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2 AIR	5 AIR	6 AIR	7 AIR	9 AIR	10 AIR	11 AIR	12 AIR	13 AIR	14 AIR
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ऑल इंडिया OS टेस्ट, निबंध टेस्ट, मेन्स 365 अभ्यास, सत्र, इंटरव्यू, गाइडेंस, CSAT टेस्ट, एग्जिस्ट केस स्टडीज, गॉसिक करंट अफेयर्स क्लास	ऑल इंडिया OS टेस्ट, अभ्यास	ऑल इंडिया OS टेस्ट, अभ्यास, इंटरव्यू, गाइडेंस	ऑल इंडिया OS टेस्ट, अभ्यास, इंटरव्यू, गाइडेंस	ऑल इंडिया OS टेस्ट, अभ्यास, PT 365, दर्शनशास्त्र टेस्ट, निबंध टेस्ट, इंटरव्यू, गाइडेंस	ऑल इंडिया OS टेस्ट, अभ्यास, इंटरव्यू, गाइडेंस	अभ्यास, इंटरव्यू, गाइडेंस	ऑल इंडिया OS टेस्ट, अभ्यास, PT 365, निबंध टेस्ट, इंटरव्यू, गाइडेंस	सत्र, अभ्यास, इंटरव्यू, गाइडेंस



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THE WORLD

TOP OF THE WORLD



Training at an army base in Hsinchu. File

Taiwan war drills to mimic actual combat scenario

Taipei: Taiwan's annual war games this year will be as close as possible to actual combat, no longer just putting on a show to score points but aiming to simulate real fighting given a rapidly rising "enemy threat" from China, a senior official said. Taiwan starts its five-day Han Kuang exercises on July 22. A senior Taiwan defence official, speaking on condition of anonymity to be able to speak more freely, said there was an urgent need to rethink how the drills were conducted. "Our defence plan must also be revised on a rolling basis, and the urgency of comprehensive combat training is becoming more important."

REUTERS

SRI LANKA 18 Indian fishermen held for 'illegal fishing'

Colombo: As many as 18 Indian fishermen were arrested for alleged illegal fishing in the island nation's waters by the Sri Lankan Navy and three fishing vessels were seized, a media report said on Sunday. The fishermen were arrested from the North Sea near Delft Islands during a search operation conducted Saturday night, news portal *The News First* reported. Navy spokesperson Capt Gayan Wickramasuriya said the arrested fishermen would be taken to Kankasanturai fishing harbour for further legal proceedings.

PTI

Minister hails UK for maintaining ban on LTTE

Colombo: Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Ali Sabry has hailed the decision of the UK government to continue to maintain the 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. In a post on the social media platform X, Sabry said that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam's (LTTE) international network's approach and strategy to get foreign governments to deproscribe it so that they could revive the group once again. The decision by the UK authorities to carry on with Sri Lanka's LTTE under the proscribed list has thwarted the group's plans to revive them in Sri Lanka, Sabry said in his post on X.

PTI

SWITZERLAND

One person killed, two missing in southeast floods

Vienna: Rescuers in Switzerland have found the body of one of three people who had gone missing on Saturday after massive thunderstorms and rainfall in the south-east of the country caused a rockslide, Swiss authorities say. The other two are still missing. One woman was pulled out alive from the rubble earlier on Saturday morning. Search operations had to be halted due to heavy rain.

AP

CERTAIN ITEMS ARRIVED BUT NOT MANY MUNITIONS: ISRAEL PM

'Dramatic drop' in weapons supply, says Netanyahu ahead of Gallant-Blinken meet

8 killed in Israeli airstrike at north Gaza aid centre

REUTERS & AP
TEL AVIV, CAIRO, JUNE 23

ISRAELI PRIME Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told his Cabinet on Sunday that there had been a "dramatic drop" in US weapons deliveries for Israel's war effort in Gaza, doubling down on a claim that the Biden administration has denied and underscoring the growing strains between the two allies.

Netanyahu told his Cabinet that the drop had occurred four months ago, saying only that "certain items arrived sporadically but the munitions at large remained behind." His remarks came hours after Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant traveled to Washington for meetings with senior officials. A statement from Gallant's office said he would discuss "maintaining Israel's qualitative edge" but didn't mention the weapons issue.

"We are prepared for any action that may be required in Gaza, Lebanon, and in more areas," Gallant said in a statement before setting off to Washington where he said he would meet his counterpart Lloyd Austin and Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

Meanwhile, 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. The strike hit part of a vocational college run by the UN agency UN-RWA. "Some people were coming to receive coupons... Some were filling up water... suddenly we heard something falling," said Mohammed Tafesh, one of the witnesses.

Ruling PML-N accepts ally PPP's demands over Pak budget: Report



Pak PM Shehbaz Sharif, PPP chief Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari

Islamabad: The ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has accepted all the demands of its major ally over the federal budget and allocation of development funds, the Pakistan Peoples Party, a Geo News report said Sunday.

Earlier this week, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had assured PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari that he would take steps to address the ally's reservations on multiple issues by forming a committee after tensions rose among the ruling coalition partners over the budget.

According to the sources, the PML-N has accepted the PPP's demands regarding district administrations, appointment of law officers, representation in various boards and authorities, early holding of local bodies elections, and distribution of funds equal to PML-N lawmakers.

PTI



A protest in Tel Aviv calling for the release of hostages held in Gaza on Saturday. AP

Israeli forces strap wounded Palestinian to jeep in West Bank; violated protocol, says military

REUTERS
JERUSALEM, JUNE 23

ISRAELI ARMY forces strapped a wounded Palestinian man to the hood of a military jeep during an arrest raid in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin on Saturday.

A video circulating on social media and verified by Reuters showed a Palestinian resident of Jenin, Mujahed Azmi, on the jeep that passes through two ambulances. The Israeli military in a statement said Israeli forces



A video grab of the incident

were fired at and exchanged fire, wounding a suspect and apprehending him. Soldiers then violated military protocol, the statement said. "The suspect was taken by the forces while tied on top of a vehicle," it said.

The military said the "conduct of the forces in the video of the incident does not conform to the values" of the Israeli military and that the incident will be investigated and dealt with.

The individual was transferred to medics for treatment, the military said.

Reuters was able to match the location from corroborating and verified footage shared on social media that shows a vehicle transporting an individual tied on top of a vehicle in Jenin.

The date was confirmed by an eyewitness interviewed by Reuters.

According to the family of Azmi, there was an arrest raid, and he was injured during the raid, and when the family asked for an ambulance, the army took Mujahed, strapped him on the hood and drove off.

Another Tory official probed over bet on UK elections date: Report

REUTERS
LONDON, JUNE 23

AN OFFICIAL from Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's Conservative Party is being investigated by Britain's gambling regulator over allegations he placed bets on the date of the general election before it was announced, the Sunday Times reported.

Britain's Gambling Commission has already been reported to be investigating two Conservative election candidates and the party's director of campaigning over bets on the date of



Rishi Sunak in his campaign bus earlier this week. Reuters

the July 4 election. The widening scandal has further damaged Sunak's attempts to catch the opposition Labour Party, which is far ahead in opinion polls in

the run-up to the election.

The official was named by the paper as Nick Mason, chief data officer at the Conservative Party. Mason did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The newspaper cited a spokesperson for Mason as saying he denied any wrongdoing.

The Sunday Times cited a statement from the Conservative Party as saying Mason had taken a leave of absence. The party did not confirm this when contacted by Reuters.

The Gambling Commission has not confirmed the names of those under investigation.

New Caledonia's independence leader moved to France prison ahead of trial

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NICE, FRANCE

A PRO-INDEPENDENCE leader in the French Pacific territory of New Caledonia was transferred to a prison facility in mainland France to await trial on charges relating to two weeks of unrest in May that left nine people dead, the public prosecutor in the territory said Sunday.

Christian Tein, an Indigenous Kanak leader of the pro-independence party known as The Field Action Coordination Unit, was flown to mainland France overnight Saturday, prosecutor Yves Dupas said in a statement.

The seven Kanak activists were transferred to pre-trial detention on "a specially chartered plane" because of "the sensitivity of the procedure," Dupas said. Moving the detained activists into custody 17,000 kilometers away from their homeland would allow the investigation to continue "without any pressure," he said.

The Kanak people have sought for decades to break free from France, which colonised New Caledonia in 1853.

Philippines won't start a war, says Marcos amid SCS clash with China

REUTERS
MANILA, JUNE 23

PHILIPPINE PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr said on Sunday his country is not in the business of instigating wars and will always aim to settle disputes peacefully, amid escalating maritime confrontations with China.

PTI



Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr

stay true to our Filipino nature that we would like to settle all these issues peacefully," Marcos said in a speech to troops of the Western Command unit in charge of over-

seeing the South China Sea.

Marcos, who did not name China in his speech, commended the troops for exercising restraint "amidst intense provocation".

"We are not in the business to instigate wars - our great ambition is to provide a peaceful and prosperous life for every Filipino," he said. "We refuse to play by the rules that force us to choose sides in a great power competition."

Over 1,000 pilgrims died during Hajj this year, say officials



Pilgrims in Mina, near the holy city of Mecca. AP

ASSOCIATED PRESS
CAIRO, JUNE 23

MORE THAN 1,000 people died during this year's Hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia as the faithful faced extreme high temperatures at Islamic holy sites in the desert kingdom, officials said Sunday. More than half of the fatalities were people from Egypt, according to two officials in Cairo. Egypt revoked the licences of 16 travel agencies that helped unauthorised pilgrims travel to Saudi Arabia, authorities said.

Saudi Arabia has not commented on the deaths during the pilgrimage - required of every able Muslim once in their life.

The Egyptian government announced the death of 31 author-

ised pilgrims due to chronic diseases during the Hajj, but didn't offer an official tally for other pilgrims. However, a Cabinet official said at least 630 other Egyptians died during the pilgrimage.

Saudi authorities cracked down on unauthorised pilgrims, expelling tens of thousands of people. But many, mostly Egyptians, managed to reach holy sites in and around Mecca, some on foot. Unlike authorised pilgrims, they had no hotels to escape from the scorching heat.

In its statement, the government said the 16 travel agencies failed to provide adequate services for pilgrims. It said these agencies illegally facilitated the travel of pilgrims to Saudi Arabia using visas that don't allow holders to travel to Mecca.

MOVE AMID REPORTS OF POTENTIAL APPLE-GOOGLE TIE-UP APPLE, META DISCUSS AI PARTNERSHIP: WSJ

Meta Platforms has discussed integrating its generative AI model into Apple's recently announced AI system for iPhones, the Wall Street Journal reported on Sunday. The move comes as Apple plans to add tech from other AI companies on its devices amid reports that it was discussing potential tie-up with long-time search partner Alphabet's Google.

REUTERS

Russia can reduce decision time for using nukes: Head of defence panel

Former military commander says it is too early to speak of specific changes

GUY FAULCONBRIDGE & LIDIA KELLY
MOSCOW, JUNE 23



Andrei Kartapolov. www.duma.gov.ru

RUSSIA, WORLD'S biggest nuclear power, could reduce the decision-making time stipulated in policy for the use of nuclear weapons if Moscow believes threats are increasing, parliament's defence committee chairman said.

On Sunday Andrei Kartapolov, the head of the Russian lower house of parliament's defence committee, was quoted by state news agency RIA as saying that if threats increased then the decision-making time for using such weapons could be changed.

"If we see that the challenges and threats increase, it means that we can correct something in (the doctrine) regarding the timing of the use of nuclear weapons and the decision to make this use," RIA quoted Kartapolov as saying.

Kartapolov, who once commanded Russian forces in Syria and now serves as a lawmaker from the ruling United Russia party, added that it was too early to speak about specific changes to the nuclear doctrine.

Russia's 2020 nuclear doctrine sets out when its president

EXPLAINED Pressure from hardliners

PUTIN SAID last week that the Russia's nuclear doctrine might have to be changed because its adversaries were developing ultra-low-yield nuclear devices. This was viewed as a nod to pressure from hardliners in the Russian elite who believe Putin should act more swiftly on nuclear escalation and reduce the threshold for use.

would consider using a nuclear weapon: broadly as a response to an attack using nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction or "when the very existence of the state is put under threat".

Russia and the United States are by far the world's biggest nuclear powers, holding about 88% of all the nuclear weapons, according to the Federation of American Scientists.

UNAUTHORISED ENTRANTS MOST AFFECTED

Over 1,000 pilgrims died during Hajj this year, say officials

EXPRESS NETWORK

SURAJ REVANNA HELD IN SEXUAL ASSAULT CASE

WAS HONOUR TO BE YOUR VOICE: RAHUL LETTER TO WAYANAD PAGE 5

Those helping terrorists should be tried under Enemy Agents law: J&K DGP



Jammu & Kashmir DGP R Swain. PTI

ARUN SHARMA JAMMU, JUNE 23

THOSE FOUND helping terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir should be tried by probe agencies under the Enemy Agents Ordinance, which is much harsher than the UAPA and has the punishment of either life term or death sentence, J&K DGP R R Swain said Sunday.

"In Jammu and Kashmir, we have a special law — Enemy Agents Ordinance," Swain told reporters after inaugurating a cyber police station building here. The law was made to tackle foreign fighters and invaders, especially from Pakistan, who come here and try to disturb and destabilise the government, he said.

"Yeh fighters toh is tarah ki investigation ke dairey mein aaney wale nahin hain. Inko toh kinetic action mein goli mar kar dher karna hai. Inko jo support ki baat CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

BIHAR POLICE ARREST 5 MORE SUNDAY TAKING TOTAL IN CUSTODY TO 18

In burnt scraps, Bihar Police found 68 questions matching 'original' NEET paper

Serial numbers identical, centre code matched; Hazaribagh principal says leak possible before papers arrived

RITIKA CHOPRA NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

THE BIHAR government's communication to the Centre that its probe "clearly suggests a paper leak" in the NEET-UG exam is based on the fact that its Economic Offences Unit (EOU) is said to have matched 68 questions (of the estimated 200) retrieved from the burnt remains of a purported photocopy of the question paper with the original one that the National Testing Agency (NTA) shared with the EOU five days ago, *The Indian Express* has learned.

The EOU's report, received by



One of the accused in the NEET-UG case in Patna on Sunday. PTI

the Education Ministry Saturday, also states that the unique exam centre code, of a school that were

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Students arrive at a school in Haryana's Jhajjar for the NEET-UG retest on Sunday. Abhinav Saha

CBI takes over NEET probe; NTA looks to debar 17 Bihar candidates

Bihar and Gujarat transfer their cases to central agency

RITIKA CHOPRA & DEEPTIMANT TIWARI NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

THE CENTRAL Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Sunday took over the probe into the alleged irregularities in the NEET-UG exam by registering a criminal case while the National Testing Agency (NTA) sent show-cause notices threaten-

EXPRESS NETWORK

BIHAR: GANG MEMBER WHO GOT SOLVED PAPER AMONG 5 HELD

AT RETEST CENTRE, UNCERTAINTY AND ANXIETY PAGE 7

ing debarment to 17 candidates in Patna, based on the report sent to the Centre by the Bihar Police's Economic Offences Unit.

According to sources, the Education Ministry is of the view that the irregularities mentioned in the Bihar EOU report are a "localised problem" that can be addressed by debarring the candidates involved.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

2 CoBRA jawans killed in Sukma as Maoists target truck with IED

JAYPRAKASH SNAIDU RAIPUR, JUNE 23

TWO JAWANS of the Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) were killed Sunday afternoon after Maoists set off an improvised explosive device (IED) targeting their truck near Timapuram village in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district.

According to officials, the IED was planted by Maoists hiding in the jungle area between the police camps in Silger and Tekalgudem villages.

The CoBRA jawans in the

MAOIST VIOLENCE THIS YEAR

JAN 30: 3 CRPF jawans, 2 of them from CoBRA, killed in Tekalgudem encounter.

FEB 18: Chhattisgarh Armed Force (CAF) company commander hacked to death in Raipur.

FEB 25: CAF jawan killed in

IED blast in Bijapur.

MARCH 3: Bastar Fighters constable killed in Kanker. One Maoist also killed.

JUNE 15: Special Task Force jawan killed in encounter in Abujhmad. Eight Maoists also killed.

truck were taking ration material for security forces stationed at the newly built Tekalgudem police camp. The truck was

driven by CoBRA jawan Vishnu R (35), while another jawan, Shailendra (29), was seated next

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



CLOUDBURST IN ARUNACHAL

A cloudburst in Arunachal Pradesh's Itanagar triggered floods and landslides on Sunday. Meanwhile, Home Minister Amit Shah held a meeting on floods in several states. ANI PAGE 5

Amid setbacks, first signs of progress in lithium mining in Chhattisgarh

AGGAM WALIA NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

EXPLORATION OF LITHIUM, a critical mineral used to make lithium-ion batteries, in Chhattisgarh's Korba district has moved a step further with one block advancing to the second round of auctions and promising deposits now being found in the initial exploration of another block, according to latest information available with the Union Mines Ministry.

The reassuring signs from Korba come after a series of roadblocks in the Centre's endeavour to develop India's first lithium mine including the cancellation of auction of a lithium block in Jammu and Kashmir's (J&K's) Reasi district due to insufficient investor interest, shelving of exploration plans in Manipur's Kamjong district due to "local resistance", and "not encouraging" results from exploration in Ladakh and Assam.

In Korba, just south of the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

After historic win over Aussies, Rashid sends a message home: 'Roll up sleeves... celebrate'

PRATYUSH RAJ NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

MOMENTS AFTER Afghanistan's historic 21-run win over Australia in the Super 8 game of the T20 World Cup at Kingstown, a video cropped up on the team's social media account that conveyed what the conquest meant for the nation that has historically seen many invasions.

The clip had captain Rashid Khan, 25, and Man of the Match



Afghanistan players after the win over Australia Saturday. PTI

Gulbadin Naib, 33, passionately belting out a Pashto verse. There were no subtitles. Maybe, there was no need as this was the team's two old hands talking directly to the fans back home.

Kandahar-born Delhi University PhD student and cricket fan Nazamuddin Asar, after sharing his excitement over his team's chances of making it to the semifinal from a group that has India and Australia, translated the verse. "Roll up

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNAY



BJP has a protem speaker and hopefully many protem listeners.

THE FIRST Parliament session of the 18th Lok Sabha will begin Monday and, unlike in 2014 and in 2019, the mood in the House is expected to be different. A resurgent Opposition, united in spirit and upbeat since their numbers and heft have gone up, appears combative and is gearing up to crank up pressure on the NDA Government on several fronts, especially over the alleged irregularities related to NEET-UG and NET exams.

The government, on the other hand, appears to be in no mood to be on the backfoot. It has already shunted out the chief of the National Testing Agency (NTA) and appointed an expert committee to recommend a roadmap for examination reforms and review of the agency.

On the eve of the session, which will have eight sittings and will conclude on July 3, the main opposition Congress signaled that mere shuffling of bureaucrats was not a solution and the buck stops at the doorstep of the top echelons of the government. And it was not just the NEET-

NET issue. The Opposition is also upset over the Government's decision to appoint seven-term BJP MP Bhartruhari Mahtab as the protem Speaker, overlooking the claim of eight-term Lok Sabha MP from the Congress Kodikunil Suresh.

Accusing the Government of flouting conventions in appointment of the protem speaker, the Congress has also alleged that Suresh was overlooked by the BJP dispensation as he belongs to the Dalit community.

The Opposition INDIA bloc is

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

THE WORLD

NETANYAHU CLAIMS U.S. WITHHOLDING ARMS SHIPMENTS

RUSSIA CAN REDUCE DECISION TIME FOR NUKE USE: HEAD OF DEFENCE PANEL

EXPLAINED

3-way contest for last 4

AFGHANISTAN'S WIN over Australia makes it a three-way contest for the semifinal spots in Group 1. In the group's final two games, Afghanistan vs Bangladesh and India vs Australia, wins for Afghanistan and India will take both to the last four. If not, Net Run Rate will be key. India can miss out if Aussies beat them by a big margin and Afghanistan beat Bangladesh.

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

ANAND MOHAN J MANDLA, JUNE 23

THE CURRICULUM at this academy is brutal — hunting prowess, kill count and the ability to evade human detection.

The students are orphaned tigers who have been rescued and are being trained at the Kanha Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh to be released into the wild again.

Since its inception in 2005, the Kanha Tiger Reserve has successfully rewilded a dozen tigers, setting a benchmark. Before this, orphaned tigers would typically end up in zoos.

'Graduation' after 60 kills: Rewilding rescued tigers at MP 'school'

Currently undergoing training there is a batch of four tigers rescued from Seoni and Bhopal districts. All four were found under similar circumstances — waiting for their mothers near lakes. In all cases, they were surrounded by village residents who were teasing them. In one case, the villagers threw stones.

The four tigers include two siblings — both four months old — from Bhopal. Their mother died fighting a male tiger in the jungles of Ratapani. The two others are unrelated, but are from Seoni. One is now two-and-a-half years old and the other 20 months. Their mothers did not

turn up as they waited at the lake. Wildlife officials rescued the tigers by luring them into a cage using a goat as bait.

At the reserve, the younger three tigers share a 2,000-square-foot predator-proof enclosure. The older one has been moved into a larger enclosure. They now spend their days lazing around and hunting small animals.

Wildlife officials watch from a distance, noting each kill. Once a tiger racks up a kill count of 60 chitals (spotted deer) it can "graduate" and be released into the wild.

"The two senior-most tigers are showing positive signals, and they are able to avoid humans.



Two orphaned cubs at the Kanha Tiger Reserve. Express

All the cubs are now able to hunt chickens on their own. They are slowly moving to goats. The cubs

are doing well — they are able to kill in 20 seconds," Kanha National Park Field Director S K

Singh told *The Indian Express*.

The first tiger rewilding project at the reserve began in 2005. Officials first built a large in-situ enclosure in the tiger reserve. The enclosure holds a small number of chital that can be driven into an inner enclosure for predation by tigers. CCTV cameras were also installed to record activities and minimise human imprinting on the tigers.

Kanha veterinarian Dr Sandeep Aggarwal knows each tiger that graduated from the enclosure. "Most of the rewilded tigers are still alive. There was a case of two tigers, however, who did not make it — one died in a

fight with other tigers and the other one went missing," he said.

It is essential none of the tigers get accustomed to human touch.

From the time the cubs are 20-22 days old, they are fed milk, eggs, and mashed meat by park officials for two months. At the age of three-four months, live predation begins in the enclosures.

"The cubs first learn to hunt chickens. At around six-eight months, they begin hunting goats, and in 15 months, they are moved to a larger enclosure where they hunt chitals. There are times when the tiger is unable to hunt properly and we intervene, putting it back to hunt-

ing goats till it develops its own hunting skills," Aggarwal said.

A tiger is rewilded after spending around two-and-a-half years in the enclosure. It is then monitored with the help of a radio collar for another year. Once it is accustomed to its new setting, the collar is removed.

According to Aggarwal, young cubs have the highest chance of being rewilded.

The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) now heavily relies on Kanha's rewilding expertise while developing its standard operating procedures for tiger rewilding, according to Field Director Singh.

FROM PAGE ONE FULL REPORTS ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Police found 68 questions matching 'original' paper

recovered from the scraps of the burnt paper, which the Bihar Police seized from the house where the arrested candidates were staying, is of Oasis School, a CBSE-affiliated private school that was NTA's designated exam centre in Hazaribagh, Jharkhand. The EOU took the help of a forensics lab to match the burnt scraps with the original paper and its questions. It was based on the EOU report that the Education Ministry Saturday decided to handover the investigation in the matter to CBI. The EOU arrested five more suspects on Sunday, taking the total number of those apprehended in connection with the paper leak case to 18. What reinforces Bihar's claim of a paper leak is the fact that, apart from the 68 questions being exactly the same as the original, the serial numbers of these questions on the burnt scraps and the original paper are also identical. Although the burnt papers were found on May 5 — the exam date — itself when the suspected candidates were arrested, the delay at the EOU's end in matching

them with the NEET-UG paper was, sources said, due to the NTA's initial reluctance to share information, especially the question paper, with the state government. However, it finally relented and started sharing information with Bihar's EOU a week ago. At present, the Bihar EOU is trying to identify the time and place of the paper leak. The NTA has recently shared the chain of custody of the question paper, with the help of which the EOU is retracing the paper's journey from NTA's custody to the Oasis school to identify the leak. For starters, its seizures from the Oasis School in Hazaribagh two days ago provide a vital clue. Sources said that when the team visited the school and picked up all the envelopes and boxes in which the question papers had arrived, it was noticed that one envelope had been cut open at a different end. All tamper-proof envelopes carrying question papers are always opened by tearing or cutting from a designated highlighted area, which all exam staff are trained to do. But one envelope, in particular,

was opened at the wrong end. When contacted, Ehsanul Haque, the principal of Oasis School, said that paper may have been leaked "much before" the packets reached the school. Haque, the district co-ordinator for conducting exams in four centres in Hazaribagh, including Oasis School, told The Indian Express that the CCTV footage clearly showed that the school's Centre Superintendent and the Observer designated by the NTA, received the packet on the morning of May 5 (test day) from one of the two designated banks. Haque said: "As soon as the packet reached the school, multiple people, including invigilators got involved. The packet with the paper was then opened in front of the students." When asked about the burnt scraps showing Oasis as the exam centre, Haque said: "Even though the question papers are sealed in a seven-layered packet, the EOU officer said that the packet seemed to have been opened in a very sophisticated manner." He said if there was any wrongdoing on the

school's part, its officials would have been taken into custody. The EOU has sent the digital devices and phones of the people who have been arrested to a forensics laboratory to retrieve clues as the accused had formatted their devices recently. All the accused have testified before the police that four examinees, who are among those arrested, had memorised answers from the leaked question paper a day before the NEET-UG exam on May 5, while residing at a location in Rajbanshi Nagar. The four eventually got 581, 483, 300 and 185 marks out of 720. While only four candidates have been arrested, the EOU, based on statements of the accused, believes another 30 candidates could have benefited from the leak and were with the four candidates at the house in Rajbanshi Nagar a night before the exam. The Jharkhand Police were the first to alert the Bihar Police about a potential NEET-UG paper leak on May 4. The Patna police quickly responded but initially struggled to pinpoint the suspects' locations. The following day, the exam

took place at 27 centers in Bihar. By the afternoon of May 5, the Shastri Nagar police station received leads indicating that some suspects were gathered at a house in Rajbanshi Nagar. Three teams were mobilized: one raided the house and found a burnt question paper; another visited a local exam centre and arrested an examinee and his father; and the third searched for a key suspect, Yadavendu, the junior engineer. Following Yadavendu's questioning, the police arrested three more examinees and four 'setters', including Nitish and Amit. The statements of all 13 accused were recorded by sub-inspector Tej Narayan Singh on May 5 itself. The arrests were made public on May 7, by which time all 13 suspects had been placed in judicial custody under charges of criminal breach of trust and criminal conspiracy. Initially, the Patna police did not label it a paper leak, despite the statements suggesting otherwise. As pressure increased, Bihar transferred the investigation to the EOU on May 11. -WITH ABHISHEK ANGAD, RANCHI

House session begins today

now likely to reject the role given to Suresh and two other Opposition MPs to assist Mahtab in administering the oath to the new members. The relocation of statues of leaders, including Mahatma Gandhi and Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar, within the Parliament building complex too has riled up the Opposition. The first two days of the session will see the newly elected members taking the oath. On Wednesday, the election of the new Speaker will take place. While most of the INDIA bloc parties are not in favour of fielding a joint Opposition candidate for the post of Speaker, some Congress leaders argue that Suresh should be fielded to make a political point. There has, however, not been any discussion on this within the bloc. President Droupadi Murmu will address both Houses of Parliament together on June 27, outlining the Government's vision. Both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha will then hold separate discussions on the President's address over the remaining part of the session, which ends on July 3. The Opposition, sources said, is planning to raise several issues,

including the recent train accident in Bengal, the implementation of the new criminal laws and the issue of sudden surge of share prices after the exit polls and their meltdown on election results day. The Trinamool Congress Sunday added one more issue. The party slammed the Centre for not consulting the state before taking the decision to start negotiations with Bangladesh for the renewal of the 1996 Ganga Water Sharing Treaty. The party's attack came a day after talks were held between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina on a range of issues, including the treaty. TMC's Parliamentary Party Leader in Rajya Sabha, Derek O'Brien, said West Bengal is a party to the treaty, but was not consulted. "The state is a party to the treaty. Even our dues for the previous treaty have not been cleared. Dredging of the Ganga has been stopped. It is the primary reason for floods and erosion. This is a plan to sell off Bengal," he said. Most of the Opposition parties, especially those in power in states, have often accused the central government of disman-

tling federalism. The TMC's charge hence would strike a chord with many of the Opposition parties. The Congress is, however, keen to focus on the NEET-NET issue. Stepping up the attack on the Government Sunday, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge alleged that the NTA was projected to be an autonomous body, but in reality was made to serve the "devious interests" of the BJP and RSS. "In the NEET scam, the buck stops at the doorstep of the top echelons of the Modi Government. Shuffling the bureaucrats is no solution to the endemic problem in the education system rotted by the BJP," he said. For students to get justice, the Modi government must be held accountable, he said. "Paper leaks, corruption, irregularities and the education mafia have infiltrated our education system," he alleged. "This belated whitewashing exercise is of no consequence as countless youth continue to suffer." Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi said Prime Minister Modi is "helpless" before the paper leak racket and "education mafia".

