

VIDEOGRAPHY SURVEY COMPLETED, REPORT IN COURT TODAY

Varanasi court orders sealing of Gyanvapi mosque spot after Shivling discovery claim

Masjid panel says object is part of fountain, will challenge sealing order in top court

ASAD REHMAN
LUCKNOW, MAY 16

RETURNING THE spotlight to the Kashi Vishwanath temple-Gyanvapi mosque controversy, a Varanasi court Monday directed the district administration to seal the spot in the mosque complex where a Shivling was claimed to have been found during a court-mandated videography survey



Security personnel at the site in Varanasi Monday. Anand Singh

that just concluded.

The Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Committee said it would

challenge the order in the Supreme Court where it had

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

SC's Ayodhya verdict faces Kashi test: Mosque plea hearing today

Survey violates Places of Worship Act, says petition

ANANTHAKRISHNAN
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

THE SUPREME Court is likely to hear Tuesday a plea by the Committee of Management of Anjuman Intezamia Masjid, Varanasi, challenging the videography survey ordered by a local court of the Maa Shringar Gauri Sthal in the Kashi Vishwanath temple-Gyanvapi mosque complex. The Muslim

EXPRESS NETWORK

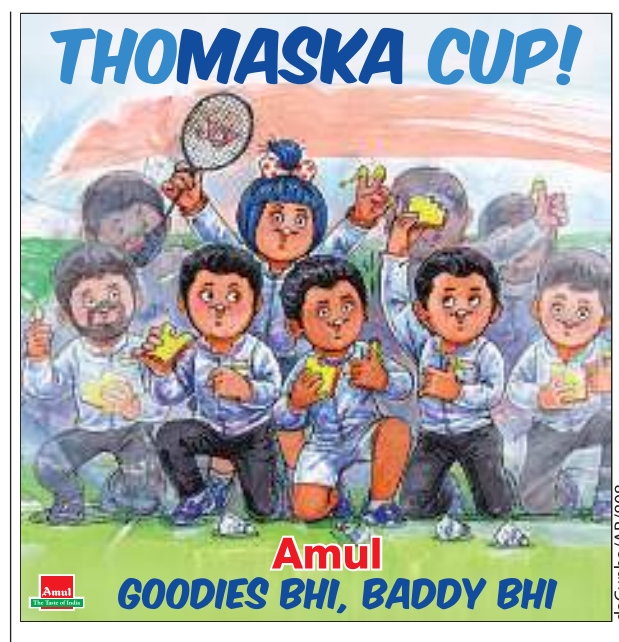
PLEA IN MATHURA COURT FOR SURVEY OF SHAHI IDGAH
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body contends that it is contrary to provisions of the Places of Worship Act (Special Provisions) Act 1991.

The Act states that the nature

of all places of worship, except Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, shall be maintained as it was on August 15, 1947 and that no suit shall lie in any court with respect to the conversion of the religious character of a place of worship, as existing on that date.

Incidentally, the Act itself is under challenge before the top court with at least two pending petitions questioning its **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**



DOMESTIC PRICES DROP SHARPLY

Export ban shakes world markets, wheat prices up 6%

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

INDIA'S BAN on wheat exports Saturday fuelled international prices by almost 6 per cent a bushel (60 pounds or one million kernels or 27.21 kg) when global markets opened Monday. Locally, prices dropped sharply by 4-8 per cent in different states — Rs 200-250 a quintal in Rajasthan, Rs 100-150 a quintal in Punjab, and about Rs 100 a quintal in Uttar Pradesh.

With the February 24 invasion of Ukraine by Russia and the supply disruption that followed, global wheat prices jumped over 60 per cent in 2022; just Russia and Ukraine together account for almost a third of world wheat exports.

The unexpected ban by India, which accounts for about 5 per cent of world wheat exports, stoked prices further. In Chicago, futures rose 5.9 per cent to \$12.47 a bushel on Monday, the

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



INDIA'S WHEAT EXPORTS

Year	Wheat Export (lakh tonnes)
2020-21	21.55
2021-22	72.15

Source: Government of India

highest in two months. The closing price in the previous trading **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

BUDDHIST CULTURE CENTRE TO COME UP

India-Nepal ties are as stable as the Himalayas, says Modi in Lumbini

YUBARAJ GHIMIRE
LUMBINI, MAY 16

MARKING HIS first official visit to the birthplace of the Buddha, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday marked Buddha Purnima by laying the foundation stone of a centre for Buddhist culture and heritage in Nepal's Lumbini — the first such facility to be set up by India there.

Modi later said the two countries of "Buddha's birth and enlightenment together have an obligation to work for the entire humanity" — and said that rela-

tions between India and Nepal are "as ancient as the ocean and as stable as the Himalayas".

"The growing and strengthening friendship between India and Nepal will work for the benefit of the entire humanity amid the kind of global situation that is emerging today. The devotion to Lord Buddha binds us together, and makes us members of one family," Modi said, referring to India and Nepal as "the countries of Buddha's birth and enlightenment".

"The energy of the place, where Lord Buddha was born, **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**



Prime Minister Modi with Nepal counterpart Sher Bahadur Deuba at the Lumbini site that marks Buddha's birthplace. PTI

Probe into J&K bus fire looks at use of 'sticky bomb'

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

THE INVESTIGATION into the fire in a passenger bus near Katra town, in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), on May 13 that claimed four lives and left over 20 injured is veering towards a terror probe, sources said.

According to sources, circumstantial evidence suggests that the fire was an act of sabotage and the use of an IED to trigger an explosion in the bus's fuel tank cannot be ruled out. Investigating officials suspect that a "sticky bomb", which can be stuck to a vehicle using magnets, was used.

The bus, mostly carrying pilgrims, had just left for Jammu when it caught fire near Khanak, about 1.5 km from Katra town. Katra is the base camp for pilgrims going to the Vaishno Devi shrine.

According to preliminary investigations, the fire started in the engine of the bus, and soon engulfed the vehicle. The initial police probe termed it as a case of the engine catching fire due to a technical fault. However, **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

NCLT ruling in way, so Govt takes another look at sale of Pawan Hans

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

THE CENTRE is taking a relook at the Pawan Hans disinvestment process on account that Almas Global Opportunity Fund, one of the three entities part of the winning consortium, has a court order passed against it by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), government sources told *The Indian Express*. The government is studying whether the NCLT verdict amounts to an "adverse order"

— something that may lead to disqualification of the bid, as per guidelines on strategic disinvestment.

The consortium entity that placed and won the bid for the state-owned helicopter service provider is Star9 Mobility Pvt Ltd. Cayman Islands-based Almas Global Opportunity Fund, which is managed by Dubai-based Almas Capital owns 49% of Star9 Mobility, with the remaining held by Mumbai-based Big Charter Pvt Ltd and Delhi-based Maharaja Aviation.

The plan for reopening does not include sending diplomats at senior levels — the embassy will likely function only with personnel for liaison purposes that may **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

India looks at reopening mission in Kabul minus senior diplomats

NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

INDIA IS exploring the possibility of reopening its embassy in Afghanistan soon, but without top level diplomatic representation, according to sources.

The *Indian Express* has learnt that a team of security officials flew to Kabul in February to assess the ground situation.

The plan for reopening does not include sending diplomats at senior levels — the embassy will likely function only with personnel for liaison purposes that may

E Much at stake

WHILE IT has not granted recognition to the Taliban regime, Delhi has been calling for an inclusive government in Afghanistan, one that ensures that Afghan soil is not used for any terror activity. India has much at stake in Afghanistan, having participated in a range of development projects.

extend to consular services, the sources said. It would not mean a recognition of the Taliban regime.

India shut down its embassy in Kabul on August 17, two days after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. Since then, Delhi has debated whether that was the right decision. Some sections of the security establishment and Ministry of External Affairs have maintained that continuing there would have put the lives of Indian personnel at risk, pointing to the 1998 incident in which Iranian diplomats at Iran's Mazar-i-Sharif consulate were **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

More men eating non-veg than before: NFHS data

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

AMID THE veg/non-veg debate that periodically convulses the country is a reality check: more people are eating non-vegetarian food than ever before, and the proportion of Indian men who do so has gone up sharply in the six years between 2015-16 and 2019-21, shows an analysis by *The Indian Express* of the National Family

15-49 YRS: WHO IS EATING NON-VEG, HOW MUCH

	Year	Daily	Weekly	Occasionally	Never
Women	2015-16	6.1	36.6	27.3	29.9
	2019-21	5.9	39.3	25.4	29.4
Men	2015-16	5.7	43.2	29.5	21.6
	2019-21	8	49.3	26.1	16.6

(figures in %)

Source: NFHS-4 and NFHS-5

Health Survey (NFHS) data. Data from the recently released NFHS-5, which was con-

ducted in 2019-21, show that the proportion of men aged 15-49 years who have never consumed

non-vegetarian food — listed as 'fish, chicken or meat' in the survey — stood at 16.6 per cent in 2019-21. That's a 5-percentage-point drop from the 21.6 per cent reported in the previous round of the survey, NFHS-4, conducted in 2015-16. There is, however, a gender skew here: the proportion of women in the same age group (15-49) who have never consumed 'fish, chicken or meat' stood at 29.4 per cent in 2019-21, only a **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

THE WORLD



SRI LANKA DOWN TO LAST DAY OF PETROL, SAYS ITS PM

PUTIN APPEARS TO BACK OFF THREATS AS SWEDEN DECIDES TO JOIN NATO P 12

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

Skyfall in Gujarat, expert says likely debris of a Chinese rocket

ADITIRAJA
VADODARA, MAY 16

FIRST CAME the metal balls, five of them, one after the other. Then came bits and pieces of metal, one that looked like a "ruler".

Across a clutch of villages in central Gujarat, the sky is falling — literally.

It started with three metal balls that fell on Bhalej, Khambholaj and Rampura villages on Thursday evening. They were followed by fragments of metal, one of which apparently

fell on a sheep pen in a farm, killing a lamb.

No one's yet got a grip on what's been happening. Gujarat officials said an ISRO team has collected samples but the premier space organisation declined comment.

The only possible clue so far has come from an astronomer at the Harvard Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics who tweeted this could possibly be debris from the "re-entry of the third stage" of a Chinese launch rocket.

It was around 4.45 pm on May 12 that the first chunk — a large, black ball weighing around

5kg — fell in Bhalej followed by two more in Khambholaj and Rampura — all located within 15 km from each other in Anand district.

Even as the local police were called in, a similar ball fell in Chaklasi village in neighbouring Kheda district, followed by another in Vadodara's Savli taluka on May 13. A day later, villagers from Kasor in Sojitra taluka of Anand reported that a fragment "resembling a ruler" fell on a farm, killing a lamb. And on Monday, the police received a similar call from Khodiyarpura in the same taluka.



'Metal balls' fell on Bhalej, Khambholaj and Rampura villages on Thursday evening

According to police, the objects fell mostly in empty areas — some on heaps of mud. And in all cases, they have begun probes, roping in forensic experts.

On May 12, astronomer Jonathan McDowell tweeted that the debris could possibly be the "re-entry of the third stage from the Chang Zheng 3B serial Y86 launch rocket". The rocket had lifted off on September 9, 2021, carrying a 5,500-kg communication satellite to geostationary transit orbit.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, McDowell said he was

identifying the debris based on tracking data, which showed that this object was "the only reentry that day (May 12) that went anywhere near India".

He said "the predicted path was a few 100 km north of the villages in question, but that's within the uncertainties for this particular object since its orbit was more uncertain than usual". The orbit was rapidly changing due to atmospheric drag, which may cause a change in the predicted ground location, he said.

Anand District Collector, MY Daxini, said: "We have sent all the items, including the metal

spheres that fell last week, to the Physical Research Laboratory (PRL) of ISRO. They have collected all the parts and are examining it."

When contacted, ISRO PRL director Anil Bharadwaj said he was out of station and would be able to comment on Tuesday. ISRO Space Applications Centre (SAC) director Nilesh Desai was not available for comment.

But in the villages where the "debris" have fallen, local residents have a lot to say — even though police suspect there could be more to it than space debris. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

FROM PAGE ONE

Gyanvapi

already moved a plea against the videography survey. It said the object being described as a Shivaling was part of the fountain in the wuzu (ablution) area.

Civil Judge (Senior Division) Ravi Kumar Diwakar, hearing a plea by five women seeking permission for daily prayers at Maa Shringar Gauri Sthal on the outer wall of the mosque complex, said, "District Magistrate, Varanasi, is directed to immediately seal the place where the Shivaling has been found. No person should be allowed to enter the place which will be sealed."

"The responsibility for the security and custodianship of the place which will be sealed will be considered personally of Varanasi district magistrate, Varanasi police commissioner and the CRPF commandant, Varanasi," the judge said.

Advocate Hari Shankar Jain, representing the five women petitioners, filed an application Monday, saying a "Shivaling is found in masjid complex at the place where wuzu khana is there".

A commission tasked by the court to conduct a survey will submit its report and findings on Tuesday. It concluded its survey Monday and officials said the findings were "confidential".

According to the court order, the application filed by Jain stated that a Shivaling was found inside the mosque complex by the survey commission on May 16.

"This is very important evidence. Hence, the CRPF commandant should be directed to seal it. Varanasi District Magistrate should be directed to stop the entry of Muslims. Only 20 Muslims should be allowed to pray at the mosque and they should not be allowed to perform wuzu (ablution)," the order stated.

S M Yasin, general secretary of the Anjumam Intezamia Masjid Committee, said, "We will challenge today's order for sealing in the writ petition being heard in the Honourable Supreme Court. The structure is part of the fountain in the wuzu area. In all old mosques, there used to be a haуз (basin), and a fountain in the centre. This is part of the fountain, which they are calling Shivaling. We are surprised how the court passed the order in a hurry. We will mention it in the Supreme Court."

District Magistrate Kaushal Raj Sharma said, "The court commissioner had given directions to all parties that until the report is submitted in court on May 17, no one should disclose what was found inside. But still if someone of their own will has given some information, then it can't be verified by anyone. Only the court is the custodian of this information. If someone has told you something, it is a personal thought. It has nothing to do with the court commission's action."

Police Commissioner Satish Ganesh told mediapersons that the action of the court-appointed commission was completed Monday. "It was done in an ideal atmosphere where no incident of law and order happened. We thank the people of Kashi for their cooperation." He appealed to the media to "not pay heed to any unofficial statement".

Soon after the court order, UP Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya, in a Twitter post, said, "No matter how much you hide 'truth', it comes out one day because 'truth is Shiv'. Baba ji ki jai, har har Mahadev. #GyanvapiTruthNow. #GyanvapiTemple."

In another tweet, he wrote in Hindi, "On the occasion of Budh Purnima, the manifestation of Baba Mahadev at Gyanvapi is a mythological message to Sanatan Hindu tradition."

Meanwhile, the All India Muslim Personal Law Board, responding to the court order, said the "Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi is a mosque and will remain one".

"To convert the mosque into a temple, then it is nothing but an attempt at a conspiracy to give birth to communal hatred. This is against the historical facts, and against the law," said a statement issued by AIMPLB secretary Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani.

"In 1937, the court had established in the Din Mohd vs. Secretary of State case matter that the premises is a property of Muslim Waqf and Muslims have a right to offer namaz there. The court had also determined how much of the disputed land is mosque's and temple's... Then, the Parliament passed the Places of Worship Act, 1991 which says that the status of religious places as in 1947 will remain. Then in 2019, the Supreme Court in the Babri mosque matter also said

clearly that all places of worship will remain under this Act," the AIMPLB said.

Mosque plea

Constitutional validity on the ground that it bars judicial review, which is a basic feature of the Constitution, and abridges the right to religion of Hindus, Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs.

Although the SC issued notice on one of them in March 2021, the Centre is yet to file its reply.

The appeal by the Masjid Committee, which challenges the April 21, 2022 Allahabad High Court ruling dismissing its petition against the order of a Varanasi court ordering the videographic survey of the disputed side, is listed Tuesday before a Supreme Court bench of Justices D Y Chandrachud and P S Narasimha.

Significantly, a five-judge Constitution bench of the then Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi and Justices S A Bobde, D Y Chandrachud, Ashok Bhushan and S Abdul Nazeer had, in the Ayodhya judgment of November 9, 2019, lauded the Places of Worship Act as "a legislative instrument designed to protect the secular features of the Indian polity, which is one of the basic features of the Constitution".

In that 5-0 unanimous verdict — on the title suit — in the wake of the Babri Masjid demolition, the Supreme Court ruled that the 2.77 acres of disputed land in Ayodhya would be handed over to a trust for the construction of a Ram Mandir and a 5-acre plot allotted to the Sunni Waqf Board at an alternate site.

The Masjid Committee's appeal contends that an earlier suit filed in 1991 by some devotees alleging that the Gyanvapi mosque was built after demolishing a temple had been stayed by the HC and the present proceedings which were instituted in 2021, were an attempt to get around the stay.

It also said that the proceedings are "an attempt to disturb the communal peace and harmony and in contravention to the Places of Worship Act".

The local court, said the Mosque Committee, should have first heard its application seeking rejection of demand for being barred by the Act, before going ahead.

Hearing a petition by five Hindu women seeking round-the-year access to pray at "a shrine behind the western wall of the mosque complex", a civil court in Varanasi had on April 8, 2022, appointed Advocate Commissioner Ajay Kumar Mishra to carry out an inspection of the disputed site — and directed him to "prepare videography of the action" and submit a report.

On April 21, the Allahabad High Court dismissed a petition filed by the mosque committee challenging this local court's order. On April 26, the Varanasi court again ordered videography of the disputed site.

Though the inspection began, it was halted after the mosque committee filed an application in the court, alleging bias, and seeking replacement of the court-appointed Advocate Commissioner. On May 12, the Varanasi court rejected the prayer to change Advocate Commissioner Mishra and ordered resumption of the video survey — even if it meant getting "locks opened/broken". The inspection report should be submitted on May 17, it said.

The two petitions challenging the Places of Worship Act have been filed by Lucknow-based trust "Vishwa Bhadra Pujari Purohit Mahasangh" along with some followers of Sanatan Vedic Religion, and Advocate Ashwini Upadhyay.

On March 12, 2021, a bench headed by the then Chief Justice of India S A Bobde issued notice on Upadhyay's plea. The Centre has not filed a reply and the matter has not come up for hearing.

Upadhyay's petition contends that the Act "has created arbitrary irrational retrospective cut-off date" and "has barred the remedies against illegal encroachment on the places of worship and pilgrimages and now Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, Sikhs cannot file suit or approach High Court under Article 226".

It said the Act is "unconstitutional and beyond its (Parliament's) law making power" as it has "frustrated" the principle of law "ubi jus ibi remedium (where there is a right, there is a remedy)," thus violating the concept of justice and Rule of Law, which is core of Article 14".

Besides, Article 13(2) also prohibits State from making any law which takes away or abridges fundamental rights conferred under Part-III of the Constitution and any law made in contravention to basic rights is void, it

pointed out.

The petition by the Lucknow trust has put forth similar arguments and questioned how any law can bar the right to seek judicial review of a grievance.

Soon after the Lucknow trust approached the court in June 2020, the Jamiat Ulema-I-Hind filed an impleadment application opposing it.

Urging the court not to even issue a notice claiming that that "will create fear in the minds of the Muslim community," it said that if the petition is entertained, "it will open floodgates of litigation against countless mosques in the country and the religious divide from which the country is recovering in the aftermath of the Ayodhya dispute will only be widened".

Modi in Nepal

gives a different feeling. I was happy to see that the Mahabodhi sapling I had gifted in 2014 for this place, is now growing into a tree," Modi said. He was referring to his first visit abroad after becoming prime minister when he had gifted a sapling brought from Bodh Gaya.

The Prime Minister was addressing a gathering after the foundation stone-laying ceremony of the India International Centre for Buddhist Culture and Heritage. It is the first centre to be established by India in Lumbini, where several of the world's major countries, including the US and China, have centres dedicated to Buddhism.

Reiterating a Ramayana reference he had made during his previous visit, Modi referred to India-Nepal ties and said Lord Ram was incomplete without Sita. "The teachings of the Buddha had universal relevance which, assisted by technology, would enrich the world," he said.

Sharing the dais with Modi, Deuba endorsed the proposal to build a Buddhist circuit, linking Samath, Bodhgaya, Kushinagar and Lumbini. "The construction of the circuit, apart from binding the two countries culturally, will promote tourism," Deuba said while thanking Modi for India's help in post-earthquake reconstruction and development.

According to the Prime Minister's Office, the Indian centre will be a "NetZero" compliant complex in terms of energy, water and waste handling, which will house prayer halls, meditation centres, library, exhibition hall, cafeteria, offices and other amenities.

On Monday, Modi was accompanied during the day-long visit, which included a stopover at the seventh-century Maya Devi temple, by Nepalese Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and his wife Arzu Rana Deuba. The two leaders also held a meeting to discuss the "full range of bilateral relations".

The two sides also signed six MoUs, including a Dr Ambedkar Chair for Buddhist Studies in Lumbini Buddhist University; ICCR Chairs of Indian Studies in Tribhuvan University and Kathmandu University; and, a joint master's degree programme between IIT-Madras and Kathmandu University.

There was also a MoU between Sutlej Jala Viduyut Nigam, a Himachal government subsidiary, and Nepal Electricity Authority for a 695 MW Arun-4 power project under which Nepal will receive 152 MW of free electricity under a sharing arrangement.

"Today's meeting with PM @ShrDeuba was excellent. We discussed the full range of relations between India and Nepal. Key MoUs were signed which will diversify and deepen cooperation," Modi tweeted.

"PM @narendramodi holds bilateral talks with PM @ShrDeuba in Lumbini. Opportunity to strengthen ongoing cooperation and develop new areas in our multifaceted partnership," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Arindam Bagchi tweeted at the start of the meeting.

This is Modi's fifth visit to Nepal after becoming Prime Minister. Monday's foundation ceremony was conducted by monks belonging to three major Buddhist traditions — Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana. The two prime ministers also unveiled a model of the temple.

At the Maya Devi temple, the two leaders paid their respects at the marker stone inside the premises, which is said to pinpoint the birth spot of the Buddha. They also attended the puja conducted according to Buddhist rituals and lit lamps near the Ashoka Pillar adjacent to the temple.

Deuba also hosted a luncheon in honour of Modi. "Today's visit has provided further momentum to the multifaceted partnership between the two countries

and advanced cooperation in key areas, particularly in education, culture, energy and people to people exchanges," the MEA said.

"Thank you, Shree @narendramodi Jee, for visiting Lumbini on #BuddhaPurnima today. I believe your special pilgrimage to the Birthplace of Lord Buddha has further strengthened our friendship and cultural ties," Deuba tweeted.

(WITH DIVYA AIN NEW DELHI)

Mission in Kabul

abducted by the Taliban during its previous stint in power, and never found.

Others have made the case that shutting down the mission has left India alone among regional countries with no representation in Kabul. On Monday, as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure group met in Delhi, with Afghanistan top on the agenda, host India was the only country at the table that had not yet reopened its mission in Kabul.

This is a key factor for Delhi in its consideration of a return to Kabul. As many as 16 countries have reopened their embassies there, including the EU which has a small presence to oversee work relating to its humanitarian assistance. The view is that India needs to do so too in its own interests.

The Pakistan, Chinese and Russian and Iranian missions did not shut down during the chaos of the Taliban takeover. These countries see key roles for themselves in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, and began positioning themselves early. All five Central Asian countries have diplomatic relations with the Taliban regime. The US signed an agreement with Qatar in April making it the "protecting power" for its interests. The UAE and Saudi Arabia have also returned. But none has yet recognised the Taliban as the government of Afghanistan.

Developments on the ground also seem to be influencing the view in Delhi that India needs some presence in Kabul quickly. Aside from the emergence of various Taliban factions, and the Haqqani network working towards repairing their international image, Tolo News reported earlier this month that a loya jirga would be held, though no dates have yet been mentioned.

Pawan Hans sale

On April 29, a group of ministers, comprising Road Transport & Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, approved Star9 Mobility's bid for sale of the Centre's 51% stake in Pawan Hans for Rs 211.14 crore.

However, nine days prior to the approval on April 20, the Kolkata bench of the NCLT had passed an order against Almas Global Opportunity Fund saying that the entity was in "knowing and wilful contravention of the approved resolution plan".

"We will do legal examination of the NCLT order before proceeding further. The letter of award (for the Pawan Hans disinvestment) has not been issued yet," a Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) official involved in the Pawan Hans disinvestment process told The Indian Express.

As per guidelines issued by the DIPAM in September 2017, "any conviction by a Court of Law or indictment/adverse order by a regulatory authority that casts a doubt on the ability of the bidder to manage the public sector unit when it is disinvested, or which relates to a grave offence would constitute disqualification".

The resolution plan in question pertains to a Kolkata-based power distribution company EMC Ltd for which Almas Global Opportunity Fund was declared the successful bidder. But despite having its resolution plan for EMC Ltd approved by the NCLT, the fund did not deposit the money required for the resolution process.

"The SRA (Successful Resolution Applicant) has not exhibited any intention by taking some concrete steps that can instil some degree of confidence in the earnestness of the SRA. It is plain for anyone willing to see that the SRA is not likely to part with the funds in the foreseeable future. The SRA has taken the entire process for a ride, and nothing can really excuse this audacity. The attitude of the SRA really will tick every parameter that can be applied to satisfy the 'knowing and wilful contravention' test laid down in section 74(3)46 of the Code on a reasonable construction," the NCLT noted in its April 20 order.

"The SRA has been pussyfoot-

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EXPRESS AUDIO

Kashmiri pandits protest, India's fertility rate, Tripura's new CM

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Why Kashmiri Pandits are protesting in the valley, why India's overall fertility rate has gone down, and why the BJP has decided to change the Chief Minister in Tripura

around with regard to the payments to be made under the approved Resolution Plan, for more than one-and-a-quarter years. It is futile to wait indefinitely for the SRA to fulfil its commitments... The repeated exhortations made during the course of hearings to the SRA through its learned senior counsel to make at least some payments in order to show its bona fides, & earnestness have gone completely unheeded. There is no point in chasing the chimera of the SRA fulfilling its commitments under the Resolution Plan," it said.

The bankruptcy court had also ordered action against Almas Global Opportunity Fund and its officers under Section 74 (3) read with Section 236 of the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code, 2016. These sections stipulate that the party can be imprisoned for a minimum of one year and maximum of five years, in addition to facing a maximum penalty of up to Rs 1 crore.

NFHS data

marginal dip from the 29.9 per cent of 2015-16. Thus, an overwhelming 83.4 per cent of men and 70.6 per cent of women in the 15-49 age group eat non-vegetarian food daily, weekly or occasionally. That figure stood at 78.4 per cent for men and 70 per cent for women in NFHS-4.

The proportion of weekly meat eaters too has risen sharply: 57.3 per cent men and 45.1 per cent women reported eating fish, chicken or meat at least once a week during NFHS-5, higher than the figures reported in 2015-16: 48.9 per cent men and 42.8 per cent women.

Among men, this category of non-vegetarian eaters is the highest in Lakshadweep (98.4 per cent) and the lowest (14.1 per cent) in Rajasthan in 2019-21. Apart from Lakshadweep, Andaman & Nicobar Islands (96.1%), Goa (93.8%), Kerala (90.1%) and Puducherry (89.9%) account for the Top 5 states and Union Territories where non-vegetarian food is eaten by men at least once a week. Along with Rajasthan, Haryana (13.4%), Punjab (17%), Gujarat (17.9%) and Himachal Pradesh (21.1%) account for the states at the bottom of this list.

In the six-year period between 2015-16 and 2019-21, the proportion of men who consumed fish, chicken or meat at least once in a week increased most in Sikkim (from 49.1 per cent to 76.8 per cent) and declined most in Tripura (94.8 per cent to 76.1 per cent).

Among religious groups, Christian men and women accounted for the highest consumption of non-vegetarian food at least once a week — 80 per cent men and 78% for women in the 15-49 age group. The corresponding numbers for other religious groups stood at: Hindu men: 52.5%, women: 40.7%; Muslim men: 79.5%, women: 70.2%; Sikh men: 19.5%, women: 7.9%; Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist men: 74.1%, women: 62.2%; and Jain men 14.9%, women: 4.3%.

The NFHS findings show that more people consume eggs than 'fish, chicken or meat'. While 84.7 per cent men reported eating eggs daily, weekly or occasionally during 2019-21 — over 4 per cent age points higher than the 80.3 per cent reported in 2015-16 — that number stood at 72 per cent for women, up from 70.8 per cent in 2015-16.

Data also show that the proportion of men and women consuming aerated drinks has come down over the years. In 2019-21, 86.4 per cent men and 84.3 per cent women reported consuming aerated drinks, down from 88.3 per cent for men and 83.5 per cent for women six years ago.

The data also show that three items — pulses/beans; fruits; and green, leafy vegetables — were consumed daily, weekly or occasionally by almost all men and women during 2019-20. Also, 96.2 per cent of men and

94.2 per cent of women consumed milk and curd either daily, weekly or occasionally, while the proportion of those who ate fried food stood at 95.6 per cent for women and 92.6 per cent for men.

The fifth round of the NFHS was conducted in two phases between June 17, 2019, and April 30, 2021, covering 707 districts drawn from 29 States and seven Union Territories.

J&K bus fire

following examination of the spot and the bus, security agencies suspected an IED attack by a terror group.

"There is a hole near the fuel tanks with the metal sheets bent inwards. Had it been an explosion due to a technical glitch from inside the engine, the metal sheets would have turned outwards near the hole. Also, samples picked up from the clothes of one of the victims suggests the use of some kind of explosive, although it is not clear what it is," said a security establishment official.

Sources said the suspicion is on the use of a "sticky bomb". "There is no material evidence to prove this, since by the time the forensic teams reached the site, the crime scene had been completely washed out in an attempt to douse the fire. But circumstantial evidence points to the possibility of a sticky bomb being used," said an officer from the National Investigation Agency (NIA) which is conducting a parallel probe.

The development casts a shadow over the Amarnath Yatra which is scheduled to begin on June 30. There has been considerable concern within the government over security for the Amarnath Yatra, which will be held after two years. It comes in the backdrop of targeted killings of civilians, particularly migrants, in the Valley.

"Katra has rarely been targeted. But, of late, we see increasing attacks in Jammu targeting Hindu-dominated areas. There have been six IED blasts in Jammu this year alone. There have been increasing inputs from intelligence agencies about impending attacks in Hindu areas. Many have been prevented, with multiple IEDs being recovered from populated areas and many operatives being arrested in the past few months," said a J&K Police officer.

While the Jammu and Kashmir Freedom Fighters on Saturday claimed responsibility for the Katra bus fire, sources played this down, saying the lesser known group had earlier claimed credit for attacks which were later traced to other groups. "At the moment, the suspicion is on operatives of the Jaish-e-Mohammed since they have been using IEDs for some time. But there is no evidence yet," said an officer.

Meanwhile, J&K Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha, who reached Delhi late on Sunday night, held a meeting with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday. He will meet Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday.

According to sources, Shah is scheduled to hold a meeting to review the security in J&K and arrangements for the Amarnath Yatra with chiefs of the BSF, CRPF and Intelligence Bureau on Tuesday. Sinha will attend this meeting.

Skyfall in Gujarat

"There was a huge sound from the sky and blinding light. I could not see anything but almost the next instant, there was a loud noise and I saw that a metal piece had fallen on a lamb. It was hot and killed the lamb instantly," said Nathi Rabari in Kasor's Bhemali Talavdi area.

According to the local police, when they reached the spot, Rabari told them the lamb's carcass was taken away by dogs and could not be found.

"We have registered a note case based on information re-

ceived from the owner of the house that a domestic animal was killed from the impact of the falling metal fragment. No other casualty has been reported from any other place," Anand SP Ajit Rajiajan said.

"They primarily appear to be objects made of high-density metal alloys used for rocket launch. They were also burnt out and had hints of vapourisation, which is what happens when they withstand high temperatures and make their way to the earth... they mostly fell in muddy areas," Rajiajan said.

