

DDA VC cites inquiry which refers to 'L-G role' in tree felling case

In affidavit to Supreme Court, DDA VC points to mail which DDA engineer had earlier termed as 'manipulated'

MALLICA JOSHI & JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

TEN DAYS AFTER a Delhi Development Authority (DDA) engineer submitted a deposition in the Supreme Court stating that an email sent from his account allegedly implicating the L-G for felling of trees in the Southern Ridge was "manipulated... and changed with malicious intent", DDA Vice Chairman Subhashish Panda wrote to the L-G's Principal Secretary pointing out that an inquiry had revealed that an email by the engineer had mentioned

that the HLG (Honourable Lieutenant-Governor) had directed the clearing of trees.

A fresh affidavit filed by DDA in the Supreme Court on Wednesday includes a letter written on June 28, 2024, by Panda to Ashish Kundra, Principal Secretary to the L-G, which states: "In compliance of the... (Supreme Court) order an inquiry has been instituted by me by constituting a three-member committee of senior officials of DDA to identify the person(s) who entrusted the job of felling of trees to the contractor without waiting for permission from the honourable Supreme Court."

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VIZHINJAM WELCOMES FIRST MOTHERSHIP

The Vizhinjam International Seaport Limited (VISL) in Thiruvananthapuram, India's first deepwater trans-shipment port, received its first mothership, *MV San Fernando*, on Thursday. The 300-metre-long Marshall Islands-flagged ship berthed at VISL after arriving from Xiamen in China. PTI

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'SAFE HOUSES, URBAN DENS' Citing 'Naxalism in urban areas', Maharashtra Govt tables Bill

Jail term even if not a member of 'unlawful organisation' but 'aids' it

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI, JULY 11

STATING THAT the "menace of Naxalism" is "increasing in urban areas... through Naxal frontal organisations", the Maharashtra government on Thursday tabled the Maharashtra Special Public Security Bill, 2024, which proposes jail term even if a person is "not... a member of an unlawful organisation", but "contributes/receives/solicits any contribution or aid" or "harbours" a member.

The Bill grants the state the authority to declare an organisation as "unlawful" — a decision which can be reviewed by an advisory board set up by the state government. Citing "safe houses and urban dens of the Maoist network" in Maharashtra, it says such groups seek to "propagate their ideology of armed rebellion against the constitutional mandate."

The Bill defines an "unlawful activity" as one which constitutes a danger or menace to public order, peace and tranquility; interferes with maintenance of public order; "administration of law or its established institutions and personnel"; designed to show criminal force to any public ser-

EXPLAINED The key provisions

- 3-YEAR JAIL TERM,** Rs 3 lakh fine for member of an 'unlawful organisation'.
- 2-YEAR JAIL TERM,** Rs 2 lakh fine even if not a member, but "contributes/receives/solicits any contribution or aid" or "harbours" a member.
- 3-YEAR JAIL TERM,** Rs 3 lakh fine if a person "manages/assists in management" such an organisation or "promotes/assists in promoting" its meeting or any member.
- 7-YEAR JAIL TERM,** Rs 5 lakh fine if a person commits/abets/attempts/plans to commit "any unlawful activity" of such an organisation.

vant; indulging in or propagating acts of violence, vandalism, use of firearms, explosives or disrupting communications by rail, road, air or water; "encouraging or preaching disobedience to established law and its institutions"; collecting money or goods to carry out unlawful activities.

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In midnight visit, J&K cops detain HC Bar Association's chairman

Nazir Ahmad Ronga booked under PSA, says family

BASHAARAT MASOOD
SRINAGAR, JULY 11

THE JAMMU and Kashmir police have detained the chairman of the J&K High Court Bar Association Nazir Ahmad Ronga following a midnight visit to his home in Srinagar, his son said on Thursday.

The family claims they were informed in the morning that advocate Ronga has been booked under the Public Safety Act (PSA).

Ronga's son Umair Ronga, also an advocate at the Srinagar High Court, first posted online, "My father, advocate N A Ronga, has just been arrested in a deeply disturbing turn of events. At 1.10 am, a contingent of J&K Police arrived at our home without any arrest warrant, merely stating, 'It's an order from above (upper order hai)'. We are left in a state of shock and profound distress. We can only hope this is not another instance of the PSA being misused to intimidate the members of the Bar Association."

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Umair said, "This morning, when he was being taken for a medical check-up, police told us he has been booked under the PSA. We were told that he would

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PM'S MEETING WITH ECONOMISTS

Budget focus likely on jobs, rural economy and manufacturing

AANCHAL MAGAZINE
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

A RENEWED THRUST on jobs, alongside a concerted push to manufacturing and rural businesses, were the key issues flagged by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a meeting with economists on Thursday.

With less than a fortnight for the presentation of the Union Budget 2024-25 on July 23, the Prime Minister is learnt to have also touched upon the complexities of Centre-state relations, particularly with the Centre funding many programmes or schemes, and states not assum-



PM Narendra Modi and Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman at a meeting with economists in Delhi. ANI

ing full accountability over implementing these on the ground.

The meeting was held in the NITI Aayog office with Finance

Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Principal Secretary P K Mishra also present.

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After three shocks, 16.45 lakh jobs lost in informal sector over 7 yrs

AANCHAL MAGAZINE
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

THE NUMBER OF workers employed in the informal sector in 2022-23 has dropped by 16.45 lakh or about 1.5 per cent to 10.96 crore compared to 11.13 crore in 2015-16, according to the latest Annual Survey of Unincorporated Enterprises (ASUSE) for 2021-22 and 2022-23 released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

The data available for the first time since 2015-16, provides an understanding of the impact of the three major exogenous shocks viz., demonetisation in

	2022-23		2015-16	
	Number of entities	Number of workers	Number of entities	Number of workers
Uttar Pradesh	89.94 lakh	1.57 crore	89.99 lakh	1.65 crore
West Bengal	78.31 lakh	1.05 crore	88.68 lakh	1.36 crore
Maharashtra	60.97 lakh	1.16 crore	47.79 lakh	0.91 crore
Tamil Nadu	42.29 lakh	0.85 crore	49.48 lakh	0.97 crore
Bihar	37.01 lakh	0.59 crore	34.46 lakh	0.53 crore
All-India	6.50 crore	10.96 crore	6.34 crore	11.13 crore

November 2016, rollout of the Goods and Service Tax in July 2017, and the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, on the growth of unincorporated enter-

prises and the employment in these enterprises.

The ASUSE for 2021-22 and 2022-23 also showed that the

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UGC-NET row: JNU may go back to own entrance exam for PhD

VIDHEESHA KUNTAMALLA
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU University (JNU) has started discussions on going back to the old system of conducting its own entrance examination for PhD admissions. This move comes in the wake of the recent cancellation of the University Grants Commission-National Eligibility Test (UGC-NET) a day after it was held, following questions over its integrity.

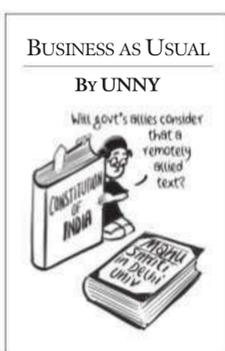
Confirming this, JNU Vice Chancellor Santishree D Pandit said: "We have begun the process and are taking the opinion of all stakeholders."

The UGC-NET is a crucial examination for entry-level teaching jobs and PhD admissions in universities.

Sources told *The Indian Express* that Pandit initiated the move on July 3 and it may take up to eight weeks to reach a decision. A source said: "JNU is not abandoning UGC-NET. Rather, it is considering holding its own PhD entrance exams, as many other Central universities do."

It was only in April that JNU had announced it would take the UGC-NET scores into account for PhD admissions, in line with the National Education Policy 2020, instead of the National Testing Agency (NTA) entrance test. The NTA was given the charge of conducting computer-based tests for PhD admissions three years ago, with the change seeing

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GOVT & POLITICS

J&K OVERDRIVE: FOREST SEARCHES, INTERSTATE MEET AND DETENTIONS P 6

Three acres 'gifted' to Karnataka CM's wife under scanner, his poll affidavits show mismatch

JOHNSON T A
BENGALURU, JULY 11

ASSET AFFIDAVITS filed by Karnataka Chief Minister M Siddaramaiah across the past three assembly polls contain several inconsistencies in submissions regarding the ownership of a 3.16-acre parcel of "agricultural land" in Mysore that was "gifted" to his wife 14 years ago, according to an analysis of official documents by *The Indian Express*.

This land parcel, which was gifted to the Chief Minister's wife B M Parvati Siddaramaiah in 2010 by her brother, is also at the

LAND IN FOCUS

- 2010:** Siddaramaiah's wife gets 3.16 acres in village on Mysore outskirts as gift from brother
- 2013:** No mention of this land in Siddaramaiah's poll affidavit
- 2018:** Ownership listed in poll affidavit, land valued at Rs 25 lakh
- 2023:** Poll affidavit shows plots allotted by govt inside Mysore in exchange for the village land now valued at Rs 8.33 crore
- 2024:** Opp says land exchange illegal; Siddaramaiah says ready to return plots, 'give Rs 62 crore compensation'

centre of a political storm in the state with the BJP calling for protests in Mysore, the home dis-

trict of Siddaramaiah, on July 12. The BJP and JD(S) have

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SMARTER STEELS BRIGHTER FUTURES

Raees defamation case: Relief for SRK as HC sets aside lower court order

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE AHMEDABAD, JULY 11

THE GUJARAT High Court Wednesday set aside a lower court's order permitting the legal heirs of deceased gangster Abdul Latif to join as plaintiffs in a defamation suit that sought damages up to ₹101 crore from actor Shah Rukh Khan and his production company Red Chillies Entertainment, among others.

The defamation suit was filed by Latif's son Mushtaq Sheikh in April 2016 following the release of the trailer for Raees, purportedly based on the gangster's life. Sheikh died in 2020, and a court in Ahmedabad in 2022 permitted his widow and two daughters to join as plaintiffs in the suit.

Advocate Salil Thakore, representing Khan and others, told the HC that the right to sue in a suit seeking damages for defamation "does not survive in favour of the heirs of the deceased". He said "the cause of action is personal in nature and remains alive till plaintiff", who claims to have been defamed, is alive and does not pass on to person's legal heirs.

The court of Justice J C Doshi held that the trial court had committed "serious jurisdictional error" in allowing the heirs to join the defamation suit as party. Setting aside the trial court's order, it directed the trial court to pass an order for the abatement of the civil suit — as the "right to sue does not survive any longer" — within three days of receipt of the HC order.

Manipur govt distributes benefits worth ₹300 crore to 4 lakh people

Imphal: Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh Thursday announced a special package for startups that employ internally displaced persons as he distributed benefits of to around ₹300 crore to over four lakh people.

Besides this, several new schemes including Product Catalogue, CM Yarn Scheme (including Muga Silk buyback), Revised Comic Textbook, and Sportspersons Livelihood Guarantee Scheme, were also declared. Singh highlighted various welfare initiatives by the state government towards bringing inclusive development.

He said initiatives like Go to Hills, Go to Village, Chief Minister-gi Hakshelgi Tengbang (Health Scheme), Start-up Manipur, Widows Pension Scheme and others have been taken up to bring equal development for both valley and hills.

He said the ongoing ethnic conflict and the recent natural calamities in the state have hindered development.

On the conflict, the chief minister reiterated that the state's territorial integrity shall remain intact.

Offence of cruelty by husband not applicable in live-in relationships: HC

Thiruvananthapuram: The penal offence of cruelty against a woman by her husband or his relatives will not be applicable when a couple is in a live-in relationship, according to a recent ruling by the Kerala High Court.

The bench of Justice A Badharuddeen on July 8 quashed the proceedings initiated against a person by a court at Koyilandy in Kozhikode on charges of harassing his live-in partner.

Police had registered the case against the petitioner following a complaint from his live-in partner that she was mentally and physically harassed at his house during their live-in relationship for a few months in 2023.

Police submitted a final report in the magistrate court saying that he should be prosecuted for the offence under Section 498 A of the IPC. The petitioner argued that his relationship with the de facto complainant woman was a live-in relationship and there is no legal marriage in between them. Accordingly, it is submitted that the offence punishable under Section 498(A) of the IPC would not attract the facts of the case.

FROM PAGE ONE Maharashtra Govt tables Bill

FULL REPORTSON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

All offences under this law will be cognizable and non-bailable, and will be investigated by a police officer not below the rank of a Sub-Inspector, says the Bill.

Specifying the punishment for offences, the Bill states:

■ "Whoever is a member of an unlawful organisation or takes part in meetings or activities of any such organisation or contributes or receives or solicits any contribution for the purpose of any such organisation, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years and shall also be liable to fine up to Rs 3 lakh."

■ "Whoever, not being a member of an unlawful organisation in any manner, contributes or receives or solicits any contribution or aid for such organisation or harbours any member of such organisation, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years and shall also be liable to fine up to Rs 2 lakh."

■ "Whoever manages or assists in the management of an unlawful organisation or promotes or assists in promoting a meeting of any such organisation or any member thereof or in any way indulges in any unlawful activity of such organisation in any manner or through whatever medium or device, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years and shall also be liable to fine up to Rs 3 lakh."

■ "Whoever commits or abets or attempts to commit or plans to commit any unlawful activity of such unlawful organisation shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to seven years and also be liable to fine upto Rs 5 lakh."

According to the Bill, an advisory board will be set up comprising three persons "who are or

have been or qualified to be appointed as judge of the high court". Within six weeks of declaring an organisation as unlawful, the government will have to make a reference to the board, which will then have to submit a report within three months after going through the evidence placed before it and hearing the persons involved in the organisation. If the board fails to find sufficient cause for forming an organisation as unlawful, the government will revoke the notification.

If an organisation has been declared as unlawful, the District Magistrate or Commissioner of Police can notify and "take possession of" any place "used for its activities". This can include movable property "including moneys, securities or other assets found therein," it says.

It adds that "where the government is satisfied after such enquiry as it may think fit, that any moneys, securities or other assets are being used or intended to be used for the purpose of an unlawful organisation, the government may... declare such moneys, securities or other assets... to be forfeited to the government."

A revision petition against the government's action can be filed with the high court, it says.

"The menace of Naxalism is not only limited to remote areas of the Naxal-affected states, but its presence is increasing in the urban areas also through the Naxal front organisations. The spread of active front organisations of Naxal groups gives constant and effective support in terms of logistics and safe refuge to their armed cadres," states the Bill's "statement of objects and reasons".

"The seized literature of Naxals shows 'safe houses' and 'urban dens' of the Maoist network in the cities of the state of Maharashtra.

The activities of Naxal organisations or similar organisations through their united front are creating unrest among common masses to propagate their ideology of armed rebellion against the constitutional mandate and disrupts public order," it adds. Saying that such organisations need to be controlled by effective legal means, it adds that the "the existing laws are ineffective and inadequate to tackle this menace of Naxalism".

It says the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has issued directions, from time to time, for "implementation mechanism for countering activities of such organisations in urban areas and chalking of flow funds to them". In its guidelines on "security related expenditure" to Maoist-hit states, the MHA has advised enactment of legislation by the states to tackle "unlawful activities" of such organisations, it adds.

"The states of Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha have enacted the Public Security Acts for more effective prevention of unlawful activities of such organisations and banned 48 front organisations," it says, adding that in the absence of such a law in Maharashtra, such organisations are "active" in the state.

In November last year, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, who holds the Home portfolio, had said the state government was studying similar laws in other states.

The Opposition, meanwhile, termed it as a "draconian" measure. "This is nothing but to muzzle protests... The government wanted to present and pass this Bill today itself. We opposed it and requested the Speaker not to push it through. We will oppose the Bill vehemently," said former CM and Congress MLA Prithviraj Chavan.

3 acres 'gifted' to Karnataka CM wife under scanner

questioned the land's subsequent transfer in 2021 to the state under a controversial "50:50" alternate site scheme in exchange for 14 housing plots developed by the Mysore Urban Development Authority (MUDA).

Siddaramaiah has dismissed the Opposition's allegations, pointing out that the land exchange took place when the BJP was in power, and that his Congress government has put the scheme on hold. He also said he was ready to return the plots in Mysore if compensation of Rs 62 crore at market rate was paid for his wife's land acquired by MUDA.

The Indian Express, meanwhile, compared the affidavits filed by Siddaramaiah ahead of the Assembly polls in 2013, 2018 and 2023 with publicly available land records and found a mismatch with regard to the 3.16-acre agriculture land under survey number 464 in Kesare village of Kasaba Hobli on the outskirts of Mysore. Consider this:

■ 2013: The poll affidavit filed by Siddaramaiah, three years after the land was received as a gift by his wife, indicates no agricultural land ownership by her during the period. But land records of Kesare village show that a mutation record number 60 was created on October 20, 2010, for a gift deed for 3.16 acres from B M Mallikarjunaswamy to his sister B M Parvati, the wife of Siddaramaiah.

■ 2018: Siddaramaiah's affidavit mentions his wife's ownership of the land. "Gift received from my brother B M Mallikarjunaswamy, Dt 20-10-2010," says the column for agricultural land owned by the CM's spouse. The value of the land is estimated at Rs 25 lakh in the affidavit.

■ 2023: The affidavit shows allotment of 37,190.09 sq ft of land by MUDA in exchange for the

land in the column for non-agricultural land held by Siddaramaiah's spouse in April 2023. "Located at Vijayanagar, Mysore. Site No 5, 25, 331, 332, 213, 214, 215, 216, 10855, 11189, 5085, 12065, 12068, 5108, 37,190.09 sq ft. Allotted from MUDA Mysore against acquisition of agricultural land," says the affidavit. The cost of the land at the time of purchase is indicated as Rs 15,130 and its value estimated at Rs 8,33,35,104 (Rs 8.33 crore) in April 2023.

In a final twist, the state's Record for Rights, Tenancy and Crops still shows the 3.16 acres in the name of B M Parvati Siddaramaiah for the 2023-24 period. Asked why land records data still show the land in the name of Siddaramaiah's wife, the CM's press secretary KV Prabhakar said, "It has to be examined."

Some of these inconsistencies are at the centre of a complaint filed by Bengaluru-based activist J Abraham with the Chief Electoral Officer on Wednesday, alleging that Siddaramaiah had filed a "false affidavit" ahead of the 2013 state polls.

The Opposition parties have also questioned the Chief Minister's claim of Rs 62 crore in compensation for the land when its value was declared as only Rs 25 lakh in the 2018 poll affidavit.

Apart from discrepancies between the poll affidavits and land records, there are allegations of wrongdoing in the manner in which the land was acquired by the Chief Minister's brother-in-law in 2004 before it was gifted in 2010. In this regard, a police complaint filed by a Mysore-based activist S Krishna has been referred to the state urban development department which is conducting an inquiry into MUDA's site allotment.

The complaint alleges the CM and other influential persons cre-

ated false documents and defrauded MUDA by illegally acquiring plots worth crores. It also alleges that records in the 2004-2005 period for the 3.16 acres were fabricated to suggest it was originally bought by the CM's wife's brother from a Dalit farmer — though the land had already been acquired in 1992 by MUDA for sites. An aide of the Karnataka CM dismissed the complaint as "frivolous".

The Opposition, however, has questioned the CM's claims. "The election affidavit of the CM in 2013 does not mention the acquisition of the 3.16 acres. It is a violation of the election code of conduct and violation of Representation of People Act," state BJP president B Y Vijayendra said on Wednesday. "This scam cannot be covered up like other previous scams," said Union Minister and JD(S) leader H D Kumaraswamy.

Following several other complaints related to the MUDA scheme, the state government has ordered an inquiry by an IAS officer into the functioning of the 50:50 alternate site scheme and put on hold all allotments under it. On Thursday, responding to the allegations and the activist's complaint to the poll officer, Siddaramaiah said, "If the election commission issues a notice (on the false affidavit complaint), I will reply as per the law. These allegations are being made for political reasons. They are jealous that Siddaramaiah, a backward class man, has become the CM for the second time."

He said, "They (MUDA) have illegally taken over our land and given alternate sites as compensation. Since we do not want illegalities in MUDA, we have ordered an inquiry and stopped the scheme (50:50 scheme). The scheme has been misused by real estate middlemen at the cost of original land losers."

DDA VC cites inquiry which refers to 'L-G role'

In the said enquiry, it has been revealed that Sh Manoj Yadav SMD 5, DDA had given directions to the contractors for felling of the said trees vide an email dated 14-02-2014 at 6.04 pm. In the said email, he has mentioned that the HLG (Honourable L-G) had visited CAPFIMS road on 3-02-2014 and directed to clear the trees coming in the ROW (right of way)."

Yadav is the Executive Engineer with the DDA who in his deposition on June 7, 2024, said, "The email dated February 14 produced by the agency (which was contracted the work) is manipulated as the contents of email sent to CE and SE dated February 14 at 5.48 hours has been changed with malicious motives. The agency in collusion with some unknown staff got the email forwarded to

them at 6.03 pm."

When The Indian Express asked DDA Vice Chairman Panda why did he refer to the email which mentioned "the HLG had visited CAPFIMS road on 03-02-2024 and directed to clear the trees" despite the DDA engineer's deposition to the Supreme Court 10 days earlier, he said, "I will not comment on this matter since it is sub judice."

Responding to Panda's letter, Kundra wrote back, "This office does not maintain record of discussions of field visits of Hon'ble L.G. This was a multi-agency visit to CAPFIMS undertaken at the best of MHA." He also requested the Chief Secretary (who was present during the visit) to submit a summary of the decisions/ suggestions taken that day.

The matter relates to the al-

leged illegal cutting of close to 1,100 trees in Chhatarpur area in South Delhi for widening the road leading to the Central Armed Police Forces Institute of Medical Sciences (CAPFIMS), even as a final permission to carry out the action was not taken from the Supreme Court.

A contempt petition was filed by activists in the Supreme Court bringing to notice the alleged tree cutting in the area. During the course of DDA's investigation, it was also revealed that there was a preliminary agreement to cut only 422 trees but several more were hacked.

The court had, on May 16, had asked that an enquiry be instituted into who ordered the trees to be cut. Panda refers to the committee's report in his letter to the L-G's Principal Secretary Kundra.

Budget focus likely on jobs, rural economy, manufacturing

About 20 economists and experts including Arvind Virmani, Surjit Bhalla, Amita Batra, Prachi Mishra, S Mahendra Dev and Ashok Gulati spoke for five minutes each. NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Suman Bery and NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam also participated.

"The key agenda was the goal of becoming a developed nation by 2047, along with the need to step up job creation. Deliberations mostly focused on the measures that can be taken in the manufacturing, agriculture and rural sectors to move towards that goal," a person in the know said.

The rural economy, which is already being closely watched for stagnant wage trends and tepid consumption demand, was discussed in detail, with economists flagging concerns about agricultural growth, highlighting lack of employment in rural areas and sluggish credit growth despite

small-ticket loans extended under Mudra scheme to boost output.

Later in the evening, Prime Minister Modi posted on X: "Earlier today, interacted with eminent economists and heard their insightful views on issues pertaining to furthering growth." Prime Minister Modi is understood to have dwelt upon the employment debate, and said numbers may not be giving the full picture. There was an issue with dignity of labour or 'shram ki pratishtha', he is learnt to have said.

The manufacturing sector too was discussed in detail, sources said. The view was that India should be manufacturing many more things and how manufacturing will play a crucial role not only in achieving a higher rate of economic growth but also in achieving the strategic goal of getting into global supply chains. Concerns over the textiles sector,

where India was once a world leader, were also brought up in the meeting, they said.

Taxation rates also featured in the discussions between the economists and the Prime Minister. "The issue of multiple slabs under GST (Goods and Services Tax) was discussed in the meeting. It was noted that there is a need to reduce the multiplicity of rates," the person said.

Flagging consumption trends has been seen as a concern among policymakers as its revival is being seen as crucial to boosting demand, which in turn is central to restarting an across-the-board investment cycle, especially rekindling private capital expenditure in consumer-focused sectors.

Pre-budget internal discussions, as The Indian Express has reported earlier, are learnt to have debated the need to rationalise GST rates as well as direct tax rates for lower-income groups.

J&K cops detain HC Bar Association's chairman

be lodged in a jail in Jammu." The PSA allows the government to detain a person without trial for up to one year.

Umair said the family has not been informed about the grounds of detention so far. The J&K police did not comment on the detention.

Reacting to the development, former CM and PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti posted online, "The cycle of violence continues unabated in J&K that too in areas which rarely witnessed militancy. Everyday soldiers are being martyred. GO hasn't only failed to end militancy but is venting its frustration by launching a vicious crackdown on helpless Kashmiris. Nazir Ronga is the latest victim of its oppressive actions."

Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq condemned the arrest of the advocate, who is also part of Mirwaiz's Awami Action Committee. "Nazir sahab is a senior member of AAC and his arrest has caused great anguish and concern to him and the party members," Mirwaiz said. "To arrest him in such a manner in the middle of night even without a warrant is highly regrettable."

Ronga, who has been the president of the High Court Bar Association several times, has been its chairman since 2020, when the government prevented the association from conducting its annual elections. The last elections were conducted in 2018 and were due in September 2019, but couldn't be held because of abro-

gation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status and the subsequent curfew.

When it announced its elections in 2020, the government said the Bar's constitution, which termed Kashmir as a disputed region, was not in consonance with the Constitution of India.

Ronga's arrest came days after the Election Committee of the Bar Association again set the ball rolling for its elections. While the committee aimed to complete the elections before July 31, the government again barred it from conducting the polls.

In a recent letter, the Bar, which has around 3,000 members, indicated that it had removed the contentious paragraph from its constitution.

JNU may hold own exams for PhD

complaints by teachers and students. The abrupt cancellation of the June 2024 NET has now prompted a reevaluation on this.

The JNU Teachers' Association has called the possibility of a return to the old system "a vindication of their long-standing position". In a statement, the association said: "We welcome the decisions taken in the meeting of the Vice Chancellor and Deans of Schools on 3 July, 2024, as well as to refer the matter to the faculty of Schools/Centres for their opinions."

It added that the association's position has consistently been that "JNU should retain institutional control over the university's own entrance examinations and their academic content." That the then JNU Vice chancellor (M Jagadeesh Kumar) autocratically imposed the decision to cede all

responsibilities regarding the conduct of these examinations to the NTA, without even a memorandum of understanding having been signed, has been a well-established fact. This loss of autonomy was accompanied by a significant increase in the costs of conducting the examinations..."

For its UG admissions to certain language programmes and its BSc-MSc Integrated Programme in Ayurveda Biology, the Central varsity uses the CUET score. These admissions are also likely to face disruption this time due to the delay by the NTA in announcing the CUET results.

The government had announced cancellation of the UGC-NET exam on June 19, following inputs from the Home Ministry that "the integrity of the examination may have been compromised".

After three shocks, 16.45 lakh jobs lost in informal sector over 7 yrs

number of unincorporated enterprises increased by 16.56 lakh from 6.50 crore in 2022-23 from 6.33 crore in 2015-16.

Much of the brunt of the three shocks of demonetisation — sudden withdrawal of cash from the system, GST — regulatory compliances and inclusion in the tax net, and Covid-19 that prompted the government to impose a national lockdown, was borne by the informal sector.

Among the top ten states that account for nearly three quarters of the informal sector workers employed in India, five states — Maharashtra, Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha — recorded an increase in the informal employment between 2015-16 and 2022-23. On the other hand, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh registered a decline in the number of informal sector workers during the same period, the survey showed. These

five states account for 42 per cent of all informal workers.

While 16 states/UTs out of 34 states/UTs (J&K and Ladakh don't have comparable figures) recorded a decline in informal sector workers in 2022-23 in comparison with the previous data of National Sample Survey's 73rd round on Unincorporated Enterprises for 2015-16, the share of informal sector workers increased in most states in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic, an indication of economic distress and a possible shift from formal to informal sector.

Uttar Pradesh recorded a decline in informal sector workers to 1.57 crore in 2022-23 from 1.65 crore in 2015-16, but registered an increase from the level of 1.30 crore in 2021-22. West Bengal also saw a decline in informal sector workers to 1.05 crore in 2022-23 from 1.35 crore in 2015-16, but the number increased marginally from 1.02 crore in 2021-22.

Maharashtra, however, recorded an increase in informal sector workers throughout this seven-year period rising to 1.15 crore in 2022-23 from 91.23 lakh in 2015-16 and 98.81 lakh in 2021-22. MP, Gujarat and Odisha, which feature among the top 10 states for informal sector employment also recorded an increase in workers in 2022-23 compared with 2015-16.

Bihar, which is among the largest source of migrant workers in the country, stood out among other states by recording a decline in informal sector workers during 2015-16 and 2021-22, but recording a sharp increase in 2022-23 to surpass the pre-pandemic level of informal employment. In numbers, Bihar recorded a decrease in informal sector workers to 43.22 lakh in 2021-22 from 53.07 lakh workers in 2015-16, only to reverse the trend to mark a sharp increase of informal sector workers to 58.95 lakh in 2022-23, higher

than the level seen in 2015-16.

For informal sector output in value added terms of Gross Value Added, India Ratings in a note said the real GVA of unincorporated sector enterprises (USE) grew by 6.9 per cent in 2022-23, which was still lower than the pre-pandemic level. "Although the real GVA of USE grew 6.9% YoY in 2022-23, it was still 1.6% lower than the levels attained in 2015-16. A long-term view at the real GVA of USE gives a better picture of the deleterious impact of the shocks on the sector. While the real GVA of USE had grown at a CAGR (compounded annual growth rate) of 7.4% between 2010-11 and 2015-16, its CAGR contracted by 0.2% between 2015-16 and 2022-23," Paras Jasrai, Senior Analyst, India Ratings said.

As far as the number of unincorporated enterprises is concerned, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Maharashtra accounted for the highest share of

such informal sector enterprises in both rural and urban areas in 2022-23.

State Bank of India in its research report, however, noted that the KLEMS data by the Reserve Bank of India and the ASUSE employment numbers broadly match and show around 8.9 crore employment in industry and services for the nine-year period during FY14-FY23.

The unorganised sector contributes over 44 per cent to the country's GVA and employs nearly 75 per cent of the workforce employed in non-agricultural enterprises. The surveys for the unincorporated sector enterprises have been released by the Ministry after a long gap since the data collection.

The data for these non-agricultural sector enterprises is seen as a crucial jobs indicator since the informal sector is closely watched for its employment generation capacity and absorption of labour force, especially in case of a slowdown in the formal sector.

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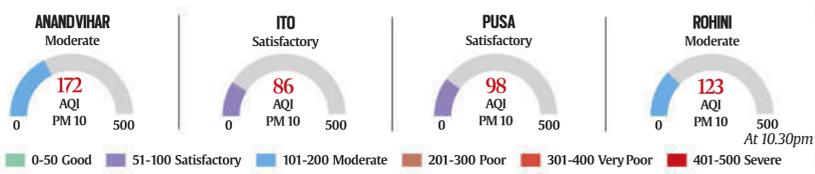
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108 TRAVEL AGENTS NABBED FOR SENDING PASSENGERS ABROAD ILLEGALLY TILL JUNE

Fake immigration stamp, illegal boat journey: How 'Dunki network' thrives

ARNABJIT SUR
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

ALL RUPA Ram, 28, wanted was a better paying job and a way out of his hometown in Rajasthan's Sikar district. On October 6, 2023, Ram took a flight from Delhi and arrived at Bangkok before reaching Malaysia on a bus with a dozen others like him. In Malaysia, he worked at a restaurant for seven months before he had to rush home after his father took ill. At the Delhi airport, he was swiftly handed over to the authorities and ended up spending four days in police custody. As it turned out, on checking his passport, immigration authorities spotted a Malaysia visa arrival stamp of 2022, which did not match his travel history.