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2 CoBRA jawans killed

to him. When the truck neared Timapuram village at around 3 pm, the Maoists set off the IED, killing the two jawans. Vishnu was a resident of Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala and Shailendra was from Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh. They were part of the CoBRA force — also known as "jungle warriors" — a specialised force established to counter guerrilla and jungle warfare, specifically tailored towards addressing the Maoist insurgency. Sunday's attack between Silger and Tekalgudem comes at a time when construction of the road between the two police camps has not yet been completed. The Tekalgudem police camp lies in an area that was once a stronghold of Battalion 1 of the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA). The PLGA is an armed wing of the banned Communist Party of India (Maoists). The area was brought under security forces' control on January 30 after a day-long encounter. In the firefight, two CoBRA jawans from the 201 battalion — the same as the one to which the two who died Sunday were attached — and a CRPF jawan were killed by snipers of the PLGA. Several Maoists were also killed in the encounter. The Tekalgudem forests have seen other attacks on security forces in the past, with 23 jawans killed in an encounter with Maoists in April 2021. Three years later, the police camp in Tekalgudem, nearly five kilometres from Silger camp, was set up. Eighteen days after that, security forces set up another camp in Puarti village, almost six kilometres ahead of Tekalgudem. The Puarti camp was seen as a big achievement by the government, as both Barse Deva — chief of PLGA — and his predecessor Madvi Hidma, who is now the Maoist commander-in-chief for South Bastar, come from Puarti village. Meanwhile, Sunday also saw an encounter between Maoists and security forces in Dhamtari district, which borders the Naxal-affected Bastar region. One Maoist was killed in the encounter, police said.

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CBI takes over NEET probe; NTA looks to debar 17 Bihar candidates

Although the NTA's action against the 17 candidates (from 12 exam centres) rules out a decision on a full-fledged retest for now, ministry officials said the final decision will be taken by the Supreme Court once it starts hearing a batch of petitions pertaining to the controversy-hit NEET-UG. Apart from the Patna candidates, the NTA has also issued show-cause notices to 30 candidates who appeared at two centres in Godhra, Gujarat, where they were allegedly helped by invigilators and staff in filling in the correct answers on their OMR sheets. Also on Sunday, after the CBI registered the criminal case, the Bihar and Gujarat governments issued notifications to transfer their local NEET-UG "paper leak" cases to the central agency. "An FIR has been registered with Godhra Taluka Police

Station on the malpractice committed in this exam. The state government has decided to transfer investigation of this case to CBI so that extensive investigation could be held in the entire matter," a Gujarat government statement said. The Bihar EOU, too, said it has handed over its probe to the CBI. These developments came a day after the Education Ministry announced an expert committee headed by former ISRO chairman K Radhakrishnan to look into exam reforms and review the NTA's functioning. The Ministry also removed Subodh Kumar Singh as NTA chief on Saturday. Singh's successor, Pradeep Singh Karola, a retired 1985-batch IAS officer, took charge Sunday and is learnt to have met the Higher Education Secretary and Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. Asked why the government

Lithium mining in Chhattisgarh

lithium block currently under auction, a private exploration company funded by the National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET) has found hard rock lithium deposits ranging from 168 to 295 parts per million (ppm). Further exploration could pin down the reserves estimate to a large number. Lithium exploration in other states, however, has not been as fruitful, latest meeting minutes of a top NMET committee revealed. In Manipur, the committee was told that efforts to explore lithium in Kamjong district were stalled due to resistance from locals in the area. "The committee decided to drop the item for the time being due to local issues," the minutes said. In Ladakh's Merak block, very close to the border between India and China, a lithium exploration funded by NMET yielded "results (that) are not encouraging". The NMET committee also recommended to "drop" an item dealing with the upgradation of a lithium exploration in Assam's Dhubri and Kokrajhar districts. The primary end-use of lithium, a critical mineral, is in lithium-ion batteries, which are extensively used in electric vehicles (EVs) and consumer electronics. Lithium is also used in energy storage systems. With lithium demand having grown significantly over the past few years and set to rise further going forward, there is a global rush for mining the critical mineral.

NEET question papers in Jharkhand

Hazaribagh, they set off to find what could have compromised the "chain of custody", sources said. According to sources in the Jharkhand police, Bihar's Emergency Offences Unit (EOU) found the conduct of a courier company, operating between Ranchi and Hazaribagh, particularly "laxadaisical". A source said that the courier company handed nine packets containing question papers to a transport company, which was tasked with delivering them to strongrooms, which in this case were two public sector banks. Sources said that on May 3, two days before the examination, the transport company's vehicle dropped the nine packets at a sub-centre of the courier com-

J&K DGP

said. "Uss mein mention hai terrorist associate. Woh log jo hamaare yahan aake nihatte aur bekaasoor logon ko maarne ke liye aarahain hain, unko jo saat leete hain, unko I am sure humari investigation agencies iske daayere main laayenge. (Terrorist associate is mentioned there. When they (terrorists) come here to kill our unarmed and innocent people and those who taken them along, I am sure that our investigating agencies will bring them under the purview of the Enemy Agents Ordinance)," he said. The Enemy Agents Ordinance, 2005 (1948) was promulgated under Section 5 of the Jammu and Kashmir

After historic win over Aussies, Rashid sends a message home

shares the emotional chat he had with his players and the inspirational head coach and former England international Jonathan Trott after the memorable win. "They all were glad that the boys didn't panic when he started hitting boundaries. We were calm, we never panic," he says. Ahmadzai jokes about Gulbadin's special celebration of flexing his muscles after getting wickets. "I have told him so many times to stop flexing his muscles. You are not bowling 150 kph, you are a 120 kph bowler. He will always say 'sir, I will do something special for my team soon but please don't stop me from showing off my muscles'. Today indeed he has earned the right," says Ahmadzai. Gulbadin also plays for IPL team Delhi Capitals where he is coached by former India player Praveen Amre. Like most Afghans,

J&K DGP

your sleeves, come celebrate and dance. Poor people like us rarely get the chance to enjoy as happiness belongs to those who are strong and rich... That's what they were singing, that's exactly what Afghanistan feels today," Asar said, before adding a typical self-deprecating Afghan touch. "Everyone is on the streets. Last time this happened was when there was an earthquake." In the Afghan city of Khost, there is a man who could have been at the Amos Vale stadium, but missed out. The team's assistant coach Raees Ahmadzai couldn't travel with the team because of a knee surgery. He says he has lost his voice, he was with thousands others on the streets chanting "Afghanistan Zindabad" after the country's first-ever win against Australia. "A couple of days ago we celebrated Eid, and it feels like we are

After historic win over Aussies, Rashid sends a message home

celebrating it again after this win. It is something very special for many reasons," Ahmadzai tells The Indian Express. "Beating Australia is very special for this nation. They refused to play the series against us. They were very lucky that they got away in the ODI World Cup. We were waiting for this result." The two nations have a history. Australia refused to play a bilateral series against Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover of 2021. They were taking a stand against the regime not allowing women to play sports. The tense Afghanistan vs Australia 50-over World Cup game in India last year added fuel to the fire. Ahmadzai recalls the evening in Mumbai when Australia were on the brink of defeat but recovered miraculously. Glenn Maxwell broke Afghan hearts with his unbeaten 201. He chased

After historic win over Aussies, Rashid sends a message home

down 292 from 91/7. At this T20 World Cup too, Maxwell seemed ready for a repeat. He scored 59 from 41 balls and the target of 149 seemed well within his striking range. That was not to be, he would become one of Gulbadin's four scalps. The part-time batting all-rounder with a bodybuilder physique would out-muscle and out-fox the Aussie with his strength and smartness. After the game, skipper Rashid was subtle in mentioning Australia's boycott and related political complexities. "Cricketer is the only reason Afghanistan celebrates. And if we keep that source away from us as well, I don't know what will remain... I don't know what's the solution... I don't know much about politics and I don't even like it. If we play (Australia) in a World Cup, why don't we play in a bilateral series?" Back in Kosh, Ahmadzai

that a CBI team was surrounded by a mob at Kasiyadh village under Rajouli. As we learnt about some people engaging in scuffle with the CBI team, we rushed a patrolling team to the spot. The police brought the CBI team to Rajouli police station safely. Police Sunday booked and arrested four village residents on the charges of causing hurt and stopping public servants from doing their duty. The SP later told reporters: "The CBI had not informed us about its team's visit. We came to know about their visit only after they were gheraoed." A Nawada police officer said requesting anonymity: "The CBI team had gone to a house of a person without adequate police cover. As they started questioning a suspect, fellow villagers got furious and gheraoed the CBI team." WITH INPUTS FROM ENS AHMEDABAD AND PATNA

3 THE CITY

ANAND VIHAR Moderate AQI: 139 PM 10: 500	IGIAIRPORT (T3) Moderate AQI: 104 PM 10: 500	SIRI FORT Moderate AQI: 123 PM 10: 500	RKPURAM Moderate AQI: 127 PM 10: 500 At 6 pm	SKY WATCH June 24 Generally cloudy sky. Thunderstorm with very light rain accompanied by gusty winds (speed 30-40 kmph) MAX: 39 (0.4°C below normal) MIN: 30 (2°C above normal)
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'If you are poor... quick death is easy'

Switching between the pavement, the subway and the Metro station's stairs, several patients and their families from across the country are forced to bear the harsh summer heat for weeks as they await treatment at AIIMS in Delhi

HIMANSHU HARSH
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

A YOUNG woman, leading a limping old man by hand, carries a bag and a folded cardboard sheet. Two elderly men, their clothes worn out, take off their plastic sandals to walk on the cooler floor of the Metro station corridor. A boy, a teenager, lends his shoulder to help an old woman walk. Fatigue from a day spent in the extreme summer heat is visible on their faces.

As the shadows of the evening grow longer, a rush of people swarms this Delhi Metro station, a gateway to two of the country's top hospitals — the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and Safdarjung. Most, however, aren't going home after a busy day of work, the AIIMS Metro station is their shelter for the night.

Many more are outside, keeping their meagre possessions close as they prepare to spend another night on the pavement, still baking in Delhi's record-breaking summer which saw temperatures soaring to 50 degrees in some places over the past few weeks.

These aren't Delhi's homeless people though. They are men and women who have come for treatment at AIIMS — mainly from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Jharkhand — and their attendants. They are here because there is no comparable public healthcare facility back home.

They are too poor to afford private treatment; AIIMS is their last hope.

And they are too poor to rent a place to stay in their nation's Capital.

The Indian Express spends a few days outside the premier healthcare facility earlier this month, speaking to families about their long journey from their hometowns in the searing heat, their life in Delhi without a roof over their heads, and why they have no other choice.

'There's no money to rent a room'

Sitting on the pavement, which runs parallel to the fence of AIIMS along the busy Sri Aurobindo Marg, are Chandra Bhan, 45, a labourer from UP's Sambhal and Veer Pal Singh, 35, a farmer from UP's Jalesar. Their belongings — three bags, clothes, disposable paper plates and glasses — are scattered around them.

"This is my wife Premvati and that's Veer Pal's wife Ashoka Devi," Bhan says, pointing to two



Patients and their attendants take shelter inside the subway and the footpath outside AIIMS. Praveen Khanna

women who sit silently, ill and exhausted by the heat. "They have breast cancer. We come here regularly for their treatment."

The men met outside the Metro station, Bhan says. "We don't have enough money to rent a room so we stay here. If we are lucky, we rest inside a corridor of the Metro station. Otherwise, we sleep on cardboard right here," he adds.

The cardboard is essential. "The floor gets so hot during the day that you can't sit on it. It doesn't cool down even at night," says Bhan.

The crowded hospital doesn't have space for OPD patients to stay, he says, so "our wives too spend the night outside".

Every day "nearly 20,000 patients, accompanied by their family members", walk into AIIMS for outpatient care. Around 2.8 lakh patients are admitted annually to AIIMS, which has a capacity of 3,346 beds. Yet, some departments "end up with waiting lists of two to three years".

AIIMS Medical Superintendent, Dr Nirupam Madan, says, "The administration is well aware of the queues that line up for OPD

registration and to offset the problem, four waiting halls are being created with facilities for registration. There are also four *vishram sadans* for attendants of patients, with a holding capacity of 249+308 people."

Dr Madan, however, says there is only so much that AIIMS Delhi can do. "We are trying to rationalise dates for surgery so planned operations are done on time with least deferment. But... there are factors which cannot be accounted for sometimes. Eventually, patients getting treatment depend upon the facilities available, which remain finite. The solution lies in strengthening healthcare institutions across the country so that the trust of the public grows in the system and they don't need to come to AIIMS Delhi.

Alongside this, there is an urgent need to lay down a mechanism for a robust referral system for which AIIMS Delhi is working in tandem with the DGHS."

Bhan has been here 10 times in the last three months. Premvati was diagnosed early last year and was due for surgery in February but it kept getting delayed. "We

travel 180 km from our home, stay here for a few days and return when the doctor gives us a new date," Bhan says.

Ashoka's radiation therapy has similarly been postponed several times. The 33-year-old was diagnosed 16 months ago. "Her disease has grown to the last stage because she couldn't get treatment immediately," Pal says. "We've been here, waiting for treatment since May 25."

"If you are poor, pray you never get a disease like this. A quick death is easy," adds Pal.

Bhan and Pal leave their children alone at home whenever they come to Delhi.

They go to the Sulabh toilets at Safdarjung Hospital to bathe once a week. "We have to pay Rs 50 for a bath and laundry there," Bhan says.

Krishn Mohan Jha, who manages one of the three toilets at Safdarjung, says it costs Rs 5 to use the toilet or take a bath. There are 18 toilet seats and 12 bathrooms across the three facilities and they don't allow people to do laundry in the morning because of the rush.

There are three public toilets along the pavement outside AIIMS, set up by the NDMC and outsourced to three private firms to run. One is temporarily closed.

Praveen Sharma, an attendant at one of the toilets, says there is no running water: "There are days when there's no water tanker and we have to close. It happens regularly."

"We also need around 7,000 litres of water, 20 litres of hand-wash liquid and 18 litres of toilet cleaner but they don't give us half of it," Sharma adds. "I often have to spend out of my pocket."

These toilets are supposed to be open from 6 am to 10 pm, but often close earlier. "We operate as long as the water is available," says Amar Choudhary, an attendant at the other toilet.

'Pavement heats up like boiling water'

Bibha Devi, 35, and her husband Santosh Singh, farmers from Bihar's Saharsa, are pacing the pavement. Their "regular place to sleep" is taken. "We got a bit late today," she says. "Everybody wants this spot as it's in the middle and therefore safe."

They prefer the pavement to the nearby subway, which is always packed. "We slept there once but it was hotter," she explains. "We felt suffocated."

She has been coming to AIIMS for two years for a broken leg, numbness in the other, back and shoulder pain, and lumps in the chest.

She worries about "drug addicts and thieves" who roam around. "During our last visit, someone stole my husband's phone. He had bought it for Rs 16,000, paying in instalments. What should we do, where do we stay?" she said.

The hot pavement is making Guddi, 40, jittery and her husband, Nazrul Islam, 50, is waving a handheld fan to make her comfortable. They are from Shishgarh in UP. Guddi, who can barely see, is waiting for treatment for her eyes.

Their two sons work as tailors in Delhi but they "don't earn enough to take care of their families". "They live in a cramped *jhuggi*, a single room for each family, and don't have space to accommodate us," Guddi says.

They've been living on the pavement for six days. "This heats up like boiling water and often keeps us awake at night," she says.

Anjana Devi, 40, has been waiting two months for her treatment to begin, living on the pavement and in the subway with her husband Kala Nand, 42.

Anjana was operated for thyroid cancer last August but still suffers "pain and unease". During their last visit, Nand, a labourer from Purnia in Bihar, rented a room for Rs 2,000 a month. "I borrowed money from our relatives and have spent it all," he says. "Should I get her treated, pay for medication, or pay rent?"

There are also families with infants. Don't they get scared living on the street?

"What is there to fear when we are fighting for life?" says a woman as she tries to calm her 8-month-old baby. She won't give her name.

She is accompanying her husband, Anand Kumar, and his mother, Padma Devi, who was diagnosed with breast cancer two years ago. "I couldn't leave my wife and infant behind, so we all came together," Anand says.

He says there are a few dharamshalas near AIIMS but "it is impossible to find space there". "If we rent a room, it will cost Rs 8,000-10,000. How can we afford that?" he asks.

AIIMS has three dharamshalas and guest houses for patients and their relatives. Rajgriha Vishram Sadan, Sureka Vishram Sadan and Sai Vishram Sadan are next to Safdarjung Hospital and run by the AIIMS Welfare Society.

A staffer says the guest houses can take 400 people in total and, unsurprisingly given the demand and the relatively low rates of Rs 20 to Rs 300 a day, remain "full round the year".

Another family, with a young boy, from Madhubani in Bihar is also sleeping on the pavement.

The boy, 12-year-old Om Ram, is uncomfortable. His mother Rita Devi wraps a scarf around his head; she doesn't want passersby to see the tumour on his ear.

"It's hard," she says as she puts a wet cloth on her son's forehead. "When it gets very hot, we take him to lie on the Metro station stairs. We sit there till the guard comes and shoos us away."

His father, Ram Bilas Ram, 35, a labourer, said the tumour appeared last November. "We took him to a private hospital in Patna where he was operated on. Two months later, it grew again... We brought him to AIIMS in April. We have been here since," he says. "He had radiation therapy on June 5 and the doctor told us to come back in six months..."

Halfway down the station's stairs, Vasdev Ram and his wife from Jharkhand are helping their only son sit up and drink water from a bottle. The boy, 13, was near-paralysed after he fell while playing six months ago.

"Doctors back home couldn't help, so we brought him here. It's been two weeks," Ram says. "The first two days, we lived on the pavement. The sun was harsh and his condition deteriorated. Then we found our way here. It's a little better."

(The writer is an intern with The Indian Express)

PMLA ENQUIRY ED seeks info on ATS Group from Noida Authority

DHEERAJ MISHRA
NOIDA, JUNE 23

THE ENFORCEMENT Directorate (ED) has asked the Noida Authority to provide details of 63 companies associated with ATS Group — among the biggest real estate developers — pertaining to allotment of land, payment, discrepancies found in the execution of works, and FIR registered, if any.

As per a letter to the Authority, this is part of the ED's enquiry against the ATS Group under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002.

The 63 companies comprise of firms executing mega projects in Noida such as ATS Apartment, ATS Buildcon, ATS Buildline, ATS Homes, ATS Infrastructure, ATS Township, ATS Real estate, ATS Dreamzone etc.

Getamber Anand, chairman of ATS Group, said he has not received any notice from the ED regarding the investigation. "I have not received any notice in this regard so far. It would be preemptive to say the ED is conducting an investigation against us. This is a routine exercise. There is also a CAG audit going on in the city. As there are multiple builders in Noida, the ED keeps asking for details from the Authority. We are not alone, then why are we being singled out? There is no case, no FIR against us. We are being targeted. ATS is completing its projects sooner or later," Anand told *The Indian Express*.

The letter dated June 21 to Noida Authority CEO Lokesh M from Jvalin Tejpal, Deputy Director, ED Lucknow Zone, reads: "The Directorate is conducting an enquiry under the PMLA, 2002, into the ATS Group. In this regard, you are requested to submit details of the allotment of land to any of the group companies, either in its sole capacity as a bidder or as part of a consortium."

It also seeks "details of payments (dues) made by the group companies and delays" as well as "details of discrepancies found in the execution of works in violation of the terms of allotment, if any".

Along with this, the letter states, the agency also sought details regarding whether cancellation of the allotment of the companies occurred. "(Provide) details of any other coercive action taken against the allottee companies. The above-mentioned information is sought u/s 54 of PMLA, 2002. It is requested that this information may be provided on or before 28.06.2024," reads the letter.

CEO Lokesh M said he has not received a physical copy of the letter. "I will check if it is in the mail or not on Monday. I have not received a physical copy of the letter sent through post, if any," he said.

The ED letter has also been marked to Manoj Kumar Singh, Infrastructure & Industrial Development Commissioner, Uttar Pradesh Government.



ATS is among the biggest real estate developers. Archive

"I have not received any notice in this regard so far. It would be preemptive to say the ED is conducting an investigation against us. This is a routine exercise... There is no case, no FIR against us. We are being targeted."

GETAMBER ANAND
CHAIRMAN, ATS GROUP

In heart of Mehrauli, this Bhool Bhulaiyya is more than just a maze

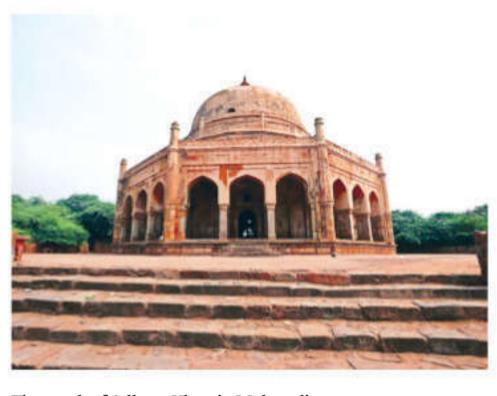
DEEPIKA SINGH
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

DELHI'S HISTORIC Mehrauli area is home to several monuments — some renowned such as the Qutub Minar, others not as well known or completely unknown jutting out of various nooks and crevices. And then there is a third kind, which is familiar to local residents but for reasons that have nothing to do with the purpose the monument was originally built for.

One such structure is what is referred to as 'Bhool Bhulaiyya (maze)' by the residents. Situated opposite the Mehrauli bus terminal, with its walls serving as a stand for autorickshaws, this is the tomb of Adham Khan, a general and foster brother of Mughal Emperor Akbar.

For visitors, though, the name rings no bell. "Hum toh bhool bhulaiyya hi jaanein (we only know it as Bhool Bhulaiyya)," says an elderly woman enjoying a somewhat pleasant evening after days of searing heat in Delhi.

On what gave the structure its moniker, author and filmmaker Sohail Hashmi tells *The Indian Express*: "The name comes from the stairs inside the walls. To ensure that the large dome does not fall off, buttresses were placed to lend some support. And to cover the buttresses, a circular outer wall was built. So, when you climb the stairs, entering the inner side of the dome, a gallery formed by the buttresses opens up. The outer



The tomb of Adham Khan in Mehrauli. Gajendra Yadav

opening comes after the inner opening, which is why it is difficult to trace the latter. Then you

Author and historian Swapna Liddle writes in her book, *14 Historic Walks of Delhi*: "The eight-sided tomb is built mainly of grey quartzite, widely available in and around Delhi. The upper part of the building is covered with limestone plaster — sparsely decorated with carved or incised motifs..."

The tomb's architecture is a confluence of the styles of different eras: While the shape is reminiscent of the Lodhi era and turrets reflect Tughlaq influence, the carvings are a marker of the Mughal period.



MURDER AT BURGER KING Woman who 'lured' victim to outlet seen at Katra rly station

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

AFTER 26-YEAR-OLD Aman Joon was shot dead by two armed assailants inside a Burger King outlet in West Delhi's Rajouri Garden, the woman who allegedly lured him to the popular food joint was spotted at Jammu and Kashmir's Katra Railway Station on June 20 — two days after the crime — in fresh CCTV footage obtained by the Delhi Police.

The incident is suspected to be the fallout of a gang rivalry, with Portugal-based gangster Himanshu Bhan claiming responsibility in an Instagram post.

Police had earlier said the woman, Anu Dhankar, is part of the Bhan gang and had been tasked to "get close" to Joon so that he is brought to a place where he could be killed by Bhan's sharpshooters. Hailing from Rohtak, police said Dhankar is a Psychology graduate from a Delhi college and was living in Mukherjee Nagar. Police said she had set up a fake ID on Facebook and Instagram and befriended Joon three months ago.

According to police sources, footage from Katra railway station shows 24-year-old Dhankar, also known as 'Lady Don' among her associates, at the railway station at 10 pm on Thursday. Footage shows a woman, wearing a blue



Grab from footage at Katra railway station. Express

scarf around her face, wheeling a blue suitcase and walking briskly towards the tracks.

Police sources said she stayed at a PG in Katra and technical surveillance revealed that she accessed its WiFi service.

Sources in the J&K Police said its Delhi counterpart had shared details/a picture of the woman with them. "During our routine scan of footage of CCTV cameras at the Katra railway station, we saw her... but she had left by then," said a J&K police source.

Police said they have immediately alerted their units around Katra and also the Delhi Police and other agencies in this regard.

Police also said CCTV footage from the day of the murder showed Dhankar boarding the Metro at GTB Nagar to reach Rajouri Garden Metro Station. Police said after the murder, she took the Metro from Rajouri Garden till Shakarpur.

How two men used a dating app to lure, assault & rob women

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

COMMON INTERESTS, friendship, companionship: These are some of the reasons why many single people join dating apps. However, when Vijay Kamal Kumar (28) and Rahul (35) created an account on one such app, it was for a different reason — quick money for a better lifestyle.

The duo would make a fake account on the app, pretend to be interested in the women they matched with — and rob them of valuables during visits to their houses, said police.

Delhi Police arrested the duo on June 18.

The matter came to light after a 35-year-old woman filed a complaint on May 31, stating that she was assaulted and robbed by a man she had met on the app and his friend. The woman — who lives with her two children in West Delhi after separation from her husband — stated in the complaint that she interacted with a man, who went by the name Jatin, on the app for two to three days before inviting him to her house, police said.

According to the FIR, Jatin showed up with his friend around 12 pm. "While the two of us were interacting, his friend waited in the other room. Later, my son came to me to inform me that the friend had been taking a tour of my house while talking over the phone," the woman said in the complaint.

Not making much of it, the woman agreed to meet Jatin again at her place the same night. Jatin showed up with his friend around 10.30 pm. While the trio was interacting, Jatin's friend suddenly grabbed the

woman by her throat and hit her on the face, said police. They then tied her hands, legs and mouth with tape, and proceeded to rob her of a gold chain, her mobile phone, and Rs 5,000 in cash before fleeing.

An FIR was registered against the accused under relevant IPC sections. As a police team analysed CCTV footage from nearby areas, it found that the duo had reached the woman's house in a Creta car, the number plate on which turned out to be fake.

"We found out that the duo had been using mobile phones of their victims to lure their next target... This app takes four days to verify the account of a new member. So, the men would create their accounts and find their targets. And then, rob them and delete the account before the verification could be completed. They would then make a fresh account and carry out the same process again," said Ankit Singh, DCP (Dwarka).

Police later got in touch with another victim — a resident of Rohini who said she was robbed in a similar fashion on March 23. Earlier that day, the two accused also stole six gold chains from a jewellery store in Rohini Sector 3, police said.

Police arrested Rahul outside Safdarjung Hospital, and Vijay, who went by the name Jatin, from Vipin Garden.

"They told us that they have committed similar crimes in Gurgaon, but we have not received any such complaint so far," the DCP said.

"Many women probably don't want to come forward and share their ordeal due to shame... many such victims only file a theft case, leaving out details," DCP Singh added.

Medical supplies fraud during Covid: Report not received, says DoV

GAYATHRI MANI
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

AS PART of its inquiry into major discrepancies in the procurement of medical items such as sterilised gloves and masks by officers of the Health department and the Directorate of Health Services (DHS) during the Covid pandemic period of 2021-22, the Directorate of Vigilance (DoV) had sought a report from those concerned within three days on June 19. No report has been submitted so far, officials said.

"The department has time till Monday... after that further action will be taken," a source said. The next meeting will take place on June 26, said officials.

According to official documents, the Directorate is investigating a case of fraud involving the procurement of gloves and masks for which payment was made to private contractors but goods were not received. "...It was pointed out that the DHS has shown goods as received though the items were not received as per e-waybill and payment was made," reads an internal document.

As per the minutes of a meeting, held on June 19, the Vigilance department said: "It was viewed that these items could possibly be transacted only on paper without actually receiving the goods but payment has been made to the supplier at the cost of public exchequer and hapless patients."

