough for the spinners then expect India to hold the upper hand. But if it is the kind of slow-paced wicket that makes playing shots difficult, it might be anybody's game. Cutters might play a big role and Australia's plethora

of all-rounders might make things very interesting. We have seen some big scores at Gros Islet this tournament but the last game between South Africa and England went down to the wire.

At the same time, this is what the second phase of a World Cup should feel like. Rather than the Super 8 stage, you want teams to warm-up in the first stage and put their tournament on the line in the second. India have avoided that by playing consistently good cricket while Australia have shown that ICC still have managed to plug all the holes.

So, for now we can sit back and enjoy a virtual knockout that seems to have come before its time.

Afghans stun Aussies, leave group wide open

Sanjeev K Samyal

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MUMBAI: Until Glenn Maxwell was at the crease, the Afghanistan players couldn't help but feel a sense of deja vu.

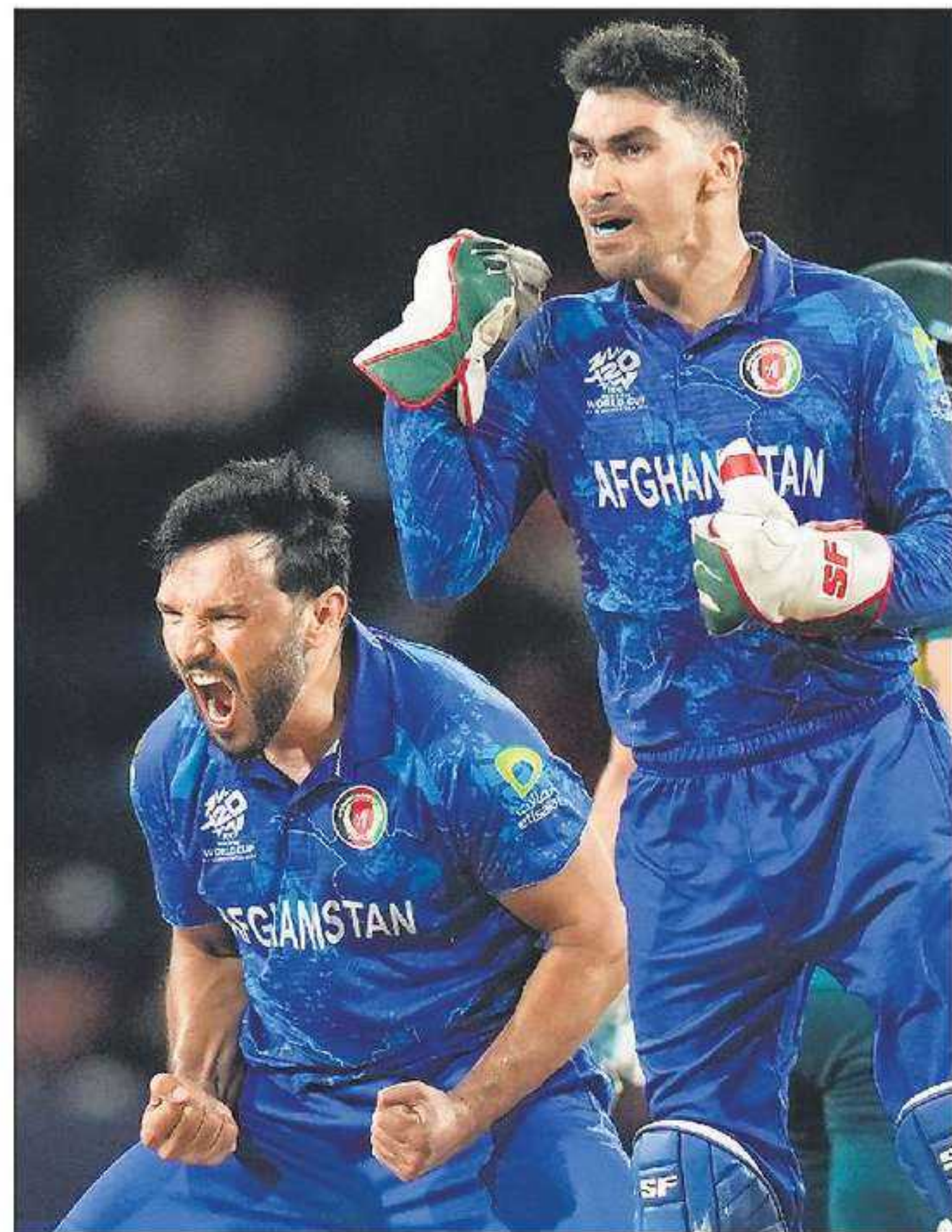
The last time Australia faced Afghanistan, at the 2023 ICC World Cup played at the Wankhede Stadium, a cramping Maxwell had pulled off a miraculous win from 91/7 in pursuit of 293. His epic double hundred had put Australia back on track for another world title and left Afghanistan on the brink of elimination.