GAMING THE SYSTEM

108 Fraudulent agents arrested so far this year by IGI unit of Delhi Police
Arrests last year: 51

76 Look-out-Circulars opened against agents who have fled abroad or remain untraceable

MODUS OPERANDI

- First, passengers with fake Schengen visas are sent to accessible European countries like Azerbaijan or Kazakhstan
- From there, they are routed through Central American or Caribbean countries such as Guatemala and Costa Rica to the USA
- Another common route includes going to Turkey on a tourist visa or Kazakhstan which has a Visa-on-arrival (VoA) system and taking the donkey route to Russia
- Donkey routes are also used to illegally immigrate people into Asian countries as well.

TOP-MOST CRIME
 Sending people via the 'dunki' or 'donkey' route

- Through this method, agents send passengers to countries with a visa-on-arrival system and then facilitate illegal border crossings to destination countries
- Agents arrested so far
- Nearly 70 passengers arrested

Passengers wanting to travel to Malaysia are provided a tourist visa to Thailand from where they are made to take an illegal route through porous borders

- From Bangkok, a 15-minute bus drive gets one to Malaysia. From Thailand, one can reach Malaysia through the river route in a boat
- In some instances, a passenger obtains a fake Schengen visa and goes to Mexico, which also has VoA. They then travel several kilometres through border points to reach USA

taking an illegal route, or "Dunki route", to reach a foreign country. "Dunki" or "donkey journey" refers to the long-winding, often dangerous routes that people across the world take to reach the places they want to immigrate to. These difficult journeys are undertaken due to a lack of requisite legal permits or financial resources. Police have nabbed more

having visa-on-arrival facilities before being shipped to their destination countries through illegal border crossings.

Officers said passengers with fake Schengen visas are sent to relatively accessible European countries like Azerbaijan or Kazakhstan. From there, they are routed through Central American or Caribbean countries such as Guatemala and Costa Rica to US.

Another common route includes going to Turkey on tourist visa or Kazakhstan on visa on arrival, and taking a "Dunki" route to Russia from there. Heading to Malaysia from Bangkok barely takes a 15-minute bus drive or a 20-minute boat ride, like in Sandeep's case. In some instances, a passenger obtains a fake Schengen visa before heading to Mexico where they receive the visa on arrival. From here, they take the "Dunki" route, travelling several kilometres through the border points to reach the US, said a senior officer.

Police also busted cases of commuters travelling on another person's passport, with similar facial features, arranged by the agents.

"These passports usually have a strong travel history and robust profile, enabling the passengers to navigate immigration process more effectively... agents usually arrange these passports after looking at the facial features of the passenger or in other cases, disguise the passenger to look like the person in the passport," police said.

Officers said that passengers who have either been deported and blacklisted often resort to changing their identities to get new passports.

Besides, they obtain fake Seaman Service Books (SSB) and fake letters of appointments which act as passports and allow easier travel without visas to most countries.

NORMS NOT FOLLOWED, KIDS FACING 'SEGREGATION': PARENTS

Fees not paid, 20+ students of DPS Dwarka not let into class

VIDHEESHA KUNTAMALLA
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

MORE THAN 20 students of Delhi Public School (DPS) Dwarka are allegedly not being allowed inside their classrooms since school resumed after summer vacation on July 1. Parents claimed the action followed their refusal to pay the revised fee, which they say was increased "without following Directorate of Education (DoE) norms". They alleged their children are being "segregated" and their names have been struck off from the rolls.

Several parents who *The Indian Express* spoke to claimed the "segregation" is being experienced by their children studying in secondary school and not the younger children.

Calls and messages to the Principal of DPS Dwarka, Priya Narayanan, did not elicit any response over the matter. When contacted, B K Chaturvedi, chairman of the DPS Society, refused to comment.

In May, the school removed 13 students from its rolls over non-payment of the increased fee.

Then, the Directorate of Education (DoE), in a letter to the school principal, stated that "Delhi Public School... is running on land allotted by DDA under stipulated conditions in their allotment letter (and) is required to seek prior approval of the Director of Education before any fee hike."

"The DoE is in receipt of various complaints from parents... wherein it has been alleged that the school is demanding increased fees from parents and is striking off names of their wards from school rolls," it stated, adding that DPS should "comply with directions issued by the DoE... and there should not be any harassment or injustice to the students in the interest of justice."

On June 28, DPS Dwarka sent an email to parents of over 20 students notifying them that their children's names would be struck from records if they did not pay the revised fee.

"The school vide email dated 19.04.2024 issued show cause notice in terms of Rule 167 (3), Delhi School Education Act & Rules, 1973, to you on account of non-payment of school fee for April 2024 of your ward... However, considering the best

interests of your ward, the school has granted sufficient time to deposit the outstanding school fee. Despite the extension of time, you have not paid the outstanding fee of your ward and further defaulted in making payment of school fee," the email read.

"In view thereof, the name of your ward has been struck off from the rolls of Delhi Public School Dwarka on account of non-payment of fee w.e.f. 01.07.2024," it further said. The fees were pending for April, May, and June, it said.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, a parent whose children are studying in Class 2 and Class 9 of the school, claimed, "This segregation is happening only with my elder child. My younger child is not being stopped from sitting in classes but my elder child is being made to sit in a chair in the library throughout the day."

"A school staff follows my child even to the washroom to make sure he doesn't enter his classroom. This has demotivated my son so much that we've stopped sending him to school," the parent added.

Another parent, whose son is in Class 8, said, "The school is targeting specific parents and stu-

dents who have raised their voices against the fee hike. The hike by the school is not as per DoE norms."

Earlier in 2021, parents said they were paying the DoE-approved monthly fee which was Rs 7,785. This has now surged to Rs 14,700. "The school is raising the fee by 8-9% every academic year," the parent said.

Another parent, whose two children study in classes 8 and 4, and had paid the increased fee by the school "under duress", alleged, "Earlier, they made sure there were bouncers in school buses and near the gates to track children who have not paid the updated fee. They would stop those students from attending classes."

Despite making the full payment, the parent alleged that he had been asked to pay more.

In its January 2016 order, the Delhi High Court had upheld the powers of the DoE to "interfere" if the fee hike was found to be excessive. It stated that "schools can't indulge in profiteering and commercialisation of school education. Quantum of fees to be charged by unaided schools is subject to regulation by DoE in terms of the power conferred..."

HC to DDA: Remove 'all encroachments' on Yamuna river banks

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

THE DELHI High Court directed the DDA vice-chairman to remove "all encroachments and illegal construction" on the banks of the Yamuna, river bed, and drains flowing into the river.

The HC was hearing a plea seeking directions to demolish alleged unauthorised construction on the banks of the river.

A division bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela, in its July 8 order, said, "This court directs the Vice-Chairman, DDA, to remove all encroachments... on the Yamuna river bank, river bed and drains... He is also appointed as the nodal officer and shall coordinate with officials of MCD, Delhi Police, DMRC, Irrigation and Flood Control Department, PWD, Delhi Pollution Control Board and Forest Department."

The HC directed the official to convene a meeting of all officials concerned within a week and called for an action-taken report



The HC was hearing a plea seeking directions to demolish alleged unauthorised construction on the river banks. Archive

to be filed in six weeks. The matter is listed on September 9.

During the hearing, the counsel appearing for the Delhi government said though the plea was confined to Shaheen Bagh area, the court "should pass directions for removal of illegal constructions and encroachments in the entire Yamuna river bank, river bed, drains and floodplains area".

Boy stabbed to death by 'Instagram friend'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GURGAON, JULY 11

A FRIENDSHIP through Instagram took a fatal turn for a 16-year-old boy in a village in Gurgaon after another teenager stabbed him to death following a scuffle over talking to a girl, police said. The incident took place Wednesday night, police said.

The accused, a 15-year-old boy, was apprehended Thursday. Police said though they were residents of the same village, the two boys had befriended each other on the social media app.

As per police, they received information that a boy was found injured with stab wounds. The complainant in the case said that when he came out of his house, he saw an injured boy lying outside.

Upon closer inspection, he saw cut marks on the boy's neck and deep wounds on his abdomen, indicating that someone had tried to murder him. Based on the complaint, a case of murder was registered under relevant sections, said ASI Sandeep, police spokesperson.

The 15-year-old juvenile accused was nabbed from Rewari

and taken into police custody.

During questioning, the accused revealed that he lived in Jharsa and had become friends with the deceased through Instagram. "The deceased had been friends with a girl for the past 1 to 1.5 years. Recently, the girl had started talking to the accused as well. The accused had been nursing a grudge against the victim and devised a plan to murder him. He bought a knife for Rs 150 on Tuesday. On Wednesday night, he called over the victim on the pretext of drinking beer and then stabbed him to death," the ASI said.

Though the police team transported the victim to the hospital with the help of an ambulance, he succumbed to his injuries.

The police team later summoned senior officers, the police's scene-of-crime unit, Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL), and fingerprint teams to inspect the crime scene, he said.

The knife allegedly used by the juvenile accused in the murder has been recovered, and the police team is proceeding with the case as per regulations.

Further investigation into the case is underway.



People walk through a flooded area after a breach in Munak canal in parts of Bawana. PTI

Desilting of drains, relief ops: L-G, govt review flood-control prep

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

FROM THE desilting of drains to relief and rescue operations in case of flooding, L-G VK Saxena and Revenue Minister Atishi Thursday assessed the Capital's monsoon preparedness.

Saxena chaired a meeting of the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) to review the flood-control preparedness of all agencies concerned in the wake of incidents of heavy waterlogging across the city following just a few hours of rain a fortnight ago.

L-G House officials said Saxena, noting that it should have been completed back by June 15, asked agencies such as the Irrigation & Flood Control Department (I&FCD), PWD, MCD, NDMC to carry out extensive desilting of drains on an urgent basis. Saxena

issued specific instructions to the Irrigation & Flood Control Department to maintain regulators on all major drains falling into the Yamuna in coordination with respective agencies owning these regulators.

Meanwhile, I&FCD Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj, while making a presentation on flood-preparedness, said regulators on 14 drains had been made functional to stop direct discharge of flood water into drains and ensure there is no flooding in the city.

The department, he added, had also restored the regulator of drain number 12 near the WHO Building, which had broken during the flood last year causing areas like ITO to submerge. The Minister also said the government is prepared to rehabilitate the people with necessary supplies for medicines, sanitation and tents. In July 2023, Delhi saw its

worst-ever recorded flood in 45 years after the Yamuna levels crossed 208 metres and flooded most parts of the city. On July 17 last year, the Yamuna water level was at 208.66 metres.

The L-G, according to officials, particularly pointed out the heavy deposit of C&D waste in the Yamuna near Signature Bridge in North Delhi, which is a highly vulnerable point during the flood. "He directed the PWD, I&FCD and Tourism Department to immediately take up the cleaning of the stretch," officials said.

While Saxena was informed that 29 teams of the NDRF, equipped with over 100 boats, are deployed in and around Delhi to carry out relief and rescue works in case of flooding, he issued directions to install permanent and temporary pumps at vulnerable spots and ensure 24x7 monitoring from the Control Room.

L-G directs early repair of breached Munak Canal sub-branch; AAP reacts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

TAKING SERIOUS note of a breach in a sub-branch of the Munak Canal, which is the only source of water to the Dwarka treatment plant, Delhi L-G V K Saxena Thursday advised the chief secretary to take up the matter with Delhi ministers to ensure that the channel is restored at the earliest.

The breach led to knee-deep waterlogging in several parts of the Bawana area, leaving residents stranded inside their houses, police said. The water entered the J, K and L blocks of the colony in Northwest Delhi early Thursday.

The L-G said the unlined segment of the canal should be taken up for lining on priority to avoid breaches and water losses, according to an official statement from Raj Niwas.

The ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) reacted sharply to the statement issued by Raj Niwas. It also issued a statement censuring Saxena and said: "The Lieutenant Governor (L-G) is not 'Satyawadi Harishchandra'. If he writes something, we ought not to believe as if the court has given its verdict. He is not our school principal."

Meanwhile, Saxena has advised the chief secretary to discuss the issue with Delhi Water Minister Atishi and Flood Control Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj so that it is taken up with the Haryana authorities at the appropriate level.

29-YEAR-OLD PACHYDERM IN ANNUAL PERIOD OF 'MUSTH'

Nylon straps, diet plan: How Delhi Zoo is managing lone African elephant

SOPHIYA MATHEW
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

ON WEDNESDAY evening, Shankar, the Delhi zoo's lone African elephant, was inside its 'musth management croll', swirling its trunk upward for a while. Outside, visitors flocked in despite the drizzle, some standing on their toes to get a glimpse of the animal. One of them asked a guard nearby, "Doesn't the elephant come outside?". He replied that Shankar was "sick".

In layman's terms, Shankar may be called sick but scientifically it is undergoing a condition called 'musth' which began in the last week of June. Dr Abhijith Bhawal, a veteri-

narian at the Delhi Zoo, said it is a condition seen annually in bull elephants when testosterone levels increase and the animals display aggressive and unpredictable behaviour. "Musth happens to a healthy animal... it is common worldwide and a healthy sign. Shankar is half-tamed, but during the musth period, it is very challenging to manage him. We had to undertake a very hard task this time which was to treat Shankar's chain burn injury sustained during the musth period," added Dr Bhawal.

On Tuesday, senior officials said the 29-year-old pachyderm was immobilised after being tranquilised with a dart gun following which Dr Bhawal, with the help of Dr Sumit Nagar from the forest de-

partment, treated the wound. Dr Nagar said, "The elephant had a 10-cm external wound on his left hind leg. It was not septic; a white discharge was noticed."

After this, the animal was kept under observation, said Zoo Director Dr Sanjeet Kumar.

Asked about steps taken to manage the elephant during this phase, he said, "Animal management takes place on a case-to-case basis... In this case, we are strengthening the peripheral wall and gate. Talks are on to bring a mate for the elephant."

Meanwhile, a letter by the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) stirred controversy after it sought clarification on whether the African elephant was tethered to a chain for



Shankar is the Delhi zoo's lone African elephant. Express

months. Senior zoo officials denied the allegations.

Dr Bhawal said the zoo doesn't follow the practice of keeping

the animal chained in non-musth periods. He said in the musth period, the animal is not allowed out in the arena, as per management

practices of captive elephants generally practised in India, and it is kept in a musth management croll with nylon straps until its aggression decreases.

Officials also said the animal's diet is controlled by reducing its carbohydrate intake. Its general diet is green fodder, tree fodder, dry fodder, fruits, rice, mustard oil, salt and turmeric.

The bull elephant is expected to remain in 'musth' for 90-120 days. Recounting the period last September, Dr Bhawal said Shankar broke the wall when not in chains and had to be tranquilised.

A study published by the University of Chicago called 'Signals, Gestures and Behavior of African Elephants' in 2011 said

that bull elephants in musth may curl, furl and unfurl the trunk in a snakelike motion, often curling it over a tusk or lift their head and, with an open mouth, reach with a curled trunk to rub against the temporal gland and forehead.

Hatbir Singh Pal, a senior official at the Chhatbir Zoo in Punjab, said there is a hormonal secretion by the glands, near its eyes; the pores open up and there will be swelling. He said, "... in this condition, the animal loses its senses and shows highly unpredictable behaviour."

He recalled the case of a bull elephant called Raj Mangal at Chhatbir Zoo which grew violent during its musth period in 2016. The government ordered it to be shot, but the step was not

taken; the pachyderm died of old age in 2018.

Meanwhile, senior officials at Delhi Zoo said talks are on to approach the Chhatbir Zoo for a mahout for Shankar. Mahouts from Chhatbir Zoo, from the Bodo tribal community in Assam, are experienced in managing bull elephants.

Pal spoke of occupational hazards for mahouts when bull elephants are in musth: "A mahout's job is extremely dangerous. When in musth, the legs of an elephant are always tied but once a week or at least once in three days, we need to remove it — this is very dangerous... Sometimes, it might take 10 days for the mahout to remove it if the bull elephant can't be controlled."

DELHI EXCISE POLICY CASE

SC verdict on legality of Kejriwal's arrest today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

THE SUPREME Court will deliver on Friday its judgment on the legality of the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the Delhi excise policy case.

The judgment will be delivered by a bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta.

The court had reserved its verdict in the matter on May 17. For Kejriwal, Senior Advocate A M Singhvi had sought to question the investigation. He argued that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) had ignored nine exculpatory statements of witnesses but given weight to one that sought to indict Kejriwal.

He also questioned the truthfulness of the witness statements, pointing out that P Sarath Reddy, who deposed against Kejriwal, had made donations to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) via electoral bonds.

While the ED has claimed that the money raised from the alleged scam was used for the Goa Assembly elections, Singhvi contended that "there is no iota of material in grounds of arrest" regarding the alleged receipt of money by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) through the hawala route.

Appearing for the ED, Additional Solicitor General S V Raju had denied the claims, stating that according to law, the defence of the accused cannot be looked at even at the stage of



Kejriwal was arrested on March 21. Archive

framing of charges.

Concluding its arguments, the ED, which arrested Kejriwal on March 21, also claimed it had found "personal, direct chats" between Kejriwal and a hawala operator.

During the pendency of the matter, the SC granted interim bail to Kejriwal to campaign for the Lok Sabha elections. He surrendered on the expiry of the interim bail period on June 2.

Reserving its verdict, the SC also asked ED to share the case files, saying it wants to have a look at the witness statements recorded by the probe agency after it denied bail to former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia before Kejriwal's arrest.

On May 17, the ED filed its chargesheet in the alleged excise policy scam, naming Kejriwal and the AAP as accused.

The agency alleged that

Kejriwal was the "kingpin" and "key conspirator" in hatching the now-scrapped excise policy in collusion with other AAP leaders who demanded kickbacks from liquor businessmen in exchange for giving them favours.

The ED earlier alleged that the now-scrapped excise policy was drafted "considering the favours to be granted to the "South Group".

As per the agency, the South Group "secured uninhibited access, undue favours, attained stakes in established wholesale businesses, and multiple retail zones (over and above what was allowed in the policy)", and paid Rs 100 crore to AAP leaders in return.

The ED also arrested AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh and Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) leader K Kavitha in the case. Singh was later granted bail by the SC.

Proposal to introduce Manusmriti in LLB course causes uproar, DU V-C says papers will be removed

VIDHEESHA KUNTAMALLA
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

FOLLOWING THE uproar by a section of Delhi University teachers over a proposal by the Faculty of Law to introduce the ancient Sanskrit text Manusmriti in its undergraduate programme as a suggested reading, Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Singh Thursday stated the papers on this particular topic would be removed from the proposal before presenting it at the Academic Council meeting Friday.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Singh said, "The varsity held a review meeting today and rejected the inclusion of the suggested readings on Manusmriti in the Jurisprudence (Legal Method) paper..." The revised syllabus document was to be placed before DU's



Revised syllabus document was to be placed before DU's Academic Council for Academic Matters Friday.

Academic Council for Academic Matters Friday to pass its implementation for the upcoming academic session in August.

Manusmriti with the Manubhasya of Medhatithi by G

N Jha and Commentary of Manu Smriti- Smritichandrika by T Krishnaswami Iyer were proposed as suggested readings under Unit V-Analytical Positivism of the undergraduate course paper in Bachelor of Laws (LLB) in Semester 1.

Professor Anju Vali Tikoo, Dean, Faculty of Law, had told *The Indian Express* earlier in the day, "The Manusmriti has been introduced in line with the NEP (National Education Policy) 2020 to introduce Indian perspectives into learning."

Protesting the move, the Social Democratic Teachers Front had written to the V-C, stating, "... this text is adverse to the progress and education of women and marginalised communities... Introduction of any section or part of Manusmriti is against the

basic structure of our Constitution and principles of Indian Constitution."

Referring to the commentary in the syllabi's suggested readings, DU AC member Maya John had said the modifications in both Jurisprudence papers are politically motivated as they lack academic merit. The Congress also attacked the Centre over the proposal. Congress general secre-

tary, in-charge communications, Jairam Ramesh said this is "all part of the salami tactics of the non-biological PM to bring fulfilment to the decades-long attempt by the RSS to assault the Constitution and Dr Ambedkar's legacy".

Meanwhile, the Faculty of Law is in the process of adding three new courses on the new criminal laws that came into effect July 1.

Top court judge recuses himself from Sisodia's bail plea hearing

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

THE SUPREME Court Thursday deferred the hearing on former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia's bail plea after one of the judges on the bench recused himself.

Justice Sanjay Kumar, who was part of the three-judge bench scheduled to hear Sisodia's plea to restore his prayer for bail, recused himself.

Last year, the AAP leader was arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement Directorate on charges under the Prevention of Corruption Act and Prevention of Money Laundering Act in connection with the excise policy case. With Justice Kumar

recusing himself, the bench presided by Justice Sanjiv Khanna and also comprising Justice Sanjay Karol said that it will be heard in the week commencing July 15.

The SC had denied bail to Sisodia on October 10, 2023. Though it raised doubts on some of the charges levelled against him by the ED, the court, however, said there is "material and evidence" which "tentatively" supports one of the charges under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 - that the 14 wholesale distributors had earned "excess profit" of Rs 338 crore in a period of about 10 months during which the new excise policy was in operation.

Subsequently, the court also dismissed petitions seeking re-

view of the October 10 order.

On June 4, 2024, a vacation bench of the SC declined to entertain Sisodia's bail plea after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta assured that the final chargesheet/prosecution complaint against him would be filed by July 3.

Noting the assurance, the SC bench disposed of the bail plea and said Sisodia could revive it once the chargesheet is filed.

Appearing for Sisodia Thursday, Senior Advocate A M Singhvi said the matter is of extreme urgency. He added that the trial was yet to start and urged the court to fix an early date. The bench then went on to fix the plea for hearing in the week commencing July 15.

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3. Bid Submission Start Date : 12.07.2024 from 09.00 AM onwards,
4. Last Date of Submission of E-Tender : 18.07.2024 upto 03.00 PM,
5. Opening Date of Technical Bids : 19.07.2024 from 03.00 PM onwards at R.P. Cell/MCD Dept. 25th Floor, Civic Centre. For details visit MCD's website : www.mcdonline.nic.in and www.etenders.gov.in

Contact Number - 011-23227514. Assistant Commissioner R.O. No. 16/DP/MCD/2024-25 R.P. Cell/MCD

BRIEFLY

Trial to begin in Brij Bhushan case on Jul 26

New Delhi: Over a year after a chargesheet was filed against former BJP MP and ex-Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh for the alleged sexual harassment of multiple female wrestlers, the trial in the case is set to begin on July 26. The Court of Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Priyanka Rajpoot in Rouse Avenue issued summons to two police witnesses to commence the trial. In May this year, the court had framed charges against Singh under IPC sections 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty) and 354A (sexual harassment). **ENS**

Court convicts man of assault on toddler

New Delhi: A court has convicted a man of committing aggravated sexual assault on a three-year-old girl in 2022, observing that sexual abuse of children is seldom reported because of shame and guilt. Additional Sessions Judge Susheel Bala Daggar of the Rohini District Court was hearing a case against the accused charged under penal provisions for rape and under Sec 6 (aggravated penetrative sexual assault) of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. **PTI**

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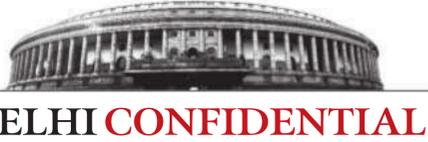
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*Applications invited from interested applicants

6 GOVT & POLITICS



LIVE FROM COURT

IN A departure from rules, the Supreme Court on Wednesday telecast live the hearing on the paper leak of NEET-UG exam. For over a year, the Supreme Court has been livestreaming its proceedings on YouTube. However, this has been restricted only to cases heard before constitution benches involving at least five judges. The NEET hearing, before a three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud, was live for nearly an hour and a half and had over 60,000 views.

TALE OF TWO MEETS

ASTOP leaders of the RSS gather in Ranchi Friday onwards for the three-day Prant Pracharak Baithak, the women's wing of the Sangh—Rashtreeya Sevika Samiti—is hosting its half-yearly all-India executive meet in Nagpur that also has the RSS headquarters. The Samiti will discuss celebrations of the 300th anniversary of Ahilyabai Holkar and expansion of the women's wing.

EASY DRIVE

THE ARMY has issued directions permitting officers to drive light military vehicles in sports dress even within military stations. Earlier, officers were only permitted to drive vehicles in uniform and while on duty. The rationale behind the latest direction is that officers going for games or PT or office in the evening or moving around in the military bases to oversee maintenance and cleanliness are in sports dress and they need more vehicles to drive around in the vast compound of the base. The privilege is not applicable for social engagements and spouses are not permitted to sit in the co-driver's seat. Parking of the vehicle at the officer's home has also been allowed under the new directives.

RSS meet in Ranchi today, members may discuss sending workers to BJP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, JULY 11

WITH KEY Assembly elections in Maharashtra, Haryana and Jharkhand slated in a few months, the three-day RSS meeting scheduled to begin on Friday in Ranchi is likely to not only see key changes in Sangh's state leadership but may also see the RSS loaning its members to the BJP, sources said.

BJP President JP Nadra and party general secretary B L Santosh are also likely to attend the meeting.

Sources said the meeting will see attendance from all Prant Pracharak (regional heads), Sah Prant Pracharak (associate regional heads) and Kshetra Pracharak (zonal heads) from 46 regions across the country. Members of the Sangh's national executive and all the top leaders, including RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, will also be present.

"This annual meeting is generally held to take stock of the work done at regional levels and to make the roadmap for the next year. However, contemporary issues are also discussed in the meeting. Apart from this there can be changes at Prant level and

DRDO awards seven new defence projects to pvt firms

New Delhi: The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has awarded seven new projects to private entities to develop key military assets — including underwater launched unmanned

As BRS explores alliance with BJP, pushback from other side

LIZ MATHEW NEW DELHI, JULY 11

THE rising strength of the BJP in Telangana, as reflected in the Lok Sabha election results, the dwindling fortunes of the Bharat Rashtreeya Samithi (BRS) and the heat of different probes against BRS leaders have prompted talk among leaders of the two parties for an alliance, with some BJP leaders pushing that the beleaguered regional party be pressed for a merger.

Others in the BJP, however, are against any truck with the BRS, whose top leadership is seen as delegitimised after its poor show in the Assembly polls and rout in the Lok Sabha polls. After the lat-

DAYS AFTER KATHUA AMBUSH

J&K overdrive: Forest searches, interstate meet and detentions

Order to identify all foreign nationals illegally overstaying in J&K since 2011

ARUN SHARMA JAMMU, JULY 11

AROUND 50 people picked up for questioning, a high-level interstate meeting, and an order to identify all foreign nationals "illegally staying in J&K": Days after an attack on an Army convoy left five soldiers dead, the security establishment in Jammu and Kashmir has put its crackdown on terror on overdrive.

According to official sources, the meeting was attended by J&K's Director General of Police R R Swain, his Punjab counterpart Gaurav Yadav, and Special Director General of BSF, Western Command, Y B Khurania, among others. The meeting reviewed the security grid along the International Border (IB) and discussed measures to plug any loopholes, they said.

According to sources, the security establishment believes terrorists have successfully infiltrated through the IB and managed to reach the dense forests of Machedi, which connect Basantgarh in Udhampur and Bhandarwah in Doda district.

The terrorists, suspected to be Pakistani, are a fresh group that infiltrated recently. Pointing out that Lohai Malhar tehsil was a hotbed of terrorist activity between the mid-1990s and early 2000s, a retired Army officer said the area is a known infiltration route for terrorists, who often proceed towards Udhampur or Doda after crossing over from Pakistan.

The fact that the site of Monday's terror attack is nearly 170 kilometres from the IB suggests the terrorists have traversed



5 soldiers were killed in the Kathua ambush on Monday. PTI

a large area, said a senior Army officer who has served in J&K, adding that it is unlikely this was possible without local support. In the days since the attack, security agencies have rounded up several people for questioning.

The police, Army and paramilitary personnel have also launched searches in the dense forests in Lohai Malhar to track down the attackers, who fled after firing on two Army trucks.

To prevent them from moving to the forests in Udhampur district's Basantgarh or nearby Bhandarwah of Doda district, the search parties from all sides are moving towards each other while combing the forests en route.

A team of the NIA also visited the scene of the ambush to assist the police, while the Army has deployed more quick reaction teams to tackle the uptick in terror activity in Jammu region.

Officials said that General Officers Commanding of both the Nagrota-based White Knight Corps and Counter Insurgency Force (Delta) headquartered at

Batote visited Basantgarh and Doda to assess the situation.

Simultaneously, security forces and the police have launched searches in border areas to plug any loophole in the security grid there. Searches were conducted in Lam sector of Rajouri district's Nowshera area on Thursday evening following an explosion near the LoC the previous night. Though the explosion took place on the PoK side, security forces don't want to take chances, officials said.

Meanwhile, the Jammu and Kashmir government has ordered identification of foreign nationals illegally overstaying in Jammu and Kashmir since 2011.

In an order dated July 9, the UT's Home Department accorded sanction for the reconstitution of a committee with the Administrative Secretary Home as chairman. The SSP, CID headquarters, J&K will be the nodal officer, and will prepare a monthly report of missing/illegally staying foreign nationals in the UT and submit it to the Home Department on the

EXPLAINED Fears of local support

WITH HEAVILY armed militants managing to cover vast distances in the forests of J&K undetected, the security establishment is looking into whether they have local support. Identifying "over ground workers", officials say, is key to tackling the uptick in incidents of terror.

5th of every month.

The officer will also monitor capturing of biographic and biometric details of illegal migrants and maintain up-to-date records digitally, the order states.

Thousands of foreigners, including Pakistani and Myanmar nationals, have been staying in Jammu and Kashmir. These include the wives and children of local Kashmiri militants who returned home following the J&K government's 2010 policy for rehabilitation of misguided Kashmiri youth, who had gone to Pakistan and PoK for arms training. However, none of these youth had returned home through routes notified under the policy. As their wives and children happened to be Pakistani nationals, many of them later approached the courts seeking restraining orders against their deportation.

Monday's attack at Kathua's Badnota was the fifth since June 9, when terrorists had attacked a bus full of pilgrims, killing nine.



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during a visit to a flood-hit area in Balrampur district on Thursday. PTI

AFTER COLLAPSE OF SEVERAL BRIDGES IN BIHAR

UP orders survey of bridges; 80 'unfit' or need 'major repair'

MAULSHREE SETH LUCKNOW, JULY 11

IN THE wake of the reports of bridges collapsing in neighbouring Bihar, the Uttar Pradesh government has ordered a "thorough survey" of bridges in the state, especially the ones which are over 50 years old, so as to avoid any untoward incidents in case of heavy rainfall.

The state Public Works Department (PWD), which has been assigned the task, has so far conducted a survey of over 700 old bridges of which nearly 80 have been found to be either "unfit or requiring a major repair".

The survey is still going on and the final report is likely to be ready by the next week, following which a decision will be taken as to which ones will be repaired or demolished, officials said.

"After recent incidents of bridges collapsing in neighbouring Bihar, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath instructed us to conduct a thorough inspection of the old bridges in Uttar Pradesh. The idea is to identify the bridges which can be repaired or the ones that have to be dismantled," Minister of State (Public Works Department) Brijesh Singh told *The Indian Express*.

These bridges are not being checked just for their "superstructure" but also the piers on which they stand. Also is being checked if there is any blockage in their waterways that can lead to holding of water during heavy rain and cause further damage, scour, abutment etc, it is learnt. The PWD will also prepare an online data of all the bridges, with details of their construction, maintenance as well as the required repair.

Naveen writes to Odisha CM over Balabhadra idol fall: 'Heartwrenching'

SUJIT BISOYI BHUBANESWAR, JULY 11

TARGETING ODISHA'S newly elected BJP government for the first time since his defeat, former chief minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday wrote to Chief Minister Mohan Charan Manjhi over the idol of Lord Balabhadra falling and injuring seven people during the Puri Rath Yatra, seeking "exemplary steps" to ensure that such "heartwrenching" incidents don't recur.