Officers of the Health department and DGHS were confronted with five instances of procurement of 2.5 lakh pairs of sterilised

gloves and 2.95 lakh N95 masks — they couldn't explain the reported mismatch in the supply chain between the manufacturer and distributor and distributor and storage in-charge, DGHS, said officials. "In all cases, the distributor/supplier is the same private company," said a senior official.

According to sources: "the Vigilance department had already raised the matter with the Health Department; it issued a letter on May 28 seeking their reply but the department did not reply to queries or furnish documentary evidence."

Officials said in the June 19 meeting, documentary evidence was shown to DGHS officers who could not provide sufficient answers and sought more time to seek necessary clarification from the distributor.

In the case of procurement of 1 lakh pairs of gloves, these were sent by the manufacturer on December 4, 2020, and were never received in Delhi but in Rewari, Haryana. "But DHS had shown that this item was received on 20.12.2021..." said sources.

Officials said payment was made without actual supply.

During the meeting, the Special Secretary, Health department, pointed out that "it is a clear case of fraud done by the distributor and a case for lodging a complaint against the distributor if the mismatch is not properly explained..."

In April, the DoV had issued a notice to the Health Minister's OSD in the case. Sources said he was heading one of the technical committees for procurement of these medical items.

Kejriwal moves SC against Delhi HC's stay on bail order

New Delhi: CM Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday moved the Supreme Court against the Delhi High Court's stay on a trial court order granting him bail in a money laundering case linked to the excise policy case in the Capital. Sources said Kejriwal's lawyers are seeking an urgent hearing in the matter on Monday.

On June 21, the Delhi HC stayed the trial court's June 20 or-

der, granting bail to Kejriwal, for "two-three days". It issued a notice to the CM on the ED's main plea against the trial court's June 20 order, and listed it for July 10.

The single-judge bench of Justice Sudhir Kumar Jain said: "Arguments are heard. Order is reserved. Till the pronouncement of the order on the stay application, the operation of the impugned (trial court) order is stayed." **ENS**

AAP leaders meet L-G, reiterate water demand

L-G spoke to Haryana CM around 4 pm... he has assured that he would seriously look into the matter: L-G Office

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

AMID THE ongoing tussle between the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) over the shortage of water, a delegation of senior AAP leaders met Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena Sunday demanding the national capital's share of water from Haryana.

The 10-member delegation, which included Rajya Sabha MPs Sanjay Singh and N D Gupta, General Secretary Pankaj Gupta, Cabinet Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj and others, highlighted that Delhi is receiving 113 MGD (million gallons daily) less water than what it is entitled to, said AAP in a statement.

The AAP said Saxena assured the delegation of his commitment to resolving the issue and making every effort to ensure Delhi receives its fair share from Haryana.

Officials said the L-G assured the AAP delegation that he would take up the matter of release of water on humanitarian grounds with the Haryana Chief Minister.

The L-G office in a statement said, "MPs and MLAs who spoke in the meeting, primarily requested the L-G to request the Haryana government for extra water, for a few days, till the rain/monsoon arrives... After listening to the representatives, the L-G reiterated that the advice by the Supreme Court that Delhi could approach Haryana for extra water on humanitarian grounds could be fructified only in an atmosphere of cooperation and amicable dialogue, rather than by indulging in accusations, abuse and blame game..."

Regarding the meeting, Singh said, "We told the L-G that Delhi is getting the same amount of water today as it was allocated in 1994... the population has in-



AAP leaders Saurabh Bharadwaj, Sanjay Singh and Somnath Bharti were part of the AAP delegation that met L-G V K Saxena on Sunday. Amit Mehra

creased three times over the years."

Singh said the delegation also informed the L-G that the Delhi government has made several efforts at its level, including spending Rs 500 crore to resolve the leakage of canals and laying 12,000 km of pipelines in the city.

"The L-G has also given some suggestions; it was agreed to work on these together," Singh added.

Cabinet Minister Bharadwaj said, "... Since the L-G is the central government's representative, we have requested him to talk to Haryana to release Delhi's share... the monsoon will start in a week, so it's just a matter of a few days."

Further, responding to the AAP statement, the L-G office said, "... the L-G spoke to the Haryana CM around 4 pm. 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."

Bharadwaj hits out at the PM

Earlier in the day, Bharadwaj, at a press conference, attacked

CAPITAL'S WATER CRISIS

Day 3 of fast: Atishi's ketone levels positive; she claims Haryana cut water supply further

SOPHIYA MATHEW
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

AS HER 'paani Satyagraha' entered Day 3 on Sunday, Delhi Water Minister Atishi's health vitals emerged as a concern with her ketone levels turning out positive. After examining the minister during the day, doctors reported her sugar level to be below 73mg/dL and blood pressure in the range of 125-56mmHg, said AAP, with many of its leaders expressing concerns over Atishi's positive ketone as it "could be dangerous for the kidneys".

Citing that Atishi has reiterated to continue with her indefinite fast till Delhi gets its "rightful share" of water from Haryana, AAP MLA Sanjay Singh posted on X on Sunday: "On the third day of the indefinite fast, the ketone level of the Minister (Atishi) came out as positive, the blood sugar and blood pressure levels also showed a decline."

Meanwhile, Atishi alleged that Delhi is not getting its share of water as Haryana has shut all the gates of the Hathnikund barrage, and asserted she will continue her indefinite fast over the issue. In a video posted on X on Sunday morning, Atishi alleged that the Hathni Kund barrage gates are not being opened by the Haryana government, due to which water supply has

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and claimed, "Despite writing letters to Modi ji, he has not said a word on Delhi's water crisis. He is completely silent on this matter; according to him, there is no water shortage in Delhi..."

Bharadwaj also alleged that the Capital's share of water dropped drastically after the Lok Sabha election results. "On June 2 and 3, 1,004 MGD on June 4, 1,003 MGD on June 5... After the results, the level started to drop and on June 21, it came to 896 MGD... Earlier, Haryana was releasing 100 MGD less water to Delhi; now this is 117 MGD."

He said the water share has dropped following their protest in the last three days, due to which 4.85 lakh people are not getting enough supply.

Bharadwaj also challenged the L-G to release videos of his meetings with the AAP delegation and BJP MPs. "He (L-G) recorded the entire meeting with us. He must have recorded the meeting with the BJP MPs too. So, he should release both videos. The people of Delhi will know who is conspiring and who is standing up for them."

remained insufficient in Delhi. She said: "There is water in Hathni Kund barrage. However, the Haryana government isn't releasing it for Delhi. I request the Haryana government with folded hands to open the gates of the Hathnikund barrage. Release the water of the people of Delhi."

"Delhiites should get the water they are entitled to. Until the Haryana government gives the water they (people of Delhi) are entitled to, until the gates of the Hathnikund barrage are opened, this hunger strike will continue," she added.

During a press conference on Sunday, Delhi Urban Development Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj also accused the Haryana government of further reducing the supply of water to Delhi from 100 MGD to 117 MGD — as Atishi began her indefinite fast.

A day after the Communist Party general-secretary, D Raja, expressed support for the AAP's 'paani satyagraha' agitation, CPI(M) politburo member Subhashini Ali joined the fast.

Meanwhile, as AAP MLA Akhilesh Pati Tripathi and former Cabinet Minister Jitendra Singh Tomar called Atishi the 'Iron Lady', AAP Delhi convener Gopal Rai claimed: "If the seven Delhi BJP MPs had lost, BJP wouldn't have had the courage to conspire and steal the water of the Delhi residents."

-WITH PTI INPUTS



AAP leaders Sanjay Singh and Atishi during her indefinite fast over water crisis in the Capital, on Sunday. Gajendra Yadav

BJP hits out at Atishi's fast: No drinking water, facilities to treat illnesses by heat

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

CALLING IT "drama", the BJP on Sunday said it was shameful that the AAP government was "engrossed" in an "air-conditioned Satyagraha" even as cases of deaths due to the heatwave were continuously increasing in Delhi.

Instead of taking measures to prevent such deaths, which the people of Delhi were facing on the one hand with a water crisis on the other, the AAP's leaders were making "petty political statements", Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva alleged.

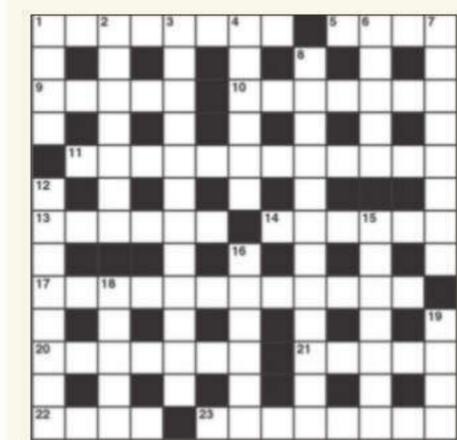
"This'll be the first Satyagraha movement in Indian history where the Satyagrahi comes only to pose for photos in front of the media and then disappears. This fact is clearly revealed in some videos received from there, showing a special meter on the wall of another's house in the service of Ms. Atishi, and four 4-tonne ACs are running there," Sachdeva said.

"As the Water Minister of Delhi, Ms Atishi has a duty to try to alleviate the water crisis in Delhi, fix the leakages, but she is trying to evade it... whether it is Saurabh Bharadwaj, Sanjay Singh, or Atishi, all are accusing the Haryana government of not supplying water, while the Haryana government and their officials have proven... that they are supplying more water to Delhi than the stipulated amount," he added.

"There is no drinking water in Delhi for the poor, no measures to prevent heatwave, and no health facilities, while Delhi ministers are busy with jail, bail, and Satyagraha," Sachdeva added.

Delhi Congress president Devender Yadav, meanwhile, termed Atishi's fast "political showmanship". "It is ironic that while lakhs of residents of Delhi are thirsting for every drop of potable water, Atishi has been shown drinking a glass of clean water in her dhama tent, which is a clear indication that those in power are not affected by the water crisis, but only the poor and the common people are," Yadav said.

CROSSWORD 5398



- ACROSS**
- 1 Roger says this works (8)
 - 5 Doesn't allow sections to be played (4)
 - 9 Aeroplane company held a conference (5)
 - 10 Sweetheart has reason to be passionate (7)
 - 11 Satisfied buyer of an electric fan? (4,8)
 - 13 A very noisy bearing causes concern (6)
 - 14 Girl appearing on stage is not a true member (3,3)
 - 17 Chap seemed in trouble in debut as an MP (6,6)
 - 20 Newspaper feature could make it clear (7)
 - 21 Letter that he takes to heart (5)
 - 22 Fish boat (4)
 - 23 It's instrumental in having wine around (8)
- DOWN**
- 1 People in competition (4)
 - 2 Succeed - but not at riding a horse (4,3)
 - 3 Spying activity makes the news (12)
 - 4 An attractive woman, this much one can see (6)
 - 6 In principle, ring after eleven in the morning (5)
 - 7 Accommodation for poor sailors? (8)
 - 8 Such a change may be on the gambler's behalf (3,3,6)
 - 12 Where one may see bellows makers? (8)
 - 15 An upholder of the Christian word (7)
 - 16 A member of society too (2,4)
 - 18 Finally dig in (5)
 - 19 Sailor put in a cellar (4)

Solutions Crossword 5397 Across: 1 Grounding, 8 Again, 9 Emerald, 10 Thrash, 11 Bad egg, 12 Hold down, 15 All at sea, 18 Plaque, 20 Coptic, 21 Degrees, 22 Spell, 23 Extra work Down: 2 Rumba, 3 Unreel, 4 Delights, 5 Gashed, 6 Cape Cod, 7 In the nude, 11 Broadcast, 13 Leapyear, 14 Flapper, 16 Trifle, 17 Barrow, 19 Clear

JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

Who speaks evil only differs from his who does evil in that he lacks _____. - Quintilian (11)

BTOOR **FKLNUY**

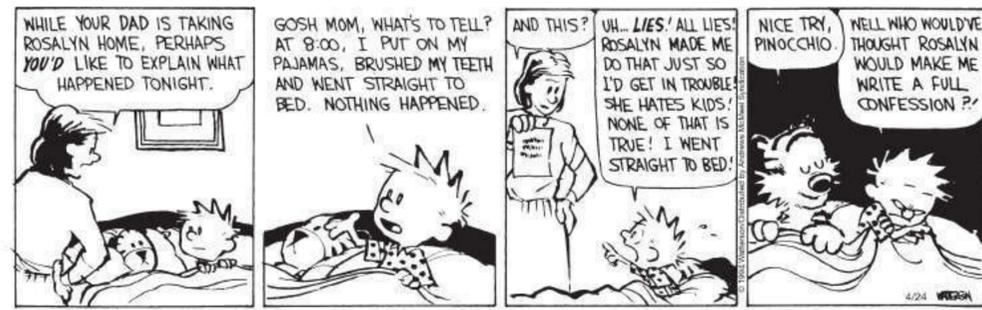
BYITT **UPPERS**

SOLUTION: ROBERT, BITTY, FLUNKY, SUPPER

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



SUDOKU 5601

Difficulty Level 5s
Instructions
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level
1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius

SOLUTION SUDOKU 5600

	6	2	7			4	8	
	1			4	9			
9		8				6	5	
	1	9	8	2		5		
3							9	
	7		4	3	5	8		
6	4				7		1	
		3	5				7	
8	5			4	6	2		

SOLUTION SUDOKU 5600

7	3	4	2	8	1	9	6	5
6	1	5	7	9	4	8	2	3
9	8	2	3	6	5	7	1	4
3	2	6	9	7	8	4	5	1
1	5	9	6	4	3	2	8	7
4	7	8	1	5	2	3	9	6
5	4	7	8	1	9	6	3	2
8	6	3	5	2	7	1	4	9
2	9	1	4	3	6	5	7	8

DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)
The relationship between Mars and Uranus may yet prove to mark a turning point in your domestic affairs. The way forward at home is through hard work. In professional matters, the key to success lies in adopting a radically different approach.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)
Financial news could be optimistic, and it may be useful to team up with a partner in a long-planned enterprise. The most important pressures in your chart are social, so you'll mix business with pleasure and cultivate useful contacts.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
Interesting news may set you on a new course of action, and you will feel a sense of urgency. Use your imagination and follow hunches, especially if any short journeys are planned. In matters of the heart you're hoping for the best - but you could be too pushy.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
The current planetary patterns seem to be definitely beneficial, even though you may come close to despairing of a particular person. Bear in mind that other people are just incapable of committing themselves at the moment - and wait until the time is right.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)
There's a lot of energy around, and there's no reason why you shouldn't achieve your aims. If you're in the property market, a little lateral or creative thinking should help cut through entrenched problems. And a word of advice - don't feel rushed into making practical choices.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)
This is unlikely to be a restful day. The planets are putting pressure on everyone, although from your point of view this is all very positive. Try socialising with colleagues you'd normally ignore. You might even consider welcoming rivals into your closest circle.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)
You'll only be as busy as you want to be, so arrange your schedule to suit your needs rather than those of friends and associates. There is every sign that decisions taken now will work out as planned, but only if you're sensitive about putting them into practice.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)
The accent is on domestic improvements, if only at the planning stage. There's much to be said for taking a radical approach, even though this may not be well received by your cautious relatives. The other factor you have to bear in mind is that children and younger relations require still more of your time.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 23)
If travel is on the horizon, please get arrangements tidied up as soon as possible. Recent conditions may have been a little stressful, although by now you should have got the hang of your new responsibilities. You will have implemented all changes by next week.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)
Career-wise, you're in for a busy time although your attention may be drawn more towards emotional complications. You must ask yourself what it is that you want from a certain person - and then work out how you can get it.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)
Lively conditions continue, although there's no reason to join in with co-operative activities if you've something better to do. Disagreements will be made up with just a little effort and attention in the right quarters. Throwing money at problems may also help.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)
Catch up on all routine chores and you might achieve more than you intended. You may even get ahead of yourself, in which case you'll be thankful for your foresight when pressures build up, possibly before the end of the week. Don't take partners for granted.

5 GOVT & POLITICS



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



NEW INNINGS

AFTER SAMAJWADI Party's stellar performance in the Lok Sabha polls in UP with 37 seats, party president Akhilesh Yadav went on a week's vacation to a foreign country with his family. Now, he has his hands full as the Parliament session begins on Monday and his party has the third largest number of MPs in the House. He also has to pick candidates for the Assembly bypolls, seats vacated by 10 MLAs who were elected as MPs. Akhilesh also has to name the Leader of Opposition — post vacated by him — in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly.

MARKING PRESENCE

DOPT'S LATEST strongly worded circular on biometric attendance has sent the bureaucracy into a tizzy. The circular took serious note of the laxity in implementing the Aadhaar Enabled Biometric Attendance System and some employees coming late to work on a regular basis. With this, senior officers were seen asking their staff about their Aadhaar-based attendance IDs and many, even of the joint secretary rank, are often seen queuing up before the attendance machines in ministry corridors to mark their presence.

GUEST APPEARANCE

USUALLY, MINISTERS inaugurate the events in their respective ministries but here is one event Union Culture Minister Gajendra Shekhawat attended after it concluded. Even as a 15-day-long exhibition at the National Gallery of Modern Art to mark the coronation of Chhatrapati Shivaji officially ended for the public on June 21, the paintings were kept mounted for one extra day for the special visitor — Shekhawat — who could visit the gallery on Saturday. On Friday evening, even as the staff had arrived to pack the 115 paintings, the plan was shelved at the last minute.

Amid Northeast flood fury, Shah reviews monsoon preparedness

Suggests creation of large ponds in Northeast, use of ISRO data for flood control

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

UNION HOME Minister Amit Shah on Sunday chaired a high-level meeting to review the government's preparedness in the wake of recent floods in the Northeast and the approaching monsoons.

Shah instructed the concerned departments to study in detail the recent floods in Sikkim and Manipur and submit a report to the Ministry of Home Affairs. Shah also suggested that at least 50 large ponds should be constructed in the Northeast.

According to an MHA official, Shah also reviewed long-term measures to formulate a comprehensive and far-reaching policy to mitigate the menace of floods in the country. The Home Minister appealed to all the States and Union Territories to timely implement the advisories issued by NDMA for flood management. He directed the India Meteorological Department (IMD) and the Central Water Commission



Union Home Minister Amit Shah with Minister of Jal Shakti CR Paatil and Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla, Sunday. PTI

(CWC) to complete the process of recalibrating all the equipment used in flood forecast, at the earliest," the MHA statement said.

"He also directed to ensure that floodgates of all the major dams are in good condition. Shah said that the CWC flood monitoring centres should be in accordance with our requirements and of international standards," the statement said. During the meeting, new technologies be-

ing adopted by all the agencies and the expansion of their network for flood management were also discussed. Shah also reviewed the preparations to deal with Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF). He also emphasized on optimum use of satellite imagery provided by the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) for flood and water management.

"The Union Home Minister said that the non-perennial rivers are prone to more soil erosion and siltation, resulting in floods. He directed that efforts should be made to upgrade the forecast system of water level of rivers for better flood management," he said.

"Shah said that a natural drainage system should be an integral part of the designs of road construction to deal with inundation of roads, in case of floods. Shah said that at least 50 large ponds should be constructed in the Northeast so that the water of the Brahmaputra River could be diverted and stored in those ponds. He said that this will help in developing agriculture, irrigation and tourism in those areas at a low cost and also help in tackling the floods, and it will eventually benefit the local economy," the official said.

According to MHA, Shah directed that the IMD's alerts regarding lightning strikes should be disseminated among the public on time. He emphasized on the need to integrate weather, rainfall and flood warning related apps.



BSP chief Mayawati with nephew and party's national coordinator Akash Anand in Lucknow on Sunday. PTI

Mayawati reinstates nephew Akash in top BSP post, again names him successor

LALMANI VERMA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

MORE THAN a month after Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati removed him from a top party post and as her political heir, Akash Anand was on Sunday reinstated as her "lone successor" and the party's national coordinator.

Mayawati made the announcement at the BSP's first review meeting, held in Lucknow, on its loss in the Lok Sabha elections. She urged party leaders to "give him (Akash) more respect than earlier". "Party president (Mayawati) has once again given an opportunity to Akash Anand to work in the party with maturity," the BSP said in a statement in which Mayawati was quoted as saying, "I am hopeful that he will emerge completely as a 'mature leader' at every level in the interest of the party and movement. Party people will also encourage him by giving more respect than earlier so that he lives up to my expectations."

At the meeting, Mayawati said false propaganda of Opposition parties on the alleged threat to the Constitution damaged the BSP. She instructed party leaders to spread awareness about how the same Congress that made the Constitution an electoral issue had "used all tactics to prevent the entry of B R Ambedkar in the Constituent Assembly". She, according to the BSP statement, said that BJP-led NDA government at Centre was not fully stable and that party leaders should "work extensively" to strengthen the organisation's base across India.

Mayawati appointed Akash, her nephew, as the party's national coordinator in 2019 and in December last year named him her political successor, only to sack him last month. On May 7, the BSP chief said the decision to remove Akash would be in force "in the

larger interest of the party and the movement... until he attains maturity". The move came after the police in Sitapur in UP booked Akash for promoting enmity after he referred to BJP government as "aatankwadiyo ki sarkar" (government of terrorists).

Following his aunt's decision, Akash stopped campaigning mid-way through the Lok Sabha elections, leaving Mayawati as the lone face of the party. The party also received feedback from its candidates, all of whom lost, that Jatav Dalits as well as a section of Muslims, seen to be the BSP's core voter base, would not have backed the Samajwadi Party (SP)-Congress alliance had Akash continued his campaign. His exit, the leaders said, sent a message that Mayawati had succumbed to the BJP's pressure.

"His reappointment will help the BSP shed the tag of being the BJP's B-team. It will help rebuild trust in our core voter base of Jatavs and Dalits," said a party leader.

In Mayawati's sudden change of heart, several BSP insiders also see the effect of Azad Samaj Party (Kanshiram) leader Chandrashekhar Aazad's win from Nagina Lok Sabha seat. The BSP won the seat in 2019, when it contested the elections in alliance with the SP and RLD.

With the BSP's electoral fortunes declining — it failed to win a single Lok Sabha seat and its vote share in UP plummeted from 19.3% to 9.3% — the emergence of a popular Dalit leader such as Aazad, who seems to have the backing of Dalits as well as Muslims, may have fast-tracked Akash's reinstatement.

"Aazad will raise the issues of Dalits and Muslims in the House while travelling across the country. This will help him evolve as a Dalit leader and as an alternative to Mayawati, further weakening the BSP. To control this damage, Anand's return was important," said a BSP leader.

BJYM leader shot dead while pasting posters in Indore: Police

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
INDORE, JUNE 23

A Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) leader was allegedly shot dead by two motorcycle-borne persons in Indore in Madhya Pradesh early Sunday, a police official said.

Monu Kalyane (35), vice president of the BJYM's city unit, was killed in front of a shop near Chimanbaag square on Jail Road at around 2am, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police Ram Snehi Mishra said.

"Kalyane and two others were pasting posters when two men came on a motorcycle and asked for his phone number and details of a vehicle rally the deceased was set to organise on Sunday," Mishra said, adding, "Names of Arjun Pathrod and Piyush Pathrod have come up during probe as Kalyane had an old enmity with them."

Police said some supporters of Kalyane ransacked the home of the accused, which is close to the deceased's residence in Usha Phatak area, and also tried to set ablaze vehicles. Kalyane was considered close to MP minister Kailash Vijayvargiya.

ISRO Reusable Launch Vehicle aces third and final landing test

ANONNA DUTT
JUNE 23, NEW DELHI

THE INDIAN Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Sunday successfully demonstrated the landing capability of the Reusable Launch Vehicle (RLV), named Pushpak, for the third time, bringing it one step closer to using the vehicle for an orbital mission. The third and final test in the series of Landing Experiment (LEX-03) was conducted at 7.10 IST at the Aeronautical Test Range (ATR) in Karnataka's Chitradurga district.

Announcing the success, the space agency on X said: "Hat-trick for ISRO in RLV LEX! (Reusable Launch Vehicle Landing Experiment). With the objectives of RLV LEX accomplished, ISRO embarks into RLV-ORV, the orbital reusable vehicle."

Significantly, the third demonstration of Pushpak reused the winged body and flight systems from the second experiment without any modifications. To bring down the launch costs and to remain competitive, the Reusable Launch Vehicle by ISRO is designed to take satellites to space and then



RLV Pushpak being carried by a helicopter during its Landing Experiment. PTI

return and land on a runway like an aeroplane. Unlike the SpaceX vehicle that lands back vertically, to achieve the horizontal landing ISRO's vehicle has wings to help it glide.

The third demonstration undertaken on Sunday using a helicopter was to test the vehicle in more challenging conditions — when there is a higher degree of deviation from the intended orbit while the launch vehicle comes down and when there are more severe wind conditions. The deviation during the third

demonstration was 500m compared to 150m during the previous experiment, according to the space agency. The winged vehicle was dropped from an altitude of 4.5 km by an Indian Air Force Chinook helicopter. After release, the vehicle autonomously undertook manoeuvres to correct course and precisely landed on the centreline of the runway.

The space agency also said that the aerodynamic design of the vehicle, which means a low drag on it when it is landing, led to the velocity exceeding 320 kmph on Sunday. To be sure, the velocity at landing for commercial planes is 260 kmph and for fighter planes is 280 kmph. After touchdown, the vehicle velocity was reduced to nearly 100 kmph using its brake parachute and then the landing gear brakes were deployed for further deceleration and stopping on the runway.

"This 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)," the space agency said.

MHA asks states to begin drill to find glitches in crime laws rollout

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

AS THE three new criminal laws — Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and Bharatiya Sakshya Act — comes into effect on July 1, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has asked all the states and Union Territories to start "dummy exercise" to identify the shortcomings and send feedback accordingly, it is learnt.

A source said at a recent

meeting, the instructions were given by senior MHA officials to the DGs and Chief Secretaries of states and UTs, except Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir, heads of the NCRB and the BPR&D.

In the meeting, the MHA enquired from the officials about any bottlenecks or hurdles they may be facing in the implementation of the new laws. When some officials raised the issue of requirement of mobile forensic vans, they were told by the MHA to submit the proposals, the source said.

Earlier, Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla had held a

meeting with all the DGs and Chief Secretaries of UTs, heads of NCRB and BPR&D for a smooth rollout of the penal laws.

The MHA is also expected to issue a gazette notification soon after deciding on the delegation of powers under relevant sections of the new laws for better discharge of duties and functions.

"The MHA had asked UTs to prepare a comprehensive proposal for delegation of powers... All the UTs submitted their proposals and MHA is currently examining them before issuing the notification," a source said.

After Canada's tribute to Nijjar, EAM recalls Kanishka bombing

DIVYAA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

DAYS AFTER the Canadian Parliament paid tribute to pro-Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday recalled 1985 Kanishka bombing in a social media post, saying that it was a reminder why terrorism should not be tolerated. "Today marks the 39th anniversary of one of the worst acts of terrorism in history," Jaishankar said. "Pay my homage to the memory of the 329 victims of AI 182 'Kanishka' who were killed this day in 1985. My thoughts are with their families. The anniversary is a reminder why terrorism should never be tolerated." The Indian consulate-general in Vancouver has announced plans to hold a memorial event for the victims of the 1985 Air India Kanishka flight bombing.

"India stands at the forefront of countering the menace of terrorism and works closely with all nations to tackle this global threat. 23 June 2024 marks the 39th Anniversary of the cowardly terrorist bombing of Air India flight 182 (Kanishka), in which 329 innocent victims, including 86 children, lost their lives in one of the most heinous terror-related air disasters in the history of civil aviation," the consulate-general posted on X. The memorial service is scheduled to take place on June 23 evening (local time), at the Air India Memorial



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar at the BAPS Hindu Mandir in Abu Dhabi, UAE, on Sunday. PTI

located in Stanley Park's Ceperley Playground area in Vancouver. "The Consulate General of India in Vancouver encourages members of the Indian Diaspora to attend, demonstrating solidarity against terrorism," the post read.

Petroleum Minister Hardeep Puri also paid homage to the victims through a post on Sunday. "This dastardly bombing on 23 June 1985 remains one of the most reprehensible acts of terror committed against India. Actions anchored in such extremism have no place in a sane and civilised world," he said.

On June 23, 1985, an Air India Flight from Montreal to London exploded 31,000 ft above the Atlantic Ocean after a bomb planted by Khalistani terrorists based out of Canada went off. Among the 329 people killed were 268 Canadian citizens, 27 British citizens, and 24 Indian citizens.