On Saturday night, the Australia batter was threatening to repeat his heroics in the T20 World Cup Super Eight match played at the Arnos Vale Ground, Kingstown, St Vincent.

The script was similar. None of the other Australia batters could get going but Maxwell again was making it look like he was batting on a different surface. At the end of the 14th over, he had taken the total to 105/5, bringing the equation down to 44 runs from 36 balls, himself batting on 59 off 39 balls. Afghanistan were in need of a moment of brilliance. It came from Noor Ahmad in fielding as he pulled off a fine, dipping catch at backward point as Maxwell sliced at a length ball off Gulbadin Naib. The main threat gone; Afghanistan bowlers cut through the rest of the batting line-up with ease to script their first-ever victory over Australia in a World Cup match.

It was a superb all-round game display from Afghanistan. Put into bat, the Asian team were on the money from ball one.

Their openers Rahmanullah Gurbaz (60/49 balls) and Ibrahim Zadran (51/48b) rattled the bowlers with their confident play. In a superb opening act, the two put on 118 runs, the highest-ever opening partnership against Australia in T20 World Cups. On a turning pitch, a total of 148 was always going to test Australia. Their worst fears came true as they were bowled out for 127 in 19.2 overs to crash to a 21-run defeat. Afghanistan's win overshadowed Pat Cummins's second



Afghanistan's Gulbadin Naib (left) celebrates with Rahmanullah Gurbaz after dismissing Glenn Maxwell on Saturday.

GROUP 1					
TEAM	P	W	L	NRR	Pts
IND	2	2	0	2.425	4
AUS	2	1	1	0.223	2
AFG	2	1	1	-0.65	2
BAN	2	0	2	-2.489	0

GROUP 2					
TEAM	P	W	L	NRR	Pts
ENG	3	2	1	1.992	4
SA	2	2	0	0.625	4
WI	2	1	1	1.814	2
USA	3	0	3	-3.906	0

consecutive hat-trick.

Pace bowler Gulbadin Naib was the star of the show as he picked up four wickets, including Maxwell, for just 20 runs. He also took a fine catch off Ashton Agar. Pacer Naveen-ul-Haq had done the early damage by claiming wickets in his first two overs to finish with excellent figures of 4-0-20-3. He set the cat among the pigeons by clean bowling opener

Travis Head with the ball of the innings, one that was full and swung late. The result has thrown Group 1 wide open. Australia have the challenge of playing an in-form India in their final group game. If Afghanistan beat Bangladesh, and Australia beat India, it will come down to NRR. Australia have a superior run-rate (0.223) compared to Afghanistan, but inferior to India (2.425).