(WITH SOHINI GHOSH IN AHMEDABAD)

Wheat export ban

session on May 13 — the day India imposed the ban — was \$11.77 a bushel.

According to the Indian government's Department of Commerce portal, the country exported 66.41 lakh tonnes of wheat in the first 11 months (April 2021 to February 2022) of financial year 2021-22 (1 tonne is 1,000 kgs or 2,204.6 pounds). This data conforms with the latest US Department of Agriculture's May 2022 report, which estimates wheat exports from India in the 12 months from July 2021 to June 2022 at 10 million metric tons (1 ton is 2,000 pounds). The total world wheat exports during the period are estimated at 201.5 million metric tons.

In the current financial year — April 2022 to March 2023, the Indian government estimates about 45 lakh metric tonnes of wheat to have been contracted for exports. Of this, 14.63 lakh metric tonnes have been exported in April 2022 alone, substantially higher than 2.43 lakh metric tonnes in the same month last year. Besides, 95,167 metric tonnes of wheat have been exported in April this year, almost four times more than 25,566 MT in April 2021.

The Group of Seven (G-7) countries too expressed disappointment on India's decision. After a meeting of G-7 agriculture ministers in Germany, German Agriculture Minister Cem Ozdemir said the export restriction would "worsen the crisis". "If everyone starts to impose export restrictions or to close markets, that would worsen the crisis," Ozdemir said at a press conference in Stuttgart on Saturday.

India defended the decision. The ban was "essentially in view of the price rise". Union Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey said Saturday during a media briefing. Retail inflation has been ruling over 6 per cent for four straight months in calendar year 2022, with the print for April soaring to 7.79 per cent, much higher than the upper band of RBI inflation target of 6 per cent. In the Consumer Price Index, wheat/atta from PDS has a weight of 0.17 and wheat/atta from other sources has a weight of 2.56.

Research analysts said the impact of India's export ban would be felt disproportionately by low income developing countries. In a note after the ban, Nomura Global Markets Research pointed out that except India and Australia, most Asian economies depend on imported wheat for domestic consumption and are at risk from higher wheat prices globally, even if they do not directly import from India.

Bangladesh especially will feel the brunt, Nomura noted. Indeed, Bangladesh was the biggest buyer of Indian wheat, importing 38.04 lakh tonnes in 2021-22. Sri Lanka (5.48 lakh tonnes), UAE (4.24 lakh tonnes), Indonesia (3.66 lakh tonnes), the Philippines (3.52 lakh tonnes) and Nepal (2.90 lakh tonnes) were the other big importers of Indian wheat.

Nomura further said the impact on India's domestic food inflation would be muted. "This export ban is a pre-emptive step and may prevent local wheat

prices from rising substantially; however, with domestic wheat production likely limited by the heatwave, local wheat prices may not moderate materially. If India's wheat ban leads to higher price of substitutes like rice, then there could be upward pressure on other food prices," it said.

Commerce Secretary BVR Subrahmanyam said the ban serves three purposes: i) maintaining the country's food security, ii) helping those in distress; if countries make a specific request, the Indian government will take a call, and iii) India's reliability as a supplier is being maintained by not renegeing on any existing contract. "So, if we say that roughly 1.6 or 1.7 million tonnes has gone out, we are still prepared to allow another 2.5 million (tonnes) to go if there are prior book valid orders with a letter of credit," he said at the media briefing on Saturday.

Chaos in Kandla

Officials from Egypt's Central Administration of Plant Quarantine were there to oversee the shipment. And a delegation from Madhya Pradesh had reached Gandhidham town near the port to flag off a cereal consignment to Egypt the next evening.

On Monday, Sanjay Mehta, chairman, Deendayal Port Trust, told *The Indian Express*: "There was already a lot of wheat inside the port. After the ban was imposed, trucks carrying wheat are in line outside. Many representations have come to us in this regard. Within the port, there is over 1 lakh MT of wheat."

The port receives wheat from Punjab, UP and MP for export mainly to the middle-east and European countries. "There are over 32 large godowns within the port. Many of them are full with wheat consignments. The rentals of godown or storage charges imposed at the port have also shot up — from Rs 10 per day per tonne to Rs 25. There is no space and wheat is now lying in the open," said an official at the facility, formerly known as the Kandla port.

The transport business is also in disarray.

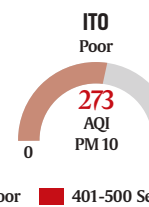
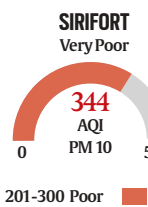
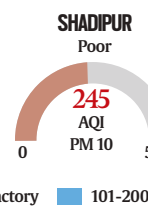
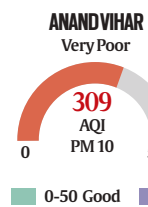
"It seems like there was no planning before the Government came up with the notification prohibiting wheat export. Transporters give truck drivers and cleaners allowances and money for fuel estimating the transportation time. But thousands of drivers and cleaners are stuck as cargo from their trucks are not being offloaded. Vessels are berthed at the port but Customs is not allowing loading," said Teja Kangad, president, Gandhidham Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

"About 4,000 trucks carrying 3.75 lakh MT of wheat left for Kandla before the Government imposed the ban. These trucks have been stranded for the last 7-8 days, unable to unload. Apart from this, we had sent some wheat earlier, which is lying in godowns near the port. These are consignments belonging to small traders in Madhya Pradesh," said Gopal Das Agarwal, president, Indore-based Sakal Anaj Dalhan-Tilhan Vyapari Mahasangh Samiti, an association of grain merchants in MP.

According to Deendayal Port Authority (DPA) officials, 44,340 MT of wheat sourced from MP has already been loaded on the Liberian-flagged vessel Mana, which was to set sail for Egypt on May 16.

"We are pleading with the authorities to allow us to load at least 5,000 MT more so that the vessel achieves balance and is ready to sail. Around 500 trucks loaded with our wheat are waiting in the port to discharge their cargo on the wharf, to be loaded on the vessel. In fact, some wheat is already lying on the wharf but we are not able to load that, either," said sources associated with the shipment.

FULL REPORTSON www.indianexpress.com



0-50 Good 51-100 Satisfactory 101-200 Moderate 201-300 Poor 301-400 Very Poor 401-500 Severe

SKYWATCH
FORECAST: May 17
Partly cloudy sky with possibility of dust storm/thunderstorm

MAX: 41 | MIN: 28
0.8°C Above normal | 1.6°C Above normal

27 DEAD IN MUNDKA FIRE

Many bodies 'highly charred', FSL has tough task at hand

JIGNASA SINHA
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

THE FORENSIC Science Laboratory in Delhi has collected DNA samples from 27 bodies — most of them charred beyond recognition — since the Mundka fire, and is now in the process of matching those with blood samples collected from family members. So far, only eight out of the 27 bodies have been identified and the rest are not just "highly charred", but also have no jewellery or clothes that can help with identification.

The fire broke out at a four-storey commercial building in Outer Delhi's Mundka on Friday, killing 27 persons, most of them women. The next day, families were called to the mortuary to try and identify their loved ones. The eight — Tania Chauhan, Ranju Devi, Amit Jyani, Kailash Jyani, Drishtii, Yashoda Devi, Vishal and Mohini — were iden-



Police said 26 DNA samples were taken from blood relatives. Praveen Khanna

tified with the help of their clothes or pieces of jewellery such as a bracelet, gold chain or earrings, said their families.

"A total of 26 DNA samples were taken from blood relatives. For one missing woman, a blood relative has not been found till now," said DCP (Outer) Sameer

Sharma.

Officials on Monday said DNA testing and profiling can take days or even weeks because of the number of the test samples and the lengthy procedure.

Deepa Verma, the director at FSL Rohini, said, "Seeing the gravity of the situation, we expedited the process and have already collected all samples, including blood samples of family members, for DNA testing. The process could take some time because the biological tests are done individually in labs and then we have to match the DNA recovered from the families. Also, some tests are repeated to re-confirm the reports."

Police said they submitted samples of all 27 bodies — including even those identified — to re-confirm and make sure there was no misidentification. In the case of bodies in such a condition, officials say they first look for any skin or muscle grafts. If that is not available, teeth or bone samples

are collected.

"It's ideal if some part of the skin or muscle tissue is available for testing. It's easier to perform tests on such samples. Otherwise, we will have to look for teeth and bone tissues for the tests. This can take some time as extraction isn't easy," said an officer.

Lab experts said many of the deceased don't have immediate family members who can give blood samples, which poses a challenge for DNA testing. "In many cases, we had to take blood samples from uncles, aunts or cousins. The DNA won't completely match but major elements will. In such cases, we re-run tests to confirm the results," said the officer.

DCP Sharma said police are working closely with forensic experts. "We have sent all samples in time and identified the gender of nearly a dozen bodies. Soon, DNA tests will be performed and results will come out," he said.

For many families, an endless wait

EXPRESSNEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

■ A son waits to see his mother's body as only that can bring him some peace of mind.

■ Two sisters still hope their mother will return and cook them dinner.

■ A husband does not know if his wife is alive or dead.

Family members of many feared dead in the fire which broke out at a four-storey building in Mundka are yet to find closure. This is because four days later, they are yet to receive the remains of their loved ones pending a report from the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL). Of the 27 dead, eight bodies have been identified so far.

Bharti Devi (42) was working in the canteen of the CCTV and router manufacturing company earning Rs 5,000-7,000 per month for the past two years. Her son Suraj, in his early 20s, spent the day pleading with officers at Mundka police station to expedite his mother's forensic report. "They (authorities) say that it will take 10-15 days. I work at AIIMS and I know reports can be expedited. We can get peace of mind only after we conduct her final



Many family members are yet to receive the remains of their loved ones, pending a report from the forensic lab. Abhinav Saha

rites. How can we spend days without any answers?" Suraj said.

Madhu Devi (29) was working as a packer earning Rs 5,000-6,000 and had been employed for the past three years. A mother of two girls, she had promised to come home for dinner.

Her nephew, Vikram (20), said Madhu's phone was confiscated by her employers and during lunch time, when she was allowed access to it, she briefly spoke to her daughters, who said they wanted to eat Maggi noodles. "She promised them she will come back home and cook a proper dinner. My grandmother has given her sample for the DNA

test. All we can do is wait," he said.

For Soni Kumari's (35) husband Manoj Thakur (39), their last call still haunts him. "She called me crying and said *bahut bhayanak aag lagi hai* (it is a horrible fire). She said that two women had escaped with the help of a rope... and she was trying to survive," Thakur said.

Soni had been working at the office for the past two years earning Rs 6,500. She had just got a raise of Rs 1,000 two months ago. The family has deposited blood samples in hopes of getting back the body. "The women who escaped say the rope she tried to use burnt off, that she fell down.

If she fell down what happened to the body?" Thakur said.

At Sanjay Gandhi hospital's mortuary, the family members of Narender (26) waited in hopes of receiving a DNA test report. His job at the office, where he worked for two years, involved assembling various parts used in CCTV cameras. His family said they wanted him to get married. But he wanted to be financially secure first considering he was not paid for the last two months, they claimed.

His brother Gopal (26) is scared of leaving the mortuary: "What if he is suddenly identified and we are not here to claim the body? There are so many questions that no one is willing to answer. How can we have peace of mind sitting at home?..."

Outside the charred remains of the building stood family members of Parveen Kumar (33). They managed to spot his bike, now broken, at the entrance. He used to work in the marketing section and is the father of three children, including twins.

His relative Sandeep said, "We run from pillar to post every day hoping for news of the DNA test report. They promised to hand his body every day, then they ask us for more time."

At time of fire, post of licensing inspector in Mundka was vacant

ABHINAV RAJPUT
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

THE MUNDKA ward, where 27 people died in a fire at an office complex, had the post of licensing inspector lying vacant for 10 days leading up to the incident.

Sushil Gautam was posted as inspector on Friday, the same day the fire broke out. His predecessor Sandeep Kumar Kaushik was relieved on May 4, and from then till May 13, the post was vacant.

Area councillor Anil Lakra claimed that after the fire, orders were issued in a hurry by authorities to appoint Gautam as licensing inspector. "It is the duty of the licensing inspector to see such violations, whether the commercial establishments operating in the area have a licence or not."

North Delhi Municipal Corporation standing committee chairperson Jogi Ram Jain said he will get this looked into. A senior official of the North MCD said: "It is a small window when the post was vacant; for the rest of the period, there were people in the position."

As reported by *The Indian Express*, it has also come to light earlier that the owner of the four-storey commercial building got a factory licence for the premises



The building owner got a factory licence in 2016 which was later cancelled by the North MCD. Abhinav Saha

under a self-assessment scheme in 2016. However, the North MCD cancelled it after it was found that the building did not meet specific criteria.

In 2019, a liquor store was also opened on the ground floor, which was sealed by the monitoring committee formed by the Supreme Court to act against illegal construction in the national capital for violations.

Sources in the North MCD said that the owner closed the shop and paid a penalty, following which the space was de-sealed in 2020.

Man cleaning sewer dies after concrete slab falls on him

EXPRESSNEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

A 55-YEAR-OLD worker died and two others were injured after a portion of a concrete slab of a sewer they were cleaning fell on them. Police said the incident took place on Sunday evening near August Kranti Marg in South Delhi.

The deceased, Ramesh Kumar, lived near the Public Works Department office and was hired on a contract basis to work for the department. The other two labourers, Pankaj Singh (26) and Jitender Mangal (35), were also hired to clean the sewer near Moolchand flyover.

Around 5.47 pm Sunday, doctors at AIIMS Trauma Centre called police about the three men.

DCP (South) Benita Mary Jaiker said, "We received an MLC and sent staff to the hospital. Kumar died while his associates are undergoing treatment. They were not fit to give a statement earlier. We conducted an enquiry and found that they were labourers working under the PWD and were hired for sewer cleaning. They entered

the sewer in the afternoon but during the process, a portion of the concrete slab fell on them."

The Delhi Fire Services was called, and locals helped rescue the men.

A case under IPC sections 304A (causing death by negligence) and 337 (causing hurt by act endangering life) was registered against unknown persons. Police said they are looking for the contractor or supervisor to ascertain their involvement in alleged negligence.

Meanwhile, Singh, who sustained severe injuries on his leg, alleged that they were trapped inside for a while.

"The cleaning work started around two days ago. We were getting paid around Rs 300-400 a day. On Sunday, we stepped in to remove plastic from the sewer but a portion of the lintel fell... and we got trapped. We screamed for help. After 20-30 minutes, someone removed the concrete and pulled us out," he alleged. "The concrete fell on my leg and it is badly injured. I hope I get work after this..." said Singh.

Police said they have informed Kumar's family who live in Ghaziabad.

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Minister of Labour & Employment and Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Eighth Edition

Migrant workers and the promise of e-Shram

The reverse migration that India experienced as the nation went into lockdown mode in 2020 brought out an overwhelming overlap between the most vulnerable migrant workers and those that worked in the country's informal sector. As such, any policy that aims to alleviate the economic hardships among informal sector workers would also have a significant bearing on India's most vulnerable migrant workers.

The e-Shram portal, which was launched with a far-reaching mandate of registering millions of unorganised workers, is one such policy.

But can the e-Shram portal be leveraged to help India's internal migrants? Can it be used to provide social security to migrant workers? What are the kind of policy enhancements required to get around the issues of bridging the digital divide and gender divide? What can be done to reduce possible exclusions?

Join us as we delve into these questions and more.

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VACCINATIONS IN LAST 24 HOURS
5,776

PATIENTS IN HOSPITAL: **135**

OXYGEN SUPPORT **48**

VENTILATOR SUPPORT **6**

DELHI TOTAL CASES	Total		Vacant	
	HOSPITAL BEDS	ICU BEDS	9,581	9,443
19,00,735	2,222	2,171		
	Cases	Recoveries	Deaths	Tests
May 15	613	784	3	22,366
May 16	377	910	1	11,198
Total	3,228*	18,71,311	26,196	3,82,35,766

*Total active cases in Delhi

NOIDA	May 15		May 16	
	Cases	72	70	0
Deaths	0	0		
GURGAON	May 15		May 16	
	Cases	241	166	0
Deaths	0	0		

DJB RAISES ISSUE WITH HARYANA, IT SAYS SUPPLY BEING MAINTAINED

Yamuna runs dry, water supply in capital to be hit from today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

WATER PRODUCTION at the Chandrawal, Wazirabad and Okhla water treatment plants (WTPs) had fallen by around 25% on Monday on account of depleting water levels in the Yamuna, according to the Delhi Jal Board (DJB).

A statement from the DJB stated that the water level at the Wazirabad pond had fallen to 669.40 ft, against a normal level of around 674.50 ft. The level at the pond has fallen further from 671.80 ft on May 12. The release of raw water from Haryana had also reduced, according to the statement. Water supply is likely to be affected from Tuesday morning onwards till the pond level improves.

The three WTPs together produce around 230 MGD (million gallons per day) — 90 MGD from Chandrawal, 120 MGD from Wazirabad and 20 MGD from Okhla — out of the total of around 921 MGD of water as of March 2021, according to the Economic Survey of Delhi.

A disruption in production at these three plants means that supply to several parts of the city will be disrupted. Supply is likely to be hit in areas under the New Delhi Municipal Council, Delhi Cantt, Patel Nagar, Karol Bagh, Civil Lines, Paharganj,



A dried up Yamuna in the capital. Praveen Khanna

WTPs GETTING WATER FROM YAMUNA*

(APPROX PRODUCTION)

Chandrawal	90 MGD
Wazirabad	120 MGD
Okhla	20 MGD
Haiderpur	200 MGD
Nangloi	40 MGD
Dwarka	50 MGD
Bawana	20 MGD

(*from Wazirabad pond and Western Yamuna Canal)

■ According to the Economic Survey of Delhi, the production as of March 2021 was around **921 MGD**. Estimated demand is **1,380 MGD**, at the rate of 60 gallons per capita per day

■ The DJB's summer action plan hopes to achieve peak production of around **998 MGD** this year

Tughlakabad, Model Town, Punjabi Bagh, Burari, Greater Kailash, Kamla Nagar, Shakti Nagar, Prahladpur, Jahangirpuri and Moolchand.

"The river is dry and water production at Chandrawal, Wazirabad and Okhla has fallen by around 25%-30%. The current level of the Wazirabad pond, which is around 669 ft, is the lowest so far this year. The wa-

ter being released from Haryana is less," a senior official of the DJB said.

"The quantity of water being released is less, both directly into the river and through the other sources. Demand is higher in the summer, and supply is now low with the river drying up," the official added.

The DJB had written to the Haryana Irrigation Department

on May 12, requesting an additional 150 cusecs of water to be released into the river. The Carrier Lined Channel (CLC) and Delhi Sub-Branch (DSB) bring water to Delhi from Haryana.

When the DJB wrote to the Haryana Irrigation Department on May 3, it had noted that the flow in the CLC was 563 cusecs against a required flow of 683 cusecs. "We should be getting

683 cusecs through the CLC and 330 cusecs through the DSB, which is a total of around 1,013 cusecs. But we are now getting only around 950 cusecs," the official said.

The DJB has written to the Haryana Irrigation Department thrice from April 30 onwards. In response to the request for additional water, the DJB was informed that the city's share of water is being released from Haryana, the official added.

A senior official of the Haryana Irrigation Department said that temporary fluctuations in the CLC and DSB could be likely, but the required supply is being maintained. "The fluctuation is only for a few minutes before it is restored. The issue is that demand has grown in Delhi, but the share decided by the Upper Yamuna River Board has remained the same. We don't supply water directly through the river route now, we supply through the CLC and DSB," he said.

In 1994, a memorandum of understanding was signed among the states of Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Himachal Pradesh on allocation of surface flow of the river to these states.

In addition to the CLC and DSB, the DJB depends on drawing 120 cusecs from the river itself, which it can no longer use, since the river is mostly dry, the official said.

MCD's bulldozers will run over 63 lakh people: Kejriwal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

TARGETING THE anti-encroachment drives held by the BJP-led MCDs, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Monday said the civic body was planning to run bulldozers over 63 lakh people in the city, making it the "biggest demolition in Independent India".

Kejriwal said he had told legislators from the AAP to stand by the people, and protest against this "gundagardi (hooliganism)".

"In the last few weeks, we have seen that the BJP-led MCD is running bulldozers and it's being said it will continue for the next months. They're saying they will remove all encroachments, and illegal constructions in Delhi. We are also against encroachments, we don't want illegal constructions," he said during a virtual press conference.

"In the last 75 years, Delhi has not been made in a planned way. More than 80% of Delhi will come under the bracket of illegal construction or encroachment. The question then arises, will 80% of Delhi be demolished?" said Kejriwal.

The Chief Minister said he led a meeting of his party's MLAs on Monday: "I told them even if we have to go to jail, don't be scared. You need to stand by the people. Running bulldozers like this is not right. Doing *dadagiri*, *gundagardi* is not okay. Abusing your power is not okay."

"Why are you running bulldozers over people? We will fix Delhi. Like we have worked on education, health, water, and electricity, similarly, we will fix encroachments too. But to demolish homes and shops by running bulldozers over them is not right," said Kejriwal.

The AAP chief said there was also the question of how these encroachments were being removed: "Papers are not being shown, nobody is being given a chance. They just take bulldozers and reach any colony, and start breaking anybody's home or shop. That man is standing with papers in his hand, screaming, pleading for mercy and asking that his papers be considered. But nobody is checking his papers, only bulldozers are being run. This is not right."

"Their plan is to break all unauthorised colonies in Delhi



CM said he told AAP MLAs to stand by the people, even if they have to go to jail. PTI

where around 50 lakh people stay. They also plan to break down all *jhuggis* (slums) where around 10 lakh people stay. Apart from this, they have made a list of 3 lakh properties where people have gone beyond the map, and added a balcony or an extra room. Bulldozers will run over 63 lakh people... This is not right," said Kejriwal.

Lashing out at the BJP, he said that before the elections, they had said they will give ownership rights to those staying in unauthorised colonies. "Before the elections, they said they will make houses where there are *jhuggis*. Now after elections, they have come to demolish them all," he said, adding that "no one would tolerate" the lives and livelihoods of 63 lakh being ruined.

"In the last 15 years, the BJP has ruled the MCD. In the last 15 years, they made more illegal encroachments and buildings, and there are allegations they took money for these. Now when their term is over — their term ends on May 18, it's May 16 today, and only two days are left. Do they have the constitutional and legal power to take such a big decision?" he said.

Kejriwal said elections should be held and the new MCD should take the decision. "We give assurance to the people that we will solve the issue of encroachments, regularise unauthorised colonies and make them clean... We are making houses for those living in *jhuggis*. It's taking time," said Kejriwal.

He said those who had made "alterations" to their homes and shops would be given a chance to clear it.

CM: Kashmiri Pandits not safe in Kashmir even today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

CHIEF MINISTER Arvind Kejriwal condemned the police action against Kashmiri Pandits who were protesting against the killing of Rahul Bhat (35) in Kashmir's Budgam district and demanded that the officers responsible be suspended.

Demanding that adequate security arrangements be made so that Kashmiri Pandits, who wish to return to the valley, can do so, Kejriwal said, "A few days ago, a government official, Rahul Bhat, was killed. Some terrorists went to his office, asked his name and shot him dead. It seems they had decided that they wanted to target a Kashmiri Pandit. Our Army traced and killed two terrorists within 24 hours. But the whole country is worried that why Kashmiri Pandits are not safe in Kashmir even today. Many Kashmiri Pandit youth were sent to Kashmir under a special package. They wanted to live and work there peacefully... After this incident, they are scared. They were protesting to express their anger at the killing but they were stopped. Tear gas shells were fired and a lathi charge was carried out on protesters... This is not right."

Bhat, a revenue department official at the tehsil office in Chadoora, was killed on Thursday. He was staying in a government accommodation at Sheikhpora village in Budgam district with his wife and six-year-old daughter.

Kejriwal had come under fire from the BJP in March after he alleged that BJP leaders were made to put up the posters of the film, "The Kashmir Files, across the country. He had called the film 'false' and had said the filmmakers had exploited the tragedy of the Kashmiri Pandit exodus to mint money instead of helping the community. The Delhi government had refused to make the movie free in Delhi, and had instead asked the filmmakers to make it available for free on YouTube.

Gurgaon: Employee at five-star hotel, live-in partner found dead

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GURGAON, MAY 16

A MAN and a woman, both aged 28, were found dead inside a rented house in Gurgaon's Sushant Lok on Monday. Police said no suicide note was recovered, and inquest proceedings under CrP Section 174 have been initiated.

Police said they were still probing if both had committed suicide or the man had murdered the woman and then killed himself. Police said the man worked as a chef at a five-star hotel in Delhi, while the woman worked with a food delivery chain in Gurgaon.

Police said the two, believed to be living-in together, had been staying there for the past 15 months, and hail from the same locality in Delhi. The man was married and his wife had gone to Bhutan, where she hailed from, during the pandemic. She had returned to India recently.

Gurgaon Police said the couple had been staying in a rented house in Sushant Lok for the past 15 months

Police said the incident was reported to them at 11.30 am by the man's brother.

Poonam Hooda, SHO, Sushant Lok police station, said, "Prima facie, it is suspected that the man killed the woman — either by strangulation or giving her a poisonous substance — and then hanged himself. The exact circumstances will be known after the post-mortem."

Police said after the man did not report for work for two days, his employer contacted his family to enquire. "The family tried contacting him on his phone, but there was no response. The family was aware he was staying in Gurgaon but

did not know the exact address or that he was living with a woman," said a police officer, requesting anonymity.

Police said his brother took the address from his colleagues and reached Gurgaon. "His brother got in through the main door after a neighbour entered the access code. The door to the house was not locked. He pushed the door and saw his brother hanging from a ceiling fan, while the woman was found lying on the bed in the room. He then reported the incident to police," said SHO Hooda.

Police said the bodies appeared to have been there for a while. "The neighbours reported that they had seen the victims two days ago," said the SHO.

DCP (East) Virender Vij said, "No suicide note has been recovered and the respective families have not filed any complaint. The reason is yet to be ascertained. The bodies have been sent to the mortuary for a post-mortem."

BRIEFLY

Citing SC sedition order, Sharjeel moves HC for bail

New Delhi: JNU PhD student Sharjeel Imam has approached the Delhi High Court with applications seeking interim bail in two sedition cases pending against him since 2019 and 2020, citing the recent Supreme Court order on Section 124A IPC. Hearing a challenge against the provision, the apex court on May 11 stayed the pending trials, appeals and proceedings under 124A IPC.

Fire at shelters near new Parliament Building

New Delhi: A fire broke out in two-three temporary shelter rooms near the new Parliament House Monday afternoon. Fire officials said labourers working on the Central Vista redevelopment project lived there. They said they sent 5 fire tenders and the blaze was doused in an hour. No casualties have been reported.

Man who demolished neighbour's wall gets 45 days in jail

New Delhi: Observing that the "democratic fabric" of society will suffer if respect for judiciary is undermined, the Delhi High Court has sentenced a contemnor to 45 days of simple imprisonment for demolishing the boundary wall of a property in Burari in violation of court orders. The boundary wall of the property belonging to Nirmal Jindal in Burari village was constructed in December 2020 on the basis of a court order in a property dispute case. The contemnor, Shyam Sunder Tyagi, on January 3 demolished the wall. **ENS**

FINISHING TOUCHES

Final work underway at the 1.36-km-long Pragati Maidan underpass, which is to be inaugurated by May-end. The tunnel is being built beneath Pragati Maidan, starting from Purana Qila till the Ring Road. *Amit Mehra*

In some DU colleges, temporary switch to online classes for first-year students

SUKRITA BARUAH
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

MORE THAN three months after classes went offline in Delhi University, some colleges have moved classes back online for first-year students as a 'temporary measure' while they conduct offline classes for their fourth and sixth semester students.

Because of the delay in admissions for the last two years owing to the pandemic, the academic calendar in Delhi

University has been upset. As a result, while second- and third-year students are currently writing their fourth and sixth semester examinations respectively, first-year students are only a month into their second semester. With colleges in the midst of conducting their first fully offline examinations since the start of the pandemic, they are conducting examinations and classes in their premises at the same time, a circumstance that has not arisen before as the academic calendar for all three

years is normally in sync.

While the University has not taken any decision on the same, some colleges have taken the decision at their own end to move classes for the second semester students online till the examinations are completed. Offline classes had begun for all years this February.

Stating that the college would be conducting offline examination for its own students as well as a large number of School of Open Learning students, Dyal Singh College had

notified that "considering the Covid-19 precautions and to maintain the necessary environment and sanctity for smooth conduct of examinations, it was decided unanimously in an urgent meeting of all the Teacher-In-Charges, held on 6th May, 2022 through Google meet, that the classes (Theory and Tutorials/Practicals) of semester II (first-year) students should be conducted through online mode/means during the entire period of examinations from 9th May - 7th June, 2022."

More people opting for third Covid dose since it was made free

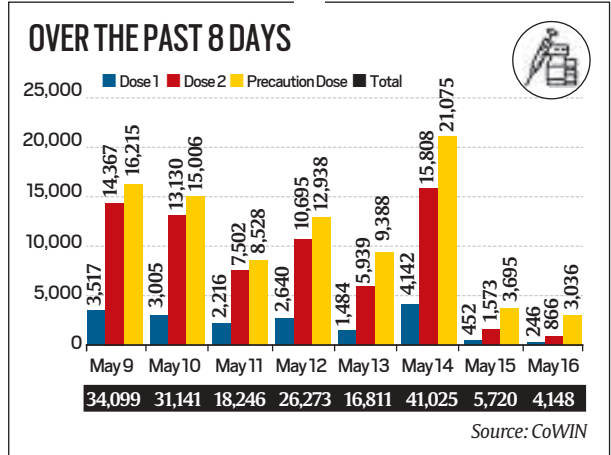
ANONNA DUTT
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

THERE HAS been an increase in the number of people taking the third Covid precaution dose in Delhi after the government made it available for free across age groups, with the number of precaution doses administered over the last one week crossing doses one and two for the first time.

There were 3,036 precaution doses administered till 7 pm on Monday, which accounted for over 73% of total doses administered on the day. (The number of shots administered is usually

lower on Sundays and holidays.)

The city administered just under 87,000 precaution doses over the last seven days, accounting for over half of all doses administered in Delhi over this period. "There has definitely been an increase in the number of people taking the precaution dose and there are two reasons for it — one, it became available to the younger group of those between 18 and 45 years and two, the Delhi government made it free for all. The numbers, of course, increased drastically once it was made free," said a senior official from the New Delhi district.



So far, 9.65 lakh precaution doses have been administered in Delhi since it was started at the beginning of the year. This, however, still accounts for a very small proportion, only 6.4%, of Delhi's total 1.5 crore adult population. "Not all the people are eligible to get the shots yet. There has to be a minimum nine months gap between the second dose and the precaution dose. The numbers will keep increasing as more and more people become eligible to get the third dose," said an official from the West district.

The precaution dose was opened for doctors, frontline

workers, and those over the age of 60 years with co-morbidities on January 10. It was later extended to all above 60 years of age on March 16. It was opened further for all adults, albeit on payment, from April 10 onwards. By April 21, the Delhi government made the precaution doses free.

The highest number of vaccination, over the last week, was among those between the ages of 18 to 45 years, accounting for nearly 38% of the total shots administered. "The number of shots has increased in this age group mainly because of the precaution dose; vaccination

had reached a saturation point among this group because over 90% of adults in Delhi have been fully immunised," said the official from the West district.

The New Delhi official said, "The numbers have remained low in the youngest population — those between the ages of 12 and 14 years. Vaccination at government schools has been successful, with nearly 90% of the eligible children in the schools where camps are held getting the shot. However, the private schools have been reluctant to organise vaccination camps even though the district does everything."