Jaishankar visits UAE to discuss ties, war in Gaza

New Delhi: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday undertook a day-long official visit to the United Arab Emirates to meet his counterpart, Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and discuss bilateral ties, besides touching upon a host of regional and global issues, including the war in Gaza. "During the visit, the Minister will have a meeting with his UAE counterpart on wide-ranging issues of the partnership," said a statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs. Before meeting Al Nahyan, Jaishankar visited the BAPS Hindu Mandir in Abu Dhabi — which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 14 this year. **ENS**

Prajwal's brother Suraj Revanna held for 'sexual assault' of JDS worker

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, JUNE 23



Suraj Revanna

THE KARNATAKA Police on Sunday arrested Janata Dal (Secular) MLC Suraj Revanna, brother of rape accused former MP Prajwal Revanna, for allegedly sexually assaulting a man.

The man, a JDS worker, said in his complaint that he had visited Suraj at a farmhouse in Karnataka's Hassan district on June 16. According to the FIR, Suraj allegedly stripped and sexually assaulted the complainant, and threatened to kill the man's family. The complainant also alleged that Suraj assured him of a job and political growth.

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara said Sunday that the case has been handed over to the state Criminal Investigation Department (CID). Following this, Suraj was taken to the CID headquarters in Bengaluru.

Later in the day, he was produced before a magistrate, who remanded him in 14 days' judicial custody.

Police on Saturday booked Suraj and his close aide Shivakumar under IPC sections 377 (carnal intercourse against the order of nature), 342 (wrongful confinement), 506 (intentional insult to provoke breach of the peace) and 34 (common intention).

Suraj's father, JD(S) MLA H D Revanna, claimed the case was part of a "political conspiracy" against his family. "I won't react to anything. Let the (CID) do the investigation. Who said don't (investigate)? I have faith in God and judiciary. I know what's happening in the state," Revanna said.

Parameshwara denied claims of a conspiracy. "There was a complaint given by an individual, and on that basis, they have summoned Suraj Revanna... When police register an FIR, they look into evidence and most probably they have found some evidence, which is why they have taken him into custody," he said.

Suraj had also commented on the case hours before his arrest, alleging that the case was filed in an effort to "extort money" from him. His aide Shivakumar had earlier filed an extortion case against the complainant, alleging that he had demanded Rs 5 crore and later settled for Rs 2 crore.

The complainant, however, said it was Shivakumar who offered him Rs 2 crore to keep the matter secret.

Was honour to be your voice: Rahul writes to Wayanad

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

Senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday wrote to the people of Wayanad and said that he is sad about vacating the Wayanad constituency, but is consoled because sister Priyanka will be there to "represent the constituency's people".

On June 17, the Congress had announced that Rahul Gandhi will vacate Wayanad and retain Rae Bareilly, with party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra to contest the Wayanad seat in Kerala. Rahul had won both seats in the recently concluded Lok Sabha polls and had to vacate one of them. In an open letter to the people

of Wayanad, Rahul said, "I met you five years ago. The first time I visited you, I came asking for your support. I was a stranger to you and yet you believed in me. You embraced me with unbridled love and affection. It didn't matter which political formation you supported, it didn't matter which community you were from or which religion you believed in or which language you spoke."

"I am sad, but I am consoled because my sister Priyanka will be there to represent you. I am confident that she will do an excellent job of being your MP if you decide to give her the opportunity," he said.

Rahul said that "when I faced abuse day after day, your unconditional love protected me". "You were my refuge, my home and



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during an election campaign for the Lok Sabha polls in Wayanad earlier this year. PTI File

my family. I never felt for even a moment that you doubted me," he said. "I will remember the countless flowers and hugs you

gave me. Each one given with such genuine love and tenderness. How can I ever forget the bravery, beauty and confidence

with which young girls would translate my speeches in front of thousands of people," he wrote in the letter.

"It was truly a joy and an honour to be your voice in Parliament... I am also consoled because I have a loving family in the people of Rae Bareilly and a bond that I cherish deeply. My central commitment to both you and the people of Rae Bareilly is that we will fight and defeat the hatred and violence being spread in the country," he wrote.

"I do not know how to thank you for what you have done for me. For the love and protection you gave me when I needed it most. You are part of my family and I will always be there for each and every one of you," said the Congress MP.

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,
PWD DIVISION SHAHPURA (DIST. SHAHPURA)**
File No: 967-76 Date: 18-6-24
Notice Inviting Bid No. 03/2024-25
Bids for Remaining work of Construction of BT Road under Rural Road Project Package No. RJ-07-10/5054/New Road/P/2018-19 are invited from interested bidders upto time 9.30 date 22.06.2024 to time 18.00 date 12.07.2024. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppp.raj.nic.in>) of the state; and PWD departmental website. The approximate values of the procurement is Rs. 278.33 Lacs.
NIB No.: PWD2425A0260
UBN No.: PWD2425 WS0B00909

Sd/-
(R.D. Meena)
Executive Engineer
PWD Dn Shahpura (Distt. Shahpura)
Email :- cshahpura.pwd@rajasthan.gov.in
Mobile No 9571221166

DIPR/C/4580/2024

CHAKUR NAGAR PANCHAYAT DIST LATUR
Out.No./CNP/WS/Kavi-896 Date : 21.06.2024
e-Tender Notice for 2024-25
Chakur Nagar Panchayat invites E-Tender for Chakur Water Supply Scheme, Tq.- Chakur, Dist- Latour in the State of Maharashtra Under M.S.U.N. Scheme of Estimated cost Rs. 60,94,02,319.00. The E-Tender details are available on www.mahatenders.gov.in
All relevant dates will be as per the tender published in web portal www.mahatenders.gov.in
Date :- 21.06.2024

sd/-
Ajay Narale,
Chief Officer
Chakur Nagar Panchayat

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION
General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of Vagabond male Age: 60 years, Complexion: Wheatish, Height: 5'7", Face: Round, Hair: White, Build: Medium, was wearing only White Pajama and Bare feet, was found at Kohli Furniture, Jail Road, Hari Nagar, Delhi in unconscious condition and taken him to DDU Hospital where doctor declared him brought dead. In this regard a DD No. 27A, dated 29.05.2024, has been lodged at P.S. Hari Nagar, 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. Hari Nagar, Delhi
Ph.: 011-28125719, 8750871128

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION
General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of male, Age: Approx 65 years, Complexion: Wheatish, Height: 5'6", ID Mark: Mole on left cheek, was wearing Sky Blue colour T-Shirt and Brown colour Trouser, was found opposite Sonia Hospital, Rohtak Road, Delhi at 6:30 PM. In this regard a DD No. 120A, dated 18.06.2024, has been lodged at P.S. Nangloi, 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. Nangloi, Delhi
Ph.: 011-25947225, 8368610532

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION
General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of an unknown male Age: Approx 45 years, Complexion: Shallow, Height: 5'5", Face: Long, Build: Medium, Hair: Small, was wearing Check colour Lungi, was found dead at back side of Delight Cinema, Darya Ganj, Delhi on 19.06.2024. In this regard a DD No. 20A 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
Ph.: 011-23279331, 8750870421

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED
See Section U/S 82 Cr. P.C.
Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Satish Kumar Sharma Prop. of M/s Raghuvir Dayal Bhatia & Sons, Shop No. 1-B/6, NIT, Faridabad, Haryana has Committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case CC No. 25306/2016 U/s 138 NI Act, P.S. Shalimar Bagh, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said Satish Kumar Sharma cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said Satish Kumar Sharma has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).
Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Satish Kumar Sharma of case CC No. 25306/2016 U/s 138 NI Act, P.S. Shalimar Bagh, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 09.08.2024.

By Order
Sh. Rishab Kapoor,
Metropolitan Magistrate-05, North West District,
Room No. 105,
Rohini Court, Delhi

DPI/7545/NW/2024(Court Matter)

PRESS NOTICE
INVITING PERCENTAGE RATE e-TENDER
Executive Engineer(C), Postal Civil Division, Jammu invites on behalf of The President of India, online percentage rate (CPWD-7) e-tenders for the following work:
N.I.T. No. : 09/EE/PCD/JMU/2024-25; Name of Work: - Misc Civil repair works and renovation of staff quarters at Postal colony Leh (Type-III-8 nos & Type-II- 12 nos); Estimated Cost: 3992857/-; Earnest Money: 79857/-; Period of completion:- 150 days; Last date and time of submission of bid: 04.07.24 upto 11:00 Hrs. ; The bid forms and other details can be obtained from the website <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>

Karnataka halts mining project; because I signed it, says Kumaraswamy

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, JUNE 23
DAYS AFTER the Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries, JD(S) leader H D Kumaraswamy, gave his nod to the Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Ltd to operationalise the Devadari mines in Ballari district, the Congress government in the state has halted the transfer of about 401 hectares of forest land to the company.
In a letter dated June 21, Karnataka Forest, Ecology and Environment Minister Eshwar Khandre directed officials not to transfer the land to KIOCL, citing its alleged violations in the past. "There are complaints KIOCL failed to implement the directions of the Centrally Empowered Committee within the stipulated time, over violations (there were allegations of polluting the Bhadra River) that took place when the company took up mining activity at Kudremukh national forest," Khandre wrote.
Kumaraswamy called it "vendetta". "Since I signed the files, the state government decided to stop the project..." he said Sunday, adding the state government's decision will have an adverse effect on job creation.
A public sector unit, KIOCL had proposed mining in 401.5 hectares in the Swamimalai Block near Sandur Taluk in Ballari in March 2018.
Environmentalists estimated that around one lakh trees were expected to be felled for the project.

'Can't comprehend': Family of Andhra man shot dead in Dallas

SREENIVAS JANYALA
HYDERABAD, JUNE 23
FOR 32-YEAR-OLD Dasari Gopikrishna's family members, some of whom inadvertently watched a CCTV clip that has been circulating on social media showing him getting shot in a convenience store in the US, it has been a struggle to come to terms with the killing of the young father.
From Yajali village in Andhra Pradesh's Bapatla, Gopikrishna had gone to Dallas, Texas, eight months ago in search of a job. However, the B.Tech graduate couldn't find a suitable position, and started working part time at the convenience store.
Late on Friday night, a man walked into the store and opened fire at Gopikrishna, who was behind the counter. The man stole some cash and other items and left. The incident was caught on CCTV camera.
"We cannot comprehend how his life has been snuffed out in cold blood," said 54-year-old D Srinivas, who had sold his one-acre field to fund his son's travel to the US.
Gopikrishna got married three years ago and had a one-year-old son. "He wanted to settle down and do well so that he could provide a better life for his wife and son," Srinivas said. Gopikrishna had completed his B.Tech from Bapatla Engineering College seven years ago. He had been working as a software engineer for a Hyderabad-based company before heading to the US.
"His friends in the US, especially two of them living in Texas, had advised him not to go now as the employment scenario was not good there. They had said that they would tell him when the situation was better, but he decided to go anyway," said G Suresh, a childhood friend and neighbour.
"His wife is also a B.Tech graduate. He thought that once he finds suitable employment, she can also join him, and the both of them can work there and enjoy a better life," Suresh said.
"His wife pray daily that he find a suitable job. He was happy when he found work at the convenience store. He used to call me every week and say something was better than nothing, and that he would soon find a better job," Suresh added.
After getting shot late on Friday night, he was rushed to the hospital, but died 10 hours later. Some members of his family had even seen the video of the shooting on social media without realising it was him.

MP Police declares bounty on cow slaughter accused; Seoni SP, collector transferred

Seoni: Madhya Pradesh police on Sunday announced a reward of Rs 10,000 each on seven residents of Nagpur allegedly involved in slaughtering 62 cows and bulls in Seoni district on June 17, a senior officer said.
Carcasses of cows were discovered in a river and a forested area in Seoni district, leading to the arrest of five individuals and the transfer of the collector and superintendent of police.
Late Saturday night, the MP government shunted out Seoni collector Kshitij Singh and SP Rakesh Kumar Singh after the recovery of carcasses of bovines.
"Investigation suggests that slaughtering was aimed at whipping up communal frenzy but the motive will be confirmed once we arrest the seven accused of Nagpur. We have announced a bounty of Rs 10,000 each for these seven persons," IG (Jabalpur) Anil Singh Kushwaha said. Of the five persons arrested, Santosh Kavreti and Ramdas Uike were remanded to judicial custody while Shadab Khan and Wahid Khan were sent to police custody for three days by a local court on Sunday. **PTI**

UP trader held over animal sacrifice video

AMIT SHARMA
MEERUT, JUNE 23
THE UTTAR Pradesh Police has arrested a 20-year-old garment trader, who allegedly uploaded photographs of animal sacrifice as his WhatsApp status on the occasion of Eid al-Adha, from Jalalabad town of Shamli district, officials said.
Soon after Javed Qureshi shared the photographs, members of some Hindu organisations vandalised his shop in Himachal Pradesh's Nahan.
An FIR was registered at a police station in Nahan over the video and a probe revealed that the photos were uploaded from Shamli, following which the district police were requested to trace him.
The UP police too have lodged an FIR in the matter. "Javed will be handed over to the Himachal Pradesh Police after we complete our legal formalities," said Thana Bhawan police station in-charge Rajendra Prasad.

कार्यालय अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियंता, जन स्वास्थ्य अभियांत्रिकी विभाग, क्षेत्र-द्वितीय, जोधपुर
Tel: 0291-2650730, Email: ace2jodhpur@gmail.com
क्रमांक:- क्षेत्र-II/जोधपुर/निविदा//2024-25/2793-2824 दिनांक:- 14/06/2024
बिड आमंत्रण सूचना (NIB) संख्या 02/2024-25
राजस्थान के राज्यपाल की ओर से निम्नलिखित कार्यों हेतु लोक निर्माण और वित्तीय नियम के पार्ट-4 नियम 334 (E) (iii) के तहत रु. 150.00 लाख तक की निविदाओं हेतु केवल जन स्वास्थ्य अभियांत्रिकी विभाग में पंजीकृत एवं इससे अधिक लागत की निविदाओं हेतु जन स्वास्थ्य अभियांत्रिकी विभाग में पंजीकृत निविदादाताओं हेतु निम्नानुसार सूट के साथ एवं केन्द्र/राज्य सरकार के अधिकृत विभागों/संगठनों, केन्द्रिय लोक निर्माण विभाग, रेल, डाक, दूरसंचार विभागों में उपयुक्त समकक्ष श्रेणी में पंजीकृत संवेदकों से पूर्ण धरोहर राशि के साथ ई-टेंडरिंग प्रक्रिया द्वारा निम्न ऑन लाईन बिड आमंत्रित की जाती है:-

बिड संख्या	UBN No.	अनुमानित लागत	धरोहर राशि 2	प्रतिबंध	बिड शुल्क (रुपए)	ई-प्रक्रिया शुल्क	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि
02/2024-25	PHE2425WLOB01650	591797005/-	11835940/-		25000/-	2500/-	12 माह

ऑनलाइन बिड उपलब्ध होने की तिथि 14/06/2024
प्रिबिड तिथि 21/06/2024 को 11.00 ए.एम.
ऑनलाइन बिड डाउनलोड/अपलोड करने की अनिम तिथि 25/07/2024 को 6.00 पी.एम.
ऑनलाइन बिड खोलने की तिथि 26/07/2024 को 2.00 पी.एम.
बिड से संबंधित समस्त विवरण वेबसाइट www.dipronline.org, sppp.raj.nic.in व www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in पर देखा जा सकता है।
हस्ता./- (जुगल किशोर करवा)
अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियंता
जन स्वास्थ्य अभियांत्रिकी विभाग, क्षेत्र द्वितीय जोधपुर
DIPR/C/4510/2024

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION
General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of beggar type male Age: 37 years, Complexion: Shallow, Height: 5'3", Face: Long, Build: Normal, ID Mark: A mole on Forehead, was wearing White, Blue and Yellow colour T-Shirt and Black colour Pajama, was found Main Hall, Pahar Ganj side, New Delhi Railway Station, Delhi. at 8:08 AM on 19.06.2024 and admitted in LHM Hospital where doctor declared him dead. In this regard a DD No. 04A, dated 19.06.2024, has been lodged at P.S. New Delhi Railway Station, Delhi.
His dead body has been preserved in LHM 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. NDRS, Delhi
Ph.: 011-27744073, 8750871305

Office of the Assistant Engineer U.P.R.E.D. Sambhal
Address:- Irrigation Colony Bahjoi, Sambhal-244410
Press Short Term Notice for Manual Tender
Dated : 14-06-2024

Letter No:- 41/RED/Tender/File-66/ Bond Clerk/2024-25
The Assistant Engineer, U.P.R.E.D. Sambhal on behalf of Governor of Uttar Pradesh invites the percentage rate bids (Awaiting Fund Sanction S.NO-3,4,12,13,17,18,26,27 and 32) through manual system from the eligible and approved Contractors registered with UP RED, in appropriate class A, B, C, D and E as the case may be. The Rates floated in Bill of quantity enclosed bid document are inclusive of all taxes except GST which will be paid extra to the contractor as per latest Government orders. The Bidder may submit bids for any or all of the works

Sl. No.	Name of District	Name of Block	Name of work	Total estimated cost (in Rupees)	Bid security (in Rupees)	Cost of Bid document including GST (if any) (in Rupees)	Stationery Value of Tender Form (in Rs.)	Period of completion including rainy season
1	Sambhal	Gunnar	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Mehua Hansangaj	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
2	Sambhal	Gunnar	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Isampur	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
3	Sambhal	Gunnar	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Shajahanabad	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
4	Sambhal	Gunawai	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Khirawari	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
5	Sambhal	Gunawai	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village pussawali	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
6	Sambhal	Gunawai	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Ghoshali Raza	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
7	Sambhal	Gunawai	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Berpur Maharaj	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
8	Sambhal	Rajpura	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Singoli Kalla	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
9	Sambhal	Rajpura	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Udharnapur	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
10	Sambhal	Rajpura	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Khajra Inayatsanj	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
11	Sambhal	Rajpura	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Harfari	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
12	Sambhal	Rajpura	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Chandungala	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
13	Sambhal	Rajpura	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Bhainsroi	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
14	Sambhal	Asmoli	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Nalpur	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
15	Sambhal	Asmoli	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Akhandpur	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
16	Sambhal	Asmoli	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Nandpur Beta	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
17	Sambhal	Sambhal	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Tatarpur Road	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
18	Sambhal	Sambhal	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Turipur Bah	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
19	Sambhal	Sambhal	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Bala	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
20	Sambhal	Sambhal	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Fulsihan	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
21	Sambhal	Sambhal	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Jalapur	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
22	Sambhal	Sambhal	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Bharat Madar	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
23	Sambhal	Sambhal	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village vatua	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
24	Sambhal	Sambhal	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Nahardher	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
25	Sambhal	Panwasa	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Chachu Nagla	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
26	Sambhal	Panwasa	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Dhureta	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
27	Sambhal	Panwasa	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Nibora	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
28	Sambhal	Baniyakhera	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Sarai Sikander	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
29	Sambhal	Baniyakhera	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Baniyakhera	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
30	Sambhal	Baniyakhera	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Janeta	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
31	Sambhal	Baniyakhera	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Budhnagar Khandna	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month
32	Sambhal	Bahjoi	Health and Wellness Center repair work in village Arjunpur Juna	90500.00	1810.00	59.00	500.00	01 Month

2. Date of availability/Sale of Bid document in the offices AE RED, Div-Sambhal, EE, RED, Div Sambhal or District Magistrate Sambhal Form :- 25.06.2024 to 28.06.2024 up to 4.00 pm.
3. Date of Pre-bids Meeting: 26.06.2024 at 11:00 am in the offices AE RED, Div-Sambhal
4. Last Date/Time for Submission of Bids in the Tender box:- 29.06.2024 time 11:00 am to 01.00 pm in the office of the Assistant Engineer, Rural Engineering Department, Sambhal, Executive Engineer, Rural Engineering Department, Sambhal or District Magistrate Sambhal.
5. Date of opening of bids:- 29.06.2024 at 04:00 PM
For further details please contact the employer office i.e. office of the Assistant Engineer U.P.R.E.D. SAMBHAL Address:- Irrigation Colony Bahjoi, Sambhal 244410

Assistant Engineer
Rural Engineering Department
Division Sambhal
On behalf of Governor of UP

UPID-216486 Dt. 22.06.2024
www.upidadv.gov.in

TRANSMISSION CORPORATION OF TELANGANA LIMITED
e-TENDER NOTICE
The TGRTRANSCO invites online Bids on e-procurement platform for supply of the following equipment. Tender Specification No. TGPMM11-16/2024, Description of Equipment: 220KV, 132KV & 33KV Solid Core Insulators. Bidders can have further details & download the tender schedule from e-procurement platform at www.tender.telanganagov.in (Telangana State). Contact Nos: O/o. The Chief Engineer/P&MM, TGRTRANSCO, Hyderabad. Phone: 040-2339600, Extn: 3670/3583/3276/3522. Fax: 040-23303736, www.tgrtransco.com.
Sd/-
R.O. No. : 104-PP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2024-25 Chief Engineer/P&MM

OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER AGRA CIRCLE, P.W.D AGRA
Notice inviting E-Tender
Dated: 12.06.2024

Letter No. : 3558/14M-A.C/2024
1. The Superintending Engineer Agra Circle, U.P.P.W.D. on behalf of Governor of Uttar Pradesh invites the percentage rate bids online from the eligible and approved registered Contractors. As The work comprises of specialized Road work, hence contractors bidding for this work must be registered in Road work with UP PWD. Bidders are advised to note the minimum qualification criteria specified in Clause 4 of the Instructions to Bidders to qualify for the award of the contract.

Sl. No.	District	Name of Work	Estimated cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Bid Security (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of Document (in Rs.)	Time of Completion	Address of Executive Engineer executing the work	Address of Superintending Engineer	Address of Chief Engineer	Category of Contractor
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11

- Time allowed for completion is including Rainy Season.
 - Bid document with detailed terms and conditions will be available online on website <http://tender.up.nic.in> and Prahari (<http://wms.upppwd.gov.in/Prahari>) From 26.06.2024 to 03.07.2024. Bids must be submitted online only at e-tendering portal of <http://tender.up.nic.in> and Prahari App with all documents as per GO No 14/2020/879(1)/ 23-7/2020/176(सं)/06 Dt 25-08-2020 on or before 12:30 Hours Dt. 03.07.2024. Technical Bid received online will be opened on 03.07.2024 at 01:00 Hours.
 - The prospective bidders who do not possess Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) must get the same issued from approved agencies before submission of bids.
 - Contractor should Quote their rates without G.S.T. which shall be paid extra as per applicable at the time of payment.
 - Labour Cess @ 1.00% will be deducted from contractor's bill at the time of payment.
 - Original MM-11 forms proof of royalty shall have to be produced at time of every running bill in accordance to Principal Secretary, Directorate of geology & mining Uttar Pradesh Letter No-2146/86-2019-52(IK0)/2019 Dt. 30.09.2019, G.O. No- 115(1)/86-2020 dated 15.01.2020 and other relevant Government orders, circulars for all the materials procured from the quarries.
 - The bidders are required to submit Original receipt of Internet Banking of E-tender portal Account as per G.O. No.-742/78-2-2018-42 I.T./2017 T.C., I.T. & Electronics Section-2 Dated-03-12-2018 following as :
(1) Online Tender Cost towards the cost of bid document (As per Column 6) by Internet Banking of E-tender portal Account (Non Refundable).
(2) Online Bid security (As per Column 5) in favour of designation of Column 9 by Internet Banking of E-tender portal Account.
 - Above Noted work will be constituted in accordance with PWD & Forest Department.
- (Ajay Kumar Singh)
Executive Engineer
Provincial Division, P.W.D.,
Mathura
- (Anand Kumar)
SUPERINTENDING
ENGINEER
AGRA CIRCLE, P.W.D, AGRA
- UPID-216426 Dt. 22.06.2024
www.upidadv.gov.in

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD
INVITATION FOR TENDER (Only Through KPP Portal)
BWSSB invites Tenders from Registered Contractors for the following works.
Office of the Chief Engineer (WWM-East), 6th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009

Sl No.	Name of the Works	Amount put to Tender
IFT No: BWSSB/CE(WWM-E)/DCE(WWM-E&W)/TA-1/251/2024-25 Dated: 21.06.2024		
1.	Project Monitoring Consultancy Service for the estimates for work of providing and laying of 1000/1200/1800/2000mm dia RCC NP-3 Class sewer pipeline from 7th Main Road, Garvebhavipalya along HSR Layout upto Agaram STP and Construction of Wet Well at HSR Layout under AEE(WWM-N-K&T) Valley-2 Sub Division at various locations.	₹ 201.00 Lakhs ₹ 3.015 Lakhs
IFT No: BWSSB/CE(WWM-E)/DCE(WWM-E&W)/TA-1/253/2024-25 Dated: 21.06.2024		
2.	Project Monitoring Consultancy Service for the a) Work of providing & laying 900/1200/1400mm dia RCC NP-3 Class sewerline including Trenchless Technology Method from MV Garden to Amarjyothi Layout (SPS Domluru. b) Work of Design, Engineering Construction and commissioning of Constructing ISPS Domluru to 218 MLD STP Challaghatta with 5 years O&M.	₹ 154.00 Lakhs ₹ 2.31 Lakhs

For the above works The last date and time for Receipt of completed tenders will be on 08.07.2024 upto 17:30 hrs. The Technical tender opening is on 10.07.2024 at 16:00 hrs.

Sd/-
Chief Engineer (WWM-E)

The details regarding participation in the e-procurement portal process can be obtained by logging on to <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> For further details contact the undersigned office during working hours. DIPR/508/2024-25

NEET-UG RETEST: ONLY 52% APPEAR

In Jhajjar, some anger, some worry — and a wait for hearing in SC



At a NEET-UG retest centre in Haryana's Jhajjar. Abhinav Saha

ABHINAV HARIGOVIND
JHAJJAR (HARYANA), JUNE 23

A RANGE of emotions filled the air as parents walked their children to the gate of the Kendriya Vidyalaya in Jhajjar district around 1 pm Sunday, an hour before the NEET-UG retest was to begin.

While some candidates were anxious if they would be able to manage similar scores this time, many parents were angry for their children having to take the retest for "no fault of theirs". Many simply wondered if they would have to do it again, for a third time.

The National Testing Agency (NTA) conducted the retest for 1,563 candidates after a high-powered committee concluded that awarding grace marks to compensate students for lost time did not provide a level-playing field, considering the varying time lost across six centres. The 1,563 candidates were from Jhajjar in Haryana, Tura in Meghalaya, and Dantewada and Balod in Chhattisgarh.

However, the 494 candidates from Jhajjar were in the spotlight as the grace marks bumped up the scores of six of them to a perfect 720, making them toppers of this year's NEET-UG. On Sunday, of the 1,563 candidates, only about half (or 52%) turned up, according to the NTA. In Jhajjar, where two centres were set up, only 287 of 494 candidates appeared for the retest — 109 of 182 at Kendriya Vidyalaya and 178 of 312 at DAV Police Public School, around 3.5 km away.

One candidate at Kendriya Vidyalaya, who had scored 610 including the grace marks, said she was nervous. The May 5 exam had been her second attempt to better her last year's score of around 350.

"I'm not sure if I will be able

to write the paper properly and get a better score. It's not like we were able to prepare much over the past month-and-a-half," she said.

Recalling the delay on May 5, the Jhajjar resident said: "The exam was supposed to start at 2 pm, we were able to start only closer to 3 pm. We were initially given one paper, and then another. Then they told us that we should start only when they tell us... altogether, it was delayed."

As the exam began for 3 hours and 20 minutes Sunday, he said his 18-year-old daughter had scored 640 in the May 5 exam, with the grace marks taking it to a full 720.

"How will the retest of some 1,500 students ensure justice when they (Government) are talking about a paper leak?... If they were cancelling the exam, they should have cancelled it for all," Balwan said.

Anup Kadian, 42, an ex-serviceman whose daughter had secured 524, said, "The problem was with those at the centre and these children are being asked to take a retest for no fault of theirs".

"Those who are responsible for the lapses at the centre should have been punished. Now this will come up (in Supreme Court) on July 8, and I was telling my daughter that we don't know if she will have to write it for a third time if the exam is cancelled for everybody," Kadian said.

The father of a candidate from Jhajjar said he was anxious about what would happen on July 8, when the hearing comes up in the Supreme Court.

Saying his daughter had gone to Delhi for coaching for two years, he asked: "What if she needs to give it for a third time this year?"

Examination postponed at eleventh hour, NEET-PG candidates stare at uncertainty and financial burden

I won't get leave again, can't afford to quit either... my life is in a limbo, says doctor who travelled 700 km to take test

ANONNA DUTT,
ANURADHA
MASCARENHAS &
ANKITA UPADHYAY
NEW DELHI, PUNE, JUNE 23

WORKING AT a primary health-care centre in Singrauli, Madhya Pradesh, Dr Akash Soni had been rotating shifts and asking seniors to cover for him as he prepared for the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test-Postgraduate (NEET-PG) exam.