"The mishap which occurred during Adapa Pahandi [ceremonial procession] of Bada Thakura [Lord Balabhadra] has hurt the Jagannath devotees across the globe. I am also deeply hurt in the incident. The manner in which Bada Thakura fell on the Charamala [steps of chariot] was quite heart-wrenching and has never happened in the history of Rath Yatra," wrote Patnaik.

The incident occurred on July 9, injuring seven servitors. Earlier, a devotee suffocated in a stampede-like situation while pulling Lord Balabhadra's chariot. These incidents during the state's marquee annual event — which drew two million people to Puri town — have put the BJP government under pressure. Deputy Chief minister Pravati Parida and Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan had tried to downplay the idol incident, calling it the will of God. Patnaik, in his letter, said the "lacklustre comments" by few ministers over the incident have pained the devotees of Lord Jagannath.

Responding to Patnaik's letter, the Chief Minister said he was also "deeply hurt" by the mishap. Majhi, in his response, said he has the utmost regard for the suggestions made by Patnaik. "I have also directed to prevent recurrence of such incidents in future," said Majhi in his letter to the former CM.



MP minister Kailash Vijayvargiya and actor Suniel Shetty during the launch of the campaign. Express

Indore to create record by planting 51 lakh trees

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE BHOPAL, JULY 11

INDORE IS gearing up to set a world record by planting 51 lakh trees in the city along with 11 lakh trees at Revati Range, in just 24 hours.

Madhya Pradesh's Urban Development Minister Kailash Vijayvargiya said the city is

poised to break the record, previously held by Assam, on July 14. "Our Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken a resolution of planting 140 crore trees. We will plant 51 lakh trees every year, and in the coming five years, we will make Indore green with 2.5 crore trees. The plants will be monitored for 15 to 20 days, the dead plants will be replaced with the new ones," he said.



BIRLA AT BRICS PARLIAMENTARY MEET

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla (centre) speaks at a BRICS session Thursday. BRICS stands for greater democratisation of the global governance system, and for reforming organisations such as the UN Security Council and World Trade Organisation, Birla said. PTI

Maharashtra council polls: BJP, Sena, NCP herd MLAs into hotels

ALOK DESHPANDE MUMBAI, JULY 11

TWO YEARS ago, the biennial Legislative Council elections in Maharashtra threw up surprising results, among which was the loss of the Congress's Chandrakant Handore. Soon afterwards, it was followed by the fall of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government as Eknath Shinde led a rebellion that caused the Shiv Sena to split.

This time, the shoe appears to be on the other foot as the ruling Mahayuti alliance is facing the heat and the Opposition

MVA alliance is hoping to ensure the victory of all three of its candidates with a little help from MLAs in the ruling bloc planning to back the Uddhav Thackeray led Shiv Sena (UBT) or Sharad Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar).

With 12 candidates in the fray for 11 seats in the elections scheduled to be held on Friday, all three ruling parties have sensed the danger and shifted their MLAs to five-star hotels to prevent cross-voting. In the Opposition camp, only the Sena (UBT) has asked its MLAs to gather in one place.

"Cross voting will take place only if MLAs voting for a differ-

ent side have an assurance of getting MLA ticket three months later," said a senior NCP leader.

The timing of the MLC polls is crucial as it comes just a month after the Mahayuti faced a reversal in the Lok Sabha polls, months before the Assembly polls.

Of the 11 MLCs set to retire on July 27, four are from BJP, two from Congress, and one each from NCP, Shiv Sena, Shiv Sena (UBT), the PWP, and the Rashtriya Samaj Party. The strength of the Assembly has reduced from 288 to 274 because seven have been elected to the Lok Sabha, four have died, two have resigned, and one has been disqualified.

EXPLAINED Why BRS finds itself in a spot

With Congress in power in Telangana, BRS is nervous about the government slapping cases on its leaders. The party is already facing the heat from Central agencies, with party chief KCR's daughter and MLC K Kavitha in custody for five months now in Delhi excise policy case.

Kumar said the Congress, which is in power now, was in a worse state five years ago. After

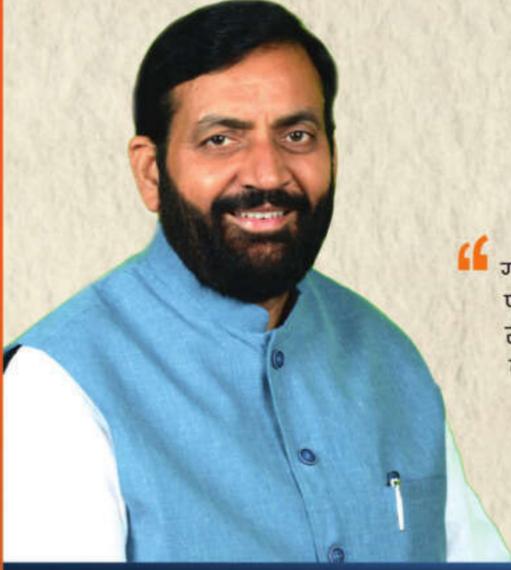


Ailing BRS chief KCR has remained absent from the public eye

This section also sees such attempts as unnecessary given that the BJP has marked its presence in the state by winning eight LS seats. This group is also resistant to offers of an alliance in Telangana by the BJP's Andhra partners TDP and the JanaSena Party, as they believe



Govt. of Haryana



“ गांवों के विकास से जुड़े हर कार्य में पंचायत की अहम भूमिका होती है। सशक्त पंचायतें हमारे समृद्ध गांवों की पहचान हैं। हमारा ध्येय इनके अधिकारों में वृद्धि करके इन्हें और सक्षम बनाना है। ”

- नायब सिंह

“ हमारी सरकार पंचायती राज संस्थाओं को मजबूत बनाने और लोगों के सपनों को पंख देने के लिए काम करती रहेगी। ”

- नरेन्द्र मोदी



Empowered Panchayats Strong Foundation of Rural Development

State Level Panchayat Sammelan

Date - July 12, 2024 | Time - 2:00 pm

Venue - Indradhanush Auditorium, Sector-5, Panchkula



Chief Guest

Sh. Nayab Singh

Chief Minister, Haryana

Presided over by

Sh. Mahipal Dhanda

Minister of State, Development and Panchayats (I.C.), Haryana

Scan QR code to join the program



Development and Panchayats Department, Haryana

British Council to give lessons on climate change to youth

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, JULY 11

THE BRITISH Council, in partnership with HSBC India, Thursday launched the 'Climate Skills: Seeds for Transition India' project that aims to equip youngsters with knowledge and skills on climate change and its challenges.

The project seeks to engage 2,000 youngsters and 300 master trainers, and is expected to run from July this year to February 2026.

Internationally, the project works with 18 to 30-year-olds in

five countries — India, Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico, and Vietnam. According to the British Council, the project "equips young people around the world with fundamental skills they need to be part of the transition from high carbon to low carbon economies...the programme trains local community organisations to better support young people who are disproportionately affected by climate change. Participants come from communities that encounter major systemic challenges in contributing to the growth of their country's green economy."

Bengal CM says BJP, media fuelling controversies, warns of legal action

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA, JULY 11

AMID THE arrest of one more aide of TMC strongman in Kamarhati in North 24 Parganas district following the surfacing of another video of torture, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday hit out at BJP IT cell chief Amit Malviya and a "section of media", accusing them of creating controversies over "old videos" to "electorally damage TMC" in the just concluded Assembly bypolls. She also threatened to take legal action.

Speaking to mediapersons before leaving for Mumbai, the TMC chief said: "There is one Malviya who is known for creating controversies that go against the culture of Bengal. An old video of an incident that took place in 2021 was circulated recently to damage the electoral prospects of my party. This was done for the last 72 hours and the issue was shown non-stop by some television news channels."

"Whenever there is something against the TMC, these channels get excited. If someone is guilty, action will be taken. Channels need to cross check before broadcasting news. They are

forced to do so. Otherwise, the BJP will send the CBI, ED, and the Income Tax Department after them. I am requesting them to stop doing it. If this continues, then I will have to take legal action," the chief minister said, adding the TV news channel "didn't show how peacefully the Assembly by-election was held" in the state.

Banerjee was referring to a string of videos of atrocities allegedly committed by TMC strongman Jayant Singh and his aides inside a club in the Kamarhati-Ariadaha area of North 24 Parganas district.

Following the surfacing of three videos earlier this week, police have arrested seven persons, including Jayant Singh.

The cases have been registered under BNS sections 341 (wrongful restraint), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 325 (voluntarily causing grievous hurt), and 34 (acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention). "Those who had committed the acts have been arrested and put in jail. Even today, in the Ranibandh area of Bankura district, attempts are being made to make a death go viral. I enquired about it. I learned that the incident was the fallout of a family dispute or personal enmity. There is nothing political regarding this. The police will take action as per law," the chief minister added.



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at the Kolkata international airport on Thursday. PTI

ing political regarding this. The police will take action as per law," the chief minister added.

Echoing her, Chief Adviser to the Chief Minister, Alapan Bandopadhyay, said the government was concerned over the surfacing of a three-year-old video that "manipulated" the gender of the victim just ahead of the bypolls in the state.

Meanwhile, one more aide of TMC strongman Jayant Singh has been arrested in connection with a video of a teenager being sexually assaulted.

In Mumbai, Mamata to meet Akhilesh, Pawar, Uddhav

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA, JULY 11

WEST BENGAL Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who left for Mumbai to attend the wedding of billionaire Mukesh Ambanis's son, on Thursday said that she would meet INDIA bloc leaders Sharad Pawar, Uddhav Thackeray and Akhilesh Yadav on Friday.

Speaking to reporters at Kolkata, she said, "I have been invited by Mukesh ji and Nita ji to attend the wedding of Anant and Radhika... I might not have gone, but since they have repeatedly asked me to come, including Mukesh ji, his son, and Neeta ji, I decided to go." "Before that (the wedding), I will meet Uddhav Thackeray. We will hold political talks as I am meeting him after a long time, especially after the LS. I will also meet Sharad Pawar. Akhilesh Yadav will also be there tomorrow," she said.

At BIMSTEC meet, Jaishankar calls for better cooperation

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, JULY 11

UNDERLINING THAT BIMSTEC should harbour higher aspirations, External Affairs minister S Jaishankar said Thursday that the grouping should infuse new energies, resources and a fresh commitment to bolster cooperation among the Bay of Bengal countries.

Jaishankar, while speaking at a two-day retreat of foreign ministers and officials from BIMSTEC countries in Delhi, said, "We all benefited from the last such exercise in Bangkok. This one now has a particular importance as it serves to prepare strong outcomes for the Summit to be held later in the year."

"Our message should be clear — that we are all determined to infuse new energies, new resources and a new commitment into cooperation among the Bay of Bengal nations," he said.

The BIMSTEC foreign ministers had last met in a similar format in Bangkok in July last year. The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with Bangladesh Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud. PTI

Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), brings together seven countries of South and Southeast Asia for multifaceted cooperation. Besides India, the BIMSTEC comprises Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan. Thailand is the current chair of BIMSTEC and it is set to host the annual summit of the grouping later this year.

"Confident that today's deliberations will contribute to solid outcomes and practical collaborations at the forthcoming BIMSTEC Summit in Thailand," Jaishankar said on X at the end of the first day's discussions.

SALUTE THE SOLDIER

CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE FORCE 13 Bn Assam 12 July 1967 Shaheed Constable Swaran Singh 13 Bn Haryana

Shaheed Inspector Nand Ram, Shaheed Lance Naik Harkavir Rai (01-01-1937 To 12-07-1967), West Bengal, Shaheed Constable Jaman Singh (16-12-1943 To 12-07-1967), Uttar Pradesh, Shaheed Constable Nagar Chand (15-09-1944 To 12-07-1967), Punjab, Shaheed Naik Surjan Singh, Shaheed Constable Sher Singh, Rajasthan, Shaheed Constable Chhajju Ram (12-03-1944 To 12-07-1967), Shaheed Constable Kaka Singh (15-01-1945 To 12-07-1967), Punjab, Shaheed Constable Bakhshi Ram (16-12-1940 To 12-07-1967), Shaheed Constable Kabal Singh (06-03-1944 To 12-07-1967), Punjab, Shaheed Constable Telu Ram, Shaheed Constable Arjun Singh, Rajasthan, Shaheed Constable Bishamer Das, Shaheed Constable Prem Singh (12-11-1945 To 12-07-1967), Shaheed Washerman Mangal Singh, Shaheed Constable Chhavi Lal (16-12-1947 To 12-07-1967), Shaheed SI Sher Singh Bala, Shaheed Constable J. Sunder Raj (21-08-1943 To 12-07-1967).

The 13th Battalion of CRPF was deployed in Manipur to maintain law and order and curb insurgent activities. While patrolling, they were ambushed by the insurgents. Despite the treacherous terrain, the men fought bravely. However, the attack resulted in the loss of Insp Nand Ram, SI Sher Singh Bala, L/NK Harkavir Rai, Constable Jaman Singh, Constable Nagar Chand, Naik Surjan Singh, Constable Swaran Singh, Constable Sher Singh, Constable Chhajju Ram, Constable Kaka Singh, Constable Bakhshi Ram, Constable Kabal Singh, Constable Telu Ram, Constable Bishamer Das, Constable Prem Singh, Constable J. Sunder Raj, Washerman Mangal Singh, who all sacrificed their lives in the line of duty. The nation will forever remain indebted to them and their families.

CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE FORCE Manipur 12 July 1967

Shaheed SI Hardayal Singh 12-08-1938 To 12-07-1967 1 Bn Punjab Shaheed HC/RF Som Nath 15-02-1934 To 12-07-1967 1 Slg Bn Himachal Pradesh Shaheed HC/RF Chhail Bihari 11-01-1938 To 12-07-1967 1 Slg Bn

CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE FORCE Arunachal Pradesh 12 July 2001

Shaheed Head Constable Amir Hussain 02-02-1963 To 12-07-2001 124 Bn Tripura Shaheed Constable Deen Mohd. 01-06-1969 To 12-07-2001 124 Bn Haryana Shaheed CT/DVR Lakhbir Singh 07-07-1974 To 12-07-2001 124 Bn Punjab

CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE FORCE Jammu & Kashmir 12 July 1992

Shaheed Lance Naik Harnath Meena 15-09-1969 To 12-07-1992 53 Bn Rajasthan

CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE FORCE Himachal Pradesh 12 July 1990

Shaheed Lance Naik Sada Ram 16-11-1953 To 12-07-1990 62 Bn Himachal Pradesh

NORTHERN RAILWAY Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems) N.I.T. No. 251819 Name of work with its location: Tender for 'Provision & fitting of additional side water filling arrangement work in LHB AC and LHB Shatabdi coaches.'

कार्यालय, अधीक्षक, न्यू गार्डिनर रोड सुपर स्पेशियलिटी अस्पताल, पटना निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना आउटसोर्सिंग व्यवस्था के तहत आंतरिक एवं बाह्य परिसर की साफ-सफाई एवं रख रखाव हेतु निविदा

India, Austria agree to build 'sustainable' economic and technology partnership

SHUBHAJIT ROY NEW DELHI, JULY 11

INDIA AND Austria have agreed to a future-oriented "bilateral sustainable economic and technology partnership" after Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer met in Vienna on Wednesday.

The two leaders — who met

over a private dinner on Tuesday night and held official talks on Wednesday — recognised that the two countries have the potential to significantly upgrade their bilateral partnership to a higher level.

"They agreed to adopt a strategic approach to advance this shared objective. To this end, in addition to closer political-level dialogue, they emphasised on a future-oriented bilateral sustainable economic and tech-

nology partnership, covering a range of new initiatives and joint projects, collaborative technology development, research and innovation and business-to-business engagement inter alia in green and digital technologies, infrastructure, renewable energy, water management, life sciences, smart cities, mobility and transportation," the India-Austria joint statement said.

Both leaders reinforced their commitment to a free, open and

rules-based Indo-Pacific in accordance with the international law of the sea as reflected in UNCLOS and with full respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and freedom of navigation to the benefit of maritime security and international peace and stability, the joint statement said in a thinly-veiled reference to China's assertive behaviour in the Indo-Pacific region.

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY NOTICE INVITING OPEN TENDER Danapur Division/Electrical (TRD) Branch Tender Notice No. 27/TRD/DNR/OT/24-25 The Divisional Railway Manager, E.C. Railway Danapur invites sealed open tender on behalf of the President of India for the following works:

WESTERN RAILWAY - VADODARA DIVISION GATI SHAKTI DEPARTMENT CONSTRUCTION OF ROB E-TENDER NOTICE NO. CPM-GSENGG-03R-24-25 Sealed Tenders for and on behalf of the President of India are invited by Chief Project Manager (Gati Shakti), Western Railway, Pratapnagar, Vadodara-390 004 for the following works:

WESTERN RAILWAY - VADODARA DIVISION VARIOUS ENGINEERING WORKS e-TENDER NOTICE NO. DRM-BRC 066 to 067 OF 2024-25 Sealed Tenders for and on behalf of the President of India are invited by Divisional Railway Manager (WA/C), Western Railway, Pratapnagar, Vadodara-390 004 for the following works:

MP POORV KSHETRA VIDYUT VITARAN CO. LTD. BLOCK NO.7, SHAKTI BHAWAN, RAMPUR, JABALPUR (M.P.) Tel No:0761 2702473, Fax No.0761-2660048 CIN: U40109MP2002SGC015120

KMF Karnataka Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation Limited KMF Complex: Dr. M. H. Marigowda Road, DRC Post, Bangalore-560 029. Tel: 080-25536625 / 25536789 fax: 080-25536105

TENDER NOTIFICATION [TWO COVER SYSTEM] [THROUGH KPP PORTAL ONLY] Tumkur Milk Union Ltd., desires to establish New Mega dairy project with regard to establishment of project on behalf of TUMUL Karnataka Milk Federation Ltd; Bangalore invites tender through e-procurement portal for the works mentioned in the below table.

Office Of The Superintending Engineer 9th Circle Public Work Department Dehradun, Uttarakhand Website- http://pwd.uk.gov.in. E-mail: sepwddun09@gmail.com Letter No. 4199/IC-9/2024 Dated: 11/07/2024 NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING e-tender Notice (Short term)

प्रेस-विज्ञापित Govt. of Jharkhand, Department of Rural Works 1st Floor, FFP Building, Dhurwa, Ranchi-834004, E-mail: rwdjharkhand@gmail.com Contractual Recruitment Notice Applications are invited from eligible candidates for contractual appointment on the post of MIS Officer in Rural Works Department:-

'Had to fight for 30 yrs': ISRO ex-scientist Nambi after CBI says Kerala cop fabricated 1994 espionage case

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
JULY 11

WITH THE CBI saying in its chargesheet that an officer of the Kerala police's special branch fabricated the 1994 espionage case, former ISRO scientist Nambi Narayanan, who was among those arrested in the case and later exonerated, said this would inspire confidence in others implicated in false cases.

"I had to fight for 30 years to get justice. I am happy that the case is coming to a conclusion when I am alive. I have fought several cases in various courts to bring to justice those who implicated us in a false case. This fight will give confidence to all those who are being tortured and falsely implicated in cases," Narayanan said.

ISRO scientists, including Narayanan, and others were arrested in the espionage case in 1994. The CBI, which soon took over the case, submitted a closure report in 1996 in the court in Kochi, saying that the allegations of espionage were false. The court then discharged all the accused.

In 2018, the Supreme Court formed a panel headed by former SC judge D K Jain to look into the case.

In 2021, on the basis of the committee's report, the court directed the CBI to register a case to probe the alleged conspiracy by officers of the Kerala police and the Intelligence Bureau.

Last week, the CBI submitted its chargesheet in the case at a court in Thiruvananthapuram. The chargesheet names five accused - S Vijayan, who was an inspector in the police special branch in 1994, former DGP Siby



Nambi Narayanan

Mathews, former DGP R B Sreekumar, former IB official P S Jayaprakash, and former SP K K Joshua.

The chargesheet alleged that Vijayan, listed as the first accused, had made sexual advances towards a woman from the Maldives in 1994. While the woman spurned his advances, he allegedly collected details about her and found that she had contacted ISRO scientist D Sasikumar. This was what led to the fabrication of the espionage story, the chargesheet said.

According to the CBI, Vijayan seized the Maldivian woman's travel documents and prevented her from going back. After filing a case against her for overstaying, Vijayan played a key role in having her later booked under the Official Secrets Act despite there being no evidence of espionage, the agency said.

"This is a clear case of abuse of law/authority right from the initial stage as the victim (the Maldivian woman) was detained illegally and framed in the false overstaying case. To sustain the initial wrongs, another case of a serious nature was launched with false interrogation reports against the victims. These false interrogation reports were used for the arrest of others, including scientists," the chargesheet said.

Those arrested in the 1994 case were two women from

Maldives, ISRO scientist Nambi Narayanan and D Sasikumar, Russian space agency Glavkosmos's India representative K Chandrasekhar, and Bengaluru-based labour contractor S K Sharma.

According to the CBI, the arrests were made at the behest of Siby Mathews, who was then a DIG and was heading a special investigation team formed after the spy case was registered. Mathews was alleged to have allowed physical and mental torture of those arrested by IB official while under state police custody. Though IB officials had questioned the arrested scientists and others, no interrogation report was prepared.

The chargesheet said reports of medical treatment given to Narayanan and Chandrasekhar in custody were suppressed by then DySP K K Joshua at the be-

hest of Siby Mathews. CBI alleged that former DGP R B Sreekumar, who was working with IB in Kerala in 1994, was responsible for unauthorised custody and torture of the accused. Sreekumar, the fourth accused, had allegedly played an active role in unauthorised questioning of the Maldivian woman and junior IB officials allegedly acted as per his directive.

The fifth accused in the case, P S Jayaprakash, another IB official, tortured Nambi Narayanan, the CBI said.

The CBI recommended the five accused be prosecuted under section 120B (criminal conspiracy), read with 167, 193, 323, 330, 342 and 354 of the IPC (before amendment). The CBI's FIR had named 11 others, but in the chargesheet, the agency said no prosecutable evidence could be collected against them.

Jaipur: SpiceJet staffer held for slapping CISF ASI at airport

Airline alleges 'sexual harassment', CISF says officer was 'doing duty'

PARUL KULSHRESTHA
JAIPUR, JULY 11

A WOMAN SpiceJet employee was arrested Thursday for slapping an on-duty CISF officer following an argument over security screening at the Jaipur airport, police said.

Calling it a "serious case of sexual harassment", SpiceJet in a statement alleged that the CISF officer used "inappropriate language" against its employee. The CISF denied the allegations and said that its officer was only "doing his duty".

Police said they were investigating claims made by both sides. The incident took place around 4.30 am at one of the airport entrances when CISF Assistant Sub Inspector Giriraj Prasad stopped the SpiceJet employee from entering without frisking, airport officials said. She was asked to undergo screening, but there were no female CISF personnel present at the spot, leading to an argument.

Jaipur airport SHO Ram Lal said that ASI Prasad then called a female colleague for the security check, but the argument escalated and the SpiceJet employee slapped him. In a video of the incident, the airline employee is seen stepping towards the CISF ASI during the argument and slapping him before she is led away by other airport staff.

Later, a case was registered at the Airport Police Station following a complaint from the CISF.

DCP Kavendra Singh said, "The woman has been arrested and her statement is being taken. The woman has also lodged a complaint. We are verifying the facts following which appropriate action will be taken." In a statement, SpiceJet said, "Today, an unfortunate incident occurred at Jaipur Airport involving a SpiceJet female security staff member and a male CISF personnel."

"While escorting a catering vehicle at the steel gate, our female security staff member, who had a valid airport entry pass issued by the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), India's civil aviation security regulator, was subjected to inappropriate and unacceptable language by the CISF personnel, including asking her to come and meet him after his duty hours at his home," it said.

"SpiceJet is taking immediate legal action in this serious case of sexual harassment against its female employee and has approached the local police. We stand firmly by our employee and are committed to providing her with full support."

CISF Commandant Narpat Singh denied the SpiceJet claims. "There was no inappropriate behavior by the officer. He was doing his work. We have registered a complaint against the accused for slapping an on-duty official and the rest of the matter will be dealt with as per norms," he told *The Indian Express*.

Charan Singh, Coordination In-charge, Airport Authority of India, Jaipur, said the matter is under investigation.

WITH PTI INPUTS

Collegium suggests names of J&K HC Chief Justice, Madras HC Acting CJ for SC

APURVA VISHWANATH
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

THE SUPREME COURT Collegium headed by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud on Thursday recommended Justice N Kotiswar Singh, Chief Justice of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court, and Justice R Mahadevan, Acting Chief Justice of Madras High Court, for appointment as judges to the apex court.

Justice Singh, if appointed, will mark the first representation from the Manipur High Court in the Supreme Court.

"There are two vacancies in the Supreme Court: the first occasioned by the retirement of Justice Aniruddha Bose on 10 April, 2024 and the second by the retirement of Justice A S Bopanna on 19 May, 2024. The Collegium has considered the names of the Chief Justices of the High Courts and of senior Judges in the High Courts within the zone of consideration," the resolution stated.

Apart from CJI Chandrachud, the Collegium comprises Justices Sanjiv Khanna, B R Gavai, Surya Kant and Hrishikesh Roy.

Justice Singh, whose parent High Court is the Manipur HC, was initially appointed a judge of the Gauhati High Court in 2011. In 2013, he was transferred to the Manipur HC when the court was established. In February 2023, he was appointed as Chief Justice of the J&K HC, and he is due to retire on February 28, 2025. If appointed to the SC, he will have an additional three years to his tenure.

Justice R Mahadevan was appointed a judge of the Madras HC in 2013. He has a tenure up to June 2025 as a HC judge and an additional three years if appointed to the SC. While he is currently the third senior-most judge of the Madras HC, the Collegium resolution noted that

he has been "given precedence" over the other two senior judges "in order to give representation to the backward community". Meghalaya HC Chief Justice S Vaidyanathan, who is due to retire in August, and Calcutta HC Chief Justice T S Sivagnanam, who is due to retire September next, are the two judges senior to Justice Mahadevan.

7 new Chief Justices

In a separate resolution, the three-member Collegium comprising the CJI, Justices Khanna and Gavai also appointed Chief Justices to seven high courts.

Justice Manmohan, acting Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court, is recommended for appointment as the Chief Justice of Delhi HC. While it is unusual for judges to be appointed as CJ to their parent HC, the Memorandum of Procedure (MoP), the rule book for Collegium, allows such appointments in the last year of the judge's tenure. Justice Manmohan is due to retire in December.

Justice M S Ramachandra Rao, CJ of Himachal Pradesh HC, is recommended as CJ of Jharkhand HC.

Justice Rajiv Shakdar, judge of the Delhi HC, is recommended for appointment as CJ of Himachal HC.

Justice Suresh Kait, judge of Delhi HC, is recommended as CJ as Jammu and Kashmir HC.

As CJs of Madras HC and Kerala HC, the Collegium has recommended Bombay HC judges K R Shriram and Nitin Jamdar respectively.

Justice G S Sandhawalia, judge of the Punjab and Haryana HC, is recommended as CJ of Madhya Pradesh HC.

Justice Tashi Rabstan, judge of the J&K HC, is recommended for appointment to the Meghalaya HC.

Centre forms 1-member panel to probe Pune IAS officer row

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PUNE, MUMBAI JULY 11

THE CENTRE Thursday formed a one-member panel to look into the controversy involving the conduct of IAS probationer Dr Pooja Khedkar. An additional secretary with the department of Personnel and Training will inquire into the matter.

Khedkar was caught in a row when as an assistant collector in Pune district, she demanded a separate office, vehicle staff and other benefits.

In the absence of a senior officer, Khedkar was accused of having converted the officer's ante chamber into her own office. Based on this, Pune district collector Suhas Diwase had written to the additional chief secretary of the state complaining of her behaviour.

On Monday, Khedkar was transferred to Washim district and on Thursday she took charge to finish her training as assistant collector. As per the news agency PTI, the one-member committee will look into complaints of the officer misusing benefits under the physical disability category and OBC quota to secure a position in Indian Administrative Services.

Meanwhile, the Pune City Traffic police on Thursday issued a notice to Khedkar for unauthorised use of a beacon and Maharashtra government sign on a privately owned luxury car which she was found to be using.

Police said the Audi car has 21 unpaid challans with compounding charges of ₹27,000.

On Thursday, a team from the traffic police went to her family residence in Baner to take action against the Audi car. Despite two attempts, the police could not manage to get the Khedkars to respond.

"Our team went to Khedkar's house in Baner but the main gate of the bungalow was found to be closed. Subsequently, a notice was issued to Khedkar," said an



Dr Pooja Khedkar

officer from the Chatushrungi traffic division.

The notice said, "It is being informed to you that a beacon and Maharashtra government sign have been found to be used on the privately owned Audi car. Based on this an action has been taken against the vehicle as per Section 177 of the Motor Vehicle Act."

An officer said, "The Audi car she was using is registered in the name of an engineering firm. The case has 21 unpaid challans with pending compounding amount totalling ₹26,900."

Pooja comes from a family of bureaucrats and politicians hailing from Pathardi in Maharashtra's Ahmednagar.

Her father Diliprao Khedkar is a retired Maharashtra Pollution Control Board officer. Diliprao had contested 2024 Lok Sabha elections as a Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi candidate. Pooja completed her MBBS, attempted the UPSC exams several times and allegedly made the cut for the IRS in 2019.

Pooja appeared for the Civil Services Examination in 2021 and cleared the preliminary exam, main exam and interview, securing the 821st rank.

Age, quota relaxation for former Agniveers, say CISF, BSF, CRPF chiefs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

THE CHIEFS of CISF, BSF and CRPF on Thursday said 10 per cent posts of soldiers will be reserved in their respective forces for former Agniveers in line with a decision by the Union home ministry.

The remarks by CISF Director General Nina Singh, her BSF counterpart Nitin Agrawal and CRPF Director General Anish Dayal Singh came amid fresh spotlight on the Agnipath recruitment scheme for short-term induction of personnel in the Army, Navy and the Air Force.

"The Union Home Ministry has taken an important decision regarding the recruitment of ex-Agniveers. Accordingly, the CISF is also preparing the process of the recruitment of ex-Agniveer," Singh said.

The chief of Central Industrial Security Force said 10 per cent jobs will be reserved for ex-Agniveers in all future appointments of constables. "In physical tests also, they will be given exemption along with relaxation in age," she told DD News.

In June 2022, the government rolled out the Agnipath scheme. "They are fully disciplined and trained personnel. This is very good for the BSF. After short training, they will be deployed along the border. 10 percent of

the total vacancies will be reserved for them. There will be age relaxation for them as well," said Border Security Force director general Agrawal. Central Reserve Police Force Director General Singh said all arrangements have been made in his force to recruit former Agniveers.

Gujarat Cong Dalit leader: Will convert to Islam if no action over son's 'assault'

GOPAL KATESHIYA
RAJKOT, JULY 11



Rajesh Solanki

THE PRESIDENT of the Congress's Junagadh city SC/ST cell, whose son was allegedly assaulted by BJP MLA Geetaba Jadeja's son in May, said his whole family and many others from Dalit community will convert to Islam if Gujarat's BJP government doesn't seek the MLA's resignation and the arrest of her husband.

Congress's Junagadh city SC/ST cell chief Rajesh Solanki is also the head of the Junagadh Jilla Anusuchit Jati Samaj, an informal Dalit organisation. His son Sanjay Solanki is a leader of Congress's student wing - NSUI, Jyotiradityasinsh was booked after Sanjay filed a police complaint, alleging that he kidnapped him following an argument over the MLA's son's driving.

rested for the alleged assault on Sanjay. On Wednesday, Rajesh Solanki went to the office of the District Collector and collected application forms to seek the state's permission for religious conversion. The move came days after he told the media on July 6 that he and around 150 members of the extended Solanki family would convert to Islam if the state government didn't act against Geetaba and her husband Jayrajisinh Jadeja.