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



TALENTED MR CM

LAST WEEK, a Parliamentary committee visiting Tripura was in news over alleged misbehaviour of the son of a leading state minister with a few members of the panel at a local five-star hotel. But the trip produced some memorable moments, too. In fact, the state government had organised a cultural event for the MPs at the same hotel. The event was attended by state ministers and senior BJP leaders, including Manik Saha, who went on to take oath as the new chief minister four days later. Saha, it is learnt, regaled the visiting MPs with Bengali songs. "Little did we know that a future CM was sitting in our midst," quipped one MP.

GOOD GESTURE

THE LAW Department of Kerala University has received a donation—a multi-volume treatise on the law of patents, which costs four times the department's budget for books. "Chisum on Patents", authored by Donald Chisum, is a 54-volume treatise first published in 1978, and costs more than \$15,000 (approximately Rs 12 lakh). The donation came from Attorney General of India K K Venugopal. Venugopal also has a collection of rare books on a wide range of subjects—from religion and mythology to travel—that he digitised two years ago, granting access to everyone through a website.

LITTLE REPRESENTATION

WHILE THE Congress has criticised the NDA government at the Centre over the recent killings of Kashmiri Pandits by militants in the Valley, the party did not invite any Congress leader from the community to the Chitan Shivir in Udaipur. The only representatives of J&K were Tariq Hameed Karra, who is a permanent invitee to CWC, and state Congress president Ghulam Ahmed Mir. Ghulam Nabi Azad was present as a CWC member, and Vivek Tankha as a Rajya Sabha MP. One gets to hear that AICC in-charge of J&K, Rajni Patil, wanted to invite one Kashmiri Pandit leader and had forwarded the name of Deepika Singh Rajawat, who represented the victim's family in Kathua rape case, but the proposal was not accepted. Rajawat recently joined the Congress.

No police force, GPS to demarcate boundaries for K-Rail survey: Kerala govt

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
MAY 16

AFTER A streak of clashes with people and Opposition parties over the last several months, CPI(M)-led LDF government in Kerala on Monday abandoned laying of boundary stones using coercive measures for social impact assessment (SIA) survey for the proposed semi-high-speed corridor (Silverline project).

Instead, Kerala Rail Development Corporation Limited (KRDL) was told to demarcate the boundaries using GPS survey, erect stones only with land owners' consent or fix the alignment by marking on permanent structures.

This is a major departure from the earlier stand of the government, which was determined to fix boundary stones using police force. In many places, the KRDL officials had by force stepped into private properties to demarcate the boundaries. In Kannur, CPI(M) workers had flexed their muscle against landowners who objected to erecting boundary stones in their property.

Experts in the civil infrastructure sector had also pointed out that boundary stones need not be erected for SIA survey.

With hindsight, the government has climbed down from the adamant stand. That shift in stand came at a time a bypoll was sched-

uled at Thrikkakara Assembly constituency in Emakulam district. Both ruling CPI(M) and Opposition Congress have declared that the outcome of the bypoll, which would be held on May 31, is a referendum on the proposed project, especially since its alignment passes through the constituency.

In fact, since the bypoll was announced earlier this month, the government had not ventured with the yellow stones anywhere in Kerala, let alone at Thrikkakara.

The concern of the government is tangible in the words of CPI(M) central committee member and LDF convener E P Jayarajan, who told the media that the government did not want to create tension over the survey. "The project would be implemented, only the survey method has been changed."

However, Opposition Leader V D Satheshan dubbed the government decision as a success of their protest. "The government should admit its mistake. All cases registered against innocent people should be withdrawn."

BJP leader and Union Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan, who has been leading party protest against the project, said: "The government has recoiled from laying the boundary stones realising that the project would not get the final nod from the Centre. This is a strategic retreat of the government at the time of the byelection."

4,000 WHEAT TRUCKS STUCK AT PORT FROM MP

Hit by wheat export ban, traders call mandi strike

IRAM SIDDIQUE
BHOPAL, MAY 16

REELING UNDER the impact of a ban on wheat export imposed by the Centre, traders' associations in Madhya Pradesh have called a two-day bandh of mandis, during which traders across the state will not participate in the auctioning process of wheat.

This comes a day after Gopaldas Aggarwal, president of Sakhal Anaj Dalhan Tilhan Vyapari Mahasangh Samitee, stated in a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi that around 7,000 trucks loaded with wheat had lined up outside the Kandla and Mumbai ports over the past 10 days.

Aggarwal pointed out that from these 7,000 trucks, at least 4,000 trucks belonged to traders from MP who have been hit badly by the ban.

Madhya Pradesh is the only state where wheat production has not been affected by the heatwave, which has left farmers with shrivelled grains in other states.

The Centre, through a notification on May 13, had banned export of wheat, moving all kinds of wheat from "free" to "prohibited" category. It has only allowed two kinds of export: those granted permission for export to countries to meet their food security needs, and contracted exports against which irrevocable letter of credits

were issued on or before May 13. Aggarwal said many traders whose trucks were stuck at Kandla port in Gujarat were meeting demands raised by exporters. "The traders had no knowledge whether the exporter concerned had the Letter of Credit," he said. "This sudden ban will be a crushing blow to them. We want the government to make arrangements for such traders."

A delegation of traders' association headed by Aggarwal, met state Agriculture Minister Kamal Patel on Monday and raised their demands.

Nimish Aggarwal, president of traders' association at Ujjain mandi, said: "No trader across the state will participate in auctioning for the next two days. We want farmers to realise that the sudden ban is a crushing blow to traders, as a result of which we can't afford to give them high rates. We will face losses to the tune of nearly Rs 1 lakh per truck."

Farmers, meanwhile, are bracing for a steep drop in wheat rates once mandis start operations. Rates dropping much below MSP will leave farmers with little options but to sell their produce to the state government at MSP of Rs 2,015. Mukesh Bangdwa, who had sown wheat over 20 acres, is still left with 200 quintals of the 400 quintals from his total production this year. Bangdwa had sold 200 quintals at Rs 2,125 per quintal at

the mandi soon after harvest. But after the ban imposed by the government, he said the rate is Rs 1,850 per quintal for the same type of wheat. "Wheat which I sold for Rs 2,125 was of relatively poor quality with high moisture content. I had stocked up the remaining 200 quintals and got it cleaned and dried, hoping to get at least Rs 2,500 per quintal with improved quality but that seems impossible. I will suffer a loss of anywhere between Rs 75,000 and Rs 1.5 lakh due to the ban," Bangdwa said.

Agriculture Minister Kamal Patel said about 40 lakh metric tonnes of wheat were procured in the name of exports but only 10-12 lakh metric tonnes have reached the port for export. "This shows there is hoarding by middlemen. It's not a complete ban on wheat export; traders can continue to supply to countries (that need to import) to meet their food security demands with proper approval and letter of credit," he said.

He also hinted at a possible implementation of a stock limit to avoid hoarding.

Farm leader Shiv Kumar Sharma 'Kakkaji' accused the government of changing its policy to suit private players and said that "the government has two years' worth of stock and still has banned export." Anil Yadav, state president, Bhartiya Kisan Union, accused the government of indulging in vote bank politics.



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Governor Anandiben Patel welcome Prime Minister Narendra Modi upon his arrival in Lucknow on Monday. Vishal Srivastava

PM to Yogi ministers: Manage time better, focus on 'karya' first

MAULSHREE SETH
LUCKNOW, MAY 16

AS PRIME Minister Narendra Modi made a stopover in Lucknow on Monday while returning from Lumbini in Nepal, he met the ministers of the Uttar Pradesh government and held a free-wheeling conversation with them, according to sources.

A month into his second term, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath welcomed PM Modi at his official residence in Lucknow, where he was joined by his entire council of ministers.

During his three and a half-hour-long discussion with the

ministers, the PM gave them lessons in governance and time management. Sources said Modi asked them to differentiate between "karya" (work) and "karyakaram" (events and programmes), telling them to focus on "karya" first and then on "karyakaram".

"It was a very informal discussion. The Prime Minister was giving us lessons on better governance. At first, the ministers were seated at a distance from the PM and CM Adityanath. But after he arrived, the PM asked us to pull our chairs closer. The discussion began and he asked us about our experiences during field visits," said a minister.

Sources said the Prime Minister also told the ministers to not indulge themselves in transfer and postings of officers, and advised them to develop a better relationship with officials by holding informal discussions for a better understanding of issues.

Sources said while talking about managing time properly, the Prime Minister advised them to read about Benjamin Franklin.

Later in the evening, the PM tweeted: "Had an extensive interaction with the Council of Ministers of the Uttar Pradesh government. We discussed a wide range of subjects relating to furthering good governance and 'Ease of Living' for the citizens."

Jagan releases first tranche of farm welfare scheme, lashes out at rivals

SREENIVAS JANYALA
HYDERABAD, MAY 16

AMIDST A war of words with the Telugu Desam Party and the Jana Sena Party over farm issues, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy released Rs 3,758 crore as the first tranche this year of the financial assistance under the "YSR Rythu Bharosa" scheme for farmers.

Benefitting over 50 lakh

farmers in the state, the welfare scheme offers Rs 13,500 per year in three installments to each farmer, with Rs 6,000 borne out of the central government's PM Kisan Samman Nidhi.

Releasing the first installment of Rs 5,500 per farmer, Reddy said it showed his government's commitment to farmers' welfare as the payment was made "even before the Kharif season starts".

The remaining portion (Rs 2,000) will be disbursed by the

Centre by May end, he added. The CM said while another payment will be made in October, Rs 2,000 will be credited into their accounts in January.

Slamming Naidu, he said TDP leaders and allies had no "moral right" to talk on farmer issues. Countering Reddy, TDP leader N Lokesh Naidu said people were fed up: "The CM is not in a position to tell what he has done to meet the growing irrigation needs of farmers..."

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is to bring to the notice of all concerned that S. Kuldip Singh, S. Swinder Singh, Sardar Gursaran Singh all S/o Sh. Mohan Singh (recorded lessee) P/o property No. III/5/51, Sy. No. 52/2 Shastri Bazar, Delhi Cantt. have requested to the office of Delhi Cantonment Board for mutation & transfer of lease hold rights in respect of property No. III/5/51 comprising of Survey No. 52/2 Shastri Bazar, Delhi Cantt. being legal heirs of the recorded lessee, to the extended of the rights of the recorded lessee. The ownership of the land vests in Govt. of India, Ministry of Defence. If any person has objection to the mutation of above property/transfer of lease hold rights in favour of above applications, may file his/her objections within 30 days of the publication of this notice to the undersigned with documentary proof in support of his/her objection, failing which the matter shall be referred to the competent authorities for consideration and taking appropriate decision as per law.

Sd/-
Chief Executive officer
Delhi Cantonment Board
Tel: 011-26593837, 011-26594540

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On or towards North : By Open Plot bearing Sr.No. 32/3A/1, Sr.No. 32/3A/2 and Sr.No. 32/3A/3B

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Biological E slashes price for its Covid vaccine

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

AFTER COVAXIN and Covishield, the Hyderabad-based vaccine manufacturer Biological E dropped the prices of its Covid-19 vaccine to Rs 250 per dose (including GST). After accounting for Rs 150 to be charged by the health centres for their services, the end users will pay Rs 400 per dose of Corbevax, the company said. The market price (including GST and hospital charges) stood at 990 per dose.

"BE has lowered the price of its vaccine with the aim of making it more affordable and help increase the reach to protect maximum number of children against the virus. The decision comes within weeks of Biological E. Limited received Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for children between 5 and 12 years of age," the company said in a statement.

This is the cost to people when administered at private centres. The vaccine is still available free of cost at government centres through the Centre's vaccination programme. It is currently being used for children between the ages of 12 and 14 years.

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Website: www.ircon.org CIN-45203DL1976GOI008171

E-Procurement Notice (National Competitive Bidding)

e-Tender No. IRCON/2052/TN/SRC/ELECT/OHE Mod./2022/86 Date: 14/05/2022
e-Tender for and on behalf of South Eastern Railway is invited from bidders meeting qualifying requirements for the work of "Design, Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of 25 KV, AC, 50 Hz, Single Phase Railway Electrification Modification Works at Santragachi Railway Station under Santragachi Station Development Project of South Eastern Railway".

Estimated Cost of the work Rs. 1,38,04,117.22 (inclusive of all applicable Taxes & GST)

Earnest Money Deposit Rs. 2,38,500.00

Last Date & Time of e-Bid Submission 03/06/2022 upto 15.00 Hrs.

For further details, visit website <https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app>.
Corrigendum, if any, would be hosted only on the website.

General Manager/East
378 Prantik Pally, Kasba, Kolkata-700107

इंडियन बैंक Indian Bank
(A Govt. of India Undertaking)

E-AUCTION ON 22.06.2022 AT 11:00 AM TO 3:00 PM UNDER SARFAESI ACT 2002 "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS, AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" through E-auction platform provided at the website <https://ibank.auctions.com>

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with provision to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Symbolic/Physical Possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of Indian Bank (Erstwhile Allahabad Bank) Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" on 22.06.2022 for recovery as follows.

Sl. No.	Description of the property	Name of the Borrower(s) & Address	Name of Guarantor/ Mortgagor	Amount of Secured Debt	Reserve Price	EMD Amount	Last Date & Time of Submission of EMD	E-Auction Date & Time	Registration No.
1.	Property 1, Sale Deed No. 3065 dated-13.05.1965, Khata No-399, Khesra No.2096, Boundary : North : Nij. South : Janak Mishra, East : Nij. West : Dorna Mishra, Property 2, Sale Deed No. 3065 dated-13.05.1965, Khata No-403, Khesra No.2095, Boundary : North : Nara & Road, South : Nij. East : Nij. West : Khakhan Mishra, All that part & parcel of the property consisting mortgage assets situated at Vill.-Nagdaha, Thana-Govindganj at present Malahi Tauji No. 951, Thana No. 68, Mothari, East Champaran-845421, Total Area-5 Katha 7 Dhur.	1.M/S Ashok Pooja Construction Pvt. Ltd., (Borrower) 2. Sri Ashok Kumar Mishra (Director Cum Guarantor), S/o Sri Ramakant Mishra, 3. Sri Akhilesh Kumar Mishra (Director Cum Guarantor), S/o Sri Ramakant Mishra All are At Vill.+PO- Nagdaha, PS-Malahi, East Champaran-845421	1. Sri Ramakant Mishra (Guarantor Cum Mortgagor), S/o Banka Mishra At Vill.+PO- Nagdaha, PS-Malahi, East Champaran-845421	Rs. 31,33,636.00 Plus Interest till the date of realization and costs, Charges and Expenses	Rs. 34,99,000	Rs. 3,49,900	Date 20.06.2022 11 AM to 3 PM	11 AM to 3 PM	DI/2022/1163/268272
2.	Property Sale Deed No. 2631 dated-17.02.2016, Khata No-75, Khesra No.310, Thana No.-106, Tauji No.-644, Area 5.80 decimal, Boundary : North : Mustari & Anil Dubey South : Road 8 Feet Wide, East : Late Bhagrasnan Devi, West : Jay Prakash Narayan, Mortgage land & building situated at Tarkulwa (New name-New Chandmanr), Near Popular School PS-Banjariya, Mothari, East Champaran-845401	1.M/S Rama Construction (Borrower) Firm,2. Sri Arjun Singh (Partner/ Guarantor), S/o-Sri Rameshwar Pd. 3.Smt. Renu Singh (Partner/ Guarantor Cum Mortgagor), W/o-Shri Arjun Singh 4. Sri Yuvraj Singh (Partner/Guarantor), S/o-Sri Arjun Singh All are at Ward No. 25, Near Durga Mandir, New Chandmanr, East Champaran-845401	1.Sri Arjun Singh (Partner/Guarantor), S/o-Sri Rameshwar Pd. 2.Smt. Renu Singh (Partner/Guarantor Cum Mortgagor), W/o-Shri Arjun Singh 3.Sri Yuvraj Singh (Partner/ Guarantor), S/o-Sri Arjun Singh All are at Ward No. 25, Near Durga Mandir, New Chandmanr, East Champaran-845401	Rs. 47,81,375.00 Plus Interest till the date of realization and costs, Charges and Expenses	Rs. 76,57,000	Rs. 7,65,700	Date 20.06.2022 11 AM to 3 PM	11 AM to 3 PM	DI/2022/1163/268272

Bidders are advised to visit the website (www.mstccommerce.com) of our e-auction service provider MSTC Ltd. to participate in online bid. Technical Assistance Please call MSTC Help Desk No. 033-22901004 and other help line numbers available in service providers help desk. For Registration status with MSTC Ltd., Please contact ibap@ipm.mstccommerce.com and for EMD status please contact ibap@ipm.mstccommerce.com. For Property details and photograph of the property and auction terms and conditions please visit : <https://ibapi.in> and for clarifications related to this portal. Please contact help line number 18001025026 and 011-41106131 Note : This is also a notice to the borrower/guarantors/mortgagors of the above said loan about holding of this sale on the above mentioned date and other details.

Place : East Champaran
Date : 16.05.2022

Sd/- Authorized Officer
Indian Bank (Erstwhile Allahabad Bank)

6 GOVT & POLITICS

Plea seeks Mathura mosque survey 'on Gyanvapi lines'

MANISH SAHU
LUCKNOW, MAY 16

WHILE ALL eyes are on the Kashi Vishwanath Temple-Gyanvapi Mosque complex in Varanasi, a similar petition seeking videography of the Shahi Idgah Masjid adjacent to Krishnambhoomi was recently moved in a local Mathura court.

The application seeks an advocate commissioner for assessment of the site "on the lines of (the) Gyanvapi mosque", to determine "existence of Hindu artefacts and ancient religious inscriptions on the mosque premises".

The application was filed in the court of Civil Judge (Senior Division), Mathura, a day after the Allahabad High Court directed it to dispose of all cases related to the Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah

Masjid dispute within four months.

On May 12, while disposing of a petition filed by Bhagwan Shri Krishna Virajman And Another, the High Court said: "The Civil Judge (Senior Division), Mathura, is directed to decide the aforesaid applications expeditiously, preferably within a period of four months from the date a certified copy of this order is produced before him, and after giving an opportunity of hearing to the affected parties..."

The High Court also stated in its order: "It is clarified that the court has not expressed any opinion either regarding the maintainability of the case or the merits of claim made by the petitioner."

The next day, May 13, an application was moved in the court of Civil Judge (Senior Division), Mathura, seeking appointment of an advocate commissioner to



The Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah Masjid complex in Mathura. Express Archives

carry out inspection of the Shahi Idgah Masjid.

Petitioner Manish Yadav, who had earlier filed an application in the High Court for early disposal of petitions connected with the disputed Mathura site, told *The Indian Express*: "I requested the Mathura court to appoint a senior advocate, an advocate commissioner, and get a video survey done of Shahi Idgah

immediately, because there are still remains of Hindu religion inside the mosque. These are important facts, and the Opposition can remove or delete them. The court is likely to take up my application on July 1."

National president of an outfit called the Narayani Sena, Yadav said he had moved the high court as petitions were pending, including ones seeking

a survey of the site by the Archeological Survey of India and a direction to stop any construction at the site.

Earlier, an advocate named Mahendra Pratap Singh had filed an application in the same civil court seeking that a commission be appointed to survey the mosque.

Advocate Tanveer Khan, who is representing the Shahi Idgah Masjid, said they were waiting for the July 1 hearing of the four petitions pending in connection with the disputed site.

Meanwhile, the District Judge Court, Mathura, is likely to soon pronounce its judgment on the maintainability of a civil suit seeking removal of the mosque, claiming it was built on Krishna Janmabhoomi, the birthplace of Lord Krishna. The suit was filed two years ago by the 'Deity and the Janmasthan (birthplace)' and 'next friend' Ranjana Agnihotri,

a Lucknow resident, and others.

The petitioners have also sought cancellation of a compromise decree between the governing body of the temple complex and the management trust of the mosque in 1968. The petitioners claim that the agreement between the Shree Krishna Janmasthan Seva Sangh, Mathura, and the mosque trust was "illegal and void ab initio (not legally binding)" as the land was vested in another trust, Shree Krishna Janmabhoomi Trust, and the Seva Sangh was not authorised to act on its behalf.

Advocate Tanveer Khan said the civil court had rejected this plea in 2020, after which the petitioners had filed an appeal. "I argued that the petitioners are neither the Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi Trust nor Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi Sewa Sangh, so their petition should be rejected."

China building infra near Arunachal border, says Army

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GUWAHATI, MAY 16

CHINA'S PEOPLE'S Liberation Army (PLA) is engaged in infrastructure capacity enhancement across the international border in Arunachal Pradesh, the Indian Army's Eastern Command chief said Monday.

General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Eastern Command, Lt General RP Kalita, however, said the Indian side is also continuously upgrading its infrastructure and capabilities to deal with any situation that may arise along the border.

"Across the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Tibet region, a lot of infrastructure development is going on. The other side is constantly upgrading their road, rail and air connectivity as well as 5G mobile network so that they are in a better position to respond to a situation or mobilise forces," he said at a press conference.

The Chinese authorities have built border villages close to the LAC that can be used for dual purposes, Lt General Kalita said. "We are continuously monitoring the situation. We are also upgrading our infrastructure and capabilities as well as the mech-

anism to handle the situation. These have put us in a robust position," he added.

Lt General Kalita, however, denied any intrusion is taking place along the border with China. There has been no case of intrusion since the 1962 India-China war, he added.

Lt General Kalita also said the Indian Army and other stakeholders are analysing implications of the recent Land Borders Law enacted by China giving more power to the PLA to protect the country's sovereignty and boundary.

Meanwhile, Lt General Kalita said insurgent groups in Northeast India have lost their "ideological moorings" and are sustaining through extortion as well as arms and drugs smuggling. "A time will come when they will join the mainstream," he added.

Expressing concern over the recruitment by the banned ULFA (Independent) outfit in Assam in the past one year, he appealed to the youths not to join the militant group.

Regarding the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), the Army Commander said that after the law was withdrawn from various parts of the Northeast, some forces have been "de-inducted" and shifted to the northern areas.

Assam coordinator on NRC: Final list not published yet

TORA AGARWALA,
GUWAHATI, MAY 16

DAYS AFTER a Foreigners' Tribunal (FT) member wrote to the National Register of Citizens (NRC) Assam coordinator HD Sarma asking him not to interfere with the functioning of the tribunals while insisting the final NRC had already been published, the latter doubled down on his stance.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Sarma said he has not received the letter yet and will respond accordingly when he does.

He, however, reiterated his stance that only the Registrar General of India's office was authorised to publish the final NRC and that it had not done so yet. "The FTs' duty is to examine the evidence and then pass their opinion, but sometimes if they find the name on the NRC then they declare the person as 'Indian'. They should look at it independently (of NRC)," he said.

In September 2021, an FT declared a man Indian, while observing that his family members were part of the NRC, which it referred to as the "final NRC".

On April 18, Sarma had written to the FTs in the state urging them not to rely on the NRC to adjudicate citizenship cases as "the final NRC is yet to be published".

"It may be noted here that there are large number of errors due to wrong data entry and erroneous process adopted in the NRC updation which has been

EXPLAINED
The curious case of NRC

EVER SINCE it was published on August 31, 2019, Assam's NRC — which left out 19 lakh people — has been in limbo. In 2021, state coordinator HD Sarma submitted an affidavit to the Gauhati High Court, referring to the August 31 list as a 'supplementary' list and not the 'final NRC' and sought a re-verification. The Assam government, too, has not accepted the list as final, and is currently pushing for a "corrected" NRC.

mentioned in the IA filed by the undersigned before the Supreme Court and the matter is yet to be heard," he wrote.

On May 10, an FT member, who did not want to be identified, wrote to Sarma asking him to withdraw the letter as it "amounts to interference in administration of justice". The claim that the NRC was not final, the FT member said, was in "direct contrast with the available records and orders of the Supreme Court which may attract contempt of court." The member also cited a 2019 press communique by former state coordinator Prateek Hajela which described the NRC as the final NRC.

BJP's 'parivarvaad' veto may thwart BSY son's chance of becoming MLC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, MAY 16

HIS RISE may have been quick enough for him to be seen as his father's political successor, but B Y Vijayendra may have to wait for a stint in the Legislature.

Vijayendra's name was among the 15 discussed at the BJP's core committee meeting last week as possible candidates for the June 3 Legislative Council polls. The meeting was chaired by BJP Karnataka in-charge Arun Singh. Vijayendra's father, former CM B S Yediyurappa was also present.

However, *The Indian Express*



BY Vijayendra

has learnt, the state unit is likely not to deliberate further on his candidature as they expect the central leadership to reject it.

Since Yediyurappa's ouster in 2021, Vijayendra, the vice-president of the BJP's state unit, has widely been seen as his father's political heir, with speculation of late he will stake claim to the Lingayat strongman's legacy. He has, however, never been given a ticket by the BJP.

Proposing Vijayendra's name as an MLC candidate is seen by many as an effort by Yediyurappa loyalists to bring his son into the state cabinet. That, however, may not exactly prove to be a boon. A source told *The Indian Express*: "Although the name was proposed it may not be pressed for, given the party's stand on issues like parivarvaad (dynastic politics) which has been raised by PM Modi and other central leaders."

Another source said many in the BJP also fear giving Vijayendra an MLC berth and then possibly a ministry could create a new power centre in Karnataka unit.

Centre to HC: Plea seeking live relay of same-sex case hearings for sympathy

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

OPPOSING AN application seeking live streaming of proceedings in the petitions seeking legalisation of same-sex marriages in India, the Centre has told the Delhi High Court that the plea was "aimed at creation of a dramatic impression of the proceedings and to win sympathy".

The government also said that neither there is violation of any fundamental right involved in the case nor it is a matter of national importance. Majority of the Indian population is "not very much af-

ected" by the case, it said. "The purpose of the applicant appears to be malafide as he is trying to get unnecessary publicity," the Centre said in its reply.

The court in November 2021 had sought Centre's response on the plea for live streaming of proceedings in the case. At least eight petitions are pending, seeking legalisation of same-sex marriages under the Hindu Marriage Act, the Special Marriage Act, the Foreign Marriage Act, and a declaration that the right to legal recognition of a same-sex marriage is the fundamental right under Articles 14, 15, 19 and 21 irrespective of a person's gender, sex or sexual orien-

tion. Senior Advocate Neeraj Kishan Kaul, representing petitioners in one of the pleas, had submitted that the issue concerns about 7-8 percent of the population and live streaming should be permitted. Seeking dismissal of the petitions seeking legalisation of same-sex marriages, the Centre in February 2021 had argued that a marriage in India necessarily depends upon "age-old customs, rituals, practices, cultural ethos and societal values". It also said that there exists a "legitimate state interest" in limiting the recognition of marriage to persons of opposite sexes only.



Kashmiri Pandits protest against the killing of Rahul Bhat, in Jammu on Monday. PTI

along with one at Vessu in Kulgam, had come up under this scheme. The families were also promised financial assistance for agricultural land if they wanted to do farming, says Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner

Ashok Pandita. However, that particular scheme had failed, with only three families opting for it and moving to Sheikhpora. Later, after the PM employment package was announced, the same accommodations were

roped in for migrants who took up the offered jobs, Pandita says.

The 72 of the 6,000 posts that remain vacant under this scheme are entangled in litigation, he adds. The Relief and Rehabilitation Commission is the nodal agency taking care of the affairs of migrant Kashmiri Pandits staying across the country.

Apart from safety, the protesters who hit the streets following Bhat's killing also raised questions regarding the low salaries they are paid (which are in line with what the other government staff get), particularly given the risk. Kashmiri Pandit leader King C Bharti also questions the undertaking Pandits have to give that they will work in the Valley and not seek posting outside Kashmir, accusing the govern-

ment of sending people desperate for jobs into risky positions for such meagre amounts.

Pandita says the government is cognizant of the problems and at least 5,000 more quarters are being readied for Kashmiri Pandits in secure zones "to house all employees". "This July, we will hand over some of them. By December, we will have all the 6,700 quarters ready and accommodate all the migrant employees."

In the interim, Pandita adds, they want the authorities to post the Class IV employees to Jammu. At a meeting with political parties in Srinagar Saturday, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha ruled out such a possibility.

On Monday, protests by Kashmiri Pandits over Bhat's killing continued in Ganderbal and

Anantnag districts. In Anantnag, protesters set fire to effigies depicting the present government.

With Bhat's family accusing the government of making Kashmiri Pandits "scapegoats", J&K BJP vice-president Yuvvir Sethi insists that their security is paramount for the party... "more than taking them back to the Valley".

A resident, who was part of the protests at Sheikhpora, said they felt caged, with no freedom to move freely, or without fear. "At times, there seems no purpose to these gated colonies. Every day, we have to move out for work, without any security. Our children have to go to school. We may be safe during the night, but we are vulnerable during the day."

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

Less than one-fifth of Pandits under PM employment package live in secure areas

ARUN SHARMA
JAMMU, MAY 16

RAHUL BHAT, who was shot dead by militants in Budgam on May 11, was working under a Prime Minister employment package for migrant Kashmiri Pandits. Of the total 6,000 posts provided for Pandit migrants under the scheme, a total of 5,928 are filled up. No more than 1,037 of them live in secure accommodations.

The remaining are compelled to rent quarters outside the secure zones meant for them. They also travel long distances without security, on a daily basis, for work.

The Valley has been seeing protests by Kashmiri Pandits regarding their security following Bhat's killing. A Revenue

Department employee, Bhat lived in a secure accommodation at Sheikhpora, Budgam — Kashmir's oldest and biggest such colony for Pandits — but was shot at his office, some distance away.

Posts such as the one Bhat held were announced in 2008 by then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, with the aim of drawing Pandit migrants back to the Valley and their eventual return and rehabilitation there. The salaries of these officials were to come from the Ministry of Home Affairs. While initially 3,000 posts were announced, 3,000 more were added later, with almost all getting filled up.

Incidentally, while the Narendra Modi government swears by the cause of Kashmiri

Pandits, and says steps like abrogation of Article 370 are a means to ensure their reintegration in the Valley, it has not introduced any scheme per se meant for the community.

The 2008 job package was itself part of an earlier scheme for return and rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits formulated in 2002-04, when the Atal Behari Vajpayee-led NDA government was in office at the Centre and Mufti Mohammad Sayeed was heading a coalition government with the Congress in the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state.

As per the policy, each migrant Kashmiri Pandit family wanting to return to the Valley was to be paid Rs 7.5 lakh for rebuilding their houses. The Sheikhpora accommodation,

7 EXPRESS NETWORK

BRIEFLY

MAHARASHTRA Actor booked again for FB post on Pawar

Pune: Yet another FIR has been registered against actress Ketaki Chitale for allegedly misusing the name of Saint Tukaram in the "objectionable" post on NCP's Sharad Pawar on her Facebook page. Nitin More (57), an office-bearer of the Sant Tukaram Dehu Sansthan, lodged FIR on Saturday. The post mentions words "Tuka Mhane (says Tukaram)". More said "Tuka Mhane" was the "naam mudra" (signature) of Saint Tukaram and using it in a defamatory post hurt sentiments of Warkaris. **ENS**

NEW DELHI SJVN to develop Rs 4,900 crore project in Nepal

New Delhi: State-owned Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN) Ltd will develop another hydro power project Arun-4 worth Rs 4,900 crore in Nepal. A MoU for the 490-MW project was signed in Lumbini, Nepal, in the presence of PM Narendra Modi and his Nepalese counterpart Sher Bahadur Deuba, the company said in a statement on Monday. SJVN Chairman and Managing Director Nand Lal Sharma said it will be company's third mega project in Nepal. The construction of 900 MW Arun-3 project is in progress and the 669-MW Lower Arun projects at the survey and investigation stage, he said. **PTI**

KARNATAKA Man flees with car on pretext of test drive, held

Bengaluru: Debt-ridden 36-year-old businessman, who stole a car to maintain his "social status", has been arrested after 100 days of police hunt. MG Venkatesh Naik of Amruth Nagar in Bengaluru approached Ravindra Elluri (47) after the latter placed an advertisement on OLX in January to sell his Maruti Brezza. Venkatesh said he would take a test drive before buying the car and never returned. Elluri had filed a cheating case against him. **ENS**

RAJASTHAN Ramgarh sanctuary now a tiger reserve

New Delhi: The Ramgarh Vishdhar Sanctuary in Rajasthan was notified as India's 52nd tiger reserve on Monday, Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav said. This is Rajasthan's fourth tiger reserve after Ranthambore, Sariska and Mukundra. "It will conserve biodiversity and bring in ecotourism and development to the area," Yadav tweeted. **PTI**



CALL OF FAITH

Devotees wait for their turn to offer prayers at a monastery in Leh on the occasion of Buddha Purnima on Monday. **UNI**

Central officials raise red flag as Bengal allots medical seats to Ukraine returnees

ANONNA DUTT & SANTANU CHOWDHURY
NEW DELHI, KOLKATA, MAY 16

IN WHAT could become another Centre-State flashpoint, the West Bengal government has allotted seats to second- and third-year medical students from Ukraine even as the country's apex medical education regulator maintained that it is not allowed.