He then took a three-day leave, travelled over 700 km to Bhopal where his exam centre was, and had just about finished his revision when an alert flashed on his phone: the exam had been postponed.

"I won't get leave again, can't afford to quit either. My life is in a limbo," the doctor said Sunday, the day he was supposed to take the exam.

Dr Auwais Shaikh from Solapur travelled almost seven hours to reach his exam centre in Pune, checked into a lodge and had spent ₹10,000 when the test he had made his life's mission

was put on hold. The same uncertainty looms over Dr Saheefa Hareem, who was to join Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals on June 27.

With the examination put on hold, she told the HR that she couldn't make it as she had no clarity on when the test would take place.

These are some of the nearly 2 lakh MBBS graduates who appear for the NEET-UG every year for the 52,000 seats on offer across the country.

Late Saturday night, the Health Ministry announced that it was postponing NEET-PG 2024 as a "precautionary measure" amid the row over alleged irregularities in NEET-UG.

The postponement may be just another official circular but for the students, it is much more: from anxiety born out of uncertainty to hefty costs of travelling to the centres and booking accommodation, none of which are refundable.

The burden is more for those who quit jobs to prepare for the exam.

Dr Prathamesh Dhople, who

had just completed his internship, was too distraught to comment.

Recounting his turmoil, his father said, "We had to travel from Mumbai to Navi Mumbai, had to check into a hotel next to the centre at ₹13,000 a night. By the time we came to know, it was 10.30 pm. That too via TV and social media. It is very difficult for students to switch on and off from their studies like this. It is psychologically draining for those who are repeating the exams." Dr Soni was sure he would secure a seat in the speciality of his choice — MD Medicine.

"I am at the peak level of preparation right now but what to do next?"

Dr Saumya Singh, a resident of Uttar Pradesh's Jaunpur, is not sure how to repay the loans she had taken from her family for her second attempt.

An MBBS graduate from GS Medical College in Hapur, her centre was Noida.

"When I saw the message in my inbox at 10 pm, I thought it was fake news. But when I saw the Health Ministry tweet, I was

devastated," she said. "I have not been working for the past year after completing my MBBS. I have been preparing for this exam and took up an accommodation at Gautam Nagar near AIIMS," Singh said.

"My parents paid for my rent and coaching fees so that I could crack the exam. I could have easily earned ₹1 lakh per month had I joined a hospital as a junior resident. Who will now bear the cost of my lost time," she asks.

For Delhi-based Dr Shubham Jha, who has done his MBBS from LHMC, this was his first attempt. He had booked a cab for his centre in Meerut. Unlike his peers, he couldn't afford to give up his job as junior resident at LHMC and took a two-week leave to study.

"Now they are financially dependent on their families and have been left in the lurch. For some of us, every penny counts, so why couldn't the government give advance notice? We could have at least saved on travel and accommodation costs," he says.

Dr Zainab Sheikh, an MBBS graduate and a former junior

resident at Lady Hardinge Medical College, Delhi, was to appear for the second time and had quit her residency three months ago.

"Now we will have to go through the entire process again because there are 19 subjects and it is impossible to maintain the same level of readiness, she says. "You have to revise over and over again. I have two more exams coming up, one for RML Delhi on July 7 and the other the UPSC CMS exam. Now I don't know when the next date will be announced and my preparations have been affected," she says.

Dr Saheefa Hareem quit her job at Lal Bahadur Shastri Hospital, Delhi, in December to prepare for the exam that was then scheduled for March.

When it was postponed, she didn't take up another job, thinking the exams would be held this time.

She was offered a job at Apollo Delhi that she was to join June 27 and which she has now signed out of.

"I didn't celebrate Eid, my mother has been staying with

me for two-and-a-half months to support my studies," she says. Dr Shaikh feels that there ought to be a proper notification for major exams like NEET-PG.

"At 10:11 pm, the postponement message popped up in one of our WhatsApp groups. One didn't know if the notification was authentic or fake because it had no official stamp or signature. It was only at 11:15 pm that the exam-conducting agency NBEMS published another notice confirming the postponement. Should it not have been emailed or sent an SMS to students on the contact details which they already have? What are we being punished for," he questions.

Another candidate, Dr Shubham Anand, said: "Postponing NEET-PG at the last moment is a big shock to us. I work as a resident doctor at Delhi's Lady Hardinge Medical College, and my exam centre was in Meerut. Like me, many people have already travelled to their exam cities. Now there is complete uncertainty on when this exam will be conducted again."

1 of 5 accused arrested got solved paper as PDF day before exam: EOU

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, JUNE 23

THE BIHAR Police's Economic Offences Unit, which has handed over the probe into the alleged irregularities in NEET-UG to the CBI, Sunday said it has arrested a "solver gang" member who had received a PDF of the solved question paper on his phone on May 4, a day before the exam. Baldev Kumar, alias Chintu, was among five people arrested by the EOU from Jharkhand's Deoghar district Sunday. The EOU produced them before a Patna court, which sent them to judicial custody.

In a statement, the Bihar Police agency said Baldev Kumar is associated with the alleged kingpin of

the "solver gang", Sanjeev Kumar, who is at large. "Based on the available evidence, the solved question papers of NEET-UG-2024 examination held on 05.05.2024 were received on mobile by this gang," it said. Baldev Kumar, a resident of Bihar Sharif in Nalanda district, had been living at a rented accommodation in Patna. The other arrested "solver gang members" are Mukesh Kumar; a resident of Agamkuan in Patna; Panku Kumar from Chhabilapur, Nalanda; Rajeev Kumar alias Karu, a resident of Ekangarsarai, Nalanda; and Paramjit Singh alias Bittu, from Chhabilapur, Nalanda.

The EOU statement said they narrowed down the five accused on the basis of intelligence inputs and technical investigation."



Tribute to the Great Warrior Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Ji on his Martyrdom Day

June 24, 2024

“बंदा सिंह बहादुर एक महान योद्धा थे। उनका जीवन हम सभी के लिए प्रेरणा है। मैं बाबा बंदा सिंह बहादुर को उनकी बहादुरी और बलिदान के लिए नमन करता हूँ।”
- नरेन्द्र मोदी



Ministry of Culture
Government of India

Prime Ministers Museum and Library cordially invites you to a **Talk** on **Heritage Nationalism in India** by **Dr. Milisa Srivastava** Former Junior Fellow, PMML
25 June 2024 at 3:00pm
Venue: Seminar Room
Prime Ministers Museum and Library Teen Murti House, New Delhi-110011
All are Welcome.
Those wishing to have their names added to the email list may please email us at:- ccs2nmml@gmail.com
CBC 09142/12/0012/2425



The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

Adversaries again

Poll verdict could make government change optics.
But it's unlikely to be amiable to Opposition



SUHAS PALSHIKAR

A SEASON OF CHANCES

Rainfall deficit in June is likely to be made up.
Government should plan ahead, free agriculture from curbs

KHARIF PLANTINGS ARE still to really take off, partly reflected in the Agriculture Ministry not releasing data on the area sown under different crops so far. The reason is the poor progress of the southwest monsoon, despite its arrival over Kerala and northeast India on May 30, two days and six days before their respective normal dates. The country received 3 per cent overall surplus rains till June 10. But the monsoon hasn't advanced much thereafter, with the all-India area-weighted rainfall during June 1-23 being 18.1 per cent below the historical average for this period. Also, while the southern peninsula has recorded a cumulative surplus of 10.5 per cent, the rains have been 25 per cent deficient in central and 58.2 per cent in northwest India. The Met department expects the countrywide rainfall for June now to be "below normal" (less than 92 per cent of the long period average), a downgrade from its "normal" (92-108 per cent range) forecast issued on May 27.

That isn't a great start to the monsoon season (June-September). Nor is it what a government beginning a fresh term would like — at a time of elevated retail food inflation (8.7 per cent year-on-year in May) and rural consumption under continuing stress. The monsoon will, hopefully, revive by the month-end. June, in any case, accounts for hardly 19 per cent of the season's total rainfall. The bulk of it happens in July (32 per cent) and August (29 per cent); these are also the peak months for the sowing and vegetative growth phase of the kharif crops. Most global weather models are pointing to the development of La Niña conditions during July-September and persisting through November-February. La Niña is known to bring copious rains to India and also colder and prolonged winters, which are good for both the kharif and the succeeding rabi crops. This is opposite of the just-ended El Niño, which contributed to last year's patchy monsoon and hotter temperatures in the months that followed.

What should the government do? It can wait and watch, but certainly plan. Some of the measures it has taken — allowing import of most pulses and edible oils at zero/low duty — are sensible. So is the hike in the minimum support prices of kharif pulses and oilseeds announced last week. These send the right signals to farmers to plant more area under these crops. But the government needs to also scrap the 40 per cent import duty on wheat, considering its own 16-year-low stocks and uncertainty over the next paddy crop. While the immediate focus has to be on augmenting domestic availability — preferably through freeing imports than curbs on exports and the trade — this is also the time to draw a long-term plan for the agriculture sector.

CEMENTING TIES

India and Bangladesh's resolve to strengthen connectivity, trade, defence links augurs well for stability in Indo-Pacific region

PRIME MINISTERS SHEIKH Hasina and Narendra Modi have been relentless in advancing the bilateral relations between Delhi and Dhaka over the last decade and turning India and Bangladesh into valuable partners of each other. It is entirely appropriate that Delhi hosted Sheikh Hasina over the weekend for the first state visit by a foreign leader during PM Modi's third term. That Hasina was in Delhi barely two weeks earlier for the swearing-in of Modi and that the two PMs have met 10 times over the past year underlines the intensity of the engagement. The productive consequences of the two leaders' commitment to overhaul ties have been hailed as marking a "golden chapter" ("sonali adhyay" in the history of bilateral relations. The "vision for a shared future" unveiled by the two leaders on Saturday promises to build on these advances and turn the "extraordinary relationship" of the last decade into a "transformational partnership".

The two countries have promised to focus on the unfinished agenda of connectivity that includes the easing of visa procedures, freer movement of goods, cross-border energy and electricity flows, and the building of digital bridges. Bangladesh has also emerged as one of India's most important trade partners. Delhi and Dhaka now propose to commence the long overdue negotiations on a comprehensive economic partnership agreement (CEPA). Free trade across India's longest frontier to the second-largest economy in the Subcontinent is an urgent regional imperative amidst the breakdown of the global trading order. As one of the world's fast-growing economies, Bangladesh is a natural partner for India in rearranging of the South Asian regional economic order. The transformation of the India-Bangladesh economic relationship lays a solid foundation not only for the sub-regional integration of the eastern Subcontinent but also for the Bay of Bengal littoral and the eastern Indian Ocean.

Hasina and Modi have also outlined the ambition to modernise the bilateral defence relationship that has fallen behind the pillars of commerce and connectivity. This would involve wide-ranging collaboration between the armed forces of the two countries, defence industrial partnership, and Delhi's support for the modernisation of Dhaka's armed forces. A substantive bilateral defence partnership will contribute to maintaining stability in the wider Indo-Pacific region through collaboration on disaster mitigation and building resilient infrastructure. Expanded regional and international collaboration between Delhi and Dhaka will also help promote the Global South's collective interests. The last decade in the Indo-Bangla bilateral relations has seen two strong leaders overcome the Partition's bitter legacies in the eastern subcontinent. While some issues like river water management remain to be sorted out, the shared vision for the future articulated by Hasina and Modi raises hopes for realising the full potential of the bilateral relationship.

AS THE NDA government settles down, should we be expecting a departure from the past decade of acrimony and a one-sided show of strength? The more balanced composition of the Lok Sabha encourages that expectation. On the other hand, the dramatis personae remain the same. And ironically, despite his "third term", the Prime Minister will be the most uncomfortable person in the new Lok Sabha because of the triple shackles — the party's minority, demands of his allies and an Opposition that is nearly as numerous as his own party. He will need to be modest and moderate in comparison to his carefully cultivated larger-than-life image — a tall order.

Thus, post-elections, the key factors that have shaped politics for some time would remain unchanged — a party with hegemonic ambition despite truncated dominance, an Opposition clueless about politics of culture and a social sphere marked by emotional ruptures. So, we can expect only small compromises and big confrontations in the political arena.

To be sure, there will be some formal bonhomie. There will also be formal assurances of accommodation and cooperation, hopes of working together to make India great, pleasantries about federalism and of course, emotional eulogies to the Constitution. Virtues of coalition will be listed too. The Opposition may get more time and visibility, both in the House and in the media, without necessarily being able to strengthen the traditions of deliberation. But, in the realm of actual policies and use of state power, a substantive change is unlikely.

If anything, there will be more direct confrontation between the main ruling party and the Opposition because the BJP would be licking its wounds, seeking opportunities to delegitimise the Opposition and the Opposition would be eager to flex its muscles because of its belief that the people have rejected the BJP. One dimension of these confrontations will be the silent decimation of the BJP's allies and the steady defections or splits in Opposition ranks as also the disunity within the INDIA bloc.

Initial optics notwithstanding, the Modi regime will soon return to its core features: Weaponisation of state power to suppress dissent, coupled with intolerance of routine opposition; delegitimisation of all institutions through their political capture and a well-de-

fining majoritarian politics that encourages the societal sphere to stigmatise the minorities.

Therefore, current social and economic fault lines are most likely to produce confrontations between the government and various sections of the population. The first, and most immediate challenge will be to handle questions of unemployment and frustrations of the youth. Long-term policies of skill enhancement and glib talk of the future will not suffice. Another arena of confrontation will be that of Centre-state relations, producing sharper regional identities and regionalist demands. Third, mainly because of the success that Congress and the Samajwadi Party have tasted, questions of caste census and reservation will haunt politics. Fourth, it is entirely uncertain how the continued victimisation and marginalisation of the Muslim community will play out. But in the social arena, vigilante adventurism against the Muslims will continue with the state as a passive onlooker.

One could add more such instances of popular unrest resulting from pre-existing social issues, strengthening the opposition. Predictably, the government's response to the many confrontations will be a combination of high-handed treatment, emotional appeals deflecting the issues and setting one section of society against the other. This assessment is predicated on the assumption that having ushered in a new regime after 2014, the BJP will be unwilling to cede space to others. It will be equally unwilling to bow to democratic pressures. Not only does the leader of this government believe in fulfilling a mission, the main ruling party itself has, over the past decade, imagined that it is changing the destiny of this country. In part, this imagination received its electoral strength from the results of 2014 and 2019. In part, it could be said that this millennial and draconian self-image has always been Hindutva's view of its historical role assigned by destiny. But in the realm of competitive politics, now the BJP too has begun taking an exaggerated view of itself since 2014.

Elections are a mechanism through which rulers are assigned a limited responsibility and legitimacy, temporarily. But the lure of an electoral majority is such that rulers are tempted to expand the meaning of electoral outcomes and attempt to authenticate their inflated and egotistical ideas of what the people have said through an election. This over-reading allows

the ruler and his supporters to shift the meaning of competitive politics from being merely a choice-mechanism to authorisation for setting up a new regime, ostensibly for a state-enforced transformation in ideas and social relations. The BJP's many face-offs with sections of society, its unbelievable confidence in the correctness of its policies, its sub-democratic governance model practised over the past decade, disdain for dissent and anxiety over electoral setbacks are all part of this dual syndrome of attaching larger meanings to electoral victories and a deep-rooted ambition to change the character of India.

Since 2014, the BJP expanded the meaning of electoral outcome in order to convince its cadres and the general public of the larger national, if not outright divine purpose that lay at the root of why it was put in power. This may be called the superimposition of a mandate over an electoral victory. A disappointed electorate voted the opposition party to power in 2014. But the BJP instilled multiple texts into that victory, mostly retrospectively — Hindutva, national rejuvenation, the idea of new India. This time around, the BJP lost the majority, but being convinced of its historical burden, it is unprepared to concede that this was a warning against its bad governance, neglect of basic questions of livelihood and the arrogance of taking Hindu voters for granted. Therefore, it emphasises continuity and seeks to posit the argument that the outcome of 2024 has "mandated" a third term for Narendra Modi.

There is an unavoidable awkwardness to this claim in view of the coalition BJP is forced to live with. That awkwardness will produce moments of farcical surrealism but also many tensions and distortions. An unfounded reading of the outcome will allow the BJP to continue with the three core features listed above and bring itself into confrontation with not only its allies and the Opposition but also with segments of the population.

In its eagerness to argue victory in the face of defeat, the BJP needs to remember that high nationalism and dreams of economic power may function as temporary painkillers, but its regime-level ambitions will only make politics more shrill, abusive and unproductive.

The writer, based in Pune, taught Political Science

WHY EXAM SCAMS HAPPEN

They are a sign of mismatch between aspiration and opportunity



RUCHI GUPTA

WHILE CORRUPTION IN the recent NEET exam has rightly garnered attention, the real scam lies elsewhere. There is no question that NEET and exams for higher education and recruitment must be conducted with integrity. However, as our public discourse gets mired in the minutiae of investigations and individual culpability, the most important aspect of the issue is lost: a staggering 24 lakh students appeared to qualify for a mere 1 lakh seats.

The real scam lies in the fact that despite celebrations of being the fifth-largest economy, our systems are woefully inadequate to address the aspirations of our youth. Worse, we have foisted our failure onto them by linking this inadequate supply with the dubious categorisation of "merit," where all but a minuscule minority is squeezed out. The same issue recurs across sectors, from education to employment. The crux of the matter is the inadequate availability of opportunities, but we sidestep it by making it about our youth's lack of merit and periodically focusing on corruption cases involving officials and young people.

It would be disingenuous to label this as merely a legacy problem. What's more concerning is the palpable indifference towards addressing the urgent need to productively engage our youth, both economically and democratically. Instead of tackling the issue of limited opportunities, we have ratcheted up aspiration. Since our systems don't support

the equal distribution of success and social status, we have superimposed the stupendous success of a few onto national pride and instead of acknowledging the singularity of their success, set them up as examples for our youth.

Simultaneously, we have propagated a narrow definition of success, limiting it to amassing wealth and power, while our education system and job markets have failed to provide sufficient avenues for students to legitimately fulfill these lofty aspirations. To counter this, we prop up "merit" as the criterion and celebrate the few who make the cut or have bucked the system in ways which are not available to most. For any society, restricting the attainment of success to a minority, is a recipe for fomenting discontent — a problem exacerbated in India as several young people struggle to secure basic formal employment.

The result is a vast number of disheartened youth who, despite working hard, are denied opportunities due to systemic bottlenecks — breeding a deep sense of injustice and hopelessness. When some buckle under this pressure (as seen from the spate of suicide cases in Kota), we offer anodyne platitudes about how one exam doesn't matter. But the platitudes ring hollow because the available pathways for upward mobility are so limited.

The scale of mismatch between aspirations and reality for India's youth is massive. Yet, our current solutions lack the bi-partisan,

top-down, nationwide approach that is required. We celebrate little islands of excellence with no clear aim to make such opportunities widely available. We cannot lose sight of the bigger picture — the need to expand quality educational and employment opportunities. As a nation, we need to demonstrate a sense of responsibility and empathy towards our youth. This calls for a multi-pronged approach.

First, responsible sections of the political class must rise above partisan divides to take cognisance of the scale of the problem and devise an institutional and societal response to this challenge. At the very least, this will require a massive infusion of public funds to expand quality education infrastructure and opportunities. Second, we must shed the dismissive and exploitative attitudes towards the working class and foster a sense of social solidarity. Third, India's elite needs to go beyond the self-satisfaction that their success is contribution enough to the nation and aim to expand opportunities for our less advantaged youth.

Only such a decisive, sustained mission, helmed by the highest leadership can instill hope and validate the aspirations of India's youth. Cancelling exams and prosecuting a few individuals is to dodge accountability and will exacerbate the youth's disillusionment.

The writer is the executive director of Future of India Foundation

FREEZE FRAME

E P UNNY



JUNE 24, 1984, FORTY YEARS AGO

PM IN GOLDEN TEMPLE

THE PRIME MINISTER, Mrs Indira Gandhi, paid a day's visit to Amritsar city, offered prayers at Harmandir Sahib in the Golden Temple. The head priest of the Golden Temple, Giani Sahib Singh, accompanied her up to Darshanl Deor where he read out the broad points of the memorandum he submitted to her.

BJP ON NSA

THE BJP NATIONAL executive unanimously opposed the latest amendment to the National Security Act, saying it was reminiscent of the Emergency period because of the

severe restrictions it puts on civil liberties. Party treasurer Shanti Bhushan said it would certainly be challenged. He did not say if BJP would challenge it or an individual member.

JANSATTA EXPOSE

RAJENDRA CHATURVEDI, A senior police officer in Madhya Pradesh who was instrumental in the surrenders of bandit chiefs Malkhan Singh, Ghanshyam and Phoolan, has lodged a complaint with the state regarding the alleged "leakage" of a top-secret semi-official letter and its publication in *Jansatta* of the Indian Express group. In the letter, the DIG of Gwalior had complained that Chaturvedi's wife had

tried to extort money from an American journalist for a set of Phoolan's photographs.

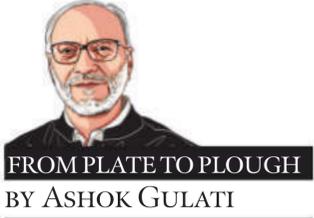
KERALA SRP SPLIT

THE SOCIALIST REPUBLICAN Party (SRP), a constituent of the ruling United Democratic Front in Kerala, virtually split when the two factions removed the chairmen of the rival faction and expelled some others from the party. While one group removed the Excise Minister N Sreenivasan from the party's chairmanship and expelled the general secretary, P Gangadharan, the rival faction expelled Janardhanan and his group's general secretary, K Gopalnathan for "anti-party activities".

“Mr Netanyahu doesn't listen to the Biden administration. He has smashed through its red lines and went out of his way to pick a fight with it this week. But the situation is unsustainable — and diplomacy, not war, must be the answer.”
— THE GUARDIAN

Filling the void in farms

As agriculture and rural development minister, Shivraj Singh Chouhan is an apt choice. He will need to recognise farming is not just food production and deal with challenge of climate change



FROM PLATE TO PLOUGH
BY ASHOK GULATI

IN THE RECENTLY formed NDA cabinet (Modi 3.0), Shivraj Singh Chouhan is an appropriate choice for heading the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW) as well as the Ministry of Rural Development. Given that most of the seats that the BJP lost in the recent parliamentary election were from rural areas, it gives a clear signal that all is not well in these areas. So, the BJP has to fix it quickly, and for that it needs to have a person with vast experience, who understands the problems of rural areas in general and agriculture in particular.

Chouhan fills this void quite nicely. He has been the longest-serving chief minister of Madhya Pradesh. With his commitment and compassion for agriculture and rural development, Madhya Pradesh saw an overall GDP growth of 7 per cent per annum, and agri-GDP growth of 6.8 per cent per annum during 2005-06 to 2023-24. No other state, with the sole exception of Gujarat under Narendra Modi as chief minister had such a combo making it the most inclusive growth model. Madhya Pradesh growth has been higher than the all India GDP growth of 6.5 per cent, and agri-GDP growth of about 3.6 per cent over the same period.

The challenge before him now is whether he can boost the all-India agri-GDP growth to say more than 5 per cent per annum and augment farmers' incomes? How can it be done?

Here are a few suggestions. First and foremost, he needs to recognise that agriculture is not just production of food, but a full food system that stretches from production to marketing to consumption. He has to increase productivity in the face of climate change which is increasingly threatened by extreme weather events. There is no better way than to invest heavily in creating a climate-smart agriculture, from heat-resistant varieties of various crops to farming practices that give “more crop, per drop” of water. This, in turn, means that he has to immediately raise expenditure on agri-R&D and extension to at least 1 per cent of agri-GDP, up from current levels of less than 0.5 per cent. The marginal returns on this are above 10 times as per latest research.

Second, he must ensure that farmers have access to the best technologies in the world as well as the best markets for their produce. Without that, neither productivity is going to catch up with global standards nor are farmers' incomes going to increase significantly. But, to enable farmers to get the best price for their produce, he has to convince his colleagues in the inter-ministerial group who would like to keep the prices of food low for consumers. It is this consumer bias in the policy framework that works against the interests of farmers. Export bans at the drop of a hat, stocking limits on traders, unloading government stocks at way below the economic cost of FCI to suppress market prices, suspending futures markets, are all tilted against farmers' interest. This is a big battle for Chouhan — let him start by open-



CR Sasikumar

ing up the export of onion, as Maharashtra onion-belt farmers are dead against the export bans which have hit their incomes badly. Thereafter, in a calibrated manner, he can go for the opening up of common rice exports with a 15 to 20 per cent export duty to recover the cost of fertiliser and power subsidies inherent in rice production.

Third, for other high-value fruits and vegetables, milk and milk products, fishery and poultry, he has to coordinate with other ministries to build value chains from farm to mega cities and foreign markets so that farmers get the best prices possible. Inviting organised private sector or cooperatives/farmer producer companies to build these value chains is necessary. They can be incentivised on the lines of the PLI scheme that exists in industry, or what India did while building value chains for milk in the domestic market on the lines of the AMUL model. This will increase the farmers' share in the consumers' rupee. Let him start by taking over the TOP scheme (tomatoes, onions and potatoes) and fix their value chains so that producers and consumers both can benefit.

Fourth, if he has the capacity to convince the Prime Minister and other cabinet colleagues, the fertiliser subsidy amount should be transferred to his MoA&FW. Today, the fertiliser subsidy of Rs 1.88 trillion (revised budget estimate of 2023-24) is more than the total budget of the MoA&FW. And the fertiliser subsidy is parked in the Ministry of

First and foremost, he [Chouhan] needs to recognise that agriculture is not just production of food, but a full food system that stretches from production to marketing to consumption. He has to increase productivity in the face of climate change which is increasingly threatened by extreme weather events. There is no better way than to invest heavily in creating a climate-smart agriculture, from heat-resistant varieties of various crops to farming practices that give ‘more crop, per drop’ of water.

Chemicals and Fertilisers, which has little to do with farmers. The policy of fertiliser subsidy, with almost 80 to 90 per cent subsidy on urea and about 20-25 per cent on DAP and MOP has massively distorted the N, P, and K balance. As a result, the ratio of grains to fertilisers, which used to be more than 10:1 in the 1970s, has dropped to about 2:1. On top of this, it must be noted that plants do not absorb more than 35-40 per cent of the nitrogen being supplied to them through granular urea. The rest is emitted in the environment as nitrous oxide which has 273 times the carbon equivalence for a 100-year timescale. It is like subsidising urea to create poison in the atmosphere. This subsidy needs to go directly to farmers' accounts, and fertiliser prices need to be freed. Digital fertiliser coupons can be issued to farmers of equivalent value and they can be given the freedom to use chemical fertilisers or bio-fertilisers or opt for natural farming. But it will need careful planning, which needs to start now so as to carry out this big-bang reform next year.

Also, a special package for Punjab-Haryana is needed to save them from ecological disaster. The list of issues is much bigger, but given the space constraint, let me stop here. If Shivraj Singh Chouhan can do even these, he will do a great service to Indian agriculture.

Gulati is distinguished professor at ICRIER. Views are personal

BJP's coalition challenge

The dominant party will have to tread carefully so as not to precipitate disenchantment among allies



E SRIDHARAN

THE NEW BJP-LED NDA government is the first of a type for India. It is a surplus majority coalition without a majority party, that is, a coalition in which there are parties in the council of ministers that are not necessary for a majority. This is different from a surplus majority coalition with a majority party, like the 2014 and 2019 governments, often called an oversized coalition. This is significant since each type of coalition has its own dynamics.

When no single party gets a parliamentary majority in an election, or loses a majority due to a split, there are two solutions. One is to form a single-party minority government dependent on external support from other parties which might be pre-electoral and/or post-electoral allies. In the Indian case, the two instances of single-party minority governments were the Chandra Shekhar government (1990-91) and the Congress government of 1991-96. The other solution is to form a coalition government of two or more parties. Let me define what the literature means by a coalition government; it counts member parties of the executive coalition — those in the council of ministers — as the coalition, and not the broader legislative coalition of supporting parties, pre- or post-electoral, which stay out of the government but offer external support to enable a majority in the legislature even if they were part of a pre-electoral alliance.