Rajesh said he has given the government till August 15. "If the government and the BJP don't listen to us... we shall lead a rally to Gandhinagar and submit memorandums to the CM, Governor to demand justice. If the government doesn't move even after that, we shall convert to Islam..."

Gondal BJP MLA Geetaba Jadeja's son Jyotiradityasinsh alias Ganesh has been ar-

HINDUSTAN PETROLEUM CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Maharatna Company)
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Email ID: hpcinvestors@mail.hpcpl.co.in Website: www.hindustanpetroleum.com

NOTICE TO SHAREHOLDERS
TRANSFER OF EQUITY SHARES TO INVESTOR EDUCATION & PROTECTION FUND

Notice is given pursuant to the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 read with the Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (Accounting, Audit, Transfer and Refund) Rules, 2016 ("the Rules") as notified and amended by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, New Delhi. The Rules, inter alia, provide for transfer of all shares in respect of which dividend has remained unclaimed by the shareholders for seven consecutive years or more, to the Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF) set up by the Central Government. Accordingly, individual communication(s) were sent to the latest available address of those shareholders whose shares are liable to be transferred to IEPF Authority under the said Rules as they have not claimed the dividend(s) for the year 2016-17 (Final), and all other dividends declared by the Company for seven consecutive years thereafter. The company has uploaded the details of all unclaimed dividends including the dividend / shares of 2016-17 (Final) due for transfer to IEPF Authority on its website - <https://www.hindustanpetroleum.com/pages/Unclaimed-Dividend>

View above, shareholders are requested to verify and claim the unpaid dividend for the year 2016-17 (Final) which is due for IEPF transfer in the month of October 2024 immediately, but not later than September 27, 2024 before the same is transferred to the IEPF Authority along with the underlying shares. Shareholders are also requested to update their KYC details and claim all the unclaimed dividends of other years in their respective folios. It may please be noted that if no claim/application is received by the Company or the Registrar and Transfer Agents (RTA) by September 27, 2024, the Company shall with a view to complying with the requirements set out in the Rules, dematerialise and transfer the underlying shares to the IEPF Authority by following the due process as enumerated in the said Rules which is briefly as under:

- In case of shares held in physical form - by issuance of duplicate share certificate and transfer the same to IEPF Authority. Upon such transfer, the original share certificate(s) lying with the shareholder will stand automatically cancelled and deemed non-negotiable.
- In case of shares held in demat mode - by issuance of instruction to member's DP to transfer the shares directly to IEPF Authority.

Kindly note that all future benefits, dividends arising on such shares would also be transferred to IEPF Authority. It may also be noted that as per the present rules, the shares transferred to IEPF Authority, including all benefits accruing on such shares, if any, can be claimed back from the IEPF Authority after following the procedure prescribed under the said Rules.

Shareholders are therefore requested to note the aforesaid provisions and submit the claim for unpaid dividends to Company's RTA, M/s. Link Intime India Pvt. Ltd. Unit: Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd. C-101, 247 Park, L.B.S Marg, Vikhroli (W), Mumbai - 400083, Tel No. 022-49186270, E-mail: rtm.helpdesk@linkintime.co.in

Since, SEBI has made updation of KYC details (Email/Address/PAN/Mobile/Bank/Signature etc.) mandatory, we appeal to the shareholders to update the same, if not already done, through the Depository Participants (Demat shares) / RTA (Physical shares). Updation of Email address will facilitate receipt of all future communications relating to Annual Reports, Dividend etc.

Place : Mumbai
Date : July 12, 2024

For Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited
V. Murali
Company Secretary

TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES LIMITED
Registered Office: 9th Floor, Nirmal Building, Nariman Point, Mumbai 400 021. Tel: +91 22 6778 9595 Fax: +91 22 6778 9660
e-mail: investor.relations@tcs.com website: www.tcs.com CIN: L22210MH1995PLC084781

Extract of the audited consolidated interim financial results for the three months ended June 30, 2024 (₹ crore)

	Three months ended June 30, 2024	Year ended March 31, 2024	Three months ended June 30, 2023
Revenue from operations	62,613	2,40,893	59,381
Profit before exceptional item and tax	16,231	62,955	14,989
Profit before tax	16,231	61,997	14,989
Profit after tax	12,105	46,099	11,120
Total comprehensive income for the period	11,891	46,336	11,200
Paid up equity share capital (Face value: ₹1 per share)	362	362	366
Total reserves (including non-controlling interests)*	90,957	90,957	90,840
Earnings per equity share:- Basic and diluted (₹)	33.28	125.88	30.26

*Balance for three months ended June 30, 2024 represents balance as per the audited consolidated balance sheet for the year ended March 31, 2024 and balance for three months ended June 30, 2023 represents balance as per the audited consolidated balance sheet for the year ended March 31, 2023 as required by Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015.

Extract of the audited standalone interim financial results for the three months ended June 30, 2024 (₹ crore)

	Three months ended June 30, 2024	Year ended March 31, 2024	Three months ended June 30, 2023
Revenue from operations	52,844	2,02,359	49,862
Profit before exceptional item and tax	15,878	58,560	13,932
Profit before tax	15,878	57,602	13,932
Profit after tax	12,115	43,559	10,484
Total comprehensive income for the period	12,149	43,724	10,602

Notes:

- The audited consolidated financial results and audited standalone financial results have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors at its meeting held on July 11, 2024. The statutory auditors have expressed an unmodified audit opinion on these results.
- The Board of Directors at its meeting held on July 11, 2024, has declared an interim dividend of ₹10.00 per equity share.
- In April 2019, Computer Sciences Corporation (referred to as CSC) filed a legal claim against the Company in the Court of Northern District of Texas and Dallas Division (trial court) alleging misappropriation of trade secrets and other CSC's confidential information and sought preliminary and permanent injunctive relief, and unspecified monetary damages and disgorgement of profits.

A trial before an advisory jury was held and on November 17, 2023, the jury returned an advisory verdict in favour of CSC, finding that the Company misappropriated CSC's trade secrets and recommended compensation of US \$70 million (equivalent to ₹584 crore) and a further punitive damage of US \$140 million (equivalent to ₹1,168 crore) to be paid by the Company to CSC. Subsequently, the parties filed their respective written submissions in the matter. On June 13, 2024, the trial court passed a judgement as follows:

- The Court ordered that the Company is liable to CSC for US \$56 million (equivalent to ₹467 crore) in compensatory damages and US \$112 million (equivalent to ₹935 crore) in exemplary damages.
- The Court also assessed that the Company is liable for US \$25 million (equivalent to ₹209 crore) in prejudgment interest through June 13, 2024.
- The Court also passed certain injunction and other reliefs against the Company.

The Company, based on external opinion and legal assessment, believes that it has a strong case and would defend its position vigorously and pursue legal remedies to overturn the adverse judgement of the trial court.

- The above is an extract of the detailed format of financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements Regulations, 2015). The full format for three months ended June 30, 2024, are available on the BSE Limited website (URL: www.bseindia.com), the National Stock Exchange of India Limited website (URL: www.nseindia.com) and on the Company's website (URL: www.tcs.com/investors).

For and on behalf of the Board of Directors

Mumbai
July 11, 2024

K Krithivasan
CEO and Managing Director
DIN:10106739

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

One for the team

As player and as coach, Rahul Dravid has tried to be the change he wished to see in Indian cricket



SANDEEP DWIVEDI

NOT TOO LONG ago, late one night, on the eve of a Test match, the then-Team India computer analyst got a call. On the line was a star batsman from north India, who, in a brusque tone, ordered him to rush to his room. The SOS wasn't about some vital data on a rival bowler, as the support staff member had guessed. It was to download a movie. Arranging Bollywood hits for Indian cricketers at unearthly hours, by the way, has never been part of any IT professional's BCCI contract.

Another time, in the distant past, one Indian team manager, seated with a couple of reporters at the stadium cafe, had barked at a support staff member to fetch tea and snacks. "I got him a raise recently," he would say, justifying the obnoxious behaviour. Waiting tables, too, wasn't part of the job requirement for those hired to help cricketers at net sessions.

Indian cricket, despite its giant strides towards modernity, hasn't yet fully shaken off its Raj-era habits. Respect, and also rewards, still depend on your rank. But not on coach Rahul Dravid's watch. In the dugout, he is always seen in the coaching corner and, at nets, he is almost apologetic in his instructions to his non-playing team.

And now, typically of the man, he has silently and subtly set an example not by words but through action. Dravid has laid the first brick of a utopian dressing room of equals that has a sliver of economic heterogeneity and where the distribution of wealth isn't ridiculously uneven. First, as the coach of the World Cup-winning India under-19 team and now, after the T20 World Cup title, Dravid has insisted on pay parity with his assistants. Of the Rs 125 crore BCCI windfall to the team, the head coach was to get Rs 5 crore but Dravid reportedly wanted exactly what other coaches were getting — Rs 2.5 crore.

Regardless of his riches, a father of two sons yet to go to college, refusing a cheque with seven zeros because of his beliefs is unheard of in these materialistic times. And in these months of appraisals, with money on most minds, it's a jaw-dropping renouncement. But that's Dravid — the painfully modest, spotlight-

phobic compassionate cricketing great.

Back in 2012, on his retirement, Dravid's wife Vijeta wrote a piece that gave a glimpse of the man who had fiercely protected his personal life. Though there were no surprises, it had interesting details. As the world had perceived, the legend who wore his greatness lightly was a man of few needs and necessities. His pursuit was runs, the race to otherworldly possessions was for lesser mortals and less-successful cricketers.

Vijeta wrote how her husband "doesn't care for gadgets, and barely registers brands — of watches, cologne or cars". But if his bat weighed a gram less, he would notice in an instant. "I know if I packed only two sets of informal clothes, he would rotate them through an entire tour... He has used one type of moisturising cream for 20 years," she would write.

His mother is an architect and his father worked for the company that produced Kissan jam. Dravid's life was dictated by classic middle-class morals and values. He rose to lofty heights but stayed grounded. He continued to stay in the locality — Indiranagar in Bengaluru — where he grew up, despite gaining celebrity status.

Unlike other stars, there are no page 3 stories of him buying mansions or having a garage full of superbikes. The other day, he drove to the polling booth in Bengaluru in a regular-sized car, wearing the most common colour combination preferred by unadventurous middle-aged Indian men — a navy blue T-shirt and lighter shade three-fourth pants.

Dravid has tried his best to debunk the "pampered superstars" image that Indian cricketers carry worldwide. It was a futile battle but India's griettest No. 3, like always, made an earnest attempt. In his stunning Bradman Oration speech in 2011, he argued the case for Indian cricket: "The caricature often made of Indian cricket is that of... overpaid, underworked [players], treated like a cross between royalty and rock stars... It is why we make it a point to always try and conduct ourselves with composure and dignity... We don't attack fans or do drugs or get into drunken theatrics.

And at home, despite what some of you may have heard, we don't live in mansions with swimming pools." It would have sounded true had Dravid spoken just for himself.

The one-of-a-kind cricketer was an outlier in most teams he was associated with. The man who valued the history of the game once opened the innings with Virender Sehwag, a rustic boy from Delhi NCR's wild west, Najafgarh. They were in to break the record set by Vinoo Mankad and Pankaj Roy but Sehwag would get out. Later, he would say that he wasn't aware of the mark or the two past greats.

As the captain of his diverse flock, Dravid tried to understand everyone and was sensitive to the team's needs. Till coach Greg Chappell spread mistrust in the dressing room, he had a close bond with players from Indian cricket's outposts. He mentored them, gave them batting tips and also took them to a musical in London. Even when the Sourav Ganguly-Chappell battle was dividing the team, he tried being the bridge. When his toddler sons would travel with the team, he would book a room that was not on the same floor as his teammates. He didn't want them to be disturbed by the wails of his children.

Dravid might have his flaws as a captain or coach but he has still managed a decent leadership legacy. He was accommodative and a peace-maker. Unlike those with not even half his body of work, he wasn't pompous. Actually, he regularly takes pains to call himself a boring batsman who puts people to sleep but miserably fails.

His conversations are rarely about him, it's about others around him. Dravid isn't the kind who will cut a deal for himself and sell others down the river.

Dravid is a true believer in the sporting brotherhood. He has never been a rebel, rable-rouser or a moaning complainer. He is someone who cares about others. Dravid also tried to be the change he wished to see in Indian cricket. Not everyone has the heart to put Rs 2,50,00,000 where the mouth is.

sandeep.dwivedi@expressindia.com

PROMISE UNDERLINED

By upholding Muslim women's right to maintenance, SC reaffirms that constitutional protection of equality includes all

THE SUPREME COURT on Wednesday ruled that a Muslim woman's right to claim maintenance under criminal law cannot be extinguished even if she has claimed her rights in personal law. This has been the lawful position for over two decades following the 2001 landmark ruling, *Daniel Latifi versus Union of India*. Yet there has been some concern on whether special legislation — the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986 — could override the Code of Criminal Procedure, a general legislation. Now the bench headed by Justice B V Nagarathna has held that a parallel remedy in law that applies universally cannot be taken away by religious custom despite the latter being codified as legislation. This is a welcome underlining by the court that the spirit of the Constitution and its promise of equality cuts across religious and other identities and divides.

Muslim women's right to maintenance has been a fraught issue. While the 1986 Act requires that maintenance is paid to a Muslim woman by her former husband within the *iddat* period (three lunar months after the divorce) by her former husband, Section 125 of the CrPC is a penal provision that requires a man to pay maintenance to his wife or former wife who is "unable to maintain herself." From the 1985 *Shah Bano* case to the Daniel Latifi ruling in 2001, the Supreme Court has maintained that a Muslim man's limited obligation under personal law cannot override Section 125 of the CrPC, despite resistance to the rulings both politically and from within the community. The latest ruling, while scrupulously following the precedents, also marks a remarkable shift in its framing of the right to seek maintenance. It highlights that maintenance must not be viewed "as a mere charity" and is a matter of "parity and rights, essential for women." "This Court would not countenance unjust or Faustian bargains being imposed on women. The emphasis is on sufficient maintenance, not minimal amount. After all, maintenance is a facet of gender parity and enabler of equality, not charity. It follows that a destitute Muslim woman has the right to seek maintenance under Section 125 of the CrPC despite the enactment of the 1986 Act," it says.

The apex Court also shows wisdom in framing the issue of gender justice not as antagonistic to freedom of religion. It sees both as complementing the rights secured under the Constitution. This framing is especially resonant given the Constitution's high visibility as a symbol and motif in the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections. It is also a timely reminder for other battles pending in court — from temple entry to the right to excommunicate. The Constitution should be the guiding principle for all, even for personal law.

A TIMELY WARNING

Blood test developed at AIIMS to detect Alzheimer's early can reduce trauma of patients, ease caregivers' predicaments

FOR MORE THAN a century since it was discovered by German neuroscientist Alois Alzheimer, the disease named after him has boggled the scientific community. Global life expectancy at the time of the discovery was less than 35 years. With the average lifespan increasing to more than 70 today, Alzheimer's afflicts many more times the number of people today than when it was discovered. More than 55 million people worldwide over the age of 60 today suffer cognitive impairments and 60-70 per cent of them go on to develop the most corrosive form of dementia. Though research over the years has identified the characteristics of the disease, and in recent years, drug development has made some headway, questions remain about how best to treat Alzheimer's. In most parts of the world, including India, tests to diagnose the disease are undertaken only after the onset of symptoms. However, there is growing unanimity amongst scientists that the precursors to Alzheimer's begin to accumulate in the brain at least 10 years before the symptoms show up. That's why a blood test developed by researchers at AIIMS, Delhi, could be a significant breakthrough in Alzheimer's management.

The AIIMS researchers tested 90 people on six blood markers, the levels of which can indicate an early onset of Alzheimer's. The test can detect the biomarkers of the disease 10-15 years before it becomes full-blown. Alzheimer's develops over 15-20 years. An early diagnosis can help clinicians manage symptoms better — medicines that promise a cure for the milder form of the disease have not yet entered the treatment protocols in most parts of the world. Dementia screenings are particularly relevant for India where cognitive impairments are often confused with "natural" signs of ageing. Though diagnostic rates are improving, the disease remains poorly understood, even amongst sections of the medical community, and many patients live with symptoms that their near ones find difficult to understand. If it is successful in larger trials, the blood test developed by the AIIMS researchers could be a step towards easing the predicaments of the caregivers and giving patients a life of dignity.

Last year, another study by AIIMS Delhi researchers in collaboration with 18 other institutes in the country and the University of South California estimated that 7.4 per cent of senior citizens in India suffer from dementia. With the population of the elderly growing in the next decade, the disease could affect close to 1.7 crore Indians by 2035, the study warned. India needs a healthcare strategy for its elderly. The blood test developed by AIIMS researchers could be a key part of it.

BARCELONA MISFIRE

Anti-tourism protests should set their sights, instead, on authorities who fail to prioritise locals' needs

BARCELONA, MIGUEL DE Cervantes's "archives of courtesy, shelter of the foreigners", has changed in the four centuries since he wrote that memorable description in *Don Quixote*. Recently, the city of Antonio Gaudi, Pablo Picasso and one of the world's best-known football clubs showcased a unique — and troubling — response to the overwhelming number of visitors it gets every year: At a massive rally last weekend, organised to draw attention to the problem of over-tourism, several protestors chanting "tourists go home" used squirt guns to drench unsuspecting diners at al fresco restaurants.

Poorly conceived as this particular form of protest was, it also had the wrong target in its crosshairs. For years — since before the pandemic, in fact — Barcelona residents have complained about their beautiful city becoming unlivable due to overcrowding, skyrocketing rents and the soaring cost of living. These are serious issues, but are tourists — who contribute up to 14 per cent of the city's GDP and on whom about 1,50,000 local jobs are dependent — really to blame for this? If squirt guns are to be used as tools of protest, they are better aimed at local authorities who, through poor or no regulation and laws that prioritise tourists over locals, have contributed to stoking resentments.

Around the world, tourist hotspots, from Venice and Athens to Kyoto and Bali, are finding ways to keep visitors from disrupting local life, including raising tourist fees and setting daily limits on the number of visitors to a particular spot. If the tourists in Barcelona who got sprayed in the face while having a drink or a churro stay away in the future, as do those who are unsettled by the treatment meted out by angry locals, the protestors would have achieved their objective. It would, however, come at the cost of tarnishing the city's reputation and ultimately hobbling its economy.

RIGHTING A WRONG

SC verdict on alimony for Muslim women enables larger fight for equality, justice



ZAKIA SOMAN

IN A LANDMARK judgment, the Supreme Court has ruled that a divorced Muslim woman can seek alimony from her husband under section 125 of the Code of Criminal Code (CrPC). We have travelled a significant distance from the Shah Bano case in 1985 to this verdict by the bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and A G Masih. It dismissed the husband's petition challenging a Telangana High Court direction to pay his wife monthly maintenance of Rs 20,000 after divorce. This is a progressive step towards the inclusion of vulnerable minority women citizens. Muslim women have suffered legal discrimination in matters of marriage and family in the absence of reformed and codified personal laws.

Why are we celebrating this judgment? Section 125 has existed since 1973. Upholding pluralism is important in a secular democracy. This includes a diversity of personal laws. But we must not confuse diversity with unjust patriarchal practices. There is nothing laudatory or "personal" about the subjugation of women and violation of their rights. The Quran emphasises maintenance to be provided to the wife after divorce. However, husbands often continue to look for loopholes. This happened in the case of Shah Bano. Her husband refused to pay the maintenance granted by the court.

The conservative clergy and other leaders jumped on the bandwagon to defend personal laws and against the imposition of secular laws on Muslims. They called it interference in Shariat and thereby, a violation of minority rights. The Rajiv Gandhi-led government came under pressure and overturned through legislation the ruling that granted maintenance to Shah Bano. A separate Shariat-com-

pliant law was hastily enacted to provide maintenance to divorced Muslim women. The BJP began to accuse Congress of Muslim appeasement. In a sense, the Shah Bano episode kickstarted the politics of religious division.

In seven decades since Independence, no government felt obliged to enable Muslim women to attain legal parity with their Hindu and Christian counterparts who enjoy the protection of reformed personal laws enacted by Parliament. No government felt the need to fulfil its constitutional obligation of upholding gender justice. As though granting legal rights to Muslim women would go against the principles of secularism!

Indian Muslims are governed by Shariat Application Act, 1937. This law is archaic. It merely states that Shariat will decide all personal law matters for Muslims. While Muslims are ostensibly governed by Shariat, in reality, unjust and unfair practices based on arbitrary interpretations prevail. Several important issues lack legal clarity. Patriarchal interpretations decide matters such as age of marriage, divorce, maintenance, polygamy, *halala*, custody and guardianship of children, share in property and inheritance and *muta* marriages. Islamic concepts of consent and *mahr* are diluted in practice.

Muslim marriage is a contract. But most women don't possess a copy of their *nikah-nama* and are unaware of their rights. There is a sense prevalent of the husband being superior in marital relationships.

The dominant conservative clergy have resisted reform. "Islam gave rights to women 1,400 years ago," they say. But are these rights available to women? Anyone who raises such

questions is demonised. Calls for reform are dismissed as the handiwork of those serving Western ways of thinking or these days, Hindutva. In this scenario, Muslim women continue to be denied their Quranic rights as well as constitutional rights.

We live in an era of religious polarisation. The condition of Muslim women is used to portray the community negatively. On the other hand, many Muslims are living with a sense of fear and insecurity. They are hardly in a position to appreciate this progressive verdict. The orthodoxy would club it with the ongoing onslaught on Muslim identity and dismiss it as unwarranted. The silver lining is that a large number of people within the community also welcome this judgment. There is a greater consciousness about rights among women and their families. The movement against instant triple talaq received support from the community after it was highlighted that it does not enjoy Quranic sanction.

I am not suggesting that patriarchy has been eradicated from the lives of women who enjoy legal protections vis a vis marriage and family. Social attitudes matter. But an enabling legal framework can support a woman who wishes to fight for justice. The Supreme Court outlawed instant triple talaq in 2017. This judgment is another step towards legal equality for Muslim women. Justice Nagarathna emphasised that maintenance must not be viewed as charity but as a fundamental right. It is a right that transcends religious boundaries.

The writer is a founding member of Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan

JULY 12, 1984, FORTY YEARS AGO

J&K TURMOIL

FOUR NON-CONGRESS CHIEF ministers and leaders of 19 opposition parties met on July 10 to condemn the undemocratic dismissal of former J&K CM, Farooq Abdullah. They also demanded the immediate removal of J&K governor Jagmohan and G M Shah's "defector government". The dissolution of the state assembly and fresh elections are also being called for.

PAKISTAN DENIES ROLE

IN AN INTERVIEW with the *Wall Street Journal*, Pakistan prime minister Zia-ul-Haq denies the

role of Pakistan in training or arming any Sikh terrorists in Punjab. He also added that it was unfair to hold Pakistan accountable for India's internal issues and chided Indira Gandhi for treating India's neighbouring states as members of the union. He said, "My effort is to impress upon her that countries don't interfere in each other's relations."

PM ON IA HIJACKERS

INDIRAGANDHI in an interview said that she was unhappy with Islamabad's decision to not return the hijackers of the Indian Airlines Airbus nor put them on trial. She also added that no Indian representatives were allowed to

speak directly with the hijackers. Gandhi said that India had rejected all demands of the hijackers and was unclear as to what assurances they had been given by Pakistan.

NO ENTRY FOR JATHAS

THE GOVERNMENT WILL not permit entry of the shaheedi jathas of the Akalis into the Golden Temple complex. Security forces have been stationed to intercept the movement of the jathas at their places of origin. The state governor, K T Satarawala, and his advisors will be having a meeting to discuss a plan of action for the Akali threat — the jathas are sent to "liberate" the Golden Temple from the Army.



11 THE IDEAS PAGE

Don't blame the Opposition

Legislative institutions do not belong only to government, Opposition is an equal stakeholder. And disruption is not Parliament's biggest problem



MANISH TEWARI

I HAVE GREAT personal respect for Harivansh, the Deputy Chairperson of the Council of States, but I beg to disagree and differ with his piece entitled 'A Mockery of Parliament?' (IE, July 10).

The endemic problems that plague Parliament are far more serious and deep-rooted than just the issue of disruptions that he has attempted to flag and the regrettably specious attempt to lay the blame entirely at the door of the Opposition.

The fundamental question that presiding officers and senior members of both the Houses need to address themselves to is the accelerated devaluation of our legislative institutions, including Parliament, and their intensifying irrelevance to the national discourse. Disruptions alone are not the cause of this.

The first Lok Sabha met for 135 days in a year and the Rajya Sabha in the decade of the 1950s convened for 93 days. In the next decade and a half, Parliament met for an average of 120 days in a year. This number came down to 70 days in a year from 1971 onwards. The 17th Lok Sabha (2019-2024) met for only 55 days in a year. Does this decline in the number of sitting days not warrant the attention of the respective presiding officers and other senior members of both Houses? Is it that there is less legislative business to be transacted today than when the first Lok Sabha sat, or is it that the government finds it inconvenient to have Parliament meet for four and a half months a year?

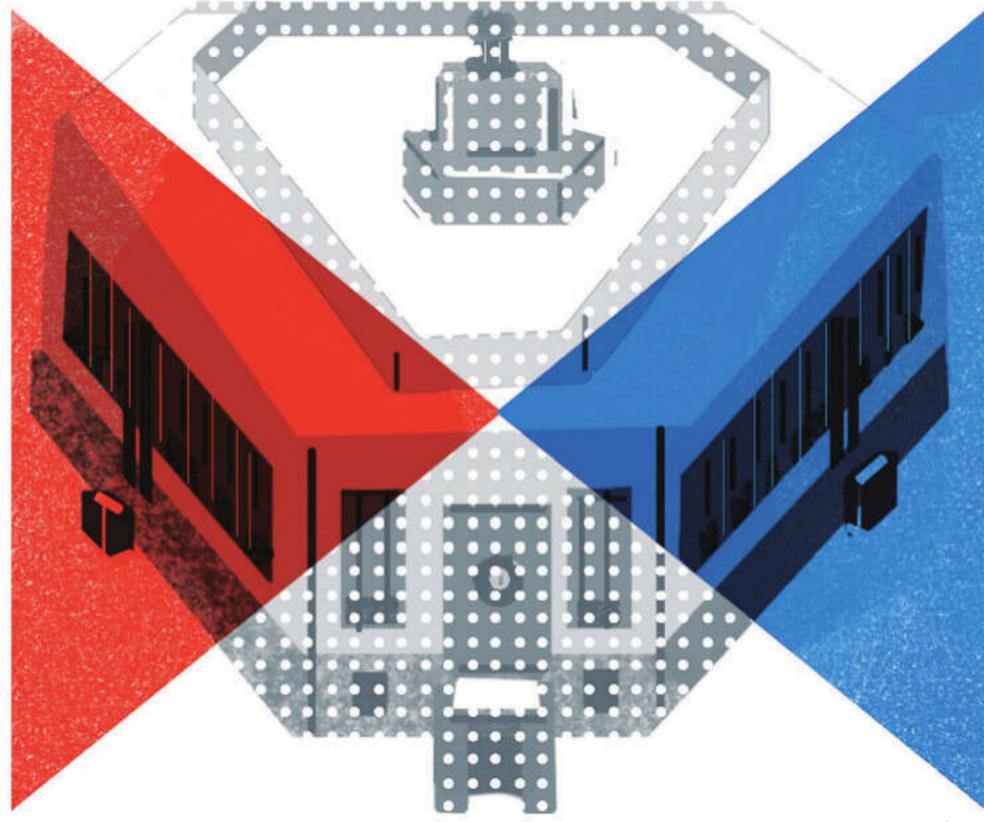
The Tenth Schedule of the Constitution, colloquially called the Anti-Defection Law, has completely failed in its intended objective, that is, to stop defections. All that it has done is to transform defections from a retail activity into a wholesale business. Nothing demonstrates this more eloquently than the manner in which successive state governments have been toppled in the past decade with impunity.

At the same time, the Anti-Defection Law has sucked democracy out of the legislative institutions. It is axiomatic that while MPs to the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha are elected by their respective electors it is the ubiquitous "whip" that runs their legislative lives.

No longer are parliamentarians and legislators free to exercise their voting preferences according to their conscience, constituency and common sense, as is the case in every legislative democracy of consequence in the world.

The essence of the argument is that the elusive "golden mean" has to be discovered between the freedom of expression, that includes the right to vote freely in legislative institutions as guaranteed by Article 105(1) of the Constitution of India, and the stability of governments that are dependent on having a majority in their respective legislatures. Is this not an issue germane enough to occupy the collective mind space of the presiding officers of Parliament and various legislatures across the country, including other stakeholders in the democratic process? I had moved two Private Members' Bills in the 15th & 17th Lok Sabhas, respectively, on this question.

In 1993 Parliamentary Standing Committees were instituted to aid Parliament in its legislative and financial re-



CR Sasikumar

mit. In the 16th & 17th Lok Sabhas the number of bills that were referred to the Standing Committees for examination has declined considerably. Some independent researchers put the bills referred to the Standing Committee at a figure of 45 per cent of the total bills introduced in Parliament in the past two decades. Is this diminishment in the role of Parliamentary Standing Committees not an issue that should collectively concern the presiding officers and other senior members of both the houses of Parliament?

Coming to disruptions, which was the burden of Harivansh's article, it is undoubtedly an issue that should cause distress to every Member of Parliament and state legislator across the country. However, selective indignation is not the answer. It would be worth recalling that the current ruling dispensation, when they were in the Opposition, did not allow former prime minister Manmohan Singh to speak even on the vote of confidence moved by him in the July of 2008. They waved currency notes in the Lok Sabha, plunging the dignity of the House to a new nadir. The former prime minister had to lay his speech on the table of the Lok Sabha.

The 15th Lok Sabha (2009-14) saw two whole sessions wiped out by the current ruling dispensation when they were in the Opposition, the first being the winter session of 2010 on the "illusory" CAG report on allotment of 2G telecom licenses and spectrum, and the second being the monsoon session of 2012. The Janata Dal (United) was for a substantive part of that time an alliance partner of the BJP that orchestrated and perpetuated these parliamentary disruptions.

If my memory serves me correctly, wasn't it the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Rajya Sabha, late Arun Jaitley, who coined and gave currency to the doctrine

"Parliamentary obstructionism is a part of legitimate parliamentary tactics..." He further went on to say, "When Parliament is used to ignore issues then obstruction of Parliament is in the favour of democracy". His colleague, LoP in the Lok Sabha, late Sushma Swaraj, was even more voluble. On September 12, 2012, she said: "Not allowing Parliament to function is a form of democracy like any other form..." It begs a question: What was good for the goose for 10 years is not good for the gander subsequently?

To lay the blame for disruptions in the Lok Sabha at the door of the Leader of Opposition, especially when his maiden speech was interrupted repeatedly by senior ministers of the government, given the past conduct of the ruling dispensation when they were in the Opposition, is a bit rich, to put it very mildly.

Finally, is it appropriate for presiding officers to raise polarising issues that attained quietus and closure decades ago? I leave it to their wisdom and sagacity to decide. Does it facilitate the smooth functioning of Parliament, is something they should reflect upon.

Legislative institutions do not belong to the government. The Opposition is an equal stakeholder. It has to be provided space to articulate its concerns and there are mechanisms to do so, as I had suggested to the presiding officer in an informal conversation.

Disruption of Parliament is eminently avoidable but it is the responsibility of the government to run the House efficiently by agreeing to debate issues that may be inconvenient for the government. The continuing transgression by China across the LAC for four years running and the situation in Manipur are just two current examples.