Students who complete their education in such a manner cannot apply for the screening test that every foreign medical graduate has to take before practicing in India, officials from the National Medical Commission (NMC) and the Health Ministry told *The Indian Express*.

On April 28, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had announced that her government would accommodate 412 students who were forced to return to the state from Ukraine following the Russian invasion. She also lashed out at the Centre for "not taking any responsibility" for these students.

Of the 412 returnees, 172 students, who were in second and third year of their medical education in Ukraine, have been allowed to attend practical classes at different government medical colleges in the state.

This announcement, Union

ON BOARD IN BENGAL		
YEAR	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	WHAT HAS HAPPENED
Sixth	23	Internship at government medical colleges
Fourth and Fifth	135	Observing seats allotted so that the students can continue their classes online from respective colleges in Ukraine while receiving practical training in India
Second and Third	172	Have been allowed to attend practical classes in government medical colleges
First	78	Those who have qualified NEET were allowed to undergo counselling for the management quota seats in private medical colleges. Colleges have been requested to offer concession on fees

government officials said, is not in line with the current guidelines of NMC, which state that foreign medical graduates should have completed their theory and practical medical education and a 12-month internship at the same college.

NMC is India's apex regulatory authority for medical education.

"Any decision about medical students from Ukraine has to come from NMC. The current guidelines are very clear. These students (from Bengal who choose to attend practical classes in government colleges) will not be eligible for FMGE (Foreign Medical Graduates Exam)," an

NMC official said.

A senior Health Ministry official agreed: "We have asked states not to make any irresponsible comments about the situation with Ukraine students. The (Union) government is looking at ways to get the students admitted to equivalent courses in other European countries."

The NMC official said Bengal had sought no permission for this. Asked whether the announcement on accommodating medical students from Ukraine went against the NMC guidelines, West Bengal's director of medical education (DME), Debasis Bhattacharyya, argued, "We first

increased the number of seats in our medical colleges and then decided to accommodate the students. So there should not be a problem (in them attending practical classes) once we have increased the (number of) seats."

On May 10, Bhattacharyya had promised to get back on the specifics of violation of NMC guidelines. He had not responded until late Monday evening. In addition to the 172 students in Bengal, another 135 students in fourth and fifth year have been allotted "observing seats" in government colleges to complete practical training. Dr Rohan Krishnan, president

of the Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA), said: "There is nothing called observing seats in India. Sometimes MBBS doctors work under various specialists for training in that particular area, which is referred to as observership. But that certainly cannot happen for someone who hasn't even completed MBBS."

Nearly 18,000 medical students were forced to leave their education midway and flee after Russia invaded Ukraine. NMC officials had earlier told *The Indian Express* that there was no way of incorporating such a large number of people in India, which has around 90,000 MBBS seats available for 2021, with around 16 lakh applicants.

"Apart from the students from Ukraine, there are nearly 65,000 others who are enrolled in countries such as China, the Philippines, and Georgia who haven't been able to receive practical education due to travel restrictions. We have to think about those students, too," the Health Ministry official said.

Meanwhile, at the behest of a student from China, the Supreme Court has directed NMC to formulate a policy over the next two months to grant temporary registration to those who have completed medical education in other countries but haven't been able to do practical training.

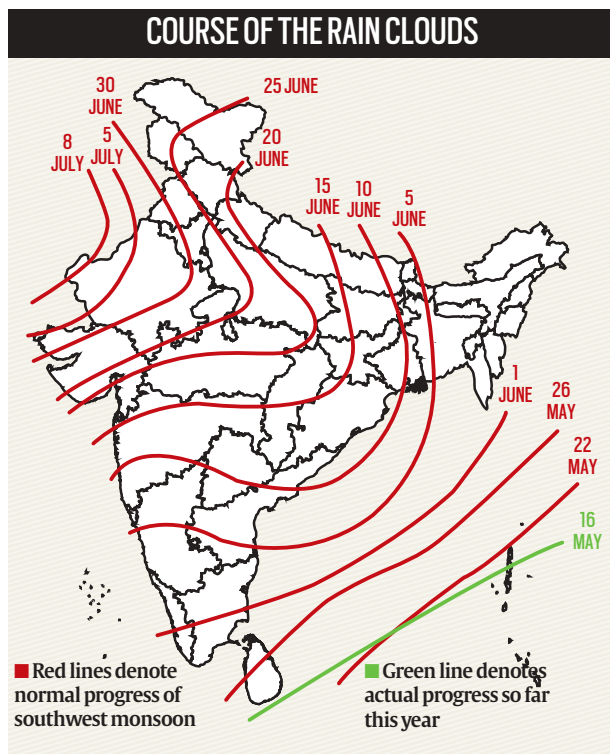
Monsoon reaches Andamans

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PUNE, MAY 16

THE IMD on Monday announced the onset of monsoon over the Andaman Sea, six days ahead of its normal schedule.

This year, the early monsoon has been attributed to Cyclone Asani, which brought in moisture over the region in plenty. Recently, the cross-equatorial flow too had picked up, aiding the monsoon currents to progress over the Andaman Sea.

The IMD has said the Southwest monsoon on Monday advanced into the south Bay of Bengal, most part of Andaman Nicobar Islands and Andaman Sea. "Conditions are favourable for further advance of southwest monsoon into some more parts of south Bay of Bengal, entire Andaman Sea & Andaman Islands and some parts of east-central Bay of Bengal during next 2-3 days," the IMD said in a statement. **WITH PTI INPUTS**



Rain: Five killed in Arunachal landslide, two drown in Assam

TORA AGARWALA
GUWAHATI, MAY 16

INCESSANT RAINS since Friday have ravaged parts of Assam, triggering floods and landslides in 20 out of the state's 35 districts. According to a bulletin issued by Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) on Monday, two persons drowned in Cachar district. Five persons in neighbouring Arunachal Pradesh were killed in a landslide.

In Assam, 1,97,248 people across 652 villages in 20 districts (Bajali, Baksa, Biswanath, Cachar, Charaideo, Darrang, Dhemaji, Dibrugarh, Dima Hasao, Hojai, Kamrup, Karbi Anglong West, Kokrajhar, Lakhimpur, Majuli, Nagaon, Nalbari, Sonitpur, Tamulpur, Udalguri) have been affected by floods and landslides. Dima Hasao, in particular, has been ravaged by flash floods and



A woman at Garukhunda village, Assam, Monday. **PTI**

landslides at several places. On Monday, connectivity to district headquarters Haflong was snapped as a major road caved in along the Guwahati-Haflong link. "It has been raining relentlessly since May 12. A cave-in was reported in the main highway that links Guwahati-Haflong, as well as the other linking Haflong to Silchar," said a district administration official. On Monday, Jogen Mohan, state Revenue and Disaster Management Minister, visited Dima Hasao to take stock

RANCHI AIRPORT ROW DGCA notice to IndiGo for 'inappropriate handling'

PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

SAYING THAT the findings of its three-member committee "prima facie indicate inappropriate handling of passengers" and "non-conformances with the applicable regulations", the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has issued a showcause notice to IndiGo for denying boarding to a specially-abled child at the Ranchi airport on May 7.

"The proceedings of the committee were partly held in the open and partly in camera as per the request of the affected family. The findings of the committee prima facie indicate inappropriate handling of passengers by the IndiGo staff thereby resulting in certain non-conformances with the applicable regulations," the DGCA said on Monday.

"In view of this, it has been decided to issue a showcause notice to the concerned airline through its authorised representative to explain as to why suitable enforcement action should not be taken against them for the non-conformances," it said. The DGCA has given IndiGo time till May 26 to respond to the showcause notice. "After hearing their submissions, appropriate action as per law would be taken," it said.

"We have received the communication from DGCA on the matter and will respond in due course," IndiGo said on Monday.

On May 7, an IndiGo staffer denied boarding to a specially-abled child for a Ranchi-Hyderabad flight. Two days after the incident, the airline's CEO, Ronojoy Dutta, had said the company was of the view "that we made the best possible decision under difficult circumstances". "Throughout the check-in and boarding process our intent of course was to carry the

family. However, at the boarding area the teenager was visibly in panic," he had said.

The national aviation safety regulator had set up a three-member team, comprising members from the DGCA's departments of air safety, aircraft engineering and legal, to probe the incident. The committee, which looked at the airport video footage, and spoke to passengers and airport staff as part of its probe, has submitted its report to the DGCA.

The Indian Express reported last week that the team would look into the operational and legal aspects, including the applicability of the "regulations for carriage of persons with disabilities and reduced mobility".

The regulation being referred to is part of the Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR) (Section 3, Series 'M', Part 1), which lays "regulations for carriage of persons with disabilities and reduced mobility by air to protect them against discrimination and to ensure that they receive all assistance during their travel".

"No airline shall refuse to carry persons with disability or reduced mobility and their assistive aids/devices, escorts and guide dogs including their presence in the cabin, provided such persons or their representatives, at the time of booking, inform the airline of their requirement(s)," it states.

However, it also states that "before refusing carriage to any person on the basis of disability, the airline shall specify in writing the basis of such refusal indicating its opinion that transportation of such persons would or might be inimical to the safety of flight". This CAR defines a person with disability as "any individual who has a physical or mental impairment" on a permanent or temporary basis that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

Row over Bajrang Dal using airguns at workshop

Bengaluru: A row has erupted after photos of youths with airguns and tridents from a workshop organised recently by Bajrang Dal surfaced on social media.

According to information, 116 activists from across Karnataka participated in the free workshop — Shaurya Prashiksha Varga — organised between May 5 and 11 at a school in Ponnampet town of communally-sensitive Kodagu district. Kodagu SP MA Aiyappa said, "Bajrang Dal and Vishva Hindu Parishad organise the camp every year and no permission was sought this year. We got to know of the workshop only from social media. No complaint has been filed. According to the Arms Act, airguns don't require licence, but we are looking into the matter."

Kodagu Deputy Director of Public Instruction Vedhamurthy said, "No permission was sought. Usually workshops are held in schools and colleges, but not to teach shooting. An explanation has been sought from the authorities."

"Bajrang Dal's regional convenor Raghu Sakleshpur said there was no need for permission as only airguns were used. **ENS**

'Death during demolition': Kin say 50 of them tried to get man out of debris

AMIL BHATNAGAR
BULANDSHAHR, MAY 16

FORTY-YEAR-OLD KAMLESH sits under the shade of a tree in the scorching sun looking at three plastic tents on an uneven muddy ground in Bulandshahr's Awas Vikas 2 colony. Adjacent to a water tank, the plot had nearly eight houses belonging to different family members of Rohtas (45), Kamlesh's husband.

Every few minutes, Kamlesh breaks down, recalling how she lost her husband and her house during an anti-encroachment drive earlier this month.

As per the family, and their neighbours, Rohtas was not allowed to move out of the house as the bulldozer moved in on May 2. The daily wager succumbed to his injuries 10 days later.



The contractor who carried out the demolition and his aides have been booked. **Express**

"When the wall collapsed, more than 50 people rushed to remove the debris from atop him. We took him to the nearest



government hospital, and it asked us to take care of him at home. He never got up and eventually succumbed to his in-

juries," a family member says, adding that Rohtas had been hurt on the leg and spine.

Officials deny this, saying Rohtas had been ailing and the family came up with the claim of his injuries later. The contractor who carried out the demolition and his aides have been booked, for culpable homicide not amounting to murder. No case has been brought against any official as of now.

"The contractor came and told us 'Samadhi banane aaya hoon (I am here to prepare your tomb)'. I told him my husband was sleeping inside the house and to give us a few minutes to wake him up. The driver didn't listen and ploughed into a wall, which collapsed onto Rohtas," says Kamlesh. The family says since the hospital didn't admit him, they don't have any med-

ical papers to show.

The extended family of Rohtas and his brothers say they have been living on the approximately 4,000 sq ft land, in eight separate half-pucca huts for decades, much before the nearby Awas Vikas 2 colony was developed.

"This is probably our sixth generation living here. We have seen the city come up. They are saying we don't belong here, when in fact we have been living here for years. If they have an issue, they should discuss it with us. Getting bulldozers is no solution," says one of the relatives, Sumit Kumar Lodhi.

Another relative, Deepak, says the women of the family went down on their knees before the contractor, Mohit Chaudhary, who was hired for the demolition. "He kept saying we will end up on pyres. They

even broke a nearby hand pump out of spite. In this heat, we are sleeping under a plastic sheet. We have been left with nothing."

Locals in the area back the family, saying the bulldozer broke a wall and Rohtas did not get enough time to escape.

The Nagar Palika, which owns the land where the family lived, says that far from causing any injury or death, the demolition exercise had been carried out amicably.

Officials said some portions of the houses had been brought down on April 14, and the action on May 2 was carried out with the family's consent. "In April, walls had been brought down and the debris was removed. On May 2, the family themselves said we should get a bulldozer and bring down the remaining structure," says Manoj Garg,

Chairman, Nagar Palika.

He also claims that in the 'Jan Sunwai' session held after the demolition, the family never talked about a person being injured and rather insisted that a route for movement be opened up. "The family never gave anything in writing about the demolition," Garg says.

District administration officials claim Rohtas had been ailing and claims of injuries were wrong. Muzaffarnagar District Magistrate Chandra Bhushan Singh said: "We have filed an FIR and an investigation is taking place. As per initial fact-finding, we were informed that no person was injured during the anti-encroachment. Further details will be ascertained during the probe and action will be taken accordingly."

As the matter is under probe, there is status quo on the land.



The Indian EXPRESS

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RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

WALK THE CHINTAN

Chintan Shivir focussed on structural changes in Congress but ignored the key question of leadership

THE THREE-DAY CHINTAN Shivir of the Congress in Udaipur didn't offer any surprises. It plotted a path to give a youthful makeover to the party and promises have been made that tickets will be restricted to one person in a family, with exceptions, of course, that help most existing families. These proposed structural changes in the organisation are necessary for the Congress, which has been in a free fall since the 2014 general election. Successive electoral defeats have turned many leaders restive. The emergence of the G-23, an informal group of dissidents, has put the spotlight on the leadership record of the Gandhi family. The Udaipur conclave, an admission of the crisis in the party, saw the invited crowd of senior leaders, parliamentarians and legislators deliberating on organisational and policy issues, but decidedly steering clear of questions concerning leadership. A clear takeaway from the conclave is that the Gandhis continue to exercise total control over the party. The G-23 fell silent.

Rahul Gandhi spoke at length in Udaipur and admitted that the party has lost its connect with the masses. This plain truth, self-evident to most people, has manifested repeatedly in the party's inability to win elections but seems to have eluded the Gandhis all this while. Rahul Gandhi blamed a poor communication strategy for the disconnect and promised a revamp. However, the loss of touch with the masses may not necessarily be the outcome of strategy. The problem also lies with the message and the messenger. Despite being out of office at the Centre for over eight years, the Congress is yet to reinvent itself as a party of the Opposition. Its politics has been more reactive than a proactive one of setting the agenda or building its own narrative. The incapacity to articulate in a coherent manner what the party stands for is curious since there is no dearth of articulate leaders in that party. While the party's message is incoherent and often contradictory, the messenger has been a failure in amplifying it or bringing clarity to the message. Rahul Gandhi, the party face for some years, will need to shoulder more than a little blame for this. The party has now announced two campaigns — a Bharat Jodo Yatra and Rozgar Do Yatra — to rebuild its ties with the people. The institutional arrangements proposed — a Social Justice Advisory Council to update the party chief on issues pertinent to the backward classes and disadvantaged social groups, a Public Insight Committee to conduct surveys on various issues and generate feedback from the public, a National Training Institute for ideological training, and an Election Management Committee — will be tested on the ground.

However, at a time when elections have also become about leaders and their image as much as their message, a party's prospects will be shaped more by the commitment and vision of its leadership than bullet points from its committees. Ideological clarity would help, but a leadership that can work 24x7 and remain accessible is necessary to inspire workers and revive the Congress. The Udaipur conclave kicked this crucial can down the party's bumpy, lonely road.

DOUSE THE FIRE

Mundka accident drives home the need to create safe working conditions in factories, end the culture of impunity

LAST WEEK'S BLAZE at a factory in outer Delhi's Mundka area that snuffed out at least 27 lives, 21 of them women, adds to the long list of avoidable fire tragedies that show the country's urbanisation story in poor light. The failings that have come to light in the four days since the incident evoke a sense of déjà vu: The building did not have a no objection certificate from the fire department — more worryingly, the owners had not even applied for one — and it had only one escape route. The manufacturing unit's licence had lapsed. Though the North Delhi Municipality had cancelled the permission after it was found that the building did not meet the required criteria, the industrial activities went on with impunity even after a Supreme Court monitoring committee raised red flags. Such omissions invite questions about the municipality's enforcement mechanisms. It's also apparent that the authorities have not learnt any lesson from the Anaj Mandi fire that killed more than 40 people in December 2019 — as well as several other mishaps dating back to the Uphaar Cinema Tragedy of 1997.

Localities such as Mundka and Anaj Mandi have become a prominent feature of Delhi's economic landscape — and that of several other parts of the country — in the aftermath of liberalisation. Factories exist cheek-by-jowl with warehouses, shops selling construction materials, banquet halls, and other multi-floor establishments. Largely unregulated, they are sources of livelihood for a substantial section of the city's population, many of whom live at its margins. At a time the pandemic-induced economic downturn has shrunk household incomes and the absence of social security has aggravated the difficulties of the working and lower-middle classes, many such manufacturing units offer hope of a semblance of relief from poverty. They also seem to buck the post-pandemic trend of a large number of women falling out of the labour force — as revealed by the CMIE data. However, with employers playing short shrift to basic safety codes, these workplaces turn out to be not only exploitative, they also add to the hardships faced by their employees — and their dear ones. Several families, for instance, lost their sole breadwinner in last week's fire tragedy.

Delhi's Lt Governor Anil Bajjal has ordered a magisterial investigation into the accident. The probe must, of course, fix accountability at multiple levels. But much more needs to be done. For far too long, a network of complicity has led to safety codes being flouted and building-by-laws being infringed. It's time such networks are taken apart.

1983 IN BADMINTON

Thomas Cup win is testimony to India's rise as a power in the sport. The challenge is to build on this triumph

NOT THE ONE for hyperbole, Pullela Gopichand, the national coach and the man largely responsible for India's rise as a badminton power, called Sunday's Thomas Cup triumph the country's greatest team sport achievement outside cricket. Vimal Kumar, the soft-spoken player-turned-coach, was quick to proclaim that this moment can be to Indian badminton what the 1983 World Cup was to Indian cricket. It's hard to dispute both claims. There are shades of '83 in '22: The stories of personal struggles and redemptions, the underdog element, and beating the most successful nation in the tournament's history, 14-time champions Indonesia, to reach the top.

Writing in these pages, Gopichand recalled how during his playing days, India lost to the likes of Sri Lanka and Pakistan, and were happy merely by qualifying for the Thomas Cup. To go on and win it then — only the sixth nation to do so, showing how competitive the tournament is — is special. And this is no fluke. The title comes on the back of years of relentless hard work and an outcome of a system that has constantly churned out players who, on their day, could upset the best in the world. That even players like B Sai Praneeth, a 2019 World Championship medalist, could not even make the team, coupled with the fact that India has seven players in the world's top 50, points to the depth in men's badminton right now.

The challenge going ahead is to build on this triumph and not let the momentum slip. Badminton is one of the few mass sports that's played almost in every corner of the country. So, even though Hyderabad and Bangalore will continue to remain the hubs, it's important to establish academies that can spot and harness players from other regions in the country. Like 1983, this title isn't a culmination of a journey. It should be the beginning of a new chapter.



NEETHA N

THE FIRE at Delhi's Mundka, with a death toll of 27 persons so far — a majority of whom are women workers in informal manufacturing units — underscores yet again the invisibilities and insecurities of informal workers in the city. The fact that the antecedents of those who died are still unknown points to the invisibility and lack of identity of informal sector workers.

Reports on buildings catching fire leading to fatalities, followed by discussions on illegal constructions and unplanned infrastructural development in urban centres, have become a somewhat repetitive subject. With every such mishap, reports on how these buildings do not have required fire clearance and no-objection certificates from concerned authorities surface. Yet, such incidents keep on repeating; the harrowing stories of those who lost their dear ones are matters of public attention only for a few days, till the headlines shift.

Incidents of this sort are also opportunities for political leaders to display their concern for those who lost their dear ones with compensation and promises coming one after the other. Enquiry commissions and assurances of tightening procedures are all part of a larger script, with no substantial change at the ground level.

By now, it is understood that the root cause of the Mundka mishap is a serious lapse in following the norms in construction as the whole building had only one staircase. While this accident shares similarities with earlier incidents, the site and the victims this time deserve special mention. Of the 27 who lost their lives to this massive fire, 21 were women workers, employed in a company that manufactured and assembled CCTVs and WiFi routers. As per reports, the manufacturing unit at Mundka employed about 100 people, half of them women. Many of them are young women and the sole or primary earners in their households. The predicament of women workers here has similarities to those in the garment units of Bangladesh — including disturbing parallels with the victims of the Rana Plaza collapse.

There are thousands of unregistered/informal industrial units in cities like Delhi without any data on the number of workers employed

Capital fire

Without accountability for employers, improving working conditions, tragedies like Mundka fire will recur

Exposure to such employment provides limited opportunities for personal or economic advancement, with monotonous repetitive work filling the day. The large turnover and women's withdrawal from the labour market are signs of extremely poor working conditions that many women cannot sustain for long. Absence of leave, including maternity leave and long working hours, are important concerns for women workers who also have to shoulder the housework and care responsibilities of their families, forcing them to eventually leave such workplaces.

and the conditions of their employment. These workplaces are known to violate all norms, including basic labour laws. Informality and precarity define such workplaces where the quality of jobs is not a concern for those who are looking for employment. Women's work participation rates have declined sharply over time, with Delhi having one of the lowest (14.5 per cent for age 15 and above as compared to 28.7 per cent all-India in 2019-20). The pandemic has added to women's difficulties in finding jobs and such workplaces reveal the conditions under which women workers get employed. The profile of workers shows that many are young in their 20s or 30s — the age categories that suffice our discourse on women's development and empowerment. They are forced to join the labour market in low-paid and highly-informal jobs because of their migrant status and poor economic conditions. There is often a clear separation of tasks for men and women. Women workers are mostly into packing or are helpers — categories that are the lowest skilled as per the job classifications in such units.

Owing to the perception that workers employed in packing or as helpers undertake jobs that do not require much skill, wages are kept very low while the labour pool remains massive. With the pandemic and the resultant decline in work opportunities and household income, women are compelled to join employment to compensate for the loss of employment or declined income of male household members. Many of the workers who died joined the factory after the pandemic, pointing to the desperation that many poor households are facing. Working conditions, in general, are not defined in such units with low and varying wages, long working hours, absence of any leave, including maternity leave and a lack of other basic facilities. In a city where living expenses have soared, with a monthly wage of Rs 6,500-7,500, a dignified life is beyond imagination. It is important to note that many women workers are often the sole earners or primary earners of their households. Working in contested spaces in

dusty, shady and stingy rooms, without any safety precautions, gloves or masks is a common scene in these sweatshops. Basic workplace requirements such as the provision of drinking water and toilet facilities are often denied to workers.

Exposure to such employment provides limited opportunities for personal or economic advancement, with monotonous repetitive work filling the day. The large turnover and women's withdrawal from the labour market are signs of extremely poor working conditions that many women cannot sustain for long. Absence of leave, including maternity leave and long working hours, are important concerns for women workers who also have to shoulder the housework and care responsibilities of their families, forcing them to eventually leave such workplaces.

Poorly ventilated workplaces, operating from dilapidated buildings are aplenty in the city and even by basic norms of occupational safety requirements, these workplaces are not to be "operational". Such workplaces are often a source of additional income for the enforcement machinery, with employers and the administration least bothered about the lives of workers. There are anxieties about how the new labour codes will add to the vulnerability of informal workers. The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 (OSHC) would replace existing regulations soon and this would worsen the conditions of informal workers as many of these small units would be left to themselves to follow prescribed safety conditions and can go unaccountable.

These sweatshops, which are part of our understanding of economic development are traps for women workers. The fact that it offers some respite from poverty and also from cultural restrictions on women also needs to be understood. But without any accountability of employers and a lack of political will to improve working conditions, we might end up allowing many more such horrific accidents.

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YUBARAJ GHIMIRE

FOR LONG, Lumbini and its people felt uncomfortable, even angry, over the projection of the Buddha as Indian. There was also the feeling that it was being treated unfairly by Indian tour handlers. Package deals for tourists and pilgrims from across the world would only make a fleeting visit to the Buddha's birth place, before being herded back to Buddhist shrines in India, denying Nepal its due economic gain.

Nearly eight years ago, Prime Minister Narendra Modi tried to address this issue when he told Nepal's Constituent Assembly that the Buddha was born in Nepal. On Buddha Poomima on Monday, Modi made a trip to Lumbini, becoming the first Indian PM to do so. He offered prayers at the Mayadevi temple, believed to be the Buddha's birthplace, in the company of highly-respected Buddhist masters, and then laid the foundation for the International Buddhist Conference and Meditation Centre.

The trip, a month after Nepali Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba visited India, is being projected as a "cultural visit" but there are many who call it India's late awakening from a deep diplomatic slumber. Delhi has been indifferent to the deep inroads China has been making in Nepal. Modi landed at a newly-built helipad close to the Mayadevi temple, avoiding the Gautam Buddha International Airport, built with a soft loan from China and co-incidentally inaugurated by his host earlier in the morning on the auspicious day.

China first offered to spend \$3 billion to

BRIDGE TO THE BUDDHA

PM Modi's Lumbini visit attempts to make up for Delhi's past indifference to Nepal

The trip, a month after Nepali Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba visited India, is being projected as a 'cultural visit' but there are many who call it a India's late wake up from a deep diplomatic slumber. Delhi has been indifferent to the deep inroads China has been making in Nepal. Modi landed at a newly built helipad close to the Mayadevi temple, avoiding the Gautam Buddha International Airport, built with a soft loan from China.

build up Lumbini as the world peace city under the aegis of its NGO — Asia Pacific Exchange and Foundation — co-opting Maoist leader Prachanda as its vice chairman. China has also built a monastery in the core area of the Lumbini Development Project. China's offer to develop it as the World Peace Centre and construct a railway line connecting Tibet and Kathmandu is as yet in abeyance, but not completely given up.

The increased presence and influence of the US and the European Union, along with India, has become more pronounced in Nepal's domestic politics — especially following the political changes of 2005-06. China retaliated with a matching presence and economic investments. This has had an impact on internal politics and policy-making in Nepal. But unlike its competitors, China's outlook had depth and took into account multiple dimensions. Lumbini, thanks largely to China, has now become sort of a microcosm of the competing international forces in the country.

India first reacted to the Chinese presence in Lumbini on November 8, 2011, in the wake of enthusiastic publicity by the Chinese about the World City initiative. At a dinner table, Dr Karan Singh's discomfort was palpable. The senior Congress leader was then in Nepal. "How far is Lumbini from the Indian border?" he asked. "Not even 10 km away," former King Gyanendra Shah had responded. Singh, apparently under instructions from the government in Delhi, told the media the next day that India was keen to

undertake the project with the promise of bestowing upon Lumbini the status it deserved.

How much Modi's visit to Lumbini will make up for Delhi's indifference is yet to be gauged. The two sides agreed to develop a Buddhist circuit, linking shrines located in the two countries with Lumbini occupying a prime position. India also agreed to set up the Dr B R Ambedkar Chair in Lumbini University, with around 1,000 students, including from China, enrolled.

Modi, by befriending Deuba, has made an effective attempt to repair the damage in bilateral ties that took place between 2016 and 2021 when he and his then Nepali counterpart K P Oli fell out. India not only refused to welcome Nepal's constitution promulgated in September 2015, but also launched an economic blockade for 134 days. Deuba, who is also the chairman of the Nepali Congress, recently accepted Modi's invitation for his party and the BJP to establish fraternal relations — something the Chinese Communist Party tried with the unified Communist party of Nepal. Modi's visit to Lumbini and the laying of the monastery's foundation may give India a foothold and cultural space. But that provides zero guarantee that it will be able to outdo its competitors, including the West and China, who are already deeply entrenched in Nepal.

The writer is a senior journalist based in Kathmandu



MAY 17, 1982, FORTY YEARS AGO

PRELIMINARY TALKS A 30-MINUTE PRELIMINARY exchange of views between the leader of the Indian delegation, Eric Gonsalves, and the leader of the Chinese delegation, Fu Hao, and the conciliatory speeches they made at the dinner Gonsalves hosted in honour of the visitors set the tone for the tone for the Sino-Indian talks opening the next day. Both Gonsalves and Fu, in their carefully prepared speeches warmly expressed their governments' desire to improve relations. And significantly, both of them underscored the understanding of the two governments have already arrived at that the border dispute is the central issue the resolution of which is important for the normalisation of relations between India and China. The problems that

India and China faced in today's world can be better faced if they devised a basis for co-operation and fully normal relations, Gonsalves said.

MINISTRY GUIDELINES

THE UNION HOME Ministry has asked ministers of state governments not to make statements on communal disturbances in their areas. The Home Ministry has recently sent "exhaustive guidelines" on prevention and control of communal disturbances and for promotion of communal harmony to the states and union territory administration. It has suggested that ministers should not comment on any agitation likely to lead to communal dissatisfaction. Once distur-

bances start, ministers should not express their views on the cause of the disturbances and they way they were being dealt with because this was bound to affect steps taken by the local administration.

MISSING CANDIDATES

WEST BENGAL CHIEF minister Jyoti Basu has asked police to intensify the search for the two election candidates and an agent who have been missing since May 14. Kashi Kanto Moitra, a Janata candidate, Gopal Chandra Sarkar, a Congress (I) nominee and Moitra's election agent, Shibu Choudhury, did not return home after election campaigns. Police have meanwhile found the car in which Sarkar was reportedly abducted.

9 THE IDEAS PAGE

Bound by geography

Developments in Sri Lanka, Nepal and Pakistan underline need for India to reframe regional ties, work with its neighbourhood



RAJA-MANDALA
BY C RAJA MOHAN

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS — in Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Pakistan — underline the geographic imperative that binds India to its neighbours in the Subcontinent. Together, they should remind the region's leaders that working with the logic of geography has become an unavoidable necessity amidst the deepening regional and global crises accentuated by Russia's war in Ukraine.

As higher oil and food prices trigger inflation and popular unrest across the region, more intensive regional cooperation is one of the tools for managing the new dangers. The last few weeks have seen some positive trends in that direction as well as enduring negative policies that defy the logic of geography.

Last week, the Indian High Commission in Colombo was quick to scotch wild speculation that the former strongman prime minister of Sri Lanka Mahinda Rajapaksa was fleeing to India. We don't know if Mahinda Rajapaksa, a target of the people's outrage for the terrible mismanagement of the economy, was actually planning to take a short flight out of Lanka. If he did, India would be the natural first destination given the geographic proximity.