There are four types of coalitions. First, the minimal-winning coalition, which India has not had yet — this has only the minimum number of parties needed to attain a parliamentary majority, with no redundant surplus parties, thus making each coalition partner pivotal since the exit of even one means a loss of majority. This is based on the Rikerian assumption of parties being office/power-seeking; a redundant party means sharing power with an unnecessary partner reducing the power shares of existing partners. However, this view tends to ignore policy-seeking motivations; additional partners might enable broader consensus-building to enable legislative changes towards policies that parties seek and hence could incentivise expanding the coalition though it would mean sharing power with more partners.

Second, there are surplus majority coalitions with no party having a majority. Here, while no single party has a majority, the largest party puts together a coalition government that has a surplus majority, that is, has parties over and above those needed for a parliamentary majority. This is usually because of pre-electoral alliances for which there are strong incentives in a first-past-the-post electoral system where vote aggregation through such alliances is very helpful in getting the single largest number of votes in constituencies needed for winning seats. In a federal system, this incentivises state-level alliances. This, in a federal first-past-the-post electoral system with multiple parties leads to diverse pre-electoral coalitions on a state-by-state seat-sharing basis in which the incentive to band together against the largest party leads parties to de-emphasise ideological and policy differences. Examples are the anti-Congress alliances of

the 1960s and 1970s which included parties of the left and right (including at one time an Akali Dal-Jana Sangh-CPI government in Punjab) and the 1989 seat-sharing arrangement in which V P Singh's Janata Dal was supported by both the BJP and the Left.

Third, there are surplus majority coalitions with a majority party — called oversized coalitions — for example, the BJP-led NDA coalitions in 2014 and 2019 in which the BJP won a majority on its own but kept its pre-electoral coalition partners in the ministry (executive coalition). This type of oversized coalition existed in West Bengal for several terms during the erstwhile Left Front governments when the CPI(M) kept its pre-electoral coalition partners in the ministry even though it had a majority on its own. Oversized coalitions, like surplus majority coalitions reflect the need for pre-electoral alliances and the anticipation that such allies will be needed for future elections and hence need to be accommodated. Fourth, there are minority coalitions, in which the parties fall short of a majority and are dependent on outside support from a wider legislative coalition, pre- and/or post-electoral.

There have been 12 coalition governments since 1977. Of these, none have been the classic minimal-winning coalitions in which each party is pivotal for a majority. Eight have been minority coalitions in which the executive coalition forming the ministry has needed external support for a majority. Three have been oversized coalitions with a majority party. These were the Janata Party, 1977-79, technically a single unified party with a majority, with a separate coalition partner in the Akali Dal, and the two BJP-led NDA governments of 2014 and 2019.

There has not been, until 2024, a surplus coalition without a majority party. While such a coalition is less stable than an oversized coalition, it is more so than a minimal-winning coalition or a minority coalition. However, in the India, three minority coalitions — NDA, 1999-2004, UPA I and UPA II — lasted full terms due to at least partial lock-in effects on supporting parties due to state-level alliances and/or due to the main national opposition party being the ideological adversary of the supporting party or its main state-level adversary.

The power dynamics in a surplus majority coalition favour the dominant party because usually no single partner is pivotal for a majority. In the present case, the largest party has 240 seats and can achieve the majority mark of 272 with the three largest allies having 16, 12 and seven seats, the rest being a surplus majority which offers an insurance policy in case some allies quit. The executive coalition (total of BJP plus nine allies) is 287, and with other five NDA partners is 293. Assuming at least partial lock-in effects for the above-described reasons on the smaller allies and taking 293 as the effective coalition, no ally is pivotal. To deprive the coalition of a majority of 272 it would need the exit of at least two allies, given that the four largest partners have 16, 12, seven and five seats. This would require considerable coordination in the normal course, including factoring in state-level repercussions, unless some serious crisis arises which precipitates broad disenchantment amongst the allies. However, the dominant party will also have to tread carefully in such a power configuration so as not to precipitate such disenchantment.

The writer is academic director and chief executive of the University of Pennsylvania Institute for the Advanced Study of India

The wisdom of Patanjali

Discipline and compassion are fundamental to the pursuit of yoga



SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR

THE MOST EFFECTIVE way of conveying something is through stories or parables. Our Puranas are filled with such parables. Maharishi Patanjali was a sage and one of our civilisation's greatest scientific minds who gave complete and authoritative texts on yoga, grammar, and ayurveda to help humans remove impurities from the mind, speech and body, respectively. No one understood the complexities of the mind better than Patanjali; hence I call his *Yoga Sutras* the “Science of the Consciousness”. The *Patanjali Yoga Sutras* are a revolutionary text where, through simple yet profound sutras, the entire science of yoga is conveyed.

Here's a story about him. A long time ago, all the seers approached Lord Vishnu to tell him that even though he had given them the means to cure illnesses through ayurveda (when he had incarnated as Lord Dhanvanthari during the churning of the ocean of milk), people continued to fall ill. These were not just physical illnesses; people also suffered from mental and emotional illnesses that manifested as anger, lust, greed, or jealousy.

Lord Vishnu was resting on Adishesha, the serpent with a thousand heads. Bowing to the request of the *rishis*, he blessed them with Adishesha, a symbol of awareness. Adishesha then took birth as Patanjali. But there were three conditions before this precious knowledge could be passed on. First, the *sutras* were not to be narrated unless

1,000 people got together. Second, a screen would be put up between the teacher and the students and nobody was to lift the screen or leave during the sessions. Third, everyone had to stay in the hall until the recitation of the texts was completed.

Patanjali stayed behind the curtain and silently conveyed his knowledge to the 1,000 people who had gathered from the south of the Vindhya Mountains. He did not utter a single word but each student understood his teachings. Each experienced profound enthusiasm and a surge in energy. The students found it difficult to contain this vibrancy but they still had to maintain the discipline of not lifting the curtain or leaving the room.

It so happened that one little boy had to go out to attend nature's call. He thought he would leave quietly and return. Another boy in the room became curious, desperately wanting to know what the Maharishi was doing behind the curtain. Disobeying the Master, he lifted the curtain. Instantly, all 999 disciples present were burnt to ashes.

At that moment, the boy who had gone to attend nature's call returned. He explained his predicament and begged for forgiveness. Patanjali was compassionate and shared the remaining sutras with him. However, he said, “Since you have violated the law, you will become a Brahmarakshasa (a ghost hanging from a tree.) And the only way you can liberate yourself from the curse is to teach another student.” Saying this, Patanjali disappeared.

Now, the Brahmarakshasa would ask a question to every passerby and if they could not answer him, he would eat them. He had no choice. For a few thousand years, he could not find a single person to whom he could teach the *Yoga Sutras*. Out of compassion for the boy, Patanjali himself was reincarnated and came as a student to the Brahmarakshasa.

The Brahmarakshasa taught only at night. Patanjali wrote the *Yoga Sutras* sitting on a tree since that was where his teacher, the Brahmarakshasa, sat. The teacher recited the *sutras* at night and Patanjali plucked the leaves from the tree, drew blood from his body and wrote. This went on for seven days. At the end, exhausted, Patanjali put all the leaves into a piece of cloth, set it down and went to bathe. When he returned, he found that a goat had eaten most of the leaves. Patanjali then took the cloth bag and the remaining leaves and walked away.

The Puranas do not give us any explanation for this story. It is for us to decode its meaning. Each student is unique, with varying levels of intelligence and understanding. The Master knows how and in what manner to impart knowledge to each student. You can say that the Master has different forms for each student. The form that the Master reveals to one is different from what he would reveal to another. Once someone asked me, “Do you love all of us equally?” I smiled and said, “No!” That came as a big shock because

everyone wants to be loved equally by the Master. “I don't love you equally because you are not equal. I love you uniquely because you are all unique and different. That doesn't mean anyone is more or less than the other.”

To teach all thousand disciples, the Maharishi took his real form. He manifested as Adishesha himself, the 1,000-headed snake, and taught the 1,000 disciples individually. But to receive knowledge, the disciple had to have unconditional faith in the Master. Lifting the veil would mean expressing doubt in the Master. Through this, the Maharishi also establishes that to understand such deep knowledge, some rules and some discipline are necessary. Discipline is the first and foremost prerequisite for learning about yoga. Another interpretation of the story is that since the disciples couldn't see the master, their entire focus was on the teachings. The veil kept their small minds and perceptions from becoming obstacles to receiving knowledge. It shouldn't matter what the teacher looks like or who he/she is.

Why was one boy forgiven? This act shows the infinite compassion of the Master. He had to go through his karma. But the Master also gave him a way out of his karma. When he had lived through them, the Master himself came there as a student to free him from the curse.

The writer is a spiritual leader and founder of The Art of Living Foundation

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LACK OF WILL

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘Clean air for the young’ (IE, June 22). The State of Global Air (SoGA) Report 2024 which referred to 2.1 million deaths from air pollution in India, including so many children under five is alarming. The annual recurrence of extreme and dangerous air pollution in Delhi, particularly in the winter, has exposed the lack of adequate planning both by the Delhi government and the Centre in the face of the challenge. Sadly, despite having the technological know-how to control air pollution, there is a lack of political will to frame and execute policy interventions to protect citizens from the ill effects of air pollution. This must change.
L R Murmu, New Delhi

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘Clean air for the young’ (IE, June 22). The air pollution-linked death rate in children under five in South Asia is 164 deaths/mn against the global average of 108 deaths/mn. While India continues to be the worst affected by air pollution-related health impacts, the part of the population facing high ozone exposure is also increasing in India. With

one billion plus populations each, India and China put together account for nearly 55 per cent of the total global disease burden from bad air in 2021. The SoGA report is a strong reminder of the growing health crisis linked with air pollution and the need to co-join the efforts to cut toxic emissions at the source and maximise the benefits of reducing public health risks.
Sanjay Chopra, Mohali

A BIGGER PROBLEM

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘Quotas and equity’ (IE, Jun 22). Politicians over the last seven decades have realised that reservation is the easiest route to usher in equity. They seem to think it absolves them of the responsibility of performing their core functions efficiently. The clamour for reservation indicates a lack of imagination and resourcefulness in our political executive. Bihar's social or economic backwardness is not because of the inadequacy of reservation but due to the built-in inefficiency in its governance mechanism. The Patna High Court's verdict indirectly proclaims this ground reality. Governance must come into focus.
Shubhada H, via email

Heat tragedy in Mecca, and what makes Hajj pilgrims vulnerable

ASAD REHMAN
 NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

HUNDREDS OF Hajj pilgrims have died in the intense desert heat of Saudi Arabia this year, with temperatures in the holy city of Mecca reportedly reaching above 51 degrees Celsius at times during the days of the pilgrimage. Although Islam was founded in the 7th century, Hajj is said to have been performed for much longer, and heat-related deaths have been recorded earlier too. However, climate change is making the pilgrimage increasingly difficult and hazardous, especially for the elderly who constitute a large section of pilgrims.

The pilgrimage
 Hajj, literally, "to set out for a place", is one of the five pillars of Islam — every Muslim is supposed to undertake the pilgrimage at least once in their lifetime. According to the

Holy Quran, the beginnings of Hajj can be traced back to the time of the Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham in the Judeo-Christian scriptures), roughly 4,000 years ago. The pilgrimage involves a series of rituals in and around Mecca, over a period of five or six days. These include multiple circumambulations of the Kaaba, the stone structure at the centre of the Masjid al-Haram, the holiest site in Islam, ritual traverses between the hills of Safa and Marwa, scaling and praying at Mount Arafat, the hill outside Mecca where the Prophet Muhammad delivered his final sermon, and the symbolic stoning of the devil in the valley of Mina. The pilgrimage takes place between the 8th and the 13th of the Dhu al-Hijjah, the last month of the Islamic calendar. Since the lunar year of the Islamic calendar is 11 days shorter than the solar Gregorian year, each Gregorian year, Hajj comes 10 or 11 days earlier than the previous year. This year, the Hajj took place from June 14 to 19.

While the Hajj will gradually move to earlier in the year and towards winter, it will come back to peak summer in the 2040s, by when the planet is expected to be significantly hotter than now, with the global temperature increase having gone past 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

The numbers
 Hajj is considered to be the largest gathering of humans in the world — some 1.84 million Muslims performed the pilgrimage last year, and the number this year is estimated to have reached close to 2 million. The Ministry of Hajj and Umrah of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is in charge of facilitating the pilgrimage and, over the years, as the number of pilgrims has gone up, the Saudi authorities have spent billions to improve infrastructure. Nonetheless, accommodating so many pilgrims in one location

for a brief period of time is a massive logistical challenge. Each year, the Saudi government issues country-wise quotas, which are by and large based on the number of Muslims in that country. Countries also lobby diplomatically with Riyadh for larger national quotas. This year, Saudi Arabia allowed 1.75 lakh Indians to undertake the pilgrimage — 1.4 lakh went through the official Haj Committee of India, and the rest went through more expensive private operators.

The tragedy
 At least 658 Egyptians have died, according to an AFP report quoting an Arab diplomat. Many of the dead were "unregistered" pilgrims sent by travel agents in contravention of rules, Egypt's government said on Saturday. Indonesia has said that more than 200 of its nationals are among the dead, and

Pakistan, Malaysia, Jordan, Iran, Senegal, and Sudan have confirmed deaths of their citizens. People were searching for loved ones who were still missing, media reports published over the weekend said. Pilgrims who come illegally on tourist visas often do not enjoy official Hajj facilities such as air-conditioned tents. An Indian official in Jeddah said that the majority of the dead came on tourist visas, perhaps with only a single mat and an umbrella. "They sleep on the streets without tents. This is why the probability of them dying is high," the official said. Local hospitals or mortuaries inform country representatives of the deaths of their citizens, following which the country's consulate confirms the dead person's identity and gets the approval of the family for burial in properly marked graves in Saudi Arabia.

Indian deaths
 MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal has

said 98 Indians have died during the pilgrimage this year. "These deaths have happened on account of natural illness, natural causes, chronic illness and old age. Last year, the figure of Indians who died on Hajj was 187," Jaiswal said. "We have heard that because it was very hot... on the day of Arafat... several people suffered... From our country, six people died on the day of Arafat," he said. India has a Hajj mission in Jeddah, the Red Sea port that serves as the gateway for the pilgrimage. Indian officials oversee a medical mission, hospital, ambulances and arrangements for Indian citizens. The Health Ministry has said that almost 40,000 people over the age of 60 years undertook Hajj this year, and due to the "harsh weather conditions", services were provided for the pilgrims round the clock. A live portal provides real time data and analysis on the pilgrims seeking medical care, and the services being provided.

EXPLAINED CLIMATE

HAWAII SETTLES CLIMATE SUIT BY YOUNG LITIGANTS: CASE, SETTLEMENT

ALIND CHAUHAN
 NEW DELHI, JUNE 23



Wildfire in Hawaii in 2023. AP

THE GOVERNMENT of Hawaii on Thursday settled a lawsuit with 13 children and teens who had sued the state's Department of Transport over its fossil fuel use. The settlement includes an ambitious requirement to decarbonise Hawaii's transportation system over the next 21 years.

The lawsuit, which was filed in 2022, is the world's first youth-led constitutional climate case addressing climate pollution from the transportation sector, according to the activists and lawyers involved in the case.

The settlement is the latest in a series of victories in climate-related cases by young plaintiffs across the world.

What was the lawsuit?
 The plaintiffs in *Navahine v. Hawaii Department of Transportation* argued that Hawaii's transport department had violated their constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment by implementing transportation policies and prioritising infrastructure projects that use fossil fuels.

The lawsuit also cited "Hawaii's constitutional pledge to 'conserve and protect Hawaii's natural beauty and all natural resources'" and pointed to the fact that Hawaii's transport sector is projected to make up 60 per cent of the state's emissions by 2030," according to a report by *Al Jazeera*.

The burning of fossil fuels such as oil, gas, and coal is the primary reason behind the soaring global temperatures. It results in the release of greenhouse gases (GHGs) like carbon dioxide and methane, which trap the heat in the atmosphere, leading to warming. Warmer temperatures have had severe consequences including worsening of extreme weather events such as droughts and floods across the world.

What is the settlement?
 According to the settlement, Hawaii needs to achieve zero GHG emissions across all transportation modes, including ground transportation and sea and air interisland transportation by 2045. The state also has to publish a green-house gas reduction plan within a year. Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit networks need to be completed within five years, while allotting at least \$40 million to expand the public electric vehicle charging network by 2030. Additionally, the state of Hawaii will be accountable to a judge who will enforce the agreement in case disputes arise.

What are the challenges?
 Hawaii's Democratic Governor Josh Green has called the settlement "ground-breaking" and said it "informs how we as a state can best move forward to achieve life-sustaining goals." However, meeting the ambitious goal of net zero will not be a cakewalk for Hawaii's Department of Transport. For instance, the department "oversees the state's airports, and there are currently no feasible ways to power passenger jets without fossil fuels," according to a report by *The New York Times*. It also manages Hawaii's harbours, where container ships and cruise ships also use fossil fuels.

CHAKSHU ROY & MANAS GUBBI
 NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

THE FIRST session of the 18th Lok Sabha will start on Monday. Before the House can begin its legislative functioning, the newly elected members will have to take the oath of Members of Parliament (MP), which is provided in the Constitution.

The day will begin in Rashtrapati Bhavan, where Bhartruhari Mahtab — who has been elected for the seventh consecutive time from Cuttack, Odisha — will be the first one to take the oath of a Lok Sabha MP in front of President Droupadi Murmu.

The President has entrusted him with the duties of the Speaker (*pro tem*) under Article 95(1) of the Constitution till the election of the new Speaker. Mahtab will preside over the House as his colleagues take oath.

When does the term of an MP begin?
 The five-year term of a Lok Sabha MP begins when the Election Commission of India (EC) declares the results according to Section 73 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951. From that day onward, MPs are eligible for certain rights as elected representatives. For example, they start receiving their salary and allowances from the date of ECI notification — after the 2024 general elections, the ECI declared results on June 6.

The start of their term also means that if MPs change their party allegiance, their political party can ask the Speaker to disqualify them from Parliament under the anti-defection law.

If the term of an MP has started, why is the parliamentary oath significant?

Winning the election and starting the term does not automatically allow an MP to participate in House proceedings. To debate and vote in Lok Sabha, an MP has to take her seat in the House by making and subscribing to an oath or affirmation prescribed in the Constitution (Article 99). The Constitution also specifies a financial penalty (the only one in the document) of Rs 500 if a person participates or votes in House proceedings without taking an oath (Article 104).

However, there is an exception to this rule. An individual can become a minister without being elected to Parliament. They have six months to secure a seat in either Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha. During this time, they can participate but not vote in House proceedings.

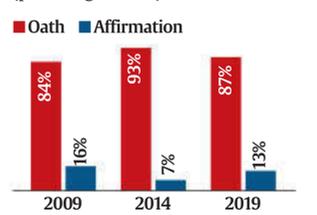
MULTILINGUALISM & OATH
 (number of MPs)

Language	2019	2014	2009	2004
Hindi	212	202	234	220
English	54	115	100	60
Sanskrit	44	39	10	23
Tamil	39	7	40	38
Marathi	36	38	23	27
Kannada	26	26	26	21
Telugu	24	13	23	29
Bengali	21	22	24	36
Oriya	16	15	12	15
Gujarati	15	23	13	11
Punjabi	12	10	13	12
Assamese	8	7	7	8
Urdu	5	3	5	9
Malayalam	4	6	5	14
Kashmiri	3	1	0	1
Maithili	3	5	2	1
Nepali	2	0	0	3
Dogri	2	0	2	2
Santhali	2	2	0	5
Sindhi	1	0	0	1
Manipuri	1	1	1	1
Bodo	0	0	0	1
Konkani	0	1	0	0



Speaker pro tem Bhartruhari Mahtab will be administering the oath/affirmation. File

OATH VS AFFIRMATION
 (percentage of MPs)



What is the parliamentary oath?

The Constitution's third schedule contains the text of the parliamentary oath. It reads, "I, A.B., having been elected (or nominated) a member of the Council of States (or the House of the People) do swear in the name of God / solemnly affirm that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India as by law established, that I will uphold the sovereignty and integrity of India and that I will faithfully discharge the duty upon which I am about to enter."

How has the oath evolved over years?

The draft Constitution prepared by the drafting committee, chaired by Dr B R Ambedkar, did not invoke God in any oaths. The committee stated that the person taking the oath solemnly and sincerely promises to bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution. When the Constituent Assembly

members were discussing the draft, the question cropped up regarding the President's oath. Moved amendments to add God to the oath.

Shah said, "When I perused the Constitution, I was left with the feeling that there was a void in it. We had forgotten, I do not know why, to invoke the grace and blessing of God." Tyagi argued that "those who believe in God will swear in the name of God and there will be liberty for those agnostics, who do not believe in God, only to solemnly affirm, so that there will be freedom for one's faith." But there was also disagreement on adding God to the oaths.

Ambedkar accepted the amendments. He believed that "To some people, God is a sanction. They think if they take a vow in the name of God, God being the governing force of the Universe, as well as of their individual lives, that oath in the name of God provides the sanction

which is necessary for the fulfilment of obligations which are purely moral and for which there is no sanction provided."

The last change in the oath was the Constitution (Sixteenth Amendment) Act, 1963, which added that the oath-takers would uphold India's sovereignty and integrity. The amendment was made on the recommendations of the National Integration Council.

How do MPs take the oath?

Before being called upon to take the oath or affirmation, MPs must submit their election certificate to the Lok Sabha staff. Parliament added this safeguard after an incident in 1957, in which a mentally unsound individual posed as an MP and took the oath on the floor of the House. After the verification, MPs can subscribe to the oath or affirmation in English or any of the 22 languages specified in the Constitution.

Roughly half the MPs take their oath in Hindi or English. In the last two Lok Sabhas, Sanskrit has also been a popular language in which MPs have taken oaths. In 2019, 44 MPs and in 2014, 39 MPs took oath in Sanskrit.

MPs must use the name mentioned in their election certificate and adhere to the text of the oath. In 2019, Lok Sabha BJP MP Pragy Singh Thakur added a suffix to her name while reading the oath. The presiding officer ruled that only the name on the election certificate would go on record. In 2024, when Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal ended her oath with "Inquilab Zindabad", the Rajya Sabha Chairman asked her to retake the oath.

Oaths and affirmations are a matter of personal choice for MPs. In the last Lok Sabha, 87% of MPs swore in the name of God, and the other 13% affirmed their allegiance to the Constitution. MPs have sometimes sworn in the name of God in one term and affirmed in another.

Can MPs in jail take the oath?

The Constitution specifies that if an MP does not attend Parliament for 60 days, their seat can be declared vacant. Courts have used this ground to allow MPs in jail to take an oath in Parliament.

For example, in June 2019, during the oath-taking for the last Lok Sabha, Atul Kumar Singh, MP from Ghosi in Uttar Pradesh, was in jail for serious criminal charges. The court allowed him to take oath in Parliament in January 2020, and Singh affirmed his allegiance to the Constitution in Hindi.

Roy and Gubbi are with PRS Legislative Research.

Why Russia-North Korea mutual defence pact is significant for region & world

SAIMA MEHTA
 NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

PRESIDENT VLADIMIR Putin's visit to Pyongyang last week culminated in a security agreement between Russia and North Korea on providing "immediate military assistance if either faces armed aggression".

Details are not known yet, the full implications of the deal remain unclear, and the commitment of the signatory countries to its terms is uncertain. But the pact could still be the strongest that Russia and North Korea have signed since the end of the Cold War.

Historical context

After World War II, the erstwhile Soviet Union wanted to install a communist regime in Korea, and offered military assistance to North Korea's founder Kim Il Sung during the Korean War. After hostilities ended, the USSR and China both provided military and other aid to the communist North.

In 1961, the Russo-North Korea Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual

Assistance was signed, which too, contained a mutual defence agreement. But this treaty was voided by the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, and relations temporarily deteriorated.

Since the early 2000s, Russia under Putin and the Kim-family ruled North Korea have come closer together. However, Putin did not back North Korea's nuclear ambitions and, for a time, even supported international sanctions aimed at curbing Pyongyang's nuclear capabilities.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 marked a watershed in the relationship between the two countries. As a coalition of Western powers led by the United States came together to isolate Russia, Putin reached out to his neighbours China and North Korea for support and solidarity. These countries today form a front against the Western liberal order, bound together by pragmatic considerations.

What the pact says

The pact between Russia and North Korea talks about cooperation in a wide range of areas, including mutual military



President Vladimir Putin and North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un ride an Aurus car in Pyongyang, North Korea. KCNA via Reuters

support, and unspecified technological assistance. But the most important part of the deal is the provision for mutual defence.

"In case any one of the two sides is put in a state of war by an armed invasion from an individual state or several states, the other side shall provide military and other assistance with all means in its possession without delay in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter and the laws of the DPRK (North Korea) and the Russian Federation," Article 4 of the agreement says, according

to a report by *Reuters*.

This provision echoes the 1961 agreement between the two nations. But what does a pact like this mean in today's world? Sue Mi Terry, Senior Fellow for Korea Studies at the New York City-based think tank Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), said in an expert brief on June 19: "Because neither country is likely to be attacked by an aggressor, the mutual defence provision is unlikely to be invoked... The more likely consequence of the treaty is simply closer cooperation in

weapons production, with North Korea manufacturing more munitions for Russia and Russia providing more high-end help for North Korea's nuclear and missile programs... Both countries will become more dangerous as a result of this new partnership." The provision of technological assistance is likely to be crucial. Western intelligence believes North Korea is in possession of nuclear weapons, but lacks critical missile guidance systems, cutting-edge warhead design, and re-entry vehicle technology, precluding its development of advanced, long-range nuclear weapons.

Strategic implications

The treaty presents a direct security threat to South Korea and Japan. Both countries have long been concerned about North Korea's nuclear program and military strength, and the Russian security umbrella will only add to these concerns.

This is likely to push both countries to strengthen their defences and rethink their security policies. Japan has already moved away from its long-standing pacifist foreign policy, and is in the process of rebuilding its military might. Both South Korea and Japan

are likely going to further cement their alliance with the US and its allies.

The US has already reaffirmed its commitment to its allies. NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg too has expressed deep concern about the pact, and underlined the risks to global security and the potential for increased nuclear proliferation. "We need to be aware that authoritarian powers are increasingly joining forces and supporting each other in a way we have never seen before," he said during an official visit to Ottawa on June 19.

The Russia-North Korea pact could also encourage similar partnerships elsewhere. The West would be especially concerned about developments in the Middle East, where Iran and Russia could seek to make common cause against the US and its allies.

China, a traditional ally to North Korea, is likely to be conflicted about the development. While the treaty strengthens the anti-West bulwark in Asia, China would be wary of Russia's growing military collaboration with North Korea, which could undermine its near-exclusive geopolitical influence over Pyongyang. It would also be concerned about even closer Western attention in Asia that this development will inevitably attract.

ECONOMY

11

MARKET WATCH

M-CAP OF 3 OF TOP-10 COS JUMPS

New Delhi: The combined market valuation of three of the top-10 most valued firms jumped Rs 1,06,125.98 crore in holiday-shortened last week, with HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank emerging as the biggest gainers. **PTI**

CYBERATTACKS A GROWING CONCERN FOR ESTONIA AND INDIA

Estonia looks at Indian partnership to beef up cybersecurity infrastructure

SOUMYARENDRA BARIK
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

ESTONIA, ONE of the world's most advanced digital countries, is looking to partner with India to collaborate on strengthening the two countries' cybersecurity infrastructure, multiple officials from the Baltic country's government said.

Estonia, courtesy its vicinity to Russia, faces a barrage of cyberattacks from the country, more so because of the former's stance on the war between Russia and Ukraine. India, meanwhile, faces a similar threat from its neighbour China.

"We are keen to work with India and to conduct cyber exercises here. Globally, there is a rise in cyber attacks and Estonia is also facing attacks from hackers," Jonatan Vseiovi, secretary general, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told a delegation of Indian journalists. He also highlighted areas like digital services and education systems as potential areas for collaboration between the countries.

Estonia, with a population of about 1.3 million, was a former member of the Soviet Union, and faced one of the largest cyberattacks on its digital infrastructure in 2007 by means of a distributed denial of service (DDoS) attack. At the time, the attack took place



A server farm of CR14 (Cyber Range 14), which is a foundation established by the Estonian Ministry of Defence, whose responsibility is to offer and develop cybersecurity training. *File*

in the backdrop of riots by ethnic Russian Estonians, prompted by the removal of a Soviet war memorial from the centre of the country's capital, Tallinn.

Since the war between Russia and Ukraine, the country has experienced similar threats from Russian actors, government officials said. Government officials in India have previously said that New Delhi faces much of a similar challenge from Beijing, where a group of independent, and state-backed actors have increased attacks on critical infrastructure in New Delhi. China's army of hackers is part of the country's information warfare apparatus and its aim is to access information and

primarily hold it as ransomware, said Mart Noorma, director of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence, told reporters. Ransomware attacks are where a cyber-actor gains access to sensitive information of an entity and encrypts, with the condition of decrypting the data only after receiving a payment.