The writer is a lawyer, Congress MP & former I&B minister

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WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"This is no longer the time for radical posturing. Given the current political balance of power, neither the left nor the right have the means to fundamentally transform French society."
— LE MONDE, FRANCE

For J&K, better days lie ahead

From abrogation of Article 370 to Pakistan's diminishing geopolitical importance, five reasons why violence is declining in the state



M N SABHARWAL AND MANISH SABHARWAL

POET FAIZ AHMAD Faiz's lines, "Qatal gahon se chun kar hamare alam, Aur niklne ushaak ke quaffle (the caravan of patriots will march collecting the flags from the hands of martyrs on the battlefield)", remind us that the most valuable tribute to the 1,608 J&K Police, 511 CRPF officers and thousands of other force bravehearts martyred fighting terrorists since 1989 is the massive decline in Valley terrorism since 2019. As the fifth anniversary of Article 370's abrogation approaches, let's honour their memory — and that of the army jawans killed in Jammu region this week — by remembering the five reasons for better prospects for peace (*Aman ki Alamat*) in J&K:

This Mahabharata's advice of *Dharmo Rakshati Rakshitah* (the system protects those who protect the system) was ignored by J&K's politicians because special constitutional status allowed a divergence between what they said and did. The abrogation of Article 370 answers the 1950s call in Parliament by Syama Prasad Mookerjee of "Ek desh me do vidhan, do pradhan, do nishan nahin challenge" (One nation cannot accept two constitutions, two heads of state and two flags).

This Article greatly contributed to keeping J&K's politics oligopolistic, dynastic, and stale. We remember the hopes that filled our hearts with the 1996, 2002, 2008, and 2014 election victories, but we were left disappointed. Future J&K elections will be held under the Indian Constitution and have new electoral thresholds, ballot structures, and context. This abrogation helps new politicians and parties who use the "civilised civil war" of democracy to convert conflicts into trade-offs through a new slate of ideas that blunt passions, create interests and forge compromise.

The Pakistan military believed cross-border military strikes by India were an impossibility after it tested nuclear bombs. But the Uri and Pulwama responses answered the decades-old prayers of the security leadership in J&K for the hot and cold pursuit of terrorists. Those prayers weren't war-mongering but a recognition that Pakistan's terror factory wouldn't back down without new calculations: No consequences for their J&K Assembly attack in 2001 led to bigger attacks on the Indian Parliament in 2001 and Mumbai in 2008.

These strikes undermined Pakistan's military promise of a gravity-free world. They embodied Nobel Laureate Thomas Schelling's book, *Strategies of Conflict* which highlighted the usefulness of the promise of future pain. India's surgical strikes signal new rules and consequences on internal security strategy.

The false narrative of "jihad" was useful for America in drafting Mujahideen to fight the USSR in Afghanistan. But clearly, the CIA hadn't heard of the myth of Bhasmasur, the demon you create that turns on you. It was only a matter of time before radical Islamists and Wahabists turned their attention to the West. There were early signs; a 1990s US

National Intelligence Council report about Islamic terrorism lamented decisive action against them felt unviable till a "domestic Pearl Harbour".

Our warnings about terrorist plans to attack the US on home ground were dismissed as self-interest and their ignorance about the terror infrastructure and Pakistan's intentions was negligent. Sadly, it took the 9/11 attacks on America to recognise the dangers of radical Islam and galvanise action on global financing, training, propaganda, and weapons trade fuelling terrorism. India's position on cross-border terrorism is no longer lonely or unique. This makes Pakistan's strategy and actions untenable.

Pakistan's geopolitical importance — 1960s Cold War defence treaties, 1970s brokering of US-China reconciliation, and 1980s Afghan Mujahideen support — greatly diminished with the 9/11 US terrorist attacks, Osama Bin Laden's role, and US-China rivalry. Internal anger is also rising against Pakistan's economically-incompetent garrison state weaponising Islam and sabotaging mass prosperity. Its per capita GDP is lower than Bangladesh and total GDP is lower than Maharashtra.

The garrison state's political and social control tools are formidable — including imprisoning poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz for many years — but Article 370 abrogation strengthens the case for Pakistan's *awaam* choosing *ittihad* (friendship) over military-sponsored "jihad".

The path to a more normal democracy in Pakistan is unclear, but its rising internal and external weakness diminishes its ability to get away with murder. Every country is an "antarlaapika" — a riddle in which the answer lies within the riddle — and Pakistan's *awaam* must send its military back to the barracks.

India created the world's largest democracy after 1947 but failed to deliver mass prosperity. This is changing.

A massive renovation of India's intellectual, security, financial, diplomatic, investment, welfare and economic infrastructure is underway. India is now the fifth-largest economy and will soon be third after China and America. In recent years, we have exported more software than Saudi Arabia did oil; this gives our military a massive edge in a digital world where the distinction between military and civilian technology is eroding.

The most significant change is a new political tone from the top — we don't have to be Western to be modern, we have zero tolerance for terrorism, and India@100 must be a developed country. India's soft and hard power are changing Pakistan's *niyat* (intentions), calculations, and options.

Historian Herodotus warned us thousands of years ago, "In peace, sons bury their fathers. In war, fathers bury their sons." The Kashmiri expression "Saadi saet lughin ya laetmitch" (start of seven and a half) is rooted in the myth of "Budhshervaar" (a lousy period for seven and half years) that occurs a maximum of three times in one life.

In recent decades, too many parents of uniformed bravehearts and civilians in J&K have needlessly buried their children. The recent decline in Valley violence represents the possibilities of what is called *Saadi Set Nairin* (end of seven and a half) in Kashmiri. Better days lie ahead. *Aman Ki Alamat*.

M N Sabharwal is former Director General of J&K Police and CRPF. Manish Sabharwal is an entrepreneur. Their forthcoming book is Kashmir Under 370



AJAY VIR JAKHAR

Note to Krishi Bhawan

Design of new agri policy must sidestep past errors, be mindful of challenge of change

THE TENURE OF the new Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, starts from a place of policy paralysis. He can neither shrug off the decisions taken by his predecessors or the legacy he inherits at Krishi Bhawan. His primary challenge is to regain the trust of the farmer. The manner in which the three farm laws were rolled out and how the establishment engaged with the agitators has left a bitter aftertaste. It will need sensitive handling that should begin with the scrapping of the infamous MSP committee formed in the aftermath of the farm laws.

India has not had an agriculture policy for decades unlike the US, the EU and China, who change their policy at frequent intervals. The commissioning of a new policy is in order and, during that process, the minister will gain time to get a grip on things. The policy will have to change tack on multiple fronts, beginning with pragmatically designing for "strategic autonomy" rather than targeting "self-sufficiency" in agricultural production. It must be appreciated that when it comes to Indian agriculture, what is true for the whole is rarely true for its parts. Some of

this is attributed to the diverse agro-climatic regions in the country and the federal structure under which policy works.

The Union Minister will soon realise that central government policy is restricted by the fact that agriculture and land are in the domain of the states; animal husbandry and fisheries where real growth is visible are separate ministries; the budgetary allocations are controlled by the Ministry of Finance; and an outdated inflation policy is dictated by the RBI. The gods have been kind to the Narendra Modi government as India has not faced a major drought in the last 10 years, but the odds of one in the next five years cannot be ruled out. Chouhan's task might not be easy.

The other big challenge for the minister is to convince the government and the RBI to change their methodology of targeting inflation. In developed countries, where central banks use the consumer price index to measure and control inflation, food constitutes a small portion of the expenditure basket, while wages impact it far more. But, in developing nations like India, food constitutes about 40 per cent of the basket.

In trying to protect the consumer, RBI's actions are constantly putting explicit and implicit pressure on the government to act on food prices, which leads to a spiral of lower farmgate prices.

How does this impact 42 per cent of India's population, dependent on agriculture for its livelihoods? Consider government actions around non-essential commodities like onion, which expose its convoluted policies and why the idea of improving farmer livelihoods by doubling their incomes is difficult. A family of four consumes about 15 kg of onion a month. If the price spikes by Rs 20 per kg, the monthly budget of the family rises by only Rs 300 per month. While artificially subduing (through stock-holding limit, export restrictions etc.) farmgate prices by Rs 20 per kg leads to a loss of Rs 2,00,000 per acre for every farmer growing onions (assuming the yield to be 100 quintals/acre). Considering on an average an onion farmer cultivates about two acres of land, the order of magnitude is astounding.

It is neither the responsibility of the farmer to provide cheap food nor is it justified for the RBI to sacrifice farmers at the altar of

inflation targeting. The government should roll out a mechanism to compensate farmers when its policies depress farmgate prices. Additionally, with the RBI, it can devise methods of softening the impact of rise in the price of food by direct benefit transfers (DBT) or coupons and other such for consumers. DBT has its share of issues, but is not uncommon.

The history of the ministries that impact farmer livelihoods is replete with a spate of forced policy errors and missed opportunities. Policymakers balk at documenting policy failures and fight back against changes that seek to improve regulation, enforcement, governance, transparency and accountability. Refusal to document failures means sowing the seeds of yet other policy missteps.

Policy makers should pay heed to the lessons learnt from the farm: There are no perfect solutions, there never were any. For the ministry, the big question is: What is the level of imperfection the Union Minister is willing to settle for?

The writer is chairman, Bharat Krishak Samaj

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CURIOUS TIMING

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Message to Moscow' (IE, July 11). Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Russia visit was particularly upsetting because of its timing, which coincided with a missile attack by Russia on a children's hospital in Ukraine, destroying essential healthcare facilities for the most vulnerable. India attended the recent peace summit in Switzerland, refrained from signing the communique and made a clear call for Russia to be at the table. PM Modi also met Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and renewed ties with G7. Some image management is overdue.
Sanjay Chopra, Mohali

TO COOL DOWN

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'It's heating up' (IE, July 11). The impact of climate change is climbing by the day. The worst affected are the poor and migrant workers. Mitigating climate change will take time and effort. The government should try to inculcate adaptation strategies like climate-resilient infrastructure and the construction of cool warehouses for informal workers to reduce heat stress. We need climate-conscious infrastructure.
S Haritha Rao, Hyderabad

THE NEW COACH

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Coach Gambhir' (IE, July 11). During Gautam Gambhir's three-and-a-half-years' tenure, India will take part in three ICC trophies, the 2025 Champions Trophy, the 2026 T20 World Cup and the 2027 ODI World Cup. Gambhir is the youngest coach in the history of Indian cricket. He is known to support players in expressing themselves, which is critical. His first goal should be to win over the dressing room and gain their confidence.
Bal Govind, Noida

RIGHT PRECEDENT

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Muslim women can seek maintenance from husband under CrPC' (IE, July 11). The verdict underscored the principle that maintenance is not a form of charity but a fundamental right of all married women, irrespective of their religion. The Court has taken a significant step towards gender justice and equality in India. This ruling not only upholds constitutional principles but also strengthens the social and economic security of Muslim women setting a precedent for future cases.
SS Paul, Nadia

12 EXPRESS NETWORK

US envoy: There is no such thing as 'strategic autonomy' in times of conflict

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, JULY 11



No war is distant anymore: US envoy Eric Garcetti

UNDERLINING THAT "no war is distant anymore", US ambassador to India Eric Garcetti said Thursday there is no such thing as strategic autonomy in times of conflict.

Garcetti, who was speaking at the Defence News Conclave organised by CUTS International, said: "I respect that India likes its strategic autonomy, but in times of conflict, there is no such thing as strategic autonomy. We will, in crisis moments, need to know each other. I don't care what title we put to it, but we will need to know that we are trusted friends... that in times of need in the next day be acting together, that we'll know each other's equipment, that we know each other's training, we'll know each other's systems, and we'll know each other as human beings as well."

He said, "Now is distant anymore, and we must not just stand for peace. We must take concrete actions to make sure those who don't play by peaceful rules that their war machines cannot continue unabated. That's something the US needs to know and that India needs to know together."

His comments come days after PM Narendra Modi's embrace of Russian President Vladimir

Putin sparked criticism from Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

The US State Department has been expressing its concerns about India's ties with Russia.

"The past three years, we've witnessed countries who ignore certain borders. I don't have to remind India how important borders are. That's the central principle to peace in our world... Together the world's two largest democracies can enhance security, stability of our region," he said.

Garcetti also touched upon the Indian sensitivity to US criticism on issues, and said: "I've been trying to impress upon Americans, because this relationship in Washington is a special one... But as I also remind my Indian friends, while... it is deeper than it's ever been, it is not yet deep enough if we take it for granted."

He said "our heads and hearts are aligned" but question is can the two countries "move the feet together" and build that continued deep trust and have outcomes that meet security threats of this moment.

NEET-UG case: CBI nabs key accused, gets 10-day custody

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, JULY 11



Rakesh Ranjan alias Rocky was arrested from Patna outskirts

THE CENTRAL Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Thursday arrested one of the alleged kingpins in connection with the NEET-UG paper leak case from the outskirts of Patna, according to a source.

The accused identified as Nalanda resident Rakesh Ranjan alias Rocky was produced before a special court in Patna which remanded him in 10 days of CBI custody.

Rocky, who was on the CBI radar for days, had been absconding and changing hideouts frequently after the crackdown was started on irregularities in the entrance exam.

"The accused identified as Rakesh Ranjan alias Rocky, who hails from Nalanda, and is said to be a relative of mastermind Sanjeev Mukhia, was arrested by the CBI from the outskirts of Patna. The CBI had been trailing him since the case came to the agency and he was changing his hideouts frequently. With the help of technical surveillance, the CBI found his exact location and arrested him in the early morning," a source said.

The agency produced him before a special court in Patna which has remanded him to 10 days of CBI custody.

After his arrest, four CBI

teams conducted searches at four locations linked to Ranjan in Patna, nearby areas and one in Kolkata.

"Earlier this week, the CBI had conducted searches at 15 locations in Bihar and Jharkhand from where they found incriminating evidence in the case," the source said.

The agency had earlier arrested the principal and vice principal of Jharkhand's

Hazaribagh-based Oasis school in connection with the case and two people who allegedly had lent the premises to NEET candidates where burnt question papers were recovered by the Bihar Police.

The CBI, which is probing the alleged irregularities in the medical entrance exam, has registered six FIRs in the matter so far.

The FIR from Bihar pertains to paper leaks, while the remaining, from Gujarat, Rajasthan and Maharashtra, are linked to the impersonation of candidates and cheating. The agency's own FIR on a reference from the Union Education Ministry pertains to a "comprehensive investigation" into the alleged irregularities in the exam.

WITH PTI INPUTS

Aspirants meets education minister, raise uncertainty over entrance test

New Delhi: Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Thursday met some NEET aspirants at his residence, amid a raging row over alleged irregularities in the conduct of the medical entrance exam this year.

According to sources, the students raised issues like the uncertainty prevailing over the fate of the exam which was

conducted in May, the delay in the counselling process and ultimately the academic calendar.

While there have been demand for a retest, education ministry has maintained the incidents of paper leak were localised, and by cancelling the exam it cannot jeopardise the careers of lakhs of candidates who cleared the test fairly. PTI

NASA ex-astronaut dubs India's space missions 'audacious'

NARAYANAN S KOCHI, JULY 11



Former NASA astronaut Steve Smith at the conclave in Kochi on Thursday

HIGHLIGHTING the Mars Orbiter Mission and Chandrayaan-3, former NASA astronaut Steve Smith has hailed India's space programme as audacious and something every Indian should be proud of.

Speaking at India's first International GenAI Conclave in Kochi Thursday, which was inaugurated by Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan, Smith, a veteran of four space flights covering 16 million miles and seven spacewalks, praised India's Mars Orbiter Mission (2013-14), known as Mangalyaan.

"It was the first time a country ever made it successfully to another planet on first attempt. All of you should be proud of it," said Smith during a session 'Lessons Learned from A Skywalker'.

Talking about ISRO successfully soft-landing Chandrayaan-3 on the lunar south pole last year, Smith said, "What makes India's moon mission spectacular is the fact that in the next 11 months after that, four other missions to the lunar south pole failed: one each by Japan, Russia, and two private US spacecraft."

Touching upon ISRO's Gagan-yaan mission, he said, "India will send astronauts to space now. I was told that one of them is from

Kerala." He was referring to astronaut-designate Group Captain Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair, who hails from Palakkad.

Smith, who recalled his friendship with Indian-born US astronaut Kalpana Chawla, also cited his experience of being rejected four times by NASA when he applied for its astronaut programme. He also recalled a near-death experience at the age of 15 when he had internal bleeding that led to medical flight disqualifications from the Air Force and NASA and four rejections from the Astronaut Corps.

Driving home the message to set audacious goals, he cited the example of SpaceX founder Elon Musk. "A South African immigrant came to NASA 15 years ago and said I can reduce cost of launching a rocket by 50 to 85%... NASA's reaction was to laugh. Here we are, 15 years later, Musk has done exactly that," he said.

Vizhinjam port welcomes 1st mothership

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JULY 11



Container ship MV San Fernando reaches Vizhinjam international seaport near Thiruvananthapuram, Thursday.

INDIA'S FIRST deepwater transshipment port, the Vizhinjam international seaport near Thiruvananthapuram, on Thursday received its first mothership.

The MV San Fernando, carrying 2,000 containers, was given a grand welcome at the port. The berthing of the ship was part of a trial run at the port before it is slated to open for commercial operations.

Before the 300-metre-long Marshall Island-flagged container ship berthed at the port Thursday morning, tug boats gave it a water salute. The ship, operated by

Bernhard Schulte Ship Management, Singapore, was hired by Maersk (AP Moller Group). It arrived from the Xiamen port in China. On Friday, the state government will hold an official recep-

tion for the ship, which will leave for Colombo after unloading around 1,900 containers.

"This event signifies a monumental moment in Kerala's maritime history and stands as

a testament to unwavering commitment of Left Democratic Front government to the state's development... Vizhinjam Port will create over 5,000 direct job opportunities and significantly boost the industry, commerce, transportation, and tourism sectors," Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan said in a post on X.

The Rs 7,600-crore transshipment deepwater multipurpose seaport project in Vizhinjam is being executed by Adani Ports and SEZ Private Ltd on a design, build, finance, operate and transfer (DBFOT) model.

Vizhinjam is the first international deepwater transshipment port in the Indian subcontinent, with a natural depth of more than 18 m, scalable up to 20 m.

Stampede-like situation as over 1,000 arrive for 40 vacancies in Gujarat firm, police start probe

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE SURAT, JULY 11



Outside the job interview venue in Ankleshwar. Screengrab/X

THE BHARUCH Police has launched a suo motu probe into a stampede-like situation when on July 9 around 1,000 people turned up for walk-in interviews held by a firm for 40 vacancies at Ankleshwar in the district.

In the video of the incident, aspirants can be seen trying to get a foothold on a ramp leading to the entrance of a hotel in Ankleshwar where the interview was being held. The railing of the ramp collapsed. No one was injured. As per

the advertisement, Tharmax Limited was to fill vacancies of shift in charge, plant operator, supervisor-CDS, fitter-mechanical

and executive-ETP at its new plant in Jhagadia industrial area. Company officials could not be contacted for a comment.

Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, said Thursday the "disease of unemployment" has taken the form of an epidemic in India, and alleged BJP-ruled states have become the "epicentre of this disease". In a post in Hindi on X, he said, "The future of India's standing in queues for a common job is the reality of Narendra Modi's 'Amrit Kaal'."

MOs for Home Harsh Sanghavi said on X, "A viral video from Ankleshwar is attempting to defame Gujarat. The walk-in interview ad clearly states experienced candidates are needed, implying they are already employed."

NEWSCLICK CASE

After 2 months, cops receive replies from Singham's business partner, one other

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL NEW DELHI, JULY 11



US-based businessman Neville Roy Singham

OVER TWO months after summoning five persons to join investigation in a terror case against NewsClick Editor Prabr Purkayastha, Delhi Police Special Cell has received replies from US-based businessman Neville Roy Singham's business partner Jason Pletcher and think tank Tricontinental's executive director Vijay Prashad.

The five people who were issued notices in April by the Special Cell were Singham, Pletcher, Prashad and two NewsClick journalists, Anand Mangnale and Pawan Kulkarni. "In his reply, Prashad informed he is currently abroad and will join after he returns to India. Mangnale had already informed them he is out of the country for work and will inform them when he will be back. Kulkarni's health is not well," the source said. They have not received a reply from Singham so far, a source said.

On May 15, the Supreme Court said that Purkayastha's arrest was invalid and a Delhi court granted him bail in connection with the case lodged under the UAPA provisions following allegations that "they received funds through Chinese firms to spread pro-China propaganda".

"Police found in their probe that a company Worldwide Media Holding LLC, USA was incorporated by Pletcher, with 100% equity of People Support Foundation (Jodie Evans, wife of Singham is a director) in November, 2017. Pletcher's reply was received in an email and the investigation officer was informed that a private foundation,

People's Support Foundation Ltd, was created by them and all funds donated to PSF came from the sale of ThoughtWorks. Their private foundation PSF never received funds from any foreign government," the source said.

In its chargesheet, the Delhi Police said Singham and Purkayastha prepared a "service agreement" with Tricontinental Ltd. The chargesheet said: "...Email communications between Singham, Vijay Prashad, Prabr and their associates established that Singham was actively pursuing the China line on Covid-19, despite mounting criticism of the same from the international community. Singham is seen clearly nudging Prabr and the PPK NewsClick team to peddle the Chinese version..."

It also said that Singham, his associate Pletcher and partner Jodi Evans, created a web of organisations — Worldwide Media Holdings, Justice & Education Fund, Inc. and People's Support Foundation — to infuse funds into NewsClick.

"The incorporations of the offshore entities is indicative of the deepening bond between Singham and Prabr and the felt need to infuse greater funds into India with the progressive expansion of their unlawful agenda which included stoking and sustaining recent Delhi riots, disinformation campaign on Covid-19, stoking farmer's protest and outright terror funding of banned LWE and Pak sponsored Kashmiri terrorist organisations," chargesheet said.

Actor arrested for 'restraining minister's movement' in Goa

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE PANAJI, JULY 11

GOA POLICE arrested actor Gaurav Bakshi on Thursday, a day after he allegedly had a brief confrontation with the personal secretary officer (PSO) of Fisheries Minister Nilkanth Halarnkar over a parking issue. He was arrested for "restraining the minister's movement".

According to police, constable Rohan Parab, who is attached to Security Unit Panaji and is Halarnkar's PSO, lodged a complaint at Colvale police station.

The complaint said around 4 pm Wednesday, Halarnkar was distributing coconut saplings as part of an official function at Revora panchayat. According to the complaint, Bakshi "wrongfully restrained" the minister by parking his ve-

hicle in front of the minister's government vehicle. Despite requests, the actor refused to move his vehicle, thereby restraining their movement and deterring "the complainant from performing his lawful duties", the complaint said.

He has been booked under sections 126(2), 221 and 132 of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. Police said they found Bakshi had previously been booked in four criminal cases in Goa.

In a statement Thursday released before his arrest, Bakshi claimed he was being "viciously targeted" for "standing against corruption".

Halarnkar had earlier told *The Indian Express* that on Wednesday, when he was at the panchayat event in Revora, Bakshi started arguing with his driver and PSO and refused to move his car.

After elopement and boycott, uneasy truce in two Haryana villages

AISWARYA RAJ NARNAUL, JULY 11

FOR NEARLY a month, all eyes were on the road connecting Dholera and Bighpur, two villages that are 2 km apart in Haryana's Narnaul. Since June 12, all Bighpur residents spotted on the way to the bank, the post office or the bus stand — common for both villages — were turned away "for the sake of maintaining peace".

For nearly a month after a woman from Dholera village fell in love and eloped with a man from Bighpur, her village instituted a boycott of their neighbours, upset over their "unacceptable" marriage. In several parts of Haryana, marriages between residents of neighbouring villages are "banned" by diktat.

The boycott was finally lifted on July 9 after the newlyweds were turned away and the man was publicly disowned by his family. With that, the two sides

managed to forge a tentative truce, but however tensions and disapprovals run high.

Late on June 9, Bighpur's Vikas Yadav, 26, and Dholera's Praveena Yadav, 21, ran away from home and tied the knot at an Arya Samaj temple in Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad, 243 km away. Residents of Dholera and Bighpur villages say the couple first met at the common bus stop from where they commuted to Narnaul. Praveena, the first in her family to attend college, is a second-year BSc student at a Narnaul college, while Vikas is preparing for government exams at a coaching institute there.

SHO Govind Singh said that on June 9, the day the couple eloped, Praveena's father Sanjay, 47, filed an FIR against Vikas under several IPC sections related to wrongful confinement.

Three days later, Praveena petitioned the court of the Judicial Magistrate, saying she feared for their safety, following which the couple were sent to a "safe house" at the Narnaul



Residents of Bighpur village in Haryana were not allowed to enter Dholera village for nearly a month. Praveen Khanna

Police Lines. *The Indian Express* reached out to the couple, but they were unavailable for a comment.

Angry over the developments, the Dholera panchayat met on June 12 and decided to impose a ban on residents of Bighpur.

"The couple's actions led to the June 12 ban," says Dholera

sarpanch Devinder Kumar, 25.

As part of the ban, Bighpur residents arriving in Dholera village for anything, "even to buy medicines", were turned away. Eleven shops in the village owned by Bighpur residents too remained out of bounds for their owners during this time. Also, since Bighpur residents couldn't use the bus stand they

shared with Dholera, they were forced to walk till the main road, a few kilometres away. "Even school children suffered since buses are shared by those from both villages," says Bighpur's Subhash, 30, who owns a general store in Dholera. He adds the boycott cost him "Rs 30,000, his entire month's income".

The boycott was finally lifted after personnel from Nizampur police station asked both sides to patch up. SHO Govind Singh says, "We told Dholera residents that they cannot ban on Bighpur-based shop owners from entering the village. The shops opened on July 10."

Residents from both villages met and decided that the solution lay in Vikas's family disowning him and the couple being asked to stay away. On July 9, Vikas's father Sajjan Singh did so through an affidavit, a copy of which was given to the station house officer (SHO) of Nizampur police station. SHO Singh says, "They just gave me a copy of the affidavit. We never asked for one.

It's not a legal document."

However, the unease remained. Kavar Singh, the father-in-law of the Bighpur sarpanch, says, "Their marriage has tarnished the harmony between our villages. Marriages within a close-knit community like ours will never be tolerated because it is like siblings getting married."

Sitting in stunned silence inside their unpaired, two-room house in Bighpur, Vikas's parents seem less opposed to his marriage. "After I disowned him, both villages reached a compromise. We have nothing to do with them anymore," his father Sajjan Singh, a farmer, tells *The Indian Express*.

Hinting that the boycott forced them to take the decision, his mother Maya, 56, says, "Both of them are adults. The girl left with Vikas willingly. She has also said that she wants to stay with him."

Nearly 2 km away in Dholera village, Praveena's family is equally shaken. Recalling the events of June 9, the day the cou-

ple eloped, her mother Nirmala 42, says Praveena left the house saying that she was going to pat cow dung cakes on the wall.

"I went looking for her, but someone told me that she had gone with Vikas. Then, we got to know that she and Vikas had gone to Jaipur. When they returned to the village two days later, we discovered that they were married," says Nirmala, sitting on the pavement in front of her house.

Maintaining that the couple had "ruined the brotherhood in the villages", Dholera sarpanch Devinder Kumar, 25, says it is up to their parents to decide the future course of action in case they decide to return.

Praveena granduncle Kailash, 65, said the family was willing to "accept her" on one condition — "she needs to change her statement and leave Vikas. We will get her married to someone else to undo the damage".

Praveena's two-storey house, wearing a fresh coat of grey paint, stands at the end of a lane

in Bighpur. Her father Sanjay says he got the house renovated in the hopes of finding a "good match" for her. "We did not even know about that boy (Vikas). I would have put an end to it all had I known about it. I sent her to good schools and enrolled her in college. She was a good student, but she won't go back to college now. I met her five times — at the safe house and at the court — but she refused to speak to me. I tried to persuade her, but she insists on staying with the boy," he says, adding that his "brain has stopped working".

Praveena's uncle Kailash places the "blame" squarely on Vikas. "Girls elope in every village and it is not a problem. *Magar taqleef yeh hai ki pados gaon ka ladka hai, bhai hai hamara* (but this boy is like a brother because he is from the neighbouring village). Such a marriage cannot be normalised. They may be from different gotras, but it is still wrong. It might happen in cities, but we don't let it happen here," he says.