Now put on the exit control list in Colombo, Mahinda might not be travelling any time soon to India and pay his regular obeisance to his favourite deity, Lord Venkateswara in the Tirumala hills. But India has had a long tradition of hosting political exiles from the region. Whether it was the Dalai Lama from Tibet or Prachanda from Nepal, Delhi has welcomed leaders from the neighbourhood taking shelter in India.

There is a dangerous flip side to this positive tradition in the Subcontinent. India has paid a high price for the decision in the early 1980s to train and arm Sri Lankan Tamil rebels. That, hopefully, is an exception rather than the rule in India's emerging neighbourhood policy.

While India's muscular meddling in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka did not succeed in realising the Tamil demands, it unfortunately contributed to the deep distrust between Delhi and the Sinhala nationalists. As a consequence, the geographic imperative became a casualty in Colombo.

But the current crisis in Sri Lanka raised hopes for transcending the internal ethnic divide in the island nation and rebuilding political confidence between Colombo and Delhi. To be sure, positive sentiments driven by crises do not always last. But Delhi's unstinting support — both material and financial — for Colombo during this unprecedented economic and political crisis has generated much goodwill in Sri Lanka. This offers a major opportunity to reframe Delhi's ties with Colombo.

India's relations with Sri Lanka underline the importance of continuous tending of political geography. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit this week to Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha in Nepal, highlights the immense possibilities of cultural geography in reshaping the Subcontinent's regional relations.

The idea of a "Buddhist circuit" connecting the various pilgrimage sites across the India-Nepal border has been around for a long time. Given the massive size of the global Buddhist



C R Sasikumar

population — estimated to be more than 500 million — and the wider international interest in the historic sites, it is surprising how long it has taken Delhi and Kathmandu to come together in developing the Buddhist circuit.

That China has built a new airport near Lumbini and Modi is avoiding it points to the turbulent triangular dynamic between Delhi, Kathmandu, and Beijing. Even more consequential has been the deep discomfort of a large section of Nepal's political class — especially the communists that have dominated Kathmandu in the last two decades — with the India relationship.

The return of the Nepal Congress to the helm and its readiness to deepen ties with India has also opened the door for a recalibration of Delhi's ties with Kathmandu. Revitalising the shared cultural geography inevitably involves better management of economic geography. The last few years have seen the Modi government step up on infrastructure development on the Indian side and accelerate transborder transport and energy connectivity in the eastern subcontinent.

Religion and culture are deeply interconnected in South Asia. Developing all religious pilgrimage sites across the region, and improving the transborder access to them could not only improve tourist revenues of all the South Asian nations, but could also have a calming effect on the troubled political relations between nations.

Despite their frozen bilateral political relationship, Delhi and Islamabad had agreed to open the Kartarpur corridor at the end of 2019 across their militarised Punjab border. The corridor makes it easier for Sikh pilgrims to visit the shrine in Kartarpur in Pakistan, where Guru Nanak founded the Sikh faith. There is much more to be done on reconnecting the Subcontinent's sacred geographies — including the Ramayana trail and Sufi shrines.

While parts of the region are aligning their policies with the geographic imperative, Pakistan would seem to be an exception. Some would say, Islamabad's policies are deliberately anti-geographic. Consider, for example, the recent controversy in Pakistan over the routine appointment of a "trade officer" in its high commission in Delhi.

Facing a barrage of media criticism, the new government led by Shehbaz Sharif had to clarify that it was not planning to improve trade ties with India. Given the depth of its macro economic crisis and massive inflation, one

Religion and culture are deeply interconnected in South Asia. Developing all religious pilgrimage sites across the region, and improving the transborder access to them could not only improve tourist revenues of all the South Asian nations, but could also have a calming effect on the troubled political relations between nations.

might have thought Pakistan would want to expand trade ties with India in its own economic interest. But Pakistan's politics are hardwired against the logic of geography.

An attempt at limited trade liberalisation with India after the two countries signed a ceasefire agreement in February last year was overruled at the last moment by Prime Minister Imran Khan. The Muslim League's Nawaz Sharif and the Pakistan People's Party's Asif Ali Zardari — who back the present government in Islamabad — have, in the past, supported normal trade relations with India, but could not get the army's consent.

While General Qamar Javed Bajwa, the current Chief of Army Staff, had called for a reset of relations with India, Imran Khan pulled the plug on trade liberalisation. His argument was that Pakistan can't trade with India unless Delhi reversed its 2019 constitutional changes in Kashmir.

Now Imran is on the streets campaigning against the "imported government" (from the US which, according to the former PM, conspired to oust him from power). He could chew the government up if it opens up to trade with India. The army, long viewed as a decisive arbiter in Pakistan's political and policy disputes, seems divided on how best to manage the current crisis.

This leaves Shehbaz little room for creative policy making that can ease some of Pakistan's current economic problems. Meanwhile, the young Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, who has taken charge of Pakistan's Foreign Office, is tied down by his bureaucracy's staple of Kashmir clichés.

Delhi had little reason to believe that Pakistan's new government can alter its self-defeating policy towards India. But it must continue to bet that the geographic imperative will eventually prevail over Islamabad's policies. Pessimists in Delhi will say the word "eventually" means nothing for policy-making today. But optimists would say India must continue to find ways to work with Pakistan.

Realists might want to argue that current trends in the Subcontinent point to India's growing agency in shaping its neighbourhood and that Pakistan will not forever remain an exception. For Delhi, the policy question is whether India can do something to hasten the inevitable change in Pakistan.

The writer is Senior Fellow, Asia Society Policy Institute, Delhi and a contributing editor on international affairs for The Indian Express

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Most Asian countries wish the US can contribute more to the region rather than engage in moves to weaken the region. Washington should listen to ASEAN instead of indulging in a zero-sum game and regarding its relations with ASEAN as playing a seesaw." — GLOBAL TIMES, CHINA

On sedition, a beginning

Centre has done well to display leadership in a matter that has divided the country in recent years



RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD

IT IS rare that the prime minister himself conveys, in a pending proceeding before the apex court, his clear and unequivocal views about respecting human rights, protecting civil liberties and further respecting the freedoms granted to the people of India. It was refreshing to find the categorical assertion by the PM in an affidavit: "One of India's strengths is the diverse thought streams that beautifully flourished in our country." In the 75th year of our Independence, as our nation is marking "Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav", PM Modi has appealed to Indians to work harder to shed our colonial baggage, which includes colonial laws and practices.

These are not empty words only for an affidavit. Under his leadership, nearly 1,500 old colonial-era laws have been scrapped. About 25,000 compliance rules which were creating hurdles, have been removed and many offences that were a hindrance to development have been decriminalised. There was also in the affidavit a profound statement of great intent: "Laws and compliances which reeked of a colonial mindset have no place in today's India."

With this background, it was conveyed, that the Government of India has decided to re-examine and reconsider the provisions of Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code which deals with sedition. The history of the sedition law in India is in many ways unique. During the British Raj, it was part of the penal law from the very beginning. The British government in India not only framed the law, defining various offences, but also made sedition a very serious offence, punishable with imprisonment for life and a fine. The definition of sedition was a little vague, whereby any attempt to bring hatred or contempt or attempt to excite disaffection towards the government constituted sedition. Disaffection includes disloyalty and feeling of enmity. Sedition was designed to perpetuate the hold of the British on the people of India, and any attempt at disloyalty was enough for the offence.

Great leaders of the freedom movement became the targets of the law. Bal Gangadhar Tilak was the first person to be convicted of sedition in colonial India because the British government thought that his writings in his celebrated Marathi newspaper, *Kesari*, were causing disaffection against the British Raj. He was imprisoned for 18 months. Even Gandhi, in 1922, was sentenced to six years for his article in *Young India* on the charge of "attempting to excite disaffection towards his majesty's Government established by law in British India". Many others were also prosecuted and convicted.

Significantly, during the making of the

Constitution, December 1, 1948, K M Munshi moved an amendment in the Constituent Assembly proposing sedition be dropped "as constituting a restriction on right to freedom of speech and expression particularly in the context of the painful experience to punish Indians by the British authorities for even innocuous expressions and criticism of colonial government." Article 19(1)(a)(g) provides for various freedoms including freedom of speech and expression while clause 19(2) to (6) enumerates provisions for constituting reasonable restrictions on the exercise of such rights.

It must be noted that in none of the said clauses is the offence of sedition mentioned as grounds for "reasonable restriction". There are expressions like "interest of sovereignty and integrity of India", and security of state public order but not sedition. Sedition simply means "deshdroh". Yet, it has continued in the IPC. There have been judgments from various high courts in this regard but a constitution bench of the Supreme Court delivered a judgment in 1962 (*Kedarnath Singh vs The State of Bihar*) where it held that "unless accompanied by incitement or call for violence criticism of government cannot be labelled Sedition".

There has been genuine criticism about why this colonial-era provision should be a part of our statute. The Congress party, which claims to be the inheritor of the freedom movement, never tried to scrap this law though it ruled India for nearly 60 years. Certain freedoms are fundamental under our constitutional scheme.

There have been cases of rampant abuse and the latest is a hilarious instance from a particular state where singing the Hanuman Chalisa amounted to sedition. Surely, there is a need for a review of the law. India, in the 75th year of its independence, is strong and stable enough to decide in a free, fair and objective manner whether the offence of sedition is needed or not, and if so under what form with strong guidelines to prevent its misuse, and clearly enunciate the circumstances in which it can be invoked. The PM has trusted the process by which so many old laws have been repealed, offences decriminalised and thousands of compliance burdens removed. All this was done in a peaceful manner with due consultation. This is the institutional strength of India. I am quite sure the same process will entail a relook at the whole issue of sedition to the satisfaction of all concerned where a healthy balance is maintained between respect for human rights and civil liberties and the compelling need to fight terrorism, and separatism and whose clear agenda is to break India.

I must conclude with a word of gratitude for the PM for demonstrating extraordinary leadership in a matter that has divided the country for the last few years. Let's hope the inner strength of the country will help us arrive at a healthy conclusion. Equally, the Supreme Court has shown judicial statesmanship by agreeing with the government's request to give time for the review and by passing appropriate interim protections in the meantime.

The writer is a BJP MP and former Union Law Minister



SUBIMAL BHATTACHARJEE

The cybersecurity burden

CERT-In directions on cybersecurity compliance are rushed

ON APRIL 28, the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) issued "directions" under Section 70-B(6) of the Information Technology Act 2000 (IT Act) relating to information security practices, procedure, prevention, response and reporting of cyber incidents. These directions have brought about a wide-ranging expansion in the scope of obligations of the above requirements compared to the Information Technology (The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team and Manner of performing functions and duties) Rules, 2013 (Rules). Among the activities in which compliance is sought by service providers, intermediaries, data centres and body corporates are the synchronisation of computer clocks to the network time protocol set at the National Physical Laboratory and National Informatics Centre (NIC), mandatory reporting of all cyber incidents within six hours of noticing or being brought to their notice in the prescribed format, designating point of contact and notifying CERT-In and undertaking to perform such actions for cyber security mitigation when notified by CERT-In, maintaining all logs of all ICT systems up to 180 days within Indian jurisdiction and for data centres, virtual private network service providers, cloud service providers and virtual private server providers to maintain all records of their users and usage for a minimum of five years.

While the overall thrust towards a robust

cyber incident reporting and security regime is prudent, some of the provisions in the absence of clarification from CERT-In have raised concerns amongst industry observers and cyber security experts. For some time now, CERT-In has been struggling to get information and incident reporting from service providers, intermediaries as well as body corporates as per the rules and its mandate under section 70B(4) of the IT Act. This was impacting its responsibility as a collector, analyser and disseminator of information on cyber incidents as well as coordinating incident responses and emergency measures. So, it took recourse to the directions, which strangely do not differentiate between the scales and nature of the incident. Some cyber incidents are far more common and occur regularly. An organisation might receive hundreds of phishing emails and the effort to notify each would drastically increase their compliance cost. It would also be interesting to know what CERT-In's strategy will be for dealing with commonplace cyber incidents and its own capacity enhancement in terms of handling the compliance sought.

A window of 60 days has been provided before implementation of these compliances begins. Given the scale of the revamp, this might be too short a window. The government must look at the concerns that arise from such directions and work out a realistic time scale. The ugly episode of the Twitter incident

around compliance with the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, last year is a stark reminder of the pitfalls of rushing in organisations without factoring in concerns. In this case, there will be multiple companies even from the MSME sector that will take time to set up systems for compliances.

All covered entities also have to mandatorily enable logs and maintain them for 180 days within the Indian jurisdiction. At present, most entities maintain logs for around 30 days, and in order to maintain logs for 180 days, the additional data storage device cost would be huge. Similarly, data centres, virtual private server providers, cloud service providers and virtual private network service providers will need to retain additional information for five years or more after the cancellation or withdrawal of registration. The virtual asset industry too will have to maintain all KYC records and details of all financial transactions for five years. The compliance cost in each case is going to rise substantially.

Many of the entities will have to shift their servers geographically as well as add excess storage capacity. Most importantly, the recruitment of additional manpower for compliance may take far longer. A realistic timeline would be six months, which would allow the entities to effectively migrate to the new regime. The penalty for non-compliance is stiff (including

up to one year of imprisonment and monetary fines). But it is also unfair to create unrealistic deadlines for industry.

This is also going to significantly affect organisations that have maintained their servers offshore, although the move is in line with the government's stated objective of localising data storage. But what cannot be denied are privacy concerns. With VPNs and virtual asset wallets being asked to store and share KYC and transaction data, these concerns become evident. VPNs have been successful for corporates as well as individuals because they address privacy concerns. There have been very few instances where these tunnels have been used for criminal activities and support from the providers was not obtained by law enforcement authorities. In the absence of legislative backing for data protection, which has been on the anvil for more than two years, the question is: How will the user have any say on which information can be held back or how his sensitive personal information is being protected?

While CERT-In has been proactive in recognising the changing frontiers of technology and trying to deal with hitherto unknown cyber threats, it is wanting in terms of a graded approach to ensuring compliance.

The writer is a defence and cybersecurity analyst

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LOSING THE WAR

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Blame it on Putin' (IE, May 16). With no swift end to the Russia-Ukraine War as Putin, the aggressor, expected, alliances are being drawn and redrawn. Russia's aggressive posturing is making the hitherto neutral nations like Sweden and Finland worried for their safety. The two countries are thinking of joining NATO, which may not strengthen the organisation, but will, definitely, help in projecting it, and, in consequence, the US, as a force to be reckoned with. Russia may be winning the battles in the ongoing crisis, but it is losing the war.

Vijai Pant, Hempur

DATA QUALITY

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'What number hide' (IE, May 14). The availability of reliable and transparent data has been a serious issue in India for a long time. Well before the Covid data controversy, there were questions raised over GDP calculation accuracy, expenditure survey data quality and others. These disputes over the accuracy of numbers arise largely on account of a paucity of quality and reliable information, which results in widely differing estimates and measurements. Unless a credible and consistent quality data infrastructure is built, these unseemly debates will keep recurring, and worse still, lead to

wrong inferences and policies.

Hemant Contractor, Pune

KNEE-JERK RESPONSE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Caught with chaff' (IE, May 16). Strangely unaware of ground reality, Minister of Commerce Piyush Goyal came up with sweeping statements painting a rosy picture of wheat output in the current season, despite indications to the contrary. Now, taking food security as the reason, a blanket ban on wheat exports has been hurriedly imposed, adversely affecting not only the exporters and grain traders but also the farmers. A better solution could have been to gradually cap the exports so that the global supply chain does not get abruptly disrupted. Such knee-jerk reactions speak of a government not willing to take the arduous route of assuredly managing farm production and hurting its own image as a global supplier of grains.

Kamna Chhabra, Gurgaon

A GREAT WIN

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'India Thomas Cup champs: Who would have thought?' The Team (IE, May 16). Our badminton team's winning of the Thomas Cup is in a class by itself. It was the result of laudable teamwork and coordination.

Y G Chouksey, Pune

Government of Madhya Pradesh
Office of the Engineer-in-Chief Water Resources Department,
Jal Sansadhan Bhawan, Tulsī Nagar, Bhopal (M.P.)
Email Id: ceproc.enrcwrdbpl@nic.in Tel: 0755-2767635 Fax: 0755-2552406
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Bids for following works are invited on website <https://www.mptenders.gov.in> Last Date of purchase/download of Bid Document and submission of bid is 31.05.2022, 17:30 hrs. Any amendment/modification can be seen only on the website. Detailed N.I.T. and other details can be viewed on above mentioned website.

S. No.	Tender No.	Work	District	Amount (Lakhs)
1.	2022_WRD_202668	On Turnkey Basis:- Construction of Banyani stop dam, as per detailed scope of work but not limited to that.	Shivpuri	346.26
2.	2022_WRD_202669	On Turnkey Basis:- Construction of Khadoy stop dam, as per detailed scope of work but not limited to that.	Shivpuri	336.36
3.	2022_WRD_202671	On Turnkey Basis:- Construction of Nichroli Stop Dam, as per detailed scope of work but not limited to that.	Shivpuri	273.12
4.	2022_WRD_202674	On Turnkey Basis:- Construction of Fulpurra Stop Dam, as per detailed scope of work but not limited to that.	Shivpuri	243.88

कोरोना से बचने की नीत बतें बहुत जरूरी,
टीका लगवाना, मास्क पहनना और अयनाना दो यज दूरी।
Sd/-
G-12832/22 Chief Engineer (Procurement)

Notice Inviting Tender
Government of Madhya Pradesh
Narmada Valley Development Department
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER
RANI AVANTI BAL LODHI SAGAR PROJECT BARGI HILLS, JABALPUR (M. P.)
Phone No.- 0761-2672230 FAX No.- 0761-2673732, E-mail: cerablsb@yahoo.co.in
Memo No. 11/G/G-2/CE/2022-23 Date 06-05-2022

NOTICE INVITING TENDER (1st Call)
NIT No. 12/G/CE/2022-23 Date : 06-05-2022

Online tenders on basis of Turn key contract for following works are invited on portal <http://www.mptenders.gov.in> brief information to tender is given below:-

Description of work	Probable Amount of tender (In Rs. Crore)
Construction of Shakkra micro irrigation project on turn key basis including construction of dam on Shakkra river and 95839ha. pressurized pipe micro irrigation system upto 2.5 ha. chak with duty 0.35 lps/ha in Narsinghpur and Chhindwara district including SCADA work as per detail scope of work.	Rs. 3824.40 Crore
Earnest Money (Rs. In Lakh)	Rs. 50.00 Lakhs
Cost of Tender Document	Rs. 50000.00 (Non refundable)
On Line Tender Document Sale Date	Dated 06-05-2022, 17:30 to 10-06-2022, 17:30
On line Bid Submission Start/Closing date	Dated 06-05-2022, 17:30 to 10-06-2022, 17:30
EMD & Technical Bid opening Date	Dated 13-06-2022, 10:30 Onward

Tender document can be purchased online only from above website after paying required amount through credit card or interest banking. For detailed information of tender visit the above website.

Sd/-
(D.S. Thakur)
Chief Engineer
Rani Avanti Bal Lodhi Sagar Project
Bargi Hills, Jabalpur

कोरोना से बचने की नीत बतें बहुत जरूरी,
टीका लगवाना, मास्क पहनना और अयनाना दो यज दूरी।
G-12831/22

In bid to flee attack by rival group, 5 men feared drowned in Yamuna

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, MAY 16

FIVE MEN were feared drowned in the Yamuna river at Yamunanagar as they reportedly jumped into the water to save their lives after being attacked by a rival group on Sunday evening.

The Haryana Police was conducting search operations with the help of divers.

The police identified the missing youths as Sunny, Suleman, Allaudin, Sahil and Nikhil, all aged between 19-21 and natives of Jagadhari. Their five other friends escaped when the alleged attack happened. The car, in which they had come to the river bank for swimming, was also badly damaged by the assailants, also hailing from Jagadhari, the police added.

The two groups of young men had a murderous clash two years ago. "Allaudin and others were attacked by the rival group with weapons, bricks and stones. To save their lives, they went deeper into the river and are suspected to be drowned. Despite all the efforts being made by police, they have not been able to find any of the bodies yet," said Ibrahim, Allaudin's uncle.

Deputy Superintendent of Police Subhash, who is supervising the rescue operation, said: "We got information that a few young men drowned in the Yamuna river. When we reached the spot, we learnt that it was a case of an old enmity and they were attacked by the rival group. We are investigating the matter. The search operation is still going on."

KNOW BJP EVENT

Nadda to envoys: UCC not on poll agenda, development is

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

AMID FOREIGN dignitaries flagging some unpleasant happenings in India, BJP President J P Nadda on Monday said that the governments helmed by the party at the Centre and in states will follow the "sabka saath, sabka vikas" theme, while the elections will be fought on developmental activities and welfare programmes of the Narendra Modi government.

Nadda, who was interacting with heads of missions of 14 countries at the BJP headquarters on Monday as part of the second leg of the 'Know BJP' initiative, told the dignitaries that the Uniform Civil Code was not on the party's election agenda even as "some states are exploring" the prospects of a legislation on it.

"The event (Know BJP) is aimed at to make the external audience aware of BJP's history, programmes, struggle and success stories... The dignitaries have appreciated the initiative. There were suggestions for party-to-



BJP president J P Nadda at the party headquarters in New Delhi on Monday. PTI

party interactions to which Nadda ji agreed," Vijay Chauthiwale, convener of BJP's Overseas Cell, told *The Indian Express*.

"There were questions on BJP's ideology, its functioning, legislative agenda, its relation with the RSS and the party's programmes. Nadda insisted that his party works on 'sabka saath, sabka vikas' slogan, which, he said, is the modern day elaboration of the party's fundamental idea of antyodaya," said a source. Some of the dignitaries had questions on the

reported incidents of communal clashes, to which Nadda maintained that the "party wants development and welfare of all."

Envoys of US, Australia, Canada, Israel, Denmark, Bhutan, Fiji, Indonesia, New Zealand, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Suriname and Dominican Republic attended the event hosted by the BJP's Overseas Cell.

In his address, Nadda said the day marked the 8th anniversary of the BJP first coming to power in 2014.

Now, demand for letting Hindus to pray at mosque in Karnataka

Bengaluru: Amid the Gyanvapi mosque row in Varanasi, members of a forum named after PM Narendra Modi have approached the Mandya district administration in Karnataka, seeking permission for Hindus to offer prayers at a mosque, which they claimed stands over the ruins of a Hanuman temple.

Built around 1782 during the rule of Tipu Sultan, Jamia Masjid in Srijangapatna is a heritage site being maintained by Archaeological Survey of India. It also runs a Madrassa. Narendra Modi Vichar Manch state secretary CT Manjunath, who was part of the delegation, met the Mandya Deputy Commissioner and submitted a memorandum, seeking permission to allow Hindus to offer prayers there.

"Documentary evidence of Tipu Sultan writing to a ruler in Persia, admitting that there was a Hanuman temple before the mosque was built; along with Hindu inscriptions on the pillars and walls support our stand. We request the administration to allow Hindus to offer prayers at the mosque." ENS

DEFENCE ESTATES OFFICER, AGRA CIRCLE, AGRA CANTT.

NOTICE INVITING E-AUCTION
E-auction for the disposal of scrap material (old disused material) at DEO Agra Circle

Online Bids (E-Auction) are invited on behalf of Defence Estates Officer, Agra Circle from the eligible Individuals/Agencies/Organization/Firms etc. for Awarding the Contract for the disposal of scrap material (old disused material) at DEO Agra Circle. Terms of contract is ten days from date of issue of work order. Manual bids/offers will not be accepted. The interested contractors/firms may look up the website (<https://eauction.gov.in/eauction>) No conditional tenders will be accepted. The Defence Estates officer reserves the right to cancel or withdraw the tender without any notice and the Defence Estates officer decision in the regard will be final. Terms/Conditions, eligibility criteria and connected details can be seen in the website - (<https://eauction.gov.in/eauction>). Clarification needed, if any may be enquired/clarified in pre-bid meeting or from the office on any working day from technical section o/o DEO Agra telephonically 0562-2225457.

Sl. No.	Activity	Date	Time in IST
i)	Date of Publication	17.05.2022	At 10:00 HRS
ii)	Start Date and Time for downloading of auction documents from http://eauction.gov.in/eauction/app .	17.05.2022	At 10:00 HRS
iii)	Submission Start date and time	17.05.2022	At 16:00 HRS
iv)	Submission End date and time	06.06.2022	At 13:00 HRS
v)	Technical Evaluation Start Date and time	06.06.2022	At 14:00 HRS
vi)	Technical Evaluation End Date and time	07.06.2022	At 17:00 HRS
vii)	Auction Start Date	08.06.2022	At 10:00 HRS
viii)	Auction End Date	08.06.2022	At 17:00 HRS

The bidder may download the "Auction Document" and other terms and conditions as available on the website of <https://eauction.gov.in/eauction>.

-sd-
Defence Estates Officer
Agra Circle, Agra Cantt.



Photographs of Taj Mahal's underground cells as shared in the ASI newsletter. Courtesy ASI

Ahead of court order on Taj, ASI released photos of underground cells

DIVYAA
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

JUST SIX days ago, as the controversy over the 22 locked rooms in the basement of the Taj Mahal was raging — inside the courtroom and outside — the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) released some photographs of these cells.

On May 12, the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court had rejected a petition seeking a fact-finding inquiry into the "history" of the Taj Mahal and also opening of the doors of its "22 rooms" to see "the truth, whatever it is".

The writ petition was filed in the Lucknow bench by Rajneesh Singh, media in-charge of the BJP's Ayodhya unit, contending that the Taj Mahal was a Shiva Temple known as Tejo Mahalaya, asking for the government to

constitute a fact-finding committee to publish the "real history" of the monument.

After the court order, ASI officials had maintained that there is no secret in those rooms, they are just part of the structure, and are not unique to the Taj Mahal. "The work of maintenance of underground cells on the river side was taken up. Decayed and disintegrated lime plaster was removed and replaced by laying of lime plaster and traditional lime processing before application," said accompanying text, while four photographs of the basement cells, "before and after" conversation, were published alongside in the organisation's newsletter.

Even as ASI officials insist the "January newsletter has been in the public domain ever since", it was released by the agency on its website on May 5 and tweeted on its official handle on May 9.

2018 NSE MANIPULATION CASE

In order against bail, a Dylan refrain: money doesn't talk... it swears

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

MONEY HAS a pervasive influence on people, a Delhi court has said, using lyrics of a Bob Dylan song in its detailed order denying bail to NSE's former managing director Chitra Ramkrishna and former group operating officer Anand Subramanian in a 2018 case of bourse manipulation.

"Bob Dylan once said 'money doesn't talk, it swears', which is a song of 1964 album 'It's Alright Ma I'm Only Bleeding' Special Judge Sanjeev Aggarwal wrote in the 42-page order. "... means that money not only has influence, but it has great influence, even a perverse influence on people."

The judge said Ramkrishna prima facie appeared to have been running the affairs of the NSE "akin to that of a private club".

Spelling out the reasons for denying bail, the court said that since the duo had held a pole position at the NSE, their chances of tampering with evidence and influencing witnesses cannot be ruled out.

While commenting on the country's leading stock exchange, the judge said the financial world, including Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs), "are waiting with bated breath for the NSE to redeem itself, so that they can fly to this country for investment in

droves, which is at present, a brilliant destination for investment."

"With regard to affairs of NSE at the relevant time, it would not be out of place to observe herein that there comes a time in a lifetime of an institution, where it finds itself at crossroads, then it should take a path which is a right path to restore its glory, rather than burying the skeletons, which may later turn into Frankenstein monsters," court said.

The 2018 case pertains to charges of preferential access to the trading system to some brokers through the co-location facility, where brokers can buy "rack space" for their servers at NSE, early login and "dark fibre", which can allow a trader split-second faster access to the data feed of the exchange. Even a split-second edge is considered capable of bringing huge gains to a trader.

According to the Securities and Exchange Board of India, several key decisions taken by Ramkrishna during her tenure as NSE's MD and CEO from 2013 to 2016, including Subramanian's appointment, were guided by an unidentified yogi "who may be largely dwelling in the Himalayan Ranges". Ramkrishna is alleged to have shared confidential information about the bourse with the "Himalayan Yogi".

The CBI has told the court the "Himalayan Yogi" was none but Subramanian himself.

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1	Providing Managerial, Technical and Clerical manpower etc.	Annual Rate Contract	Verka Mohali Dairy Ph No. 0172-2271754, 020, 5039350-351	100/-	50,000/-	20.05.2022 from 3:00 PM	06.06.2022 up to 5:00 PM	Technical bid 07.06.2022 at 3:00 PM Financial bid 17.06.2022 at 3:00 PM
2	Hiring of Diesel cars (Brezza, Swift Dzire, Bolero, Equivalent) at Milk Union, Bathinda for, Moc Bhihi, Sarbajgan, Sale Depot, Marketing and Procurement.	3 No's	Verka Bathinda Dairy Ph No. (0154-2214825,2212825)	500/-	10,000/- each vehicle	18.05.2022 from 5:00 PM	06.06.2022 up to 5:00 PM	Technical bid 07.06.2022 at 12:00 PM
3	Annual rate contract for Operation, Repair, maintenance of pouch packing machines (Milk, Lassi, Dahi), online coding machines, photocellsens ors and crate washers at Verka Amritsar Dairy.	Annual Contract	Verka Amritsar Dairy Ph. 73555-96892, 73555-48163	1000/-	50,000/-	24.05.2022 from 3:00 PM	09.06.2022 up to 4:00 PM	Technical bid 10.06.2022 at 11:00 AM Financial bid 10.06.2022 at 3:00 PM
4	Steam Coal having Calorific Value not less than 5500 Kcal/Kg (200 MT per month)	1000 MT	Verka Jalandhar Dairy Ph. 73555-56749, 73556-01750	500/-	2,00,000/-	24.05.2022 from 3:00 PM	13.06.2022 up to 2:00 PM	14.06.2022 at 11:00 AM
5	Hiring maintenance engineer and instrument technician for spray dryer milk powder plant capacity 25 MTPD at Verka Jalandhar Dairy	One job	-do-	500/-	40,000/-	24.05.2022 from 3:00 PM	13.06.2022 up to 2:00 PM	14.06.2022 at 11:00 AM
6	Hiring of insulated vehicles for supply of packed milk and fresh milk products for Ludhiana city and adjoining towns	One year with extension up to one year	Verka Ludhiana Dairy Ph. 0161-5203300, 5203301, 5203334	500/-	50,000/-	18.05.2022 from 11:00 AM	06.06.2022 up to 12:30 PM	Technical bid 07.06.2022 at 11:00 AM Financial bid 15.06.2022 at 11:00 AM
7	Annual rate contract for Transportation of finished Cattle Feed, Mineral Feed Mixtures and UML to various stations of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan	-01-04 Trucks of 10 MTs Capacity an average per day -05-07 Trucks of 20 MTs/25 MTs Capacity an average per day, which can be increasing/decreasing as per demand	Verka Cattle Feed Plant, Khanna Ph.No. 01629-521450,51,52	200/-	100,000/-	18.05.2022 from 11:00 AM	28.05.2022 up to 12:30 PM	28.05.2022 at 1:00 PM
8	Chromium Propionate (Chromium: 4% Min.)	1kh 1MT	-do-	200/- Each	20,000/-	20.05.2022 onwards	03.06.2022 up to 3:00 PM	04.06.2022 at 11:00 AM
9	Cobalt Sulphate Cobalt : 20 % Min.	1 MT	-do-	-do-	40,000/-	-do-	-do-	-do-
10	Magnesium Chloride -Assay: Not less than 98% -Ph: 5% Solution: 4.5-7.0	6 MT	-do-	-do-	10,000/-	-do-	-do-	-do-
11	Zinc Sulphate Zn: 33% Min.	35 MT	-do-	-do-	1,00,000/-	-do-	-do-	-do-
12	Calcium Chloride -Assay: 90-95% -Ph: (200g/l)=7	18 MT	-do-	-do-	40,000/-	-do-	-do-	-do-
13	Copper Sulphate Cu: 24% Min.	10 MT	-do-	-do-	1,00,000/-	-do-	-do-	-do-
14	Formaldehyde Solution (with drum) 37-40 %	35 MT	-do-	-do-	30,000/-	-do-	-do-	-do-
15	Manganese Sulphate 32% Min.	1.8 MT	-do-	-do-	20,000/-	-do-	-do-	-do-
16	Ferrous Sulphate/Iron Sulphate 30 % Min.	5 MT	-do-	-do-	10,000/-	-do-	-do-	-do-
17	EDDI -EDDI Iodine 80% Min. -Pb (lead) 10 ppm Max.	1 MT	-do-	-do-	1,00,000/-	-do-	-do-	-do-
18	Ammonium Sulphate -Moisture % (by mass) 5% Max -Total Nitrogen % (by mass) 20 % Min. -Sulphur 22 % Min.	800 MT	-do-	-do-	5,00,000/-	-do-	-do-	-do-

Bidders shall have to pay required Tender Processing fee through online mode only i.e. through debit/credit card for getting registered for e-tendering system. EMD should be made only through online mode i.e. Credit/Debit card, NEFT/RTGS, Internet Banking. For participating in the above e-tender, the parties shall have to get themselves registered with our e-tendering portal i.e. eproc.punjab.gov.in and get USER ID and Password well in time. For downloading tender through e-tendering, process flow, please contact e-Procurement help desk on given Nos. 0172-2970263, 2970264 immediately so that process of timely registration and downloading the tender is completed in time by the date of tender opening. For additional details regarding e-tendering please visit website eproc.punjab.gov.in. Tender processing Fees is Non-Refundable.