The NATO (CCDCOE) is a NATO-accredited knowledge hub, which was established in 2008, and offers an interdisciplinary approach to the most relevant issues in cyber defence. It has a group of international experts from the military, govern-

ment, academia and industry from 39 countries.

Noorma said: "We wholeheartedly welcome like-minded democratic nations like India to join us. This will help in cyber knowledge and exchanging methods to address cyber-attacks. The cooperation will help a large-scale coalition through research, training, and exercises."

The ties between Estonia and India are increasingly growing. An Indian contingent was, for the first time, observers in a NATO-run cyber security exercise in Estonia last month. The exercise was the largest of its kind in Europe, Tiit Riisalo, Estonian economic affairs and information technology minister, said. It involved 32 NATO countries and a handful of invitees.

Although, it is worth noting that the Estonian security establishment does not view favourably the fact that India has become one of the largest purchasers of Russian oil since the war began. *The Indian Express* had earlier reported that India's Russian oil imports climbed to a 10-month high in May as low Russian refinery capacity use due to Ukrainian drone strikes made more of Moscow's oil available for the export market.

Estonian defence minister, Hanno Pevkur, said that the northern European country and India have worked together on

cybersecurity issues previously and could further that collaboration not just from government engagements, but by involving the two nations' private sector as well.

The Estonian Secretary General Vseiovi said that European countries are keen to diversify their bases in various industries over concerns emanating from over-reliance on specific countries, especially those with authoritarian regimes. In this context, Estonian officials highlighted, India could emerge as a potential partner for Europe and Estonia, despite the significant population and size differences between the countries. Courtesy of its NATO membership, Estonia has also become a crucial market for a number of Indian start-ups in the defence space as well.

There's another key similarity between Estonia and India - both the countries possess a ubiquitous national identity system, e-ID in the former, and Aadhaar in the latter, which are tied to a number of government services. In fact, in the early days of Aadhaar, when the system was being worked upon, Indian officials had closely studied Estonia's system, a former official at the Unique Identity Authority of India (UIDAI), said.

(*The reporter was in Tallinn at the invitation of the Estonian government.*)

'India's aviation sector growth provides a lot of opportunities for SriLankan Airlines'

FOR SRI Lanka's flag carrier SriLankan Airlines, India is a special market that accounts for a quarter of passenger revenue. The rapid growth in India's aviation market and the growing heft of IndiGo and Tata group airlines, while presenting a few challenges for SriLankan, also provide massive opportunities for the Colombo-based airline, believes its Chief Executive Officer **RICHARD NUTTALL**. In a candid interaction with **SUKALP SHARMA**, Nuttall talks about SriLankan's plans for the Indian market, the probable impact of development of large hub airports in India on the airline, and the challenges as well as advantages of being a small airline competing with much larger carriers. Edited excerpts:



How significant is the Indian market for SriLankan Airlines? With Indian carriers now growing rapidly, how do you view the opportunities and challenges for your airline?

India is far and away the most important market to SriLankan. In terms of passenger revenue, the share from India is about 25 per cent (including transfer traffic). In terms of passengers, the number would be slightly higher...We fly to nine Indian cities at present. Indian tourism to Sri Lanka has grown three times in the last 12 months. And I think we are still scratching the surface. India's GDP growth is over 6 per cent and air traffic usually grows at three times GDP growth, so that is 20 per cent growth. So, the opportunities are massive...growth of the Indian carriers is stimulating demand.

The challenge is that there are Indian carriers that are growing very fast...What it means is that if you are a competing carrier, you need to make sure that your growth on your markets is commensurate. As Indian carriers grow to Sri Lanka, we need to grow in the same way to India.

Going ahead, what can we expect in terms of network development from SriLankan for the India market?

From major airports like Delhi, Mumbai, and Chennai, it is going to be about having the right frequencies. Apart from point-to-point traffic, there is going to be connecting traffic from those cities to Sri Lanka and also the other way around. Those are the core markets and we have to have enough frequencies to stay relevant. But beyond those big markets, there are so many airports in India...As air travel expands in India, it should provide opportunities to us to connect with more Indian cities...But how fast we grow will depend on how quickly we can get aircraft. Our fleet has been reduced since COVID. Some

aircraft went back to lessors, and it is challenging getting new aircraft in the current market. We currently have 21 aircraft, and we will add one next month. We had 27 pre-COVID. We are working with a couple of lessors and we hope to be at 25 (planes) by the end of 2024...We believe our sweet spot is around 35 aircraft. When we get to that size will depend on how quickly we can get aircraft.

The Indian government as well as airlines want to develop large Indian airports into international hubs. What kind of an impact do you expect that to have on SriLankan, as you also have sizable connecting traffic through Colombo?

What we are seeing is that traffic from Sri Lanka to Europe, which historically connected in the Gulf, is now beginning to connect in India. So, if you are an Indian carrier, your market from Sri Lanka will include traffic to India and connecting traffic, say towards Europe...Hubs are driven by geography.

As tourism grows in India, we are very well placed to be a hub in the southeast. The opportunity from India is to Sri Lanka and beyond going east and south...We carry quite a lot to Australia, Singapore, and Thailand, and we still have some flows to the Gulf, particularly from southern India...From India, connecting traffic for us is more than 30 per cent, probably closer to 40 per cent, but it varies by month and market.

So, you don't see any threat from development of

international hubs in India when it comes to connecting traffic for SriLankan?

If India develops hubs in its southeastern region, then yes, they will compete with us...but we are probably more direct in line to many of our destinations than Mumbai, Delhi, and even Chennai in some cases...We need to grow fast enough on our main markets, so that our frequency is comparable with the Indian carriers. But equally, we are small enough that we can adjust where we fly to based on demand. If you have 500 aircraft, you have to grow a little bit everywhere. But if you are a small airline like us, if you have say 20 or 30 aircraft, you can be nimble. Yes, there will be markets that get more challenging, but the opportunities will also be there, and it is up to us to make the most of those opportunities. Overall, the growth generated in India provides more opportunities for SriLankan as well.

Indian carriers are also increasing frequencies and launching more Southeast Asia services. Even Australia is likely to see more direct services from India over the next few years. Do you see space for you as well as Indian carriers in such markets?

The most important market for us is Sri Lanka, although we want to also grow as a hub. If you look at India...it is like a continent...we first want to increase frequencies to India and then expand to more cities in time. If we fly to more cities, we don't need as much traffic from each city. Also, more point-to-point traffic for us means more connections out of Colombo.

And if you look at Australia, there will be markets that will be served nonstop by Indian carriers or Australian carriers. There will be markets that get more connecting traffic and become more competitive for us while we carry a smaller share. There will be other markets where we may be the best-positioned carrier when you look at the geography. As the market grows, the opportunities grow for everyone.

FULL INTERVIEW ON www.indianexpress.com

Received inquiries from Sebi, committed to cooperate: Quant MF

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, JUNE 23

QUANT MUTUAL Fund on Sunday said it has received inquiries from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) and is fully committed to cooperate with the market regulator.

According to a media report, Sebi has conducted search and seizure operations on Quant Mutual Fund on suspicion of front-running. The search operations were conducted across Mumbai and Hyderabad, the report added.

"As a policy, we don't comment on the media reports, however here is an important update to clarify some points to maintain transparency with all our stake holders. Recently, Quant Mutual Fund has received inquiries from Sebi...," the asset management company said in a statement to its investors.

The fund house said it is a regulated entity, and will cooperate with the regulator throughout any review.

"We will provide all necessary support and continue to furnish data to Sebi on a regular and as-needed basis," it said. Sandeep Tandon is the Founder and CEO of Quant MF.

Front running refers to usage of non-public information to directly or indirectly, buy or sell securities or enter into options or futures contracts, in advance of a substantial order, on an impending transaction, in the same or related securities or futures or options contracts, in anticipation that when the information becomes public, the price of such securities or contracts may change.

Quant Mutual Fund says it has over 80 lakh folios and manages assets worth Rs 93,000 crore. It witnessed a phenomenal growth in the last three of four years.

458 infra projects hit by cost overrun of ₹5.71L cr in May

Out of 1,817 projects, 458 reported cost overruns and 831 projects were delayed, as per the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)



1,817 PROJECTS

₹27,58,567.23 cr
Total original cost of implementation

₹33,29,647.99 cr
Anticipated completion cost

₹1,707,190.15 cr
Expenditure incurred till May 2024

DELAYED PROJECTS

35 The average time overrun was 35.1 months in May

■ Of the 831 delayed projects, 245 have delays in the range of 1-12 months

■ 188 have been delayed for 13-24 months

■ 271 projects for 25-60 months

■ 127 projects for more than 60 months

Source: MoSPI/PTI

REASONS FOR TIME OVERRUN

- Land acquisition issues
- Contractual/internal issues
- Environmental clearance and litigation issues
- Financial issues
- Manpower shortage

BRIEFLY

FPIs infuse ₹12,170 crore in equities in Jun

New Delhi: Staging a strong comeback after general election results, foreign investors pumped Rs 12,170 crore in Indian equities so far in June, mainly driven by expectations of continued policy reforms and sustained economic growth. This came following a net withdrawal of Rs 25,586 crore from equities in May on poll jitters and more than Rs 8,700 crore in April amid concerns over a tweak in India's tax treaty with Mauritius and rise in US bond yields. **PTI**

BoB aims to double tech headcount

New Delhi: Bank of Baroda is aiming to double its in-house technology team headcount to 3,000 in the next two years, a top official has said. The new additions to the current team strength of 1,500 employees will be done both through the regular hiring processes and lateral hires of specialist talent, Debaddatta Chand, its managing director and chief executive officer said. **PTI**

Govt mulls dedicated bank for MSMEs to enhance credit access, economic growth

PRASANTASAHU
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

THE GOVERNMENT is considering a proposal to set up a separate bank for direct lending to the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). This would help deepen credit flows to the under-penetrated sector, and boost economic activity and job creation. "There is a need to set up a separate bank for the MSME sector to help address the direct credit shortages," an official told *FE*, adding such a proposal is under consideration.

The government would soon take a call on the proposal, the official indicated. The ownership structure of the bank, which might include a hybrid (public-private partnership) model, is among the details to be worked out. Access to adequate, timely and low-cost finance is seen as a key bottleneck, stymieing MSMEs' growth to bigger enterprises.

Currently, the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) provides largely refinance to banks that lend to MSMEs, lowering the cost of finance to these units. State financial corporations and state industrial development corpora-



tions, among others, lend directly to units in the MSME sector. It has access to low-cost funds, which are made available by banks against their shortfalls in meeting their priority sector lending (PSL) targets. The micro and small enterprise (MSE) refinance allocation for FY24 was Rs 84,000 crore.

According to an EY report, MSME credit penetration is still 14 per cent in India compared with 50 per cent in the US and 37 per cent in China. There is a credit gap of Rs 25 trillion for the MSME sector in India, reflecting the large untapped credit market. The outstanding credit to the MSMEs by scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) expanded by 20.9 per cent annually to Rs 26 trillion at the end of December 2023.

The 64 million-strong MSMEs are the backbone of the Indian

economy. MSMEs employ over 110 million people or 23 per cent of the country's labour force, making it the second-largest employer in India after agriculture. They account for 27 per cent of India's GDP, 38.4 per cent for the total manufacturing output and 45 per cent for the country's total exports.

"A separate bank which understands the needs and the working of the MSMEs is required," said Sandip Kishore Jain, president of the Federation of Indian Micro and Small & Medium Enterprises. Large banks don't understand the requirements of the MSMEs, Jain said, adding that in some European countries, MSMEs are clubbed together with home loan customers as both are small borrowers. All India Association of Industries president Vijay G Kalantri said if not a new bank, SIDBI should be converted into a full-fledged bank for direct lending to MSMEs instead of focussing on just refinance.

Kalantri also said that MSMEs should be given loans at the same interest rate as housing, i.e., at the rate of 6 per cent for exports and 8 per cent for regular domestic production activities. Currently, he said, the bank interest rate for MSMEs is 11-13 per cent and for exports 8-9 per cent. **FE**

India, Korea make headway in CEPA review talks, exchange 'request' lists

MUKESH JAGOTA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

THE TALKS between India and Korea on the review of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) have made significant headway, with both sides exchanging the list of 'requests' where they want further opening up of trade.

From the Korean side the demand has come in regard to sectors like automobiles, textiles, chemicals and petrochemicals while India is seeking greater access to the Korean markets for steel, rice, shrimp and clothing.

"The requests made by Korea are being discussed with the ministries of steel, textiles, chemicals and petrochemicals and heavy industries. Based on the discussions, offers of the request will be finalised," senior official said.

The revision of the CEPA has been painfully slow as both sides are approaching the matter from different standpoints. Korea wants to expand the agreement while India is seeking review to address the expanding trade deficit with Korea. The review of CEPA - which was signed in 2009 and came into force in 2010 - was agreed to in 2016. Since then ten rounds of talks have been held. The last

round of discussions on the subject were held earlier this year. Some Korean officials have been on record saying that talks may finally conclude in 2024 but dates for the next round of talks is yet to be finalised. Officials say that the next dates of next round of talks will be finalised when both sides are ready with their offers.

According to experts, Korea's attempt is to increase the level of openness of the Indian market or at least get it on par with India-Japan FTA. From South Korea's perspective, the effectiveness of bilateral trade liberalisation has been questioned as key export sectors such as automobiles have

been excluded from concessions. Indian exporters have complained of the unwillingness of the Korean industry to buy items like steel from India despite the competitiveness. Apparel makers have complained of safety standards being kept so high as to make exports difficult.

The agreement covers trade in goods, investments, services, and bilateral cooperation in areas of common interest. Under the CEPA, Korea was to phase out/reduce tariffs on 90 per cent of Indian exports, while India would phase out/eliminate tariffs on 85 per cent of Korean exports. **FE**

Electronic components demand to jump 5x by 2030: CII

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

INDUSTRY BODY CII has demanded that the government provide 6-8 per cent fiscal support for select electronic components and sub-assemblies for a period of eight years to help strengthen the domestic manufacturing sector and curb imports.

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), in a report, stated that the demand for electronic components and sub-assemblies would grow to \$240 billion to support \$500 billion of production by

The report identifies lithium-ion, camera modules, mechanicals, displays and PCBs as high priority for India

2030 from \$45.5 billion to support \$102 billion production in 2023. "Priority components and sub-assemblies, including PCBAs (printed circuit board assembly), are projected to grow at a robust CAGR of 30 per cent, reaching \$139 billion by 2030," according to the report on "developing India

as the manufacturing hub for electronics components and sub-assemblies".

The report identifies five components/sub-assemblies of batteries (lithium-ion), camera modules, mechanicals (enclosures etc.), displays and PCBs that are of high priority for India and account for 43 per cent of the components demand in 2022. It is expected to grow to \$51.6 billion by 2030. These components have either a nominal production in India or are heavily import dependent, it said.

India can hardly afford to sustain this trend of importing priority components. Similarly, PCBA is

a high potential category for India since most of the demand is met by imports. This segment is expected to grow by 30 per cent, leading to a demand creation of \$87.46 billion by 2030.

However, manufacturing-related cost disabilities vis-à-vis other competing economies like China, Vietnam and Mexico, lack of big domestic manufacturing corporations, lack of domestic design ecosystem for Indian companies and lack of raw materials ecosystem add to the challenges that disable the domestic manufacturing of components and sub-assemblies. **FE**

12 IDEA EXCHANGE

NEWSMAKERS IN THE NEWSROOM



IAN BREMMER

AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENTIST

WHY IAN BREMMER

Ian Bremmer is a keen India watcher, who has commented on the nation in various contexts, particularly in relation to its economic development and global influence. Founder of the Eurasia Group, a risk assessment consultancy that specialises in geopolitics and the political economy of emerging markets, the prolific author has published over 11 books and developed key conceptual tools such as the 'J-Curve' and 'G-Zero world'



Illustration: Suvajit Dey

'Americans versus the Americans is the most dangerous war out there'

American political scientist and entrepreneur Ian Bremmer on the election results in India, its growing strategic importance and how the American democracy is in crisis. The conversation was moderated by Aakash Joshi, Deputy Associate Editor, *The Indian Express*

QUICK QUESTIONS

One thing that India could have done better in its relationship with China?
The engagement that you're seeing now by Modi should have been done earlier.

The biggest geopolitical challenge PM Modi faces right now?
Maintaining stable relations with China, given that it's your most important trade partner.

The one concern that global investors have about India today?
What they should be concerned about long-term is climate change and water.

The rise of Chinese science: welcoming or worrying?
Both.

Is there an Opposition anywhere in

the world that the Congress party in India can learn from?
Yes, the Labour Party in the UK. When you're out of power for a long time, you need to get rid of incapable leaders, you need to focus on policies that matter, and you need to take advantage of the mistakes being made by the party in power.

Is BRICS currency a good idea or a bad idea?
I don't think it's very important.

Japan ended its 17-year negative interest rate regime. Will it impact India?
It's one of India's most important relationships. Japan is becoming a little less important on the global stage, but it's very useful for India to strengthen that relationship.

there are many American voters who will not accept the outcome of this election. In 2020, the argument was that the election was legitimate, but the vote was rigged, which is not true. Trump is running on that. Today, the argument is that the election is illegitimate, not the vote. The Democrats will say Trump should not be eligible to run for office because of the two impeachments that were politically incapable of reaching conviction,

even though there were Republicans that voted to convict him in the second impeachment. A vote to convict is a vote that says that you can never run for President.

If you go to our top risks that we put out every year, as we did in January this year, despite all the concerns of US-China, the Middle East war, Ukraine war, the number one risk was the US versus itself. The Americans versus the Americans is the most dangerous war

out there. This is a horrible election and no American wants to have it.

Anant Goenka: There are two Indias — one which agrees with the ideas of the BJP, and another that doesn't. Is there something about polarisation in America that could happen in India?

India is obviously a country with far more poverty and far less, in that regard, time and energy spent by the average citizen on high-level politics. We're just at a different part of Maslow's triangle of self-actualisation. You're nowhere close to the middle-income trap. When you've got a country that is growing at six-seven-eight per cent a year, there's still a lot you can do that can make the average citizen feel like they have a bright future. That undermines polarisation. In a sense, political polarisation is a bit of a malaise that comes from ennui. It comes from a level where your basic needs are taken care of but now you feel you've got bigger demands.

China's gone through a very different political system but for 40 years the population felt good about the fact that economically they were going to have opportunities. India is finally on that path. It was a lot easier when Modi first came in because there was so much corruption and no digitisation. So you could help people without blowing out the budget. You could just improve efficiency and win. India is beyond that. But it's too pessimistic to say that India at this stage of development is heading towards where the US or Europe is.

Adya Goyal: In the US, students in

Columbia University were protesting against what is happening in Palestine. Similar protests took place in European colleges. Why is there a difference in the nature of student protests across regions?

The demonstrations and the number of students demonstrating have been extremely small. They're mostly in elite universities. But, of course, you have an environment that it's politically polarised. You have a small number of political activists on the Right and on the Left in the campuses, and more importantly outside the campuses, who are looking for extreme statements to promote and say, 'look at these crazy Hamas supporters', or 'look at these crazy Islamophobic Jews.' It's true that young people in America, like in Europe, are more sympathetic to Palestinians because they see them as the underdog and think that ethnic cleansing and genocide is going on in Gaza right now. That doesn't mean they support Hamas. Almost none of them support Hamas, but they don't support the US-Israel policy as well.

Rishika Singh: The US has, for long, championed values such as liberty and free trade but in the last few years, particularly with regard to China, they've placed a lot of bans on semiconductor technology and other kinds of high-level technology, citing security concerns. How do you rate these bans in terms of legitimacy?

When you talk about access to the US market, that's a choice that's made by the American government. And that's also true for China. China doesn't allow Google, Facebook or Wikipedia to operate. I wish they would, but they see those companies as a systemic challenge to the Chinese political system. The Americans see Huawei as a national security challenge to the American system. The US is not only doing that domestically but increasingly leveraging relations with their allies to ensure that nobody is providing the Chinese with high-level semiconductors. They're now talking about the same with software. It's within the right of the US and other countries to make those decisions. It starts looking unfair if the Americans are coercing other countries to do it against their will. In principle, you want to see the US investing in being the best competitor globally. To that extent, the Americans have paid no attention to their semiconductor industry for the last 25 years and allowed it to be exported to mainland China. The Chinese increasingly have a lot more influence over Taiwan economically, politically and strategically, and you can understand why the Americans are panicking a bit.

Anant Goenka: You'd said the obituaries on China are premature, and that China will bounce back. Is it bouncing back?

There are way too many Americans who are prepared to say that China can't do anything right. The fact is that China is overall close to a technological parity with the US. When you talk about transition energy, they're way ahead. It's a huge mistake to be overconfident. Mike McFaul, former US ambassador to Russia, saw Putin meeting Kim Jong-un (North Korean leader) and immediately said, look at the desperation. When I look at Putin with all the oil, gas, uranium, precious metals and land, the size of his conventional military and his nuclear forces, and I look at his relationship with China, I look at the unwillingness of the Americans to take pain by really hurting Russia. I look at the ability of the Russians to deter NATO. When I see him meeting Kim Jong-un, I don't see desperation. I see danger. I see the emergence of a couple of countries that are chaos actors. They are pariahs for the West but they're not pariahs for India, China or the developing world. They are not pariahs for the BRICS. Even for the Americans and the Europeans, how many companies are still doing business there? We have to be careful before we write off China and Russia.

Anant Goenka: How do you describe G7's decision to lend Ukraine \$50 billion backed by \$300 billion frozen Russian assets?

They're spending a lot of money to ensure that the Ukrainians don't lose more territory. I support that because I think the invasion was illegal. It would have been more effective to stop Putin before he invaded Ukraine in 2022, to be tougher after 2014. Now it's a lot more expensive and we're all paying for that. But I also recognise the unwillingness of the West to take pain themselves. You still want to do business. If you sell the business now, you're not going to get any money for it. The Russians can just take advantage. So, I guess, we should probably keep a lot of those businesses there. You can't cut off Russian oil because it would be a real cost for the global economy. You can't cut off Russian uranium because then the reactors wouldn't work. If you're only willing to spar with them, play fight with them, then they're obviously not going to take you seriously.

I wrote this in our top risks: we expect that Ukraine will be partitioned. Not because I want that outcome. I think it's horrible. Ukraine should get all their land back. Crimea is a different story... The rest of Ukraine should clearly be Ukrainian territory. There should be (accountability for) war crimes and war reparations. But that's not going to happen because the West is too unwilling to create leadership. It's a G-Zero. It's not a G7. Putin is advantaged in a G-Zero.

Aakash Joshi: You have been following the Indian elections and politics closely. Will this coalition government, marked by continuity, be seen as a stable government?

I see India today as I've seen India for the last decade — as the strongest and most stable democracy with the strongest leadership, certainly in the Global South and in many ways around the world. Narendra Modi is now in a coalition. But it also means 15 years of driving of a consistent foreign policy, security policy and economic policy. That is unusual, even exceptional for a well-functioning democracy. It makes it much easier for foreign governments and multinational corporations to rely on India. It's certainly true that Modi underperformed with being nowhere close to the 400 seats but the NDA coalition has a Cabinet that's already formed. Most of the notable ministries are with the BJP. This speaks of a government that Modi is going to have control over. I'm sure he's going to have to negotiate and provide more to the states where his two regional partners are dominant, and that will slow down some of the new economic reform process, for example in agriculture. But it will also sort of reduce some of the strongman tendencies that you've seen from India's leadership. Greater checks and balances are a good thing for a democracy.

Aakash Joshi: We've seen foreign policy becoming a part of political campaigning more than ever before. But we've got two kinds of feedback over the last 10 years. One has been of the hyperbole that India has never been as respected before. The other is that India is now seen as a "declining" democracy. What is your opinion?

ON INDIA

INDIA HAS MATTERED MORE STRATEGICALLY OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS ACROSS THE WORLD. FINALLY, INDIA'S ECONOMY IS STARTING TO CATCH UP WITH ITS GROWING STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

It's overwhelmingly the former. It is true that there are aspects of Indian democracy that are problematic. Of course, there are aspects of American democracy that are even more problematic. The US has slipped more as a political system in a liberal democracy in the last 30 years than India has.

The US has a hard time even holding a free and fair election that is seen as legitimate by its population. India just had elections, Modi didn't do so well, and everyone recognises it was a free and fair election. That's a sign of a strong and healthy democracy. When I was working on my PhD in 1989, people around the world looked at the US as the shining light. They wanted their political system to run more like the US. In 2024, a lot of people want to move to the US, invest in American markets, and send their kids to American universities but nobody says, 'I wish my political system ran like Washington.'

Yet, the US continues to be the most powerful country and is driving greater strategic relationships, international architecture, Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue), AUKUS, Indo-Pacific framework, all of which India and many other countries in Asia want to be a stronger part of. India is respected in the Global South and has been very successful at chairing the G20 over the last two years. It is also seen as a bridge to the US, Japan, the UAE, and, increasingly, to Europe as well. That's somewhere that Modi, almost singularly, and S Jaishankar (External Affairs Minister), have done great work in. They've allowed India to punch above its weight. India has mattered more strategically over the last 10 years across the world. Finally, India's economy is starting to catch up with its growing strategic importance.

Aakash Joshi: How much does a Trump presidency affect India and other non-NATO US partners in the region?

For many allies of the US, the prospect of a Trump presidency is deeply concerning. Trump says he's going to end the war in Ukraine in one day, and if you're a frontline NATO country, you think that Trump is a crisis for you. There are other countries in the world that are deeply concerned about Trump's lack of climate agenda, his greater transactionalism on trade deficits, willingness to put tariffs. He's talked about a 10 per cent tariff on all exports to the US. That would clearly have a negative effect on the Indian economy. The more important point for India is that a US-China relationship under Trump would be under significantly greater pressure.

On the political side, the fact that the US and China would have a more tense relationship would benefit India strategically. Modi is one of the few leaders in the world who really doesn't care that much personally whether Biden or Trump wins. But there would be greater uncertainty. India is, right now, trying to navigate a world that has much greater geopolitical uncertainty because of all the industrial policy, subsidies, as well as sanctions and tariffs because of two major wars going on in the Middle East and Russia-Ukraine, and tensions in the US-China relationship. If you're India, you just want a stable global environment to grow your economy.

Aakash Joshi: Through the Ukraine war, Delhi has managed to keep our channels open with Russia. How do you assess that kind of balancing in this uncertain geopolitical climate?

This year was the 11th time that India has been invited to attend the G7 as an observer. There was a time when the Russians were the G7 plus-one. If there was a plus-one to the G7 right now, it would probably be India because of its economic size and growing strategic alignment. There is a lot of constructive engagement between India and the G7,

including on Russia-Ukraine. India is buying a lot of goods from Russia, particularly oil. That is in explicit alignment with US policy. The US is not trying to prevent the Russians from exporting oil because it would lead to a global recession. Right now, it's escalating in terms of the use of frozen assets and targeting of NATO weaponry into Russia. We could see a time where India would be pressured to do a lot less with Russia.

Pooja Pillai: What is the response to Trump's conviction among his supporters? What does that mean for the US election and the world eventually?

In terms of the way they're going to vote, it has had virtually no impact — 34 convictions, felony convictions, are unprecedented in the US. That should mean that Trump should not be viable as a presidential candidate. But it doesn't mean that. He is arguing that this is a politicised case that wouldn't have been brought against anyone else. It's the least serious case of the indictments that he is facing, much less serious than the Georgia case of trying to overturn the election, the Florida case of stealing and then lying and obscuring classified documents, the Washington DC case of abetting insurrection on January 6. But none of those cases are going to come to resolution before the November elections. So, in my view, this is not going to have a significant outcome, but it does have a significant impact on how we think about the US in terms of the rule of law and a sustainable democracy. US democracy is in crisis right now and

TODAY'S GAMES

T20 WC: West Indies vs South Africa, 6am
 India vs Australia, 8pm
Live on: Star Sports Network and Jio Cinema;
EUROS: Albania vs Spain, 12:30 AM; Croatia vs Italy, 12:30 AM
Live on: Sony Sports Network

SUPER 8 STANDINGS

GROUP 1

	M	W	L	T	Pts	NRR
IND	2	2	0	0	4	2.425
AUS	2	1	1	0	2	0.223
AFG	2	1	1	0	2	-0.650
BAN	2	0	2	0	0	-2.489

GROUP 2

	M	W	L	T	Pts	NRR
ENG	3	2	1	0	4	1.992
SA	2	2	0	0	4	0.625
WI	2	1	1	0	2	1.814
USA	3	0	3	0	0	-3.906

SCENARIOS



Mitchell Marsh's Australia will go up against an Indian side that have yet to register a loss at the T20 World Cup. AP/PTI

Where does Afg's win leave India in the race for a semi final spot

Afghanistan's historic five-wicket win over Australia has topped up a three-way contest for the semifinal spots in Group 1, with India leading the race ahead of the final round.