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I, Meenu Sharma, d/o Din Dayal Sharma, w/o Rambir Shingh Manhas, R/O 1504-CV4, Supertech Capetown, Sector 74, Noida-201301, have changed my name to Tanvi Manhas, and that I am one and the same person.
0040737912-1

It is for general information that I, HARSHIT BHATIA, S/O Kapil Bhatia, R/O A-99A, Flat-No-10, Rampuri Chander-Nagar, opp-Devika Tower-Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201011, declare that name of my mother has been wrongly written as Deepthi Salwan in my 10th-class and 12th-class marksheet and certificate educational documents. The actual name of my mother is Deepthi Salwan Bhatia. Which may be amended accordingly.
0040737935-2

It is for general information that I, ARNAV BHATIA, S/O Kapil Bhatia, R/O A-99A Flat-No-10, Rampuri Chander-Nagar opp-Devika Tower-Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201011, declare that name of my mother has been wrongly written as Deepthi Salwan in my 10th-class and 12th-class marksheet and certificate educational documents. The actual name of my mother is Deepthi Salwan Bhatia. Which may be amended accordingly.
0040737924-8

It is for general information that I, Shivani Minz D/o Satish Malhotra and Ex. wife of Vinay Minz, R/o 537/1A, Near Gayatri Mandir, Meerapur, Allahabad, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh-211003, declare that I got divorce from my husband Vinay Minz vide court decree No. SMA No. 18/2023 dated 21.09.2023. Further, I have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Shivani Malhotra.
0070912160-1

It is for general information that I, Sarita Ray W/o Debendra Prasad Yadav, R/O Gwalapada, Lamtibahal, Brajrajnagar, Jharsuguda, Odisha-768216, declare that name of my husband and my minor son has been wrongly written as Lal Babu Ray and Sonu Ray Respectively in my minor son Harish Prasad Yadav aged 17 years in his 10th Class School Certificate Cum Marksheet. The actual name of my husband and my minor son are Debendra Prasad Yadav and Harish Prasad Yadav Respectively, which may be amended accordingly.
0070912164-1

I, Sumit S/o Raj Pal R/o C-1/50, Krishan Vihar, Delhi have changed my name to Sumit Verma.
0040737904-8

I, Vinesh S/o-Hariram, R/o-50, Daheliya, Dabehliya, PO Harpalpur, Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh-241402, have changed my name, from Vinesh to Vinesh Kumar, for all, future purpose.
0040737944-6

I, USHA W/O DINESH KUMAR R/O HNO.203, PURANE DAK KHANE KE PASS, HOLAMBI-KALAN, DELHI-110082, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO USHA DEVI.
0040737905-4

I, Tanveer S/o Ashraf Ali, R/O C-1/93 Yamuna Vihar Delhi-110053, have changed my name Tanvir Ashraf, for all purposes.
0040737910-10

I, Sunny S/o-Sunil Kumar, R/o-308,2nd-Floor, Sunlight-Colony-1, KiloKari, New Delhi-110144, have changed my name, from Sunny to Sunny Singh Rajput vide-Affidavit dated-11/07/2024, before New-Delhi.
0040737924-1

I, Sudhangshu Roy S/o Nimai Chandra Roy R/O A-16 Gram Sabha Colony Nilothi Extn Nangloi Delhi 110041 have changed my name to Sudhansu Roy.
0040737944-3

I, Shweta Singh, W/o Shri Pranav Ojha, R/O 06111, Tower No.7, Mahagun Mywoods Gaur City-2, Greater Noida West Uttar Pradesh-201306, have changed my name to Shweta Singh Ojha for all future purposes.
0040737944-5

I, Shiwali Mandla, D/o Satnam Singh and W/o Shiv Kumar R/o VPO-Budhabar, Budha Bar, Hoshiarpur, Punjab-144221, declare that Shivali, and the Shiwali Mandla is the name of the same person, and that is myself and my exact and correct date of birth is-01.10.1997.
0040737904-9

I, Shashi W/o Vinesh Kumar, R/o-50, Daheliya, Dabehliya, PO Harpalpur, Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh-241402, have changed my name, from Shashi to Shashi Yadav, for all, future purpose.
0040737944-7

I, Shashi Diwaker, W/o Naresh Kumar, R/o, J-2-N-113/243, J-2-T, Hous, J.J-Colony, Wazirpur, Delhi-110052, my name is wrongly-mentioned in school-records of my-minor daughter Avani Mathur it would be known, from Shashi to Shashi Diwaker, for all, future purposes.
0040737910-3

I, SURINDER S/O PRAKASH CHAND, residing at M-62, FIRST FLOOR, ABOVE MAIN ROAD, SAKET, DELHI-110017, have changed my name to SURENDER KUMAR, for all, future purposes
0040737828-2

I, SUMAN S/O RAJ KUMAR SONI, R/O, H. NO-A-70A, DUGGAL-COLONY, KHANPUR, Delhi-110062, HAVE changed my name to SUMAN SONI, For all purpose.
0040737910-2

I, SRIJITA BANERJEE, W/O INDRANEEL CHATTERJEE, R/O FLAT, NO-704, TOWER-1, AHINSHA KHAND-II, INDIRAPURAM, GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH-201014, have changed my name to SRIJITA CHATTERJEE.
0040737944-9

I, SONU GULATI, S/O PRITAM SINGH GULATI R/O PLOT.NO.46 SF,BLOCK-G,KIRAN GARDEN,UTTAM-NAGAR,DELHI-110059,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SONU SINGH GULATI.
0040737902-5

I, SEEMA RAMESHAL LALWANI, W/O AMIT KUMAR, R/O-J-901, 9TH-FLOOR, FRENCH APARTMENTS, SECTOR-16B, GREATER NOIDA-WEST, GAUTAMBUDHA-NAGAR U.P.-201307, have changed my name to LALWANI SEEMA, For all purpose.
0040737910-9

I, SAHIL, S/o M.L. ARORA, R/O, H.No.09, GALI No.03 BLOCK-E, NEAR SHIV SHAKTI MANDIR-GOVERDHAN KUNJ BHONDSI GURGAON, HARYANA-122102, have changed my name to Sahil Arora.
0040737935-1

I, Rubeeena, W/o Tanvir Ashraf, R/O C-1/93 Yamuna Vihar Delhi-110053, have changed my name Rubeeena Parween for all purposes.
0040737910-11

I, Ramesh Jindal, S/O Ram Dhari Jindal, R/o H No.C-157, Street.No-07, Bhajanpura, Delhi-110053, have changed my name to RAMESH KUMAR.
0040737902-6

I, Rahul Goel, S/o Subhash Goyal, R/o-163, Deepali, Enclave Pitampura, Delhi-110034, have changed my minor Son name Toraya Goel to Krishiv Goel.
0040737904-1

I, ROBIN D S/O RAJ KUMAR JAIN R/O 521/1, GALI NO.1, UTTAM NAGAR, GOHANA, SONIPAT, HARYANA-131301, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO ROBIN JAIN.
0040737905-1

I, RENU W/O ROBIN JAIN R/O 521/1, GALI NO.1, UTTAM NAGAR, GOHANA, SONIPAT, HARYANA-131301, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO RENU JAIN.
0040737905-2

I, REKHA RANI GARG, W/O SURENDER KUMAR, residing at, M-62, FIRST-FLOOR, ABOVE MAIN ROAD, SAKET, DELHI-110017, have changed my name to REKHA GARG, for all, future purposes
0040737828-1

I, RAJ KUMAR, S/O INDERJEET, H.NO-A-70A, DUGGAL COLONY, KHANPUR, Delhi-110062, HAVE changed my name to RAJ KUMAR SONI, For all purpose.
0040737910-1

I, Pawan Singh S/o Prithvi Singh R/o A-1/68, Sector-18, Rohini, Delhi-110089, have changed my daughter's name from Vanshika to Vanshika Gill for all purposes.
0040737828-1

I, PRIYANKA, W/O Omar Lal, House.No-1532, BLOCK-E, Sainik Colony Sector 49, Faridabad Haryana-121001, have changed my name to PRIYANKA JAGMAMA.
0040737902-4

I, PRASHANT KUMAR PANKAJ, S/O HARERAM PANDEY, R/O TOWER N2, FLAT-704, ROYAL NEST SOCIETY, NEAR SAMRIDHI GRAND AVENUE, GREATER-NOIDA WEST, GAUTAM BUDDHA-NAGAR, UTTAR PRADESH-201306, have changed my name to PRAASHANT PANDEY, For all purpose.
0040737902-8

I, Devender Goel, S/O Banwari Lal Gupta, R/O B-38, B-Block, Ashok Vihar Phase-1, North West Delhi-110052, have changed my name to Devender Kumar Goel.
0040737944-2

I, Deepak S/o-Rakesh Nagar R/o-Badhpora, PO Dadri, Dist.-Gautam BudhNagar, Uttar Pradesh-203207, have changed my name to Deepak Nagar.
0040737905-9

I, DINESH TYAGI S/O DULI CHAND R/O HNO.203, PURANE DAK KHANE KE PASS, HOLAMBI-KALAN, DELHI-110082, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO DINESH KUMAR.
0040737905-5

I, DINESH KUMAR KAPOOR S/O KAILASH CHAND KAPOOR R/O 94, SANDESH VIHAR, PITAMPURA, DELHI-110034, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO DINESH KAPOOR.
0040737905-6

I, LOKESH S/O RAM KARAN R/O FLATNO.355-356, POCKET-1, SECTOR-AG, NARELA, DELHI-110040, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO LOKESH RUHLI.
0040737905-3

I, NIRMALA DEVI, D/O BUDHI SINGH, R/O Village Challoonu, Tehsil Khundian, Aluha (687), Thiri, Kangra, Himachal Pradesh-176032, have changed my name to NEERU RANA, for all, future purposes.
0040737902-7

I, Mukta Lala D/o-Chander Mohan Lala, R/O H No-3130, SF-02, Sector-57, Sushant Lok-3, Gurgaon (Haryana)-122003, have changed my name Mukta Nayyar, for all purposes.
0040737935-2

I, Geeta Kumari W/o Late Vasant Mehto R/O J-22/4A, Gali No.22, Indra Park, Delhi-45 and mother of Tenvi and Doli of Tenvi is 11-03-2007 and school records of Tenvi are Roll no. in 10th class 26223054 my husband's name is typed Late Vasant Kumar Chauhan Mehto but as per Tenvi's Aadhaar card no. 950986804447 his correct name is Late Vasant Mehto.
0040737831-1

I, Mohd Ahtesham S/o Zulfikar R/o-542, Gali Hakim Ji Wali Choori, Walan Jama, Masjid Delhi-110006, have changed my name to Mohd Ahti Sham
0040737904-3

I, Mahender Kumar, s/o Megh Raj, R/o/9/26, Geeta colony, Delhi-110031, have changed my name to Mahinder Kumar Arora permanently
0040737904-2

I, MOHAMMED MURSALEEM, S/O ZAFAR ALI R/O, D-71-DU JANA HOUSE-BAZAR MATTIA MAHAL JAMA-MAJSID DELHI-6, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO MOHAMMED MURSALEEN.
0040737910-5

I, Lalit kumar chauhan, S/O Sh. Gyanendra Pratap Singh, R/O flat no.D-1102, Tower -D, Charms Castle, Rajnagar Extension, Ghaziabad, UP 201017, have changed my name from Lalit kumar Chauhan to Lalit Chauhan for all future purposes.
0040737922-1

I, KM SANDHYA, W/O ASHISH SONKER, R/O FLAT, NO-201, SECOND-FLOOR, TOWER-M, STELLAR JEEVAN SECTOR-01, GREATER NOIDA, GAUTAMBUDHA-NAGAR, U.P.-201306, have changed my name to SANDHYA RAGHAV, for all purpose
0040737910-8

I, KAMAL DEEP S/O SATPAL SHARMA R/O ARUM 101, PARAMOUNT FLORAVILLE, SECTOR-137, NOIDA, GAUTAMBUDHA NAGAR, UTTAR-PRADESH-201301, have changed my name to KAMAL DEEP SHARMA.
0040737902-6

I, Jayeshkumar Lalabhai Darji, S/o- Lalabhai bachubhai Darji, Address-I-block/003 vir savarkar height 1 gota vasant nagar town ship G.H.B Chandiodiya Ahmedabad Gujarat 382481, changed my name to New name- Jayesh Derji.
0070912214-1

I, Yogendra Choudhry S/o Rajendra Singh R/O SI-36, Shastri Nagar, Ghaziabad have changed my name to Yogender Chaudhary.
0070912214-1

I, Vinamarta Joshi, D/o Bhuvan Chandra Joshi residing at Bheta, Chanoda, Almor, Uttarakhand-263629 have changed my name to Vinamrata Joshi vide affidavit dated 09/07/2024 at New Delhi
0050245760-1

I, Vipin pahwa S/o Darshan Lal pahwa R/o 20B/90A, first floor, Tilak Nagar, New Delhi-18 have changed the name of my minor daughter aged 16 years from Mahi Pahwa to Manvi Pahwa
0070912169-1

I, Hemant Kumar, S/O-KAILASH CHAND SINGHAL, residing at, 2181, GALI HANUMAN PRASAD NAI SADAK CHANDNI CHOWK DELHI-110006, have changed my name to HEMANT SINGHAL, permanently.
0040737904-5

I, Dinesh Kumar, S/o Late Shri Sant Ram Kathuria, R/O, D-402, Apex Green-Valley Vaishali Sector-9, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-2010110, have changed my name, from Dinesh Kumar Kathuria to Dinesh Kumar, for all, future Purposes.
0040737818-1

I, SREECHITHRA MENON W/O KAMLESH MENON R/O B-26, Manas Apartments, Mayur Vihar Phase-1 Extension, New Delhi-110091 have change my name SREECHITHRA KOOLANGHAT to SREECHITHRA MENON for all purposes.
0040737816-1

I, SANDEEP SHARMA S/O RAKESH KUMAR R/O A-100/114, GALI NO. 3, NEAR LAL MANDIR, KARTAR NAGAR, SOUTH GAMARI EXTENSION, GARHI MENDU, DELHI-110053 declare that name of my father has been wrongly written as RAKESH SHARMA in my 10th class marks-sheet and certificate. The actual name of my father is RAKESH KUMAR
0070912250-1

I, AJAY THUKRAL S/O LATE SHRI SUBHASH CHAND THUKRAL, R/O H.No. 504 LIG-FLATS SANJAY-ENCLAVE OPP GTK BUS-DEPOT DELHI-110033, HAVE CHANGED MY-MINOR DAUGHTER'S NAME PAWANI THUKRAL TO PAWNI THUKRAL, FOR ALL, FUTURE PURPOSE.
0040737902-3

I, Rita Nakra @ Rita Puri W/o Chander Puri R/O-1/129, UGF, Subhash-Nagar, New Delhi-110027, have changed my name to Rita Kumari Nakra.
0040737924-3

I, Rachna Sangha Mehta, W/o Mr. Ishan Mehta, R/O 199, Jor Bagh, New Delhi-110013, do hereby solemnly affirm & declare that I have changed my daughter's name as Leilaa Mehta in place of her previous name i.e. Leela Mehta.
0060117295-1

I, RAKESH KUMAR BANSAL, S/O SALAG RAM, R/O E-2/10B, BLOCK-E-2, SHIV RAM PARK NANGLOI, NILOTHI, WEST DELHI, DELHI-110041, have changed my name to RAKESH KUMAR for all future purposes.
0040737922-3

I, Mohd Khalid Burney S/o Akhtar Ali R/O 57, Gali No.3, Noor Nagar, Jamia Nagar, New Delhi-110025 have changed my name from Mohmmad Khalid Barni to MOHD KHALID BURNEY for all future purposes and legal document.
0040737826-1

I, Mohammad Farhan Simab S/o, Md Zafar Alam R/O J-39, 3rd-Floor, Abula-Fazal Enclave-I, Iqbal-Apartment, Okhla, New Delhi-110025, have changed my name to MD Farhan Simab.
0040737924-6

I, Rajesh Kumar Verma, S/o Jagdish Parsad Verma, R/O E-6, Milap-Nagar, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059, have change my name Rajesh Verma, for all purposes.
0040737811-2

I, Ankur Sehgal, S/o Suresh Sehgal, R/O, M-42 (GF), Rajouri Garden New-Delhi-110027, have changed the name of minor son named Ahaan to Ahaan Sehgal born on-17.05.2023.
0040737904-3

I, Anita Devi Gupta, W/o-Late Shree Dhruvan Kumar, R/O C-15/5, mandawali uncheper, delhi-92, opp.Taravati hospital, have changed my name to Shobha Devi, for all, future purposes.
0040737828-3

I, Aman Raj S/o Prabhash Kumar, R/O Maya Bazar, Tand Kujur, West Kujur Murpa, Ramgarh-825316 (Jharakhand), have changed my name to Aman Mittal.
0040737954-3

I, AMIT KUMAR WADHERA, S/O LATE SHRI CHETAN PRAKASH WADHERA, R/O, 34, LIG-FLATS SANJAY-ENCLAVE OPP-GTK BUS-DEPOT, DELHI-110033, HAVE CHANGED MY MINOR-DAUGHTER'S NAME DEEVANSHI WADHERA TO DEVANSHI WADHERA, FOR ALL, FUTURE PURPOSE.
0040737902-2

I, AAKKANSHA TIWARI, daughter of, Santosh Kumar Tiwari, Presently, residing at, Village Pure Shiv Charan Tiwari, P.O. Rehua Lal Ganji, Distt. Pratapgarh, Uttar Pradesh-230139, have changed my name from AAKKANSHA TIWARI to AAKANSHA TIWARI, vide-affidavit date-10-07-2024.
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0040737811-2

I, Mohammad Dilshad S/o Abdul Gaffar R/O D-254, Abul Fazal Enclave-I, Jamia- Nagar, Okhla, New Delhi-110025, have changed my name to Dilshad Alam.
0040737924-5

I, Kulbeer Singh Rana S/o Sh. Budhi Singh Rana, residing at, K-3/32, Gali, No.12, West Ghonda, Garhi Mendu, Bhajanpura, North East Delhi-110053, have changed the name of my minor son Prutush Rana aged 16 and he shall hereafter be known as Pratyush Singh Rana.
0040737860-1

I, Karan Narang S/o Harjeet Singh R/O C-80, Sudershan Park, New Delhi-110015, have changed my name to Karan Singh.
0040737833-1

I, Jyoti D/o Rishi Pal R/o A-11, Gali-3, Khajani Nagar, Johripur, Delhi have changed my name to Jyoti Dahiya forever.
0070912208-1

I, Gaytri W/o. Mahesh Kumar Mishra R/o. Plot No-6A, Khasra No.-14, Shivani Enclave, Phase-2, Kakrola, South West Delhi have changed my name to Gyatri Mishra
0040737827-1

I, Bharti, D/o Mr. Jugal Kishore, R/O H-24, Green Park Extension, New Delhi-110016, have change my name to Bharti Gupta.
0040737859-2

I, Baljit Kaur Bhasin W/o Harbhajan Singh Bhasin, R/o-20B/47A, Tilak Nagar, Delhi, have changed my name to Baljeet Kaur
0040737829-1

I, Azra Shabab W/o Shabab Uddin R/o, C-44, Block-C, Abul-Fazal Enclave, Jamia-Nagar, Okhla, Delhi-110025, have changed my name to Azra Parveen.
0040737924-4

I, Ankit Gupta S/o Anil Gupta R/o, CGM-256, DLF-Capital Green, Ph-2, Moti-Nagar, New Delhi-110015, have changed my name to Ankit Chand Gupta.
0040737924-7

I, AMIT KUMAR BANSAL, S/O RAKESH KUMAR, R/O E-57, SHIV RAM PARK, SHANI BAZAR ROAD, NANGLOI, WEST DELHI, DELHI-110041, have changed my name to AMIT KUMAR for all future purposes.
0070912153-1

I, Parul Sharma W/o Anupam Sharma R/o 24, Varun Enclave, P-7, Omega-2, Greater Noida-201310, have changed my name to Parul Dixit for all future purpose.
0040737904-6

I, Manika Sidu S/O Mochiram Sidu R/O Village- Khakasa, Police Station- Gurudjhatia, G.P- Gobara, PO- Gobara, Block- Athagarh, District- Cuttack, Odisha-754028, have changed my name to Ishant Sidu
0070912165-1

I, Mahesh Chand Gupta s/o Ram Bharese R/o H/2/26, Sultanpuri Delhi-110086 that my name printed wrong as Mahesh Gupta in marksheet Parmod Kumar Gupta s/o Mahesh Chand Gupta both are same person, known as Mahesh Chand Gupta for all future purposes.
0040737878-1

I, Harpreet Singh Anand S/O, Jaspal Singh R/O 213 Pocket A-3 Sector-7 Rohini New Delhi-110085 have changed my name to Harpreet Singh.
0040737857-1

I, Dasarathi Amrta W/o Chandra Prakash Agarwal R/o Mannavilas Lane, Bima Ice Factory Road, College Square, Cuttack Sadar, Cuttack, Odisha-753003, have changed my name to Amrta Agarwal
0070912162-1

I, Adil Kamal s/o Masood Ahmed R/O 813, lane -22 zakir nagar Okhla-110025 have changed my name to Adil Kamaal
0070912157-1

I, Abhishek Bathla R/O 19B, Purnhottam Garden, Kunjpura Road, Karnal, Haryana Presently at 54, Vishaal Apartment, Vasundhara Enclave, Delhi-110096 have changed the name of my minor son from Yug Bathla to Yuvaan Bathla for all purposes.
0040737813-1

I, Sunita Devi, W/o-Leela Ram, R/O-Village-Tulshipura, Tehsil-Pawata, District-Jaipur Hall Kotputli-Behroad, Rajasthan, inform that in my Voter ID my name has wrongly mentioned as Sunita Devi Jaat instead of Sunita Devi.
0040737922-2

I, Sajna Devi, Mr. Omprakash Jat, R/O-Village, Tulsiapura, Tehsil-Pawata, Jaipur Hall, district Kotputli-Behroad, Rajasthan, inform that in my Voter ID my name has wrongly mentioned as SAJNA DEVI instead of Sajana Devi.
0040737922-2

I, Neelam Verma W/o Rakesh Verma R/O E-6, Milap Nagar, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059, have change my name Neelam, for all purposes.
0040737811-1

I, RAJBEER SINGH S/O KUNDAN SINGH R/O Flat No.102, Mahadev Apartment, DDA Pocket -1, Sector 23 Dwarka, South Delhi 110075, have change my name to RAJBEER SINGH RANA for all purposes.
0040737811-9

I, Tanish Kumar, S/o: Mahesh Kumar, R/O: B-17, Police Colony, Mehram Nagar, Delhi Cantt-110010, have changed my name from Tanish Kumar to Tanish Yadav for all future purposes.
0130043418-1

15 ECONOMY

SENSEX: 79,897.34 ▼ 2743 (0.03%) NIFTY: 24,315.95 ▼ 8.50 (0.03%) NIKKEI: 42,224.02 ▲ 392.03 HANG SENG: 17,832.33 ▼ 360.66 FTSE: 8,208.55 ▼ 15.04 DAX: 18,457.60 ▼ 50.38

GOLD	USD RATE	OIL	SILVER
₹75,100	₹83.56	\$85.19	₹94,500

Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market, gold per 10g, silver per 1 kg; Crude oil (Indian basket) as of July 10

International market data till 1900 IST

QCOs ADDING TO STRESS IN SECTOR: MANUFACTURERS

Synthetic textile makers seek relief from QCOs amid supply chain woes

AGGAM WALIA
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

DOWNSTREAM SYNTHETIC textile manufacturers are urging the government to revoke Quality Control Orders (QCOs) on man-made fibres (MMF), which they have undermined the competitiveness of the MMF supply chain by limiting access to affordable and specialised raw materials.

With the textile sector already grappling with weak domestic demand, shrinking exports, and an underdeveloped raw material value chain, QCOs on polyester and viscose inputs have further exacerbated its woes, leading to significant idling of production capacity and balance sheets turning red, according to industry representatives.

"We do not get our raw material at internationally competitive prices. That is the biggest problem, which is impacting our exports. The first item in the value chain, the raw material that you use for synthetic textiles, is either polyester staple fibre (PSF) or viscose staple fibre (VSF). All these basic raw materials are at least 20 per cent more expensive in India than anywhere else in the world. That is killing our competitiveness," Rakesh Mehra, Chairman of the Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI) told *The Indian Express*.

Industry players report that the market prices of PSF and VSF increased in FY24 following the implementation of QCOs on these inputs early on in the financial year. A QCO mandates foreign exporters to obtain Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) certification to sell products covered under it in India. It is aimed towards curbing the



Reuters

import of poor quality products into the country.

BIS, industry players allege, has been highly selective in granting certifications under the PSF and VSF QCOs to foreign exporters. For instance, while 65 per cent of PSF imports in 2022-23 came from China and Thailand. The BIS has not certified any Chinese unit alongside only three Thai units, two of which are owned by Indorama Ventures, which also manufactures PSF in India. Similarly, while 50 per cent of VSF imports in FY23 came from Indonesia and Singapore, no company in the two countries has received BIS certification. Moreover, the BIS has certified only three overseas VSF units in Austria and the United Kingdom, all owned by Lenzing AG. However, Lenzing's Indonesia plant is yet to be certified.

Consequently, PSF imports dropped 43 per cent in FY24 to Rs 520 crore from Rs 917 crore in FY23, as per official trade data. Similarly, VSF imports plummeted 65 per cent to Rs 710 crore from Rs 2,033 crore in the same period. Curbing of VSF and PSF imports has forced downstream users— including spinners,

weavers, and knitters, to rely more heavily on domestic fibre supplies. Various industry representatives told *The Indian Express* that these inputs are more expensive in the domestic market, which also lacks adequate supply of specialised fibres.

In FY24, the MMF textile sector experienced a significant downturn, according to Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIIS) data compiled by CITI. Exports of MMF apparel fell by 22 per cent to \$2.89 billion from \$3.53 billion in FY23. Overall exports in the MMF sector dropped by 11 per cent to \$9.03 billion from \$10.02 billion.

"The QCOs are a lethal thing that they have done. There is nothing wrong with quality control to ensure that the end product which the consumer is using doesn't trouble the skin. If at all they have to apply QCOs, they should apply it on garments and fabrics. What is a QCO on raw materials going to do? It is not going to ensure that the end product is correct. It is a non-tariff barrier and a protection to them (domestic industry) so that they can charge higher prices," Mehra said.

In a meeting of the National

Committee on Textiles & Clothing (NCTC) in May, representatives from various industry bodies called for suspending PSF and VSF QCOs for a few years to allow domestic upstream manufacturers to become competitive. The temporary removal of these QCOs, they argued, will help revitalise the sector by allowing access to cheaper raw material and improving sourcing flexibility.

In March earlier this year, *The Indian Express* had analysed official documents obtained through the RTI Act to show how Aditya Birla Group-owned Grasim Industries Ltd lobbied the Ministry of Textiles to implement a QCO on VSF to curb imports. Grasim Industries is the sole producer of VSF in India.

In August, 2021, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) issued an order stating that Grasim had abused its dominant position in the VSF market "by charging discriminatory prices to its customers, denying market access and imposing supplementary obligations upon its customers". Grasim subsequently appealed the order before the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) and the case is currently ongoing.

The PSF market is relatively more fragmented but still concentrated. As per documents from the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR), Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) accounted for 57 per cent of domestic PSF production in 2017. The remaining market share belonged to Alok Industries Ltd, owned by RIL, Indo Rama Synthetics (India) Ltd, and The Bombay Dyeing & Mfg Co Ltd. Industry players claim that RIL continues to hold a market share of more than 60 per cent.

The downstream industry received partial relief when the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) exempted VSF imports from QCOs under the advance authorization (AA) scheme in March. This exemption was extended to PSF imports in June. The AA scheme permits duty-free import of inputs that are physically incorporated into export products. However, the industry argues exemption under the AA scheme is not enough and QCOs on textile inputs should be removed altogether. "It's only a very handful of people who can use advance authorisation. A person who is exporting made-up textiles can't use advance authorisation—he is too small to use the exemption. The government's policy should be such that you import from wherever in the world you can where it is cheaper," Mehra said.

"Man-made cellulose fibre (VSF) constitutes a negligible share of the MMF basket. On account of geopolitical issues, overall textile demand has fallen resulting in lower exports in the recent past for the overall textiles sector. The fall in (VSF) exports is much lower than the overall sector. The QCO includes provisions for importing raw materials on an advance authorization basis for export purposes. Therefore, the argument that the QCO hampers viscose exports is not substantiated," a spokesperson from Birla Cellulose, a subsidiary of Grasim, said.

The textiles ministry, the chemicals and fertilisers ministry, the finance ministry, BIS, and RIL did not respond to requests for comments.

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

Too premature to talk about interest rate cuts, says RBI Governor Das

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, JULY 11

RESERVE BANK of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das on Thursday said with retail inflation still above the 4 per cent target, any talks about cut in interest rates would be too premature.

The country will achieve the projected growth rate of 7.2 per cent in 2024-25 and is heading towards the 8 per cent GDP growth, Das said during an interview with *CNBC-TV18*.

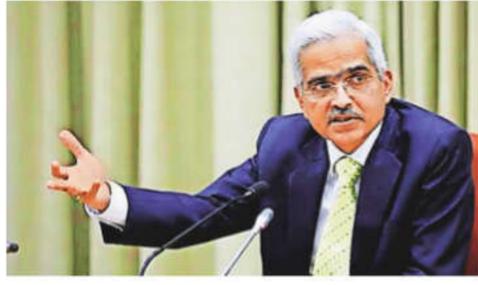
"The last (May) CPI print was 4.7 per cent and the June inflation is expected to be out tomorrow (July 12). As per various surveys, it (June CPI inflation) is likely to be close to 5 per cent. So, when we are at 5 per cent and our target is 4 per cent, I would feel it is too premature to talk about interest rate cuts," Das said when asked about his guidance on repo rate cuts.

He said the overall economic environment, globally as well as in India, is very uncertain to talk about interest rate cuts.

"I would not like to give any kind of forward guidance, which would lead the market players and the stakeholders to board the wrong train," he emphasised.

The RBI Governor's statement comes days ahead of the monetary policy meeting, wherein it is expected that the six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) may leave the repo rate—the key policy rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent. The MPC is scheduled to meet from August 6 to 8.

In the June monetary policy meeting, the rate-setting panel kept the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent for the eighth consecutive time. In the policy, two external MPC members—Ashima Goyal and Jayanth R Varma—voted for reducing the repo rate by 25 basis points and changing the stance from with-



RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das.

File

drawal of accommodation to neutral. When asked if the perceived froth in the stock market is holding the RBI from cutting the repo rate, Das said the central bank monitors all aspects of the economy, including the stock markets, more from the point of view of financial stability and the kind of spill over it will cause to the economy. He said the RBI's rate action or monetary policy decision is governed by inflation and growth trajectory.

Das further said the RBI is very closely watching the banking sector and wherever it sees a potential problem, it takes action. He said the RBI increased the risk weights last year on banks' exposure to consumer credit, credit card receivables and non-banking finance companies (NBFCs), to avoid any stress in the banking sector.

To a specific query on if there was a fear that bank money could be fuelling the stock market rally, and so there was a case for higher risk weights or to keep interest rates on watch, he said, "So far as bank money giving some boost to the stock market is concerned, the exposure limit of banks to the stock market, individual borrowings from NBFCs, which were very high earlier for participating in initial public offering (IPOs) and follow-on public offering (FPOs)...even there we have put a limit of Rs 1 crore.

It was all done some two years ago." He said banks do have their own system of monitoring the end use of funds and only some amount of unsecured credit may go into the stock market. However, for unsecured credit, the RBI has mandated additional risk weights, which has already moderated the overall growth in the segment.

When asked about the factors which could lead to the change in monetary policy stance of withdrawal of accommodation, Das said, given that inflation is above the 4 per cent target, it would be early to talk about the change of stance.

"Unless you are close to 4 per cent, the question of changing the stance, I think, would be premature. When we move towards 4 per cent (inflation target) on a kind of a sustained and durable basis, only at that point we may get the confidence to have a relook (on policy stance)," the Governor said.

On growth, Das said in the last three years, the GDP growth has averaged at about 8.3 per cent, and for the current year the economy is expected to expand by 7.2 per cent. Das said the momentum of growth witnessed in the last quarter (January-March) of FY2024 was very strong, and it continues to be strong in Q1 FY2025. FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

BRIEFLY

Procurement through GeM crosses ₹1.24 lakh cr in Q1

New Delhi: With the procurement of goods and services through government's portal GeM crossing Rs 1.24 lakh crore in first quarter of 2024-25, the platform will become world's largest by the end of this fiscal, an official said on Thursday. The Government e-Market (GeM) portal was launched on August 9, 2016, for online purchases of goods and services by all central government ministries and departments. "GeM has clocked a gross merchandise value of Rs 1,24,761 lakh crore at the end of first quarter, representing a quarter-on-quarter growth of 136 per cent over last year's Rs 52,670 crore," GeM CEO Prashant Kumar Singh said. He added going by this pace, it will become the world's largest platform. PTI

FinMin notifies GSTR-1A to amend outward supply form

New Delhi: The finance ministry has notified the GSTR-1A form which will give an option to taxpayers to amend outward supply or sales return form. Last month, the GST Council had recommended providing a new optional facility by way of form GSTR-1A to facilitate the taxpayers to amend the details in form GSTR-1 for a tax period and/or to declare additional details. GSTR-1A will, however, have to be filed before filing of return in GSTR-3B for the said tax period. The finance ministry on July 10 notified the GSTR-1A form. Moore Singhi Executive Director Rajat Mohan said the CBIC has introduced a significant enhancement to the GST compliance framework with the optional facility of form GSTR-1A. PTI

Upstream oil sector offers \$100-billion opportunity, says Hardeep Singh Puri

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

OIL MINISTER Hardeep Singh Puri on Thursday called for stepping up oil and gas hunt to cut India's reliance on imports and making available fuel at an affordable and sustainable way. Speaking at the Urja Varta conference, he said the exploration and production (E&P) sector is integral in the journey towards energy self-sufficiency, which is critical for sustained economic growth.

"E&P offers investment opportunities worth \$100 billion by 2030," he said.

Stating that India's exploration and production potential still lies untapped, he said, "I find it strange that India is so heavily reliant on oil imports despite the abundant geological resources available to us." The Indian sedimentary basins hold about 651.8



Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Singh Puri.

million tonnes of crude oil and 1138.6 billion cubic meters of natural gas, he said. Puri said only 10 per cent of our sedimentary basin area is under exploration, which will rise to 16 per cent by 2024-end after the current bid ends.

"The focus of our exploratory endeavours must pivot towards discovering 'Yet to Find' re-

sources," he said.

India imports over 85 per cent of its crude oil needs. Crude oil is converted into fuels like petrol and diesel in refineries.

"The government is doing its part to catalyse investments in E&P. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) has instituted sweeping reforms, em-

powering stakeholders to contribute to our nation's progress," he said, adding "We intend to increase India's exploration acreage to 1 million sq. km. by 2030." The minister said since its inception in 2015, the Discovered Small Field (DSF) Policy has garnered investments of approximately USD 2 billion and brought in 29 new players in the field.