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If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com

TELLING NUMBERS

Alcohol consumption in India: trends across states, age groups

ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION among both men and women is higher in rural India than in urban India, the National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5), 2019-21 has found. Overall, 1% of women aged 15 and over drink alcohol, compared to 19% of men in the same age group. This breaks up into 1.6% (rural) and 0.6% (urban) among women, and 19.9% and 16.5% respectively among men.

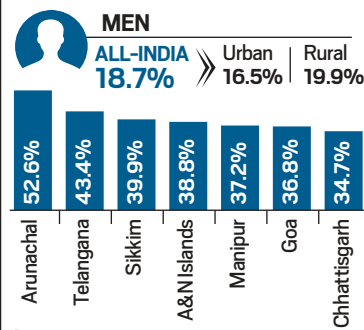
Of all states, Arunachal Pradesh has the highest proportion of both men (53%) and women (24%) who drink alcohol. Among women, Arunachal Pradesh is followed by Sikkim (16%); among men, it is followed by Telangana (43%). Besides Arunachal and Telangana, alcohol consumption among men is higher (40% and above) in upper Brahmaputra region of Assam, districts in Jharkhand and Bastar region of Chhattisgarh, and the Chhota Nagpur region of Jharkhand and Odisha.

The level of alcohol consumption among men is 30-40% in parts of Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, and a few districts of Odisha. It is below 30% in the remaining parts of India, and the lowest in Lakshadweep (0.4%).

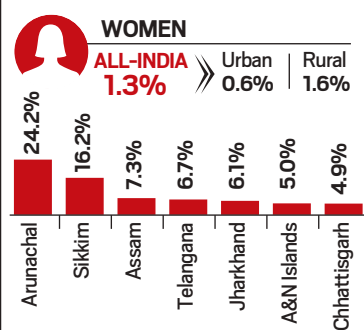
Alcohol consumption is more common among those from the Scheduled Tribes than from any other caste/tribe groups; this is true of both women (6% consumption among STs) and men (33%). Among religious groups, the proportion of men who drink alcohol is higher among those belonging to "other religions" (47%) than among those belonging to the Hindu (20%), Muslim (5%), Christian (28%), Sikh (23.5%), Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist (24.5%) and Jain (5.9%) religions.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

% of population aged 15 and over who currently drink alcohol, as reported



Lowest consumption: Lakshadweep 0.4%, Gujarat 5.8%, J&K 8.7%, Rajasthan 11.0%, Maharashtra 13.9%, UP 14.5%



Lowest consumption: Kerala 0.2%, J&K 0.2%. In 9 states/UTs, alcohol consumption among women is 0.3%.

Source: NFHS-5

THIS WORD MEANS

PROTECTED MOBILITY VEHICLES

Army has floated an RFI for such vehicles. What protection do they provide, and where will they be deployed?

THE ARMY last floated a request for information (RFI) to purchase Protected Mobility Vehicles (PMV) for high-altitude areas above 4,000 m, and for deserts and plains. After getting responses, it is expected to float a request for proposal (RFP) in November, followed by trials.

PURPOSE: The PMV is a wheeled armoured personnel carrier. It provides troops protection from mine blasts and sudden attacks with small arms.

WHAT ARMY WANTS: The RFI specifies that the RMVs should be able to carry ten personnel in addition to the driver and co-driver with each person carrying a combat load of not less than 30 kg. The PMVs should have ballistic protection and provide protection from grenade and mine blasts. They should have a maximum speed of 90 kph on road and 40 kph on cross-country terrain, and be able to operate in temperature range of 40°C to -15°C in high-altitude areas, and be able to ford in water at a depth of 1,000 mm, it said. The Army wants the RMVs to have a weapon mount to enable a 7.62 mm Light Machine Gun (LMG) to be fitted, and 11 firing ports — five on either side and one at the rear.



An Infantry Protected Mobility Vehicle jointly developed by TASL and DRDO. Indian Army

WHERE IT'S MADE: India has the capability of producing PMVs. Last month, the Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) handed over the first Infantry Protected Mobility Vehicle (IPMV) to then Chief of Army Staff, Gen MM Naravane. TASL, the first Indian private sector company to produce such carriers, has developed the IPMV in collaboration with the DRDO. These are produced at the TASL's Pune establishment.

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SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

The Places of Worship Act

Today, the Supreme Court will hear an appeal against the video survey of Varanasi's Gyanvapi mosque. A Muslim body says the survey violates a 1991 law. What is this law, and what has the SC said about it earlier?

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G. NEW DELHI, MAY 16

THE SUPREME Court will on Tuesday hear a challenge to the order of a civil court in Varanasi directing a videographic survey of the Maa Shringar Gauri Sthal in the Kashi Vishwanath temple-Gyanvapi mosque complex.

The principal contention of the Committee of Management of Anjuman Intezamia Masjid, the organisation that has filed the appeal, is that the order of the Varanasi court — which was upheld by Allahabad High Court on April 21 — is "clearly interdicted" by The Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991.

What are the Places of Worship Act, and what are its provisions?

The long title describes it as "An Act to prohibit conversion of any place of worship and to provide for the maintenance of the religious character of any place of worship as it existed on the 15th day of August, 1947, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto."

Section 3 of the Act bars the conversion, in full or part, of a place of worship of any religious denomination into a place of worship of a different religious denomination — or even a different segment of the same religious denomination.

Section 4(1) declares that the religious character of a place of worship "shall continue to be the same as it existed" on August 15, 1947. Section 4(2) says any suit or legal proceeding with respect to the conversion of the religious character of a place of worship existing on August 15, 1947, pending before any court, shall abate — and no fresh suit or legal proceedings shall be instituted.

The proviso to this subsection saves suits, appeals and legal proceedings that are pending on the date of commencement of the Act, if they pertain to the conversion of the religious character of a place of worship after the cut-off date.

Section 5 stipulates that the Act shall not apply to the Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri Masjid case, and to any suit, appeal or proceeding relating to it.

At least two petitions challenging the Act — filed by Lucknow-based Vishwa Bhadra



The Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi. In the foreground is the shikhara of the Kashi Vishwanath temple. Renuka Puri/Express Archive

Pujari Purohit Mahasangh and some followers of Sanatan Vedic Religion, and advocate Ashwini Upadhyay — are pending before the Supreme Court. The law has been challenged on the ground that it bars judicial review, which is a basic feature of the Constitution, imposes an "arbitrary irrational retrospective cutoff date", and abridges the right to religion of Hindus, Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs.

The court issued notice on Upadhyay's petition in March 2021, but the Centre is yet to file its reply.

Under what circumstances was the 1991 law enacted, and how did the government justify it?

The Act was brought by the Congress government of Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao at a time when the Ram temple movement was at its peak. The Babri Masjid was still standing, but L K Advani's *nath yatra*, his arrest in Bihar, and the firing on *kar sevaks* in Uttar Pradesh had raised communal tensions.

Moving the Bill in Parliament, then Home Minister S B Chavan said: "It is considered necessary to adopt these measures in view of the controversies arising from time to time with regard to conversion of places of worship which tend to vitiate the communal atmosphere... Adoption of this Bill will effectively prevent any new controversies from arising in respect of conversion of any place of worship..."

What has the BJP said about the Places of Worship Act and the Kashi Vishwanath temple-Gyanvapi mosque dispute?

The main opposition BJP opposed the Bill. Then MP Uma Bharti said "maintenance of *status quo* as in 1947 in respect of religious places is like closing eyes similar to that of pigeons against advancement of cats. This... will mean preservation of tensions for the coming generations". She referred to the Kashi Vishwanath temple-Gyanvapi mosque dispute: "Was not the intention of Aurangzeb behind leaving remnants of the temple (he destroyed) at the site of mosque, to keep reminding Hindus of their historical fate and to remind coming generations of Muslims of their past glory and power?"

During the movement for the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, the VHP-BJP often spoke of "liberating" the temples at Varanasi and Mathura as well. A popular slogan of the time was, "Ayodhya toh bas jhaanki hai, Kashi Mathura baaki hai" (Ayodhya is just a preview, Kashi and Mathura are yet to come)."

After the Supreme Court's unanimous 2019 verdict giving the disputed land in

Ayodhya to Hindus, however, the RSS sought to distance itself from demands for similar movements in Varanasi and Mathura. Ayodhya was an "exception", it said.

Responding to specific questions on the issue, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat told reporters: "The Sangh is not associated with any movement, it is associated with human development. Because of a historical backdrop, the Sangh got associated with this (Ramjanmabhoomi) movement as an organisation. It is an exception. Now we will again be associated with human development and this movement will not remain of concern to us."

What did the Supreme Court say about the Places of Worship Act in its Ayodhya judgment?

The constitutional validity of the 1991 Act was not under challenge, nor had it been examined before the Supreme Court Bench that heard the Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri Masjid title suit. Even so, the court, while disagreeing with certain conclusions drawn by the Allahabad High Court about the Act, made specific observations in its support.

"In providing a guarantee for the preservation of the religious character of places of public worship as they existed on 15 August 1947 and against the conversion of places of public worship, Parliament determined that independence from colonial rule furnishes a constitutional basis for healing the injustices of the past by providing the confidence to every religious community that their places of worship will be preserved and that their character will not be altered," the court said.

"The law addresses itself to the State as much as to every citizen of the nation... The State, has by enacting the law, enforced a constitutional commitment and operationalised its constitutional obligations to uphold the equality of all religions and secularism which is a part of the basic features of the Constitution. The Places of Worship Act imposes a non-derogable obligation towards enforcing our commitment to secularism under the Indian Constitution. The law is hence a legislative instrument designed to protect the secular features of the Indian polity, which is one of the basic features of the Constitution... The Places of Worship Act is... a legislative intervention which preserves non-retrogression as an essential feature of our secular values."

EVERYDAY AGRICULTURE

Fair & average quality wheat: norms, relaxation

ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA JALANDHAR MAY 16

THE CENTRE on Sunday relaxed the Fair and Average Quality (FAQ) norms for wheat in the ongoing rabi marketing season in Punjab, Haryana, and Chandigarh by a factor of three, raising the permissible limit of "shrivelled and broken grains" to 18% from the existing 6%. Unseasonal heat in March, when the rabi crop goes through its grain-filling stage, has led to shrivelling, making the grain unfit for procurement as per the usual quality norms.

Procurement norms

Every year, before procurement begins in this region in April, the Storage and Research division of the Department of Food & Public Distribution in the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, notifies specifications to ensure the quality of the procured wheat. This year, wheat con-

taining up to 0.75% foreign matter, 2% damaged grain, 4% slightly damaged grain, 6% shrivelled and broken grain, and 12% moisture was cleared for procurement.

The specifications are implemented at the time of procurement by personnel from the quality control wing of the Food Corporation of India (FCI).

Grain that looks good

FAQ wheat is fully developed, and has a proper lustre. The main varieties are golden or pale yellow, the grain is not dark, and it does not have any streaks. It is properly dry, and meets all nutritional conditions, the values of which are tested in the lab in case of doubt.

"If a layman takes a handful of wheat and finds the grain is shiny and beautiful, it would usually mean that the wheat meets FAQ," an FCI quality control inspector said. The QC wing conducts physical and chemical analyses during the procurement process, and on the stored crop, the inspector said.



FAQ specifies texture, colour and content of wheat grain. Express Archive

Previous relaxations

The government has in the past relaxed norms for moisture content and loss of lustre following heavy rain during the harvesting season, when ripe crops were flattened, and the grain turned blackish. This is the first time, however, that such a major relaxation has been

allowed for shrivelled grain, FCI officials said. They could not recall a previous relaxation for shrivelled grain of more than perhaps 1-2%.

Is the wheat bad?

The relaxation of procurement parameters to "reduce the hardship of farmers and avoid distress sale of wheat" does not mean the quality of the grain is bad. "The grains are smaller in size, but there is no loss of quality. The quality control wings of both FCI and the government have carried out several tests on the shrivelled grain, and found only weight loss, not a loss of quality," a senior FCI officer said, adding that this wheat will now be called "Under Relaxed Specifications (URS) wheat" instead of FAQ.

Several senior scientists at Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, also said the shrivelling has caused only loss of yield and lower milling recovery, not deterioration of quality or nutritional value, and the protein content of the grain remains intact.

What Bilawal's US visit means for Pakistan's relations with the West

NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN NEW DELHI, MAY 16

BILAWAL BHUTTO ZARDARI, Foreign Minister of Pakistan in the new "unity government" of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, is scheduled Monday to leave on a visit to the United States. It is expected that the visit will repair ties between the two countries, which have been in limbo for over a year, and which reached a low with former Prime Minister Imran Khan's accusations that the Biden Administration was behind his ouster.

Pakistan and US

Given the military-security establishment's stakes in Pakistan's foreign relations, the spadework for the 33-year-old's first solo official visit abroad as Foreign Minister was done by ISI Director-General Lt General Nadeem Anjum, who was in Washington last week and held meetings with US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan and CIA head William J Burns.

The two visits are the first high-level contact between the two sides since last

September, when Pakistan's then National Security Adviser Moeed Yusuf and ISI chief Faiz Hameed got a cold reception while visiting Washington following Imran Khan's rhetoric, especially his description of US troops' departure from Afghanistan as Afghans "breaking the shackles of slavery".

An urgent reset in the ties is important from Pakistan's point of view. The military-security establishment has deep historical ties with its counterparts in the US. It does not want to lose this. Also, repairing ties with the US could help Pakistan regain influence over the Taliban in Afghanistan as its interlocutor with the West.

The new civilian regime needs assistance from Western-led lenders as it looks to repair a crumbling economy. Pakistan has not seen that money is no longer on tap from the Gulf countries. The Chinese too have been reluctant to lend any more to Pakistan for fear that it will not be able to repay, reportedly refusing a \$6-bn loan for a CPEC power project recently.

For the US, the new government in Islamabad provides an opportunity to get back into a region that it exited in August 2021 after handing over Afghanistan to the

Taliban. Concern has grown that IS-K is now established in the mix of terror groups operating in Afghanistan, and the term "Af-pak" is back in vogue in the US. Pakistan's hold over the Taliban was never complete, and is less so now. But the US believes that Pakistan could still provide essential help to stabilise the country, which in turn would help the US secure its interests at a time when Washington's focus is on Ukraine.

After four years without one, the US named an Ambassador in Islamabad in February this year. Pakistan's controversial appointee, Sardar Masood Khan, took charge only a couple of months ago when the Biden Administration greenlighted the appointment after a four-month wait.

Coming of age

Bhutto is travelling to New York at the invitation of Secretary of State Anthony Blinken for a foreign ministers' meeting on world food security being hosted by the US and UN in the context of the war in Ukraine, but the two are expected to hold bilateral

discussions on the sidelines.

While the Pakistan establishment expects the young Oxford-educated foreign minister to make an impression in Washington, the visit is also an opportunity for Bhutto, who has to lead the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) into a general election within months, to demonstrate to both the *jiyals* (as loyal PPP workers are called) and the sceptics that he can wear the mantle of Benazir Bhutto and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

Ever since Zulfikar Ali Bhutto turned his stints as foreign minister (to President Ayub Khan, and later, from 1971 to 1977) into grand international theatre tuned to domestic political constituencies, the Foreign Ministry is where ambitious politicians have hoped to grow as they cut their teeth on Pakistan's tricky civil-military equations.

Bhutto's charge as Foreign Minister comes at a time when Pakistan's diplomacy, not just with the US, but with the entire Western world, is in disarray.

Imran Khan's ill-timed visit to Moscow on the day Russian President Vladimir



IN FACT

The China equation

Even as it gets on with resetting ties with the US, Pakistan is keen not to give any wrong signals to China. Bhutto has pledged not to allow anyone to harm Pakistan's "iron-clad friendship" with China, and promised that those behind the suicide attack at Karachi University, which killed three Chinese nationals and their Pakistani assistant, would be brought to book.

According to a report in *Dawn*, quoting a statement from the Prime Minister's Office, PM Sharif held a "comprehensive" telephone call with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang on Monday during which he affirmed the government's "firm resolve" to fast-track China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects. "He also reiterated that Pakistan attached the highest importance to the safety, security and protection of all Chinese nationals working in Pakistan on economic projects and institutions..." *Dawn* said.

Some reports suggest that immediately after returning from his US trip, Bhutto will travel to Beijing on the invitation of Wang Yi, with whom he has already held a virtual meeting.

TOP OF THE WORLD



US President Joe Biden.

USA

Biden acts to deploy troops to Somalia

Washington: President Joe Biden signed an order on Monday to redeploy hundreds of US troops to Somalia to counter the Islamic extremist rebel group al-Shabab. US troops will be repositioned from elsewhere in Africa to train and provide other support to Somali forces in their fight against al-Shabab, which is considered the largest and wealthiest affiliate of the al-Qaeda extremist organisation. The decision to station forces again in Somalia, rather than rotate them in and out, is intended "to maximise the safety and effectiveness of our forces and enable them to provide more efficient support to our partners," National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said in announcing the redeployment. **AP**

LEBANON

Early results: Hezbollah sees election losses

Beirut: Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group and its allies appear to have suffered losses in this weekend's parliamentary elections with preliminary results Monday showing their strongest opponents picking up more seats and some of their traditional partners routed out of the legislature. Despite the apparent setback, Hezbollah and its main Shia ally, the Amal group of Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, are likely to retain the 27 seats allocated to the sect. It was not clear, however, whether the Iran-backed group and its allies would hang on to the majority they have held since 2018. **AP**

UK

4 men infected with monkeypox in London

London: British health authorities say they have identified four "rare and unusual" cases of the disease monkeypox among men who appear to have been infected in London and had no history of travel to the African countries where the smallpox-like disease is endemic. In a statement Monday, the UK's Health Security Agency said an investigation had begun into how the men became infected and whether they had any links to each other. Three of the men are in London and one is in northeast England. Last week, Britain reported three earlier cases of monkeypox. **AP**

NEPAL

In a first, Britisher scales Everest for 16th time

Kathmandu: Kenton Cool, a 48-year-old British national, has scaled the world's highest peak Mount Everest for the 16th time, becoming the first non-Nepalese to do so, a media report said on Monday. Cool, who hails from Gloucestershire, a county in South West England, reached the top of Mount Everest for the 16th time early on Sunday morning. *The Guardian* reported, citing the Instagram page of Cool. **PTI**

ERDOGAN OPPOSES NORDIC MOVE, MACRON SHOWS SUPPORT

Putin appears to back off threats as Sweden decides to join NATO

AGENCIES

STOCKHOLM/KYIV, MAY 16

VLADIMIR PUTIN appeared to climb down on Monday from Russia's objections to Sweden and Finland joining NATO, saying Moscow had no issues with them entering the US-led military alliance they now aim to join in reaction to his invasion of Ukraine.

Though the Russian leader said Moscow would take action if NATO were to move more troops or hardware onto the territory of its new members - steps Finland and Sweden have both already ruled out - he said NATO's expansion itself was not a threat. "As far as expansion goes, including new members Finland and Sweden, Russia has no problems with these states - none. And so in this sense there is no immediate threat to Russia from an expansion to include these countries," Putin said.

The comments came after Sweden on Monday decided to join Finland in seeking NATO membership. "Russia has said that it will take countermeasures if we join NATO," she said. "We cannot rule out that Sweden will be exposed to, for instance, disinformation and attempts to intimidate and divide us," the PM said.

Putin, however, had stated that, "The expansion of military infrastructure into this territory would certainly provoke our response. What that (response) will be - we will see what threats are created for us." "Problems are being created for no reason at all. We shall react accordingly."

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said on Monday that Swedish and Finnish delegations should not bother coming to Ankara to convince it to approve their NATO bid. President Emmanuel Macron of France welcomed Finland and Sweden's decision to apply for NATO membership, saying in a statement that their accession would reinforce security for "Europe as a whole."

A resident next to a flooded area after Ukrainian military forces opened a dam to flood a residential area to stop advance of Russian forces to Kyiv on Sunday. **Reuters**

MCDONALD'S RETREATS FROM MOSCOW

Russian forces fall back in northeast Ukraine

REUTERS

RUSKA LOZOVA, MAY 16

UKRAINIAN TROOPS have pushed Russian forces back from the northeastern city of Kharkiv and some have advanced as far as the border with Russia, Ukrainian officials said on Monday.

The developments, if confirmed, would signal a further shift in momentum in favour of Ukraine. And in another setback for Putin, McDonald's Corp, the world's largest fast food chain, said it was pulling out of Russia because of the conflict. The world's largest burger chain, which owns about 84% of its nearly 850 restaurants in Russia, will take a related non-cash charge of up to \$1.4 billion following its sale.

On the battlefields near Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, interior ministry adviser Vadym Denisenko said

Ukrainian troops were mounting a counter-offensive. "It can no longer be stopped... Thanks to this, we can go to the rear of the Russian group of forces," he said.

Ukraine's defence ministry said on Monday the 227th Battalion of the 127th Brigade of Ukraine's Territorial Defence Forces had reached the border with Russia. The governor of the Luhansk region in Donbas, Serhiy Gaidai, said the situation "remains difficult", with Russian forces trying to capture the town of Sievierodonetsk.

Russia said on Monday that it had agreed to evacuate wounded Ukrainian soldiers from the bunkers below the besieged Azovstal steel works in Mariupol to a medical facility in the Russian-controlled town of Novoazovsk. "An agreement has been reached on the removal of the wounded," the Moscow defence ministry said in a statement.

EU to offer Kyiv new loans to plug urgent needs

FRANCESCO GUARASCIO

BRUSSELS, MAY 16

THE EUROPEAN Commission is set to propose on Wednesday a new package of financial aid to Ukraine, including new loans to provide immediate liquidity to Kyiv and commitments for the long-term financing of the country's reconstruction, officials said.

The size of the short-term financial support is still being defined but two officials familiar with the discussions told *Reuters* they expected it to roughly cover Ukraine's financial needs for two months, largely through loans.

A third official said the money would come from the EU budget and from EU governments, dismissing earlier talk that the funds could be raised in the market with the issuance of joint bonds backed by the EU budget.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimated in April that Ukraine needed around \$5 billion dollars a month for at least three months to plug the immediate financial shortfall caused by Russia's invasion.

The Fund's chief, Kristalina Georgieva, has called for this support to come in the form of grants rather than loans.

A spokesperson for the EU declined to comment on the new package. **REUTERS**

People wait in a queue to buy petrol at a closed fuel station in Colombo on Monday. **Reuters**

Sri Lanka down to last day of petrol, says PM

In first televised address, he says nation needs \$75 million forex to pay for imports

REUTERS & AP

COLOMBO, MAY 16

SRI LANKA'S new prime minister said on Monday the crisis-hit nation was down to its last day of petrol, as the country's power minister told citizens not to join the lengthy fuel queues that have galvanized weeks of anti-government protests.

Ranil Wickremesinghe said in his first televised address to the nation the country urgently needed \$75 million in foreign exchange to pay for essential imports. "At the moment, we only have petrol stocks for a single day. The next couple of months will be the most difficult ones of our lives," he said. "We must prepare ourselves to make some sacrifices and face the challenges of this period."

Two shipments of petrol and two of diesel using an Indian credit line could provide relief in the next few days, he added, but the country is also facing a shortage of 14 essential medicines.

"Request the public not to queue up or top up in the next three days until the 1,190 fuel station deliveries have been completed," Power Minister Kanachana

EXPLAINED

Crisis in nation

IN HIS ADDRESS, the PM said the country's financial health is so poor that the government has been forced to print money to pay the salaries. He said about \$75 billion is needed urgently to help provide people with essential items, but the country's treasury is struggling to find even \$1 billion.

Wijesekera said on Monday.

Wickremesinghe said "I have no desire to hide the truth and to lie to the public. Although these facts are unpleasant and terrifying, this is the true situation. For a short period, our future will be even more difficult than the tough times that we have passed." "We will face considerable challenges and adversity. However, this period will not be long," he said, adding that countries with which he has spoken have pledged to help in the next few months.

POLICE SAY WOULD-BE BOMBER ARRESTED

Pak: Foiled suicide attack against Chinese nationals along CPEC

ASIF SHAHZAD

ISLAMABAD, MAY 16

PAKISTANI POLICE arrested a would-be suicide bomber who planned to blow himself up near a convoy of Chinese nationals along the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a police statement said.

Monday's arrest came two weeks after a woman suicide bomber blew herself up on a university campus in the southern port city of Karachi, killing three Chinese teachers and their Pakistani driver. Police arrested the militant in southwestern Balochistan province that borders Afghanistan and Iran, the statement said.

She belongs to the separatist Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), which has started using women militants as suicide bombers, police said, a new phenomenon for counter-terrorism police who are more used to dealing with such attacks by Islamist militants. "The woman wanted

Shehbaz assures more security for Chinese citizens

Islamabad: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday assured China that his government is determined to take all necessary measures for the enhanced security and safety of Chinese nationals in Pakistan and affirmed his "firm resolve" to fast track projects under the \$60 billion CPEC. **PTI**

to target a convoy of Chinese nationals," police said, adding the attack was planned along a route of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Police recovered explosives and detonators from the woman and investigated her, revealing her plans to target Chinese nationals. No other evidence was produced to support their accusation. **REUTERS**

N Korea's Kim orders military to stabilise supply of Covid drugs

Seoul: Leader Kim Jong Un has ordered North Korea's military to stabilise distribution of Covid-19 medicine in the capital, Pyongyang, state media said.

Drugs procured by the state were not reaching people quickly, Kim told an emergency politburo meeting on Sunday, before visiting pharmacies near the capital's Taedong River, state news agency KCNA said.

Kim ordered immediate deployment of the "powerful forces" of the army's medical corps to "stabilise the supply of medicines in Pyongyang City", it added.

Among shortcomings were a lack of adequate drug storage, salespeople unacquainted with the proper sanitary clothing and hygiene falling short of standards, Kim said. He criticised the "irresponsible" work attitude, organisation and execution by the cabinet and the public health sector, it added. **REUTERS**

US deaths from Covid hit 1 mn

CORONAVIRUS CASES are spreading at an alarming rate across the US, particularly in the Northeast and the Midwest, as the country's death toll nears the one million mark.

An average of over 90,000 new cases are now being identified each day in the US, a 60 per cent increase from two weeks ago. And in much of the Northeast and Midwest, daily new-case reports have already surpassed the peak of last summer's Delta surge.

Hospitalisations are increasing across the country, though more slowly than new cases. The number of patients with coronavirus in American hospitals surpassed 21,000 over the past week, but still a 23 per cent rise from two weeks ago. Health officials across the Midwest are beginning to warn high-risk people to once again wear masks indoors and to get booster shots, as counties in several states move to higher-risk Covid-19 community levels. **NYT**

Imran's security beefed up after 'assassination' plot claims

Islamabad: The Pakistani government on Monday beefed up security for former PM Imran Khan, two days after he claimed that there was a plot to assassinate him, according to a media report.

Khan claimed on Saturday that a "conspiracy" to assassinate him was being hatched in Pakistan and abroad, warning that if anything happens to him, the people will come to know about the perpetrators through a video message he has recently recorded and placed in a safe place.

At Khan's residence in Bani Gala, 94 security officers will be deployed, of which, 22 men will be from the Islamabad police and 72 from the Frontier Constabulary, the report said, quoting the spokesperson of the interior ministry. **PTI**

BLOOD MOON DAZZLES NIGHT SKIES

The eclipse was visible for a large portion of the world, including those in the US, much of Europe and Africa, and parts of the Pacific. 'Blood moon' happens when the Earth's moon is in a total lunar eclipse. An associate astronomer at the Hayden Planetarium in New York estimated that 2.7 billion people could catch at least part of the eclipse, including viewers in Dresden, Germany, where the moon could be seen setting behind the dome of the Kunstgedmied on Monday. **AP**

PLAN REPRESENTS STEP TOWARD COUNTRY'S GOAL OF ACHIEVING NET-ZERO CARBON EMISSIONS BY 2050

New Zealand to help pay for cleaner cars to reduce emissions

NICK PERRY

WELLINGTON, MAY 16

NEW ZEALAND'S government said on Monday it will help pay for lower-income families to scrap their old gas guzzlers and replace them with cleaner hybrid or electric cars as part of a sweeping plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The government said it plans to spend 569 million New Zealand dollars (\$357 million) on the trial programme as part of a larger plan that includes subsidies for businesses to reduce emissions, a switch to an entirely green bus fleet by 2035 and curbside

food-waste collection for most homes by the end of the decade.

"This is a landmark day in our transition to a low emissions future," Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said in a statement. "We've all seen the recent reports on sea level rise and its impact right here in New Zealand. We cannot leave the issue of climate change until it's too late to fix."

The plan represents a step toward the pledges the nation made under the 2016 Paris Agreement on climate change and New Zealand's stated goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Ardern, who was scheduled to launch the plan but cancelled

An electric vehicle charging station and car share parking in Auckland. **AP**

after testing positive for Covid-19 late last week, said every community and sector had a role to play and that reducing reliance on fossil fuels would help shield households from volatile price hikes.

The plan also sets a target of reducing total car travel by 20% over the next 13 years by offering better transportation options in cities as well as improved options for cyclists and walkers.

The programmes will be paid for from a 4.5 billion New Zealand dollar (\$2.8 billion) climate emergency response fund. Officials said over time, money collected from polluters would pay for the programmes rather than taxes from households.

The most significant emissions reductions for the period ending December 31, 2025 will come in the energy, industrial and transport sectors, government documents said, adding every sector will have to play a role.

But the plan remained short on some details, including for the gas guzzler replacement plan which the government said would be finalised over the coming months. And some critics said it continued to give an easy ride to the nation's huge agriculture industry, which creates about half of the nation's total greenhouse gas emissions but is also vital to the economy as the nation's biggest export earner.

"Some of the policies announced, like the cash-for-clunkers system, are proven to be dogs and have been tried and failed overseas," said David Seymour, leader of the libertarian ACT Party. Seymour said consumers should be able to choose how they reduce emissions through the market-based emissions trading scheme.