Even if Australia beat India by one run, Afghanistan (-0.650) need to win by 36-plus runs to overtake Australia on NRR and become the second qualifying team. Bangladesh, who have lost both their games, also have an outside chance. If India beat Australia and Bangladesh defeat Afghanistan by a big margin, then Bangladesh could get in too. **Brief scores:** Afghanistan 148/6 (R Gurbaz 60; P Cummins 3/28). Australia 127 in 19.2 overs (G Maxwell 59; G Naib 4/20). **Afghanistan won by 21 runs.**

England march into semi-finals

Rasesh Mandani

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MUMBAI: This first 20-team T20 World Cup has thrown up newer contests. USA versus England is a more regular fixture at the rugby World Cup. Even football; the two nations have faced off thrice. But this was their first in cricket. Not just at World Cups, even T20Is.

England ended up handing USA a 10-wicket thrashing in Bridgetown, Barbados and enter the semis. England needed to chase down 116 inside 18.4 overs to

advance. They took only 9.4 overs. There was a Chris Jordan over that produced four wickets, including a hat-trick, and an over where Jos Buttler smashed Harmeet Singh for five consecutive sixes.

A little over halfway through USA's innings England had got their wickets by serving a complete bouquet of variations suited for the tacky surface on a hot Sunday morning at the Kensington Oval. Sam Curran got his 50th T20I wicket with a back-of-the-hand slower ball. Adil Rashid spun a web with his googlies.

Somewhere during USA's battling struggles Jordan got a hat-trick. Three times in a row, the batters missed and Jordan hit — Ali Khan, Nosthush Kenjige and Saubh Netravalkar were his victims.

Butler (83*-38b, 6x4, 7x6) and Phil Salt (25*) gave USA bowlers a hiding as their unbroken 117-run partnership saw England through. **Brief scores:** USA 115 in 18.5 ovs (N Kumar 30; C Jordan 4/10, A Rashid 2/13, S Curran 2/23). England 117/0 in 9.4 ovs (P Salt 25*, J Buttler 83*). **England won by 10 wickets.**

India ease to win, sweep series 3-0

Shalini Gupta

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CHANDIGARH: The only disappointing moment for the M Chinnaswamy Stadium fans came in the 31st over when the prolific Smriti Mandhana, on the verge of a third century in a row, fell for 90 in the final women's ODI against South Africa in Bengaluru on Sunday.

The India vice-captain, in sublime form this series, was out to Khaka Milaba's bowling, finishing with a superb series aggregate 343 runs at an average of 114.34. All eyes will be on the 27-year-old when she takes guard in the one-off Test in Chennai from June 28. It will be followed by three T20Is.

India completed a six-wicket win, restricting South Africa to 215/8 and chasing down the target in 40.4 overs by reaching 220/4.

Mandhana, who scored 117 and 136 in the first two games, resumed from where she left off, producing another flawless innings studded with 11 fours.

Chasing 325 in the last match, South Africa scored 321, but the visitors were restricted to a modest total after electing to bat first, skipper Laura Wolvaardt (61 off 57b) and Tazmin Brits (38 off 66) doing the bulk of the scoring in a 102-run opening partnership. Wolvaardt was the first to go with Arundhati Reddy taking an impressive catch off her bowling. Last match's centurion Marizanne Kapp (7) was



Smriti Mandhana.

caught and bowled by spinner Shreyanka Patil, who had come in place of leg-spinner Asha Sobhana. Nadine de Klerk (26) and Mieke de Ridder (26) played little cameos to lift the team past the 200-run mark. For India, Deepti Sharma and Arundhati Reddy scalped two wickets each.

After a halt due to wet conditions, India's chase was led by Mandhana and Shafali Verma (25).

While Verma struggled to score quickly, Mandhana's prowess and form gave SA bowlers a tough time again. Tumi Sekhukhune removed Verma for 25 in the 12th over, while the left-handed opener dominated the bowling until her dismissal in the 31st over. **Brief scores:** South Africa 215/8 in 50 overs (L Wolvaardt 61; D Sharma 2/27). India 220/4 in 40.4 overs (S Mandhana 90). **India won by 6 wickets.**

{ NO AGENDA }

Sanjay Manjrekar



At the T20 World Cup, India's batting displays have been modern, dynamic

It felt as though the Indian selectors played it safe with their selections for the T20 World Cup squad. In picking Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, it was a clear message that they were not yet ready to commit to the youth; they still wanted some experience around for an ICC event.