"The opening up of the erstwhile no-go areas has paved the way for exploration activities in previously restricted zones, fostering investments, notably in regions such as the Andamans," he said. Puri announced formation of a Joint Working Group (JWG), comprising representatives from private E&P operators, the National Oil Companies, MoPNG, and DGH to examine issues relating to the ease of doing business in E&P, adequacy of policies and procedures, and the need for their revision.

TCS profit rises by 8.7% YoY in Apr-Jun, down 2.8% sequentially

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, JULY 11

AIDED BY an all-round growth across various markets, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) kicked off FY25 with an 8.72 per cent rise in net profit (attributable to shareholders of the company) at Rs 12,040 crore for the first quarter (Q1) ended June 2024 as against Rs 11,074 crore in the same period of last year. However, on a sequential basis, the net profit declined by 2.89 per cent from Rs 12,240 crore in the March 2024 quarter.

With the domestic market leading the growth, India's largest IT company posted a revenue at Rs 62,613 crore for the June 2024 quarter as against Rs 59,381 crore a year ago, a rise of 5.4 per cent. However, on a sequential basis, revenue rose by only 2.24 per cent from Rs 61,237 crore in the March quarter. The board of directors of TCS declared a dividend of 10 per cent.

TCS said all major markets returned to sequential growth with very strong double-digit growth in emerging markets, led by India at 61.8 per cent on a year-on-year basis. Almost all verticals posted a sequential growth. The growth was led by manufacturing (9.4 per cent), energy, resources & util-

ities (5.7 per cent) and life sciences & healthcare (4.0 per cent).

The operating margin was at 24.7 per cent, an expansion of 1.5 per cent on a year-on-year basis, TCS said. Revenue has gone up by 4.4 per cent in constant currency terms and net margin was at 19.2 per cent. The company reported a revenue growth of 3.9 per cent growth and 8.7 per cent rise in profit in dollar terms.

TCS MD and CEO K Krithivasan said: "I am pleased to report a strong start to the new fiscal year with all-round growth across industries and markets. We are continuing to expand our client relationships, create new capabilities in emerging technologies and invest in innovation, including a new AI-focused TCS PacePort in France, IoT lab in the US and expanding our delivery centers in Latin America, Canada and Europe." TCS shares closed 0.33 per cent higher at Rs 3,922.70 on the BSE on Thursday ahead of the results announcement. Samir Sekaria, Chief Financial Officer, said: "In spite of the usual impact of the annual wage increments in this quarter, we have delivered strong operating margin performance, validating our efforts towards operational excellence."

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

Vodafone-Idea seeks ₹24,700-cr bank guarantee waiver

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, JULY 11

DEBT-RIDDEN Vodafone Idea has reached out to the Department of Telecom to seek waiver on a financial bank guarantee worth Rs 24,747 crore for spectrum payment due in September 2025, according to sources. Vodafone Idea (VIL) needs to securitize the annual instalment one year before the due date of the payment.

"Vodafone Idea has reached out to DoT seeking waiver for financial bank guarantee (FBG) worth Rs 24,747 crore which it has to pay in September 2025. The FBG needs to be deposited one year before the due date as per spectrum auction rules," a source, who did not wish to be identified, told *PTI*. An email query sent to Vodafone Idea elicited no response. The payments are for frequencies that VIL purchased in auctions that were conducted before 2022. VIL in 2022 opted for a four-year moratorium to pay for the spectrum allowed under a government relief package.

The moratorium period for the spectrum payment obligations related to spectrum auctions conducted until 2016 ends between October 2025 and September 2026.

Started settling claims at 8.25% interest rate for FY24: EPFO

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

THE EMPLOYEES' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has started to settle PF claims at 8.25 per cent, the interest rate announced for the financial year 2023-24, it said in a series of posts on X. All continuing EPF members will also receive the credit of interest which was recommended by the Central Board of Trustees in February 2024 and subsequently approved by the Finance Ministry in May this year, it said.

"EPFO has already started settling claims @ 8.25% per annum. Rate of interest is calculated on the basis of income from debt and equity investment of EPFO. The interest income on debt instruments is estimated at the beginning of the financial year but the income from equity investment is known only after carrying out the equity redemption during the financial year," it said. The posts mentioned about the settlement of claims at the higher rate of interest, while stating that



the accounts of continuing members will soon be credited with the interest for FY24.

Assuring members of no loss of interest due to the delay in crediting of interest, the retirement fund body said members are not at loss on account of declaration of rate of interest after the end of financial year as difference in rate of interest is paid to them, if the declared rate is higher than the previous year.

"The interest at the revised rates, since notified, is being paid to the current and outgoing members in their final PF settlements. Accordingly, 23,04,516 claims have been settled disbursing an amount of Rs.

9260,40,35,488 to the members inclusive of the latest interest rate declared @ 8.25% per annum," it said.

In February, the EPFO had announced 8.25 per cent for financial year 2023-24 for its over 29 crore total subscribers, out of which around 6.8 crore are active contributing subscribers. This is the highest rate of interest for EPF subscribers in the last three years.

After maintaining the interest rate at 8.5 per cent both in 2019-20 and 2020-21, the EPFO had cut the interest rate in 2021-22 to 8.1 per cent, the lowest in four decades. It then hiked it marginally to 8.15 per cent in 2022-23.

India bond yields steady ahead of inflation data

Mumbai: Indian government bond yields ended steady on Friday as market participants awaited crucial inflation readings in the United States later in the day, followed by India's retail inflation data on Friday.

The benchmark 10-year yield ended at 6.9832 per cent, following its previous close at 6.9754 per cent. US inflation likely rose 0.1 per cent month-on-month, while consumer prices for 12 months to June are expected to have risen 3.1 per cent, a *Reuters* poll showed.

On Wednesday, the Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said he was not yet ready to declare victory over inflation but felt that the economy is on a stable path to steady prices and continued low unemployment rates. In his two-day address to Congress, Powell avoided providing any major guidance on the timing of interest rate cuts in the world's largest economy. REUTERS

TOP OF THE WORLD



Former Pak Premier Imran Khan. File

PAKISTAN
Actions of Imran similar to that of a 'terrorist': Court

Lahore: An anti-terrorism court in Pakistan on Thursday said the actions of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan were similar to that of a "terrorist" in a case linked to the May 9 violence and ruled that he had delegated the task of attacking military installations, government properties, and police officials to party leaders to exert pressure for his release. Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party termed the court's ruling an "absurd order" and declared that it would launch protests. The anti-terrorism court at Lahore had earlier this week dismissed pre-arrest bail to Khan in three cases related to the May 9 riots. **PTI**

Lahore HC gets first woman Chief Justice

Lahore: Justice Aalia Neelum on Thursday took oath as the Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court (LHC) of Pakistan, making her the first woman to be elevated as the court's top judge. Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan administered the oath of office to her. Punjab province's first woman Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz was also present in the ceremony. Justice Neelum, 57, stood third in the seniority list of judges of the LHC but the Judicial Commission of Pakistan headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa had decided to consider her nomination. **PTI**

UNITED KINGDOM
UK to expand early release of prisoners

London: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer's new government will widen the early release of prisoners to tackle an overcrowding crisis that has left jails within weeks of running out of space, prison governors said on Thursday. Britain's Prison Governors' Association said in a statement to media that it had been "reliably informed" that rules would change on Friday so that most inmates would serve only 40% of their sentences, down from a typical 50% at present. Prisoners who are released can be returned to jail if they reoffend. **REUTERS**

ALLIANCE JOINS U.S. IN DENOUNCING BEIJING

For first time, NATO accuses China of 'enabling' Russian attacks on Ukraine

NATO: China supplied Russia with advanced software, components to rebuild defence industry

DAVID E SANGER
WASHINGTON, JULY 11

AFTER DECADES of viewing China as a distant threat, NATO on Wednesday accused Beijing of becoming "a decisive enabler of Russia's war against Ukraine," and demanded that it halt shipments of "weapons components" and other technology critical to the rebuilding of the Russian military. The statement is contained in a declaration approved by the 32 leaders of the alliance, shortly before they headed to a dinner at the White House on Wednesday night. It is a major departure for NATO, which until 2019 never officially mentioned China as a concern, and then only in the blandest of language. Now, for the first time, the alliance has joined in Washington's denunciations of China's military support for Russia.

But the declaration contains an implicit threat that China's growing support for Russia will come at a cost. China "cannot enable the largest war in Europe in recent history without this negatively impacting its interests and reputation," the declaration said, particularly calling out "its large-scale support for Russia's defense industrial base." The declaration did not specify what those costs would be, though the natural first step will be economic sanctions.

While China has heeded warnings not to supply Russia with full weapons systems, it has done everything short of that, providing computer chips, advanced software and components needed to rebuild a defense industrial base that churned out faulty and outdated equipment.

The intelligence evidence was provided to NATO countries by the Biden administration, in an effort



Joe Biden with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the White House Wednesday. Reuters

to win over skeptics who argued that China was not a central player in the war. That succeeded, but only after the United States published the names, in a Treasury Department economic sanctions order, of Chinese front companies and manufacturers that were funneling the technology to Russia.

The declaration also blames China for "malicious cyber and hybrid activities, including disinformation" aimed at the US and Europe. Earlier this week, the US and several of its allies warned of a hacking group linked to China's Ministry of State Security that appears to be focused on stealing well-protected government and commercial secrets. Officials have spent much of past few years focused on a different group that it has charged with planting malware in US critical infrastructure, which could be activated to cut off pipelines and electric grids in a confrontation over Taiwan. **NYT**

Beijing rejects accusation, tells NATO not to create 'chaos' in Asia

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIJING, JULY 11

CHINA ON Thursday hit out at NATO for terming it as a "decisive enabler" of Russia's war against Ukraine, lodging a diplomatic protest to the Western alliance for the "provocative" remarks and asking it not to bring the same "chaos" to Asia.

The China-related paragraphs in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's Washington summit declaration are "biased, provocative and aimed at vilifying" Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said. "We strongly deplore it and firmly oppose it and lodged a serious representation to NATO," Lin said. He also lashed out at the NATO Asia-Pacific push, saying the organisation is strengthening ties with China's neighbours and US allies trying to seek security at the expense of others and asked it not to bring the same "chaos" to Asia.



Russia's Vladimir Putin with China's Xi Jinping in 2022. File

China will firmly safeguard its sovereignty, security and development interests, he said. The NATO Washington summit has made scathing criticism of Beijing, saying China has "become a decisive enabler of Russia's war against Ukraine" through its so-called "no limits" partnership and its large-scale support for Russia's defence industrial base. Also, China's military exercises with Belarus, a close ally of Russia, were sharply criticised by NATO especially since they are being held close to the border of Poland, a NATO member.

TO SHOOT DOWN NORTH KOREAN DRONES
S KOREA TO DEPLOY 'STAR WARS' ANTI-DRONE LASERS

South Korea will deploy laser weapons to shoot down North Korean drones this year, becoming the world's first country to deploy and operate such weapons in the military, the government said Thursday. South Korea has called its laser programme the "Star Wars project". The Koreas have both violated the armistice that governs their border by sending drones into each other's airspace, the US has said. **REUTERS**

Some advisers discuss how to persuade Biden to leave race

Close aides increasingly convinced that he cannot win against Trump: Sources

THE NEW YORK TIMES
WASHINGTON, JULY 11

SOME LONGTIME aides and advisers to President Biden have become increasingly convinced that he will have to step aside from the campaign, and in recent days they have been trying to come up with ways to persuade him that he should, according to three people briefed on the matter.

A small group of Biden's advisers in the administration and the campaign — at least two of whom have told allies that they do not believe he should keep trying to run for a second term — have said they would have to convince the president of several things.

They said they have to make the case to the president, who remains convinced of the strength of his campaign, that he cannot win against former President Donald Trump. They have to persuade him to believe that another candidate, like Vice President Kamala Harris, could beat Trump. And they have to assure him that, should he step aside, the process to choose another candidate would be orderly and not devolve into chaos in the Democratic Party. Those discussions were recounted by three people familiar with them who spoke on the condition of anonymity. The White House denied the account. "This is not true," said Andrew Bates, a White House



Biden attends NATO working session II in Washington on Thursday. AP

spokesman. President Biden's team is strongly behind him."

T.J. Ducklo, a spokesman for the Biden campaign, said the same. "Patently false," he said.

The people who are closest to the president remain adamant

that Biden will stay in the race. The conversations have been happening outside that small orbit, but include some of his most loyal and longest-serving allies. Among the obstacles that those people see is convincing

Biden that he cannot win. The president told confidants before his disastrous debate showing that he believed he had a better chance of winning a second term than Harris had at winning.

The internal deliberations speak to the standoff between Biden and his party, as he has become increasingly entrenched in his conviction, and party leaders are publicly hinting that now may be the time for him to step aside.



RACE FOR THE WHITE HOUSE

Ahead of today's trust vote, Deuba, Oli discuss Nepal govt formation

Kathmandu: AHEAD OF a floor test for Nepal's embattled Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' on Friday, the Nepali Congress and CPN-UML have issued whips requiring their lawmakers to vote against the confidence motion tabled by the former guerrilla leader.

The Nepali Congress, the largest party in the House has 89 seats at present, while CPN-UML has 78 seats. Their combined strength of 167 is much more than the 138 seats required for a majority in the lower house.

Oli, the CPN-UML chairperson, met Nepali Congress president Sher Bahadur Deuba Wednesday.

The meeting between the two leaders was aimed at formulating a future strategy on how to move forward. They discussed the formation of the new government and inviting other smaller parties to join the national consensus government being formed under the leadership of Oli. According to the agreement, Oli will become the Prime Minister for one and a half years in the first stage. **PTI**

Macron ends silence, calls for 'broad gathering' to split Left

ROGER COHEN
PARIS, JULY 11

EXPRESSING HIMSELF for the first time three days after deadlocked legislative elections, President Emmanuel Macron of France said on Wednesday that "a little time" would be needed to build a "broad gathering" of what he called "republican forces" able to form a coalition government.

Just 16 days from the opening of the Paris Olympics, it was unclear whether Mr. Macron had in mind a delay that would mean no new government was in place when the games begin. For now he has asked Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, whose resignation he rejected, to continue in a caretaker capacity.

In a letter to the French people, made public before its scheduled publication on Thursday in regional newspapers, Mr. Macron said of the election he abruptly called last month: "nobody won it." That seemed certain to irk the New Popular Front, a resurgent left-wing alliance that came in first with about 180 seats in the



Jean-Luc Melenchon (second from left), leader of France Unbowed with leaders of his alliance in Paris earlier this week

National Assembly. The alliance was well short of the 289 seats needed for an absolute majority, and was not notorious in the sense of having the means to govern, but the New Popular Front's leaders said they believed the group won and have said it would name its choice for prime minister this week.

The letter made clear that, if that happens, Mr. Macron is almost certain to reject the left's choice, raising political tensions

that are already high. Under the Constitution of the Fifth Republic, the president names the prime minister, and there is no time limit for this choice.

Macron appears to be moving toward a potentially explosive clash with the left, particularly the France Unbowed party of Jean-Luc Melenchon, the combative leader of the largest and most left-wing group in the victorious alliance. **NYT**

Hamas's ceasefire demands at odds with framework deal, says Israel

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

Cairo: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday accused Palestinian militant group Hamas of making demands in talks on a possible ceasefire in Gaza that contradict a framework deal brokered by Washington.

While Netanyahu spoke, some residents of Gaza City were trapped in houses and bodies lay uncollected in the streets after an intense Israeli assault that Hamas says could wreck the prospects of a ceasefire. The head of Israel's Shin Bet intelligence agency was headed to Cairo to pursue the negotiations, the PM's office said.

Speaking at a military ceremony in Israel, Netanyahu said: "I am committed to the framework deal for freeing our hostages, but the Hamas murderers are sticking to demands that contradict the framework, that endanger Israel." **REUTERS**

43 UAE activists who called for democracy given life sentence

Over 80 accused of starting 'terrorist' organisation were arrested years ago

VIVIAN NEREIM
RIYADH, JULY 11

MORE THAN 80 lawyers, academics and activists in the United Arab Emirates who had been convicted in shadowy national security trials years ago, after they had called for political reforms, had expected to soon be released from prison as, one by one, their sentences expired.

But in a move that stunned the prisoners' families, the men were all prosecuted again, the majority sentenced Wednesday to terms ranging from 10 years to life in prison, dashing their families' hopes of a long-delayed reunion.

Authorities accused the men of starting a "terrorist" organization called the Justice and Dignity Committee, and a court in Abu Dhabi sentenced 10 of them to an additional 10 to 15 years behind bars, and 43 others to life in prison. The court dismissed the cases against 24 defendants, the Emirati state news

agency said, and acquitted one of them. The outcomes of the cases against the remaining defendants remained unclear.

"It is something that shocked everyone — for what?" said Ahmed Al Nuaimi, a UAE dissident living in exile in London. "Just calling for democracy leads to life in prison?" Al Nuaimi added. "It's unacceptable and unimaginable."

Human rights groups that had spent months raising concerns about the mass trial against the 84 defendants condemned the verdict. Human Rights Watch said in a joint statement with other groups that the trial had been "fundamentally unfair."

The Emirati state news agency said in a report that the men had been part of a local Islamist group called Al Islah that "worked to create and replicate violent events in the country," referring to the Arab Spring revolutions a decade ago, which the news agency said had spread "panic and terror" and threatened the states' sovereignty. **NYT**

INTRODUCED BY ROBERT ALTMAN, DUVALL WITH HER WIDE-EYED, WINSOME PRESENCE WAS A MAINSTAY IN HIS FILMS

Shelley Duvall, star of *The Shining*, *Nashville* and *Popeye*, dies at 75

JAKE COYLE
JULY 11

SHELLEY DUVALL, the intrepid, Texas-born movie star whose wide-eyed, winsome presence was a mainstay in the films of Robert Altman and who co-starred in Stanley Kubrick's "The Shining," has died. She was 75.

Duvall died Thursday in her sleep at her home in Blanco, Texas, her longtime partner, Dan Gilroy, announced. The cause was complications of diabetes, said her friend, the publicist Gary Springer.

"My dear, sweet, wonderful life, partner, and friend left us last night," Gilroy said in a statement.

"Too much suffering lately, now she's free. Fly away beautiful Shelley," Duvall was attending junior college in Texas when Altman's crew members, preparing to film "Brewster McCLOUD," encountered her as at a party in Houston in 1970. They introduced her to the director, who cast her "Brewster McCLOUD" and made her his protegee.

Duvall would go on to appear in Altman films including "Thieves Like Us," "Nashville," "Popeye," "Three Women" and "McCabe & Ms. Miller."

"He offers me damn good roles," Duvall told *The New York Times* in 1977. "None of them have been alike. He has a great confi-

dence in me, and a trust and respect for me, and he doesn't put any restrictions on me or intimidate me, and I love him. I remember the first advice he ever gave me: 'Don't take yourself seriously.'"

Duvall, gaunt and gawky, was no conventional Hollywood starlet. But she had a beguiling frank manner and exuded a singular naturalism. The film critic Pauline Kael called her the "female Buster Keaton."

At her peak, Duvall was a regular star in some of the defining movies of the 1970s and 1980s. In "The Shining," she played Wendy Torrance, who watches in horror as her husband, Jack (Jack Nicholson), goes crazy



Shelley Duvall in Cannes in May 1977. File

while their family is isolated in the Overlook Hotel. It was Duvall's screaming face that made up half of the film's most iconic image, along with Jack's axe coming through the door.

Kubrick, a famous perfectionist, was notoriously hard on Duvall in making "The Shining." His methods of pushing her through countless takes in the most anguished scenes took a toll on the actor. Some saw Kubrick's treatment as bordering on torture; one scene was reportedly performed in 127 takes.

Duvall, in an interview in 1981 with *People* magazine said she was crying "12 hours a day for weeks on end" during the film's

production. "I will never give that much again," said Duvall. "If you want to get into pain and call it art, go ahead, but not with me."

Duvall disappeared from movies almost as quickly as she arrived in them. By the 1990s, she began retiring from acting and retreated from public life.

"How would you feel if people were really nice, and then, suddenly, on a dime, they turn on you?" Duvall told the *Times* earlier this year. "You would never believe it unless it happens to you. That's why you get hurt, because you can't really believe it's true." Duvall, the oldest of four, was born in Fort Worth, Texas, on July 7, 1949. Her father,

Robert worked in law and her mother, Bobbie, in real estate.

Duvall moved back to Texas in the mid-1990s. Around 2002, after making the comedy "Manna from Heaven," she retreated from Hollywood completely. Her whereabouts became a favorite topic of internet sleuths. A favorite but incorrect theory was that it was residual trauma from the grueling shoot for "The Shining." Another was that the damage to her home after the Northridge Earthquake was the last straw.

Duvall attempted to restart her career, dipping her toe in with the indie horror "The Forest Hills" that filmed in 2022 and premiered quietly in early 2023. **AP**



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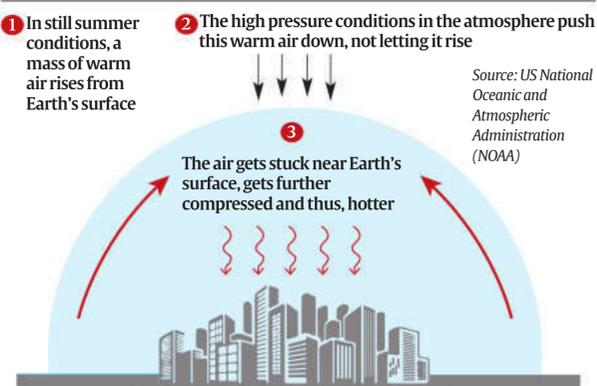
If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com

THIS WORD MEANS

HEAT DOME

Weather phenomenon where a high-pressure system in the atmosphere traps warm air like a lid on a pot

HOW A HEAT DOME WORKS

ALIND CHAUHAN
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

THE ENTIRE western US is facing a massive heatwave that began last week. The worst affected is the state of California, where at least a dozen cities broke all-time high-temperature records. For instance, the city of Redding in Northern California recorded a maximum of 48.33 degree Celsius last Friday, while Palm Springs in Southern California touched a record 51.11 degree Celsius. These scorching temperatures are a result of a heat dome over the state of California.

behaviour of the jet stream — an area of fast-moving air, high in the atmosphere, that usually helps move weather systems along the Earth's surface.

Typically, jet streams have a wave-like pattern that moves from north to south, and then north again. When these waves get bigger and elongated, they move slowly and sometimes can become stationary. This is when a high-pressure system gets stuck in place, and leads to the formation of a heat dome.

How is climate change impacting heat domes?

Scientists are still debating how climate change is impacting the blocking weather events that cause heat domes. They have ascertained that rising global temperatures have made heat domes larger, and more intense.

A 2021 study by a team of international climate researchers who were part of World Weather Attribution, found that temperatures recorded during the formation of a heat dome in Canada that June "would have been virtually impossible without the influence of human-caused climate change".

Another study, published in the journal *Nature* in 2023, indicated that the intensity of heat domes is outpacing the rate of global warming — which means that climate change is fuelling their intensity.

What is a heat dome?

A heat dome is a weather phenomenon in which a high-pressure system in the atmosphere traps warm air like a lid on a pot, for an extended period of time. Since the warm air cannot rise upwards, clouds cannot form — clouds form when warm, moist air from the ground rises, cools down, and the water vapour in it condenses.

With skies clear, more sunlight reaches Earth, which results in more warming and drying of the soil. The longer the heat dome stays in one place, the warmer the conditions get with each passing day.

Why are heat domes formed?

A heat dome's formation is tied to the

Late sleepers are cognitively sharper than early risers: Study

THOSE WHO stay up late might actually be sharper than those who wake up early.

A study published in *The BMJ* on Wednesday examined how sleep duration, quality, and chronotype (which determines when one feels most alert) affected cognitive performance. It used data from the UK Biobank study, in which more than 26,000 individuals had completed intelligence, reasoning, reaction time, and memory tests.

The analysis revealed a positive association between normal sleep duration (7-9 hours) and cognitive scores — sleep duration appeared to be the biggest determinant of cognitive performance.



NEW RESEARCH

function. Those who slept late, and were most productive in the evenings, performed better cognitively than early risers.

Beyond being contrary to conventional wisdom, this goes against studies done with adolescents, suggesting that circadian rhythms evolve with age. **ENS**

"It is important to remember to get just enough sleep, not too long or too short. This is crucial for keeping your brain healthy and functioning at its best," Dr Raha West, lead author and a researcher at Imperial College London, said.

The study also found that among adults, there is an inverse relationship between "morningness" and cognitive

EXPLAINED FOREIGN POLICY & STRATEGY
India and Austria

SHUBHAJIT ROY

NARENDRA Modi's visit to Vienna this week was the first by an Indian Prime Minister to Austria since June 1983, when Indira Gandhi travelled to the country.

The Prime Minister's decision to travel to Vienna immediately after he met President Vladimir Putin in Moscow was significant — Austria is a European country that is not a part of Nato, the US-led anti-Russia trans-Atlantic military alliance, whose 32 leaders gathered in Washington DC this week.

Message to both sides

During the visit that Modi said was being watched by the "entire world", the Prime Minister told Putin that the death of innocent children causes "pain and the heart simply explodes", that "peace talks do not succeed amid bombs, guns and bullets", and that the "solution [to any conflict] cannot be found on the battlefield".

Modi's statements conveyed India's deep concern at a suspected Russian missile attack on a children's hospital in Kyiv. The attack, carried out when the Prime Minister was in Russia, reflected a pattern — in December 2023, when External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar visited Moscow to meet Putin and his Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Russia launched its biggest air attack on Ukraine since the beginning of the war in February 2022, killing at least 31 people, according to the Ukrainian military.

So, speaking in Vienna with Chancellor Karl Nehammer the day after he met Putin, the Prime Minister stressed again that "this is not a time for war", that "problems cannot be solved on the battlefield", and that the "loss of innocent lives anywhere is unacceptable".

The reiteration was India's clear message to Western capitals concerned over Modi's bilateral meeting with Russia's leader.

Country born neutral

Vienna was under Nazi occupation during World War II. After the end of the war, it was divided into four sectors by the US, the UK, France, and the Soviet Union, supervised by the Allied Commission. The Allies occupied Austria for a decade after the war ended.

In 1955, the four occupying powers signed the Austrian State Treaty with the Austrian



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Austria's Chancellor Karl Nehammer in Vienna on Wednesday. PTI

government to establish Austria as an independent state. The Soviet Union demanded that Austria, which is located strategically between capitalist western Europe and the communist bloc in the east of the continent, maintain neutrality on the model of Switzerland, with the four powers pledging to the integrity and inviolability of Austrian territory.

The 1955 treaty, which was ratified by all countries, thus bound Austria to neutrality. The constitution of Austria prohibits entering into military alliances, and the establishment of foreign military bases on Austrian territory.

Austria and Nehru

In 1952-53, the Austrians approached Jawaharlal Nehru, who was respected by both Western nations and the Soviets, for help in securing a sovereign nation.

India was among the few countries that supported Austria's appeal at the United Nations General Assembly in 1952 for an end to the Allied occupation and the restoration of its sovereignty. Karl Gruber, the Austrian Foreign Minister, noted that "The consent of such an important country [India] — whose neutrality in the East-West Conflict is beyond any doubt — was destined to be especially beneficial to Austria's cause." (Quoted in Hans Köchler, *Austria, Neutrality and Non-alignment*)

In June 1953, Gruber and Nehru attended the coronation of Elizabeth II in London and, according to media reports from the time, had a meeting the following morning. In his book *The Political Settlement After the Second World War* (1972), the British historian Sir

John Wheeler-Bennett wrote that Nehru's role as a "diplomatic mediator" introduced "an entirely new factor into the Austrian treaty discussions".

Köchler, the well known Austrian philosopher, quoted from a report published in the Austrian daily *Neues Österreich* on June 21, 1953: "Prime Minister Nehru... is without a doubt the only personality in international politics whose 'good offices' can be effective in supporting Austria in her efforts towards the realization of the State Treaty."

In June 1955, about a month after Austria had gained full independence through the conclusion of the State Treaty, Nehru paid a State Visit to the country, the first by a foreign leader.

On Wednesday, Chancellor Nehammer recalled Nehru's role. With Prime Minister Modi listening, he said: "The situation was difficult, it was difficult to make progress. It was Foreign Minister Gruber who contacted Prime Minister Nehru, asking for support in the negotiations to bring them to a positive conclusion. This is what happened. India helped Austria and the negotiations came to a positive conclusion with the Austrian State Treaty."

Evolution of ties

Diplomatic relations between India and Austria were established on November 10, 1949 — this year marks its 75th anniversary.

The year after Indira's visit in 1983, Austria's Chancellor Fred Sinowatz came to India on a reciprocal visit. President K R Narayanan went to Austria on a State Visit in November 1999; Austria's President Dr Heinz

Fischer came in February 2005, and President Pratibha Patil visited Austria in October 2011. Austria's Foreign Minister, Alexander Schallenberg, has an interesting connection with India.

When he visited with a high-level business delegation in March 2022, it became known that his father, Wolfgang Schallenberg, was Austria's Ambassador to India between 1974 and 1978, and the current Foreign Minister had attended elementary school in New Delhi.

Alexander Schallenberg followed in his father's footsteps to join the Austrian foreign service and, in 2019, became the Foreign Minister of his country. He became Chancellor for three months in 2021, and has been Foreign Minister since December 2021.

So, when Schallenberg met Jaishankar, they struck an instant rapport — both career diplomats turned Foreign Ministers, both sons of illustrious government officials. (Jaishankar is the son of K Subrahmanyam, the doyen of India's strategic affairs analysts.)

Why Austria matters

On Wednesday, Chancellor Nehammer and Prime Minister Modi recognised the potential to significantly upgrade the bilateral partnership to a higher level. In addition to closer political-level dialogue, the two leaders emphasised a "future-oriented bilateral sustainable economic and technology partnership", covering a range of new initiatives and joint projects.

Austria offers tremendous opportunities for bilateral collaboration in infrastructure, renewable energy, e-commerce, fintech, enterprise tech, consumer services, and media and entertainment.

Both countries have taken balanced positions in the Russia-Ukraine war.

Even though Austria supported the EU's sanctions against Russia, on April 11, 2022, Chancellor Nehammer became the first European leader to visit President Putin to discuss the end of the war. Austria has publicly criticised Russian actions in Ukraine, but commercial ties between the two countries remain largely intact, and it continues to import gas from Russia.

During Nehru's visit in 1955, Austria's President Theodor Körner described him as a statesman who was "continuously giving new impulses to world politics by fruitful ideas", and a "tireless fighter for freedom and understanding among nations". (*India and Europe in a Changing World: Context, Confrontation, Cooperation*, ed. Rajendra K Jain, 2023).

2024 is not 1955, but New Delhi and Vienna could again navigate the choppy global waters of tension and conflict as partners with a shared goal.

Why location sharing can't be bail condition

AJJOY SINHA KARPURAM
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

THE SUPREME COURT on Monday held that courts cannot impose bail conditions that require accused persons to share their location on Google Maps.

A Bench comprising Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan also held that in cases where the accused is a foreign national, courts cannot demand a "certificate of assurance" from relevant Embassies or High Commissions that the accused will not leave the country.

On May 31, 2022, the Delhi High Court granted bail to Nigerian national Frank Vitus in a drug smuggling case, subject to the condition that he and co-accused Ebera Nwanaforo "shall drop a PIN on the Google map to ensure that their location is available to the Investigation Officer of the case". They were

also required to obtain a certificate of assurance from the High Commission of Nigeria saying they would not leave the country.

Why did the SC reject Delhi HC's unusual conditions?

After considering an affidavit submitted by Google which clarified that sharing a pinned location "does not enable real-time tracking of the user or their device", the SC held that the condition imposed was "completely redundant" as it does not help authorities track the accused persons.