According to Reuters report, the new Emissions Reduction Plan "delivers the greatest opportunity we've had in decades to address climate change but also move to a high wage, low emissions economy that provides greater economic security by creating jobs," Ardern said. **AP**



GOLD

₹49,754



RUPEE

₹77.44/USD



OIL

\$104.29



SILVER

₹59,452

Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market, gold per 10g, silver per 1 kg; Crude oil (Indian basket) as of May 12

SENSEX: 52,973.84 ▲ 180.22 (0.34%) NIFTY: 15,842.30 ▲ 60.15 (0.38%) NIKKEI: 26,547.05 ▲ 119.40 HANG SENG: 19,950.21 ▲ 51.44 FTSE: 7,410.64 ▼ 7.51 DAX: 13,926.59 ▼ 101.34

Note: Rupee figure as of Friday since forex market was shut on Monday on account of Buddha Purnima; international market data till 1900 IST

SECTOR WATCH
INSURANCE

Disclosure norms eased for foreign reinsurance branches, Lloyd's

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, MAY 16EXPLAINED
Where do they invest

IN A surprise move, the insurance regulator has relaxed the disclosure requirements of foreign reinsurance branches (FRBs) and Lloyd's India as part of "rationalisation of compliance" standards.

The regulator said FRBs and Lloyd's India are now exempted from disclosing financial details and underwriting performance through NL40 format. However, according to experts, the latest measures will lead to opaqueness in the functioning of reinsurance branches in India.

Irdai said FRBs and Lloyd's India need not publish the half yearly and annual revenue account, profit & loss account, balance sheet and analytical ratios as mandated in the captioned circular in the newspapers. "However, they may continue to publish a true and accurate abstract of the various returns for the purpose of publicity on a voluntary basis pursuant to provisions of Section 25 of the Insurance Act, 1938," it said.

FRBs and Lloyd's India provide reinsurance support to the direct insurers and the insurers do conduct their due diligence on the FRBs while entering reinsurance contracts with them, Irdai said. "The necessary information on financials is also made available through public disclosures on the respective website of the FRBs. Reinsurance business is B2B segment and the policyholders do not deal with the reinsurers," it said in a circular to the CEOs of insurance companies.

"Transparency is equally important. Discontinuing uploading NL40 appears to be a retrograde step in this era of transparency. Whether the FRBs in India have provided any significant advantage to the market as compared to the services rendered by international reinsurers who do not have a branch in India is a matter that requires frank study and analysis," said former Irdai Whole-time Member KK Srinivasan.

Traditionally, the FRBs and Lloyd's India do not invest in equity instruments and they mainly invest in government

FOREIGN REINSURANCE branches (FRBs) and Lloyd's India do not invest in equity instruments and they mainly invest in government securities and debt markets.

Based on the investment exposures of the branches of foreign reinsurers and Lloyd's India, Irdai has granted exemption to entities, whose investment policy does not permit the investment in equity, from the application of common stewardship code, disclosure requirements and returns.

The entities, whose investment policy allows equity investment but have not made any investment in equity, the code is applicable. However, a NIL return will be a sufficient compliance for the same, Irdai said. "Other entities have to comply with the prescribed requirements."

Irdai has dispensed with the Form NL 40 on disclosure of underwriting performance but advised insurers to file the said form to the Authority.

"In any case FRBs don't bring in any significant FDI in India unlike joint venture insurance or reinsurance companies incorporated in India. If the Ukraine war escalates, the threat of FRBs clamping up if India does not yield to the pressure of joining America and the western powers against Russia, is quite high. The role played by FRBs and the extent of our market dependence on them requires study and more critical monitoring," Srinivasan said.

"NL 40 gives some important ratios line of business wise. For FRBs preparation and uploading of NL 40 in their website is simple and easy. In this era of disclosure and transparency exempting FRBs from uploading NL 40 seems a hasty step," he said.

"The Authority has received representations on the rationalization of compliance requirements of FRBs as they are not directly dealing with the retail customers," Irdai said.

BROADLY, SOUTHERN STATES, EXCEPT TELANGANA, SEE LOWER-THAN-NATIONAL LEVEL RATE

Rural pinches more in high inflation states

AANCHAL MAGAZINE
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

AS RETAIL inflation surged to an 8-year high of 7.79 per cent in April, individual states recorded a divergent trend with southern states of Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, alongside Punjab and Delhi, seeing a perceptibly lower-than-national level inflation rate, while states such as Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Telangana, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Assam trending mostly above the national level.

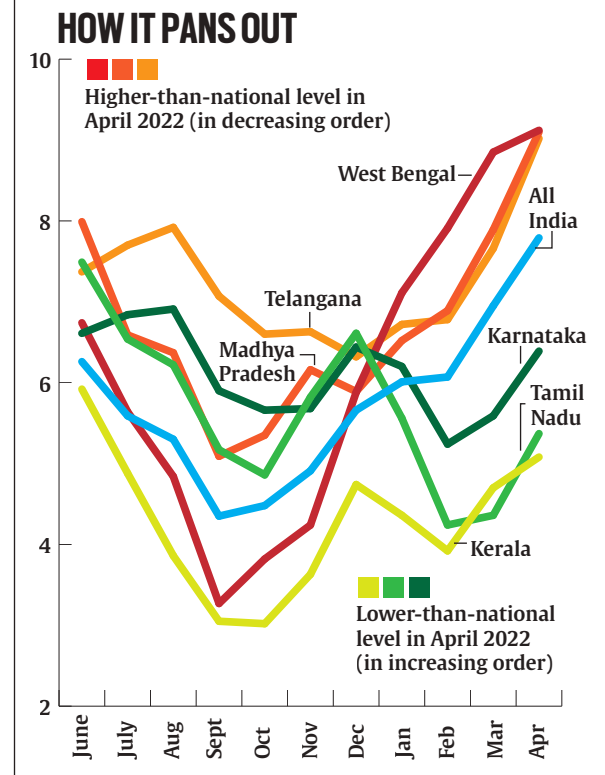
Retail inflation has persisted above the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) inflation target for the fourth straight month, with price levels rising to an 8-year high of 8.38 per cent in rural areas in April while urban inflation was at a 18-month high of 7.09 per cent. Incidentally, a number of states recording higher inflation rate over the national level are displaying a higher inflation trend in rural areas as against the urban areas.

Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation data for the last 11 months shows Kerala as the only state that has consistently remained below the all-India inflation level, while Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and Jammu & Kashmir have stayed above the national level all

throughout. States/UT such as Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Punjab and Delhi, which had remained above the national inflation level in at least five out of the last eleven months have now trended below the national level at least for the last three months. States such as West Bengal, Assam, Jharkhand, Rajasthan which had remained below the all-India inflation till December 2021 have now picked up pace to rise above the national level in the last three months (four months for Jharkhand).

Possible reasons include the cushion of subsidies routed through the public distribution system across income levels in some of the southern states. Also, states with lower urbanisation rates end up spending more on food and fuel, while those with more urban areas end up spending a higher share on services.

The disaggregated data reveals that most of these states, which have a higher inflation rate over the national level, are displaying a higher inflation trend in rural areas as against the urban areas. West Bengal has seen double-digit rural inflation over the last two months while rural inflation in Assam has also topped the national level over the last three months even as urban inflation remains below the national level.



Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Haryana, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Jammu & Kashmir too have recorded a higher rural than urban inflation in last 3 months at least.

Inflation rates for April-May 2021 were not considered, as the

government only provided state-wise indices and not inflation rates since all-India indices for these two months were imputed in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Among states, the highest weight in CPI is of Maharashtra (13.18 per

cent), followed by Uttar Pradesh (12.37 per cent), Tamil Nadu (7.25 per cent) and West Bengal (7.09 per cent). "The first set of shocks to inflation have been broadly felt through food and fuel. Typically, poorer parts have a higher proportionate spending on food. About 60-80 per cent of the total spending in states with less urban areas or lower incomes would be on food, fuel, health and education. At the margin, there could also have been logistics-related shocks. Southern India, which has a higher per capita income than the national average could be spending more on services," Rahul Bajoria, chief economist, Barclays, said.

The decision to not reduce Value Added Tax on fuel in some of these states could also be an additional factor for higher fuel inflation. Services, as per the latest CPI data, have gained sharply with miscellaneous goods and services jumping to a 115-month high of 8.03 per cent in April and household goods and services rising to a 105-month high of 7.97 per cent.

There could also be the cushion of subsidies routed through the public distribution system seen across income levels in some of the southern states, especially on food items that constitute a big chunk of CPI inflation weightage. "States such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu have a strong public distribution

system, wherein subsidised food may be helping cushion the impact of higher food prices," Devendra Kumar Pant, chief economist, India Ratings, said.

"Items which have price sensitivities to substitutes are gaining such as ghee prices that have been moving up, with upward movement in prices of cooking oil. Also, chicken prices have gained as feedstock prices have gone up globally and after a supply-scare was seen in Andhra Pradesh, which is the hub for meat, poultry and pisciculture. Fruit prices also gained to 8.4 per cent in April as against our expectation of 7.4 per cent, which could be seen as a result of the heat wave," Bajoria said.

Wheat, protein items (chicken in particular), milk, lemon, cooked meal, chillies, refined oil, potato, chillies, kerosene, firewood, gold and LPG are contributing to overall inflation in a substantive manner, an SBI Research report said.

"Kerosene has seen a sharp spike, almost 35-40 per cent month-on-month increase. Household use is limited and mainly used for industrial purposes. There has been a massive drop in kerosene consumption over last 10 years but since it is not subsidised in most parts, any price movement gets reflected substantially in inflation," Bajoria said. Full report on www.indianexpress.com

LIC to list today: GMP in negative

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, MAY 16

SHARES OF Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) will be listed on the stock exchanges on Tuesday, slated to be the country's largest, amid worries about market volatility and listing performance of the corporation.

Despite gloomy sentiment, the offer got better-than-expected subscriptions figures. "Unofficial grey market premium (GMP) is trading down into the negative territory mainly on the back of depressed global markets which are in the bearish zone since Russia-Ukraine war," said Prashanth Tapse, vice president (research), Mehta Equities Ltd.

"Everything depends on market conditions... market discount indicates that the stock may be listed at a moderate to discounted price. However, we expect a listing with a 7 per cent discount to a 3 per cent premium," said Ravi Singhal, vice chairman, GCL securities Ltd. Full report on www.indianexpress.com

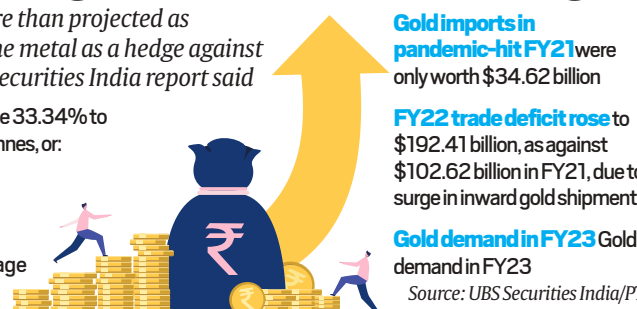
'Spiraling inflation may boost gold demand among households as a hedge'

Gold demand may rise more than projected as households may snap up the metal as a hedge against spiralling inflation, a UBS Securities India report said

GOLD IMPORTS IN FY22 rose 33.34% to \$46.14 billion in FY22 to 837 tonnes, or:

1.5 times above pandemic low in FY21

12% more than pre-pandemic average of FY16-20



Holcim CEO rules out capital gains tax on sale proceeds

RAJESH KURUP
MUMBAI, MAY 16

HOLCIM CEO Jan Jenisch on Monday said the company's \$10.5-billion sale of its stakes in Ambuja Cements and ACC to the Adani group will not attract any capital gains tax. "According to our analysis, it is a tax-free transaction... there is no capital gains or any other tax for this transaction. I don't know if any complication arises, but we assume that we will get this 6.4 billion (Swiss francs) as net proceeds," Jenisch said in an analysts' call on Monday.

Tax experts said Holcim may not have to pay capital gains tax for the bulk, if not all, of the \$10.5-billion

proceeds from the sale as it will sell the shares in the Indian companies to the Adani family's offshore special purpose vehicle (SPV) through a Mauritius-incorporated entity. This will likely give the Swiss company the cover of India's tax treaty with the island nation. The India-Mauritius double taxation avoidance agreement (DTAA) was revised bilaterally in May 2016 to remove the tax waivers prospectively, make it on a par with other DTAs and check its rampant use for tax avoidance in India. However, a carve-out is still available for investments made prior to April 1, 2017. Holcim acquired the cement assets in India 17 years ago.

Holcim and its subsidiaries ex-

ecuted the share purchase agreement with Adani's SPV Endeavour Trade and Investments for the sale of its shareholding in Mauritius-based Holderind Investments, which in turn holds 63.19% stake in Ambuja Cements. The Holcim entity also agreed to sell 54.53% stake in ACC, of which 50.05% is held through Ambuja Cements. Capital gains from the sale of these stakes to the overseas SPV won't be taxed in India. However, it is not clear if the sale of 4.5% stake will also be routed through Holderind Investments or any other entity based in either Mauritius or Singapore. The benefit is now available only for investors from these two countries, subject to the cut-off date of April 1, 2017. FE

Adani makes open offer for 26% each in Ambuja Cements, ACC

Mumbai: Adani group on Monday made an open offer to acquire a 26 per cent stake each in Ambuja Cements and ACC Ltd from public shareholders after announcing a \$10.5-billion deal to acquire Holcim's India business.

Through its Mauritius-based subsidiary Endeavour Trade and Investment, the group has made an open offer at Rs 385 per share for Ambuja Cements Ltd and Rs

2,300 per share for ACC Ltd. For Ambuja Cements, the open offer to its public shareholders is for acquiring up to 51.63 crore equity shares, representing 26 per cent of the expanded share capital, aggregating to a total consideration of Rs 19,879.57 crore. While for ACC, the offer is to acquire up to 4.89 crore shares held by public shareholders, representing 26 per cent of the expanded

share capital, aggregating to a total consideration of Rs 11,259.97 crore. This would be "subject to the receipt of the Required Statutory Approval," Adani group said.

The open offer has been triggered after the execution of the share purchase agreement between Adani group and Holcim to buy controlling stake in the latter's India business. Full report on www.indianexpress.com

Bose proposes to repay Zilingo's \$40-mn debt

SALMAN SH
BENGALURU, MAY 16

ZILINGO'S CO-FOUNDER Ankita Bose, who was recently suspended from her position at the B2B e-commerce start-up, is exploring recompensing the company's entire outstanding debt worth \$40 million. This would provide her with an option to gain more equity in the firm, two people aware of the discussions said.

However, according to an investor in a venture debt firm based in Asia, Bose's endeavour to acquire more shares in the company could be met with a pushback from the board, and eventually lead to a legal tussle if the warrants were to be sold to her.

Sources said Bose had already reached out to Varde Partners and Indies Capital with a term sheet to pay back the entire pending loan amount. Varde and Indies provided a \$40 million loan to Zilingo under her leadership in July 2021, which is valid till July 2023. FE

Terra backer to compensate some users

Hong Kong: Luna Foundation Guard (LFG), a Singapore-based non-profit organisation designed to maintain TerraUSD's price, said Monday it spent the bulk of its reserves trying to defend its dollar peg last week and would use what little remained to compensate some users who had lost out.

The token's crash last week sent cryptocurrencies crashing, as bitcoin traded below \$30,000 on Monday. REUTERS

TO TAKE UP NEW ROLE WITHIN GROUP, SAYS CO Srinivasan quits as MD of Aditya Birla Capital

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, MAY 16

ADITYA BIRLA Capital Ltd (ABCL) on Monday said Ajay Srinivasan has decided to step down as MD and CEO of the company as he had "expressed his desire to take on a new role within the group".

According to a media report, serious allegations of corruption and mismanagement, including front-running and insider trading, have been levelled by a whistleblower against ABCL and Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC. In an exchange filing, ABCL said, "The company received a complaint in which certain allegations were made about Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC and its employees. As per the Aditya Birla group policy, an independent Committee was formed to investigate the allegations."

"The committee did not find any merit in the allegations. There was no allegation whatsoever, made against Ajay Srinivasan, by the said employee," a company spokesperson said.

"In so far as Srinivasan stepping down is concerned, it is clarified that he had expressed his desire to take on a new role within the group, after having served as chief executive for over 14 years," the person said, adding, "A role is being crafted at the group level in consultation with him."

"A story has appeared, this morning, based on insinuations of vested interests. These insinuations/allegations are bereft of facts," the company said. The board of ABCL recently appointed Vishakha Mulye as the next CEO. ABCL is the holding company



Ajay Srinivasan has stepped down amid reported whistleblower allegations of corruption. via company

for the financial services businesses of the Aditya Birla group. Its overall AUM across asset management, life insurance and health insurance businesses grew 16 per cent on-year to Rs 3,72,423 crore as of December 2021.

On Monday, ABCL fell 5 per cent to Rs 95.05 while Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC dove 7.44 per cent to Rs 452.30 on the BSE.

ABCL further stated, "There have been no employee exits at Aditya Birla Capital and Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC, as a fallout of these malicious allegations. Girish Patil left the company to pursue better prospects outside the group. Vineet Maloo moved internally within Aditya Birla Group, in line with the group's policy of career progression."

"The reference in the article associating his new role with the AMC business is not correct and misleading. Further, it is also not correct as mentioned in the article that Girish Patil is related to Mahesh Patil. Girish Patil and Mahesh Patil are not related to each other in any manner," it added.

Full report on www.indianexpress.com

BRIEFLY

Solar glass duty

New Delhi: The Commerce Ministry's investigation arm Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) recommended continuation of anti-dumping duty on Chinese solar glass, also known as "textured tempered coated and un-coated glass", for two years.

Annual reports

New Delhi: The Securities and Exchange Board of India has relaxed compliance rules for entities with listed non-convertible securities from dispatching physical copies of annual report to debenture holders till December-end.

BoE member

London: UK-based academic Dr Swati Dhingra has been named the first Indian-origin woman to be appointed external member of the Bank of England's interest rate-setting panel. PTI

PGCIL deal

New Delhi: Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd (PGCIL) has acquired the project special purpose vehicle (SPV) - Khetri Narela Transmission Ltd after emerging successful in the Tariff Based Competitive Bidding (TBCB) by the government. ENS

Era of higher interest rates; encourage cut in duties on fuel: CII

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, MAY 16

THE CONFEDERATION of Indian Industry (CII) on Monday said an immediate measure to ease inflation could be to moderate taxes on fuel products, which constitute a large share of the retail pump prices of petrol and diesel.

"CII would encourage Centre and state governments to collaborate in reducing these duties," CII president Sanjiv Bajaj said. The Reserve Bank decision to raise benchmark interest rates and the likelihood of a good monsoon will help in containing inflation, Bajaj said, addressing his maiden press conference after taking over as the industry body's chief.

"I do believe that we are now in an era of higher interest rates. This will help us in bringing down inflation, at least a part of that going forward," he said, adding that various factors combined with the hope of a strong monsoon "should put us in a better place" by the second half of the year for policymakers to decide where inflation and interest rates move.

Bajaj said the rise of inflation has two aspects - demand and supply side. "RBI has already started the cycle of taking interest rates up and we should expect interest rates to continue moving up



CII president Sanjiv Bajaj File

in the coming year. We would expect from the RBI a clear direction to how they are going to address interest rates. Hopefully in the next monetary policy review we should be able to hear from them something to that extent," he said.

"Global headwinds and inflation will have to be countered with robust policy reforms, both domestic and external sector reforms, to unlock the growth potential of the economy."

"CII expects the GDP growth in a range of 7.4-8.2 per cent in 2022-23, with the outlook critically hinging on the trajectory of global crude oil prices."

"Global headwinds and inflation will have to be countered with robust policy reforms, both domestic and external sector reforms, to unlock the growth potential of the economy," he said.

Full report on www.indianexpress.com

Classifieds

PERSONAL

It is for General Information that I, AMRIK SINGH S/O MOHAN SINGH, R/o/WZ-502, Second-Floor, Gali.No-26, Shiv-Nagar, Janakpuri, New-Delhi-110058, Declare that Name of My Mother has been wrongly written as BEER KAUR in my Educational-Documents Class-10th. The actual Name of My Mother is RAGHBIR KAUR Respectively which may be amended accordingly.

0040613952-7

I, Yashika, D/O sanjay, R/O shubham saree emporium, main bazar, baniya wara, Faridabad, Haryana-121004, Have Changed My Name To Yashika Garg permanently.

0040613952-2

I, WAKIL AHMED, S/O HAJRAT ALI RESIDENT-333,VILLAGE-BADH MALIK, SONIPAT, HARYANA HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO VAKIL AHMED.

0040613949-6

I, Vinay Sugla S/O Late Niranjan Lal Sugla R/O E-54, Sector-40, Noida, G.B.Nagar (U.P.), have changed my name from Vinay Sugla to Vinay Kumar Sugla for all future purposes.

0040613945-1

I, Sidhart S/O Mukesh Sharma, R/O D.10, shanti kunj vasant kunj near church-road, new delhi-110070, Have Changed my name to Sidharth bhardwaj.

0040613949-5

I, Sato Saho, S/O Hari Sahu, R/O-108/48, Silver Oak Apts, DLF-1, Gurgaon-122002, have changed my name Sato Saho to Santosh Sahu, for all future Purposes.

0040613949-4

I, Raju alias Radhika Aggarwal, D/O Dilbagh Singh W/O Jatin Aggarwal R/O House No-5075, Parkar Residency, Near-Park Mall, Sector 62, Kundli (S5), Sonapat Haryana-131028, have Changed My Name To Radhika Aggarwal.

0040613954-10

I, Rajinder Singh, S/O Fouja Singh, R/O-Village-Jalalpur, Hoshiarpur, Punjab-144202, Inform that by mistake my father name has been wrongly written in my 'CISF SERVICE RECORDS' as Fazal Singh instead of Fouja Singh.

0040613951-4

I, Pranay Aneja, S/O Harish Anagar, R/O B-34 Soami-Nagar, New Delhi-110017, Have changed my daughter name Gunny Aneja To Gunni Aneja, for all purposes.

0040613954-4

I, Indra Dev Vashist S/O, Ram Niwas Sharma R/O, A-69, Kewal Park EXTN Adarsh-Nagar Delhi-110033, have changed my name to Indar Dev.

0040613949-1

I, Pooja Rani D/O Om Prakash R/O-Flat No.149, Block-C4H, Near Kadmi Market, Janakpuri C-4, West Delhi, Delhi-110058 have changed my name to Pooja for all future purposes.

0040613891-1

I, Pankaj Adlakha, S/O-Munshi Lal Adlakha, R/O-Flat No. CTB-003, Tower-B Ground-Floor DLF-Crest Phase-5, Gurgaon, 122011, have changed my Son's name, from Samar Adlakha to Samarth Adlakha.

0040613954-5

I, Om Prakash Gosain S/O Late Shri Durga Dass R/O-53, New T phase-II Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059, declare that my wife's actual name is Rashpal Kaur as per 10th-Certificate and Adhar-card, but wrongly her name mentioned as Rachhpal Kaur in some of the documents. Rashpal Kaur and Rachhpal Kaur is both one and the same person. I am giving affidavit-Dt.14-May-2022.

0040613949-10

I, Naresh Kumar Aggarwal, S/O-Shri Kishan Aggarwal, R/O-B-34, Sector-30, Noida, G.B. Nagar, G.P., U.P.-201301, have changed my name to Naresh Aggarwal for all future purposes.

0040613951-6

I, NAZMA AIJAZ SHAMSI W/O AIJAZ AHMAD, R/O-390/6, STREET, NO.6, ZAKIR-NAGAR, JAMIA-NAGAR, NEW DELHI 110025, CHANGED MY NAME NAZMA AIJAZ SHAMSI TO NAJMA.A. SHAMSI, PERMANANT Y.

0040613949-7

I, NAZISH W/O ATIQU REHMAN, R/O 3542 WARD XI KUCHA TARA CHAND, DARYA GANJ, NEW DELHI-110002, HAVE TO CHANGED MY NAME TO NAZISH ATIQU.

0040613954-7

I, JANVESH S/O-Prabhu dayal, H.No.B-277, gali.No-10, Rajeev Gandhi road swoop-nagar, Delhi, libaspur, north west delhi-110042, Have Changed My Name to janved diwakar.

0040613949-2

I, JASWINDER SINGH, S/O GURCHARAN SINGH IS JASWINDER SINGH PRUTHI and my son's name is HARMEET SINGH PRUTHI. HOUSE. No. 58/365, Flat, No-A-1, UGF, Near-Dr Jagpal Health-Centre, Sultan-Pur, South-Delhi, Delhi-110030

0040613949-3

I, Geeta Manak, D/O Surender Singh Grover, R/O-B-24 plot no-4, golf-Venue Apartments Sector-19B, Dwarka, Delhi 110075, Have Changed my name to Geeta Grover, for all purposes.

0040613951-1

I, Bhavesh Saraogi s/o Shiv Bhagwan Saraogi r/o D-323, Vivek vihar, Delhi-110095 have changed my name to BHAVESH KUMAR SARAOGI.

0040613951-1

I, GULSHAN VERMA S/O CHANDER BHAN R/O-RZ-70A Gali No.9, KAMAL PARK, PALAM COLONY, DELHI-110045, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO GULSHAN KUMAR

0040613952-1

I, Dharmendra H Kumar, S/O-Hariday Shankar Gupta, R/O-D-276, D-Block, Ganesh Nagar, Pandav Nagar, Complex, Delhi-110092, have changed my name to Dharmendra Kumar for all purposes.

0040613951-5

I, Devanand Mani S/O-Dinesh Mani Tripathi, R/O 1801, Tower-G1, Supertech ECO Village-1, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301, have changed my name Devanand Mani Tripathi, Permanently.

0040613954-9

I, Ayush S/O-Arjun Singh residing-H.No.-H-20, Gali No.19, Parwana Road, Jagatpuri, Krishna Nagar, Delhi, have changed my name to Ayush Rathore, for all purposes.

0040613954-1

I, Aparna Kaushik, D/O Sharvan Kaushik R/O B-61, Shiv Mandir-Road Swaroop Nagar, New Delhi-110042, Have changed my name, from Aparna to Aparna Kaushik, for all future purposes

0040613954-8

I, Amit Chaudhary S/O-Brahm Pal Singh R/O-A-225, Block-A Baaghwali-Colony, Shastri-Nagar, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201002, have changed my Name Amit Chaudhary, for all purposes.

0040613954-3

I, Abhinav S/O-Rajesh Kumar BRD/A, R/O P-80/2 SMQ, 13 BRD, AF, New Pinto Park, Delhi-110010, changed my name Abhinav, S/O Rajesh Kumar Poonia, R/O P-80/2 SMQ 13 BRD, AF, New Pinto-Park, Delhi-110010, changed my name to Abhinav Poonia to Abhinav Poonia.

0040613952-3

I, ATIQU UR REHMAN, S/O ATA UR REHMAN QURESHI, R/O-3542 WARD XI KUCHA TARA CHAND DARYA GANJ, NEW DELHI-110002, HAVE TO CHANGED MY NAME TO ATIQU UR REHMAN QURESHI.

0040613954-6

I, ANJAN PUTATUNDA, S/O ADHIR KUMAR PUTATUNDA, R/O-FLAT, NO-11, FIRST-FLOOR, JAIPURIA-ENCLAVE ,KAUSHAMBI, GHAZIABAD, UP-201010, Inform that by mistake my name to ANJAN KUMAR PUTATUNDA, Permanently.

0040613949-8

I, Tarun Paul Sethi s/o Yash Paul Sethi r/o PU-110, Vishakh Enclave, Pitampura, Delhi-110034 have changed my name to TARUN PAL SETHI.

0040613951-3

I, Talib Ahmed S/O, Habib Ahmad R/O. 69, Shaipur Jat Village, Andrewsganj, South Delhi - 49 have changed my name to Talib Ahmad

0040613927-1

I, Sami Qureshi S/O Mohd Shahid R/O 2060, Naheer Khan Street Kucha Chelan Darya Ganj, Delhi-110002 have changed my name from Mohd Sami to Sami Qureshi for all future purposes.

0040613898-1

I, Pushkar S/O Sushil Kumar R/O House No.-63, Sector-10B, Vasundhara Ghaziabad (U.P) 20112 have changed my name to Pushkar Kumar for all future purposes

0040613898-1

I, Prashant Bhardwaj S/O Kaushal Kishore R/O A-33, 34 Flat No-10 Paryavaran Complex Mehrauli, South Delhi-110030 have changed my name from Prasant Pandey to Prashant Bhardwaj for all future purposes.

0040613901-1

I, Parveen Kumar S/O Sita Ram R/O-48 G.F Executive HomeZ Omaxe-City, Bahadurgarh, Hajaraj Haryana, have change my name to Parveen Aggarwal

0040613905-1

I, Nikhil S/O Sushil Kumar R/O 1506, Sector-16A, Ekta Kuni, Vasundhara, Ghaziabad (U.P) 201012 have changed my name to Nikhil Kumar for all future purposes.

0040613900-1

I, Khajan Chandra alias Khajan Chandra Pant, S/O Brij Mohan Pant, R/O B-22, Garjiya Apartments, Abhay Khand-3, Indirapuram, Ghaziabad, UP-201014, have changed my name to Khajan Pant for all future purposes.

0070785579-1

I, DEVENDER YADAV, S/O YOGRAJ YADAV, R/O POST-WAZIRPUR, DHANAWAS (119), GURGAON, HARYANA-122505, have changed my minor Son's name from KUNAL, aged 14 years to KUNAL YADAV forever.

0070785542-1

I, Ashish Mishra, S/O Satish Kumar Mishra, R/O B1-704, Tulip Purple, Sector-69, Gurgaon, Haryana-122001, have changed my minor Daughter's name from KHUSHI MISHRA, aged 13 years to TANYA KHUSHI MISHRA forever.

0070785541-1

I, Asad Khan, S/O Jamil Husain, R/O- E-T 18 102, RPJ Savana, Faridabad-121002, have changed my name to Asad Husain.

0070785582-1

I, Satyavir Singh s/o Daya Ram R/O House No.1849/A, Sector-13, Huda, Bhiwani, Haryana-127021 have changed my name to SATYAVIR SINGH SANGWAN.

0040613951-2

I, Krishnamurtysastry Annapurna W/O, B Viswanathan R/O 132-a, Dda Flats, dg2 Vikasपुरi, New Delhi-110018 have changed my name to Krishnamurti Annapurna for all purposes.

0040613946-1

I, Gulnazz Bano D/O, Maqsood Khan Chouhan R/O House No-4/231, Flat No 402, Shivaji Nagar, Near Khandsa Road, Gurgaon 122001 have changed my name to Gulnazz Khan for all purposes.

0040613947-1

I, Parvez Akhtar S/o Bashir Ahmed R/O G-1/264, Dal Mill Road, Uttam Nagar, Delhi-110059, changed name to Parvez Akhtar.

0040613949-9

I, MOHAMMAD MASUD LASKAR, MOHD MASUD LASKAR AND MD MASUD LASKAR S/O MOHAMMED MUJIBAR RAHMAN R/O 53-A DDA FLATS NEAR BULAND MASJID SHASTRI PARK DELHI-110053 HAVE CHANGE MY NAME TO MOHAMMED MASUD LASKAR.

0040608620

I, Kamla Rani W/o Narender Mohan R/O Flat No-220-C, Janta Flats, Paschim Vihar Extn. Delhi-110063 hereby solemnly inform that Kamla Rani and Chhaya Mohan both are one and the same person.

0040613874

LOST & FOUND

I Gurcharan Singh S/o Sh. Mohan Singh R/O QU-251C, North Pitampura, Delhi-110088 have lost my Original DDA Possession Letter in the name of NADAN L/O S/O Kishan Lal File No. MDL019(432)85/PT/HBM/NP dated 19.10.1985 of QU-251C, North Pitampura, Delhi-110088. Finders may contact at above address.

0040613890-1

I Suresh Kumar Bhatia S/O Sh. S.L. Bhatia R/O Flat No. C-18, Suvidha CGHS, Plot No.25, Sector-13, Rohini, Delhi-110085 have lost my Original Allotment Letter issued by Suvidha CGHS Ltd. of above said property. Finders may contact at above address.