Having said that, the way India have batted so far conveys that even though selections have taken a more traditional and cautious route, the brand of cricket on show is going to be modern and dynamic.

In the game against Bangladesh, I watched with great fascination how fans in our studio reacted when India lost both Rohit and Virat early. Their faces reflected doom and gloom.

Having watched T20 cricket evolve rapidly over the last few years, I urged them to have a look at India's run rate, not at wickets lost, and who it was that got out.

India were going at nine runs an over despite losing Rohit and Virat by the ninth over on a 150-par score pitch.

India were going fine; they still had plenty of batting left — six batters, to be specific, with 11 overs to go.

The brand of cricket India are playing in this WC is one we



Virat Kohli may not have made the big scores, but he has looked to bat aggressively right through this T20 World Cup.

have never seen before, and something we are trying to come to terms with.

To Virat's credit, for someone who doesn't like getting out (a trait that can be a weakness in T20 cricket), he has also committed himself to taking risks regularly and seems okay, as of now, with getting out while taking those risks.

India have got great batting depth this time. Perhaps it was a conscious decision from the selectors and team management while picking the squad, in that batting must run very deep, with bowlers who can bat and vice versa, an approach that England has had for many years, but in the wrong format — Tests.

When you have Axar Patel and Jadeja at number seven and eight, Virat and Rohit getting out in the first six overs is no longer a life-changing, game-defining moment.

In my preview of the tournament, I mentioned that an ICC event for India these days is not about India reaching the final stages, but about how India play in these final stages.

India have not had to overpower a single strong opposition to reach the semis. When they meet Australia in the last game of the Super 8s, it will be the first quality side they have had to face thus far.

Champion players

In Rishabh, Hardik, Surya and Bumrah, India have four champion players who will thrive on the big stage, along with additions such as Dube, who will chip in to complete this new imagery of Indian T20 cricket. Rohit and Virat, when they eventually come to the party, will be a welcome bonus.

The key, however, is the approach.

This current approach in which no one individual is unnecessarily trying to shoulder the burden, trying to play conservatively to avoid a possible debacle (which is often a fig-

ment of paranoid imagination), rather than focusing on what transpires.

Rohit and Virat are still obvious icons in this team and for its fans, but India, as we have seen in this WC, have moved on. It is now a team of 11, not just one or two. Come the semis, when the challenge gets stiffer and India play with the realisation that they will be knocked out of the tournament if they lose, Rohit and Virat must continue to embrace this attitude.

Concern over seam bowling quality

The last thing India want is a repeat of the semis of the last T20 WC when both Rohit and Virat took it upon themselves to be the ones to lead India's fight against a strong England side, which backfired badly.

If India are to win the WC, these two must continue to facilitate rather than lead. I also have one minor concern regarding India's seam quality (barring the genius of Bumrah, of course); I am not so sure about Arshdeep against a strong team on a pressure stage. This aside, India seem to have all bases covered.

For now, it's about more of the same in the knockout games.



NADA suspends Bajrang again

NEW DELHI: The National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) on Sunday suspended Bajrang Punia for a second time, three weeks after its Anti-Disciplinary Doping (ADDP) panel had revoked his suspension on the grounds that NADA had not issued a "notice of charge" to the wrestler.

Verstappen wins Spanish GP

BARCELONA: Red Bull's three-time world champion Max Verstappen won the Spanish Grand Prix on Sunday from McLaren's pole-sitter Lando Norris to extend his lead in the world championship. Lewis Hamilton completed the podium for the Mercedes seven-time former champion's first podium of the season.

Recurve archers win two bronze

ANTALYA: Dhiraj Bommadevara secured two bronze — one individual and another in recurve mixed team event with Bhajan Kaur — as India ended with four medals in the Archery World Cup Stage 3 here on Sunday.