The court also held that "any bail condition which enables the Police/Investigation Agency to track every movement of the accused by using any technology or otherwise would undoubtedly violate the right to privacy guaranteed under Article 21". The court then ordered the removal of this condition.

On the subject of the "certificate of assurance", the court held that the grant of such a certificate is "beyond the control of the accused", and ordered the removal of this condition as well. It stated that if the Embassy does not grant such a certificate within a reasonable time, the accused "cannot be denied bail" on the basis of a condition which is simply "impossible for the accused to comply with".

EXPLAINED LAW

What was the case about?

In May 2014, Vitus, Nwanaforo, and one Eric Jayden were arrested in Mahipalpur,

Delhi by Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) officials who claimed to have received "secret information" regarding a consignment of drugs. According to the NCB, the three were in a taxi at the time, and Jayden was found carrying a bag containing 1.9 kg of Methamphetamine.

Vitus and Nwanaforo argued in court that

there was no incriminating evidence on their person. They said that they had been incarcerated for eight years, and were thus entitled to bail as per the SC's directions in *Supreme Court Legal Aid Committee Representing Undertrial Prisoners vs Union of India & Ors* (1994).

In this case, the SC had held that when there is a delay in disposing of cases under the NDPS Act, if the accused is charged with an offence punishable with 10 years' imprisonment or more, they "shall be released on bail if he has been in jail for not less than five years provided he furnishes bail in the sum of Rupees one lakh with two sureties for like amount". Other "general conditions" included, in the case of foreign nationals, obtaining a "certificate of assurance" from the relevant Embassy stating that they will not leave the country.

In line with this, the Delhi HC granted bail to Vitus and Nwanaforo, but added the requirement of submitting their Google Maps pin.

Chasing asteroids: Why ISRO wants to venture into planetary defence

AMITABH SINHA
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

INDIAN Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman S Somanath said last week that "we should be able to go and meet" the asteroid Apophis when it passes by Earth at a distance of 32,000 km in 2029. However, "it is yet to be decided in what way [ISRO] should participate".

The Indian space agency might send its own spacecraft, or collaborate with other space agencies. A NASA mission has already been confirmed.

Somanath's remarks reveal ISRO's intent to develop capabilities in planetary defence — an area it has so far not entered. A mission to study an asteroid would be the first step towards building a programme aimed at preventing celestial bodies from colliding with Earth with potentially catastrophic consequences.

An alarming asteroid

When Apophis was discovered in 2004, scientists thought there was a 2.7% chance of a collision with Earth — the highest probability of any large asteroid hitting Earth in the recent past. Initial observations showed that if not in 2029, Apophis could hit Earth in 2036 or 2068.

Given the asteroid's size — it measures about 450 m at its widest — a collision with Earth could cause large-scale damage. Some scientists compared the potential impact to the event that wiped out dinosaurs and most other extant life some 66 million years ago.

Subsequent observations showed these initial fears to have been unfounded — the Earth did not face any risk from Apophis in 2029, 2036, or 2068. The asteroid will come the closest to Earth in 2029, when it flies by at a distance of 32,000 km. This is close enough to be visible to the naked eye, and at a distance at which some communication satellites operate.

SPACE OBJECTS

ASTEROID: Rocky/metallic objects moving around Sun, mostly leftovers from the formation of solar system. Asteroids less than 1 metre in diameter are called meteoroids.

METEOR: The streak of light produced when an asteroid/meteoroid encounters friction of Earth's atmosphere.

Threats from space

Apophis may not pose a threat, but asteroids are headed towards Earth all the time.

In fact, thousands enter the Earth's atmosphere every day. Most are very small and burn up in the atmosphere due to friction — some of the larger ones burn spectacularly, and show up as fireballs in the sky. In some cases, unburnt fragments make it to surface, although they are not large enough

to cause much damage.

Once in a while, however, asteroids do cause damage. In 2013, a 20-metre wide asteroid entered the atmosphere and exploded about 30 km above a Russian town, releasing energy equivalent to the blast yield of 400-500 kilotons of TNT — 26 to 33 times the energy released by the atom bomb that detonated over Hiroshima. While most of this energy was absorbed by

the atmosphere, shock waves travelled to the ground, flattened trees, damaged buildings, and injured 1,491 people, according to the Russian Ministry of Health.

Worryingly, the asteroid was detected only after it entered the atmosphere. This was in part because it came from the direction of the Sun, and was hidden by its glare.

Scientists know of at least 1.3 million asteroids, but there could be more surprises in store. A planetary defence programme seeks to track and neutralise these threats.

From sci-fi to reality

In 2022, NASA demonstrated technology that has long been a science fiction staple.

A spacecraft launched in the previous year crashed into an asteroid named Dimorphos, and changed both its shape and its trajectory. Dimorphos did not pose a threat to Earth, and was circling the Sun some 11 million km away from our planet. But this showed the beginning of a planetary defence programme. Asteroids are yet

to be studied in detail, and very few missions have been dedicated to them.

This is why the approach of Apophis has generated huge interest among space agencies around the world. While formal announcements are yet to be made, several missions, including those from private agencies, are expected to be launched in order to study the asteroid from close quarters.

NASA has already redirected one of its spacecraft, one that previously studied the asteroid Benu, to track Apophis. This spacecraft will go within a distance of 4,000 km of Apophis in April 2029, and then trail the asteroid for 18 months, collecting data and analysing its surface.

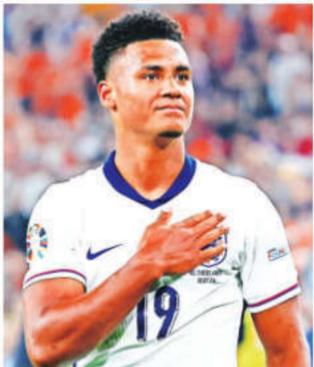
ISRO's intention to join such an endeavour displays its growing confidence in taking on newer challenges, and contributing proactively to global space objectives. It is also a reaffirmation of its continuing evolution into a well-rounded space agency, with capabilities that match the best in the world.

19 SPORT

"Our adventure came to a painful end last night in the semi-final, in a match in which our team gave everything. I am proud of this great group of players and staff, who have worked together with enormous dedication."

RONALD KOEMAN, NETHERLANDS COACH

Watkins: From a forgotten understudy to folk hero



Ollie Watkins has scored 19 goals for Villa last season. Reuters

SAYAK DUTTA
JULY 11

TILL 90+1 minutes of England's semifinal against Netherlands, Ollie Watkins was Harry Kane's understudy, struggling to get a look in the team. After the final whistle, the 28-year-old morphed into a national hero, sealing England's place in the final with a 2-1 win. As the Aston Villa striker wheeled away in celebration after breaching the Dutch defence in the dying embers of a finely balanced match, his expression was that of unbridled joy, occasionally betraying a sense of disbelief. This was not in the script but in Berlin on Wednesday, the best laid plans were torn up and scattered under the night sky as Watkins became the unlikely protagonist in a tale that will be passed down through generations.

Up until Watkins' moment of magic, it looked like a foregone conclusion that the match was headed to Extra Time like all of England's previous knockout fixtures in this tournament. With the tie precariously balanced at 1-1 courtesy of a Harry Kane penalty and a Xabi Simons thunderbolt in the first half, England manager Gareth Southgate played the ace up his sleeve as he subbed off Kane to bring in Watkins in the 81st minute.

And just like that, the complexion of the match changed. With the fresh legs of Watkins in front instead of a tiring Kane, England started to press high leading to the Dutch to give away possession. And that pressure counted as Cole Palmer on the right played a simple pass to Watkins who had his back towards goal. With De Vrij breathing down his neck, the striker turned and smashed a low shot from a tight angle into the far corner.

The striker who has had a tremendous season with his club Aston Villa, scoring 19 goals in all competitions, did not get a sniff into the England first team with Kane and even Brentford's Ivan Toney ahead of him in the pecking order.

On any other night, the bet would be on Toney getting the nod against the Dutch but Southgate decided to opt for something different. Watkins was an unfamiliar opponent to face for the Netherlands, having played just 21 minutes in the Euro in a drab 1-1 draw with Denmark in the Group stages. Any other player in his place would have suffered from a lack of confidence when thrust into such an important match with just those 21 mins under his belt but the Torquay-born forward has always been different.

The player who guided Villa to their first ever Champions League after finishing fourth in the Premier League last season, had reached double figures for league goals and assists in the EPL as early as February this year, becoming the first Villa player since Dwight Yorke in the 1995/96 season to achieve that feat.

England put on game face

Three Lions roar to life during a 35-minute period to play their best football of the tournament; Ollie Watkins's late strike books final berth

SCORELINE	
England	Netherlands
2	1
H Kane 18' (P)	X Simons 7'
O Watkins 90'	

SANDIP G
JULY 11

SOMETIMES, A pause helps. Three minutes after Xavi Simons's solo-run goal slipped England into pandemonium, Jude Bellingham suffered a blow on his head, colliding with Jerdy Schouten. But when the support staff attended to Bellingham, England's Kieran Trippier, a warrior according to his coach, snarled at his teammates, exhorting them to pick the shattered pieces of their self-belief. He rushed to Declan Rice, from whom Simons had snatched the ball, and offered a warm embrace. He wrapped an arm of comfort around Phil Foden, whose struggles had embodied England's passivity. Something suddenly stirred. The England that resumed after the break was a different animal, a beast that relentlessly tossed and ripped the Dutch stranglehold apart. England buzzed and fizzed into life, for 35 minutes of sustained and sweeping magnificence. The repelling parts finally fused and burned to produce carnage.

Two minutes on, Phil Foden composed a clever free-kick that Rice could have flicked towards the goal rather than passing back; Harry Kane would trap a ball on the turn and cracked a shot from 30 yards. Bukayo Saka, England's most penetrative forward in the entire tournament, warped through the tight alleys into expansive spaces. He schemed the contentious Harry Kane penalty. He swanned into the box and took his shot, but the blocked attempt bounced to Kane. The VAR check, drama, the penalty and equaliser threw the game into the melodrama zone. It was even a kind of distraction, a disruption of England's fluttering forwards. Kane regained his mobility, his pace and positioning instinct; Saka was a little globe of fire, swerving past the Dutch backline like a gust of breeze, cutting into his preferred inside right channels that lingering on the far right zones. It freed up space behind him, where Foden would slash in. The Manchester City forward has been the critics' lightning rod for criticism, the finest example of Gareth Southgate's capacity to stifle creative footballers.

But Foden bristled with a fuming energy, his off-the-movements a treatise for fledgling footballers to read. He ran with purpose, passing with the clarity of the summer sun. He nearly snatched the lead, prodding the ball past his club-mate Nathan Ake and goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen, only for Denzel Dumfries's clearance off the line denying him. Foden's link-up with another colleague from Manchester City, Kyle Walker, oozed reassurance too. Walker served Saka and Foden with a stream of overlapping runs, cutting open the Dutch backline. Foden relished the free role, where he could shuttle in and out of the flanks with Jude Bellingham filling into the pockets of real estate he left behind.

He was woefully unfortunate not to enter the scoresheet. He channeled his inner Lamine Yamal and packed a curler into the far corner from 25 yards. Had the shot not cannoned off the woodwork (Yamal's too hit the post, but deflected into the net), this would have been as spectacular a goal as the Spaniard's, because he had struck the shot on half-run. Nonetheless, Southgate would be pleased at Foden's vibes, the swagger and intensity had returned. He is his most important forward — EPL's player of the season last year no less — with his vision, passing range, finishing skills, and someone who could perform roles within roles. Even the Kane-Bellingham understanding improved, furnishing intermittent glimpses of the combined havoc, their smooth interchanging of roles and



Ollie Watkins sets off after scoring in the 90th minute against The Netherlands to put England in the Euro final. Reuters

understanding of each other's movements.

In those 35 minutes every note and syllable fell into place. Cagey, compressed, and unimaginative for most of their campaign, England breathed freedom, life and imagination. Kobbie Mainoo owes a chunk of credit too. He kept sliding in passes others didn't see. He twice released Foden for goals (the Dumfries one and another the forward bunted to the goalkeeper). He won several balls in the final third, despite his relatively deeper starting positions, and had a couple of attempts himself. He rarely clings onto the ball for too long, barely attempts the outrageous, but unlocks defences with eye-of-the-needle passing.

Irresistible passage

In this irresistible passage, Rice too displayed the virtues that made him Arsenal's lead act in the season past. For much of the season, he has looked clumsy in possession, often seeking the route of safety rather than aggression. He would close his body at the ball and pass sideways. He was largely confined to his territory, which is not a bad thing, but only if making progressive passes. But against the Netherlands, he frequently pinged the ball forward and produced precise diagonal balls. He was doubtlessly a few notches below his peak, but threw assuring signs of revival. The upturn was that England looked increasingly creative and purposeful, more than they had looked in any other game in this tournament. The downswing was that it lasted only 35 minutes and dissipated after the Dutch shored up their midfield.

The spark fizzled out, the match meandered on, and they just kept waiting endless for a twist of fate. Southgate has, at times, been slow to make in-game changes, ponderous to the tactics of the opponent. Good teams could ruthlessly punish them. His resistance to tweak the dysfunctional left-flank could pile on eternal agony if Yamal clicks into his gears on Sunday.

He did displace Trippier with Luke Shaw in the second half, which immediately enhanced their thrust and threat. In the end, the substitutions too were brave, and rewarding. There was relief and joy when the whistle blew, after Ollie Watkins fired a stoppage-time winner. Though imperfections still gleam, England is a far better side now than they were at the start of the knockouts. And those 35 minutes of buzz and life offer them hope of Euro redemption.

We all want to be loved: Southgate

ASSOCIATED PRESS
JULY 11

Gareth Southgate has faced non-stop criticism as England's manager at Euro 2024. Reaching the final could rekindle a love affair with the team's supporters.

A coach once idolized by his team's fans — and with the most consistently successful record of any England manager — had been the target of a volley of plastic cups from disgruntled fans at one game, and criticism from British TV commentators over his cautious approach.

Wednesday's 2-1 win over the Netherlands in the Euro 2024 semifinals might change all that. Southgate's team played a more open, attacking style for much of the game, and his decision to take off captain Harry Kane paid dividends when substitute Ollie Watkins scored a dramatic stoppage-time winner.

"We all want to be loved, right? When you're doing something for your country and you're a proud Englishman, when you don't feel that back and when all you read is criticism, it's hard. So to be able to celebrate the second final (after Euro 2020) is very, very special," Southgate said, paying tribute to England's traveling fans.

"If I hadn't been on the grass, I'd have been watching, celebrating like they were. We are kindred spirits in many ways but of course I'm the one who has to pick a team. So to be able to give them a night like tonight, it's very special." Southgate was once seen as someone who reconnected England with its fan base, making them fall back in love with the team.

Supporters sang of Southgate being "the one" and the vest — or waistcoat — he wore at the 2018 World Cup became one of the iconic symbols of his first major tournament in charge.

But a loss on penalties to Italy at home in the Euro 2020 final seemed for some to show the limits of his cautious tactics as England tried and failed to defend an early 1-0 lead.

At Euro 2024, England's path to its semi-final game against the Netherlands featured some games that were hard to watch —



Gareth Southgate's decision to substitute Harry Kane paid dividends. Reuters

NUMBER PLATE

2

England have now reached the final in two of their four major tournaments under Gareth Southgate (also Euro 2020) — they had only done so in one of their previous 23 World Cup/Euro appearances (1966 World Cup) before Southgate's tenure.

England didn't have a shot on goal until deep into added time against Slovakia in the round of 16, and the 80th minute against Switzerland in the quarterfinals. Both were

crucial goals that kept England's hopes alive. Until Wednesday, Southgate's most notable experiment in Germany was one that backfired, deploying right back Trent Alexander-Arnold as a central midfielder in the opening 1-0 win over Serbia and 1-1 draw with Denmark.

England faces Spain in Sunday's final, one game away from what would be its first men's trophy since winning the 1966 World Cup on home soil.

"The only reason I took the job was to try and bring success to England as a nation and try and improve English football. To be able to take the team to its first final overseas, I'm immensely proud of that," Southgate said.

"We play the team who have been the best team in the tournament and we have a day less to prepare so it's a huge task. But we're still here and we're fighting."

Southgate's plans that worked, and one that didn't...

The England manager had come off as a stubborn man throughout the tournament, with his team barely progressing through each round. However, most of his decisions seem to have worked out. SANDIP G analyses



Phil Foden was unlucky not to have scored a goal against the Dutch. Reuters

FAITH IN FODEN

Coming into the semifinals, Phil Foden was England's most criticised footballer. He is used to playing on the left, but in Germany he resembled a shadow of his exciting self. Perhaps, he was not used to operating so wide, or he might have been tired. Several alternatives and names were discussed and the semifinal seemed

to be his last lease. But Southgate remained totally committed to him and was eventually rewarded. Against the Netherlands, he was handed out a free role, wherein he could occupy central channel as well as slide to the right, where he had been at his creative best in the last two seasons for the club. Finally, he rediscovered his pace, touch, and off the ball movement.

THREE-MAN DEFENCE

IT WAS how the Southgate era began and after the tenuous game against Slovakia, he reverted to a formation that he had liberally used in his early days in the quarterfinal against Switzerland. The strategy armoured their defence, but offensively they struggled to make an impact against the Swiss.

The wingbacks ended up as full-backs, blunting their teeth upfront, where the forwards remained isolated. But it gradually settled into place. Rather than a 3-4-3 or 3-5-2, the staple formations when playing with three at the back, he employed a 3-4-2-1 with Jude Bellingham and Phil Foden as the No 10s and Kobbie Mainoo and Declan Rice as the double pivots. An exciting formation, England showed its possibilities to thrill without compromising on defensive sturdiness. Given Spain's attacking edge, he is likely to stick to the format.



Kobbie Mainoo (L) gets to the ball ahead of Netherlands' Jerdy Schouten. Reuters

THE MAINOO GAMBLE

He was third choice midfielder to partner Declan Rice. Trent Alexander-Arnold started the first two games. Conor Gallagher was used in the third. Neither could wield any influence, and in the round of 16, Mainoo was thrown into the pack. He or Southgate had not turned back since. The 19-year-old has upgraded

with every game; his cool under pressure is immense, even when surrounded by bigger men, his passing range is supreme (his passing accuracy of 94.4 percent better than Rodri's 93.7), and spatial awareness incredible. He never wastes a ball, seldom concedes cheap possession, reads the movements of his teammates as well as the opponents. Against the Dutch he completed 36 off 42 passes.

A PROBLEM ON HAND

PERSISTENCE WITH TRIPPIER



The England left-side is akin to a free runway, not only limiting England's space to two-third of the field but also affording opposition

wingmen space to bomb forward. Part of the problem is a wide left-sided forward (like Raheem Sterling) but the bigger problem is the right-footed Kieron Trippier. He is an excellent creator and defensively resolute, but on the opposite flank. On the left, he had looked out of depth, fullbacks too easily cutting outside him, the weaker side. The difference was perceptible when Luke Shaw replaced him. Shaw is getting more game time, and should he start against Spain, England would restore stability and the attacking threat on the side. It could be that England are not gifted with too many competent left-backs, but it surely cannot be about a semi-fit player and a wrong-footed one.

Smith scores 70 on debut, takes England to big lead over Windies



England's Jamie Smith celebrates after reaching his half century. Reuters

REUTERS
JULY 11

JAMIE SMITH made a fluent 70 on debut to lift England to 371 all out and a 250-run lead over West Indies at tea on the second day of the first test at Lord's on Thursday.

Joe Root scored 68 and Harry Brook a breezy 50 as the hosts took advantage of good batting conditions to seize control of the match.

Resuming after lunch on 293-6, the 23-year-old Smith shared a 52-run partnership with Chris Woakes who was caught at square leg off Jayden Seales for 23.

Fast bowler Gus Atkinson, who took seven West Indies first-innings wickets on his debut, fell first ball to Jason Holder and Smith went on the attack, hitting two big sixes and eight fours in the sunshine to underline his potential. Shoaib Bashir was run out by a brilliant throw from Mikyle Louis and Smith became Seales' fourth victim when he holed out to Kirk McKenzie on the mid-wicket boundary.

James Anderson did not face a ball in his 188th and final test after receiving another warm ovation from the crowd as he walked out to the crease.

In the morning session, Brook batted with attacking intent and reached his 12th fifty in 13 tests before getting in a tangle over a short ball from Alzarri Joseph and striking a catch to wicketkeeper Joshua de Silva.

Ben Stokes was bowled by Gudakesh Motie for four with a ball that span sharply and struck the England captain's middle stump.

Root eased to his 62nd test fifty and looked completely untroubled until just before lunch when Motie produced another fine turning delivery to bowl him.

England dismissed West Indies for 121 on the first day.

BRIEF SCORES (DAY 2): West Indies 121 vs England 371 all out in 90 overs o/n 189-3 (J Smith 70, J Root 68, H Brook 50; J Seales 4-77)

Tendulkar 'best batter' I have bowled to, says Anderson

PTI Adds: England fast bowling great James Anderson, who is into his final few days as an international cricketer, enjoyed his battles against Sachin Tendulkar the most over the course of his remarkably long career.

Anderson, who is playing his 188th Test for England against the West Indies at Lord's, will retire after the game. Even though Anderson dismissed Tendulkar on nine occasions, he could not have a set plan against the Indian master blaster.

"The best batter I would have to say is Sachin Tendulkar," Anderson told Sky Sports when asked about the toughest batter he bowled to.

"I don't remember having a specific game plan against Sachin Tendulkar. Once he came on, I would just think that I cannot bowl a bad ball here, he was that kind of player. He was a key for India as well. If you get him out in India, the whole atmosphere, in the ground changes. He was such a big wicket," Anderson said.

Paolini becomes first Italian woman to reach Wimbledon final after beating Vekic in the longest women's semis at All England Club

REUTERS
JULY 11

SEVENTH SEED Jasmine Paolini became the first Italian woman to reach the Wimbledon final after defeating Croatian Donna Vekic 2-6 6-4 7-6(8) on Wednesday in the longest women's semi-final at the All England Club.

Fans were treated to a roller-coaster encounter on Centre Court as both players exhausted themselves in the two hour, 51-minute epic, during which both players ran more than 3.5 kilometres.

Paolini will face 2021 French Open champion Barbora Krejickova for the title on Saturday. Krejickova eliminated 2022 Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 in the second semifinal.

The two 28-year-olds were in uncharted territory, with Vekic playing the first major semi-final of her career while Paolini had never even won a match on grass before this year.

NUMBER PLATE

0

Paolini hadn't won a singles match at Wimbledon in three previous attempts. She becomes only the second player in the Open Era to reach the women's singles final at Wimbledon without a main draw win before that year's event, after Justine Henin in 2001.

5 Paolini becomes only the 5th player to reach Women's Singles finals at Roland Garros and Wimbledon the same year since 1999: The previous four are Steffi Graf (1999), Serena Williams (2002, 2015, 2016), Venus Williams (2002), Justine Henin (2006).

The Croatian took the opening set comfortably having broken Paolini, a surprise finalist at the French Open last month, in the fifth game and then again in the seventh with her mixture of groundstrokes and dropshots proving too much for the Italian under a sunny sky.

However, Paolini, cheered on by a loud contingent of Italians in the crowd, became more aggressive in the second as she approached the net more and put Vekic on the backfoot. Her diligence and energy eventually paid off with a break to clinch the set.

The pair exchanged numerous breaks in the decider as both racked up the unforced errors, particularly Vekic who looked fatigued and emotional as the match wore on. She was in tears after saving Paolini's first match point.

A successful challenge overturning a line call helped Paolini hold an almost 10-minute game that ended in Vekic sobbing in her chair at the changeover. The Croatian rallied to save another match point and held serve to force a tiebreak but looked particularly laboured as she made 57 unforced errors in total and voiced her frustration to coach Pam Shriver in the players' box.

Paolini, in contrast, looked just as energised as she did at the start.

"These last months have been crazy for me. I am trying to focus on what I have to do on court and I love playing tennis. It is amazing to be here and it is a dream," Paolini, who reached the semi-finals in Eastbourne last month, said on court. "I think it was an intense match and I tried to play my best and now it's time to recover. I think I need an ice bath as my legs are a little bit tired," she said.

The previous longest women's semi-final at Wimbledon was two hours and 50 minutes between Serena Williams and Elena Dementieva in 2009.

A marathon on grass



Jasmine Paolini beat Croatian Donna Vekic 2-6, 6-4, 7-6 (8) to reach the final of Wimbledon on Thursday. AP

Musetti has the tools to push Djokovic in semis

NAMIT KUMAR
JULY 11

AT THE 2021 French Open, Lorenzo Musetti was on the cusp of one of the biggest upsets of the tournament's recent history. In their feisty fourth-round encounter, he had Novak Djokovic on the ropes, fashioning a two-set lead before getting tentative with the finish line in sight, eventually retiring with injury as Djokovic recovered. The then 19-year-old Italian, for long hyped as one to watch, went away from that match never to get past that stage at a Major again; later that week, Djokovic left Paris with the trophy.

At some point in the three years since, Musetti got the Italian phrase 'Il meglio deve ancora venire' tattooed around his ribcage. It roughly translates to 'the best is yet to come.' On Friday, in his first Major semifinal, he will have the chance to roll out his best against Djokovic.

Peek into the semifinal lineup and the 25th-seeded Musetti seems like a typical journeyman who has coasted his way into a lucky meeting with a great on the heels of a favourable draw. His physicality and temperament may be taking more time to catch up with his talent; some of his contemporaries, namely Carlos Alcaraz (who will face Daniil Medvedev in the other semifinal on Friday) and Jannik Sinner, may have become household names as he has stayed relatively obscure. Yet Musetti has all the tools to do more than just make up the numbers. And Djokovic has seen it in the past.

His head-to-head with the men's tennis GOAT stands at 5-1, but there's plenty to unpack in those six encounters. He got his first high-profile win over Djokovic on the clay of Monte Carlo last year, and just last month, he took the Serb to the wire in their Roland Garros third round, the five sets of which lasted over four hours to become the latest



Lorenzo Musetti's head-to-head against Novak Djokovic is 1-5. Reuters

finish in the tournament's history.

Craft, guile

Musetti is an aesthete's delight. Part of what had created the hype around him as a precocious teenager was that he was not cut from the same cloth as most of the top players of today's game. He relies more on touch, feel, and craftiness as opposed to the surface-agnostic, big ball-striking baseline bashers currently occupying the latter stages of Grand Slams. That's a strength that is accentuated on grass.

Those around him may have fine-tuned massive serves or big forehands, but Musetti's greatest tool is his backhand slice. He has plenty of variety in his groundstrokes, likes to play it short and throw in drop shots, and disrupt opponents with rhythm shifts. It proves

to be an antidote to the power hitters.

Both his last two opponents, Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard and Taylor Fritz, were big servers and hard strikers of the ball. Musetti neutralised both by his ability to change the pace of the baseline exchanges thanks to his variety.

In their last few encounters, he has made Djokovic sweat. The Serb prefers to control patterns of play and dismantle the opponent's game once he has got a read on them. Musetti, with his constant momentum shifts, does not always make that easy.

Backhand that tests the knee

Part of why this has been a tricky matchup for Djokovic in the past is that he does not always come out on top in the backhand exchanges. Musetti's single-hander, an

Musetti got his first high-profile win over Djokovic on the clay of Monte Carlo last year, and just last month, he took the Serb to the wire in their Roland Garros third round.

oddy in modern tennis, is very versatile but it is the slice that is most challenging on grass.

His backhand slice often skimps over with the slightest net clearance and can stay very low. It's a most useful rally tool, it takes the sting out of the power coming from the other side of the net and resets the pattern of play. For Djokovic, it will make him hit outside of his comfort zone too, in repeated exchanges the Serb will have to bend very low and test the right knee on which he had surgery just last month.

Gritty as his quarterfinal triumph was on Wednesday, Musetti's detractors will say his craftsmanship is deceptive, that the eye test pales in comparison to the real test, and that he is all style and little substance.

That is why Friday's match is a new challenge for the 22-year-old from the small Italian town of Carrara. Excellent players can play scintillating tennis and still be dismantled by Djokovic, especially on a stage as big as Wimbledon's Centre Court. The Serb may not be at his best, but if his tussles with a seemingly imaginary hostile crowd earlier this week are anything to go by, he has begun rediscovering his winning edge.

The crowd will get behind Musetti, Djokovic will be distracted and ultimately use that to fuel his fire. If the Italian can be composed and not overawed by the occasion, he has the ability to make a match of this. He need only look to his ribcage for motivation.

[SPORTS BAR]



McIlroy opens with 65 at Scottish Open

North Berwick (Scotland): Rory McIlroy took his first step toward moving on from his US Open collapse and felt just as good about the state of his game. He opened with a 5-under 65 on Thursday and was in the mix on a cool, breezy day at the Scottish Open. Maximilian Kieffer and Haotong Li set the early pace at The Renaissance Club with a 64 on a links-style course that yielded low scoring with only a moderate wind. McIlroy took a week away from his golf clubs after the US Open, where he missed two short putts over the final three holes and finished one shot behind. AP

Van Nistelrooy returns to Man United

Manchester: Manchester United have appointed their former striker Ruud van Nistelrooy as an assistant to manager Erik ten Hag in another move they hope will restore the record 20-times English champions to former glories. Rene Hake was also hired in an assistant role to complete an all-Dutch managerial team. Ten Hag has signed a contract extension that will keep him at the Premier League club until 2026 despite a poor season in which United finished eighth in the standings. "Now is a good time to refresh the coaching team as we look to build on the achievements of the past two years and push to the next level," Ten Hag said in a statement. REUTERS

F1 announces six sprint races for 2025

London: Formula One will again have six sprint race weekends next season with Belgium instead of Austria the only change. Austria has held a sprint at Spielberg's Red Bull Ring for the past three years but will now revert to the traditional grand prix format. The other five sprint weekends will be the second round in Shanghai on March 21-23, Miami on May 2-4, Austin on October 17-19, Sao Paulo and Qatar on November 7-9 and 28-30 respectively. REUTERS



Eritrean Biniam Girmay celebrates after winning on Thursday. AP

Girmay wins Tour de France stage 12

Paris: Eritrean Biniam Girmay edged out Wout van Aert to win the 12th stage of the Tour de France on Thursday while Slovenian Tadej Pogacar retained the overall leader's yellow jersey. Girmay, who became the first Black African to triumph on the Tour when he won the third stage, sealed his third win at this year's race on a day for the sprinters. "We didn't want to take any risks today," Intermarche-Wanty rider Girmay, 24, said after the 204 km ride from Aurillac to Villeneuve-sur-Lot. "But in the end, when everyone came together, I felt super good, and I said on the radio, 'give me support and I can deliver'. So I'm just super happy." Girmay out-paced Belgium's Van Aert and Arnaud Demare. REUTERS

Mumbai City rope in Greek striker Karelis

Mumbai: Mumbai City FC on Thursday announced roping in Greek striker Nikolaos Karelis ahead of the upcoming Indian Super League season. The 32-year-old, also known as Nikos Karelis, is set for his maiden stint in India. He began his youth career with Ergotelis and made his senior professional debut with them in 2007. Karelis has played for seven more clubs including stints in Russia (Amkar Perm), Belgium (Genk), England (Brentford) and the Netherlands (ADO Den Haag). PTI



Hasaranga resigns as Sri Lanka T20 captain

Colombo: All-rounder Wanindu Hasaranga has stepped down as captain of Sri Lanka's Twenty20 team, the country's cricket board said on Thursday, days after the South Asian side made an early exit at the T20 World Cup in the West Indies and United States. The 26-year-old was appointed in December in place of Dasun Shanaka. The 2014 T20 World Cup champions were knocked out of this year's tournament after failing to qualify for the Super Eight round. "Hasaranga said it is in the best interest of Sri Lanka Cricket that he decided to relinquish the captaincy duties and remain in the side as a player," the country's board said in a statement. REUTERS