0040613890-2

I, Dr. Umber Agarwal, S/O Dr. B.K. Agarwal, R/O 88-5, Sector-7, Jaspola Vihar, New Delhi, have lost my original possession letter, allotment letter, and office order (name transfer letter), of my Plot No.13/9, Sector-13, Vasundhara, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, if anyone uses them then it will be considered illegal, Finder please inform/contact-9811152551. 0070785578-1

I, Chetan Swaroop Kanodia S/O Shri Keshav Dev Kanodia R/O-A-213, Kewal Park, Azadpur, Delhi-33, have lost Handing Over Possession and Site Possession Slip papers(F.16(12548)/2012/RHN) of Plot No.733, Block & Pocket C-5, Sector-34, Rohini, Delhi-42. Finder Contact-9205341655

0040613952-9

I, Neeru Puri D/O Sh. Purshotam Lal Satija R/O AO-28, Shalimar Bagh Delhi-110088 have lost my 70 Shares, Certificate bearing, No.6691, Distinctive No.4013098 to 4013167, of C&S Electric Ltd. Finder Contact-9868504238.

0040613952-8

Lost 5 Chains of Original Sale-Deeds of Property, No.A-52, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi-110027 in favour of last 2 chains name of Shrimati Subash Kumari, Smt. Saroj Talwar & Shri Ashok Kumar Talwar and Second Chain Shrimati Sita Devi & Shrimati Kailash Kumari, founder may contact Atul Talwar, S/o Sh. Madan Lal Talwar R/O 185, Sukhdev-Vihar, New Delhi. M-9711002154.

0040613952-10

Lost all original Documents of my Office No.103, Ansal Chamber-II, 6, Bhikaiji Cama Place, New Delhi. Finder may Contact-Ramesh Kumar Sharma at above noted address.

0040613897-1

Recruitment Notice
This is for information of general public that my client 1. Sh. Neeraj Khatar 2. Sh. Nitin Arora & 3. Sh. Om Prakash Karra jointly absolute owners of Property bearing No. E-193, Chittaranjan Park, New Delhi-110019 The original Lease Deed dated 28.01.1978 & Conveyance Deed dated 15.09.2004 executed by President of India in favour of Sh. Kamlesh Chandra Deb, registered as document No. 11, 809 in Book No. 1 Vol. No. 4306 on Page No. 15 to 17 of 16.03.2004 FIR/NCR has also been lodged and if any person's having claims regarding sale, mortgage, charge, trust or otherwise are requested to inform the same in writing along with proof regarding the same at Chamber No. G-511, 6th Floor, Karkardooma Court Complex, Shahdara, Delhi within 15 days from the date of publication hereof, together with copies of documents forming basis of such claim failing which it shall be concluded that there is no claim whatsoever against the above said property and my client can proceed with his intended object pertaining to the above stated property.

Recruitment Notice
This is to inform the Public at large that Sh. Rakesh Sherawat S/O Sh. B.S. Sherawat is the 'Title Holder' in possession of 'DDA Built Up Freshhold Property Bearing Flat No.-118, Ground Floor, Category-Janta, Mahiya Nagar, Residential Scheme, Saket, New Delhi', hereinafter referred to as 'Schedule Property' vide Conveyance Deed Regn.No. 103.03.2020, registered as Deqn.No. 2881, Book 1, Vol. No. 7597, pp-188-192 on 19.03.2020 in the Office of Sub. Registrar-VII, New Delhi. That the original documents w.r.t. the Schedule Property, (i) Allotment Letter dated 24.11.1977, (ii) Offer to possession Letter dated 15.02.78, (iii) NOC for water and electricity dated 15.02.78 and (v) Possession Slip all issued by DDA in favour of Sh. Nand Kishore (Original Allottee) have been lost/misplaced and are untraceable, hence unavailable for verification in original, in lieu of which information Report dated 13.05.2022 is filed with Delhi Police bearing LR No. 399157/22. This notice is issued to Public at Large. i.e. any Person(s), Financial Institution(s), Bank(s), HUF(s) etc., having any knowledge, custody or possession of the lost/misplaced/ untraceable documents as mentioned herein above or otherwise having any claim right, title, interest, possession in the Schedule Property, may come forward with supporting documents, to be delivered to the undersigned within 15 days from the date of this Publication, post expiration of which, any claim (s) or objection (s), if raised or received, shall be treated as null & void and such claims or objection shall be treated as waived, and the Title Holder shall proceed to sell the Schedule Property as per presently intended.

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Tiger Woods will be teeing off in his second Major championships of the year.

Woods back in spotlight, Mickelson still in shadows

REUTERS
TULSA (USA), MAY 16

TIGER WOODS will be back in the global golf spotlight when the PGA Championship gets underway this week but defending champion Phil Mickelson, his great rival and the player he has been tethered to throughout much of his career, will not. Woods and Mickelson are to golf what Roger Federer and Rafa Nadal are to tennis, athletes in the twilight of their careers but still the most compelling figures in their sport and guaranteed ratings grabbers. The PGA Championship, which begins on Thursday in Tulsa, Oklahoma, had all the makings of one of those special sporting occasions when old rivals collide. After nearly losing his right leg in a car crash 15 months ago, Woods made his return to competition at the Masters in April and will take the next step in his extraordinary comeback at Southern Hills Country Club. Mickelson, who has kept a low profile since his controversial comments about a Saudi-backed global golf circuit, has not played anywhere since February but looked like he might return in Tulsa when his name appeared on the field list. But Mickelson, who became golf's oldest major winner last year when he won the PGA Championship just shy of his 51st birthday, said on Friday he would not play, becoming just the third PGA champion not to defend his title after Woods in 2008 and Ben Hogan in 1949, both of whom bowed out due to injury. There will be plenty of other storylines and great golf played at Southern Hills, most of it from a pack of hard-charging twenty-somethings, including Masters champion and world number one Scottie Scheffler, but Woods is unlikely to be pushed from the

spotlight.

The 46-year-old won the PGA Championship the last time it was staged at Southern Hills, hoisting the Wanamaker trophy for a fourth time in 2007. While Woods always plays to win, few expect him to add to his tally of 15 majors this week. Woods worked the golf world into a frenzy at the Masters when he carded a one-under par 71 in his first round of competitive golf since his horror car crash. He would make the cut but four rounds on Augusta National's undulating layout proved too much as the 15-times major winner closed with six-over 78s on Saturday and Sunday, his worst-ever scores at the Masters. Woods will hog much of the spotlight but will not carry the same pressure as the likes of world number one Scheffler and Jordan Spieth, who has an opportunity to complete the career Grand Slam. Spieth missed the cut at the Masters for the first time in his career but has been golf's hottest player since, winning at Hilton Head Island and finishing second at his PGA tune-up. If the 28-year-old can triumph at the PGA Championship, where his best result was runner-up in 2015, he would join Gene Sarazen, Ben Hogan, Gary Player, Jack Nicklaus and Woods in golf's elite club of Grand Slam winners. The pressure is also building on Scheffler, who heads to a layout he has touted as his favourite course. When the year began Scheffler was still chasing a first PGA Tour win. He now has four, a Green Jacket, the world number one ranking. A win at the PGA would saddle him with talk of a rare Grand Slam sweeping all four majors in a single season. "For Jordan to win the career Grand Slam at still a young age, he's got to throttle that back," said twice US Open champion Curtis Strange

WORLD BOXING CHAMPIONSHIP

Famous victory for the secretive boxer

Family came to know about Manisha's boxing talent only after she got gold at district meet

NITIN SHARMA
CHANDIGARH, MAY 16

AS A youngster, Manisha Moun would accompany her elder brother to the volleyball ground at the RKSD College Stadium in Kaithal without telling father Krishan Moun. While her father only knew about her practising judo at the venue apart from playing volleyball, Manisha would be training under boxing coach Rajinder Singh.

It was around this time that Krishan suffered the first of his heart attacks and the farmer-cum-tractor mechanic had to worry about the medical expenses apart from the needs of his three children.

Those tough times were recalled on Monday when 24-year-old Manisha secured her maiden world championship medal with a 4:1 split decision win over Mongolia's Namuun Mankhor in the 57 Kg category at the IBA Women's World Boxing Championship in Istanbul, Turkey.

"Our family wanted Manisha to go outside so she would often accompany her brother to the volleyball stadium. But we did not know that she was approached by coach Rajinder Singh, who got her enrolled into boxing. When she became district champion within two years, we got to know about her feat, and I praised her in front of all my relatives and neighbours. So far, she has won more than 40 medals but this one, whatever colour she brings home, will be special for us. She told me that a medal in Turkey will be no less than an Olympics for us and I am glad that she has proved herself," an emotional Krishan told *The Indian Express*.

While her father owned a 15-acre farm apart from working as a tractor mechanic in their village, Manisha's interest in boxing meant that the family had to look for funds to support her training. While a young Manisha would often bring some prize money from local boxing tournaments to mother Usha Rani, the family faced a tough time in those years when Krishan suffered his first heart attack and spent more than a month at the PGIMER in Chandigarh. "She was a child at that time and would not understand my condition. She would tell us that she is going to training but would always ask her mother about my health. Whatever prize money she won, she would give to her mother," remembers Krishan.

Coach Gurmeet Singh, a trainee of



Manisha, 24, secured her maiden world championship medal in the 57 kg class.

While Manisha would often bring some prize money from local tournaments to mother Usha Rani, the family faced tough times when her father suffered a heart attack.

Rajinder Singh, who has been training Manisha since 2014 remembers her early days in boxing. "Is larki main zanoon hai kuch seekhne ka (This girl has the passion to learn). At that time, we had fewer female boxers at the academy and would train her with boys. It also meant that she would take part in cross-country runs every week in which she would finish in the top three in the 21-km country run. It helped her build stamina and she maintains the habit of running cross-country events even now. She has always been a fan of 2006 Commonwealth Games champion Akhil Kumar and her left punch is just like Akhil with a bit of an open guard," says Singh.

Steady progress

A silver at the junior Haryana boxing championships in 2013 was followed by successive All India Inter-University titles in 2016 and 2017 before Manisha won three international medals in 2018. It was the year when she would win the trials for the 2018 World Championships in Delhi, where she would reach the quarter-finals before losing to 2016 world championship silver medalist Stoyko Petrova of Bulgaria. During her campaign, Manisha would score wins over two-time world championship medalist

Christina Cruz of USA and 2017 world champion Dina Zhalaman of Kazakhstan. She would win a bronze at the Asian Boxing Championships in 2019.

Then came the setback of an elbow injury in 2019 before she decided to shift to the 57 Kg category, where she would compete against the likes of former world youth champion Sakshi Chaudhary, former world medalist Sonia Lather and Sonia Chahal. "She would start her career in the 50 kg category and once she felt confident, she chose 54 Kg as her best weight. The 2018 Nationals silver medal gave her confidence ahead of the world championship trials in 2018 and she could have won a medal in Delhi. She often watches videos of her bouts against Christina and Dina and would observe her mistakes during the rehabilitation period after her elbow injury. When she was dropped from the TOPS scheme recently, she was a bit disappointed as her family's financial condition is not that good but this medal will hopefully ensure that she gets back into the scheme," says coach Satvir Kaur, who has been in several national camps with Manisha.

The pugilist will now face Irma Testa of Italy in the World Championship semi-finals and her father will be watching the bout with the family at their village. "Sometimes, I would spend extra hours at the tractor shop to earn more money even though Manisha would often ask me to come home early. But then we had loans to repay. She always hands her prize money to me or her mother till now but for us the biggest prize is her medals. The only thing she is fond of while at home is cleaning the house and making space for her medals. This medal will be the brightest of all of her medals till date," her father says.

Nikhat, Parveen also advance to semi-finals, secure medals

PRESSTRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, MAY 16

NIKHAT ZAREEN (52kg), Manisha (57kg) and Parveen (63kg) continued their stellar run at the IBA Women's World Boxing Championships in Istanbul on Monday by advancing to the semifinals but five other Indians bowed out after suffering quarterfinal losses. Confirming their first World Championships medals with a place in the semifinals, Nikhat out-punched England's Charley-Sian Davison 5-0 while young Parveen got the better off Shoiria Zulkaynarova of Tajikistan with an identical margin.

Manisha, on the other hand, dispatched Mongolia's Namuun Monkhor in a hard-fought quarterfinal by a 4-1 split decision.

However, it was the end of the road for Nitu (48kg), seasoned campaigner Pooja Rani (81kg), Anamika (50kg), Jaismine (60kg) and Nandini (+81kg).

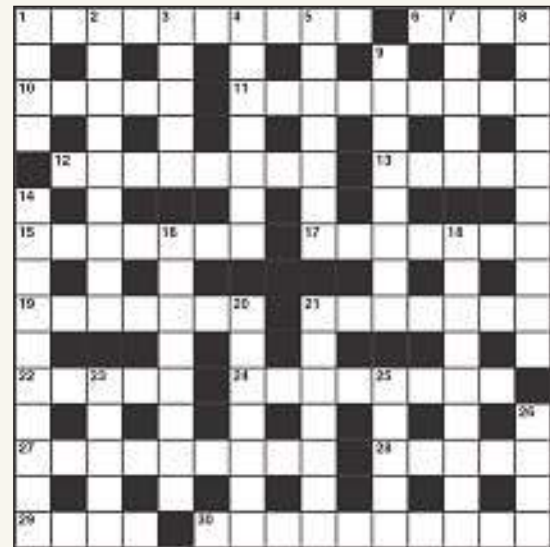
Continuing her stellar run from the prestigious Strandja Memorial tournament where she won the gold earlier this year, Nikhat handed India its first medal at this year's tournament with an impressive victory.

"My opponent was taller than me today, so my strategy was to block her right hand which is her strength. I am delighted to give India the first medal, hope I can win the gold," Nikhat said after the bout.

The former junior world champion will next square off against Caroline De Almeida of Brazil, who thrashed the 2018 Commonwealth Games silver winner Carly McNaul of Ireland by unanimous decision.

In the fourth Indian bout of the day, Parveen initially seemed hesitant to attack and looked out of depth but as the seconds ticked away and coach Bhaskar Bhatt and the support staff encouraged her to go forward and attack from the sideline, the Haryana boxer gained confidence to notch up a memorable win. She will be up against Ireland's Amy Broadhurst in the semifinal. Anamika and Jaismine fell short of securing medals on their debut appearance at the world event after enduring 0-5 and 1-4 losses respectively. Anamika lost to Rio Olympic bronze medalist Colombia's Ingrid Valencia and Jaismine succumbed to Rashida Ellis of USA. Nandini was handed a 0-5 loss by Morocco's Khadija Mardini in her opening bout.

CROSSWORD 4742



- ACROSS**
- Game for an old school get-together (5,5)
 - Items given for storage in a bank (4)
 - Lie about showing true grit (5)
 - They work with a will (9)
 - Instrument puts old man in confusion (8)
 - Unusual Roman dwelling house (5)
 - It's near breaking up and showing distress (2,5)
 - Hide at one time found in California (7)
 - They're told to go to blazes (7)
 - Wine forced on some Irishmen (7)
 - One who gets up part of the stairs (5)
 - Determined to give poor Rose an instrument (8)
 - After work, quiet or music is timely (9)
 - Got an order to dance (5)
- DOWN**
- Bird making harsh sound (4)
 - Tribal rag turns out to be rock (9)
 - Return and surrender (5)
 - With one point each, one more becomes redundant (7)
 - Cocaine distilled from the sea (7)
 - Lend beauty to part of a head ornament (5)
 - Pacific islander (10)
 - Asked to appear at court? (8)
 - Seek earthly riches? (3,3,4)
 - Erns amid wayward lovers (8)
 - Being in the wrong scene, exit (9)
 - Foster may run true to form (7)
 - Gets better of teachers (7)
 - Brown monkeys climb all around one (5)
 - A deal with America for a plant (5)
 - Place appointed for a picket (4)

Solutions Crossword 4741: Across: 1 Tanning, 5 Which, 8 Stringent, 9 Car, 10 Each, 12 Unchaste, 14 Callow, 15 Harass, 17 Nominate, 18 Str, 21 Out, 22 Reeled off, 24 Mused, 25 Melange. Down: 1 Taste, 2 Nor, 3 Inns, 4 Greens, 5 Watchman, 6 Incessant, 7 Harness, 11 Cellmates, 13 Cornered, 14 Conform, 16 Stream, 19 Rifle, 20 Seal, 23 Own.

JUMBLED WORDS

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

If men could only know each other, they would neither... nor... - Elbert Hubbard (7...4)

MNAEE	EEEDLT
DTIIO	AILYHZ

SOLUTION: ENMA, IDIOT, BELEFE, HAZLY - Elbert Hubbard

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



SUDOKU 4837

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

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

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

SOLUTION SUDOKU 4836

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

DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

Please don't sit around thinking how unfair life can be. Mars, the planet of excess energy, has passed on, and that imaginative and awkward squad, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto, will now leave you in peace for a little longer. Meanwhile, Saturn will continue to keep you in your place.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

The Sun is still maintaining your social profile, reminding you that it is important to get other people to see that your way of doing things is best. With a charm like yours, how can you fail? Only by not taking care of every single detail, that's how.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

The first thing to say is that there is a shortage of epoch-making planetary aspects at the moment. The result is that you may begin to see yourself as more in control of your life than you have been for quite some time. If you do, that's a sign that you may come unstuck very soon.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

There's one thing you want more than anything else in your life, and recently it has seemed that you have been about to achieve it. However, if you have fallen at the last hurdle, can you wait for another two months? Current developments may open your eyes to the broader picture.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

Don't back away from problems at work. People in all areas of your life are waiting for you to make yourself clear and demonstrate that you are able to cope with any amount of practical difficulty. People you live with could get intense, so don't let anything surprise you.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

You seem to be quite preoccupied with personnel changes on the work front. Seeing as that radical sign Aquarius is involved, you may be concerned to increase your independence and sense of personal responsibility. And it means you may have to strike out on your own.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

A series of powerful planetary aspects has been keeping your personal affairs in a state of flux. However, Venus, the planet of love is bringing help from near at hand. And that help may be more practical than you think. In the meantime, sort out cash questions while you can.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

If you are absolutely determined to assert your authority, there seems to be little to stand in your way. The Moon combines with the Sun to strengthen an already solid personal position, much to your relief. The best advice is to take a creative approach, but keep other people on your side.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

The Sun and Mercury are casting their benevolent rays over your family affairs. You are never certain about your foundations - emotional and otherwise. Yet, really, you have little to worry about. Probably the best area to focus on is the effect your public commitments have on your private affairs.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

Have you realised that the obstacle you faced last week was a hurdle to leap over, not a brick wall to stop your progress? By now, you must be well on your way to establishing your life on an entirely fresh footing. Today's Venusian alignments should help balance your emotions.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

This may well be a challenging and upsetting time, but graceful Venus will bring support and sympathy from close friends. The best thing you can be told is that your fears and worries are illusory. And the best thing you can do is wait until you have a clearer picture.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

Pisceans have a reputation for being too sensitive by half. The only way to get the most out of your current situation is to lay yourself on the line and learn to accept criticism in the spirit in which it is meant. In other words, there may be something genuine for you to learn.

Shock, anger and grudging respect for Indian shuttlers

Watching the unheralded team lift the Thomas Cup, badminton powerhouses Indonesians, Malaysians and Danes wonder what went wrong for their men

SHIVANI NAIK
MAY 16

INDIA'S THOMAS Cup victory sent some seismic waves through South-East Asian powerhouses and European big daddies of badminton. India can chuckle a tad and wink a bit this week, or have the proverbial last laugh. But there was a hint of a scoff and grudging respect as Malaysia, Denmark and Indonesia came to terms with being handed losses by the first-time finalists in the 2022 edition.

Here are some snatches of the fallout that erupted in two proud shuttle nations from the straits, and the Scandinavian behemoth boasting of Olympic champ Viktor Axelsen.

Taufik lets it rip

Indonesian legend and universal favourite Taufik Hidayat, couldn't hold back an almighty rant when he took to Instagram to post his thoughts under a video of a glum looking team clutching their silvers on the podium.

The 2000 & 2002 Thomas Cup champ had found a scapegoat in the singles coach - with the classic gripe: 'Where is the coach?'

His post read (translated): "Team Thomas Cup. Thank you for reaching the best possible position of a final. Surely, they are disappointed with this defeat, but one thing is to be noted always: it's a mental, physical battle... and where is the Indonesian men's singles coach? Does Indonesia not have a better and more qualified coach? How long do you want this to last, PBSI?" Addressing the federation, Indonesia's last Olympic singles champion tore into the incumbent, after Anthony Ginting and Jonatan Christie had lost their matches.

This soon turned into a 'Who's wiser?' scrap as a social media follower compared his bruising tone to the more restrained reaction from Malaysian Lee Chong Wei, who basically urged patience while the Malaysians rebuilt their side. Not unlike India and Pakistan who both lose and then snipe at each other while a third country wins at cricket, Indonesian and Malaysian fans started venting against each other, much



As Indians savoured the historic win, Indonesian and Malaysian fans started venting against each other, much like the famous rivalry of the 1970s.

like the famous rivalry of the 1970s.

Indonesia coach under fire

Indonesia's singles coach Irwansyah did cop criticism the day after, though moving images of him consoling Ginting and Christie, and his efforts to help make the finals seemed to have earned him a longer rope. Detik Sport quoted him as saying, "The players in the future will be given more opportunities to appear in international championships. This is part of the regeneration process."

Doubles coach Herry Iman had a more rous-

ing defence of his troops: "We have to accept this defeat as part of the learning process. Last year we won, we are happy. This time we lost, so we have to accept it," Detik quoted the coach nicknamed the Fire Dragon. "Defeat should not make us dissolve in sadness. But we must rise again to look to the future. Whatever the result, India deserve to be congratulated," said Herry.

The King mourns

Liem Swie King, a contemporary of Prakash Padukone with many storied battles, lamented the loss to India, in what was a dis-

believing tone. Detik quoted him wondering: "Three Indonesian players were ranked below Anthony Ginting & Co. In fact, based on the track record of the two countries' meetings, Indonesia was supposed to have been quite dominating. But that advantage was not utilised by the defending champions. Yes, it must be evaluated why we lost. The performance until the final was extraordinary. I didn't think that I would lose to India!" The 1976, '79 and '84 Thomas Cup champ exclaimed, "Yes, that's right, India is also good, I just didn't think it was... with this history, that they can

Chirag Shetty, who was a thorn in the flesh of Mohammad Ahsan and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo, found himself on the dartboard of Indonesian netizens, after his pumped-up face was captured in a photograph, staring at the sole Minion.

win in the Thomas Cup. Physically (Indonesian players must) improve (because) every time they play three games, they lose a lot," said Liem. "(So) you can't just have skills, it must be complete play," he stressed.

Nasty nickname

Chirag Shetty, who was a thorn in the flesh of Mohammad Ahsan and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo, found himself on the dartboard of Indonesian netizens, after his pumped-up face was captured in a photograph, staring at the sole Minion. Manning the net with aggressive energy, Shetty had clearly rattled the fancied pairing as it wilted - or so Indonesian fans were convinced.

His swivel serve came in for more carping: they nicknamed him 'Kang Delay', the serve delayer. A loss in doubles for a country that boasts three pairings in the Top 10, including Nos. 1 and 2, was a whiplash on dazed Indonesian faces. Kevin had earlier remarked about those tense moments: "In the second game, when they were leading 19-13, Indians played like they had nothing to lose. They were so hard to put down."

Malaysia in soul-searching mode

Lee Chong Wei did ask for accountability though, speaking to Straits Times. But first was a compliment for Kidambi Srikanth and HS Prannoy, who handed Malaysia a 3-2 loss in the quarters. "I don't think we would have stood a chance even if we fielded Daren (Liew). Srikanth was oozing with confidence, he was untouchable. Neither (Ng) Tze Yong or Daren could beat him."

"Jun Hao fared poorly against a more-experienced Prannoy. To win the Thomas Cup, it takes a collective effort from everyone in the team. We certainly need to improve our

singles depth if we want to challenge for the title. Having been the singles coaching director for a few years now, (Wong) Choong Hann has to be held accountable and explain," Lee told ST.

He proceeded to suggest an Indian style trial: "Perhaps, it's time we looked into having a selection trial for the men's singles in order to make it fair to all, especially with many independent players outside the national team." Malaysia's team event specialist Chong Wei Feng added to ST: "India developed a huge pool of singles players, you got to give them credit. They have five singles in the world top 30 and more than 10 in the top 100."

Boe hero; Hoi on backfoot

Denmark's only bright spot in the finals was India's doubles coach Mathias Boe, who told TV2 Sport: "I have to find my dance shoes and see if I can show them how to make a quiet and calm charming Viennese waltz." Clearly the Dane couldn't match step with the wild Bhangra and freestyle moves of Chirag & Co.

Elsewhere, national coach Jakob Høi, was left defending his decision to field Rasmus Gemke ahead of seasoned HK Vittinghus. "We've been in dreamland, and when you are, and it's bursting, it's hard to get up again. Respect for the boys on and off the field, but we were not good enough today," he was quoted by TV2 Sport, adding that India had negotiated conditions better: "No, I do not regret anything," he stressed.

Gemke spoke of feeling wretched as Indians rushed onto the court to hug Prannoy. "It was hard to stand in there when the Indians stormed onto the field, and I knew it was over," he said.

Late charge by Delhi Capitals takes them to the top four

SYNOPSIS: Mitchell Marsh steers his side to a competitive score, and Shardul Thakur's slower ones hold off a fighting PK to take DC to No 4 in the table

ABHISHEK PUROHIT
MUMBAI, MAY 16

Shardul Thakur's four strikes first brought Delhi Capitals back into the game and then cut short a late fightback by Punjab Kings to deliver a crucial 17-run win that took his team to fourth position on the table, with 14 points and the fourth-best net run-rate so far.

Marsh carries DC again

In DC's previous match at the same ground four nights ago against Rajasthan Royals, Mitchell Marsh had powered seven sixes in a match-winning 89 off 62. That knock, though, had come in the chase with the ball coming on better than it had in the first innings. Against PK, Marsh had to come in the second ball of the match after David Warner's golden duck.

With a 6-3 field set to protect the shorter boundary, Marsh still took on the longer side when the bowling became too predictable, seeking to force the bigger hit. He first lofted Kagiso Rabada over the farther cow-corner rope. Later when the spinners too continued to bowl wider to the longer off side, he rocked back, waited and made sure he beat the sweeper with his cut. And when Marsh gets the power and timing right, the size of the boundary rarely matters. Against PK, Marsh had to come in the second ball of the match after David Warner's golden duck.

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He had his couple of moments of good fortune, though. A mishit off Arshdeep Singh just cleared a jumping long-on, and another off the left-armer tickled into the wide long-off boundary despite a valiant dash-and-dive to attempt to catch it from Shikhar Dhawan.

How difficult it could be, and how well Marsh had played, was evident when he failed to clear deep midwicket on the shorter side off a Rabada slot delivery in the 19th over. So short Marsh had fallen that the fielder had to run in to complete the catch.

Marsh's exit meant DC took just ten off the last two overs, but they'd still managed to set a competitive target of 160.

Panic after powerplay
Courtesy swift bursts from Sarfaraz Khan - opening for the first time in the IPL - and Jonny Bairstow, the powerplay had gone almost equivalent for both sides. DC had scored 59 for 2, PK were on 53 for 1 with three deliveries remaining in their

IPL TABLE

TEAM	M	W	L	PT	NRR
GT	13	10	3	20	0.391
RR	13	8	5	16	0.304
LSG	13	8	5	16	0.262
DC	13	7	6	14	-0.255
RCB	13	7	6	14	-0.323
KKR	13	6	7	12	0.160
PK	13	6	7	12	0.043
SRH	12	5	7	10	-0.270
CSK	13	4	9	8	-0.206
MI	12	3	9	6	-0.613

powerplay. However, Shardul Thakur first sent back Bhanuka Rajapaksa; two balls later, he bowled one that was close to cut, but Shikhar Dhawan tried to and went caught behind.

Three balls later, the DC spinners struck with their tricks. On a dry pitch where turn was available, Axar Patel foxed Mayank Agarwal with a straighter one; the line was on the stumps, Mayank Agarwal still went for a late steer and had his stumps rattled.

In the next over, Kuldeep Yadav slid it straight past an advancing Liam Livingstone to have him stumped by a long way.

Thakur intervenes decisively

At 61 for 5, the bulk of the PK batting was gone but the asking rate wasn't steep, and wicketkeeper Jitesh Sharma would take his side close with a 34-ball 44.

With 39 needed off the last three overs, Rovman Powell made a critical save on the straight boundary.

He leaped to catch what was an otherwise certain six from Jitesh and hurled it back in time as he went over the rope to keep the damage to just a single.

Jitesh went for another six in the over but this time, Thakur had got the knuckle ball right, and Warner surged forward from long-off to take a sharp, low catch.

PK would go down swinging. Now Rabada mowed Thakur over the shorter deep-midwicket rope. Next ball, Thakur sent the wide bouncer wider towards the longer side, and Rabada swatted it straight to long-off. Down to 131 for 9 after 18, PK were finally out of the game.

BRIEF SCORES: Delhi Capitals 159 for 7 (Marsh 63, Sarfaraz 32, Livingstone 3-27) beat Punjab Kings 142 for 9 (Jitesh 44, Thakur 4-36, Axar 2-14, Kuldeep 2-14) by 17 runs

Road gets tough for Bangalore

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY

ONE PLAYOFF spot is officially taken by Gujarat Titans. The next two positions are Rajasthan Royals and Lucknow Super Giants' to lose. Battle is intense for the one remaining place.

RAJASTHAN ROYALS
M: 13, PTS: 16, NRR: 0.304

A win against LSG have all but secured a playoff place for Royals. Only two more teams can now get to 16 points. One of them, RCB, have a negative net run rate.

LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS
M: 13, PTS: 16, NRR: 0.262

Successive losses by big margins have pulled Super Giants' net run rate down to 0.262 from 0.703. And yet, KL Rahul's troops sit pretty because of their far superior net run rate.

DELHI CAPITALS
M: 13, PTS: 14, NRR: 0.255

On the face of it, DC now are in a straight fight with RCB. If they win their last game against Mumbai Indians, they will be through, thanks to their very impressive net run rate. If they lose and RCB win against Titans, DC will be knocked out.

ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE
M: 13, PTS: 14, NRR: -0.323

Despite being on 14 points, the final group league fixture is a win-or-bust for RCB. Still, they will not get there if DC secure a victory. In the playoffs scrap, RCB have the worst net run rate among all the aspirants.

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS
M: 13, PTS: 12, NRR: 0.160

KKR will have to hope that no other team reaches 16 points.

PUNJAB KINGS
M: 13, PTS: 12, NRR: -0.043

Defeat to DC sort of put paid to their playoffs hopes. Punjab Kings' chance now lies in DC, RCB and KKR losing their respective final league fixtures, while they beating SRH.

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD
M: 12, PTS: 10, NRR: -0.270

Sunrisers are hoping against hope that no other team gets to 16 points and they win massive against MI and Punjab Kings. For example, even if they beat the two by 30 runs each, they won't have a positive net run rate.

EXPRESS
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Inflation:
How bad is it for you,
and India's growth story?



Neelkanth Mishra

Part-time Member Economic Advisory Council to PM and Co-Head of Equity Strategy, Asia Pacific and India Equity Strategist, Securities Research, Credit Suisse



Anil Sasi

National Business Editor
The Indian Express

In conversation
with

In the growth-inflation trade-off, the focus has clearly shifted to reining in prices. A fortnight ago, the RBI hiked the key policy rate by 40 basis points, the first in four years. Given the worries about domestic food prices, India has already banned wheat exports. With the Russia-Ukraine war still unravelling, fuel prices may remain elevated. Tough measures like more interest rate hikes and liquidity absorption in coming months will kill whatever little demand India is seeing now. Is stagflation - low growth, high inflation - looming large?

20 MAY 2022

06:00 PM

To register, SCAN



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