WHAT DO INDIA NEED TO DO?

For India to secure qualification, they simply need to beat Australia or avoid a heavy defeat in St Lucia on Monday. Their superior net run rate (+2.425) puts them in a spot where they are all but through to the semifinals and can likely avert a last-minute upset that could knock them out.

WHAT DO AUSTRALIA NEED TO DO?

As for Australia, Mitchell Marsh's side (+0.223) can still pip Afghanistan (-0.650) on net run rate with a win over India. If Australia are to overhaul India and take the first spot, they will need a big win. For example, if India set a 151-run target, Australia will need to chase them down within 14 overs to surpass Rohit Sharma's side on NRR. Similarly, if Australia bat first and get a 190-run total on the board, India will be required to attain at least 150 runs to maintain their position at the top.

WHAT DO AFGHANISTAN NEED TO DO?

Afghanistan's NRR equations will boil down to the result of the India-Australia contest, following which they take on Bangladesh in Kingstown. An Indian win will mean that Afghanistan's contest will be a direct shootout where a victory over Bangladesh can propel them to their first World Cup semifinal.

LALITH KALIDAS

Roll up your sleeves, come celebrate and dance. Poor people like us rarely get the chance to enjoy as happiness belongs to those who are strong and rich.

RASHID KHAN AND GULBADIN NAIB, DURING AFGHANISTAN'S CELEBRATIONS

Aussies Afghanistunned

Rashid Khan's men exorcise loss in Mumbai, defend 148 against Australia for a shot at making the T20 World Cup semi-final

LALITH KALIDAS
JUNE 23

"THEY GOT 20 too many."

Mitchell Marsh's admission at the end of an epochal night was perhaps the most subtle first reaction to Afghanistan's stunning upheaval of the former champions in Kingstown.

After a reality check in the previous Super 8 game against India, Afghanistan realised sticking to their original strengths, one of which helped them beat England, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, New Zealand, and now Australia across the 50-over and T20 World Cups within a year, was the best way forward.

And so when Australia surprisingly elected to bowl first at the Arnos Vale Stadium, where the previous three wins were etched out by teams defending totals, even as low as 106 and 115, Afghanistan were not quite unruffled as they fell back onto their group-stage XI. It was a unit that best exuded the strengths of Afghanistan even as their middle-order frailties laid bare open.

Openers Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran did not stutter even as Australia nailed down 25 dot balls within the Powerplay. The scoring shots, two effervescent straight sixes from Gurbaz off Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood and Zadran's late charge in the sixth over with flashy fours on either side of the square, kept the engine room steady.

Marsh would toss in his variety of spins with Adam Zampa, Ashton Agar, and Glenn Maxwell between overs 7-10, but the openers sagely waded through at a run-a-ball rate for 24 runs. The three-figure mark took another 20 balls as the duo masked the middle-order as much as possible with their third 100-plus opening stand – the only pair to achieve at least one such partnership this tournament. Call it foresight or acute consciousness from the openers and the Afghan think tank, the side would freefall from 118 for no loss to 148 for six within 25 deliveries, including a second Pat Cummins hat-trick in succession.

The last thirty minutes of the innings would have boosted the Afghan seamers as the slower deliveries tossed in by Cummins with good effect were right up their alley.

The spirits would have been simmering when Naveen-ul-Haq's first delivery to Travis Head reared away sharply from the brim of the left-hander's off-stump. It only took an amendment in line.

The slinging right-armeder magically darted the ball inward and scuttled the ball towards the middle-and-leg stump two balls

later, with Head's swinging bat falling across the line. The 20-run cushion which Marsh highlighted also meant Naveen would not shy away from plotting dismissals by dangling a few carrots. A fuller delivery waltzed to the cover boundary, but Naveen's angular smarts at the crease would allow an in-dipping slower ball on the off-stump, inviting a ballooning mis-hit from Marsh to the cover fielder.

In a trice, Australia were three down within the Powerplay in a progressively stalling chase, and the familiarities from Wankhede 2023 kicked back in. Glenn Maxwell was back up and running, admirably quelling the middle-overs venom from Rashid and Noor Ahmad. For once Maxwell was not alone as Marcus Stoinis strode along with firm sweeps off the spinners. Australia chugged along with the asking rate until the halfway mark, with Rashid ringing in as many as eight bowlers. Rashid's final dial, Gulbadin Naib, proved to be the most decisive on a strip of uneven bounce.

Naib's surprise bumper scalped Stoinis caught-behind before a clever back-of-a-length delivery would skim low onto the pads past a towering Tim David's flick in his next over. Maxwell did not take any of it as he raised his half-century, a first since February, in 35 deliveries with a six off Naib.

But Arnos Vale was no Wankhede, and the niceties of the pitch had eventually died down. Maxwell lunged at a pace-on delivery from Naib through cover, only for it to clip the outside half and lob towards point, with Ahmad springing forward to scoop up a ball he would cling onto for life. Naib (4/20) capped off his momentous night by sending Cummins a taste of his own medicine – a cheeky slower one aimed at the base of the stumps.

149 amplified as an insurmountable task as the Afghan nous prevailed in bundling Australia for the first time in the tournament. It also brought the mighty side back to the mortal worlds of net run rates and equations. Fun time is effectively over for the all-star Australians on the Caribbean shores as they battle the possibility of losing out on the semifinals at the hands of India and rewarding Afghanistan with a chance to channel their destiny at the same venue on Tuesday.

BRIEF SCORES: Afghanistan 148 for 6 in 20 overs (Rahmanullah Gurbaz 60, Ibrahim Zadran 51; Pat Cummins 3/28) Australia 127 all out in 19.2 overs (Glenn Maxwell 59; Gulbadin Naib 4/20).



Rahmanullah Gurbaz (R) and Gulbadin Naib celebrate the dismissal of Glenn Maxwell (L). AP/PTI

How Afghanistan upset the Aussies

SRIRAM VEERA
JUNE 23

PERHAPS, AFGHANISTAN hadn't forgotten the 50 over World-Cup thriller when they came so close but were denied by a once-in-a-generation knock by a limping breathless Glenn Maxwell, who should have been on a hospital bed taking drips instead of annihilating the Afghani dream. Rashid Khan had spoken about how he at times lies sleepless in bed, thinking about that World Cup game on the Mumbai coastline. The Australians, barring Maxwell too, it felt, hadn't forgotten their nervy batting that Mumbai night, as their nerves seemed shot in the chase here.

Which moment to choose, for there were many, to observe the Australians? Perhaps, the 16th over when they bowled is best to be cited first for it revealed a mini-breaking-away moment from being entrapped in the spell cast by the Afghani openers Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran, whose unbeaten 129 had been overshadowed by Maxwell's madness in the World Cup. Until then, ground fielding was as bad as it was against Scotland, Wade's wicket-keeping too wasn't flash as he too missed a stumping, and the bowlers couldn't find a way through, when Marcus Stoinis decided to pull out the bare-the-Australian-fangs trick.

After Gurbaz punched a ball back to him after backing outside leg, Stoinis gave the nasty eye – unsure if the Australian lip was also thrown in. Gurbaz stared, Stoinis lingered on. The next ball was thrown back from wide long-on stands and though his partner was beside him with cheers for the audacious hit, Gurbaz was still giving an angry-cold stare at the receding Stoinis.

This seemed a mini-turning point – Afghanistan were 118 at that stage – for Australia rallied back via Adam Zampa, who skidded out Zadran and bounced out a started



Ashton Agar drops a catch during Australia's match vs Afghanistan. AP/PTI

Azmatullah. Cummins ripped out the lower middle order with a hat trick, and was denied a four-in-four as David Warner dropped a sitter. That fielding had continued regardless of the bowling turnaround as Agar too dropped a catch and committed misfields.

A sense of doom soon embedded itself in their camp as Afghans sniped at them from the start of the chase. Naveen-ul-Haq, an infamous cult figure among IPL faithful, produced an absolute Jaffa first up that stunned Wade. From round the stumps, it veered in on back of length on the middle-stump line, before cutting away with bounce to thud into the wicketkeeping gloves of the adrenaline-junkie Gurbaz.

Naveen would walk away ever-so-coolly point his finger with a seemingly 'I-told-you-so' gesture to a team-mate a ball later after shredding the stumps behind Wade with a corker. It was a great course-correction ball, a perfect knockout to follow the earlier brute: fuller, starting audaciously from leg and middle and darting away from that angle and leaving Wade's aggressive flail with no hope of stopping it from its destination.

Australia's captain Mitch Marsh, who has overseen some of shoddiest fielding displays

back to back, projected his imperious batting persona, reeling out a few booming front-foot drives. But Afghanistan bowlers cannot be limited to conjuring magic balls, but also dish out well-thought out gems. Naveen, yet again, with a peach of a slower one twisted out from finger tips sucked Marsh into a big forward drive rather early and unsurprisingly it ballooned up to mid-on.

It was Stoinis's fall in the 13th over that then captured Australia's state of mind. He walked a couple of steps down the track to the medium-pace Gulbadin Naib. The aggressive intent had the same whiffs as his banter-move with Gurbaz with the ball, but he was duped by a 121-kmph slow bouncer. He froze as the ball reared, couldn't but stab his hands up as face-shield to pop a catch to who else but Gurbaz, who pounced and roared.

Australia would stagger as Gulbadin would punch the knockout moment in the 15th over by taking out Maxwell. It was a full delivery outside off and Maxwell plunged into his crashing off-drive but spliced this off the outer edge towards backward point where Noor Ahmad contorted his body and swooped forward to grab the match-turning catch. Where Australia had fumbled at such fielding moments, Afghans were making their fans proud in Kabul and around the country.

Wade was removed by Rashid Khan who brought himself on to bowl his final over in the 16th to do precisely that. And the gush of anguish that emanated from Pat Cummins's mouth even before the slower ball from Gulbadin had disarranged his stumps told the story. He knew he was cooked and had; so was Australia. Befittingly, the veteran Nabi took the final catch to trigger pandemonium in the dugout. Australia should have lost that 50 over faceoff but they Maxwellled their way to seal the semi-final spot and shove out Afghanistan. Now, Afghanistan are trying to reproduce similar outcomes.



Afghanistan cricket fans celebrate in large numbers in Khost province. ACB/X

FROM SUPER 8 TO SEMIFINAL

Defending champs England become 1st team to book semis berth

VINAYAKK MOHANARANGAN
JUNE 23

DESPITE QUESTIONS swirling around their progress out of the first group stage, despite contriving to lose a Super 8 match against South Africa that they looked to have under control late on, England became the first team to reach the T20 World Cup. It's been a stop-start tournament for Jos Buttler's men but such are the vagaries of tournament play, that they seal their place in the final four before teams that are yet to lose a match.

They did so by following a template we have seen already. Not for the first time in the tournament England's bowlers restricted the opposition to a below-par total only to smash the target down in no time. Batting first, USA – despite a solid powerplay – were bundled out for 115. Buttler's 38-ball 83 then powered the defending champions to 117/0 in 9.4 overs.

Chris Jordan picked up four wickets in three balls, including the third hat-trick of this tournament. Buttler was ruthless in his approach to the total, and powered England's Net Run Rate even past the West Indies. But

the real hero of the win was Adil Rashid, who spun a web with his mastery of wrist-spin.

Rashid's brilliance

'Are you watching closely?' It's one of the most famous opening lines to a movie (Christopher Nolan's *The Prestige*) but it also sums up what batters must do when facing elite spinners in cricket. Because, if you aren't, you are going to pay. Rashid's googly is one of those magic tricks on a cricket field that can leave batsmen bamboozled by the sleight of hand.

Rashid picked up two wickets, and despite the more eye-catching performances from Jordan and Buttler, was rightly deemed the player of the match. The main reason for that was the importance of his spell in the middle phase of the innings, and the value of the batters he dismissed.

Aaron Jones lit up the tournament early on with his six-hitting masterclass in Dallas against Canada – but mirroring USA's campaign – finished with two ordinary displays in the end. He started off with a second ball four but was a bit sedate after that, perhaps trying to reign himself in a bit. Discipline, is what he thought was the biggest lesson from



Adil Rashid's 2/13 restricted USA to 115 on Sunday. AP/PTI

the West Indies defeat. But a scratchy innings ended soon, as he fell playing the slog sweep for the second time in a row. Rashid's googly drew the false shot as Jones' head wasn't still, his reach wasn't close to the ball that snuck

past the defence.

Rashid's googly did the damage again to USA's best batter on the day. Nitish Kumar was looking in good touch but the ball that spun in sharply beat him all ends

up. That particular delivery could have ended Corey Anderson's innings a couple of times too. Rashid has now picked five out of his nine wickets in the tournament with the wrong 'un.

"Two wickets, but so much more than that," Nasser Hussain said on air to sum it up.

Jordan's special hat-trick

The only change England made was to bring in Jordan for Mark Wood, the latter struggling for wickets despite cranking up the pace. Jordan made Buttler a happy captain for that call as he finished off USA's batting with a hat-trick, making sure the target was small enough to be overhauled with plenty of balls to spare.

After getting Anderson at the start of the 19th over, Jordan honed in on the stumps with a hint of reverse swing that tailed back into tail-enders. It brought about a special moment for the English pacer in the country of his birth.

Jordan recalled in a 2020 interview with his then IPL franchise Punjab: "I remember the atmosphere there (Kensington Oval) was crazy. Everyone in Barbados used to rush to the stadium if they heard that West

Indies were batting and were a wicket down, just to watch Brian Lara bat. Even if it was just one cover drive from Brian Lara, it was a joy for all."

Jofra Archer's rise from Barbados to England is well documented in recent times but Jordan had done it before him. At a venue where he grew up watching some of his idols, Jordan turned it up. It explained the smiles on his face as he celebrated with his teammates.

The run-chase itself was a question of how quickly England will chase it down. And when Buttler smashed Harmeet Singh for five sixes in one over, it was evident they didn't just want to qualify for the semifinals but give their NRR a boost significant that gave them a chance of topping Group B. It's been somewhat of a strange tournament for them, but the champions have done enough to be in the top four... from here on, it's anybody's tournament.

BRIEF SCORES: USA 115 (Nitish Kumar 30, Corey Anderson 29; Chris Jordan 4/10, Adil Rashid 2/13, Sam Curran 2/23) in 18.5 overs lost to England 117/0 (Jos Buttler 83 n.o.) in 9.4 overs.

PREVIEW: INDIA VS AUSTRALIA

Pace duo key for a Head start

Australian batter's troubles in focus as powerhouses meet in high stakes clash

SANDIP G
JUNE 23

THE BALL would haunt Travis Head in his nightmares. The white sphere of leather arrowing into his middle stump, landing on good length, or slightly fuller, before seaming away, rerouting as though guided by a GPS just adequately to beat his feet-in-cement swipe. When Naveen-ul-Haq blasted his stumps with a similar ball, he might have only felt a sense of deja vu. Several faces would have flashed through his head—Jofra Archer (this World Cup), Mitchell Starc and Arshdeep Singh (IPL 2024) – from the last month alone.

Awareness of a flaw is one thing; executing is the more tedious bit, India's seamers would know. In the last two major ICC games between the two sides, Head had single-handedly lopped off India's ambitions. Centuries of outrageous derring-do in the World Test Championship and 50-over World Cup finals needn't any reopening; they flinch as unhealed wounds in the mind of the nation. Now Australia would hope their maverick opener would perform a triple-peat, just as India's bowlers would sniff an overdue revenge.

India possess a pair of seamers skilled with both knowledge and power of execution, riding an irrepressible wattage of form, to bait their moustachioed nemesis in recent finals, when they duel in Gros Islet, in a Super 8 group game with the consequence of a knockout.

The Bumrah-Arshdeep duet has been a music of doom for batsmen this tournament. A combined haul of 22 wickets, of them several unplayable ones, conceding an average of 5.28 runs per over, breathing hostility and high-spec skills, with wisdom and mastery of coaxing the best out of surfaces, has headlined India's march of a six-match unbeaten streak. Both can readily deliver the ball that troubles Head, in different angles. Bumrah releases the ball wide of the crease, like a boxer's upper cut appearing from nowhere. It curls into him, drawing his eyes into him, opening up his body in the process, and squaring him up. Arshdeep's away-swing is subtler, stings more no less, like a jab. The ball travels almost



Jasprit Bumrah has all the ammunition to trouble the Australian batters. PTI

in line with the umpire, semi-opens his body, and induces his hands into stabbing at it. His vulnerability to the away-swing stems from his insignificant front-foot stride, his tendency to stay leg-side of the ball, further complicated when he opens up his stance, often by clearing the front-leg.

The mouth-watering opening exchange sets up an intriguing match that was not designed this way. Had Afghanistan not upstaged Australia, the game would have been piped up as a trial for the finals, a shadow boxing before another grandstand game. But the defeat has slashed open the group and injected a Hitchcockian suspense to a game that both teams ought to win. India could make do with a point, in case it rains in Gros Islet. But Australia need to win, and do so with a handsome margin so that they could progress even if Afghanistan topple Bangladesh. The latter too is suddenly in the fray, should a string of results favour them.

India peaking

In this backdrop of the Sunday mayhem, India would walk into the picturesque Daren Sammy Stadium as the calmer side. They have

reached a day earlier, bossing their adversaries and peaking insidiously as the tournament has rolled along. With every passing game, India have looked unbreakable, fixing every troubleshot on the go. The openers, Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, hit their straps against Bangladesh; installing Rishabh Pant's at No 3 has been a masterstroke; Hardik Pandya has dusted off his IPL dust and begun to influence games as a genuine all-rounder would, with the bat and ball. Seamers have terrorised batsmen every game, and the spin trio has settled into rhythm too. It's a travesty if they are not addressed as the red-hot favourites to hoist the trophy. On Monday, too, the odds would heavily favour them, despite the format's fickleness.

In contrast, Australia have been slipping from one weakness to another with every soaking game. They have less than 36 hours to soak the shock of the Afghanistan defeat and muster the wits to compete against the most competent side of the tournament. The middle order has been as brittle as the colourful shacks in the Caribbean islands during a cyclone. Tim David and Matthew Wade have collected only 72 runs between them; captain Mitchell Marsh has eked out only 88 runs in six outings.

TRYST WITH TRAVIS

Seamers — left-armers from over the stumps and right-handers from around — have exploited Travis Head's weakness against good and fuller length balls seaming away from him. Perhaps something India can. Here are a few instances:

BOWLED BY NAVEEN-UL-HAQ: The ball from the right-hander around the stumps swung into him. Head shaped for the waft over the bowler's head. But he could not reach the pitch of the ball; more crucially he did not account for the marginal away seam movement. A combination of both beat his swipe.

BOWLED BY JOFRA ARCHER: This time, he moved away from the stumps to the leg-side, as he had the previous ball, cleared his front leg and looked to launch the ball over covers. But the off-cutter from England quick gripped off the surface, cut away from him, beat him with the lack of pace and the ball clattered the stumps.

BOWLED BY MITCHELL STARC: It was the dream ball during SRH vs KKR in the IPL from a left-handed seamer to a left-handed batsman. The ball curved in the air, luring him to drive down the ground, before bending away (this was swing) to blast the stump. Yet again, his non-existent front-foot stride beautified the ball. Head realised he had made a mess of his judgment, but there was no wriggle room.



BOWLED ARSHDEEP SINGH: Like the Starc ball in the IPL qualifier, it curved into him, swung away and skidded to hit the stumps. But as beautiful as the ball was, his feet were static, and he reached out for the ball with just his hands. This was an instance when he was not looking to attack and still got bowled.

CDHAWAN B: ARSHDEEP: This time, he tried to smack the bowler out of the park. The ball was full and wide, but Arshdeep's away swing did the trick. He lost his shape, failed to get half a decent connection and sliced the ball a little behind mid-off. Again, the same old flaws,

Openers David Warner and Head (their top two run-getters), blasters Marcus Stoinis and Glenn Maxwell have shouldered much of their batting burden. Surges of inspiration have been rare and collective performances rarer.

On a similar vein, bowlers have struggled to put on a concerted show. Pat Cummins's hat-tricks in successive games have masked the frugal returns of Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood (three wickets each, economy rates of 7.88 and 6.55, respectively). Part-timers Glenn Maxwell and Stoinis have often chimed in with wickets, but Cummins and Adam Zampa have often felt isolated. Sloppy fielding and catching have confounded the audience

as much as the adversaries. The usual spark has gone AWOL.

But for all their failings, Rohit Sharma and Co would not be conceited in believing that they could just turn up and send them packing home. Rather, they are all too familiar with the steel and defiance of Australians, the match-winners in the midst, and of course Head. Despite his flaws (and many others), he has prospered, which should warn forewarn India's seamers. They could relive his away-seamer nightmare, just as Head could make India rekindle their own old nightmares too. This sets up a suspenseful contest, unexpected though it was. Thanks largely to Afghanistan.

Sreeja does the double; wins singles, doubles WTT titles

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JUNE 23



SREEJA AKULA created history at the WTT Contender in Lagos on Sunday by becoming the first Indian to clinch a singles title at Contender level. Impressively, she also

won the women's doubles title, becoming the first Indian to win two titles at the same event at this level of World Table Tennis events.

With her singles triumph, Sreeja is set to reach a career-high ranking of World No. 25, becoming the highest-ranked Indian, leapfrogging Manika Batra, who has been India's top female paddler for the majority of the last few years. Sreeja had already once gone past Batra earlier this year.

It was also the first time that India won a men's doubles title after the Surat duo of Harmeet Desai and Manav Thakkar beat local favourites Azeez Solanke and Olajide Omotayo 3-0 (11-8, 11-9, 11-8).

In the first final of the day, Sreeja combined with her Paris Olympics teammate Archana Kamath to thrash compatriots Diya Chitale and Yashaswini Ghorpade 3-0 (11-9, 11-6, 12-10) in the women's doubles final.

You could sense that Sreeja was in a hurry to finish off the doubles final knowing that she had to a tricky women's singles final to play next. But against Ding Yijie, her 16-year-old Chinese opponent who is ranked outside the top 500, Sreeja fought back from a game down to absolutely dominate the match and clinch the title with a 4-1 win (10-12, 11-9, 11-6, 11-8, 11-6).

Paris-bound Sreeja has been in phenomenal form in both singles and doubles. In singles, her 5-game win over Sutirtha Mukherjee in which she calmly saved three match points in the deciding game was mighty impressive. Her doubles partnership with Archana is important since they will most likely be the doubles pairing at the Paris Olympics in the women's team event. It's the first time India have qualified for the men and women's team events at the Olympics and this WTT tournament was part of their preparation camp under recently-appointed head coach Massimo Costantini.

BRIEFLY

Mandhana's 90 leads India to 6-wicket win

Bengaluru: Smriti Mandhana waltzed to a characteristically elegant 90 to form the crux of India's six-wicket win in the third and final women's ODI against South Africa, marking their 3-0 series clean sweep here on Sunday. Mandhana, whose innings came off 83 balls (11x4), had efficient support casts in Shafali Verma (25), Priya Punia (28) and Harmanpreet Kaur (42, 48b, 2x4) as India went past the target of 216 without exerting themselves much. The hosts made 220 for four in 40.4 overs, after South Africa were restricted to an underwhelming 215 for eight despite skipper Laura Wolvaardt's solid 61 (57b, 7x4). Though she failed to make a third hundred on the bounce, the knock underlined the way Mandhana dominated this ODI series, scoring 343 runs at an average of 114.33. **PTI BRIEF SCORES:** South Africa 215/8 in 50 overs (Laura Wolvaardt 61, Tazmin Brits 38; Arundhati Reddy 2/36, Deepti Sharma 2/27) lost to India 220/4 in 40.4 overs (Smriti Mandhana 90, Harmanpreet Kaur 42) by 6 wickets

NADA suspends Bajrang again

New Delhi: The National Anti-Doping Agency 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. NADA had on April 23 suspended the Tokyo Games bronze medallist wrestler for refusal to give his urine sample for dope testing during the selection trials held in Sonapat on March 10. The sport's global governing body United Wrestling World (UWW) had also suspended him. Bajrang had appealed against the provisional suspension and the ADPP had revoked it on May 31 till NADA issues the notice of charge. Swinging into action, NADA on Sunday served the notice to the wrestler. "This serves as a formal notice that you are being charged with the violation of Article 2.3 of the National Anti-Doping Rules, 2021 and now you are provisionally suspended," said NADA's communication to Bajrang. Bajrang has time till July 11 to request for a hearing and accept the charge. **PTI**

De Bruyne, Belgium get Euro campaign on track

SCORELINE	
Belgium	Romania
2	0
Y Tielemans 2'	
KD Bruyne 80'	

ASSOCIATED PRESS & REUTERS
JUNE 23

IN FRONT OF Belgium's royal family, King Kev sealed the win.

Belgium shook off the shock of losing to Slovakia in its opening game of the European Championship by beating Romania 2-0 on Saturday.

Kevin De Bruyne's second-half goal completed the win after Youri Tielemans scored in the second minute at Cologne Stadium.

Watching on were Belgium's King Philippe and Queen Mathilde.

"We knew what we needed to do. We needed to win otherwise we were going home," De Bruyne said. "I will do everything I can to keep the lads on track." This was just what Belgium needed after the Slovakia stunner, which raised the prospect of another early exit from a major tournament after being eliminated at the group stage of the 2022 World Cup.

Tielemans gave the No. 3-ranked team in the world a flying start with a goal from the edge of the area. De Bruyne converted direct from Belgium goalkeeper Koen Casteels' long kick in the 80th.

The result means all four teams in Group E have three points and there is all to play for in the final round of games on Wednesday, when Belgium plays Ukraine and Romania takes on Slovakia.

"I'm very relieved we won the game. It was very important to get the three points," Belgium coach Domenico Tedesco said.

While Belgium won, there was more frustration for Romelu Lukaku, who had a third goal ruled out by VAR at these Euros.

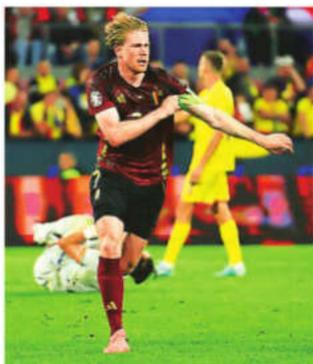
Still, he was at the center of his team's great start when laying the ball off for Tielemans to drive in low from the edge of the box.

Belgium has been criticized for failing to live up to expectations in the past, and its opening defeat would not have helped the confidence among the squad going into Saturday's game.

Tielemans' goal seemed to lift the pressure, and Belgium ruled the rest of the half with 67% of possession. Lukaku thought he scored after the break, but VAR said he strayed offside before firing past Romania keeper Florin Nita.

The longer the game went on without Belgium scoring a second, the more the tension rose.

Dennis Man could have evened the score



Kevin de Bruyne celebrates after scoring Belgium's second goal. Reuters

when running through on goal, but was denied by Casteels. The keeper then turned provider with a long punt upfield, which De Bruyne raced on to and fired home.

Tedesco thought his team took too long to seal the win.

"Scoring four or five goals tonight was possible," he said. "It is important to create chances, but you have to kill the game earlier for sure." Under former Belgium coach Roberto Martinez, Portugal advanced to the knockout phase after a 3-0 win against Turkey in Group F. Georgia picked up its first ever point at a major tournament after a drawing the Czech Republic 1-1 and still has hopes of advancing.

De Bruyne not ready to retire

For a brief moment on Saturday, Belgian maestro Kevin De Bruyne looked like he was about to drop a bombshell on his country when he started talking about leaving the national team in good shape for when he moves on.

It would have been terrible timing for De Bruyne to announce he was hanging up his international boots after an astonishing performance in their 2-0 win over Romania, when he netted his 28th goal for Belgium and was instrumental in keeping their Euro 2024 hopes alive.

"When I leave the team it will be up to them to be left to their own devices," said the Belgian captain, who was player of the match.

After a few moments of puzzlement among media, De Bruyne quickly clarified.

"I was more thinking about the fact that there are lots of young lads coming in," he said.

"I've been playing for this team for the past 10 years now and I've got knowledge to share with them but I haven't really thought about whether it's the end of the road for me here.

"I don't really like thinking about when I'm going to be retiring or my future," he added.

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